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Walden University
2017

Abstract

Success Strategies of Latin American Immigrant Small Business Entrepreneurs

by

Bruce D. Gaynor

MBA, Georgia College & State University, 2010

BS, University of Maryland University College, 2002

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

December 2017

Abstract

Small business restaurants represent a significant segment of the U.S. economy; however, many small business restaurants fail before 5 years of operation. The purpose of this exploratory multiple case study was to explore the strategies entrepreneurs used to sustain operations beyond 5 years. The population for this study was 3 Latin American immigrant small business restaurant owners in the central part of the U.S. state of Georgia, who had sustained operations for more than 5 years. The conceptual framework consisted of entrepreneurship and knowledge management theories. The data derived from semistructured interviews and organizational documents presented by the participants. Data analysis involved using a modified van Kaam method and qualitative analysis software to identify and analyze emergent themes. The 3 themes were cultivation of ego-networks, human capital development, and engaged entrepreneurial activities. The findings from this study suggest that small business owners enhance their external social network, advance the human capital of employees and the entrepreneur, and apply entrepreneurial orientation practices. Using study findings, small business restaurant owners may be better able to have sustainable businesses and, thus, contribute to their local communities' economic and social well-being. Implications for positive social change include the potential to prevent the economic and socially damaging effects of business failures and unemployment as well as the potential to cultivate a skilled U.S. Latin American workforce, through the advancement of human capital.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Following the 2008 economic recession, small business restaurants helped fuel the U.S. economic recovery (Coughlan, 2014). In 2012, owners of small business restaurants employed 13.5 million food service workers and contributed $1.8 trillion to the U.S. economy (U.S. Small Business Administration [SBA], 2014). In the U.S. state of Georgia, the accommodation and food service industry is a significant employment source (SBA, 2015a). The industry accounted for the majority of the small business employment base in the state in 2012 (see Appendix A).

Despite the overall economic success of small business restaurants, many owners of small businesses in the United States struggle in sustaining their operations. Approximately half of U.S. small business ventures survive their first 5 years of existence (U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2016). Moreover, small businesses in the restaurant sector also struggle with surviving past this benchmark. Parsa, van der Rest, Smith, Parsa, and Bujisic (2014) found, for instance, that 25% of small business restaurants in a medium-sized city in the U.S. failed after the first year of operation.

Background of the Problem

Surviving as a small business restaurant is challenging. T. Luo and Stark (2015) found that 40% of restaurants with 6 to 20 employees in eight western states of the United States failed before the fifth year of operation. Parsa et al. (2014) attributed some independent restaurant failures to small business restaurant owners' lack of business skills. In particular, Olivas and Frankwick (2016) found that many Hispanic

entrepreneurs lacked training in management, leadership, communication skills, and relationship building. Small business restaurant owners also need to understand the importance of knowledge management in sustaining operations. Managing knowledge assets facilitated meaningful sustainability in organizations (Shehata, 2015). According to Mousavizadeh, Ryan, Harden, and Windsor (2015), implementing knowledge management processes enhanced business value. Thus, entrepreneurial and knowledge management are strategies available to small business restaurant owners to sustain operations beyond 5 years.

Another challenge for business owners in the food service industry is high employee turnover. Restaurant owners are four times more likely to have job vacancies compared to owners in other industries (Richards & Terkanian, 2013). High turnover in the restaurant sector is occurring as the U.S. population grows and more people choose to dine out (Richards & Terkanian, 2013). In this environment, an expected increase in the demand for food service workers projects the need for 491,200 additional food service workers by the year 2022 (Richards & Terkanian, 2013). In addition to employee availability, employee turnover present other concerns for small business owners.

Employee turnover has negative consequences for organizations, which include knowledge loss (Lin, Chang, & Tsai, 2016). Employee turnover is especially detrimental in smaller firms due to the limited number of individuals who possess critical tacit and explicit knowledge (Durst & Wilhelm, 2012). An increasing demand for services, coupled with high employee turnover, requires that small business restaurant owners

understand the appropriate strategies needed to sustain their operations beyond 5 years. The discussion now shifts to the problem statement.

Problem Statement

Small business restaurants fail at a higher rate than do chain restaurants (Parsa et al., 2014). T. Luo and Stark (2015) found that 40% of small business restaurants fail to sustain their businesses beyond 5 years. The general business problem was that these small business failures have negative economic and social effects on small business restaurant owners and employees, and the communities that these owners serve. The specific business problem was that some small business restaurant owners lack the entrepreneurial and knowledge management strategies necessary to sustain their restaurant businesses for more than 5 years.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative, exploratory multiple case study was to explore the entrepreneurial and knowledge management strategies that small business restaurant owners use to sustain their business more than 5 years. The population for this study was Latin American immigrant owners of three small business restaurants with 20 or fewer employees in central part of Georgia, who had sustained operations for more than 5 years. Similar to Fray (2014), I selected three Latin American immigrant entrepreneurs to participate in my study. Fray found that interviewing three Latin American immigrant entrepreneurs was sufficient in exploring successful entrepreneurial ventures. The selection of this particular ethnic group also served to fill a gap in the literature. Much of the prior research on ethnic minority entrepreneurs has involved African-American and

Asian ethnic groups (Z. Moon, Farmer, Abreo, & Miller, 2013). This study's implications for positive social change include helping small business restaurant owners understand the entrepreneurial and knowledge management strategies needed to sustain their businesses. Understanding these factors may be able to prevent the economic and employment loss caused by business failure in the highly competitive restaurant industry.

Nature of the Study

I used a qualitative research method to study the entrepreneurial and knowledge management strategies of small business entrepreneurs. In qualitative research, researchers study empirical evidence to gain an understanding of the routines, problems, and meanings in the lives of individuals (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). They use this evidence to produce descriptions and analyses of processes, practices, and phenomena, and how individuals view these concepts within their social environments (Koch, Niesz, & McCarthy, 2014). A qualitative approach has proved useful in exploring subjective topics such as the entrepreneurial and knowledge management strategies used by small business owners (SBO; Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013). I deemed other research methods as not suitable for this study. I decided, for instance, not to use a quantitative method; researchers used methods to study relational data sets that are measurable (Harrison, 2013). Equally inappropriate was a mixed-methods study, which combines both the quantitative and qualitative research approaches (Galvin, 2014). A qualitative approach, I determined, was the appropriate method for this research study.

An exploratory multiple case study was the choice design for this study. Researchers use case study designs to explore holistic phenomena through the lens of

individuals (C. Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Researchers gain understanding of the success factors and the cost management practices of entrepreneurs through case study research (Alonso & Krajsic, 2014; Fray, 2014). Lahtinen (2013) used a case study approach in exploring knowledge management concepts and the associated effects of knowledge sharing within groups.

I determined that other research designs, such as ethnography, phenomenology, and narrative inquiry, were not effective for this study. Ethnography has proved suitable for studying the rituals, mores, and observable behaviors of a cultural group (C. Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Researchers use phenomenology to explore the lived experiences of individuals (C. Marshall & Rossman, 2016). However, phenomenology would not support analyzing the strategies used to sustain operations. Finally, narrative inquiry was not sufficient for this study because researchers use narrative inquiry to capture individuals' "storied" lives through conversations (C. Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 155). The focus of narrative inquiry research, therefore, is on the individual while the focus of this study was on the strategies used by individuals in my study population. In summary, a case study design proved most appropriate for exploring the entrepreneurial and knowledge management strategies used by small business restaurant owners to sustain operations beyond 5 years.

Research Question

The research question for this exploratory multiple case study was, as follows: What entrepreneurial and knowledge management strategies do small business restaurant owners use to sustain their business more than 5 years?

Interview Questions

Each participant provided answers to nine semistructured interview questions to address the research question. The interview questions were, as follows:

1. What education or training strategies helped prepare you to operate your small business restaurant?

2. What financial support strategies did you use to help start and maintain your business?

3. What community or outside resource strategies did you use to support your business?

4. What marketing strategies did you use to support operating your small business restaurant?

5. What strategies did you use to manage the cost of operating your business?

6. What strategies did you use to manage the knowledge needed to operate your business?

7. What strategies do you use to encourage your employees to share knowledge?

8. What strategies did you find most effective in sustaining your small business restaurant?

9. What strategies that we did not discuss have helped with the success of your business?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is an essential pillar of scholarly research. Conceptual frameworks allow researchers to define the concepts of the research phenomenon and

determine how the concepts are related (Fawcett & Desanto-Madeya, 2013). Researchers have found that use of conceptual frameworks helped researchers to clarify operational definitions and empirically identify the concepts of research phenomena (C. C. Cohen & Shang, 2015). Researchers develop theories, research questions, and hypotheses from conceptual frameworks (Fawcett & Desanto-Madeya, 2013). Therefore, conceptual framework provides researchers a foundation for conducting empirical research. The conceptual framework for this study consisted of entrepreneurship and knowledge management theories.

In the seminal work, *The Nature of Trade in General* [translated], Cantillon (1931) introduced the theory of entrepreneurship and discussed the theory's contribution to economic policy. Cantillon was the first economist to describe the concept of risk for entrepreneurs. For example, undertakers (i.e., entrepreneurs) offer products and services to the market without the assurances of making a profit (Cantillon, 1931). Other economic concepts related to the theory of entrepreneurship include the effect of supply and demand on prices, the supply of money's influence on credit and interest rates, and the opportunity costs of producing goods or services (Cantillon, 1931). Thus, Cantillon provided some essential economic strategies that may be beneficial for entrepreneurs in sustaining their businesses more than 5 years.

Knowledge management is equally important to small business owners. Polanyi (1966) along with Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) are seminal contributors to the theory of knowledge management. A principal tenet of this theory is the description of knowledge as either tacit or explicit (Polanyi, 1966). Tacit and explicit knowledge comprise of the

knowledge resources used in knowledge management (Wong, Tan, Lee, & Wong, 2013).

Besides knowledge, other dimensions of knowledge management theory are knowledge

infrastructure and process capabilities (Gold, Malhotra, & Segars, 2001). Therefore, it is

important for small business to understand and implement knowledge management

strategies to sustain operations

Operational Definitions

The specific terms used in this study and their definitions are, as follows:

Entrepreneurship: Entrepreneurship is the combined economic activities that

individuals conduct, often with uncertainty, to create opportunities for economic

prosperity and personal welfare (Carlsson et al., 2013).

Entrepreneurial orientation: Entrepreneurial orientation is a strategic posture that

promotes entrepreneurs to be proactive and innovative while assuming certain levels of

risk to accomplish business objectives (Pérez-Lũno, Saparito, & Gopalakrishnan, 2016).

Explicit knowledge: Explicit knowledge is the knowledge that is simple to codify

and disseminate through printed and electronic media (Filieri & Alguezaui, 2014).

Knowledge: Knowledge is the acquired skills, information, and capabilities that

individuals use to meet objectives (Gaimon & Bailey, 2013).

Knowledge management: Knowledge management is the management of an

organization's knowledge resources and knowledge processes, with the goal of using

knowledge to create value and give its users competitive advantages (Wong et al., 2013).

Knowledge sharing: Knowledge sharing is the conscious process of disseminating

task-related ideas, information, suggestions, as well as improvements with members of

the organization (Eze, Goh, Goh, & Tan, 2013).

Tacit knowledge: Tacit knowledge is knowledge individuals acquire from the learned experiences embedded in the individual's mind, making tacit knowledge difficult to transfer or imitate (Panahi, Watson, & Partridge, 2013).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions are variables that might affect the research study. In research, assumptions are those elements that difficult or impossible for the researcher to control, but if absent would render the study irrelevant (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I had several fundamental assumptions in conducting this study. The initial assumption I had was that a qualitative case study was the appropriate method for my investigation. Another assumption was that the underlying concepts or phenomena of the study would remain relevant throughout the study. In addition, I assumed that the participants would provide truthful answers and that the data to be collected and analyzed would represent small business owners' entrepreneurial and knowledge management strategies. The next assumption was that small business restaurant owners were engaged in all operations of their organizations and initiated entrepreneurial strategies while also serving as the central source of tacit knowledge. The final assumption I had was that the Latin American immigrant owners in my study understood the interview questions enough to describe their entrepreneurial and knowledge management strategies. I used English to conduct the semistructured interviews.

Limitations

Perfectly designed research studies do not exist, as limitations are inherent in the research process (C. Marshall & Rossman, 2016). C. Marshall and Rossman added that limitations stem from the conceptual framework and the research design. Bounding the study by the study's theory or research method, places limits on the research (C. Marshall & Rossman, 2016). For example, a limitation in my study related to participants providing honest responses about their entrepreneurial and knowledge management strategies during the semistructured interviews. Also, limiting the study's population to Latin American owners may have suppressed the generalizability of the results to other ethnic groups. I mitigated this limitation by conducting the study within the boundaries of the conceptual framework, in particularly, how the conceptual framework applies to entrepreneurial and knowledge management strategies. Another potential weakness was barriers to knowledge management. Some barriers to knowledge management are lack of interest by the employees, inefficient communication, and the lack of a knowledge sharing culture (Oliva, 2014). These barriers might have limited the study's efficacy if they existed. Last, obtaining documents for triangulation from the Latin American immigrant business owners proved challenging, but the documents were fundamental in ensuring the study's credibility.

Delimitations

Converse to limitations, delimitations are within the researcher's control. The researcher identifies those characteristics that are relevant to the study. Yin (2014) referenced identifying those elements within the researcher's control as *bounding* the

case. For example, owners of small business restaurants with 5 or more years of continued operations contributed in this study. A census sample of three Latin American immigrant restaurant owners participated in this qualitative, exploratory multiple case study. Delimiting the research to three participants coincided with Fray's (2014) research of the success strategies of Latin American small business owners. The geographical area selected for this study was central Georgia, United States. The data collection method consisted of face-to-face semistructured interviews, designed to address the research question and gather data on entrepreneurial and knowledge management strategies.

Significance of the Study

The value of this research study was in providing strategies that are beneficial to small business restaurants, in particular, changes to business practices. The results of this study offer Latin American immigrant restaurant owners the strategies needed to sustain business beyond 5 years. Certain entrepreneurial strategies, such as resource acquisition, fostered success for immigrant small business owners (Madu & Bakari, 2016). The entrepreneurial strategies presented in this study may improve the businesses' sustainability, as well as improve the business' economic and social influence on the community at-large. Understanding knowledge management strategy is equally important to business operation success. Establishing a knowledge sharing culture stimulated innovation and creativity in organizations (Saifi, 2015). The outcome of this research identified strategies for improving the economics and quality of life of Latin American small business restaurant owners.

Contribution to Business Practice

The contribution to business practice was identifying the entrepreneurial and knowledge management strategies necessary to sustain operations beyond 5 years. Entrepreneurial activities have contributed significantly to the development and growth of economies (Carlsson et al., 2013). Incorporating an entrepreneurial and marketing orientation fostered improved business performance (Kajalo & Lindblom, 2015). Likewise, restaurant entrepreneurs who infused innovations in their business operations experienced positive business outcomes (C. Lee, Hallak, & Sardeshmukh, 2016). The ambition for conducting this study was to gain an understanding of the entrepreneurial activities of successful entrepreneurs to share with practicing and future entrepreneurs.

Also important for small business entrepreneurs are strategies to manage their knowledge resources. The use of efficient knowledge management strategies has facilitated organizational success (Miklosik & Zak, 2015). Firms have turned to knowledge management as a strategy to improve performance outcomes (Eze et al., 2013). Consequently, the rationale to manage knowledge assets is increasing. Knowledge is a critical and effective organizational asset (Allameh, Pool, Jaberi, & Soveini, 2014). Knowledge has become an increasingly important source of an organization's competitiveness, and organizational leaders must manage knowledge as efficiently as possible (Kim & Ko, 2014). Accordingly, small business restaurant owners must understand the importance of the organization's knowledge management strategies.

Implications for Social Change

The contribution of Latin Americans immigrant entrepreneurs to the U.S. economy is significant. Latin American immigrant entrepreneurs own and operate over 3 million businesses while generating over $400M in annual revenue (Ortiz-Walters, Gavino, & Williams, 2015). As depicted in Table 1, the number of immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States has increased steadily since the 1980s. Wilmoth (2016) added that increasing the contribution of immigrant entrepreneurs is more beneficial to society than to individual entrepreneurs. C. Y. Liu, Miller, and Wang (2014) agreed, adding that ethnically diverse businesses enhanced the economic, social, infrastructure, and political capital in the communities they served. This study offers opportunities for positive social change, particularly for Latin American small business restaurant owners. The strategies presented in this study positions the Latin American small business entrepreneurs to earn livable incomes and maintain a suitable quality of life for themselves and their families.

Table 1

Share of Foreign Born, Self-Employed Immigrants in the United States

Census year	Share (%)
1980	6.9
1990	9.8
2000	13.8
2010	18.4
2015	19.5*

Note. Data sources included the 1980, 1990, and 2000 U.S. Census and 2010 American Community Survey (Wilmoth, 2016).

* Data were calculated by Wilmoth (2016) using U.S. Census Bureau data.

According to Z. Moon et al. (2013), the lack of other opportunities was not the cause for immigrants to seek entrepreneurship. Z. Moon et al. (2013) instead argued that Hispanic immigrants used what human capital they possessed to start their own business. Canedo, Stone, Black, and Lukaszewski (2013) suggested that some Hispanics might believe that they lack the entrepreneurial skills to start, resource, and achieve business success. Fairlie and Lofstrom (2015) found that, while Latinos comprise the largest immigrant group in the U.S., the percent of Latino entrepreneurs is quite low compared to other immigrant groups. Fairlie and Lofstrom suggested that the Latino population's lower education level as a contributor to the lack of Latino entrepreneurs. Supporting positive social change for this ethnic group is the identification of the educational and training strategies used by successful Latin American immigrant small business entrepreneurs.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The focus of this literature review was the entrepreneurial and knowledge management strategies used by Latin American immigrant small business restaurant owners to sustain operations more than 5 years. I specifically reviewed literature grounded in entrepreneurship theory and knowledge management theory, emphasizing those strategies that researchers have identified as effective for business performance and sustainability. Composing the literature review included scanning the literature to identify the financial, educational, social, and resource management strategies integral to sustaining operations. These macro-level concepts are instrumental in fostering an entrepreneurial behavior to start, grow, maintain, or (perhaps) leave a business (S. C.

Chen, & Elston, 2013). Within the literature, researchers have identified what were the challenges ethnic minority entrepreneurs experienced and how the entrepreneurs resolved these challenges.

Included in the literature review is a discussion of the evolving domain of entrepreneurship research. A review of the entrepreneurial research literature provided insight about strategies for successful entrepreneurial activities. Other topics include entrepreneurship and knowledge management strategies that entrepreneurs used to sustain operations. The topics of discussion are *entrepreneurship theory*, *entrepreneurship orientation*, *marketing orientation*, and the *explorative and exploitative dimensions of entrepreneurship*. Additional topics include *knowledge management*, *knowledge sharing*, *explicit*, and *tacit knowledge.* As found by Affendy, Asmat-Nizam, and Farid (2015), small business Latin American immigrant restaurant owners enhance their business performance through the use of entrepreneurial strategies. Small business restaurant owners have used knowledge management strategies to create the tacit and explicit knowledge needed to sustain operations (Saifi, 2015).

I also explored the organizational capabilities that facilitated small business restaurant owners' knowledge management strategies. Organizational capabilities such as infrastructure and technology are integral facilitators of knowledge management (Alaarj, Abidin-Mohamed, & Bustamam, 2016; Gold et al., 2001). The infrastructure capability of an organization supports the knowledge management processes used to store and disseminate knowledge (Tseng & Lee, 2014). An important component of quality

knowledge management is the technology used to manage an organization's knowledge assets (Dzekashu & McCollum, 2014).

The findings and conclusions from my research offer potential business practice and social change benefits, specifically a possible reduction in small business restaurant failures. The small business restaurant owners in this study identified the entrepreneurial and knowledge management strategies used to sustain operations. Entrepreneurial orientation strategies enabled firms to achieve positive performance outcomes (Kreiser, Marino, Kuratko, & Weaver, 2013). Similarly, effective knowledge management processes fostered strategic sustainability (Perry, 2014). Therefore, small business restaurant owners who fail to implement entrepreneurial and knowledge management strategies might encounter economic difficulties.

This literature review consists of scholarly (peer-reviewed) articles obtained through the Walden University Library. Compiling this literature review entailed searching a variety of multidisciplinary, management and business sources, which included ProQuest Central, Emerald Management, Sage Premier, Science Direct, EBSCOhost, and Google Scholar. Using the following keywords facilitated the search effort: *entrepreneurship theory*, *knowledge management theory*, *entrepreneurship and innovation*, *entrepreneurship and marketing orientation*, *small business restaurant*, *entrepreneurial self-efficacy*, *knowledge management infrastructure and capabilities*, *tacit and explicit knowledge*, *human capital, cost management*, and *entrepreneurial support or assistance*. Of the 174 literature sources used in this study, 96% are peer-reviewed and 86% are less than 5 years old from my expected graduation date. The

remaining 4% of sources that were not peer reviewed were seminal or government sources. I begin this literature review with a discussion of the entrepreneurship theory conceptual framework.

Entrepreneurship Theory

Cantillon (1931) conceptualized entrepreneurship theory and explained the theory's connection between entrepreneurship and economic analysis. For instance, entrepreneurs must understand certain economic principles, such as supply and demand, and adjust accordingly to sustain their operations (Cantillon, 1931). Cantillon and other researchers described certain traits of entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs are risk-takers who often operate under conditions of economic uncertainty (Brown & Thornton, 2013; Cantillon, 1931; Tocan & Chindris-Vasioiu, 2014). Klein (2016) added that entrepreneurship involves making judgmental decisions in markets of uncertainty, which includes introducing innovative ideas to the market. Implementing innovative activities stimulated increase sales and improved operating efficiencies (C. Lee et al., 2016). The entrepreneurship and economic concepts introduced by Cantillon influenced the entrepreneurs' role in the economy.

