THE ROLE OF EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES ON THE

DEVELOPMENT OF KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND DISPOSITIONS OF SUCCESSFUL

ENTREPRENEURS IN HAWAI'I

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By

Kari S. Leong

Dissertation Committee:

Sarah J. Twomey, Chairperson
Steve Shiraki
Val Iwashita
Lynn Mochizuki

Abstract

There is a powerful link between entrepreneurship and economic vitality that serves to maintain a growing and thriving economy. When eight million jobs were lost in the United States during the Great Recession—December 2007 through June 2009—there was an upswing in entrepreneurship, as individuals began pursuing their entrepreneurial dreams. Academic interest in entrepreneurship blossomed as colleges and institutions developed entrepreneurial programs that would prepare interested entrepreneurial students to develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to start a business.

This exploratory case study examines a range of educational experiences that influenced the development of five successful entrepreneurs in Hawaiʻi. Their rich and varied experiences, which included building relationships, fostering a team, developing a supportive network, facing challenges with a growth mindset, and connecting passion with purpose, were influential in their development.

The results suggest that a combination of formal, informal, non-formal, and experiential educational experiences may influence the development of key knowledge, skills, and dispositions of successful entrepreneurs. The findings may be of interest to researchers or educators who are developing entrepreneurial curriculum, activities, and experiences that may better prepare aspiring entrepreneurs for careers in the 21st century marketplace.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

During the Industrial Revolution, in the period of 1760 to 1840, a new manufacturing process started transitioning from hand production methods to machines, making production factories more efficient with the development of goods. Throughout this time, many immigrants were coming to America from Europe and Asia to work in factories because the pay was poor in their countries and America was seen as "the land of opportunity." These immigrants had little money, few possessions, and a good work ethic (Roberts, 2010).

The Information Age has created another significant change in how the flow of workers interacts with the demands of the marketplace. The world is moving towards globalization hiring practices in which employees can work from any site. These employees, coined "virtual," are often computer workers who do data entry, writing, editing, test video games, and anything that can be done on a computer not at a designated location (Cherry, 2010). Companies are outsourcing low wage jobs to foreign countries with highly skilled and educated employees who work for relatively low-wages while many American college graduates are left with limited job choices, minimal work experience, and high pay expectations (Nader, 2014).

After the recession in 2008, many more American companies began utilizing highly skilled and educated professionals from other countries. These companies found that their dollar stretched further with foreign workers because many offshore workers are paid at wages below the average American worker for the same occupation within the United States (Nader, 2014). This has affected the American college graduate market.

More American companies outsource work, which according to Nader (2014), "obviously darken(s) job prospects for America's struggling young scientists and engineers (and workers) trying to find jobs commensurate with their skills" (para. 4).

Recently, I had an engaging conversation with a college graduate who shared with me the challenges of getting a job. He said that he would like to have his own business but did not know how to start, even though he had just completed a Bachelor's degree in Business Management. As I reflected on this conversation, I began to worry about my children's future and what choices they would have when choosing a career or college pathway, and that neither might promise a good job and/or success.

As I embarked on this study, I discovered that a college degree no longer translated into higher earnings and more employment opportunities. Businesses are now expanding their search for work teams globally and are using the Internet as a tool to communicate with team members at a low to no cost. Friedman (2005) refers to the world as being flat and mentions that individual entrepreneurs as well as companies, both large and small, are becoming part of a large, complex, global supply chain extending across oceans, with competition spanning entire continents. The dynamics of globalization and virtual communication has spurred competition between countries, cities, and employers, which have increased the interest in entrepreneurial activities (Weiser, 2011).

Over the last 50 years, there has been an increased interest in entrepreneurship throughout the United States. With the challenge of finding job opportunities within local and national companies, college graduates are considering entrepreneurial opportunities. Downsizing, headhunting, early-retirement, and outsourcing have now become commonplace throughout the nation, which has also driven individuals to start their own

business and become entrepreneurial to maintain a desired lifestyle (Hisrich & Peters, 2002).

In the last decade, diverse educational opportunities for aspiring entrepreneurs have been created in over 1,500 colleges and universities worldwide (Charney, 2000). Although interest in entrepreneurship has grown within the academic community, there are emerging contradictions between education and entrepreneurship with regard to the nature and nurture debate. Collett (2012) believes that encouraging an entrepreneurial spirit through education is the key to entrepreneurship that leads to job creation and improving competitiveness and economic growth throughout a global market economy. Conversely, Shane (2010) believes that a person is born with the entrepreneurship gene and that "some people are more likely than others to become entrepreneurs because they were born with the variants of genes that increase their odds" (p. 153).

As a teacher, a mother of four children, a doctoral candidate, and an entrepreneur for 20 years, I was interested in exploring how educational experiences might have a role in the development of knowledge, skills, and dispositions of an entrepreneur. Mandell (1995) states that many entrepreneurs do not believe that formal education makes any difference in their endeavors. Conversely, Hisrich and Peters (2002) and McGrath and MacMillan (1992) argue that educational experiences do impact an entrepreneur's journey. According to the Small Business Economic Report (Moutray, 2008), there is a positive link between education and entrepreneurship. The report suggests a robust performance when an educated person chooses an entrepreneurial route. However, there is no correlation between the level of education and the success of an entrepreneur.

As an English Language Learner teacher who works with minorities in a low socio-economic area of the island (family income for 56% of students enrolled is under $15,171 annually in 2015) (StartClass, 2017), I want to help students develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions they need to live the *American Dream* that many of their parents hoped for their children when moving to America. The traditional education system in America, which many consider dated and need of a radical transformation, provides a set curriculum that limits students' thinking and will keep them in the same class living level throughout their lives (Szarowicz, 2004). According to the functionalists view, the three main aims of education are: 1) role allocation; 2) providing skills; and, 3) socialization. Concerned with the way of life for my students, in this study I seek to identify the key knowledge, skills, and dispositions of successful entrepreneurs that may suggest ways in which I can help prepare my students for the real world and life; with the possibility of helping them to move up in social class, developing skills for a better job, and possibly, becoming an entrepreneur. It is my hope that by identifying these key qualities and helping my students to develop them, they will have the ability to think effectually and learn how to create opportunities in whatever career pathway they choose later in life.

Overall, questions continue to emerge concerning the complex relationship between education and entrepreneurial success. The purpose of this study is to explore the connections between educational experiences and the development of entrepreneurship to add to our understanding of the phenomena of entrepreneurialism.

The Problem

As previously stated, it is no longer the case that continuing to higher education will provide a person with more job opportunities and higher pay. A person with a college degree is not immune to local and national economic problems that affect the job market. Unfortunately, business owners need to do what is best to keep their business running. As stated, many businesses are now outsourcing work to other countries to stay competitive and profitable where the wages are lower, yet quality of work remains at an American standard. According to the Small Business Administration (2012), most businesses shut down within two years of opening for different reasons such as, financial challenges, lack of customer interest, inability to build a strong team of experts to move the company's mission and vision forward, and the inability to create systems for the business to grow.

Interest in entrepreneurship is on the rise and is proving as a positive trend for Hawai'i because of the tough job market, fierce competition in the local workplace, and more outsourcing of jobs. Hawai'i was ranked eighth in CNN Money's Top Ten Entrepreneurial Places in America (Kavilanz, 2013). So how do we properly prepare people exiting the work force to start their own business? How can the education system support aspiring entrepreneurs to succeed?

The current curricula in entrepreneurship education varies in topic and extends its focus from developing skills to learning about entrepreneurship as a phenomenon (Rassmussen, 2006), experiencing learning techniques with traditional teaching methods (Pittz, 2014), and examining of traits, characteristics, and motivation of entrepreneurs (Vanevenhoven, 2013). In addition, other curricula develop entrepreneurial skill sets and

mindset, or create a holistic competency-based approach in an entrepreneurship 'tool box' (Winkel, 2013). While there are a variety of approaches to teaching entrepreneurship, there is not enough evidence showing which elements and methods are most beneficial in promoting the success of entrepreneurs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the role that educational experiences have on the development of knowledge, skills, and dispositions of successful entrepreneurs in Hawaiʻi. The results may provide useful information and an understanding of the relationship between educational experiences and entrepreneurial success. The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How have educational experiences impacted the development of successful entrepreneurs?

2. What are some key knowledge, skills, and dispositions of successful entrepreneurs?

3. Are entrepreneurs born or made?

Significance of Study

This research aims to address the connection between educational experiences and the success of entrepreneurs in Hawaiʻi. I first begin by defining entrepreneurship. Then, I explore the educational experiences that may have played a role in the development of knowledge, skills, and dispositions of five aspiring entrepreneurs in Hawaiʻi. The discussion on the development of entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, and dispositions hopes to answer the last research question of whether entrepreneurs are born or made. With "Generation Z" predicted as the most entrepreneurial, tech savvy, connected

globally and self-educated (Schawbel, 2014), this research hopes to provide useful information that addresses the role that educational experiences have in shaping aspiring entrepreneurs.

Furthermore, this study provides a clearer connection between the affects of educational experiences and entrepreneurship success. The results of this study may aid those who are deciding on a career or educational path to create the life that he/she wants. By exploring the various educational experiences that influenced an entrepreneurs' success, aspiring entrepreneurs will see that each phenomenon is unique. I believe this study, regardless of economic circumstances and job opportunities, one can rely on the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that have been developed through educational experiences to help him/her create his/her own career and become the next successful entrepreneur.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, I define the following terms and definitions as follows:

Business success: Ibrahim and Goodwin (1986) state "a business [is] successful if it remains in business for five or more years and achieves positive sales growth" (p. 42).

Educational experience: As defined by The Glossary of Education Reform (2013),an educational experience is also known as a learning experience. A learning experience refers to any interaction, course, program, or other experience in which learning takes place, whether it occurs in formal or traditional academic settings (schools, classrooms) or non-formal or nontraditional settings (outside-of-school locations, outdoor environments), or whether it includes traditional educational interactions (students

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learning from teachers and professors) or nontraditional/informal interactions (students

learning through games and interactive software applications) (para.1).

Entrepreneur: The definition of "entrepreneur" continues to change and evolve

with no universal definition. Merriam-Webster (2015) defines an entrepreneur as

"a person who starts a business and is willing to risk loss in order to make money"

(para.1).

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The review of literature is aligned with the purpose of this study—an exploration of the role educational experiences have on developing knowledge, skills, and dispositions of successful entrepreneurs in Hawaiʻi. The following sections will reflect the process as outlined: a) provide a contextual background about the educational experiences of an entrepreneur; b) identify the knowledge, skills, and dispositions entrepreneurs possess; c) provide greater insight into whether an entrepreneur is born or made.

The Role of Education

For many in the United States, education is seen as a vehicle to provide students with curricula that teach skills that will prepare them physically, mentally, and socially for the world of work later in life (Szarowicz, 2004). However, many will argue that the educational system does not work for everyone in the United States. Not all people in the United States have an equal opportunity to move out of lower socio-economic living conditions and as a result, remain in their role in society, develop skills, and socialization that perpetuates this inequity (Szarowicz, 2004). With the different pathways to learning, such as formal, informal, non-formal, and experiential education, educators have been challenged to keep up with inculcating a variety of competencies, ideas, skills, and knowledge that students must master.

The United States education system was built on teacher-centered methods that focused on rote learning and memorization. According to John Dewey, educational reformer, this traditional method of education is imposed from above and from the

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outside. Dewey describes a learning environment in where students are expected to docilely and obediently receive and believe fixed answers, while teachers are instruments to deliver and communicate the knowledge, while enforcing standard behaviors (Dewey, 1963). However, more parents are seeing the need to abandon traditional methods in favor of more progressive educational practices of student-centered and task-based approaches that promotes meeting individual students' learning needs. According to DeHaan and Ebert-May (2009), creativity skills, sense of inquiry, use of imagination, and the ability to synthesize information are not nurtured in the traditional classroom so they researched methods to enhance these skills that promote cognitive flexibility needed in the work place.

Since the Great Recession of 2007, there has been a change in economy and a high rate of unemployment. The government and educational institutions are making an effort to identify ways in which to educate and train our students to think more creatively, innovatively, imaginatively, and analytically. Reynolds, Hay, Bygrave, Camp, and Autio (2000) and Sanchez (2010) believe that the government is one factor that influences the rate of entrepreneurship growth through legislation and educational systems. Sarasvathy (2004) states:

> Traditional education systems around the world are very good at teaching students to think causally, to set a pre-determined goal and then acquire the means and resources to find the most efficient way of achieving it. People who use effectual reasoning, on the other hand, start with a given set of means and allow goals to emerge and change over time. (p.2)

Raposo (2011) states:

> [F]irst, education provides individuals with a sense of autonomy independence and self-confidence. Second, education makes people aware of alternative career choices. Third, education broadens the horizons of individuals, thereby making people better equipped to perceive opportunities, and finally, education provides knowledge that can be used by individuals to develop new entrepreneurial opportunities. (p. 454)

The motivation to teach students, according to Raposo (2011), to think entrepreneurially is to help them develop a different mindset that encourages effectual and causal thinking. An entrepreneur will develop his/her idea utilizing effectual thinking, based on logic, to use a given set of means and allow goals to emerge and change over time by voyaging onto unchartered waters. The entrepreneur will eventually move to causal thinking of expanding the business and conquering the market.

Rae and Carswell (2000) states, "Learning theories offer several understandings of the role of learning in entrepreneurship" (p. 221). Kolb (1984) says that learning is an experiential process through which conceptualization stems from and adapted by experiences. Education is provided through learning experiences in different formats—formal, non-formal, and informal—but there is no agreement as to which plays the biggest role in the development of an entrepreneur. Raposo and Paco (2011) believe that entrepreneurs become successful through the experiences in their lives. They also point out that entrepreneurship education can help to access the skills and knowledge that a person has and the requirements to start and grow a business. Kuratko (2005) feels that an entrepreneurial perspective can be developed through experiences within an organization

if given the opportunity to create ideas and be innovative. The 2006 Small Business Economic Report finds that the highest levels of entrepreneurship link to individuals that have some college education (Raposo, 2011).

Influences of entrepreneurial growth are based on exploitation of entrepreneurial knowledge as a source of economic development. The availability of entrepreneurial knowledge creation and commercialization of entrepreneurial knowledge vary in different locations, which may affect growth performance. According to Karlsson, Johansson, and Stough (2009), there is a correlation between knowledge, entrepreneurship, and economic growth. Knowledge is a broad concept that can be developed in many different ways. For this study, the development of knowledge is explored through educational experiences that impacted the success of these entrepreneurs.

Types of Educational Experiences

In this section I look at the educational experiences that have played a role in the development and success of an entrepreneur. For this study, the term educational experiences refer to learning experiences. Living life is naturally full of education; there are many lessons learned and knowledge gained through experiences. American philosopher John Dewey (1893) encouraged people to stop thinking that education is a mere preparation for later life, but to find the full meaning of life by living in one's present life of experiences. Cortes-Ramirez (2014) reviewed Sir Francis Bacon's theory of ideology and culture, promoting the belief that knowledge is power and found that humans acquire knowledge through different educational experiences such as formal, informal, and non-formal.

Formal education. For the context of this research, formal education refers to education that occurs at an institution of higher education, which follows a curriculum to develop knowledge and skills. According to Finkle, Kuratko, and Goldsby (2006), formal education for aspiring entrepreneurs in the United States is available at over 1,600 different schools with 2,200 courses, 277 positions, 44 referred academic journals, other mainstream management journals, and over 100 funded centers focused on entrepreneurship. Hoy (1994) states:

> [T]he growth of entrepreneurship as an academic discipline is well documented. It can be measured by the expanding number of schools instituting entrepreneurship courses, by the proliferation of courses within colleges and universities, by the frequency of academic meetings addressing entrepreneurship education and research, by the increase in faculty and faculty positions specializing in entrepreneurship, and by the new journals in the field. (p. 216)

As educational institutions create curricula to offer entrepreneurship classes and programs, there is very little agreement on the specific elements and methods that should be used to teach entrepreneurship (Vanevenhoven, 2013). There are contradicting beliefs about what should be included in entrepreneurial programs to prepare aspiring entrepreneurs because of the lack of accepted theories of entrepreneurship education and the infancy of entrepreneurial interest. There are a few approaches within entrepreneurship education literature that has been identified of how entrepreneurship preparation could be attempted for aspiring entrepreneurs (Bernstein, 2011). Vesper and McMullen (1988) believe that preparing entrepreneurs must include skill-building courses in negotiation, leadership, new product development, creative thinking, and

exposure to technological innovation. Charney and Libecap (2000) suggest that a program for entrepreneurs should cover a broad set of goals including: integrating various courses and disciplines; providing the foundation for new businesses; improving graduates' employment prospects; promoting the transfer of university-based technology; forging links between the business and academic communities; and providing an opportunity to experiment with curriculums. Envick (1998) believes that entrepreneurship education needs a more focused effort on identifying distinct needs that emphasize innovation and creativity, rather than traditional business education that stresses conservatism.

Leitch (2012) believes that "Entrepreneurship education is a key input to the development of appropriate knowledge and skills" (p. 733). Fayolle and Gailly (2009) agree and suggest that entrepreneurial education should include activities that foster entrepreneurial mindset, attitude and skills, idea generation, start-up, growth, and innovation. Leitch (2012) also mentions that entrepreneurship education is important and states, "A key instrument in the development of entrepreneurial attitudes is education, which can be particularly influential in increasing an individual's intent to start a business" (p. 734).