Entrepreneurs, at times, have encountered uncertainties while conducting business. One uncertainty is obtaining the resources needed to conduct business and another is the uncertainty of trust between the consumer and the entrepreneur (Lanivich, 2015; Mitchell, Mitchell, Zachary, & Ryan, 2014). The uncertainty of resource providers might constrain the entrepreneur's ability to obtain needed resources (Lumpkin, Moss, Gras, Kato, & Amezcua, 2013). The term used for the uncertainty of trust between the

entrepreneur and consumer is *relational uncertainty* (Mitchell et al., 2014). Entrepreneurs have mitigated relational uncertainty by building trust relationships with customers (Mitchell et al., 2014). Building trust with consumers is beneficial to entrepreneurs. C.-H. Liu and Lee (2015) revealed that entrepreneurs who developed a trusting relationship with consumers and other vendors increased the chance of repeat business. Repeat customers are likely to develop a close relationship with business owners (Dessi, Ng, Floris, & Cabras, 2014). Therefore, building trust relationships is a significant business activity for entrepreneurs. The uncertainty of obtaining needed resources and gaining consumer trust are primary concerns for entrepreneurs.

The opportunity cost of doing business or leaving the business is a significant consideration for entrepreneurs. As such, entrepreneurs must develop an understanding of the optimal time to leverage funds for profiteering (Brown & Thornton, 2013; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). For example, entrepreneurs have assessed the opportunity costs to determine if creating a new venture is economically viable (BarNir, 2014; Venkataraman, 1997). However, fewer than 8% of the entrepreneurs surveyed by Alonso and Krajsic (2014) acknowledged that they fully maximized the beneficial opportunity costs that were available to them. Consequently, entrepreneurs should implement an effective cost management strategy to manage opportunity costs and promote sustained operations (Alonso & Krajsic, 2014). According to BarNir, other opportunity costs that the entrepreneurs must consider include the opportunity costs of leaving a current occupation, the potential outcomes (i.e., profit or loss) of starting a new venture, and the

personal benefits realized from entrepreneurship. Thus, decisions based on opportunity costs are important for entrepreneurs to consider.

Evolving Research in Entrepreneurship

Research on entrepreneurship has evolved slowly; it was not until the 1980s that economists began to engage in meaningful dialogue on entrepreneurship research (Carlsson et al., 2013; Casson, 2014). For example, scholars began debating the specific domains of entrepreneurship (Busenitz, Plummer, Klotz, Shahzad, & Rhoads, 2014; Carlsson et al., 2013). A renewed focus on Cantillon's (1931) contribution to entrepreneurship theory also emerged. Researchers have credited Cantillon with describing entrepreneurs as opportunists who take advantage of the economic market conditions (Brown & Thornton, 2013; Busenitz et al., 2014). This association between opportunities and the entrepreneur aligns with the explorative dimension of entrepreneurship (Carlsson et al., 2013). The evolution of entrepreneurship research since the 1980s renewed researchers' interest in the study of entrepreneurship.

In 1934, Joseph Schumpeter argued that entrepreneurs' innovativeness upset the economic equilibrium proposed by other economists at that time, a phenomenon Schumpeter termed *creative destruction* (Carlsson et al., 2013; C. Lee et al., 2016). Schumpeter added that the emphasis of innovative activities shifted from individuals to existing firms (Brown & Thornton, 2013; Carlsson et al., 2013). In other words, the existing products and services of the firm became the focus of innovative ideas. Schumpeter also predicted that advancements in technology would shift innovation from individuals to existing firms (Carlsson et al., 2013). The innovations emerging from

existing firms are consistent with an exploitative entrepreneurship approach (Chava, Oetti, Subramanian, & Subramanian, 2013), which entails refinement of existing processes (March, 1991). Researchers have credited Schumpeter with categorizing entrepreneurs who exploit opportunities created from within the firm (Carlsson et al., 2013). Therefore, advancing the evolution of entrepreneurship research was the research of the exploration and exploitation domains of entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship research continued to evolve following Schumpeter's 1934 seminal work. Examples included researchers focusing on the traits and characteristics of the entrepreneur (Busenitz et al., 2014). Trends advocating entrepreneurship research from a practical lens (i.e., from a management perspective) emerged in the late 1940s (Carlsson et al., 2013). In the 1950s, Schumpeter encouraged researchers to view entrepreneurship from a theoretical lens and include an economic analysis with entrepreneurship research (Carlsson et al., 2013). Instead, researchers refuted and rejected Schumpeter's ideology until the 1980s when researchers reconciled to further the advancement of entrepreneurship research (Ferreira, Reis, & Miranda, 2015). During the 1980s, researchers questioned the adequacy of current entrepreneurship research development and suggested a need for more theory-based research (Ferreira et al., 2015). Economists departed from character trait-based view of entrepreneurship and began researching entrepreneurship from an economic analysis view (Carlsson et al., 2013). The interest in entrepreneurship grew since the 1980s. Teachings of entrepreneurship at institutions of higher learner increased, as did the number of journals and journal articles dedicated to entrepreneurship research (Carlsson et al., 2013; Casson, 2014; Ferreira et

al., 2015). Following a period of stagnation from the 1950s until the 1980s, research on the evolution of entrepreneurship reemerged.

A renewed focus from economists and scholars advanced the field of entrepreneurship research. This renewed focus on entrepreneurship research led to associating existing management and sociological concepts with entrepreneurship (Carlsson et al., 2013; Scherdin & Zander, 2014; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; van Burg & Romme, 2014). These concepts included sociology and psychology (Kuratko, Morris, & Schindehutte, 2015); behavioral science (Audretsch, Kuratko, & Link, 2015); and strategic management (Carlsson et al., 2013). A pivotal breakthrough in the expansion of entrepreneurship research followed Venkataraman's (1997) seminal research article.

Venkataraman (1997) called for a consensual definition of entrepreneurship, arguing that the current definitions only described the entrepreneur. Venkataraman asserted that entrepreneurship is the study of how opportunities to create, exploit, or discover new goods and services came into existence and by whom. The central focus was opportunities, as Venkataraman claimed that researchers ignored the main question from where do the opportunities to create future goods and services originate. Shane and Venkataraman (2000) reiterated the opportunism theme and stated that entrepreneurship could not exist without entrepreneurship opportunities. Amongst researchers, the opportunistic view continued to manifest in entrepreneurship research, particularly when researchers discussed the entrepreneurship dimensions (Carlsson et al., 2013). Entrepreneurs explored opportunities in response to the radical innovations occurring in

industries (Osiyevskyy & Dewald, 2015a). The discussions induced from the evolving research of entrepreneurship include the domains of entrepreneurship, the relationship of entrepreneurship with existing management concepts, and the roles of opportunity and innovation in entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship Theory of Innovation

The concept of innovation in entrepreneurship theory is essential. Researchers credit Schumpeter with developing the entrepreneurship theory of innovation (C. Lee et al., 2016). Schumpeter considered innovation an important economic development factor and argued that economists err by adhering strictly to the traditional cyclic economic flow as it disregards the forces of change (Sweezy, 1943). Instead, Schumpeter asserted that change is a viable economic phenomenon and that the initiator of change is the innovator or the entrepreneur (Sweezy, 1943). Schumpeter's ideology of the entrepreneur's role in economic development prompted the first combined studies of economic history and entrepreneurship (Carlsson et al., 2013). Although, the economic analysis and entrepreneurship correlation did not endure (Ferreira et al., 2015), the research between the alignment of innovation and entrepreneurship continued. The ongoing entrepreneurship and innovation research produced two important dimensions of entrepreneurship: the explorative and the exploitative dimensions of entrepreneurship.

Exploration and Exploitation Dimensions of Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurs engaged in exploration and exploitation activities to create new opportunities and to take advantage of existing opportunities respectively. March (1991) contextualized the exploration and exploitation of new and existing uncertainties from an

organizational learning perspective. The concept of organizational learning is important to organizations. Organizational learning involves the firm's ability to explore new opportunities and exploit existing competencies (Bonesso, Gerli, & Scapolan, 2014). The exploration of new opportunities and the exploitation of existing opportunities are activities that propel entrepreneurship.

March (1991) articulated the concepts of exploration and exploitation and how each dimension relates to organizational strategic actions. For example, March described exploration in terms such as search, variation, risk-taking, experimentation, flexibility, discovery, and innovation. Exploration involved the activities to introduce new products and services in response to the economic or market environment (March, 1991). Conversely, exploitation processes involve transforming existing products and services to meet economic and market demands (Carlsson et al., 2013; March, 1991; Voss & Voss, 2013). An exploitation approach presented entrepreneurs with a safer alternative to exploration, as categorized by terms such as refinement, choice, production, efficiency, implementation, and execution (Lisboa, Skarmeas, & Lages, 2013; March, 1991).

While March (1991) did not specifically correlate exploitation with risk-averment, Kollmann and Stöckmann (2014) argued that entrepreneurs engaged in exploitation activities to minimize risk. Indeed, exploiting familiar processes enabled firms to mitigate risk (Mueller, Rosenbusch, & Bausch, 2013). However, some researchers disagreed with the assertion that entrepreneurs engaged in exploitation activities to minimize risk. Osiyevskyy and Dewald (2015b) stated that some managers were not predisposed to expanding exploitative activities when facing external threats, suggesting a proclivity to

consider taking risks. Similarly, risk-taking did not negatively influence the firm's performance when the firm applied an exploitative approach (Kollmann & Stöckmann, 2014). In other words, the difference between the creative exploration approach and the safer exploitation approach appears not as polarizing as suggested by some researchers.

Regardless of the differences between exploration and exploitation, researchers viewed the ability to integrate both approaches simultaneously as a distinctive performance enabler (Lisboa et al., 2013). The term researchers used to describe the combined application of both exploration and exploitation activity is ambidexterity (Lisboa et al., 2013; Rodriguez & Hechanova, 2014; Volery, Mueller, & von Siemens, 2015; Voss & Voss, 2013). Performance outcomes in some firms improved using ambidexterity (Bonesso et al., 2014). Some researchers warned against small firms using an ambidextrous approach because of resource scarcity (Lisboa et al., 2013; Voss & Voss, 2013). Applying an ambidextrous approach may not be worth the risk to limited resources for small business owners as using either a purely exploration or exploitation approach also produced positive revenue performance (Voss & Voss, 2013).

Countered to Voss and Voss (2013), some researchers argued that a complete separation between exploitation and exploration is not possible (Nonaka, Kodama, Hirose, & Kohlbacher, 2014). Indeed, the simultaneous deployment of both a marketing exploration strategy and a product exploitation strategy also produced positive revenue outcomes (Voss & Voss, 2013). This combined approach contradicts earlier warnings that small businesses avoid ambidexterity and suggests that the two strategies are not mutually exclusive. Similarly, exploitation of existing knowledge enabled the discovery

of new opportunities, while exploration of new possibilities leveraged existing

knowledge (Lisboa et al., 2013). Rodriguez and Hechanova (2014) found a positive

correlation between ambidexterity and innovation, whereas Úbeda-Garcia, Claver-Cortéz,

Marco-Lajara, and Zaragoza-Saéz (2016) suggested that organizational ambidexterity

facilitated attaining competitive advantages. Although some researchers supported the

use of ambidexterity, when faced with resource trade-off decisions, entrepreneurs favored

the exploitation approach (Volery et al., 2015).

Exploration dimension of entrepreneurship. In strategic management research,

exploratory strategies are opportunity-seeking strategies (Rodriguez & Hechanova,

2014). Firms prescribing to the exploration dimension usually exhibited creative,

adventurous, and risk-taking tendencies (Cui, Walsh, & Zou, 2014). Exploration

activities included recognizing opportunities, innovation, and creating new firms or new

processes within existing firms (Carlsson et al., 2013; Leyden, Link, & Siegel, 2014).

Kollmann and Stöckmann (2014) found that innovativeness positively influenced

exploration, which in turn positively influenced performance outcomes. Increasing the

levels of innovativeness proved an adequate strategy, but was not required for exploration

of new product development (Lisboa, Skarmeas, & Saridakis, 2016).

Following Schumpeterian innovation theory, firms have adopted explorative

disruptive business models when firms offered new goods or services, changed existing

processes, or reevaluated their value creating and distributing activities (Osiyevskyy &

Dewald, 2015b). Firms have changed (i.e., disrupted) current business models to explore

perceived opportunity (Osiyevskyy & Dewald, 2015a). Researchers also acknowledged

that perceived opportunity drives strategic entrepreneurial activities (Osiyevskyy &

Dewald, 2015a; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). Perceived opportunities have influenced

budding entrepreneurs to pursue entrepreneurship (Bayon, Vaillant, & LaFuente, 2015).

The small business owners in this study were not budding entrepreneurs, having

sustained operations for well over 5 years. Still, the entrepreneurs used exploratory

strategies to pursue opportunities, which enabled sustaining operations beyond 5 years.

Exploitative dimension of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs applied an

exploitative approach by using existing product or service knowledge and technologies to

create new opportunities for profiteering (Lewin, 2015; March, 1991; Zúr, 2015).

Entrepreneurs used an exploitative approach to retain existing customers by improving

known products and services (Voss & Voss, 2013). Researchers described this

exploitative entrepreneurial behavior as opportunity exploitation (De Jong & Marsili,

2015; Santos, Caetano, Baron, & Curral, 2015; Zúr, 2015). Opportunities are initiators

that prompted entrepreneurial activities. Amirsardari and Maritz (2015) stated that

entrepreneurship could not occur if entrepreneurs did not react to opportunities.

The entrepreneur's ability to decipher and act upon to opportunities promotes

innovation (De Jong & Marsili, 2015). Entrepreneurs exploited opportunities to foster

short-term, reliable, and efficient operations (Volery et al., 2015). Entrepreneurs respond

when opportunities arose because the value of opportunities diminishes over time (Zúr,

2015). Using an exploitation approach, entrepreneurs looked to improve current

processes to create new profitable opportunities for existing products and services.

In summary, entrepreneurs engaged in exploration and exploitation activities to create new opportunities and take advantage of existing opportunities. March (1991) contextualized exploration and exploitation of new and old uncertainties, respectively, from an organizational learning perspective. Organizational learning occurs through the ability to explore new opportunities and exploit existing competencies (Bonesso et al., 2014). Exploration and exploitation are two strategies used by entrepreneurs to sustain operations. Other entrepreneurial strategies included entrepreneurial orientation and marketing orientation.

Entrepreneurial Strategies

Entrepreneurial orientation and marketing orientation are two fundamental strategies of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurial orientation is a strategy categorized by innovation, risk-taking, and proactiveness on the part of the entrepreneur (K. Y. Wang, Hermens, Huang, & Chelliah, 2015). Marketing orientation involves analyzing the marketing environment, in particular, how market conditions related to customers and competitors (Affendy et al., 2015). Both entrepreneurial and marketing orientation reflects the organization's culture and capabilities (Affendy et al., 2015). Researchers have indicated that both orientations positively influenced the firm's performance outcome (Affendy et al., 2015; Gruber-Muecke & Hofer, 2015; Tajeddini, Elg, & Ghauri, 2015). Both entrepreneurial orientation and marketing orientation are fundamental strategies used by entrepreneurs. Despite the similarities with regard to organizational culture and firm performance, these orientations represent different perspectives.

Entrepreneurial orientation. Similar to the explorative dimension of entrepreneurship is an entrepreneurial orientation. Entrepreneurs who adopted an entrepreneurial orientation are risk-takers, innovative, and proactive (Fuentes-Fuentes, Bojica, & Ruiz-Arroyo, 2015; Hinz & Ingerfurth, 2013; Kajalo & Lindblom, 2015; K. Y Wang et al., 2015). Lumpkin and Dess (1996) added two additional dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation: autonomy and aggressiveness toward competitors (Soininen, Puumalainen, Sjogren, Syrja, & Durst, 2013). However, the majority of the entrepreneurial orientation literature focused on the risk-taking, innovative, and proactive dimensions (cf. Gruber-Muecke & Hofer, 2015; Semrau, Ambos, & Kraus, 2016; Soininen et al., 2013). A focal point of this study was in exploring the risk-taking, innovative, and proactive strategies that entrepreneurs used to sustain a business.

Marketing orientation. Understanding the market conditions is essential. The central theme of a marketing orientation dimension is meeting the customer's satisfaction based on market information (Tammi, Saastamoinen, & Reijonen, 2014). Specifically, entrepreneurs focused their market orientation activities on the customers and competitors (Affendy et al., 2015; Narver & Slater, 1990). A marketing orientation supported understanding and meeting the customer's needs while assessing the competitive environment through market research of competitors' intentions (Affendy et al., 2015). This customer-/competitor-oriented focus was a factor for sustaining competitive advantages (Narver & Slater, 1990; Tammi et al., 2014). As such, a goal of this study was to assess the marketing strategies used by small business restaurant entrepreneurs to sustain operations.

Entrepreneurial Support Systems

Entrepreneurs faced challenges in acquiring the strategic skills and support necessary to start and sustain a business. Particularly, entrepreneurs of small business restaurants may lack the management and finance skills needed to sustain operations (Parsa et al., 2014). Small businesses also faced resource constraints that prevented implementation of formal knowledge management systems (Wee & Chua, 2013; Zieba, Bolisani, & Scarso, 2016). Fortunately, many resources are available to assist entrepreneurs in starting and sustaining a business. These resources included government, community, and social support systems (Canedo et al., 2013; Kinsella & Wood, 2014; Solomon, Bryant, May, & Perry, 2013; Sonfield, 2014). Government resources include the Small Business Administration, whereas academic institutions provide community support. Entrepreneurs have turned to their inner circle of family and friends for social support (Kinsella & Wood, 2014; Phillips, 2014; Solomon et al., 2013). Despite the resources available to entrepreneurs, the small business owners in this study felt challenged when seeking outside support needed start and sustain a business.

Government support systems. The SBA offers comprehensive educational and financial support to small business entrepreneurs (Rolleri, Nadim, & Lussier, 2016). Because of their ethnicity, ethnic entrepreneurs, more often than not, faced challenges financing their business (Bengtsson & Hsu, 2015). The SBA grants entrepreneurs financial and non-financial support to launch and manage their business (C. Alvarez, Urbano, & Amoros, 2014). According to Solomon et al. (2013), the SBA provides technical and managerial support to small business entrepreneurs. Essential information

on starting a business, financing the business, tax and regulatory laws, and cybersecurity is available to small business owners through the SBA website (https://www.sba.gov). Another resource provided by the SBA for small business entrepreneurs is the Small Business Resource Guide (SBA, 2015b). Phillips (2014) added that SBA publishes the Small Business Resource Guide in Spanish as well as English. Bi-lingual publication of the Resource Guide may be significant, as researchers have indicated that Hispanic entrepreneurs are more likely to accept business-related education from the less formal sources (Z. Moon et al., 2013).

The SBA also manages 63 lead Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) across the U.S. (Phillips, 2014). The U.S. Congress enacted requirements that institutions of higher learner host the lead SBDCs (Phillips, 2014). The University of Georgia (https://www.georgiasbdc.org/macon-office) hosts the central Georgia area lead SBDC, meaning that SBDC support is available to Latin American immigrant entrepreneurs in the central part of Georgia. The SBA implemented the SBDC concept to provide management expertise to help prevent entrepreneurs from suffering business failure (Phillips, 2014). The SBDC also provides technical assistance and counseling services to small business entrepreneurs (Solomon et al., 2013). The staff at the SBDC has developed websites to provide information to entrepreneurs online. In summary, the lead SBDCs provides in-house and online support to assist entrepreneurs.

Community support systems. Besides government sources, entrepreneurs have access to community support systems. A particular source of community support derives from the co-relationship developed between university librarians and agencies that

support entrepreneurs (Feldmann, 2014; Griffis, 2015). For example, university business librarians in conjunction with small business outreach centers created networks of support and provided access to academic resources to community entrepreneurs (Griffis, 2015). Such partnerships between universities and local businesses benefitted both community development and the students' learning of entrepreneurship (Kinsella & Wood, 2014). Universities have facilitated the development of new businesses in the regions where they operate (Audretsch, Link, & Peña-Legazkue, 2013), as well as helped develop an educated workforce (Harrington & Maysami, 2015). Some researchers argued that university and community support systems should increase entrepreneurial skills training opportunities to Hispanic entrepreneurs (Canedo et al., 2013). Educating and developing entrepreneurs are essential support functions provided by academia and community agencies.

Social support systems. Social support systems are important to entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs acquired social support from varied sources including family members, consumers, suppliers, and other entrepreneurs (Bird & Wennberg, 2016; Leyden et al., 2014; Ozdemir, Moran, Zhong, & Bliemel, 2016). Particularly, family members offered financial, labor, knowledge, and networking support to immigrant entrepreneurs (Bird & Wennberg, 2016). The resources cultivated from the entrepreneurs' social networks proved critical for the performance of small businesses by identifying opportunities, securing cheaper resources, and building relationships (Stam, Arzlanian, & Elfring, 2014). The uncertainty entrepreneurs faced while conducting business (cf. Brown & Thornton, 2013; Tocan & Chindris-Vasioiu, 2014) increased the entrepreneurs' reliance

on family members and close associates for resource support (Stam et al., 2014).

Consequently, the support that entrepreneurs received from personal social networks

enabled acquiring resources.

Social networks helped entrepreneurs obtain capital resources (C. Smith, Smith,

& Shaw, 2017) and enabled exploiting opportunities (Leyden et al., 2014). Researchers

used the term social capital to describe resources sought for and obtained from social

network relationships (Bastie, Cieply, & Cussy, 2013; Eklinder-Frick, Eriksson, &

Hallen, 2014; X. Li, Wang, Huang, & Bai, 2013; Stam et al., 2014). Social capital

represents the influence that entrepreneurs develop with others (Eklinder-Frick et al.,

2014). Ethnic entrepreneurs have used their ethnicity as social capital to launch business

ventures (Q. Wang, 2013). Whereas human capital enabled obtaining knowledge assets

(Marvel, Davis, & Sproul, 2016), social capital aided in obtaining access to financial and

networking resources from external sources. Therefore, social capital facilitated obtaining

tangible assets for business operations.