While the interest in entrepreneurship education has grown, educators continue to find challenges in meeting the learning needs of each student with varying learning needs and styles. Additionally, a person's educational experiences affect the learning curve of

developing entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Vanevenhoven (2013) notes:

> Some of the challenges of determining entrepreneurship education are students learning at different rates, having different motivations, starting with different bases of knowledge and experience, and having access to different resources and networks. In addition, another challenge is educators have different discipline specialties, different levels of capability, and different resource networks. (p. 467)

Although institutions and organizations are still trying to figure out the elements and methods to teach entrepreneurship, a study conducted by Luca (2012), found that the involvement of entrepreneurship courses is the beginning of future entrepreneurial activities. "Extending the focus of entrepreneurship education from skills development to learning and entrepreneurship as a phenomenon increases not only entrepreneurial awareness but also entrepreneurial knowledge in individuals who may work for entrepreneurs or get involved in entrepreneurial activity" (Leitch, 2012, p. 734).

Shefsky (1994) points out those instructors who teach entrepreneurship sometimes present a challenge to prepare entrepreneurs for success. Those who teach entrepreneurship do not have any personal experience of actually starting a business; however, they may possess traits of an entrepreneur. They choose another career and keep their interest in entrepreneurship hidden. Shefsky (1994) uses the term "divergent-path syndrome" to describe a person who makes a choice about their career path, yet has an interest in entrepreneurship. While these entrepreneurship educators teach from the perspective of having an interest in entrepreneurship, they teach the academics of it and not the process of being an entrepreneur. Teachers instruct to avoid risk and making

mistakes, likening it to choosing the wrong answer when doing academic work and earning a penalty. Except in business, wrong choices may cause dramatic and fatal consequences or it can go well and the business could really succeed.

Shefsky (1994) admits that not all businesses require the entrepreneur to have formal education. However, according to Charney and Libecap (2000) those who were involved in formal entrepreneurial education spent more time in research and development related activities and was able to able to promote the use of technology products to communicate globally about a company's service or product.

Informal education and non-formal education. One of the enduring themes in the literature is that formal education is not the only way to learn. Informal and non-formal education provides learning opportunities for a person to be in control and feel empowered while understanding the social structure around them (Fordham, 1993). Informal learning is more about influencing behavior or change of attitudes. Entrepreneurial behaviors and attitudes may be affected by relationships, mentorships, apprenticeships, or partnerships with one's own family, friends, and community. Ronstadt (1987) believes that entrepreneurship education programs should include showing students both how to behave entrepreneurially and introduce them to people who may help to facilitate success. McConnell (2015) also strongly believes in the importance of mentors for aspiring entrepreneurs and says that having the advice from someone who has been "around the block" is always helpful. Mentors may help new entrepreneurs with advice from making mistakes that he/she has already learned from, provide a different perspective on the business idea, and provide introductions to senior executives or larger companies with whom a seasoned entrepreneur may have a relationship with.

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Non-formal education is engaging learners with opportunities to learn about their interests (Fordham, 1993). This can happen through countless courses and books available to teach a person how to run a business. Hawaiʻi's Small Business Development Center offers courses about how to develop a business plan, the fundamentals of running a business, intellectual property, patents and licensing, government contracting, and breaking into or expanding international trade. These programs offer support and education for all stages of business to develop, build, or expand a business idea (Small Business Development Center, 1990).

Experiential education. Itin (1999) notes that according to the Association for Experiential Education "Experiential education is a process through which a learner constructs knowledge, skill and value from direct experience" (p. 91). According to Durrant (2014), the current entrepreneurship programs offered in the United States are more action-oriented and experiential. Experiential learning is designed to give students experience in proper context, which includes the processes of design, implementation, evaluation and feedback. Experiential learning is beneficial for students to experience situations in a contextual environment that includes fostering positive aspects while still allowing mistakes and failures to occur while learning is taking place (Itin, 1999).

Shefsky (1994) agrees that start-up entrepreneurs develop hands-on expertise as they go. He recalls a story told by one of his interviewees, Gary Greenberg, who went into the food distribution for the airlines. He saw the lack of specialized distribution system for serving millions of meals for the airlines, so he asked his friend to partner with him in a venture that would create a system for food distribution for the airlines. Using their specialized experiences from prior jobs they grew their business to one that was

worth over $50 million. Gary admitted that he and his partner knew they would make mistakes along the way, possibly lose some money, but they would also learn and grow. Neither held a Masters in Business and both lacked experience in managerial programs. However, they focused instead on what they learned from their business in day-to-day experiences.

Student attitudes toward experiential entrepreneurial experiences. The following two studies on the impact of entrepreneurship education suggest the complementary effect it has on the students enrolled in classes or programs for two years. Stamboulis and Barlas (2014) studied how entrepreneurship education impacted students' attitudes at a Greek university. There were 169 student participants; 124 were male and 45 were female. Most of the participants were electrical and computer engineering students. The majority of students was not exposed to or had not experienced entrepreneurship with family members. At the beginning of the study, 146 participants said that they wanted employment from a company, 47 planned to seek out employment in the public sector, and 17 wanted to start their own business in the future.

Questionnaires were completed by participants to measure what they felt the impact was on their mindset and comfort level of being entrepreneurial, before and after taking entrepreneurial classes. Evidence indicated that the entrepreneurial classes made a significant impact on the students' attitudes toward creating their own business after their academic program. The students' perceptions of entrepreneurship and openness to try entrepreneurship in the future became more positive than prior to taking entrepreneurial classes. There was also an improvement in students' attitudes about entrepreneurship that

was reflected in the question whether entrepreneurship suits his/her character. Lastly, there was a substantial improvement and appreciation of entrepreneurship.

The University of Otago Master of Entrepreneurship program in New Zealand (University of Otago, 2017) is a three-semester program that admits students with the following two criteria: holding a tertiary degree in any discipline or having relevant business experience. The program's structure is flexible, interactive and incorporates an experiential learning approach. The goal of the program is to emphasize experiential learning to encourage connections of theory to real life situations.

Kirkwood, Dwyer and Gray (2014) also looked at Otago University's Masters of Entrepreneurship program that utilized hands-on and experiential learning. There were 29 students who participated in the study; 18 male and 11 female. Students were asked to keep a reflective journal about their capstone project as they experienced identifying a market need, developing a business model to exploit the opportunity, conducting a feasibility study, conducting primary market research and writing a business plan, while being supervised by an Academic Leader. Researchers also kept a reflective journal to capture the value that students gained from the entrepreneurial experience.

The most prevalent theme that emerged from the students' reflections was the increased confidence in their ability to become an entrepreneur. Students also gained confidence, decreasing their fear of failing. Students did not see failing as something bad, rather a stepping-stone to learning. Eighty percent of the students appreciated the higher-level skills taught such as strategic planning and financial literacy. Additional skills and topics that were helpful to learn were time management, editing, word processing, and market research.

Students also gained value from the entrepreneurship program by learning skills that they would use in their future. A quarter of the students also mentioned the networking that was invaluable for raising finances and human resources. Kirkwood, Dwyer and Gray (2014) found that overall, evidence shows that majority of students who took part in the 18-month entrepreneurial program gained five types of value: confidence, entrepreneurship knowledge and skills, a sense of reality, practical solutions, future ideas, and networking.

Taking a closer look at the different ways entrepreneurship is learned is important because there is no evidence that proves formal, informal, non-formal, or experiential learning is a more effective way to teach entrepreneurship. However, an examination of the experiential entrepreneurial programs in Greece and New Zealand provides evidence that a combination of formal, informal, non-formal, and experiential entrepreneurship education increases students' confidence in their knowledge, skills, and ability to turn their ideas into a possible new venture (Kirkwood, 2014). There is also a growing acceptance that learning is a constant process of sense making, evolving, and their sense of meaning through what they experience and how they talk about it. Learning emerges as people explore and understand their experiences to make sense of their identity as an entrepreneur (Rae, 2000). In the next section I present some specific opportunities in Hawai'i for developing entrepreneurship skills?

Educational Opportunities in Hawai'i

Since 2011, Lemonade Alley (BizGym Foundation, 2017) has offered participants a fun activity that teaches about business and how to help boost the economy through entrepreneurship. Lemonade Alley activities include raising money, creating a simple

business plan, creating products, building a store front, developing a market strategy and partnering with a non-profit organization to donate funds to. Some schools are also utilizing Junior Achievement's Entrepreneurial program that introduces high school students to start entrepreneurial ventures while learning about advertising, competitive advantages, financing, marketing, and product development.

The University of Hawai'i offers a major in Bachelor of Business Administration with an emphasis on entrepreneurship. The degree program provides a focus on identifying, analyzing and evaluating global and local business opportunities, developing creativity and understanding of innovation, ethical and social responsibilities for entrepreneurs, and taking many more classes that give students a range of business outlooks. Also, the Pacific Asian Center for Entrepreneurship (PACE) at the Shidler College of Business in the University of Hawai'i was founded in the year 2000, and offers over twenty entrepreneurial programs that provide mentorship, inspiration, training and resources that encourage entrepreneurial thinking across disciplines.

In 2013, the Kauffman Foundation ranked Hawai'i as 8th in the nation for entrepreneurial activity in the Kauffman Index of Entrepreneurial Activity (Fairlie R. , 2014). The startup rate in 2012 was 400 per 100,000 adults. With Hawai'i's top industries being tourism and military, there has been continuous entrepreneurial growth with a surge in technology startups. Colleen Hanabusa, U.S. House of Representatives, told CNN Money, the world's largest business website, "Though the cost of living and operating a business can be higher in Hawai'i than in other states, entrepreneurs are overcoming these factors. They see the appeal of being their own boss in the creative environment that Hawai'i offers" (Kavilanz, 2013).

According to Kauffman's Index of Entrepreneurial Activity (Morelix, 2015),

Hawai'i decreased its ranking to 14th in the nation in 2014, but improved to 12th by 2015.

The ranking is affected by the percent of the adult population that became entrepreneurs

within a given month, the opportunity share of new entrepreneurs that indicates market

opportunities, and the startup density that is based on the number of startup firms per

100,000 resident population.

Hawai'i is also a popular location for immigrant entrepreneurs. The Immigrant

Policy Center reported that between 2006—2010, 15,997 immigrants in Hawai'i became

new business owners. In 2010, new immigrant business owners generated $771.7 million,

which is 19.8 percent of all net business income in the state (Immigration Policy Center,

2013).

Governor David Ige plays a significant role in Hawai'i by supporting efforts that

help develop the innovation ecosystem, in turn, creates high growth businesses and

creates high wage jobs. Twenty million US dollars of investment capital focuses on the

innovation ecosystem by establishing the Launch Akamai Venture Accelerator Program

that provides funding to Blue Startups and GVS Transmedia Accelerator (State of

Hawai'i, 2016). These programs provide entrepreneurs with a "structured framework to

build and launch their businesses by providing promising entrepreneurs with mentors,

seed capital, supporting resources, and exposure to follow-on investment capital for

future growth and expansion" (State of Hawai'i, 2016). These accelerators promote

collaboration and community building by providing a facility for companies to work side-

by-side while building their business.

There are also a variety of informal learning opportunities available for aspiring adult entrepreneurs (Bond Street, 2017). Workshops, counseling and mentorships share a wealth of experience and knowledge offered at the Hawaiʻi's Small Business Development Center, SCORE Hawaiʻi, and Small Business Administration's Hawaiʻi District Office.

In the next section, the literature helps to identify key knowledge, skills and dispositions of successful entrepreneurs. Following, an examination of various educational experiences that may play a role in the development of entrepreneurial mindset and behaviors of participating successful entrepreneurs will help to understand the effects and importance of these experiences. The last section concludes with an investigation of whether entrepreneurs are made or born.

Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions of an Entrepreneur

As the traditional education system in the United States continues to train students to be good employees and succeed in the workplace, highly skilled and affordable employees from other countries are displacing them. With the high rate of unemployment, and people finding it difficult to find a job, people are turning to entrepreneurship and looking for ways to support their interest through the development of knowledge and skills to succeed in business (Patel, 2015). Lame and Yusoff (2015) states that entrepreneurship education is about teaching someone to run a business, promote a strong sense of self-worth, empowerment, and innovation. Raposo and Paco (2011) identify the core knowledge entrepreneurship education includes which are:

- The ability to recognize opportunities in one's life.

- The ability to pursue opportunities, by generating new ideas and find the needed resources.

- The ability to create and operate a new firm.

- The ability to think in a creative and critical manner (p. 454)

Knowledge. Most colleges and universities encourage incoming freshmen to have an interest or an idea of what specialized knowledge they will declare as their "major" prior to their junior year. "The educational system influences the knowledge base, the achievement of skills, competencies and attitudes on which future career choices are based" (Raposo, 2011, p. 456). For the past few decades, the interest in entrepreneurship has grown and the development of curriculum has varied within different schools. A concern is the lack of research and evidence that show how learning strategies influence the development of entrepreneurial competence that transfer into new ventures.

Some believe that the idea of entrepreneurship is broad and can cover anyone with a specialized knowledge who decides to open a business. However, others see it as developing competency in specific areas. In the current landscape, anyone who starts a business is considered an entrepreneur. Vaynerchuk (2016) shares that "someone shows up to tryout and they're automatically referred to as an entrepreneur and someone who builds businesses" (p.1). Fayolle, Gailly, and Lassas-Clerc (2006) and Kuratko (2005) believe that entrepreneurial students need to develop an "entrepreneurial perspective characterized by opportunity-seeking behavior, the tenacity to take an idea from concept through to reality, and the ability to move beyond personal comfort zones for the sake of potential reward" (p.703). However, according to MindTools (2016), an online resource

to increase productivity, improve management, and leadership skills, conveys that successful entrepreneurs possess knowledge and competency in the following areas:

- Business knowledge — for functional areas of sales, marketing, finance and operation

- Entrepreneurial knowledge — knowing how to raise capital to start or grow your business to the next step. Knowing how to work hard by innovating and creating to stay competitive.

- Opportunity-specific knowledge — competency of the market you're about to enter; have an idea of the market trends and cycles to be prepared for the ups and minimize the downs.

On the other hand, Shefsky (2004) believes that "Education is important, but no amount of formal education is as important to entrepreneurs as common sense" (p. 21). According to Ringer (2017), "Common sense is simply described as a "sound judgment not based on specialized knowledge" (para. 3). He continues to explain that common sense is developed through purposeful awareness and habit through self-discipline of doing the right thing, as opposed to what makes a person feel good at the moment. Ringer (2013) equates common sense to the wisdom of gaining sound understanding of how life works through the experiences that one has that leads to consequences. As one matures, their knowledge increases from the experiences that they have had.

Skills. In addition to having knowledge and competency of business, having the business and entrepreneurial skills is key to the success of entrepreneurs. A skill is something that one can do well. Burns (1999) says that entrepreneurs do have certain skills and dispositions that make them stand out. For example, entrepreneurs possess

skills such as effective communication; strategizing, personal and business branding (Demers, 2014); sales expertise (Vaynerchuk, 2016); financial expertise; resourceful expertise; people-oriented expertise (Aileron, 2013); visionary expertise; adaptability (Tobak, 2016), and leadership expertise (Shefsky, 1994).

According to different studies, (Clifford (2013), Collins (2004), Daley (2013), Demers (2014), and Shefsky (1994) there are a wide range of skills that a successful entrepreneur must possess. One skill that the literature cites consistently is leadership. Entrepreneurial leadership is different from someone who is a simply a leader. For an employee leader who may be leading a group of other employees, he/she has a boss who has a road map to fulfill his/her dreams. An entrepreneurial leader has no boss and has to devise their goals and plans, supply a dream, create procedures to attain the dream, be responsible for the success or failure of the company, and determine shared rewards.

Leadership in entrepreneurs. From an article (10 Skills You Need to Be the Next Great Entrepreneur), Tobak (2016) wrote in Inc.com that if a person is not deemed management material, he/she will never get a shot at the big-time. A person may never get the chance to learn or hone the leadership skills that enable you to someday start your own business. Unfortunately, a lot of people who might have turned out well never get the chance to find out. Some people may have the skills without the experience and decide to make a giant step into entrepreneurialism and figure it out as they go. Two examples of this are Larry Page, co-founder of Google and Mark Zuckerberg, co-founder of Facebook, who learned how to be effective leaders as their companies developed.

Shefsky (1994) states that characteristics of a leader include a "realistic but clear vision of a goal, the means to accomplish it, and a sense of how, once achieved, success

will be measured and rewarded" (p. 170). He also believes that leadership is something you have or you do not have, and not everyone can lead. He states, "You can judge people's ability to lead by the results they achieve" (Shefsky, 1994, p. 169). As he found in one of his studies, a gentleman was given the opportunity to lead in a series of experiences. People listened to him and followed him, regardless of his achievement that day. Eventually his leadership achieved success in various projects and his following of people increased. Shefsky believes, "nothing succeeds like success" (Shefsky, 1994, p. 188).

Seetubtim (2014) said, "Being an entrepreneur takes guts, another level of courage, and a totally different mindset. The earlier you learn, the better" (para. 1). She describes the importance of mindset in an entrepreneurial leader who can create solutions to problems, communicate effectively, sell an idea, conceptualize a product or business concept, be resourceful through outsourcing work that saves time and produces more money, and can create a good team that creates synergy.