Based on a cognitive approach, researchers have asserted that social capital

operates on multiple dimensions (Eklinder-Frick et al., 2014; Stam et al., 2014). A

preponderance of researchers adopted the three social dimensions–relational, structural,

and cognitive–proposed by Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998). The relational dimension

denotes the strength of the relationship between the entrepreneur and external

stakeholders, whereas a structural dimension considers the position of the entrepreneur

within the network relationship (Eklinder-Frick et al., 2014; C.-H. Liu & Lee, 2015; Stam

et al., 2014). The cognitive dimension focuses on shared beliefs of the network members

(X. Li et al., 2013; C.-H. Liu & Lee, 2015). Because immigrant entrepreneurs depended on intra-ethnical networks for sustainability (Fray, 2014), for this study, it was important to understand the multi-dimensional construct of social capital.

The intra-ethnic relationship between immigrant entrepreneurs suggests that the relational and cognitive dimensions of social capital are more important than the structural dimension. Research indicating a proclivity for immigrant entrepreneurs to establish operations in ethnic enclaves further supported the importance of the relational and cognitive dimensions (Braymen & Neymotin, 2013; C.-H. Liu et al., 2014). Minorities, in particular, were more likely to seek financial support from family members, other individuals, and businesses (Bewaji, Yang, & Han, 2015). Furthermore, the accumulation of relational and cognitive social capital facilitated tacit learning among immigrants (K. Y. Wang, Kitvorametha, & Wang, 2014). Understanding the effects of the relational and cognitive social capital dimensions proved important for immigrant entrepreneurs.

Despite some tangible and intangible benefits, social capital presented some negative consequences. Braymen and Neymotin (2013) warned that implementing a policy of establishing operations in immigrant enclaves was not conducive for sustainability. Brayman and Neymotin argued that such a policy was shortsighted as it only encouraged starting a business without regard to real economic growth. Another social capital issue is the strength of the relationship between the entrepreneur and other stakeholders. Strong relational ties hindered decision-making in collectivist cultures, and Latin American ethnic groups typically behaved as a collectivist culture (Canedo et al.,

2013; X. Li et al., 2013). Indeed, researchers have revealed that Latino entrepreneurs'
preferred reliance on weak tie relationships when seeking information related to business
operations (Ortiz-Walters et al., 2015). Detrimental to resource acquisition is a strong tie
relationship. Developing a trusting, but tight-knit social network may limit availability to
resources (Ozdemir et al., 2016). Typically, trust relationships are difficult to build and
therefore may limit the availability of resources. Moreover, small firm entrepreneurs have
benefited from a social network structure categorized by distant relationships (Stam et al.,
2014). Therefore, entrepreneurs must consider both the positive and negative effects of
social capital.

The support mechanisms available to entrepreneurs included government,
community, and social support systems. In the U.S., the SBA managed the majority of
the government support systems for entrepreneurs (Solomon et al., 2013). Universities
are the foci of community support for entrepreneurs and provided entrepreneurs access to
academic resources and community business leaders, which helped develop an educated
workforce (Griffis, 2015; Harrington & Maysami, 2015). Using social capital, via social
networks, entrepreneurs gained access to financial, labor, and knowledge resources (Bird
& Wennberg, 2016; Leyden et al., 2014). Small ethnic minority firms need to avoid over-
reliance on social networks. Over-reliance on ethnic social networks may hinder
obtaining financing from mainstream financial institutions (Bewaji et al., 2015).

Human Capital Strategies

Entrepreneurs needed to obtain the appropriate human capital required for
business operations to achieve success. Human capital denotes the skills, knowledge, and

abilities acquired by individuals (Becker, 1993; Marvel et al., 2016). Components of human capital for entrepreneurs included education attained, personal experiences, and the influence of entrepreneurial parents (Martin, McNally, & Kay, 2013). According to human capital theory, increasing one's skills, knowledge, and abilities lead to better performance (Martin et al., 2013). Evidence exists that illustrate the economic benefits derived from education and learning (Becker, 1993; Marvel et al., 2016). Obtaining the appropriate human capital is beneficial to entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurs acquired human capital from varied sources. Universities, governments, and social networks facilitated the development of entrepreneurial human capital (Bird & Wennberg, 2016; Martin et al., 2013; Phillips, 2014). Universities and colleges, with government support, expanded the depth of entrepreneurship education and training (Martin et al., 2013). Entrepreneurs also acquired human capital from social networks, including family, friends, and business associates (Bird & Wennberg, 2016; Leyden et al., 2014; Ozdemir et al., 2016). Researchers have described the strengths of social networks as strong or weak (Eklinder-Frick et al., 2014; Leyden et al., 2014; Ortiz-Walters et al., 2015). Close acquaintances and family members, who often shared common interests and language, characterized strong network ties (X. Li et al., 2013), whereas weak ties consisted of less, emotionally attached relationships (Ortiz-Walters et al., 2015). Entrepreneurs acquired and developed human capital through educational and social network sources.

Entrepreneurial education. Entrepreneurial education from academia is available for entrepreneurs. Since the early 1970s, the availability of entrepreneurial

education at universities and colleges has increased (Joshi, 2014). The human capital of students was enhanced when universities and colleges offered programs in entrepreneurship, conducted workshops and seminars, and provided access to community business leaders (Harrington & Maysami, 2015). Faculty members at universities provided supervisory control as the students gave consultation and aid to local businesses (Sonfield, 2014). The goal of the universities and colleges was to provide students, who considered starting an entrepreneurship, the tools to obtain entrepreneurial success.

Essential for successful outcomes was obtaining the appropriate entrepreneurial skills. Ethnic restaurant owners who possessed some entrepreneurial management skills were more likely to succeed (Agarwal & Dahm, 2015). However, Hispanic entrepreneurs often lacked training in the areas of management, leadership, communication skills, and relationship building (Olivas & Frankwick, 2016). Education desired by Hispanic entrepreneurs included education on tax laws, government regulations, licensing, and developing a business plan (Z. Moon et al., 2013). The method for how Hispanic entrepreneurs obtained business-related education is a factor. Most Hispanic entrepreneurs did not prefer obtaining an education from formal sources and instead opted for informal education from workshops or specific business-related training (Z. Moon et al., 2013).

When feasible, Latin American entrepreneurs used informal social networks with other immigrant entrepreneurs to gain information on running their operations (Fray, 2014). This social network concept of obtaining necessary information explains suggestions that the immigrant entrepreneurs' cultural connections fostered successful

performance (Braymen & Neymotin, 2013). C.-H. Liu et al. (2014) found that ethnic

communities provided immigrant entrepreneurs access to business information such as

lending practices and acquiring real estate. Other researchers cautioned that developing a

network characterized by closely held relationships might also hinder the entrepreneur's

ability to acquire resources (Ozdemir et al., 2016). To sustain operations, Latin American

entrepreneurs need to understand how to gain the necessary business-related education

and training.

In summary, Government, university, and community agencies provide support to

entrepreneurs. The SBA is the primary government agency that provided information and

financial resources for entrepreneurial efforts. The SBDC, in conjunction with

universities and colleges, offered education and knowledge resources to entrepreneurs

and entrepreneur students. Institutions of higher learning created entrepreneurship degree

programs to motivate and develop entrepreneurs. Community agencies and local business

leaders have collaborated with universities to create community development activities

through entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs have used social support systems to obtain

needed resources for business operations. Social support systems included close personal

relationships and relationships with external groups. Human capital consists of the skills,

knowledge, and abilities entrepreneurs needed to develop and sustain operations.

Entrepreneurs acquired human capital from varied sources including formal academic

institutions, government, and social networks. Immigrant entrepreneurs favored informal

education, primarily through social networks. Regardless of how entrepreneurs acquired

the knowledge to operate their business, they must manage the acquired knowledge

effectively to facilitate sustaining operations. The following section of this literature

review is the discussion of the knowledge management theory conceptual framework.

Knowledge Management Theory

Beginning in the 1980s, an evolution of knowledge management theories emerged

(Borjigen, 2015). Knowledge management theory evolved from a machine-centered to

human-centered perspective (Borjigen, 2015). Borjigen's dichotomy revealed two

knowledge management concepts: codification (i.e., machine-centered) and

personalization, or human-centered (Al-Hakim, & Hassan, 2013). Codification involved

capturing and storing explicit knowledge in databases (Al-Hakim & Hassan, 2013), thus

making knowledge accessible within the organization (Tworek, Walecka-Jankowska,

Zgrzywa-Ziemak, & Martan, 2015). Personalization is the interaction between

individuals to share rather than store knowledge (H.-F. Lin, 2014). Similar concepts also

emerged as knowledge management research increased. Among these similarities are

four central categories of the knowledge management process: generation/acquisition,

organizing/saving, dissemination/sharing, and application (Akhavan, Sanjaghi,

Rezaeenour, & Ojaghi, 2014). Tworek, Walecka-Jankowska, Zgrzywa-Ziemak et al.

added [knowledge] storage in their interpretation of knowledge management. Simply

stated, knowledge management consisted of three processes, which is to create, share,

and apply knowledge (Saifi, 2015). Knowledge management proved important for

organizations. The use of knowledge management has provided information that

facilitated improved organizational performance (Jalali & Sardari, 2015). To summarize,

knowledge management research has evolved from a machine-centric to a human-centric

perspective as the humanistic processes of generating, sharing, and applying knowledge developed. Implementing a knowledge management system begins with acquiring knowledge.

Knowledge. The first phase of the knowledge management process is the acquisition of knowledge. The acquisition of knowledge has empowered humans to achieve goals and objectives (Rodzi, Ahmad, & Zakaria, 2015). Knowledge is the combined experiences, values, attitudes, and beliefs internalized mentally by individuals, which became sources of organizational knowledge (Wahid, Ismail, Wanarat, & Laohavichien, 2013). The individual's combined experiences, values, and attitudes are instrumental in the evaluation and application of new information (Allameh et al., 2014). In turn, based on their intuition, individuals produced knowledge through their understanding, interpretation, and judgment of information (Whyte & Classen, 2012). Implementing a knowledge management system requires an understanding of how individuals attain knowledge.

Knowledge is an important asset for organizations. Knowledge assets are primary sources of sustainable competitive advantage, giving organizational leaders reason to rethink how they viewed this intangible asset (M. W. J. Khan, 2014). Knowledge is a major factor why some businesses outperformed others, as the more competitive organizations have the most knowledgeable workers (Wambui, Wangombe, & Muthura, 2013). Creating, disseminating, and incorporating knowledge of the organization's technologies, services, and products are characteristics of successful organizations (Wee & Chua, 2013). Y. Luo and Bu (2016) found knowledge is a source of strategic

competitiveness, while Allameh et al. (2014) added that successful organizations acquired and applied new knowledge. Knowledge is a critical organizational asset, and the ability to acquire and apply knowledge facilitates positive organizational outcomes.

The definition of knowledge varied among researchers. Allameh et al. (2014) described knowledge as an intangible asset and a telling indicator of organizational success that required skillful managing. Another description of knowledge is the accumulated set of facts and principles necessary for action (Nandita, 2013). Y. Li, Shi, Li, and Wang (2015) succinctly stated knowledge is "justified true belief" (p. 131). H. A. van den Berg (2013) described knowledge as a valuable resource derived from individual thought processes, experiences, or reflections. Knowledge as a resource, referenced by H. A. van den Berg, suggests that knowledge is a tool that organizations used in sustaining competitive advantage. Regardless of the varied definitions of knowledge, knowledge is an essential organizational resource.

The resource-based view of knowledge ushered the transformation from an industrial-based to a knowledge-based economy. In the new economy, the knowledge/information concept of business management replaced the product/market concept (Zanzouri & Francois, 2012). Specifically, knowledge resources have displaced the natural resources of capital and labor as the primary economic drivers in the new economy (Wu & Chen, 2014). An organization's performance depends on the knowledge within an organization, making knowledge a critical organizational asset (Turner, Zimmerman, & Allen, 2012). Members of organizations must be cognizant of the processes used to manage knowledge (Turner et al., 2012). The transformation from an

industrial-based to a knowledge-based economy signified knowledge's importance to organizations.

Tacit and explicit knowledge. An important concept in a knowledge-based economy is with understanding the types and sources of knowledge. Researchers categorized knowledge resources as either tacit (implicit) or codified (explicit; Massingham, 2014). Polanyi's (1966) seminal work laid the foundation for the exploration of tacit and explicit knowledge. Unique are the differences between tacit and explicit knowledge. Grant (1996) described tacit knowledge as *know how* and explicit knowledge as *know about*. How individuals transferred knowledge made understanding the distinction between tacit and explicit knowledge fundamental. Polanyi asserted that tacit knowledge resided within individuals, making it difficult to externalize. Tacit knowledge is the knowledge personalized by individuals through their experiences, ideas, beliefs, perceptions, and feelings (Wahid et al., 2013). Conversely, organizations easily recorded, classified, and stored explicit knowledge (Allameh et al., 2014). Omotayo (2015) suggested explicit knowledge is synonymous with information found in documents and publication; therefore, explicit knowledge is more prevalent in the work section (Z. Wang & Wang, 2012). The relative ease of obtaining makes explicit knowledge less expensive to transfer than tacit knowledge (Hau, Kim, Lee, & Kim, 2013). Contrastingly, the internalized experiences, thoughts, and contents of individuals make tacit knowledge more valuable to organizations (Bessick & Naicker, 2013). Tacit and explicit knowledge are critical internal and external knowledge resources for organizations to acquire, store, and transfer.

Organizational leaders need to understand the importance of tacit knowledge for organizational sustainability. Tacit knowledge is a strategic resource that requires capturing, storing, and disseminating throughout the organization (Ketcha, Johannesson, & Bocij, 2015). Small business owners used tacit knowledge to facilitate sustaining operations (Dessi et al., 2014). Similarly, Pérez-Lũno et al. (2016) revealed a positive link between business owners' entrepreneurial orientation strategy and tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge has its roots in the individual's mind, has formed what the individual knows, and has influenced their actions (Scully, Buttigieg, Fullard, Shaw, & Gregson, 2013). This internalization by individuals makes tacit knowledge difficult to present, transfer, and discuss as easily as with explicit knowledge (Allameh et al., 2014). Because, tacit knowledge is difficult to replicate, tacit knowledge is a competitive advantage resource for organizations (Omotayo, 2015).

The ability to use tacit knowledge within organizations is challenging. Hau et al. (2013) added organizations had expended more resources to share tacit knowledge than explicit knowledge. The large allocation of resources to share tacit knowledge proved not necessary for all firms. In small and medium-sized firms, Wee and Chua (2013) found knowledge reuse occurred tacitly. Employees reused the tacit knowledge of fellow employees, facilitated by the proximity of employees in smaller organizations (Wee & Chua, 2013). Because tacit knowledge is a resource internalized by individuals, tacit knowledge is important but difficult to manage.

Despite the preponderance of supporting literature, some researchers questioned the tacit and explicit knowledge dimensions. Patriotta (2003) argued that all knowledge

needed acquiring and processing, whether consciously or subconsciously. Grandinetti

(2014) agreed, stating the terms unconscious and tacit are not interchangeable; that is,

tacit knowledge is both unconscious and conscious. Indeed, Polanyi (1966) based his tacit

knowing theory on experiments where participants responded to electrical shock stimuli

but did not know why. Polanyi posited that tacit knowing consisted of two entities: the

stimulus (i.e., the electrical shock) and the participant's response to the stimulus.

Grandinetti argued that the electrical stimulus represents the conscious element and the

response as unconscious, raising some doubts about Polanyi's tacit knowledge theory.

Crane and Bontis (2014) stated Polanyi's research failed to recognize that tacit knowing

develops through communications of thoughts. Crane and Bontis added some researchers

failed to understand the philosophical nature of Polanyi's tacit knowledge and its impact

on knowledge management research. Crane and Bontis furthered that this omission of

discourse contributed to knowledge management failures. While support for Polanyi's

seminal research is well known, some researchers have raised counter arguments to

Polanyi's tacit knowledge theory.

Schmidt (2012) is perhaps the most vocal critic of Polanyi's (1966) research on

tacit knowledge. Schmidt contended politics and not science grounded Polanyi's

research. Polanyi admitted as much when he acknowledged his search for knowledge

came after he confronted the Soviet ideology under Stalin. Schmidt also argued that

researchers failed to critically access Polanyi's assertion that the individual harbored

more knowledge than what they tell. For example, Schmidt contended Polanyi often

associated tacit knowledge with ordinary skills, such as facial recognition, when,

according to Schmidt, facial recognition is an elaborate and specific skill. Schmidt discredited Polanyi's philosophical depiction of tacit knowledge for failing to acknowledge Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) research of the practical, cognitive, and technical elements of tacit knowledge.

Finally, Schmidt (2012) questioned Polanyi's (1966) connection between tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge. If explicit knowledge is the opposite of tacit knowledge as Polanyi claimed, Schmidt argued this assumption associates explicit knowledge with physical objects and disregarded any cognitive interpretations. In other words, Schmidt maintained that Polanyi failed to acknowledge the cognitive processing that is required to interpret explicit knowledge. Sanchez, Sanchez, Collado-Ruiz, and Cebrian-Tarrason (2013) added that explicit knowledge lost meaning without some tacit connotation. Regardless of Schmidt's critique, researchers continued to discuss tacit and explicit knowledge's effects on organizational performance (Allameh et al., 2014; Z. Wang & Wang, 2012), knowledge sharing (Hau et al., 2013; Scully et al., 2013), and academics (Ketcha et al., 2015). While some researchers have questioned Polanyi's tacit and explicit knowledge theory, researchers continued the discussions on the tacit and explicit knowledge dimensions, and the dimensions' relationship to knowledge management.

Knowledge Management

Organizational leaders are increasingly aware of the importance of knowledge management. An effective knowledge management system fostered competitiveness and prevented resource waste (Akhavan & Pezeshkan, 2014). Organizational leaders gained a

competitive advantage, created by the value obtained through the knowledge management processes used to manage the firm's knowledge resources (Wong et al., 2013). Knowledge management practices helped organizations achieve organizational goals through creating, sharing, and exploiting knowledge (Jain & Jeppesen, 2013). Implementing knowledge management processes enhanced the business value of organizations and facilitated organizational sustainability (Mousavizadeh et al., 2015; Suresh, 2013). Consequently, knowledge management is a vital organizational activity.

The use of knowledge management systems has played a significant role in fostering innovation, as well as the level of innovativeness in organizations (Al-Hakim & Hassan, 2013). Innovation is essential for organizational sustainability (Yu, Yu, & Yu, 2013). Wee and Chua (2013) argued that small- to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) could not survive without being innovative. Entrepreneurs also benefited from the use of knowledge management systems. C.-H. Liu and Lee (2015) found a direct correlation between entrepreneurialism and knowledge management. The benefits realized from implementing knowledge management include innovation, competitive advantage, and organizational sustainability.

Despite its relative importance, knowledge management is fraught with confusion and controversy (Chatti, 2012). Chatti blamed the confusion on the conceptualization of knowledge as an object or a process. Early knowledge management frameworks advanced knowledge as an object and encouraged a heavy reliance on technology to promote knowledge management (Chatti, 2012). Too much reliance on technology significantly hindered knowledge sharing in organizations (Akhavan & Pezeshkan,

2014). Ramanigopal (2012) added that mandating the use of technology thwarted employee behavior to embrace knowledge management initiatives. Researchers have also argued that tacit knowledge sharing, in particular, depended on personal interaction and not technology (Allameh et al., 2014; Whyte & Classen, 2012). While researchers have recognized the importance of knowledge management, researchers have also debated the use of technology and knowledge management.

Other researchers have embraced the use of technology in knowledge management systems. Al-Qdah and Salim (2013) argued that supporting the information technology system enhanced the knowledge management process, especially the transfer of tacit knowledge. Depending on the degree of the knowledge's tacitness, technological tools such as video conferencing and email facilitated the transfer of tacit knowledge (Al-Qdah & Salim, 2013). Central to the argument for the use of technology is how information technology functions with knowledge management. Tworek, Walecka-Jankowska, Zgrzywa-Ziemak, et al. (2015) concluded that information technology supported the acquisition of knowledge in knowledge management systems. Pinho, Rego, and Pina e Cunha (2012) cautioned that technology and knowledge management are not mutually exclusive. Pinho et al. asserted that managers must align technology with the knowledge management processes and the users' needs. Accordingly, organizational owners must understand how to manage knowledge within the organization.

To effectively manage knowledge to achieve organizational strategies and objectives, organizational managers must understand the barriers to knowledge management (Oliva, 2014). Knowledge management barriers included the lack of interest

and competence of employees, inefficient communication, the lack of a knowledge

sharing culture, and the lack of incentives (Oliva, 2014). Employees were not the only

initiators of knowledge management failures. Senior managers who did not communicate

or provide knowledge management support also contributed to knowledge management

failures (Akhavan & Pezeshkan, 2014). It is incumbent that small business owners

understand and support knowledge management strategies to sustain operations.

Building a culture of trust is a knowledge management critical success factor.

Trust is a difficult variable of knowledge management to achieve (Newman & Newman,

2015). Several researchers have concluded that trust is an enabler of knowledge sharing

(Alaarj et al., 2016; Durmusoglu, Jacobs, Nayir, Khilji, & Wang, 2014; Eze et al., 2013;

Swift & Virick, 2013). Promoting an organizational culture of trust has proved to

positively influence knowledge transfer (Rutten, Blaas-Franken, & Martin, 2016;

Sankowska, 2013), whereas member distrust hindered the firm's performance (Alaarj et

al., 2016). S. Lee, Kim, & Kim, 2012 disagreed and argued that the effect of trust was not

as significant for knowledge sharing. Admittedly, S. Lee et al. acknowledged that the

research participants were from a collectivist culture, which might explain why their

results conflicts with existing literature. Trust, along with the interpersonal relationships

cultivated through trust, are significant enablers of knowledge sharing (Amir & Parvar,

2014). A critical component of knowledge management is knowledge sharing.

Knowledge sharing. Knowledge sharing fosters the reuse of knowledge and the

discovery of new knowledge within organizations (Abuazon, Azizan, & Ahmad, 2013).

Researchers have argued that knowledge sharing is the most important component of

knowledge management (Kuo, Kuo, & Ho, 2014). Z. Wang, Wang, and Liang (2014) argued that knowledge sharing is the most efficient and effective means for creating, sustaining, and transferring knowledge to enhance organizational performance. Knowledge sharing among employees generates knowledge collectiveness, which in turn stimulates innovation (Yu et al., 2013). The effective use of knowledge sharing is capable of turning individual or group knowledge into organizational knowledge and vice versa (Z. Wang & Wang, 2012). Therefore, it is essential that small business owners promote a knowledge sharing culture.

Despite its importance, poor implementation of knowledge sharing in the knowledge management process has occurred, resulting in critical failures (Akhavan & Pezeshkan, 2014). Heavy reliance on technology for sharing knowledge hampered the effective use of organization's knowledge management system (Akhavan & Pezeshkan, 2014). For example, firms have expended considerable resources creating documents for knowledge sharing, when simple oral communication would have sufficed (Lahtinen, 2013). An effective knowledge-sharing environment depends on organizational personnel. W.-L. Wu (2013) stated the internal motivation of knowledgeable individuals facilitates a knowledge-sharing behavior in organizations. Essential capabilities for implementing and managing knowledge in organizations are technology, organizational structure, and culture.

Infrastructure and Process Capabilities

Capitalizing on internal capabilities enabled organizations to advance their knowledge management efforts. Theories of competitive advantage, strategy, learning,

and technological change, derived from organizational capabilities (Grant & Verona, 2015). According to Gold et al. (2001), effective knowledge management depends on the organization's infrastructure and process capabilities. Incorporating these capabilities stimulated organizational effectiveness (Gold et al., 2001). Additionally, the efficient use of the organization's knowledge infrastructure depended on the knowledge management processes used to store and disseminate knowledge (Tseng & Lee, 2014). Understanding the constructs of knowledge infrastructure capabilities is fundamental for organizational owners. The essential elements of knowledge infrastructure capability include technology, structure, and culture (Alaarj et al., 2016; Gold et al., 2001).

The ability to acquire and disseminate knowledge makes technology a primary knowledge management enabler (Gold et al., 2001). Technology provided organizations the systemization to acquire, store, distribute, and apply knowledge (Kushwaha & Rao, 2015). Researchers considered technology a critical asset in a knowledge-driven economy (Islam, Jasimuddin, & Hasan, 2015). An important component of the technological infrastructure is information technology. The use of information technology has proved to increase the opportunities to share knowledge (Prasad, Suar, & Taraban, 2014). The importance of technology infrastructure extends beyond the information technology system.

The use of technological systems influenced the relationship between the organization's culture, structure, and knowledge sharing (Islam et al., 2015). Use of information technology enhanced knowledge management capability and enabled organizations to acquire, store, and transfer both tacit and explicit knowledge (Al-Qdah &

Salim, 2013; Chuang & Lin, 2013). Using technology improved the structural and cultural capabilities in organizations, which enabled knowledge management success (Pandey & Dutta, 2013). Information technology fostered important elements of knowledge sharing and knowledge integration in organizations (Y. Luo & Bu, 2016). Therefore, H.-F. Lin (2014) argued that firms initiating a knowledge management system should implement a technological infrastructure to acquire, codify, and disseminate explicit knowledge.

Despite its advantages, technology also hindered the organization's knowledge management capacity. Improperly designed technical infrastructures lead to knowledge management failure (Akhavan & Pezeshkan, 2014). Excessive reliance on technological systems resulted in failures to share knowledge (Akhavan & Pezeshkan, 2014). These failures occurred because heavy dependence on technology ignored essential human characteristics, which includes training and tacit knowledge sharing (Akhavan & Pezeshkan, 2014). Ignoring the human factor of organizations is precarious. Researchers found knowledge management systems failed in organizations that adopted wholly information technology systems to manage knowledge (Ragab & Arisha, 2013). Ignoring the humanistic variable disrupted the knowledge owner's participation in the knowledge management process (Merat & Bo, 2013). Simply stated, information technology alone cannot duplicate the cognitive processes and socio-culture interactions required for knowledge management (Akpotu & Jasmine, 2013; Ragab & Arisha, 2013). Business owners must understand that information technology has had both beneficial and adverse effects on knowledge management.

The design of an organization's structure facilitated maintaining organizational sustainability. The organizational structure supports the technology infrastructure which, when properly designed, enhanced knowledge sharing and collaboration throughout the organization (Gold et al., 2001; Islam et al., 2015). Organizational structure referred to the alignment and interaction of individuals in groups or teams to meet the objectives of the organization's strategy (Taghizadeh & Skokri, 2015). Small business restaurant owners need to understand how to design the organizational structure to implement knowledge management strategies to maintain organizational sustainability.

A fundamental component of an organization's humanistic dimension is its culture. Culture refers to the mindset that the organization wishes to portray and is a problematic knowledge infrastructure capability to implement, (Gold et al., 2001). Organizational owners must take the initiative to articulate the firm's vision. A communicated shared vision is critical for establishing an organization's culture (Gold et al., 2001). Organizational owners must recognize the significance of organizational culture. Organizational culture enhanced knowledge management excellence when guided by organizational mission objectives (Pandey & Dutta, 2013). Conversely, knowledge sharing tendencies declined when the organizational culture did not encourage teamwork to solve problems (Alrawi, Hamdan, Al-Taie, & Ibrahim, 2013). Business owners must take prudent action to assess and manage the organization's culture.

In summary, knowledge management facilitated positive organizational performance. The principal concepts of a knowledge management system are the ability to acquire, organize, share, and store knowledge. Polanyi (1966) described knowledge as

either tacit or explicit, depending on the knowledge's transferability. Some knowledge management researchers argued against Polanyi's subconscious merits of tacit knowledge. Still, most knowledge management researchers and practitioners upheld the distinction between tacit and explicit. An important knowledge management process is knowledge sharing.

Essential to implementing a knowledge management system is the organization's knowledge infrastructure and process capabilities. The knowledge infrastructure and process capabilities include technology, structure, and culture. Technology refers to the information systems used to capture, store, and disseminate knowledge. Central to implementing a technological system is aligning the organizational structure to facilitate access to the technology. Fostering a knowledge management system is difficult if the organization does not support and influence a knowledge sharing culture.

Transition

In Section 1, I introduced the problem that some small business restaurant owners lack the entrepreneurial and knowledge management strategies needed to sustain business beyond 5 years. Participants for this study were three Latin American immigrant small business restaurant owners. Included in this section is the rationale for conducting this study and the possible benefits to small business restaurant entrepreneurs. I explored the strategies needed to sustain operations beyond 5 years from an entrepreneurial and knowledge management perspective. The literature review includes research of the theories, strategies, and applications of entrepreneurship and knowledge management. Strategies related to entrepreneurship and knowledge management have supported

organizations in achieving positive performance outcomes and sustainability (Brown &

Thornton, 2013; Perry, 2014).

Section 2 includes a description of the data collection and analysis procedures

used to conduct this study. Explained in Section 2 are the activities for conducting the

study ethically and ensuring the validity and reliability of the data. In Section 3 are the

thematic content analyses of the data collected using the methods described in Section 2.

From the emerging themes, I identified the strategies used by successful small business

restaurant entrepreneurs who have sustained operations beyond 5 years. Following the

identification of successful strategies is a reflection of conducting this research as well as

suggestions for future research.

Section 2: The Project

In Section 2 are descriptions of the procedures, methods, and activities used in conducting this study. Topics discussed in the section include my role as the researcher, the selection of participants, the research method and design, the population and sampling determination, ethical research issues, data collection and analysis procedures, and the reliability and validity of study findings. These procedures, methods, and activities provided the structure and guidance in conducting this study.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory multiple case study was to explore the entrepreneurial and knowledge management strategies that small business restaurant owners use to sustain their business longer than 5 years. The specific target population for this study was three Latin American immigrant owners of small business restaurants with 20 or fewer employees in the central part of Georgia. At the time of the study, these owners had managed successful small business restaurants for over 5 years and had implemented the knowledge management strategies in their restaurants. The contribution to social change is in helping small business restaurant owners understand the entrepreneurial and knowledge management strategies they can use to sustain their operations. Understanding these factors may prevent the economic and employment loss caused by a business failure in the highly competitive restaurant industry.

Role of the Researcher

My role as the researcher was to plan the research activities, recruit participants, and collect data by conducting in-person, semistructured interviews. These roles included

evaluating pertinent documentation, validating the data through member checking, and analyzing the results. The researcher is the primary source of data collection in qualitative research (Cope, 2014; Leedy & Ormond, 2013). Being the central data collection source required developing a guide to conduct the research interviews. Guided interviews enable researchers to explore the topic of interest as dictated by the participant (C. Marshall & Rossman, 2016). However, researchers must avoid using overly structured interview guides as these may influence participants' responses (A. Khan, Faucett, & Brown, 2014).

In addition to semistructured interviews, I analyzed documentation related to participants' business operations. According to Grant and Verona (2015), using multiple data sources averts researcher subjectivity and avoids validity issues in case study research. Remaining objective was a critical requirement for conducting this research study. To prevent bias, I did not include small business owners whom I knew either personally or professionally. I have not conducted similar research nor have I owned or operated a food service business. I do reside in the area where the research occurred, and I have patronized one participant's restaurant in the past. I have not conducted similar research nor have I owned or operated a food service business. I do reside in the area where the research occurred, and I have patronized one participant's restaurant in the past. By taking a personal accounting of my relationship within the contents of the research environment, I was able develop countermeasures to minimize any bias. For instance, I sought to maintain a neutral stance and evaluate only the documentation presented by study participants. Remaining objective also meant being reflective and

mindful of my personal biases throughout the research process (see Birchall, 2014). My spouse also works in the food service industry. I did not share any results with or identify any of the participants to my spouse or her co-workers while conducting this research to avert a conflict of interest bias

My role as the researcher demanded that I treat the participants in an ethical and professional manner. In conducting my investigation, I adhered to the ethical responsibilities outlined in the 1979 Belmont Report protocol. These responsibilities include treating participants with respect and offering protections consistent with ethical research guidelines (Brakewood & Poldrack, 2013; Cseko & Tremaine, 2013; Fiske & Hauser, 2014; Jones & Steen, 2013). Treating participants ethically meant ensuring (a) that the participants understood that the interview was voluntary, (b) that the interview questions were reasonably understandable, and (c) that participants knew that they could cease the interview process at any time. Also, aligning with Davidson and Page's research (2012), a significant ethical consideration was ensuring the confidentiality of participants' entrepreneurial and knowledge management strategies. As Brakewood and Poldrack (2013) noted, protecting the privacy and confidentiality of individuals is a fundamental Belmont Report principle. My belief is by conducting interviews privately and safeguarding the data collected during the research ensured the participants' confidentiality.

Of particular importance was the need to protect participants' views gathered through personal interviews. I followed an interview protocol (see Appendix B) to conduct the interviews appropriately. The purpose of an interview protocol is to ensure

researcher neutrality by asking each participant the same questions verbatim and

clarifying the question if asked (De Vries, Leppa, Sandford, & Vydelingum, 2014). The

interview protocol I used included a scripted introduction, the semistructured interview

questions, and protocols for conducting member checking. The purpose of an

introductory dialogue is to establish rapport and thereby comfort the participant (Doody

& Noonan, 2013). Establishing rapport early in the interview process is important

because of the personal connection between the interviewee and interviewer (Ashton,

2014). In summary, my role as the researcher involved attending to any personal biases

and ensuring the ethical treatment of the participants.

Participants

The participants for this study were three Latin American immigrant small

business restaurant owners. At the time of the study, these business owners had used their

interpretations of entrepreneurial and knowledge management strategies to sustain

operations for 5 consecutive years or more. The 5-year criterion is a pivotal milestone.

According to the BLS, nearly 50% of small businesses do not sustain operations past 5

years (BLS, 2016). Therefore, it was essential to identify and select from a population

that met the 5-year requirement. I submitted a request to obtain data on Latin American

restaurant owners from the Department of Environmental Health offices in the central

Georgia area. Specifically requested was information to identify small business

restaurants that had been in operation for 5 consecutive years or more. In addition to the

5-year sustainment requirement, eligible participants were small business owners.

The participants for this study were owners of small businesses. The criterion for a small business, full-service restaurant is one with annual earnings of less than $7.5M (SBA, 2014). I anticipated that a small business restaurant with 20 or fewer employees would have earned significantly less revenue than the high-end of the SBA requirement. As anticipated, each participant confirmed earning significantly less than SBA's monetary threshold for a small business.

The purpose of this exploratory multiple case study was to explore the entrepreneurial and knowledge management strategies that small business restaurant owners used to sustain operations. Vital to the success of this research study was in choosing the appropriate participants. Selecting participants knowledgeable of the research objective was mandatory (Elo et al., 2014). Researchers must ensure that the participant cases selected were capable of answering the research question (Poulis, Poulis, & Plakoyiannaki, 2013). Each participant selected acknowledged having responsibility for the strategies used in their small business restaurant. Before interviewing, the participants verified being the small business restaurant owner and being responsible for implementing entrepreneurial and knowledge management strategies. Researchers must ensure the prospective participant has the contextual experience required for qualitative study (Yin, 2014). Traditionally, the small business restaurant owner is the owner-manager. The owner-manager is the primary source of knowledge in SMEs (C. S. Lee & Wong, 2015). The participants identified from the Department of Environmental Health database received written Letters of Invitation to participate in this study (Appendix C).

Potential participants acknowledged their entrepreneurial and knowledge management responsibilities outlined in the written requests. Similarly, McIlfatrick et al. (2014) forwarded written requests to potential participants to solicit those who met the research objective. Participants who responded positively to the requests received additional information about the study contained in the Participant Consent Form. By signing the consent form, the participants acknowledged and attested to the requirements for this study and agreed to the interview process. The requirements in the consent form aligned with the research question: What entrepreneurial and knowledge management strategies do small business restaurant owners use to sustain their business more than 5 years.

Establishing a Relationship with Participants

Physically visiting the restaurant to speak with the small business restaurant owner in person enabled establishing a cordial relationship with the participant. Particular to establishing a relationship was in explaining that the intent of the interview was to collect data for academic research only. When conducting interviews, discussing the purpose, type, and format of the interview is an important first step to establishing a relationship (Doody & Noonan, 2013). Participants had the opportunity to ask any questions about the interview process, the confidentiality of the data collected, or how the study may benefit them. Opening the conversation by reinforcing the confidentiality and explaining the consent procedures helped establish early rapport with participants (Ashton, 2014). Each participant had the option of selecting the location and time that was acceptable for conducting the interviews. Allowing the participant to decide the

location and time to conduct the interview, helped ease the participant's anxiety and fostered establishing trust (Ashton, 2014). Establishing trust with participants is important. Trust is an influential factor in high-quality interviews (Perales, Baffour, & Mitrou, 2015). Identifying the appropriate participants to interview and establishing a trust relationship with the participants were important activities for this research study. Equally important is deciding the research method and design to conduct the study.

Research Method and Design

The research method and design approach used for this study were the qualitative and case study respectively. Qualitative research is effective when researchers seek the perspective of participants about a particular phenomenon (Mukhopadhyay & Gupta, 2014). A case study is the preferred research design when the researcher explores current situations and when the factors of the case are not alterable (Yin, 2014). The research method and design selected for this study facilitated exploring the entrepreneurial and knowledge management strategies used by small business restaurant owners.

Research Method

The research method for this study was the qualitative approach. In qualitative research, the researcher studies empirical evidence to gain an understanding of the routines, problems, and meanings in the lives of individuals (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Descriptions and analysis of processes, practices, and phenomena, and how individuals view experiences within their social environments emerge from qualitative research (Koch et al., 2014). Researchers relied on a qualitative study approach to develop and explain theories (Mukhopadhyay & Gupta, 2014). Qualitative research proved to be a

superior method for understanding the interpretations of individual experiences

(Harrison, 2013). Other research methods considered for this study included quantitative

and mixed methods.

Researchers have used quantitative methods in conducting research related to

business practices. Quantitative methods were better suited for studying relational and,

therefore, measurable data sets (Harrison, 2013). Similarly, Hallak, Assaker, and

O'Connor (2014) used quantitative research to study the link between the owner's

entrepreneurial outlook and positive business performance outcomes. Researchers have

applied quantitative research methods to study the relationships between entrepreneurial

self-efficacy, innovation, and knowledge acquisition (C. Lee et al., 2016; V.-H. Lee,

Leong, Hew, & Ooi, 2013). Likewise, Z. Wang and Wang (2012) used a quantitative

method to study the relationships between knowledge sharing, performance, and

innovation. Quantitative methods proved useful in comparing knowledge management

capability and organizational performance (J. F. Cohen & Olsen, 2015). The quantitative

method has proved beneficial in entrepreneurship and knowledge management research.

Another research method considered for this study is the mixed methods

approach. Researchers have used mixed methods in business research extensively

(Harrison, 2013). The effectiveness of the mixed methods approach was in using the

qualitative data derived from the research to develop survey instruments for the

quantitative research (Harrison, 2013). Galvin (2014) agreed, stating that the richness of

the mixed method's qualitative component was often the catalyst in explaining the

research's quantitative results. Furthermore, a qualitative approach was more appropriate

when exploring subjective matters, such as strategies used by small business owners (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013). Accordingly, the apt research method for this study was the qualitative method. Designs available for research purposes included the case study, ethnography, phenomenology, and narrative study.

Research Design

The research design for this qualitative study was the case study. Case studies allowed exploring holistic phenomena from the individual's perspective (C. Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Researchers used a case study approach in researching business practices. Miklosik and Zak (2015) used case study research to engage deeply with business owners who were responsible for implementing knowledge management strategies. Bonesso et al. (2014) stated that conducting a multiple case study research allowed researchers to explore the entrepreneur's exploration and exploitation behaviors, two essential entrepreneurial strategies. Bonesso et al. added that a multiple case study strengthened the study's results, which enhanced the study's generalizability. Case study research allowed deep exploration into the development of organizational capabilities and related strategies (Grant & Verona, 2015). A case study approach proved effective in exploring knowledge management concepts and the associated effects of knowledge sharing within groups (Lahtinen, 2013). Grant and Verona opined that the case study design fostered an in-depth understanding of the development and strategic alignment of organizational capabilities.

In contrast, other qualitative research approaches were inappropriate for this study. For example, ethnography is suitable for studying the rituals, mores, and

observable behaviors of a cultural group (C. Marshall & Rossman, 2016). This study was specific to small business restaurant owners and their application of entrepreneurial and knowledge management strategies. Another design approach considered was phenomenology. Researchers used phenomenology to explore individuals' lived experiences with a particular phenomenon through in-depth interviews (C. Marshall & Rossman, 2016). As with case study design, the data collected for phenomenology is from semistructured interviews. Phenomenology helped understanding how small business restaurant owners described and interpreted their entrepreneurial and knowledge management strategies (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013). Describing and interpreting strategies is not equivalent to analyzing the strategies used by small business restaurant owners to sustain operations. Finally, a narrative inquiry was not sufficient because researchers use narrative inquiry to capture the individuals' storied lives through conversations (C. Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The focus of narrative inquiry research is on the individual; the purpose of this study was exploring entrepreneurial and knowledge management strategies. Thus, a case study design was more suitable for identifying the entrepreneurial and knowledge management strategies than an ethnographical, phenomenological, or narrative study approach. Certain issues, inherent in case study research, warranted scrutiny.

Case study research, particularly within the context of organizational capabilities, can be problematic. Case study research was prone to three problems based on the researcher's subjective interpretation of capabilities, which are accuracy and face validity, discriminant validity, and consistency (Grant & Verona, 2015). Researchers

averted these problems by limiting the researcher's subjectivity through triangulation of multiple sources of data (Grant & Verona, 2015). Accordingly, I supplemented the semistructured interview data with organizational documents collected from the participants. Conducting a multiple case study addressed the validity issues. A benefit of a multiple case study was that the conclusions emerging from multiple cases offered stronger arguments than a single case (Yin, 2014). Using a multiple case study provided enough replication to enable generalization of the studied phenomenon across cases (Mookherji & LaFond, 2013). Applying a multiple case study approach and triangulating the data collected helped ensure the validity of the case study research.

In conducting case study research, it is imperative to ensure that the research is valid. Data saturation, in part, assures the validity of qualitative research (Finfgeld-Connett, 2013). Data saturation occurs when the researcher conducts enough interviews until no new relevant themes emerge, or would emerge if conducting more interviews (Galvin, 2014). The owners of three Latin American small business restaurants, selected by census sampling, partook in the interviews. Conducting follow on member-checking interviews aided achieving data saturation. Member checking allowed the participant to verify the accuracy of the data collected and furthered enhancing the validity of the data (Koelsch, 2013). Achieving data saturation required an applicable data population and a representative sample of the population.