Good with people. Some say that reaching success on one's own can be a lonely journey and others say that it simply cannot be done. Bowser (2016) quotes Jim Rohn's tweet on Twitter who shared his thoughts about the importance or working as a team toward success saying, "You can not succeed by yourself. It is hard to find a rich hermit." He continues to say that we do not want to become a rich hermit, but strive to build rich teams. "Seeing someone successful at doing what they do creates followers, because nothing motivates like success, said Shefsky (1994, p. 188).

Being good with people is two-fold. Entrepreneurs need to work with a team of employees and have a social network of like-minded people (Aileron, 2013).

Entrepreneurs need to know how to leverage employees, vendors, and other resources. A business owner is not good at everything, so surrounding oneself with others who have different strengths can add to the strength of the organization. Having great people on your team will give you access to new strengths and build a company culture of which everyone wants to be a part of (Patel, 2015).

In addition to having a corporate team, having a social network of like-minded people is critical to the success of entrepreneurs. A group of like-minded people provides a safe place where he/she can bounce off ideas, get advice, and also leverage peers or colleagues as a financial resource. Patel (2015) continues to highlight that there may be a point in an entrepreneur's career that he/she may need to raise money to expand or help his/her struggling company. Pittz (2014) also emphasizes that "Success in entrepreneurship is dependent not only on personal knowledge, but on the network of individuals with whom the entrepreneur is connected" (p. 180). Patel (2015) also believes that if you have friends who are entrepreneurs, they will understand your struggles and provide insights differently than friends who are employees or managers.

Effective communicator. Being an effective communicator is another key skill for entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs need to communicate with team members, vendors, customers, and prospects on the phone, or via email, social media, video chat, and messages. Messages sent by an entrepreneur can help or hinder a company. Effective communication to employees is important in communicating company goals clearly and the plan for achieving success together. Communicating the successes of the company, providing acknowledgement, and praises for achievement leads to more loyalty. Shefsky (1994) says, "Nothing increases a follower's dedication more than seeing how much his

or her leader cares" (p. 188). On the other hand, poor communication can lead to decreased productivity, low morale, or mistakes when instructions are not clear. Effective communication to customers and prospects can help with branding and building of an online reputation through social media or content publications (Shefsky, 1994).

Salesmanship. Entrepreneurs do not usually associate themselves with a salesperson; however, they are selling themselves, their service, or product daily. Whenever someone asks an entrepreneur about his/her company, he/she gives a brief elevator pitch, which sells someone the idea of the company. Demers (2014) explains that negotiating with a vendor or persuading someone to do a task is selling someone on an idea or action.

Entrepreneurs must sell themselves from the beginning. When writing a business plan, they need to sell someone on their dream to obtain moral support or financial backing. They need to build the right team by selling others on the dream. On a daily basis, the entrepreneur needs to sell the company's product or service, negotiate with vendors, and convince customers to support the company (Demers, 2014). While these are not actions that a typical salesperson would make, it is the action of promoting and convincing another person on a product or idea.

While refining the study of entrepreneurial knowledge and skills, I also linked entrepreneurial disposition to be important to the development and success of a business venture. The follow section reviews studies that have looked closely at the various dispositions of entrepreneurs depending on the entrepreneur's cultural setting, education, and government support.

Dispositions of entrepreneurs. According to Stewart (2003), there have been

studies worldwide about the dispositions of entrepreneurs. However, there are no lists of

common dispositions that all entrepreneurs must possess. Akhter and Sumi (2014)

suggests that dispositions of entrepreneurs vary according to culture. External influences

on entrepreneurial dispositions are referred to as culture: the different settings,

availability of entrepreneurship education, and government policy. However, according

to Stewart's (2003) research, entrepreneurial dispositions in the United States link three

classic hallmarks: achievement motivation, risk-taking, and preference for innovation.

Achievement motivation. According to Collins (2004), understanding the

motivational characteristics that trigger people to pursue entrepreneurialism and why

some succeed is related to achievement motivation. Shefsky (1994) notes:

> Entrepreneurs are the prototype of the American persona. Unlike managers
>
> (no matter how successful they may be), entrepreneurs have an added
>
> dimension. Just having the determination to follow their dreams entitles
>
> them to respect and admiration and makes them the envy of those who
>
> thought about it but 'chickened out'. (p. 1)

According to McClelland (1961) if entrepreneurial individuals decide to pursue a job

instead of starting their own venture, they are most likely to choose a career path that

offers a moderate level of risk and provides more direct and immediate feedback on

performance. Those with entrepreneurial dispositions have a high degree of individual

responsibility for outcomes that require individual skill and effort. Shefsky (1994) adds,

"Entrepreneurs are very different because unlike most people, who neither need nor

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desire a change from the status quo, entrepreneurs can't cope with the way things are and are willing to take a different approach" (p. 107).

In addition, McClelland (1965) adds that entrepreneurs with high achievement motivation are more likely to overcome obstacles, utilize resources for help, compete, and improve their skills. Tang (2007) also finds that entrepreneurs' achievement motivation is related to an entrepreneurs' risk-taking propensity.

   Risk-taking. A popular view of entrepreneurs is that they are risk takers. Risk reflects the degree of uncertainty and potential loss associated with outcomes which may follow from a given behavior or set of behaviors. "Entrepreneurs refuse to let their fears hold them back" (Shefsky, 1994, p. 35). Rosenman (1933) quotes President Franklin Delano Roosevelt for saying, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself" (para. 1). Entrepreneurs take risks and seem overconfident with the results that they can produce. Baron (1998) echoes this assertion that "entrepreneurs often underestimate risk and overestimate the likelihood of success" (p. 1). According to Gupta (2014), entrepreneurs take risks to move forward toward their goals and dreams with foresight of future success. Risks are taken with the presumption that with failure there is the possibility of another opportunity to try. "Failure teaches you that failing isn't fatal…Failing teaches you what not to do and, thus, how to succeed" (Shefsky, 1994, p. 59). Gupta (2014) states that not giving up in the face of failure with adverse circumstances brings the crowning glory of success. Shefsky (1994) states:

   Entrepreneurs don't aim to fail but do consider failing an acceptable, expected, natural occurrence. They liken their failings as hash marks on their sleeve of their business uniform—a kind of decoration of valor—and they know that the more

hash marks they have earned, shows the learning and experiences they have

gained. (p. 131)

Successful entrepreneurs tend to have a growth mindset (Demers, 2014). Dweck (2007) shares two mindsets for learners—a growth mindset and fixed mindset. Individuals with growth mindsets, believe that intelligence grows as you add new knowledge and skills. Those with growth mindsets value hard work, learning, and challenges. These growth mindset people also see failure as a message that they need to change something in order to succeed next time.

An alternative view of entrepreneurs as risk takers is provided by Drucker (1985), who subtly argues, "the notion that entrepreneurs love risk is exaggerated" (p. 160). Cronin (2012) explains that excessive risk is costly, disruptive, and can lead to failure, so entrepreneurs are focused on minimizing risk and increasing opportunity, while being innovative, as much as possible.

However Lange, a professor at Babson College has seen students start out with an interest, and through entrepreneurship classes, teachers have been able to enhance a student's ability to become a good entrepreneur (Daley, 2013). However, one trait that Lange mentions is that an entrepreneur must be able to take risks. He describes himself as "no daredevil," yet has a lot of experience as an entrepreneur. Further he explains that there are people who will not take any risk, some who will take considerable risk, and those in the middle. For entrepreneurs like him and those in the middle, he explains that as an entrepreneur, you must be willing to take some risks to the degree that is necessary to advance or keep the business going.

As a professor of entrepreneurship, Lange does not teach students how to take risks with their business decisions, rather, he teaches opportunity recognition, which is teaching students to look at something with a slightly different lens and evaluate whether it has potential can help students to see opportunity. If students can see the opportunity, Lange says that it is more likely that they will act on the opportunity to shape and create something innovative that everyone wants and everyone needs.

Preference for innovation. Cronin and Genovese (2012) describe the early stages of innovation like a cocktail party where conversations are casual, but serious. Exploration of new ideas of innovation while eliciting reactions to listeners and having fun with what they are doing. According to a study by Schumpeter (2012), entrepreneurs are generally considered innovators, catalysts of change and creative destructors. Cronin and Genovese (2012) describe creative destructors as people who "shatter set patterns of thinking and threatening the status quo" (p. 161). Cronin and Genovese (2012) said that innovative entrepreneurs yearn to experiment and have a passion for improving things. Shefsky (1994) also adds that entrepreneurs are godlike about their creativity and innovation.

It is key for entrepreneurs to generate and recognize a novel and useful idea that develops into new goods or services that would be attractive to customers to stay competitive. Drucker (1985) considers innovation as being the specific tool by which entrepreneurs exploit opportunities. Not only is innovation important to the idea of starting a business, but crucial for entrepreneurs to continually evolve their business by devising ways to carry out actions in a more efficient and effective way that will save time and cost. Optimizing time and costs to increase profit for a company provides a

competitive advantage. By staying innovative and "thinking out of the box," an entrepreneur can offer something new, interesting, and versatile to customers without re-marketing something that already exists (Anastasia, 2015).

According to Drucker (2002), despite the amazing things one can create as an innovator, it is not magical. When creating, one looks and approaches things with a different perspective. Innovation is learning a process that is currently working, transform it, combine it, and/or tweak it to make it better.

As research continues to reveal through studies the key knowledge, skills, and dispositions of entrepreneurs, the debate continues whether or not these can be developed through teaching entrepreneurship or if someone is born a natural entrepreneur. Ideas called into question are the impact that entrepreneurial education has on aspiring entrepreneurs and whether or not a person born with or without an entrepreneurial *gene* will naturally choose to be an entrepreneur and succeed.

Are Entrepreneurs Born or Made?

Is entrepreneurship a natural talent or a learned ability to use one's strengths and skills? Fouladgar-Mercer (2016) compares entrepreneurs with athletes. He says that they both have laser-focus on the task at hand, have a diehard dedication for what they do, and possess skills that gives them an edge over their competition. As such, the question remains: Are entrepreneurs born or made?

Entrepreneurs are born. Greathouse (2015) believes that entrepreneurs are not created in classrooms and are born with an entrepreneurial personality and innate qualities. Shane (2010) also feels that:

[Y]our genes influence the odds that you will become an entrepreneur…There is

nothing in your genetic make up that will guarantee you will become an entrepreneur and nothing that will preclude it. Even if you lack the versions of the genes associated with starting a business, you can always overcome your genetic predispositions. But, if you have the genetic variants that increase the probability of becoming an entrepreneur, the odds will be in your favor. (p. 147)

Shane (2010) connects his beliefs to well-known entrepreneurs Richard Branson, Alan Sugar, and Theo Paphitis, who all dropped out of school at an early age and started their careers in the world of business. Those that believe that entrepreneurs are born suggest that they can spot opportunities, think differently and take risks. Shane also (2010) states:

Studies have now shown that a number of different genes, particularly those that influence the production of the neurotransmitters dopamine and serotonin (chemicals that control brain function) affect risk taking, responsiveness to stress, impulsivity, novelty seeking, and a host of other human attributes that influence work life. (p. 134)

Clifford (2013) conducted a study looking at a hundred of the richest people in the world and found that 27 of them inherited their fortune, 36 were born to humble households (but some did not have a family at all), and 18 had no college degree. How did these people get so wealthy? They all took enormous risks. Five of them invested during hard times, four bought companies that were all but ruined at the time of purchase and had to turn it around, three had one lucky deal that changed the course of their life, seven were early adopters of trends that needed recognition, and half of the self-made

billionaires invested in multiple businesses. The big risks these entrepreneurs took paid out big long-term. They took big risks that others were not willing to take.

Daley (2013) interviewed a professor and co-author of a book focused on entrepreneurial personality, James Koch. Koch believes that people are born with personalities that are more favorable to entrepreneurship. He thinks these are the ones who have the personality and ability to bear risk. Based on his literature reviews on the genetics of entrepreneurship, Koch found that 60 percent of critical personality characteristics are heritable, like the willingness to take risks, the ability to tolerate ambiguity, and uncertainty. He strongly believes that he can teach his students economics and accounting, but changing their personality to make them to want to take risks is more difficult. He believes that you can teach people how to be better accountants, economists, and tax lawyers, but you can't change the someone's genetic preference for risk. Shane (2010) states that:

> [R]esearchers have long known that individuals whose moms and dads are entrepreneurs are much more likely than other people to start their own businesses. The academics have just attributed that pattern to the parents' efforts to teach their children about entrepreneurs, either directly or indirectly. (p. 165)

He continues saying that there is nothing in the genetic makeup that guarantees that someone will or will not become an entrepreneur. Daley (2013) agrees and adds that interaction with external forces, such as environment, people, or education, may trigger a person's entrepreneurial gene causing them to start a business and act entrepreneurially. Others may carry the gene but it may lie dormant and never used.

Schultz (1975) states that entrepreneurial ability is not only innate, but may also be enhanced by experience and education. Moreover, he shares that mental skills can be learned or at least, enriched by education. The debate highlights both viewpoints, and starts off with the stance that entrepreneurs are made through the influence of educational experiences.

Entrepreneurs are made. A ten-year literature review by Gorman, Hanlon, and King (1997) of enterprise, entrepreneurship, and small business management education found that most of the empirical studies surveyed indicated that entrepreneurship could be taught, or at least encouraged, by entrepreneurship education. Pinker (2002) believes that "most management research assumes business-behaviors are learned and that the human mind is a blank slate that can be shaped by parents, schools, and culture" (p. 3). He argues that human behavior is substantially shaped by evolutionary psychological adaption and the mind has no innate traits. Durrant (2014) also supports this position that: "Scholars reached consensus that entrepreneurship is a discipline and at least certain facets can be taught" (p. 295). MaRS (2016), a company that partners to help entrepreneurs launch and grow innovative companies through training also believes in teaching entrepreneurialism. MaRS refers to successful programs like StartUp Weekend, the NEXT program, and other incubator programs that help teach methodologies and provide tools for entrepreneurs to get started building a business. By teaching entrepreneurs a process they can use to build their startup, "these programs and tools support the talent and skill development of entrepreneurs who may have to repeat the process many times, with several ventures, before finding success" (Damen, 2014, p. 1).

Entrepreneurship educational programs offer experiences for aspiring entrepreneurs and MaRS believes that these experiences give credibility to entrepreneurship as a valid career choice. Entrepreneurship education supports entrepreneurs by giving them tools to organize and analyze their business ideas and thoughts, methodologies to approach the market, community support, and feedback by working with a network of like-minded students, and a general business knowledge to grow and build the different components of the business. Shefsky (1994) found:

> Countless courses and books are available to teach you how your business should run. They can be very helpful if you remember that, no matter what they are called or how they are described, they teach you how your business, not you, should be run. (p. xv).

The Huffington Post recognizes the importance of business education before starting an organization to build a strong foundation to succeed in the long run (Humpage, 2014).

Daley (2013) refers to Lange, a professor at Babson College, who believes that you can not teach a student to be passionate about entrepreneurship, but you can help them to discover their passion for entrepreneurship in the classroom. His research in the past five years, as a professor of entrepreneurship, has concluded that exposing students to the ideas and lessons of entrepreneurship will have lasting effects even though students are not "natural" entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurs are both born and made. Development of knowledge, skills, and dispositions of an entrepreneur is similar to that of an athlete. An athlete is rated by his/her set of actions or behaviors when playing his/her sport, as an entrepreneur's success is measured by his/her actions or behaviors that leads to business success. Some

athletes have developed their knowledge, skills, and dispositions since childhood from coaches through community teams, from mentors of the game, and some are natural born athletes. Devenney (2015) argues that entrepreneurs are both born and made and should know what one has to offer in life and how to use it. Learning how to invest in the talents one was born with improves the opportunity for success. He suggests that recognizing this opportunity can be learned. Landstrom and Sexton (2000) also believe that "children are seen as entrepreneurial by birth" (p. 455) and encourage education to support the development of knowledge, skills, and dispositions to promote success.

Devenney (2015) continues to make his point that entrepreneurs can succeed through a combination of natural abilities and the right environment to apply those talents. One without the other is not enough. He describes entrepreneurs as independent, problem solvers, and lifelong learners. As a lifelong learner, entrepreneurs continually learn and are exposed to new opportunities to recognize their strengths and abilities. He also emphasizes, "Being an entrepreneur isn't only about drive, passion, and seeing answers others don't. It is also about management, leadership and strategy" (p. 1). He talks about being a "smart entrepreneur" that utilizes both nature and nurture to make it as an entrepreneur successfully. Devenney (2015) advises smart entrepreneurs to:

- Clarify their unique ability and understand who they need around them;
- Clarify the real problem behind the opportunity to ensure they gain traction; and,
- Clarify the management processes require to translate a great concept to a great business. (p. 1)

What can be determined is that the literature surrounding the nature/nurture debate in the making of entrepreneurs has no clearly determined answer.

Summary of Key Points

Research revealed much about the mechanisms and factors that could lead to the success of an entrepreneur. The range of research shows how educational experiences could play a factor in entrepreneurial success through formal, informal, non-formal, and experiential education.

The literature provides different perspectives about what knowledge may be effective in helping entrepreneurs to succeed, which suggests business knowledge, entrepreneurial knowledge, and opportunity-specific knowledge. Shefsky (2004) also mentions that common-sense is developed as a person matures and has more experiences in life to make good decisions.

Certain entrepreneurial skills are essential and may affect the success of an entrepreneur. These skills include possessing leadership with vision, being good with people in order to develop a network that supports and helping the entrepreneur move forward, having the ability to find and develop a good team, being an effective communicator, and having salespersonship to sell the company's good ideas, products, and services to investors and customers.