Population and Sampling

The population for this qualitative multiple case study were Latin American immigrant owners of small business restaurants in the central part of Georgia. The

Department of Environmental Health offices maintain records on local business establishments. Data requested from the Department of Environmental Health included information identifying Latin American restaurants operating in the local area. Also requested was the relative size of the restaurant (based on the number of tables) and how long has the restaurant been operating in the local area. The Latin American small business restaurant owner acknowledged their Latin American ethnicity by signing the consent form. Parsa et al. (2014) used data obtained from Department of Health records to support research of restaurant failures in a medium-sized city. For qualitative research, researchers determined the appropriate sample size of eligible participants to conduct semistructured interviews from the selected population (C. Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

Determining the sample size of participants is subjective and arbitrary (B. Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, & Fontenot, 2013). Researchers found as few as one person was sufficient in conducting case study research (M. Moon et al., 2013; Robinson & McAdams, 2015). In other research, how broadly defined was the study, played a role in determining the number of participants (M. Moon et al., 2013). Malterud, Siersma, and Guassora (2015) addressed the sample size issue by developing research based on the intensity of the information required for the study. Malterud et al. surmised how powerful the participant's information correlated to the aim of the research study determined the number of participants required. A narrowly defined objective would require fewer participants to reach data saturation (Malterud et al., 2015). Cruickshank and Dupuis (2015) agreed, stating the sample size should correlate to the "in-depth nature" (p. 83) of the information collected from the participants. Even a single participant was acceptable

in case study research when identifying best practices was the goal (Robinson, 2014). However, relying on the perspective of one participant invites scrutiny of the study's trustworthiness or credibility. The number of participants needed for this research study required careful consideration.

A census sampling technique was the method used to determine the sample size suitable for this qualitative multiple case study. Using a census sampling technique, the Latin American immigrant owners of three small business restaurants contributed interviews. C. S. Lee and Wong (2015) indicated that the owner-managers of small- to medium-sized businesses are the primary source of knowledge. Thus, a census sampling technique facilitated selecting suitable participants to interview. Lamond, Joseph, and Proverbs (2015) used a census sampling technique to select participants from populations found in agency records. Using a census sampling technique aided with identifying organizational leaders responsible for implementing management procedures (Fusch & Fusch, 2015). Z. Moon et al. (2013) selected Hispanic small business entrepreneurs to interview from records maintained by the Department of Health. From the population of three Latin American small business restaurants, a census sampling was the technique used to identify the appropriate Latin American restaurant owners to interview.

To qualify, the participants for this study were the owners of small business restaurants who were of Latin American descent. Records requested from the Department of Environmental Health stipulated the Latin American ethnic criterion, along with the required 5 years of sustained operation. The three small business restaurant owners selected each indicated sustaining operations for more than 5 years and received

invitations to participate in the study. McIlfatrick et al. (2014) found forwarding written

requests to potential participants was effective in soliciting those who met the research

objective. The Latin American immigrant small business restaurant owner also

acknowledged their Latin American heritage by signing the consent form. Because the

median survival rate for restaurants is 4.5 years (T. Luo & Stark, 2015), the required 5-

year sustained operation was the determinant used to validate the Latin American

immigrant owner's restaurant success. The Latin American immigrant owners also

acknowledged being the owner/operator of the small business restaurant for 5 years as

specified in the consent form.

Another sampling technique considered for this study was purposeful (or

purposive) sampling. Using purposeful sampling, researchers selected samples based on

criteria commonly associated with the objectives of the study (R. Olsen, Orr, Bell, &

Stuart, 2013). Purposive sampling enabled researchers to select entrepreneurs, who were

most likely able to contribute to the research of successful entrepreneurship (Fisher,

Maritz, & Lobo, 2014). Rather than random sampling, purposive sampling facilitated

finding ideal research participants to interview (Burda, van den Akker, van der Horst,

Lemmens, & Knottnerus, 2016). Finding the adequate sample size using a purposive

sampling technique has challenges.

Determining the number of participants to interview using a purposeful sampling

is inexact. For example, if the researcher chose a purposeful sampling technique and new

themes or concepts develop after the initial set of interviews, the researcher must conduct

additional interviews until no new themes emerge. This iterative process is in keeping

with existing qualitative research methods (cf. Elo et al., 2014) and was necessary to ensure data saturation (Donges, 2015). Poteat, German, and Kerrigan (2013) used a purposive sampling approach to interview 30 participants to achieve data saturation. Using a census sampling technique, the researcher samples all willing participants from the entire population. Conducting member checking of all sampled participants facilitates achieving data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015). For this study, the three Latin American small business restaurant owners completed semistructured and member checking interviews.

Researchers varied in determining the appropriate sample size for qualitative research. Using small sample sizes in qualitative research is problematic. A small sample size limited generalizing the findings to similar population groups and casts doubt on achieving data saturation (Knight, 2013; Volery et al., 2015). Conversely, a large sample size raises questions if the researcher had adequate time to collect and richly analyze a sizable number of interviews (B. Marshall et al., 2013). The sample sizes in existing research varied, prompting calls for additional research to determine the ideal sample size for multiple case studies (B. Marshall et al., 2013). Because data saturation is vital when conducting qualitative research, the number of participants is a concern to achieve data saturation (Galvin, 2014; Sisnowski, Street, & Braunack-Mayer, 2015).

Achieving data saturation in qualitative research is subjective. By definition, data saturation occurs when the data collected are rich and varied, and no new relevant information emerges (Frivold, Dale, & Slettebø, 2015; Galvin, 2014). Determining data saturation in qualitative research is a contentious issue amongst researchers (Dworkin,

2012; Fusch & Ness, 2015; Galvin, 2014; O'Reilly & Parker, 2012). For example, researchers have had little control over some factors that influenced data saturation such as time and financial resources (Yin, 2014). Another reason was data saturation varies amongst qualitative research methods (M. Moon et al., 2013; O'Reilly & Parker, 2012). For example, data saturation for phenomenological studies differs from case study research (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Researchers found data saturation occurred sooner when interviewing focus groups than when conducting individual interviews (Namey, Guest, McKenna, & Chen, 2016). Finally, the researchers' discretion was a factor in determining acceptable data saturation (Macey, Gregory, Nunns, & Das Nair, 2015). Regardless of the number of participants needed for data saturation, selecting relevant participants for this study was essential.

The participants in this study indicated being the principal entrepreneurs for the business and responsible for implementing the knowledge management strategies. Being the principal entrepreneur and implementer of knowledge management strategies ensured that the data collected was meaningful. The owners of three Latin American small business restaurants identified from the research of Department of Environmental Health records received Letters of Invitation (see Appendix C). Forwarding written requests to potential participants proved effective in soliciting those who met the research objective (McIlfatrick et al., 2014). From the Department of Environmental Health records, restaurant owners received Letters of Invitations until reaching the appropriate census sampling size of three Latin American immigrant small business restaurant owners.

Participants who respond positively to the written requests received additional information about the study as presented in the Participant Consent Form. Within the Participant Consent Form are the entrepreneurial and knowledge management criteria described above. The participants acknowledged and attested to the requirements for this study and agreed to the interview process by signing the consent form. The participants received written copies of interview questions within one week of the scheduled interview to review before the interview.

Because the data collected from the semistructured interview was crucial for this qualitative study, the interview setting required careful consideration. One consideration was where to conduct the interview. Doody and Noonan (2013) advised that researchers should conduct interviews at a location and time that is both convenient and comfortable to the interviewee, and free from distractions. Allowing the participant to choose a location and time that is convenient for them put the participant at ease (Ashton, 2014). I suggested three location options for the participant's consideration. The first option for the interview site was the participant's private office if the location was free from distractions. The second option was to reserve a meeting place at a semiprivate location, such as a library, that is convenient for the participant. The third suggestion was to interview at my residence. The primary objective is to promote a quality interview by interviewing in a private setting. The presence of others at the interview session might influence the interviewees' responses, thus diminishing the quality of the interview (Perales et al., 2015). Each participant elected to interview at the respective restaurant. Respecting the participant's privacy is one of several ethical research obligations.

Ethical Research

Adhering to the ethical concerns of the participants is essential. Each participant reviewed the consent form for an understanding of this research before collecting any data. No data collection occurred before IRB approval. The Walden IRB approval number for this study is 05-10-17-0447008. O. M. Smith et al. (2013) suggested using a standardized template to document the consent. Developing a standardized consent form supported conducting the research ethically. Certain elements were mandatory for informed consent according to some U.S. federal agencies (Cseko & Tremaine, 2013). The required elements included explaining the purpose, procedures, and participation requirements; any risks and or benefits involved; and must indicate that participation is voluntary (Cseko & Tremaine, 2013). I reviewed the consent form in person with each participant before the participant acknowledged informed consent and signed the form.

Participation in this research study was voluntary. Researchers advised ensuring that wording in the consent form included the option to decline participation in the study (Y. van den Berg & Cillessen, 2013). O.M. Smith et al. (2013) also recommended giving participants the opportunity to opt out without consequence at any time during the study. The participants had the option to withdraw at any time by contacting me verbally either in-person or by telephone. Whereas offering financial incentives proved beneficial in some research (see Pope, Corona, & Belgrave, 2014; Poteat et al., 2013), participants for this study did not receive any financial incentives for their involvement. Offering financial incentives might have lead to collecting questionable "dodgy data" (Robinson, 2014, p. 37). The consent form includes a statement that the potential benefit to other

small business restaurant owners is to find ways to avoid failure and subsequent economic ruin. Equally appropriate for the procedures written in the Consent Form and IRB requirements were other measures to ensure the participant's ethical protection.

Masking the participants' identity and describing this process to the participant further protected the participants ethically. Robinson (2014) stated that describing the process for protecting the participant's identity enhanced the participant's willingness to join in the study. For identification, I assigned a pseudonym for each participant in the study on all data records. An example of the pseudonym used in this study is SBO1 for the first small business owner number interviewed, followed by SBO2 and so forth. The pseudonym used to identify the documents collected from the first small business owner for triangulation was SBO1D. Researchers observed that creating pseudonyms for the interview and documents gathered during the research ensured the participants' anonymity and confidentiality (Gibbins, Bhatia, Forbes, & Reid, 2014; Pedersen, Hack, McClemont, & Taylor-Brown, 2014). The data collected from the participants also required protecting.

Protecting the data collected from this study involved securely storing the data for 5 years after the publication of the study. Ensuring all data collected is available for 5 years after publication increases data reliability and transparency (X.-P. Chen, 2015). Data collected data during this research included hard copy data (e.g., notes taken during interviews) and digital data, such as audio and computer files. The use of case-sensitive passwords helped protect data stored on computers. I copied all digital files to an external hard drive and stored the hard drive in a fireproof SentrySafe 5-key combination safe. I

scanned paper documents to create electronic data files, then burned the data files to a

digital versatile disk (DVD), and stored the DVD in a safe for at least 5 years. Erasing all

remaining data files stored on the main computer and external hard drive using the

Permanent Eraser for Mac software was an additional data protection measure. Also

deleted was the interview files recorded on the digital recording device. The data

provided by the participants was vital for this study; however, the preponderance of the

research involved the collecting, organizing, and analyzing the data.

Data Collection Instruments

Data for case study research derives from several sources that includes

documents; open-ended, structured, and focus group interviews; archival records; and

observations Yin (2014). The primary sources of data for this study were personal

interviews and organizational documents applicable to entrepreneurial and knowledge

management strategies. Examples of documents were work assignment, inventory

management records, the business' websites, and training guides. The review and

analysis of these documents augmented the data collected during interviews to support

triangulation, as suggested by Yin.

My role as the primary data collection instrument was to collect and analyze the

data gathered from semistructured interviews and organizational documents. The small

business restaurant owners received requests for permission to partake in semistructured

interviews and to provide documents pertinent to entrepreneurial and knowledge

management strategies. Interviews serve important functions in the research process in

addition to data collection. The interview allows the researcher to understand the

participants' interpretation of daily actions (C. Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Collecting and analyzing data from the semistructured interviews was essential in conducting this research study.

Fundamental for this study was the data collected from the semistructured interviews. Semistructured interviews gave participants the opportunity to explain the research topic from their perspective (Mozaffari, Peyrovi, & Nayeri, 2015). Delbecq, House, Sully de Luque, and Quigley (2013) used semistructured interviews in determining the owner's behaviors that influenced the actions of followers. Likewise, semistructured interviews proved effective in collecting data on knowledge loss from business owners (Daghfous, Belkhodja, & Angell, 2013). Stoffers and Mordant-Dols (2015) used semistructured interviews to collect data from managers responsible for implementing business practices. Administering semistructured interviews migrated possible language barrier issues. The interviewer's passive role when conducting semistructured interviews enabled the interviewer to guide the interview (Knight, 2013). Therefore, semistructured interviewing was appropriate for collecting the data for this study. A list of the interview questions is in Appendix B. The importance of the interviews as a primary data source mandates following specific protocols.

When conducting interviews, building rapport and trust with the participants was essential. C. Marshall and Rossman (2016) stated the interviewer is required to build a trusting relationship with the interviewee. Building trust is important in helping the participant feel at ease (Doody & Noonan, 2013). To put the participant at ease, Higginbottom, Pillay, and Boadu (2013) suggested including an informal opening before

the starting the interview. The interviewer must also exhibit proper interviewing techniques (Loosveldt & Buellens, 2013) and promote a setting that is conducive to personal interviews (Perales et al., 2015). Subsequently, my role as the researcher was to develop and follow an interview protocol (see Appendix B) that included methods to establish trust and rapport with the participants. The interview protocol also served as an interviewing guide.

As described in the interview protocol, each participant addressed the same questions verbatim. I used bracketing to enhance the study's rigor. Bracketing is a technique in which the researcher disengages any preconceived notions about the research topic (Danielsson & Rosberg, 2015). Strategies used for bracketing included asking open-ended questions and operating from a "not-knowing" stance to encourage curiosity from the participants and enrich the participation (Chan, Fung, & Chien, 2013, p.6). Keeping with protocols used by De Vries et al. (2014), I conducted the interview sessions professionally by maintaining a neutral stance during the interview.

Analysis of organizational documentation also occurred. Use of documents in conjunction with interviews facilitates triangulation (Yin, 2014) that is critical for ensuring the research's accuracy and neutrality (M. Moon et al., 2013). Moore and Prentice (2015) ensured research rigor by triangulating interview and document data. Madu and Bakari (2016) analyzed organizational documents to identify themes of successful small business owners. The optimal time to request these documents was at the completion of the interview or during the member check interview. Participants were aware of the request to provide copies of documentation as stated in the Letter of

Invitation and the Participant Consent Form. Documents provided for this study included work assignment records, inventory management documents, and training guides. The documents provided by the participants enhanced the reliability and validity of this study.

Member checking also enriched the reliability and validity of this qualitative research. Member checking is a significant qualitative research process that ensured the comprehensive understanding of the participant's responses (Nite & Singer, 2013). Described in the interview protocol were the procedures to conduct follow-up member checking interviews. Member checking facilitates credibility in qualitative research (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016; M. Moon et al., 2013). Participants affirmed the study's trustworthiness by validating the collected interview data through the member checking process (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013; Nite & Singer, 2013). Validation occurred when the participants assessed my interpretations of their responses and provided clarification as necessary. The protocol for the member check interview is in Appendix D. The member-checking interview process was to repeat the questions asked during the initial interview and asking the participants to confirm, clarify, or expand their response.

Data Collection Technique

The data collection activities for this study were face-to-face semistructured interviews and review of organizational documents. Although time-consuming at times, face-to-face semistructured interviews provided the opportunity to collect rich descriptions of the research phenomenon through the participant's narratives (Birchall, 2014; Zieba et al., 2016). In contrast, Macey et al. (2015) argued for allowing the

participant to choose an alternate interview setting (e.g., telephone or online [Skype]) as advantageous to the participant's comfort level. Researchers also found telephone interviews as acceptable for collecting data from at-risk participants in addition to face-to-face semistructured interviews (Michel, Schimmelmann, Kupferschmid, Siegwart, & Schultze-Lutter, 2014). Szolnoki and Hoffman (2013) differed, finding that face-to-face interview responses best represented the research topic versus telephone and online survey methods. The interview process adopted for this study was face-to-face semistructured interviews.

Funding is an issue when conducting face-to-face interviews. The costs of face-to-face interviews could amount to 1.5 to 2.5 times more than the cost of conducting telephone and online interviews respectively (Szolnoki & Hoffman, 2013). Funding for face-to-face interviewing was not a concern, as the cost of interviewing three participants, bounded within the central Georgia area, was negligible. The semistructured interview constituted the primary data source for identifying the entrepreneurial and knowledge management strategies that small business restaurant owners used to sustain operations.

Data collected via personal interviews involved specific requirements. For example, as mentioned in the interview protocol, I opened the interview by thanking the participant for accepting the interview request. Reminding the participant of the study's purpose and the option to end the interview at any time as specified in the consent form also occurred. As suggested by Doody and Noonan (2013), the interviews took place at a time and place suitable for the participant and free from distractions. The device used to record the interview is an Olympus LS-P2 digital recorder, with a Samsung Galaxy Note

5 mobile cellular phone as a backup recording device. Beforehand, the participants acknowledged consent to having the interview recorded. During the interview, note taking in a journal, using ballpoint pens also occurred. The purpose of the note taking was to capture nuisances not transferable from the digital recordings, for example, gestures added for emphasis or noteworthy observations about the interview setting. Doody and Noonan cautioned that researchers be mindful not to let taking notes disrupt the interview process.

To facilitate the accuracy of the recorded interview data, I used the transcription service *TranscribeMe* to transcribe the interview data to text. The transcription service provider received the digitally recorded interview within 48 hours after each interview. Timely transcribing the interview data promoted a continuous analysis of the data as well as an ongoing contemplation of the data collected (Chimhundu, McNeill, & Hamlin, 2015). The transcription service provider signed a non-disclosure agreement thus ensuring the confidentiality of the data collected. The IRB received a copy of the non-closure agreement before approval to collect data for this study. I compared the digital audio recording with the transcribed document from the transcription service provider for accuracy. The transcribed document contained some missing words or other discrepancies, which I corrected before using the document for thematic analysis. After making corrections, I saved the audio files to an external hard drive and deleted the audio files from the digital recording device.

Correcting and formatting the transcribed interviews document files occurred using Microsoft Word Processing software. The transcribed Microsoft Word documents

had the same pseudonym to correspond with the applicable participant. Using

corresponding pseudonyms for each participant facilitated the combined analysis of the

interview transcripts and the notes recorded during the interview. The documents

collected from each participant aided triangulation. I stored files from the transcribed

interviews, documents collected, and the journal notes recorded during the interview in a

personal 5-key combination safe for security.

Data Organization Technique

Along with safekeeping, the data collected required organizing and maintaining to

foster the legitimacy of the study. C. Marshall and Rossman (2016) suggested researchers

organize the data collected by developing procedures to code or label the data. Data

collected for this study included the transcribed semistructured interviews, notes recorded

during interviews, and documentation provided by the participants. Yin (2014)

commented that a major data source in case study research was the researchers' field

notes. As such, organizing and categorizing these notes for future retrieval is essential

(Yin, 2014).

Researchers have recommended using a reflective journal to record the categories

and labels for the data (Fusch & Fusch, 2015; Madu, 2016; C. Marshall & Rossman,

2016). The purpose of the reflective journal for these researchers included, for example, a

description of the data (e.g., semistructured interview), a label identifying the source of

the data, the date of the data collection, and where the data will be stored electronically. I

used my reflective journal to record nuisances and observations that occurred during the

data gathering process. I described and identified the data collected electronically, using

word processing, or qualitative analysis software, using the same pseudonyms used to protect the participant's confidentiality.

Consistent with the interview protocol, each participant responded to the same questions verbatim. Similar to data collection, I used measures to protect the participants' identity throughout the data organizing process, including the use of pseudonyms to protect each interviewed participant's identity. Similarly, the recorded audio files used to transcribe the interviews, as well as the typed transcriptions, had the same pseudonym for each participant. This categorizing process enabled creating a database for this case study. Creating a case study database increases reliability by allowing researchers to track and organize data for future use (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014). Organizational documents collected from the participants had the same naming convention and database storage requirements, as did the data collected during the interviews.

Using the transcription service to transcribe the data from the interviews to create the case study database happened within 48 hours after the interview. Namey et al. (2016) similarly transcribed their participants' recorded interviews immediately following the interview. Analyzing transcribed interviews a soon after the interview as possible augmented the data interpretation for the member checking interviews. Researchers should also plan to record notes immediately following data collection (C. Marshall & Rossman, 2016). I used a reflective journal to record the date, location, participant's pseudonym, and summary of the interview to support data organization. Maintaining a log of the data collection activities helped demonstrate a carefully planned line of qualitative inquiry (C. Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Creating such a log also established a

chain of evidence, showing data obtainment, alignment with the data source, and "undeniably explain the crux of data collection" (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014, p 21).

Supporting ethical research protocols required transferring all electronic data files to a DVD and storing the DVD in a safe for 5 years after the publication of the study. Once transferred to DVD, I deleted all electronic files from the computer and external hard drive devices using Permanent Eraser for Mac software. After scanning paper documents, including notes recorded during interviews to electronic files, I transferred the electronic files to another DVD and stored for a 5-year period. X.-P. Chen (2015) argued that storing research data for 5 years is a critical research ethics principle. After the 5-year storage requirement has elapsed, I will destroy the data by shredding the DVDs using a crosscut document shredder.

Data Analysis

Determining an appropriate strategy was the first stage of the data analysis process. An appropriate data analysis process for case study research is triangulation (Yin, 2014). Triangulation involves collecting data from multiple sources, which strengthens the findings or conclusion of the research (C. Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Yin, 2014). Birt et al. (2016) furthered that the use of multiple research methods enhanced the validity of the researcher's interpretation of the data. C. Marshall and Rossman added that triangulation helps demonstrate that the researcher captured the participant's genuine views and behaviors, thus furthering the study's credibility. De Massis and Kotlar (2014) stated that the use of multiple sources of data bolstered case study research, particularly in cases involving family businesses.

There are four approaches to conducting triangulation. These four types are data triangulation, investigator triangulation, theory triangulation, and methods triangulation (Patton, 2002). Yin (2013) argued that data and methods triangulation present the best approaches to use when evaluating the case study's validity. Yin (2014) encouraged that researchers use data triangulation to find similar meaning from a variety of data sources. The type triangulation used in this study was methodological (or methods) triangulation. Methodological triangulation involves using data collected from multiple methods in a research study (Joslin & Muller, 2016).