Dispositions of entrepreneurs were generally inconclusive. In general, dispositions of an entrepreneur seem to vary and depend on culture that creates distinctions in different settings, degree of support of entrepreneurship programs within the community, and government policy. The three hallmark dispositions of entrepreneurs

in the United States were achievement motivation, risk-taking, and preference for innovation.

The literature highlights different perspectives for the question of whether entrepreneurs are born or made. Evidence for strong arguments show that entrepreneurs are born with skills and dispositions that are triggered through exposure to entrepreneurship education, or a life change that motivates/makes a person to become an entrepreneur. Raposo and Paco (2011) state that education for entrepreneurs not only develops knowledge and skills, but it influences the beliefs, values, and attitudes of an entrepreneur. However, there are contradictions in research studies regarding the phenomena of entrepreneurship and development. Inconsistent evidence of the influences that affect the development of knowledge, skills, and dispositions continue to be unclear.

Recently, Hawai'i has offered a few programs through organizations that offer a variety of educational opportunities to introduce and develop key knowledge, skills, and dispositions for aspiring entrepreneurs. However, due to it's recent developments there is no research that supports or proves that these educational opportunities are effective in helping entrepreneurs succeed in Hawai'i.

In conclusion, the literature is rich in what we currently know about entrepreneurship and provides insight into important knowledge, skills, and dispositions that affect an entrepreneur's success. However, there is less research on how to develop aspiring entrepreneurs, especially in the context of educational programs offered. Current and participating entrepreneurs can provide the best perception into what affected their development as an entrepreneur. Entrepreneurs know through personal experience what it takes to become a successful entrepreneur in the state of Hawai'i, nationally, and

internationally. Therefore, this research adds to the current literature of entrepreneurship by examining the educational experiences that played a key role in the development of successful entrepreneurs in Hawaiʻi. The following chapter covers the methodology, focusing on research design, participant sampling, data collection, data analysis, threats to validity, and limitations of the study.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Qualitative research is a method used to take a closer look at any human condition or experience in depth and with rich detail. The rich details can provide valuable understanding to learn about people and their experiences. Merriam (2009) finds that qualitative methods facilitate study of issues in depth and detail. Qualitative methods are "used within context to study and understand how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences." (p. 5) Within the context of case study research, this study was conducted with five participants, with each being a separate case. The participants offer considerable insight into role that educational experiences had on the development of knowledge, skills and dispositions that promote success in entrepreneurs. Patton (2002) adds that "information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research" (p. 47). Donmoyer (1990, as cited in Merriam, 2009) provides three rationales for the value of qualitative case study research. "First, these studies allow us to experience situations and individuals in settings that we would not normally have access…Second, case studies may allow us to see something familiar, but in new and interesting ways…Third, vicarious   experience is less likely to produce defensiveness and resistance to learning" (p. 258). Consistent with case study methodology, exploring educational experiences that played a role in entrepreneurs may lead to discovery and possibly construction of a conceptual framework.

Participant Sampling

The selection of purposeful sampling was used to select participants within the entrepreneurship community that I felt would present a range of different entrepreneurial experiences, yet shared a common expertise of entrepreneurship. Learning from the experiences of these entrepreneurs would have the potential to provide a richer, deeper within-case and cross-case analysis for an in-depth understanding of the role educational experiences had on the success of entrepreneurs in Hawaiʻi.

Merriam (2009) states that when making a criterion-based selection, one should create a list of attributes that are essential to the study and then locate or find someone that would best meet the criteria. As suggested by Merriam (2009), criteria identified for selection was: 1) an entrepreneur who started with an idea and built a business organization that has existed for at least 5 years with positive sales growth; and, 2) an entrepreneur who was educated in Hawaiʻi for a minimum of three years. As selected, participants were poised to provide a breadth of experience and rich details of their educational experiences in Hawaiʻi that possibly impacted the development of their entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, and dispositions.

The selection of purposeful sampling for this study was to include knowledgeable experts within the entrepreneurship domain that varied in ethnicity, marital status, level of education, and type of businesses owned. Participants in the study reflected different generations, socioeconomic backgrounds, gender, and industries, which helped to provide a range of perspectives shared by entrepreneurs born, raised, and nurtured in Hawaiʻi. All participants were selected based on their capacity to share first-hand educational

experiences from different time periods, and knowledge of the few entrepreneurial programs available currently in Hawai'i.

Consent to Participate

Before the study, emails were sent to participants to review and sign the Consent to Participate (See Appendix B). The Consent to Participate form informed participants that if, at any time, they did not want to answer a question or wished to withdraw from participating in the study, they were free to do so. Participants were asked to bring the signed document to the individual interview session. Participants received a copy of the form for their records.

Data Collection

Data collection methods for this research study included a survey of demographic questions for the five participants, semi-structured individual and partner interviews, a total of eight, and researcher field notes.

Demographic survey. In the demographic survey, participants answered questions about their educational background, extra-curricular activities that they participated in, and what they thought were important experiences that served to develop their knowledge, skills, and dispositions as an entrepreneur. Each participant received a survey by email (See Appendix A) that collected demographic information, along with information on the participant's educational background and career experiences. All surveys were completed before the scheduled individual interview.

Interviews. Participants were asked a series of eight to ten questions during a sixty-minute interview. The questions (See Appendix C) were designed to build off the information shared in their survey results as well as explore how educational experiences

contributed to their development and success as an entrepreneur. Probing questions allowed participants to provide additional information and clarify responses. Patton (2002) explains, "The purpose of interviewing…is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective" (p. 341). The chosen method of individual interviews was to focus the conversation on one's journey, to build trust with the participant, and to allow the participant to feel comfortable in an informal setting.

With the consent of each participant, each interview was recorded digitally to help document the dialogue. Interview dates, times and locations were scheduled by telephone or using a meeting scheduling application by email. This form of communication allowed participants to schedule interviews to suit their convenience.

At the beginning of the interview, I took time to explain the purpose and nature of the study. Participants were assured that all information and data collected would be kept confidential, thus responses that could be shared openly and honestly.

Semi-structured individual interviews provided a closer look into the entrepreneurs' lives now and a reflection of the journey that got them to becoming a successful entrepreneur. As Merriam (2009) states, "Interviewing is necessary when we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them. It is also necessary to interview when we are interested in past events that are impossible to replicate" (p. 88).

Partner interviews. Upon completing all five individual interviews, partner interviews were scheduled amongst the group. Partners were paired by availability of schedule. One participant 's schedule did not align with any of the other participant's schedules, so did a follow-up interview individually. As Madriz (2000) explained in a

multi-person interview, "participants are in a safe environment where they can share ideas, beliefs, and attitudes in the company of people from the same socioeconomic, ethnic, and gender backgrounds…" (p. 835). The goal of the partner interviews was to discuss emerging themes that arose through the individual semi-structured interviews, as well as ask any follow up questions that emerged as a result of the initial analysis of interview data. A different series of eight to ten questions were posed during the sixty-minute partner interview session. The questions were designed to explore their entrepreneurial journey more deeply to gather additional details, and to allow participants to share stories and recall their own experiences relative to those shared by other participants.

The partner interviews allowed participants to expand on ideas that were shared individually, and a discussion developed around common key factors and themes that developed from the interviews. Patton (2002) expounds:

> Unlike a series of one-on-one interviews, in a focus group participants get to hear each other's responses and to make additional comments beyond their own original responses as they hear what others in the group have to say. However, participants need not agree, disagree, or reach any kind of consensus. The objective is to get high-quality data in a social context where people can consider their own views in the context of the views of others. (p. 368)

Similar to the scheduling of individual interviews, participants participated in a digital app email to find a date and time when partner interviews could convene. Partners were determined based on the availability of participants' schedules. Four of five participants were included in a second partner interview session. Due to a scheduling conflict, one

participant did not participate in the second interview with a partner. However, a follow up semi-structured one-to-one interview was completed with me asking the participant the same pre-scripted partner interview questions and any additional questions that were needed to clarify thoughts from the first interview.

With participants' consent, the discussions were recorded electronically. Participants were assured that all information and data collected would be kept confidential to encourage open and honest discussions among the participants.

Researcher's field notes. Descriptive and narrative field notes were kept in a journal during data collection and immediately after to capture my insights, ideas, inspiration, observations, clarifying questions, along with any thoughts regarding patterns, themes or categories that began to emerge from the data. The field notes were utilized as another source of data that prompted the triangulation of data in the process of analysis.

Data Analysis

Analysis of data for the research drew on an inductive process, allowing themes and patterns to emerge (Merriam, 2009). Upon the completion of each interview, a third party transcribed the recording. I reviewed the transcripts while listening to the recording to ensure accuracy of data.

Coding. After completing all individual interviews and partner interviews, I analyzed the data from the demographic survey, interviews, and partner interviews to search for patterns or themes, take notes, and identify key factors that may have helped entrepreneurs succeed. The notes helped to identify data that I found interesting,

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potentially relevant, or important to the study. Merriam (2009) identifies this step as

"coding that comes from interpretation and reflection on meaning" (p. 180).