Interestingly, this description of methodology triangulation is vastly similar to Yin's (2014) data triangulation. Moreover, Yin's description of data triangulation (i.e., the convergence of evidence from documents, interviews, and archival records, for example) conflicts with other researchers. Other researchers described Yin's data triangulation as methods triangulation (c.f., N. Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, & Neville, 2014; Gorissen, van Bruggen, & Jochems, 2013; Wilson, 2014; Zuze & Weideman, 2013). For example, N. Carter et al. stated that data triangulation includes only interview data collected from individuals or groups of individuals, such as focus groups. For this study, methodological triangulation was the convergence of data from multiple sources that included interviews and documents. The data analysis process for this multiple case study is methodological triangulation.

Data analysis began with the transcription of the interview data into a textual format. Vaismoradi, Turunen, and Bondas (2013) recommended three approaches for analyzing qualitative data: content analysis, thematic analysis, and descriptive

phenomenology. Researchers differ on the relationship of the three analysis approaches. Vaismoradi et al. stated that content and thematic analysis lay on opposite ends of a qualitative methodology continuum, thus indicating an opposing relationship. Wahyuni (2012) merged the two approaches, suggesting that thematic analysis involves identifying themes while conducting a content analysis. Some researchers ignored the term thematic analysis altogether, instead referencing content analysis only (Elo et al., 2014; Finfgeld-Connett, 2013). Vaismoradi et al. differentiated these approaches by stating that the thematic approach aligns with qualifying the data, whereas content analysis relates to data quantification. Thematic analysis proved useful identifying themes relevant to successful policy development (Sisnowski et al., 2015). Likewise, thematic analysis aided in studying entrepreneurs' perceptions and behaviors regarding exploration and exploitation trade-offs (Bonesso et al., 2014). A thematic analysis approach was appropriate for this study.

After arranging the research data, an exhaustive analysis followed to identify common themes and patterns. For thematic analysis, this entails coding collected data into categories and subcategories and comparing the themes that emerged (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014; Maritz & Brown, 2013; Vaismoradi et al., 2013). The method used to analyze the data is Moustakas' (1994) modified van Kaam method. Researchers have used this method to extract findings and themes from the data (D. Carter & Baghurst, 2014), enhance validity (Welch, 2014), and to explore the experiences of the participants (Anthony & Weide, 2015).

Using Moustakas' (1994) modified van Kaam method facilitated data analysis (D. Carter & Baghurst, 2014). Forber-Pratt, Aragon, and Espelage (2013) used the modified van Kaam method to conduct a case study of participant's lived experiences. The modified van Kaam method proved beneficial in analyzing strategies used by small business owners (Madu, 2016). The 7-step van Kaam method allows researchers to compose the meaning and experiences of the participants as a group (Moustakas, 1994).

According to Moustakas (1994), the initial step of the process was to list and then compartmentalized the data gathered from the participants. After the initial step, scrutinizing the transcribed data to find and remove unnecessary and ambiguous terms followed. The third step involved compiling the data into primary themes and beginning data coding, followed by step four, identifying the compatible components or replicative themes found in step three. Constructing and summarizing the components and themes into textual annotations based on the participants' responses to the questions occurred next. Step six involved further constructing the summarized text annotations into structural depictions of each participant. The last step involved building a textual-structural depiction of the data formulated in steps five and six.

Coding and building themes from the data were essential in the research process. Researchers have turned to computer qualitative analysis software (QAS) programs to assimilate, code, and analyze data collected. De Massis and Kotlar (2014) found QAS programs added rigor to the study by providing researchers a systematic method to code and analyze data. For example, the NVivo QAS (QSR International, Ltd.) facilitated identifying themes that were essential to small business restaurant owners' cost

management practices (Alonso & Krajsic, 2014). Likewise, Knight (2013) used NVivo to study the motivation factors of ethnic entrepreneurs. Another QAS, ATLAS.ti (ATLAS.ti Scientific Software Development GmbH), proved effective in analyzing data collected from in-depth interviews and researcher notes (Poteat et al., 2013). Using QAS facilitates the coding and theme building of the data analysis process.

Several QAS products are available to researchers for analyzing data. Silver and Lewins (2014), conducted an extensive review of several major QAS programs available. Silver and Levins provided a rich source of each QAS program's features and capabilities. The qualitative analysis software (QAS) program used to assimilate, code, and analyze data for this study is ATLAS.ti for MAC. The primary factors for choosing ATLAS.ti for MAC are (a) the program's compatibility with Apple Inc.'s OS X operating system; (b) the extensive training support available from ATLAS.ti, including webinars and tutorials; and (c) the relatively low cost compared to other QAS programs.

Researchers have raised concerns about the use of computer QAS programs. D. Carter and Baghurst (2014) cautioned that QAS programs might miss subtle themes detected during the interview. Al-Dajani and Marlow (2013) rejected the use of QAS outright, stating unreliability issues when used with a foreign language. The language was an initial concern because recognizing the use of any Hispanic words was important, as these words may provide clarity to the participant's meaning. The participants, however, did not express any difficulty with interviewing in English.

As themes developed, the focus turned to how those themes related to the conceptual framework entrepreneurship theory and knowledge management theory. The

semistructured interview questions constructed for this study supported this theme/conceptual framework relationship. I compared the emerged themes and meanings with the entrepreneurship and knowledge management literature, including newly published literature. Expanding the study to more recent literature disclosed new revelations about the research phenomenon needing further research.

Reliability and Validity

The reliability and validity component consists of the methods researchers used to validate the study's rigor and trustworthiness. Yin (2014) recommended using multiple data sources to support reliability. The triangulation of the data sources and member checking bolstered validity (M. Moon et al., 2013; Pedersen et al., 2014). Collectively, researchers have used reliability and validity techniques (i.e., multiple case study and triangulation) to strengthen the qualitative case study's research (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013; Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013; Taylor, 2013). Reliability and validity are terms usually associated with quantitative research. In qualitative research, the terms credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are synonymous with reliability and validity (Houghton et al., 2013).

Trustworthiness was a critical requirement for qualitative analysis. Trustworthiness coincides with the terms credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Donges, 2015; Elo et al., 2014). Credibility refers to how believable are the research findings (Houghton et al., 2013), whereas the ability to apply the research to other settings defines transferability (Mariotto, Zanni, & Marcondes de Moraes, 2014). Dependability demonstrates the research's repeatability if conducted by other researchers

(Hays, Wood, Dahl, & Kirk-Jenkins, 2016). Finally, confirmability describes how the findings were determined, and illustrates the findings' direct correlation with the data (Cope, 2014). In combination, these components of trustworthiness reinforce reliability and validity in qualitative research.

Reliability

Parallel to quantitative research's concept of reliability is the concept of dependability for qualitative research (Hays et al., 2016). Interview questions constructed to address the strategies that small business owners used to sustain operations promoted dependability. Researchers assured dependability by asking clear questions related directly to the research topic (Boesch, Schwaninger, Weber, & Scholz, 2013). Dependability was also evident when the reader can determine that the research results were consistent with the data collected (M. Moon et al., 2013). In other words, another researcher should be able to replicate the study's results if using the same research methodology (Cope, 2014). Consequently, it is critical that researchers comprehensively document their research to foster dependability (Donges, 2015; Wahyuni, 2012).

Another technique to ensure dependability is member checking (Taplin & McConigley, 2015). Member checking consists of giving participants the opportunity to assess the researcher's interpretation of the interview for accuracy, to add clarity, or to make corrections (Morse, 2015). Researchers differed on when to conduct the member check interview. Nite and Singer (2013) conducted member checking during the interview process, while Nakano, Muniz, and Batista (2013) performed member checking after coding the data. Houghton et al. (2013) warned that if member checking occurred

after data analysis, the participants might not recognize what they discussed during the interview. Houghton et al. added that providing verbatim transcriptions negates the participant's opportunity to understand how the researcher portrayed and interpreted the data. For this study, member checking consisted of face-to-face discussions of the interpreted interviews with the participants, using a questioning approach (see Appendix D, Follow-up Member Checking Interview). Hence, member checking facilitated the research dependability by allowing the participant to verify the data collected during face-to-face interviews.

Validity

Ensuring dependability was not the only requirement for establishing rigor in qualitative research. Along with dependability, Lincoln and Guba introduced credibility, confirmability, and transferability as other criteria that ensured validity in qualitative research (Donges, 2015; Elo et al., 2014). Together, these qualitative criteria promoted the study's trustworthiness (Morse, 2015). Researchers established credibility when the findings were believable and, therefore, trustworthy (M. Moon et al., 2013). Similar to dependability, member checking also facilitates credibility. Member checking supports credibility by including the rich narratives and detailed descriptions derived from the participants (M. Moon et al., 2013). Researchers include all of the data collected and ensure the sampled participants were knowledgeable of the research topic to obtain rich and thick descriptions (Morse, 2015). The sampled participants for this study were small business restaurant owners who sustained operations beyond 5 years.

Triangulation also facilitates credibility. Triangulation of the data collected supports credibility when researchers conjugated multiple data sources to answer the same question (Morse, 2015). Additionally, identifying and documenting the data sources creates an audit trail for future researchers, furthering the study's credibility (Cope, 2014). For example, triangulating employee surveys with the recorded observations of interpersonal and customer interactions enabled researchers to explore the influence of servant leadership on employees (D. Carter & Baghurst, 2014). In this study, auditable documents included transcribed interviews, field notes, and organizational documents related to entrepreneurial and knowledge management strategies. The triangulation of multiple data sources enhanced the study's credibility.

The ability to conduct future research similar to this study describes the study's transferability. To promote transferability, the researcher provides thick descriptions of the research contents and methods (Houghton et al., 2013). Thick descriptions allowed the reader the opportunity to decide if the findings are transferable to similar situations (Elo et al., 2014). Transferability is equivalent to the quantitative criteria generalizability. However, the difference between transferability and generalizability is significant for qualitative researchers.

In quantitative research, generalizability refers that the research is repeatable to other research. This assumption suggests an ability to repeat the research using a similar population as the prior research (Yin, 2013). Yin argued that this same population assumption is not valid because, in case study research, the cases are not from a known population from which to select a random sample as in quantitative research. Yin

furthered that a case study research is likely to include only a small number of cases. Tsang (2013) posited that case study research might be less generalizable compared to quantitative research if selecting only from the population of the selected case(s). In theory, this reselection from the case population is essentially repeating the same study a second time. In summary, it is incumbent to provide detailed depictions of the research conducted to enhance the study's trustworthiness, regardless of the sampled population.

It is critical for researchers to confirm the integrity of the research. The concept of confirmability equates to how objective, neutral, and accurate was the case study (Houghton et al., 2013). Confirmability demonstrates how well the researcher presented the findings as depictions of the participants while avoiding personal biases (Hays et al., 2016). Quoting the participants ensures that the data collected represents the participant's views. Using quotations from multiple participants enhanced the connection between the participants and the research findings (Cope, 2014; Elo et al., 2014; Farokhzadian, Nayeri, & Borhani, 2015). The overuse of quotations, on the other hand, may dilute the study's analysis (Elo et al., 2014). For this study, I relied on the findings from the thematic analysis and I limited the number of direct quotations to support the confirmability of the research.

Central to the premise of confirmability was that the findings were reflective of participants and transparent by ensuring the data is available to other researchers (Cope, 2014; Moore & Prentice, 2015). A condition of confirmability is that the data presented was accurate (M. Moon et al., 2013). A strategy used to validate accuracy is triangulation (N. Carter et al., 2014). C. Marshall and Rossman (2016) added that researchers could

validate the study's logic and transparency by articulating how others can draw parallels between the study's content and its findings. Objectivity and transparency required articulating the processes in conducting the research and arriving at the findings.

Transparency is a critical quality attribute of qualitative research (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012). Trainor and Graue (2014) stated that researchers ensured transparency through the methods (e.g., design, data collection, or analysis) used to conduct the study. In data collection, triangulation of data sources has supported confirmability (Boesch et al., 2013; M. Moon et al., 2013). Boesch et al. also stated that an expert review of the study supports confirmability. For dissertations, the student's university committee serves as an expert outside reviewers of the study's methodology (Donges, 2015). Others have stated that researchers need to exhibit reflectivity by understanding their biases (Elo et al., 2014; Houghton et al., 2013; M. Moon et al., 2013). As such, my role as the researcher was to ensure transparency and to mitigate any biases regarding the participants or the research topic.

Further supporting confirmability is the coding and categorizing of the collected data for other researchers to follow (Moore & Prentice, 2015). Constructing the data as such creates an audit trail comprised of the themes, models, categories, and analysis that emerged from the research (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014). Researchers are turning to data processing tools to conduct data analysis of the themes emerging from the research. For example, Houghton et al. (2013) used the NVivo qualitative analysis software (QAS) to aid confirmability through the program's ability to analyze emerging themes from all participants. Using the NVivo program allowed researchers to analyze multiple data

groups sequentially (Namey et al., 2016). De Massis and Kotlar (2014) furthered that using qualitative analysis software added rigor to research studies through the ability to thematically code and analyze significant volumes of data. For this study, I used the ATLAS.ti QAS for data analysis and will maintain the emergent themes and analysis for at least 5 years after the study's publication.

Researchers ensured the research's thoroughness by achieving saturation. To reach saturation, researchers strived to capture all information relevant to the research topic until no new information develops (Pedersen et al., 2014). Data saturation assures the validity of qualitative research (Finfgeld-Connett, 2013). Convergence of the semistructured interviews and the documentation collected from the owners of three Latin American immigrant small business restaurants supported achieving data saturation. Researchers should alternately gather and analyze the data to determine the progress of the research (Burda et al., 2016). Using an iterative analysis approach reveals if further data needs collecting (Burda et al., 2016), at which time the researcher decides if additional interviews and member checking is warranted.

Fusch and Ness (2015) suggested that data saturation was a by-product of data triangulation. Fusch and Ness added the association between data saturation and triangulation allows examining the same phenomena from different perspectives, which theoretically, fosters validity. Analyzing data from multiple sources enhanced the validity of the data collected from semistructured interviews while ensuring data saturation (Stevens & Palfreyman, 2012). Cronin (2014) added that engaging multiple data collection methods bolstered the evidence's credibility in case study research.

Furthermore, triangulation strengthens interpreting the findings by migrating the fallacies of a single data source strategy (Cronin, 2014). Similar to sampling participants knowledgeable of the research topic, the triangulated data must also represent the research topic (cf. D. Carter & Baghurst, 2014). To summarize, researchers ensure validity through triangulation, ensuring transparency of the data collected, that the data is representative of the participant's views, and data saturation.

Transition and Summary

The purpose of this qualitative, exploratory multiple case study was to explore the entrepreneurial and knowledge management strategies used by small business restaurant owners to sustain operations longer than 5 years. As the primary research data collector, I was mindful to mitigate potential biases and follow appropriate ethical protocols. Census sampling a population of three Latin American restaurants was the sampling technique used to identify prospective participants and to ensure that the participants met eligibility criteria. A qualitative multiple case study was the appropriate research method and design for this study. The population and sample size for this study was justifiable. Following the ethical protocols described in the Belmont Report ensured conducting the research ethically.

The data gathered for this study derived from semistructured interviews and organizational documents presented by the participants. Digitally recording and transcribing the interviews ensured accuracy and facilitated member checking. Data analysis involved using a modified van Kaam method. Using qualitative analysis software enabled identifying and analyzing the emergent themes. Conducting member

checking, data triangulation, and achieving data saturation, were the procedures used to ensure reliability and validity. Following these procedures, collecting and analyzing the data from the Latin American immigrant small business restaurant owners occurred.

In Section 3, I analyze and triangulate the data collected from the semistructured interviews with the documentation provided by the small business restaurant owners who participated in my study. The thematic analysis I conduct is to determine what emerging themes may prove beneficial to small business restaurant owners in sustaining operation beyond 5 years. Discussion of how the research findings may influence positive social change and provide practical business application is a substantive outcome of the study. No research is perfect (C. Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Consideration and identification of limitations that may have hampered the study, as well as suggestions for future activities, depict responsible research. Culminating the study is a reflective assessment of the study's results and how the study relates to the literature.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative, exploratory multiple case study was to explore the entrepreneurial and knowledge management strategies that small business restaurant owners use to sustain their business longer than 5 years. This final section includes the presentation of the findings from the data collection and the application to professional practices that may foment positive social change. Central to the purpose of this section are recommendations for small business entrepreneurs and suggestions for further research. I conclude the section with my reflections on conducting the study.

From the data collected, three major themes emerged. The first theme is a description of how the entrepreneurs in my study obtained resources from established social networks. The second theme encompassed the strategies and techniques used to develop both employee and entrepreneur human capital. The final theme includes the entrepreneurial activities used by participants to sustain operations. The following presentation of the findings contains an analysis of the emergent themes and the themes' relationship to the literature and conceptual framework.

Presentation of the Findings

The research question that I sought to answer was, What entrepreneurial and knowledge management strategies do small business restaurant owners use to sustain their business more than 5 years? I identified three major themes, which were (a) cultivation of ego-networks, (b) human capital development, and (c) engaged entrepreneurial activities. The data compiled for this study came from semistructured

interviews with three successful small business owners. To support the analysis, the participants provided documents that included employee work schedules, inventory records, records tracking past customer behavior, business websites, point-of-sales databases, and maintenance equipment and employee training manuals.

The participants for this study were Latin American immigrants who met the research requirement of sustaining successful operations beyond 5 years in central Georgia in the United States Each participant provided their views and interpretations in answering the interview questions, which concerned the entrepreneurship and knowledge management strategies they had used to sustain operations beyond 5 years. With some exceptions, the themes emerging from the data collection were consistent with existing literature on effective entrepreneurship and knowledge management strategies. The subsections that follow contain descriptions and explanations of the thematic findings from the data collected for this study.

Theme 1: Cultivation of Ego-Networks

Ozdemir et al. (2016) used the term ego-network to describe an entrepreneur's social networks. Ego-networks consist of suppliers, service providers, customers, family, friends, and, at times, the entrepreneur (Ozdemir et al., 2016). Cultivating these ego-networks was a major theme in this study. In interview responses, the participants referred to social network support 15 times and relationships 13 times. All participants in the study relied on customer-focused initiatives to support their businesses. Amongst the nine total references to outsourcing were outsource services and social media advertising.

Table 2 depicts participants' references and their frequencies for the first theme, cultivation of ego-networks.

Table 2

Findings for Theme 1, Cultivation of Ego-Networks

References	Frequencies
Social support network	15
Relationships	13
Customer dependent advertising	7
Providing good customer service	11
Outsource services	4
Social media	5

To facilitate cultivating relationships with customers, the SBOs in the study were attentive in providing good customer service. Enhancing relationships with customers through word-of-mouth advertising proved beneficial, participants noted. Therefore, essential to building social network support was cultivating relationships with customers. Central to the theme of cultivation of ego-networks was the use of social support network resources and relationship building.

Social support network and relationship building. Entrepreneurs benefit from the use of social capital. The facets of social capital beneficial to entrepreneurs are from the relationships providing access to resources used by entrepreneurs to attain desired outcomes (C. Smith et al., 2017). All participants in this study stressed the importance of

building and using social support networks. From social support networks, the SBOs

obtained vital resources to support and sustain their businesses, including financial

support, advertising, training, and support for business operations.

Social support networks include family members. The SBOs in the study relied on

family members to provide start-up capital. When asked what were the financial

strategies used to start and maintain his or her business, SBO1 replied, "I reach [out] to

family members, just borrowing from family members." SBO2 and SBO3 also acquired

financial aid from immediate family members. Obtaining financial capital from family

members concurs with prior research indicating that ethnic minorities, in particular, are

more likely to seek financial support from family members and other individuals (see

Bewaji et al., 2015). In this study, financial assistance from family social networks was

strategically important for SBO participants.

In addition to family social network support, the SBOs built social support

networks with customers, which they said was equally essential to their success.

Researchers have identified customer relations as a critical success factor for restaurant

entrepreneurs (see Dalbour, Hua, & Andrew, 2014). For example, the SBOs in my study

relied on the relationships they had built with customers and friends for advertising

purposes. When asked what were the marketing strategies he or she had used to attract

customers, SBO2 responded, "I do not have to do nothing, I know a lot of people because

I used to work in another place, another Mexican restaurant." SBO3 attributed much or

his or her business's success to "treating customers as if they are coming into your own

homes."

When asked about other strategies not previously discussed that supported the success of his or her business, SBO1 replied, "Well, you know it has a lot to with personal relations, … and an extremely good relationship with your customers." In cultivating relationships with customers, SBO1 used a computer program to track customer patronage and implemented a reward program for frequent customers. In addition to treating customers like family, SBO3 furthered customer relationships by offering discounts to older adults and military personnel. The SBOs in this study unilaterally credited relationship building with customers as the impetus for customer word-of-mouth advertising. To facilitate customer relationship building, SBO2 implemented a flexible menu policy that allowed customization of food items. These seemingly small gestures to build customer relations coincide with Elbeltagi, Kempen, and Garcia's (2014) research finding that even "…the smallest things make the biggest differences" (p. 138). Thus, the participants in this study managed to build good customer relations by offering incentives and being hospitable to customers.

In addition to building relationships with customers, relationship building with suppliers also proved beneficial for sustainable operations. SBO3 admitted receiving business administrative training from a distributor. SBO2 relied on suppliers for inventory management. Suppliers provided SBO2 weekly invoices of suggested inventory items to replenish, causing SBO2 to lampoon, "I basically work for them." SBO1 stated establishing good relations with suppliers as a success strategy. However, SBO1 also referenced some suppliers as, "people that offer their services to small business owners… for a fee." SBO1 contracted suppliers to provide web-based and

printed advertising services. Thus, SBO1 maintained a weak tie supplier relationship based on contractual trust, whereas SBO2 and SBO3 maintained a strong tie supplier relationship based cognitive trust (see Jonsson, 2015; Stam et al., 2014). Overall, the relationships built with suppliers benefited the SBOs in this study. Also beneficial was the relationships developed with customers.

Customer-focused initiatives. Customer-focused initiatives comprised of customer dependent advertising and providing good customer service. The relationships with customers developed by the SBOs incited customer dependent advertising. The consensus of the participants admitted to relying on word of mouth from customers as a prime advertising mechanism. The SBOs also credited providing good customer service as a successful business strategy. The customer-focused initiatives of customer dependent advertising and providing good customer service were strategies essential to the SBOs.

Entrepreneurs encouraged customer dependent advertising through two methods. First, through the social relationships established between the entrepreneur and customer that developed over time. Following research conducted by C.-H. Liu and Lee (2015), establishing a trusting relationship with customers enabled the SBOs to gain repeat customers. During the interview when asked, what strategies not mentioned helped the success of the business, SBO1 responded, "Whenever there is a conversation, try to make the moment more pleasant. Talk about something useful…something that will make it conducive for us to get back together." SBO2 admitted to maintaining social relationships with customers and co-workers from working in another restaurant before starting the business. SBO3 attributed treating the business like a family and stopping to talk to every

customer as a strategy that encouraged customer word-of-mouth advertising. Equivalent

with research by Dessi et al. (2014), the SBOs close relationships developed with repeat

customers, most likely influenced customer word-of-mouth advertising. In addition to

hospitality, the SBOs provided evidence in developing relationships with customers to

encourage customer word-of-mouth advertising that included implementing incentive

programs, customizing menu options, and developing a database to track customer

behavior. Thus, the social capital that the SBOs cultivated with customers influenced

customer opinion of the restaurant. Another method to incentivize customer behavior

involved customer service.

The second strategy that induced customer dependent advertising was in

providing good customer service. Small business entrepreneurs acknowledged providing

outstanding customer service has a successful entrepreneurial strategy for sustaining

operations (Hodges et al., 2015). Each SBO acknowledged providing good customer

service as an essential business practice and used various approaches. For example,

SBO1's database to track customer patronage enabled SBO1 to implement a rebate

program for repeat customers. Being innovative to enrich the customer's experience is

also indicative of providing good customer service.

Important entrepreneurial strategies are dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation

and marketing orientation (Fuentes-Fuentes et al., 2015; Hinz & Ingerfurth, 2013; Kajalo

& Lindblom, 2015; K.Y. Wang et al., 2015). SBO2 exhibited the entrepreneurial

orientation characteristic of an innovator by creating a condiment bar for customers to

personalize their food orders. SBO2 admitted to implementing the idea, "Because no one

else had one." Adhering to a marketing orientation, SBO3 recognized a distinct local population segment and instituted a program offering discounts to military members and older adult patrons. SBO2 instructed employees to make sure the customer's order is correct stating, "I explain to my workers, the ladies, when they [i.e., the customer] say it is wrong, it is wrong. Say I am sorry, let me know how we can trade it or whatever."

SBO2 displayed an exploitative dimension of entrepreneurship by offering customizable menu options to meet the customer's desire by using existing products to create new opportunities for profiteering. Entrepreneurial and marketing orientation and exploitative dimension strategies of entrepreneurship are essential elements of entrepreneurship conceptual framework. Thus, the SBOs in this study used the entrepreneurial and marketing orientation, and exploitative dimension strategies of entrepreneurship to provide good customer service. In addition to relationship building with customers and suppliers, the SBOs developed relationships with outside service providers.

Outsourcing and social media strategies. Occasionally, the SBOs outsourced services and used social media in the operating the business. Outsourcing allows entrepreneurs to concentrate on core capabilities and exploit new opportunities (Antonietti, Ferrante, & Leoncini, 2016). However, the outsourcing activities exhibited by the SBOs in this study was scant. SBO2 relied on suppliers to compile suggested weekly inventory invoices to order, while SBO3 acquired business administration knowledge from external entities. Both SBO1 and SBO2 acquired accounting services to manage the business' tax reporting responsibilities. Managing the business website and

printing advertising material are services that SBO1 outsourced. Although limited, the SBO in this study relied on outsourcing for some services.

More small businesses are using social media to enhance customer satisfaction and build long-term relationships (Balan & Rege, 2017; Charoensukmongkol & Sasatanun, 2017). Social media enabled the entrepreneurs in this study to build relational social capital with customers. SBO1 and SBO3 have established Facebook accounts as advertising tools. When asked were what the marketing strategies used to operate the business, SBO1 cited marketing media websites such Yelp.com and Google AdWords. SBO3 created a website for advertising purposes. Some of the information on the website available to consumers includes menus, specialty dishes, the business' location, and hours of operation. SBO2, however, did not have a digital presence and instead relied on the relational capital built through direct interaction with customers.

In summary, the SBOs in this study cultivated ego-networks through the building and maintaining of social support network relationships. Central to building relational capital with customers was treating customers like family and being hospitable. Through the relationships built, the SBO enjoyed word-of-mouth advertising from customers. The SBO furthered the positive relationship building by providing good customer service. Reliance on outsourced services and social media benefitted the SBOs' business operations and advertising efforts. The second major theme described the SBOs' human capital development activities.

Theme 2: Human Capital Development

In this study, human capital development consisted of nurturing the skills and abilities needed to operate the business of both the entrepreneurs and employees. Central to the theme human capital development was developing employees. The SBOs referenced developing employees 18 times during the semistructured interviews. Closely related to developing employees, the participants cited the importance of on-the-job training (OJT). Other human capital development references pertained to self-taught education and prior work experiences. The SBOs and employees in this study acquired human capital from different sources. Sources documents and material used in human capital development included employee training manuals, documentation describing safe food handling procedures, rotating shift schedules, recipe books instructing how to prepare specialty food items, and service manuals for maintaining equipment. In Table 3 are the references and frequencies for the human capital development major theme.

Table 3

Findings for Theme 2, Human Capital Development

References	Frequencies
Develop employees	18
Self-taught education	11
On-the-job training	10
Prior work experience	6

The SBOs in this study recognized the importance of developing employees for business operations. The primary method used to develop employees was OJT. Nonaka (1994) stated that OJT was an enabler of tacit knowledge in business organizations. Amir and Parvar (2014) found OJT as the best method to share and transfer knowledge. The SBOs used OJT to share tacit knowledge and empowered employees to conduct OJT to newer employees. Thus, the SBOs made OJT a fundamental element of the employee's development.

Employee development and OJT. The SBOs made developing employees a priority to ensure business success and implemented strategies to foster employee development. In 1981, Berger and Bronson used the term humanistic entrepreneurs to describe entrepreneurs who displayed a genuine concern for employees (S.C. Chen & Elston, 2013). The SBOs demonstrated genuine caring for their employees through various methods. SBO1 conducted personalized training with employees, stating, "I also do one-on-one training as far as how they should conduct themselves to the customers, what the company policy is, what is expected of them." To facilitate the training, SBO1 created a series of training manuals including a training manual for new hires. Another concept used by SBO1 is to "gamify the experience." In this, SBO1 created gaming scenarios of particular work tasks and awarded employees for achievements. Similarly, SBO3 would perform a task (e.g., 'bussing a table') and had the employee assess whether SBO3 completed the task satisfactorily or unsatisfactorily. SBO2 personally trained each employee before allowing the employee to work autonomously. SBO3 stressed developing well-rounded employees and implemented rotating work schedules for

employee development, while SBO1 relied on cross-training as a human capital development strategy. The hands-on approach to training displayed by the SBOs is reminiscent of a servant leader. D. Carter and Baghurst (2014) found that servant leadership galvanized restaurant employees to provide customers memorable experiences. Therefore, the personal involvement of the SBOs in this study enhanced the employee's development.

Knowledge management, particularly knowledge sharing played an essential role in developing employees. All participants encouraged employees to share knowledge through employee development. SBO1 assigned experienced employees with specialized skills to train employees. SBO1 commented, "When someone new needs to train, I come in and them the general rundown, and then I bring them to the specific person that is going to train them." SBO2 explains to new employees the duties of the current employees and then have the current employees train the new employees. When asked how is knowledge sharing encouraged, SBO3 simply stated, "We need to communicate each other's knowledge of this stuff so we can help each other out and work better as a team"; and added, "I mean there is nothing wrong with sharing the knowledge." To facilitate knowledge sharing, SBO3 created a system of rotating work-related tasks, designed to familiarize employees with all facets of the business operations. In sharing knowledge with employees, the SBOs exhibited an exploitative knowledge sharing behavior as explained by D'Arrigo, Fachinelli, and Giacomello (2016). D'Arrigo et al. added that exploitative knowledge sharing facilitated achieving short-term goals using existing knowledge.

The SBOs in this study did not develop a formal knowledge management system typically used in larger organizations. Formal knowledge management systems include the processes of creating, organizing, disseminating, and utilizing of acquired knowledge (Akhavan et al., 2014; Tworek, Walecka-Jankowska & Martin, 2015). Instead, the SBOs used an emergent approach to knowledge management. Learning while performing the daily operations of the firm characterizes an emergent knowledge management approach (Zieba et al., 2016). The hands-on emergent approach to knowledge management also supported operating the business. Tasks, decisions, and actions beneficial to the firm reflect the acquired knowledge that is necessary to meet organizational objectives (Bolisani, Scarso, & Giuman, 2016). Therefore, the SBOs' development of employees through OJT is representative of a knowledge management system.

The SBOs being the principal initiators of the employees' human capital development was not coincidental. The SBOs in this study were the primary creators of knowledge, coinciding with Wee and Chua's (2013) research on knowledge management in SMEs. Implementing employee-led training facilitated knowledge sharing. Promoting a supportive atmosphere amongst employees builds trust, which also encourages knowledge sharing (Alaarj et al., 2016; Durmusoglu et al., 2014; Wee & Chua, 2013). Wee and Chua added that tacit knowledge reuse occurred when employees worked closely together. The SBOs used an informal knowledge management system to share knowledge.

Human capital development extended beyond the skills and abilities needed for business operations. SBO1 stressed that building leaders was as equally important as

building competent employees, explaining, "My main testament here is to develop leaders." Another example is SBO2 who acknowledged that employees have other obligations, such as raising a family and gave employees extra time to take children to school or daycare centers. SBO3 extended the family-oriented theme of relationship building by suggesting that "It is better that employees are emotionally invested in the business so as not to think all they are doing it to earn a paycheck." The human capital development exhibited by the SBOs is one of building a trusting relationship with employees. Trust is a significant enabler of knowledge sharing and a facilitator of knowledge creation (Alaarj et al., 2016; Durmusoglu et al., 2014; Eze et al., 2013; Sankowska, 2016; Swift & Virick, 2013). Thus, the SBOs in this study supported the human capital development of employees by building relationships founded on trust.

The primary method used for developing employee human capital was OJT. In addition to employee-lead OJT, the SBOs also provided OJT. SBO1 conducted personal one-on-one training with employees, including a "gamification" approach. SBO2 provided the first level of training, before delegating the training to other employees, while SBO3 trained assistant managers while performing administrative duties, ensuring that assistance managers were capable in the SBO's absence. Only one SBO developed a formalized training plan by creating training manuals and having employees take online courses on food service and safety. However, this finding was indicative of behavior displayed by other Hispanic entrepreneurs. Research conducted by Z. Moon et al. (2013) revealed that most Hispanic entrepreneurs preferred less formal forms of education, perhaps explaining the lack of formal training documentation by the SBOs.

Self-taught education and prior experience. According to research conducted by Z. Moon et al. (2013), less than 50% of the Hispanic entrepreneurs in the U.S. surveyed completed the 12th grade. Moreover, researchers indicated that of Korean, African-American, Mexican, and nonminority entrepreneurs, the level of formal education was highest for the Korean ethnic group and lowest for the Mexican ethnic group (Y. G. Lee, Fitzgerald, Bartkus, & Lee, 2015). The low level of formal education amongst Hispanic entrepreneurs is consistent with existing research (Canedo et al., 2013; Olivas & Frankwick, 2016). Each of the participants for this study completed a high school education, and two of the participants attended some college, with SBO1 achieving an associate's degree. Despite research purporting to the importance of education for entrepreneurial success, (see Martin et al., 2013; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Singh & Gibbs, 2013) recent research conducted by Clark-Gill (2016) revealed that education was the lowest concern amongst U.S. ethnic minority entrepreneurs.

Interestingly, neither of the participant's secondary or post-secondary education involved business-related or management courses which perhaps explains why SBO3 relied on suppliers to provide entrepreneur administration training. SBO3's approach aligns with prior research. Ortiz-Walters et al. (2015) that found Latino entrepreneurs sought business-related information from other owners and business associates instead of from family members or friends. Obtaining business-related information from outside sources is typical for immigrant entrepreneurs. Immigrant small business entrepreneurs tend to rely on sources other than strong tie relationships for business information (Tata

& Prasad, 2015). Another source for business-related information was the entrepreneurs themselves.

Primarily, the SBOs in this study relied on self-taught education and prior work experiences for learning how to operate the business. For example, SBO1 self-taught maintaining the equipment used to operate the business and explained, "If you can do your own maintenance...that is going to be a big boost in savings." SBO1 admitted self-studying subject matter such as food sanitation, small business operation, finance, and accounting. To facilitate knowledge sharing with his employees, SBO1 obtained status as a ServSafe proctor. ServSafe is the leading provider of food safety training for National Restaurant Association Education Foundation according to information from the organization's website (https://servseafe.com). After employees completed the online food safety training, SBO1 administered the assessment exam to evaluate the employee's knowledge of the material presented. From the knowledge gained through self-study, SBO1 created a food safety and sanitation manual to train employees. SBO3 also self-maintained equipment used for business operations. In addition to self-learning, the SBOs used experiences gained from prior employment to understand how to operate the restaurant business. SBO2 incorporated the experience gained from prior work in the restaurant business with the OJT provided to employees.

The prominent education philosopher John Dewey argued that life experiences have as much to do with educating children as classroom instruction (Dewey, 1900). The SBOs in this study used prior work experiences in learning how to operate a successful business. SBO2 used experiences gained from working at another restaurant to teach

employees how to prepare food items. SBO3 credited the experiences working in restaurants owned by family members with developing processes to manage inventory. Conversely, SBO1 did not indicate any prior working experience that helped with operating the business. Instead, SBO1 depended on the knowledge gained from self-study with operating the business. Relying on accumulated experiences and personal initiatives, as displayed by the SBOs in this study, is a reason why Hispanic immigrants seek entrepreneurship according to Z. Moon et al. (2013).

Sans post-secondary education, the SBOs in this study operated successful businesses beyond 5 years. While notable, furthering the SBOs' human capital through college education has merit. Guo, Chen, and Yu (2016) found that a college education benefitted Hispanic entrepreneurs financially through increased income. Olivas and Frankwick (2016) revealed that Hispanic entrepreneurs struggled as compared to other ethnic entrepreneurs due to lower education levels. Canedo et al. (2013) added that failures of Hispanic entrepreneurs are due to lack of business education and urged increased educational opportunities to improve the skills and abilities of Hispanic entrepreneurs. While the lack of a college education does not translate to failure, as evidenced the SBOs in this study, the benefits of obtaining a college education are justified.

In summary, the second major theme emerging from the data collected for this study is human capital development. Human capital development is the acquisition of the skills and abilities required for business operations. The SBOs in this study ensured the human capital development of employees, both personally and professionally, through

servant leadership and OJT. The SBOs acquired human capital to operate and maintain the business primarily through self-taught education and from prior work experiences. One SBO earned a post-secondary degree, despite evidence asserting that entrepreneurs benefitted financially by acquiring a college education. Regardless, the SBOs in this study sustained successful operations beyond 5 years sans post-secondary education.

Theme 3: Engaged Entrepreneurial Activities.

The SBOs in this study practiced typical activities of entrepreneurship. These activities included financing, cost management, and inventory control. Documents used for these activities included point-of-sales receipts, checklists used to control inventory usage and spoilage, inventory invoices, and evidence of technology used to track purchases. For reasons of personal privacy, I did not ask to review bank account statements or loan documents. Displayed in Table 4 are the references for the theme engaged entrepreneurial activities.

Table 4

Findings for Theme 3, Engaged Entrepreneurial Activities

References	Frequencies
Traditional financing	10
Cost management	6
Inventory control	5
Entrepreneurial opportunity	5
Entrepreneurial necessity	3

Obtaining required financial resources was a primary concern for each SBO. The SBOs used traditional methods to obtain needed financial capital to start and sustain the business. The SBOs in this study also implemented cost management and inventory control strategies. Entrepreneurs of different ethnicities enter entrepreneurship for various reasons (S.C. Chen & Elston, 2013; Knight, 2013; Rubach, Bradley, & Kluck, 2015). Opportunity and necessity were the reasons provided by the SBOs in this study for starting an entrepreneurial venture. In starting the business, the SBOs sought to obtain financial capital.

Traditional financing. Ethnic minority entrepreneurs faced challenges when attempting secure financial resources to own and operate a business (Bengtsson & Hsu, 2015; Bewaji et al., 2015). The SBOs in this study experienced some adversity when attempting to secure financing. SBO1 sought to obtain a loan from the SBA, but withdrew the application stating, "The paperwork was 'overwhelming,' and the originating fee was high." Neither SBO2 nor SBO3 attempted to request an SBA loan. Each SBO used personal resources to finance the business. SBO2 stated that personal savings accounted for 50% of the financing needed to start the business. Use of personal savings by entrepreneurs is typical. Frid (2015) estimated about 80% of new entrepreneurs used personal savings to finance their business. SBO1 and SBO2 acknowledged using revolving credit to sustain business operations. Despite research indicating that financial institutions are less motivated to approve loans to ethnic minority entrepreneurs than non-minorities (see Bewaji et al., 2015; Canedo et al., 2013; Reuben & Queen, 2015), the SBOs in this study were able to secure traditional loans from banks.

Except for providing limited start-up capital, the SBOs in this study did not rely on their relational social network for monetary resources. This lack of reliance on financial resources from relational social network support contrasts with prior research that immigrant entrepreneurs relied on social networks for financial assistance (see Edelman, Manolova, Shirokova, & Tsukanova, 2016; Daskalakis, Jarvis, & Schizas, 2013; Rauch, Rosenbusch, Unger, & Frese, 2016). Therefore, the SBO in this study were able to use traditional financing practices such as obtaining loans and revolving credit.

Cost management and inventory control. Resource scarcity is a major concern, particularly for entrepreneurs of small firms (Lisboa et al., 2013; Voss & Voss, 2013). To address resource scarcity, the SBOs had to manage costs and implement controls for inventory. SBO1's financial management policy included implementing a cost structure strategy of finding low cost/high-yield products to offer to consumers. SBO1 created a consumer behavior database to monitor customer preference. Using the database enabled SBO1 to identify low-cost yet high-yield consumer items. SBO1 considered waste a significant concern and created inventory worksheets to monitor inventory usage and control inventory spending. Both SBO1 and SBO2 used point-of-sales technology to manage inventory and control inventory costs through sales tracking. SBO2 also used the point-of-sales system to compile documents for tax reporting. Use of external sources also helped in controlling inventory. SBO2 integrated supplier support for inventory control, allowing suppliers to compile weekly inventory invoices. SBO2's unique entrepreneur-supplier relationship is reminiscent of just-in-time inventory management used in Lean-focused organizations (see Elking, Paraskevas, Grimm, Corsi, & Steven,

2017; Hu, Mason, Williams, & Found, 2015). SBO2's supplier relationship is somewhat surprising giving Zhou's (2016) research that small enterprises have limited use of Lean methodologies from a supply chain perspective.

SBO3 is the sole source for inventory management. Based on experience operating the restaurant, SBO3 replenishes stock inventory weekly. SBO3's cost management focused a self-imposed goal of keeping overhead costs at no more than 30% of total operating costs. Strategies that SBO3 indicated to achieve the 30% goal included reducing lighting and managing available labor, based on customer demand. SBO3 implemented a daily work schedule used, not only as a tool to rotate duties for training purposes, but to also control labor usage. SBO3 or an assistant briefs the schedule to employees daily. Therefore, careful monitoring of overhead costs aided the SBOs' cost management efforts.

Financing and controlling costs and inventory are essential activities for entrepreneurs. The SBOs in this study obtained financing from traditional financing institutions, despite research indicating the difficulties experienced by other ethnic minority borrowers. The use of personal savings was prominent in financing the business. Strategies to control cost included use of point-of-sales databases to identify low-cost/high-yield items, developing and implementing daily work schedules, and reducing overhead costs. The SBOs used inventory control checklists, relied on supplier input, and conducted weekly assessments of stock levels to control inventory costs.

Rationale for entrepreneurship. People become entrepreneurs for various reasons (Braymen & Neymotin, 2013; Fray, 2014; Z. Moon et al., 2013; Rubach et al.,

2015). Two reasons are opportunity and necessity Limited employment options are catalysts for entrepreneurship out of necessity, whereas the attraction of owning a business or the emergence of profitable opportunities motivate others into entrepreneurship (Braymen & Neymotin, 2013; Rubach et al., 2015). However, the reasons why ethnic minorities engage in entrepreneurship is more complicated than merely citing out of necessity or opportunity (Knight, 2013). Research conducted by Z. Moon et al. found that immigrants engaged in entrepreneurship for reasons other than limit opportunities, income, or human capital. The SBOs in this study became entrepreneurs out of necessity and opportunity.

SBO1 credited family members, whom also owned businesses, as the prime motivator of becoming an entrepreneur. In demonstrating Knight's (2013) complexity theory, SBO2 exhibited both necessity and opportunistic causations for starting an entrepreneurship. After leaving college and working in a restaurant to support family members, a former employer gave SBO2 the opportunity to own a restaurant. SBO2 used the experiences gained working in the former employer's restaurant and decided to start a business. SBO2's opportunistic behavior is in keeping with research conducted by Z. Moon et al. (2013) for reasons why immigrants become entrepreneurs. SBO3 exploited the opportunity to open the business after recognizing the lack of competition for Latin American cuisine in the central area of Georgia. Thus, the entrepreneurship established by the SBOs in the study was for reasons of necessity and opportunity.

In summary, three major themes emerged from the data collection. The first theme, cultivation of ego-networks, is comprised of the social support networks built

from the relationships of family, friends, suppliers, and customers. Customer word-of-mouth advertising demonstrated the strength of the relationships, which the SBOs augmented by providing good customer service. The SBOs relied on outsourcing services and used social media for advertising purposes.

Human capital development was the second major theme emerging from the data collection. The SBOs used a hands-on approach when developing the skills and abilities of employees, primarily through OJT, training manuals, or rotating duty assignments. The SBOs stimulated knowledge sharing through employee-led training and encouraged open communication. The SBOs self-taught the business-related education needed to operate the restaurant, and gained knowledge from prior work experience.

The SBOs practiced activities typical of entrepreneurship, such as using personal savings and loans from financial institutions to finance the business. Using point-of-sales technology, inventory checklists, and relying on supplier support were ways in which the SBOs controlled inventory. In addition to controlling inventory, cost management activities implemented by the SBOs included reducing overhead, managing labor, and itemizing products based on a low-cost, high-yield structure. Last, the SBOs provided the rationale for becoming entrepreneurs based on necessity or for opportunistic reasons.

The strategies and activities observed by the SBOs relate to the entrepreneurship and knowledge management conceptual framework. The SBOs exhibited innovation, risk-taking, and the dimensions of entrepreneurial and marketing orientation in operating the business. Knowledge management concepts used included acquiring knowledge, transfer of tacit knowledge, documentation of explicit knowledge, and creating a culture

conducive to knowledge sharing. From the strategies and activities presented by these successful entrepreneurs are applications appropriate for professional practice.

Applications to Professional Practice

The findings from this qualitative, exploratory multiple case study offer applications to professional business practice based on the entrepreneurship and knowledge management strategies demonstrated by the three successful SBOs in this study. In particular, Latin American small business entrepreneurs could gain vital insight to sustain operations beyond 5 years from the findings of this doctoral study.

Latin American small business entrepreneurs must understand the value of cultivating social network support and how to use the social networks to their advantage. C.-H. Liu and Lee (2015) revealed that social networks positively influenced entrepreneurial orientation and knowledge management behaviors in organizations. Social networks are means of providing resources deemed critical for entrepreneurial success (C. Smith et al., 2017). Embedded in social networks is social capital, considered an essential asset for small businesses (Stam et al., 2014). Advice to build external social support networks is especially pertinent for Latin American entrepreneurs. Latin Americans, as well as other immigrant entrepreneurs, typically rely on family members and friends for support (Bewaji et al., 2015; Fray, 2014). Reliance on family members and friends for support limits opportunities to obtain resources from external sources.

Nurturing relationships with customers and employees also proved beneficial for business success. Furthering relationships with customers builds goodwill, prompting repeat patronage (C.-H. Liu & Lee, 2015). Moreover, bettering relations with customers

fosters innovation capabilities (Sulistyo, 2016). Enhancing employee relationships is also constructive. Entrepreneurs who strengthen relations with employees build trust (Alaarj et al., 2016; Sankowska, 2016) that motivates employees to provide quality service to customers (D. Carter & Baghurst, 2014). Therefore, improving external social support network relationships promotes resource acquisition, customer goodwill, and innovation capabilities, while enhancing employee relationships incentivizes good performance from employees.

Fundamental to the success of the SBOs in this study was developing employee human capital. The owner is typically the source of tacit knowledge in small businesses (C. S. Lee & Wong, 2015). The SBOs in this study accentuated knowledge transfer to employees through personal training and encouraged employees to share knowledge through employee-led training. The SBOs' knowledge transfer and knowledge sharing activities enabled employee learning and skill development, similar to research findings by Edvardsson and Durst (2013). From the efforts in developing employee capabilities, small business entrepreneurs can expect better customer service and increased customer satisfaction (Jayaram & Xu, 2015). The positive outcomes of developing the human capital of employees using knowledge management activities include enhanced customer service and customer satisfaction.

Latin American entrepreneurs should seek knowledge resources from structural (i.e., weak tie) social network relationships. Incorporating knowledge from external sources is a fundamental knowledge management process for small- to medium-sized businesses (I. Alvarez, Cilleruelo, & Zamanillo, 2015). The assortment of knowledge

available from weak tie social networks offers better opportunities for entrepreneurial

innovation than from strong tie social networks (Leyden et al., 2014). For example,

knowledge gained from new customers and applied from existing customers helped

acquire new customers, improved services and operations, and stimulated innovation

(Gorry & Westbrook, 2013; K.-W. Lee, Lanting, & Rojdamrongratana, 2016). From a

cultural perspective, Latin American entrepreneurs will benefit from obtaining business-

related knowledge from informal, external sources such as workshops or other business

partners.

Small businesses typically do not maintain sophisticated knowledge management

systems, as do large organizations (Edvardsson & Durst, 2013; Wee & Chua, 2013; Zieba

et al., 2016); neither do the SBOs in this study. Small business owners can instead

implement an emergent knowledge management approach. An emergent approach to

knowledge management develops from close entrepreneur-to-employee and employee-to-

employee relationships. The close relationship between the small business entrepreneur

and employees builds trust that facilitates knowledge sharing (Wee & Chua, 2013). With

an emergent knowledge management approach, knowledge acquiring, transferring, and

sharing occurs while conducting the daily operations of the business. Small business

entrepreneurs should encourage open dialogue amongst employees, especially when

performing daily operations, to promote knowledge sharing. Tacit knowledge is critical

to the success of small businesses (see Zieba et al., 2016) and advocating open

communication between the small business owners and employees advances the sharing

of tacit knowledge.

To summarize, the data collected for this study offered applications useful for sustaining business operations. Cultivating holistic social networks facilitates acquiring resources and knowledge from external sources. Advancing relationships with customers stimulated goodwill. Small business owners should also cultivate good relationships with employees through human capital development. Providing good customer service encourages word-of-mouth advertising and customer retention. Small business entrepreneurs should seek business-related knowledge from external sources, to include informal education. Last, small business entrepreneurs can use an emergent approach to knowledge management by fostering open communication with and between employees, which facilitates tacit knowledge sharing. Sustaining business operations is beneficial to all stakeholders both economically and socially.

Implications for Social Change

According to the 2010 U.S. census, the Latino population in the state of Georgia has nearly doubled between 2000 and 2010 (Ennis, Ríos-Vargas, & Albert, 2011). The Latino population growth in the state of Georgia has sparked the growth of Latin American restaurants in the state (Hoalst-Pullen, Slinger-Friedman, Trendell, & Patterson, 2013). However, almost half of the new Latin American cuisine restaurants ceased operations within 2 years (Hoalst-Pullen et al., 2013). Latin American immigrants face challenges when seeking economic opportunities, and there is a rise of Hispanic entrepreneurs in the U.S. in general (see Canedo et al., 2013; Z. Moon et al., 2013). Understanding the strategies needed to sustain operations is vital for entrepreneurs, the entrepreneurs' families, and the communities that they serve.

The findings from this study may help decrease the high failure rate of Latin American restaurants in the state of Georgia. Hispanic-owned entrepreneurial ventures have converted neglected neighborhoods into viable business communities, increased the variety of goods and services available, and influenced the development of business associations to collaborate with local government officials (C.-H. Liu et al., 2014; Schuch & Wang, 2015). Wilmoth (2016) asserted that immigrant entrepreneurship benefits society as a whole more so than entrepreneurship benefits the entrepreneur. Therefore, mitigating business failures not only benefits the entrepreneurs' and employees' livelihood but the surrounding community's socio-economic status as well.

Giving the propensity of the SBOs in this study to develop employee's human capital, sustaining business operations will provide more opportunities to increase the employee's skills and abilities. Advancing employees' human capital fosters building a viable workforce and provides employees the wherewithal, perhaps, to start an entrepreneurship. Most of the employees who work in Latin American-owned restaurants are Latinos (Hoalst-Pullen et al., 2013). Therefore, entrepreneurs sharing tacit knowledge can bolster the intellectual capital of the Latino employees, who may not have other educational options.

Small business restaurants are significant contributors to the state of Georgia's economy (SBA, 2015a) and as such, generate meaningful tax revenue for the state. Businesses able to sustain operations provide tax revenue that enables government officials to provide social services for the state's citizenry. Small business restaurants are a significant employment source for the state of Georgia as well (SBA, 2015a). Enabling

small business restaurants to sustain operations lessens unemployment and subsequent drain on government unemployment benefits, and mitigates the negative connotation of being unemployed.

The implication for social change centers on averting business failure. Latin American entrepreneurship in the state of Georgia helped improve neighborhoods, expanded the availability of goods and services, and fostered Latin American and local government cooperation. Developing the human capital of the Latino workforce exemplifies positive social change likewise, reducing the unemployment rolls. Last, collection of tax revenue needed to support basic social services continues from businesses able to sustain operations.

Recommendations for Action

The three major themes from this study prompted some recommendations for action. Small business entrepreneurs, the SBA, Chambers of Commerce, and the Latin American Economic and Development Association (LAEDA) are in the best positions to implement the recommendations that follow for the betterment of Latin American small business owners. Infused in the recommendations for action are the suggested entrepreneurship and knowledge management practices required to sustain operations beyond 5 years. Among the entrepreneurial practices is building the entrepreneur's social support networks.

A first recommendation is for the entrepreneurs to reach out to external sources in support of business operations. Advisement to Latin American small business entrepreneurs is to build holistic social networks to include customers, suppliers,

employees, and even other entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs can use suppliers to help manage inventory by coordinating the delivery of goods based on the supplier's invoice records. Suppliers can also be a source of business-related information. Because small business entrepreneurs perform many functions in conducting business, outsourcing services is a recommendation for action. When financially feasible, outsourcing advertising services, that support marketing and provides a social media footprint, allows the entrepreneur to focus on the core competencies of the business.

Along with suppliers, entrepreneurs should continue to build trust relationships with customers by inducing a friendly and hospitable atmosphere. Building customer relationships fostered innovation and improved performance in organizations (Sulistyo, 2016). Greeting customers warmly, being observant of the customer's behavior, offering incentives, and providing good customer service are strategies to gain and retain customers. The benefits of displaying hospitality to customers exceed the efforts required. Quality customer service is essential in retaining repeat customers and influencing customer word-of-mouth advertising.

Developing the human capital of the entrepreneur and employees is essential. Creating training manuals, rotating duties, and conducting comprehensive OJT are recommend techniques to develop employees. Although researchers have called for entrepreneurs to obtain some formal entrepreneurial-related education (see Maritz & Brown, 2013; Martin et al., 2013; Marvel et al., 2016), a less formal methodology is equally appropriate. Immigrant small business entrepreneurs preferred obtaining business-related education from informal sources (Canedo et al., 2013; Z. Moon et al.,

2013). Therefore, a recommendation for action is for agencies, such as the SBA and Chamber of Commerce, to develop and conduct workshops on business-related topics. Business-related topics of interest to Latin American entrepreneurs include developing business plans, tax laws, acquiring capital, and management training (Canedo et al., 2013; Z. Moon et al., 2013).

Various avenues are available for disseminating the recommendations presented in this study to Latin American entrepreneurs. The findings and recommendations for actions from this study are applicable for discussion at seminars sponsored by LAEDA (see http://www.laeda.com). LAEDA is an organization that provides scholars and practitioners a forum to share information that may benefit Latin American entrepreneurs. The SBA could also provide information to small business entrepreneurs. The SBA's SBDC staff can use the recommendations for action to build instructional aids for small entrepreneurs. The recommendations from this study might provide the SBA insight of ways to better assist Latin American small business entrepreneurs.

In addition to the business and academic outlets mentioned earlier, the results of this study are also available to students, researchers and practitioners of entrepreneurship, and academia through ProQuest/UMI database access. I will provide a copy of this study to the participants, and offer to explain the results to the participants. Other methods to share these results are through publication in peer-reviewed journals, conference presentations, particularly conferences intended for Hispanic audiences, and Chamber of Commerce materials and business information resources.

Recommendations for Further Research

The purpose of this qualitative, exploratory multiple case study was to explore entrepreneurship and knowledge management strategies used to sustain operations beyond 5 years. The population for this study was three Latin American small business restaurant owners, who successfully sustained operations for more than 5 years. Resultant from the study were three major themes related to the entrepreneurial and knowledge management strategies that the SBOs used to sustain operations. In addition to the findings and recommendations for action are the recommendations for further research.

Limiting the study to a specific ethnic group, for this case study Latin American immigrants, may cause generalizability concerns in applying the research to small business owners overall. While the selection of Latin Americans was to fill gaps in the literature, researchers may consider replicating the study to other small business owners, regardless of ethnicity. Additionally, only SBOs contributed semistructured interviews. Expanding future research to include employee interviews may prove helpful in capturing rich descriptions of knowledge management strategies from the employees' perspective. Interviewing employees in focus groups would facilitate triangulation with data collected from the SBO.

Review of the literature identified available resources to assist small business entrepreneurs, including the SBA and Chamber of Commerce. However, the SBOs in this study indicated not using the resources available from these agencies. Review of the literature also revealed the value of membership in the Chamber of Commerce for small business owners; yet, neither of the SBOs are members of the Chamber of Commerce.

These omissions require further research regarding the reasons why SBOs do not seek using resources from the SBA or Chamber of Commerce. Such additional research may provide these agencies insight to develop strategies to extend support efforts to Latin American small business owners. Last, using a mixed-method research approach may further explain the strategies used to sustain operations beyond 5 years. Researchers can achieve this objective by collecting qualitative data from the owners and using quantitative survey instruments to collect data from employees or assistant managers. A mixed-method approach would also promote the study's validity and reliability.

To summarize, the limitations presented for this study offers suggestions for future researchers in exploring strategies used by small business owners to sustain operations beyond 5 years. Further research of benefit includes replicating the study to small business owners regardless of ethnicity and to include employees in the data collection process. Additional research would explore the reasons for not using resources available from outside agencies and last; researchers could apply a mixed-method approach to support the qualitative research.

Reflections

As an African-American, I am mindful of the challenges that ethnic minorities face as small business entrepreneurs. When asked why did I select Latin Americans as a research population, my answer was that I simply admired the number of successful Latin American restaurants in the central Georgia area. I hoped to uncover successful entrepreneurial and knowledge management strategies and disseminate that information to other ethnic minority entrepreneurs. I plan to return as an adjunct at a local historically

Black university, and I will share my findings with the students, regardless of their intent to become entrepreneurs.

I mistakenly thought that finding participants to engage in this study would not be difficult. Indeed, finding eligible Latin American participants was challenging, and I attribute the reluctance of willing participants to the cultural differences between the Latin American participants and myself. If I were to conduct future research involving immigrants of a particular ethnic group, I would solicit assistant from a person of the same ethnicity early in the research to help with developing research questions and help build trust with potential participants.

Having completed this arduous, yet insightful challenge, I am appreciative of the research, critical thinking, and epistemological skills that I have learned. A motivating factor to complete this journey was the possibility of contributing meaningful knowledge management strategies to senior leaders to combat the impending loss of tacit knowledge when personnel leave the federal workforce. As I traversed through the knowledge management research over the past 5 years, I believe the proliferation of social media and the Internet of Things will further evolve the knowledge management landscape. I hope to take advantage of the technology-infused knowledge management evolution, and I am grateful for the skills I have learned while attending Walden University, which has positioned me to do so.

Conclusion

I began this study by stating the importance of small businesses to the overall U.S. economy. Small businesses contributed $1.8 trillion in annual revenue and employment

for 13.5 million people. The small business restaurant industry helped fuel the economy following the 2008 financial crisis. Significantly contributing to the economic resurgence were the efforts of small business restaurant owners.

Small business restaurant owners primarily rely on personal savings to start their business. As such, I would argue that business failure for small business restaurants is economically and perhaps, emotionally devastating. Still, 40% of small business restaurants do not survive the 5th year. The success strategies documented in this study will enable small business restaurant owners to sustain operations beyond 5 years. The devastation of economic collapse and unemployment is disheartening and demoralizing. Incorporating these strategies will benefit the small business restaurant owners, their families, and the communities that they serve.

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Appendix A: Employment in Georgia by Industry and Firm Size, 2012

Industry	Employment	
	Small firms	Total firms
Accommodation & food services	215,149	358,799
Health care & social assistance	201,617	459,876
Retail trade	136,446	436,660
Professional, scientific, & technical services	136,382	227,434
Other services (except public admin.)	128,928	150,972
Manufacturing	116,471	335,703
Construction	114,145	138,834
Administrative support, waste management & remedial services	104,792	330,120
Wholesale trade	102,853	187,834
Finance & insurance	51,584	162,056
Educational services	39,707	80,027
Transportation & warehousing	38,569	155,414
Real estate & rental & leasing	36,020	55,553
Arts, entertainment, & recreation	26,662	41,678
Information	24,220	115,755
Management of companies & enterprises	10,647	116,785
Forestry & agriculture support	7,161	7,499
Utilities	6,421	24,254
Mining, quarrying, and oil & gas extraction	2,520	5,071
Unclassified	216	216
Total	1,500,510	3,390,540

Note. Adapted from "Small Businesses by Industry," by U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), *2016 Small Business Profiles for the States and Territories* [Online reference], p. 47. Produced 2016, SBA Office of Advocacy.

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Actions during interview	Scripted dialogue for the interview
Open the interview by thanking the participant for the opportunity and briefly restating the purpose	Good (afternoon/evening). First, I would like to thank you for taking the time to allow me to interview you for my doctoral study. I admire how successful your restaurant is and I hope to explore what entrepreneurial and knowledge management strategies you have implemented to maintain that success.
	The food and service industry is a huge economic engine for the U.S. economy. Unfortunately, many restaurants fail to stay in business past 5 years. You are part of a very competitive business and I hope to discover ways to help other restaurants stay in business and avoid economic ruin.
	I hoped I explained clearly the purpose for this interview, my ethical obligations to you, and what are your rights in the consent form. If you do not mind, I will be recording the interview so I can transcribe your exact words. I will also be taking notes to help jog my memory, later when I am transcribing your answers to these questions.

If you do not have any questions or concerns, I would like to start the interview.

Actions during interview	**Interview questions**
During the interview process I will:	1. What education or training helped prepare you to operate your small business restaurant?
• Watch for non-verbal cues	2. What financial support strategies did you use to help start and maintain your business?
• Paraphrase as needed to ensure clarity	3. What community or outside resources strategies did you use to support your business?
• Ask follow-up questions to probe for deeper meaning	4. What marketing strategies did you use to support operating your small business?
• Maintain a neutral stance	5. What strategies did you use to manage the cost of operating your business?
	6. What strategies did you use to manage the knowledge needed to operate your business?
	7. What strategies do you use to encourage your employees to share knowledge?
	8. What strategies did you find most effective in sustaining your small business restaurant?
	9. What strategies not discussed has helped with the success of you business?

Schedule a follow-up member checking interview	At a later date, I would like to share my interpretation of this interview with you to ensure I captured your exact thoughts and opinions during this interview. Can we schedule a time and date for a follow-up session, perhaps a week or so from now?
Conclude interview by thanking the participant	Again, I would like to thank you for your time and energy for this interview, and thank you for helping me address a serious issue in the restaurant and other businesses as well. I look forward to meeting with you again.

Appendix C: Letter of Invitation

Date: _____

Dear Small Business Owner,

My name is Bruce Gaynor and I am a student attending Walden University. I am conducting a study on Latin American immigrant small business restaurant owners. I am interested in studying what strategies you have used to succeed in the restaurant business here in Middle Georgia and I need your help.

I would like to interview you. The interview will take no more than 90 minutes. With your permission and consent, I would like to ask you a few questions and record your answers. I would also like to review any documents, such as checklist or training guides that you use to share knowledge with your employees. I promise I will keep your personal information confidential, and I will not publish or share your personal information with anybody or any other business. I will share the results of this study with you and business organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce.

To be a part of this study, you must be of Latin American descent, be responsible for the day-to-day operations, manage the knowledge to run your restaurant, and be an owner of the restaurant for at least 5 years. There is no compensation for participating in the study. My hope is that the results of the study will make a difference in helping other Latin American small business restaurant owners be successful and provide employment for the communities they serve. For your information, I used records maintained by the Department of Environmental Health to identify potential participants.

If you decide to participate in the study, please contact me by phone at [Insert telephone number] or by email at [Insert email address] by [Insert date]. You may also contact me if you have any questions about this research project. Please help me make a difference in the lives of Latin American and other minority entrepreneurs. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,

Bruce D. Gaynor, MBA
DBA Candidate, Walden University
[Insert telephone number]

Appendix D: Protocol for Follow-Up Member Checking Interview

Actions during interview	Scripted dialogue for the interview
Provide an introduction for the member checking interview	Hello and again thank you for your time and support for my doctoral study. It is important for academic and ethical research that I captured your exact thoughts from the initial interview. To do so, I would like to read the original questions asked during that interview and give you a brief summary of how you answered the question.
Provide a copy of the interview summary to the participant. For each question and summation, ask if he or she agrees with the summary, if you missed anything, or if he or she would like to add anything	1. What education or training helped prepare you to operate your small business restaurant? [insert brief summary of the recorded interview] 2. What financial support strategies did you use to help start and maintain your business? [insert brief summary of the recorded interview] 3. What community or outside resources strategies did you use to support your business? [insert brief summary of the recorded interview]
Continue to probe until no new information is collected	4. What marketing strategies did you use to support operating your small business? [insert brief summary of the recorded interview]

5. What strategies did you use to manage the cost of operating your business? [insert brief summary of the recorded interview]

6. What strategies did you use to manage knowledge needed to operate your business? [insert brief summary of the recorded interview]

7. What strategies do you use to encourage your employees to share knowledge? [insert brief summary of the recorded interview]

8. What strategies did you find most effective in sustaining your small business restaurant? [insert brief summary of the recorded interview]

9. What strategies not discussed has helped with the success of you business?