Coding is a word or short phrase that assigns a summative, essence-capturing, or

attribute for a portion of the language-based or visual data. I used coding as a problem-

solving technique to analyze data. Shank (2002, as cited in Hendricks, 2009) describes

the process of analyzing data by stating:

There is an awareness in the mind of I that there are patterns of order that seem to

cut across various aspects of the data. When these patterns become organized,

and when they characterize different segments of data, then we can call them

'themes'. (p. 143)

Codes were compared and validated through review of the interviews and partner

interview transcripts. As patterns and commonalities emerged from the transcripts, I

grouped them together. As other transcripts were analyzed, existing codes were organized

and new codes were added. As new codes were created, some codes were combined to

create a new code and other codes were deleted.

While the data was being analyzed, I created an on-going code sheet that included

quotes from the transcripts and an explanation of codes used. In the end, themes derived

from the data and were made more robust by searching through the data for more and

relevant information. Refining of themes continued throughout the analyzing process.

Triangulation. I triangulated data collected from demographic surveys,

interviews, partner interviews, and field notes to look for patterns, common themes,

enrichment of data, and to find any differences across the forms of data collection. The

term triangulation was coined for the action of I drawing on the metaphor of sighting two known points and connecting it to a third (Maxwell, 2013).

Consistent with Patton's (2012) reasons for triangulation, he adds that gathering data through diverse platforms allows a researcher to see a complete picture of the phenomena. He also added, "Consistency in overall patterns of data from different sources or reasonable explanation for differences in data from divergent sources can contribute significantly to the overall credibility of findings" (p. 560).

Final Member-Check

Prior to finalizing the analysis, I provided each participant with their case study profile and any direct quotes that were included in the analysis. Participants had the opportunity to review and offer any corrections. The confirmation of details was to provide the participants with a level of comfort in knowing that what they said and what was being used was accurate.

Threats To Validity

In this study, to minimize threats to validity, I referred to Maxwell's (2013) checklist for strategies to attempt to guarantee validity. Maxwell (2013) suggests using the method of triangulation; using groups to help participants validate each other's events, details, and stories to create an accurate picture of what happened. Merriam (2009) also states:

> Triangulation using multiple sources of data means comparing and cross-checking data collected through observations at different times or in different places, or interview data collected from people with different perspectives or from follow-up interviews with the same people. (p.216)

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Another threat to the trustworthiness of my interpretation was my positionaility as a partial insider entrepreneur and I had prior relationships with some of the participants. However, I believe that these relationships allowed each participant to feel comfortable right away, trust was quickly established, and the sharing of information about their journeys as entrepreneurs flowed naturally and led to a richer conversation. To minimize the threat, I acknowledged the relationship with participants, focused on the purpose of the meeting, and attempted to conduct myself with professionalism as a researcher by being conscious of how my positionality might impact the dynamics of exchange with my participants, as well as my interpretation of their stories. Merriam (2009) suggests "shifting from a wide angle to a narrow angle lens—that is focusing on a specific person, interaction, or activity, while mentally blocking out all the other extraneous details" (p. 150). This allowed me awareness of discriminating between thoughts and emotions of participants and self.

An additional threat to the research is interpretive validity. I accurately documented the stories and perspectives of the entrepreneurs' journey as told, included member checks, and did cross-coding during the analysis of data as a way to create trustworthiness within my interpretation of what was said. As suggested by Maxwell (2013), I planned to ask for clarification, as appropriate, and not make assumptions about the statements or thoughts offered by any of the participants. He also suggests respondent validation to minimize this threat; therefore, I used member check-ins after each interview and focus group session to make sure that the stories captured and transcribed were accurate.

Related to interpretative validity is the notion of researcher reflexivity. Merriam (2009) explains reflexivity as "the process of reflecting critically on the self as researcher, the human as instrument" (p. 219). Bolton (2012) states that "reflective practitioners write in order to learn: a self-illuminatory and exploratory process, rather than one focused upon creating a product" (p. 8). This strategy was used to begin to perceive the areas that needed further discussion at later times of engagement.

In addition, another strategy used for reflexivity is what Merriam (2009) refers to as peer examination. I asked my dissertation committee to read and comment on the findings presented in the study to assess whether the findings are plausible based on the data.

Lastly, another threat to validity is related to the integrity of the research. Four of the five participants in the study are men and women with whom I have known through working on other projects together. The fifth participant in the study is someone whom I have not worked with directly or indirectly, but was introduced by a friend. To control this potential threat, participants were reassured that information shared would be kept confidential and all data used for the study would be approved before making it available to the public. I asked for each participant to speak openly and honestly to provide in-depth experiences that would provide detailed insights into the phenomena.

Limitations of the Study

One limitation is the selection of entrepreneurs that participated in this study. Utilizing entrepreneurs located in Hawai'i made it convenient for I, who lives in Hawai'i, to access the participants, which increased the chances of participation in the study. Therefore, the findings of this study are limited to the context of Hawai'i.

The second limitation of this study is that all participants in this research knew that my husband and I own and operate several business entities together. I believe that I was viewed as someone who understood entrepreneurship, which could be construed as someone who can relate to their individual journeys as entrepreneurs. To control this potential threat, I asked the participants to speak to me as if I had no entrepreneurial expertise and to use layman's terms when referring to entrepreneurial terminology, but with detailed stories of experiences as a developing entrepreneur. Having a set of questions and protocols to conduct each interview and partner interviews allowed me to follow a semi-structured process. When I felt that the participants were using language that was not commonly known or understood, I used the strategy of clarification, by asking for examples or definitions, while questioning the participants so that the data would be understood in layman's terms.

Summary of Methodology

This chapter highlighted the design of this study and the rationale behind choosing a qualitative case study and the selection of participants. This chapter also explained the data collection methods used and explained the details of the analysis process of data. This chapter concluded with explaining the technique of verifying data through triangulation and made mention of the limitations of the study.

The following chapter includes a description of the demographics of the participants, which provides a contextual background for each case. A within-case analysis provides themes that emerged during individual interviews, followed by a cross-case analysis that highlights the themes that intersected among interviews and were significant information to the study.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis

The purpose of this study was to examine the lives of successful entrepreneurs and explore the role that educational experiences had on the development of knowledge, skills, and dispositions that promoted entrepreneurial success.

Participants in this study were men and women who have had a range of educational experiences in Hawaiʻi and currently own, have owned or/and have operated a business in Hawaiʻi. Each participant shared their journey through a demographic survey, individual interviews and partner interviews sharing stories about their past memories and educational experiences. The data collection provides descriptions of key experiences that played a role in their development throughout their entrepreneurial journey.

A brief demographic profile precedes each within-case analysis to provide a contextual background for each participant of this study. The first part of this chapter presents a within-case analysis for each participant. The within-case analysis looks closely at the formal, informal, and non-formal educational experiences that shaped an individual, influential people who shaped their mindset and attitudes that affected the interactions, challenges and obstacles along their journey, and the experiences that led them to entrepreneurship. Thereafter, a cross-case analysis describes the four themes that were common among the educational experiences that played a role in the development of these entrepreneurs: 1) rich experiences; 2) influential people; 3) facing challenges with optimism; and, 4) purpose and passion. Although the participants' educational backgrounds and experiences were different, these four themes represented the common

threads that permeated through different journeys. Sub-categories provided further details for each theme in the cross-case analysis.

John

John graduated from Punahou School, a private college preparatory school, located in Honolulu, Hawaiʻi with a 3.92 grade point average. He continued his education at the University of Pennsylvania, Wharton School of Business where he obtained a Bachelor's of Science in Economics and Entrepreneurial Management.

In 2000, after returning from Pennsylvania, John founded Pono Pacific, a company that provides natural resource management services to aid conservation agencies and landowners in their efforts to preserve and protect the environment and restores Hawaiʻi's precious ecosystems (Pono Pacific, 2016). In 2007, John established a 501(c)(3) organization called Kupu Hawaiʻi that empowers future generations to create a more sustainable, pono (perpetuated) Hawaiʻi through hands-on training programs that develop a strong connection to the islands. Kupu's hope is that their participants become stewards of the Hawaiʻian culture and environment that they live in for themselves and future generations (Kupu Hawaiʻi, 2016).

John described his path to getting to where he is today as "not a standard one," but as he thought about it, he questioned whether there was a standard course. John contrasted the development of an entrepreneur with the growth of a tree.

* * *

Seeds waiting to sprout. John said, "There are many seedlings that come out of a tree, just as there are so many people who want to be entrepreneurs. However, not all of them make it to maturity." John believes that the experiences that he had were seeds of

opportunities that helped to shape him. Some of the experiences did not go far and remained just a good memory, while others triggered an excitement within him to pursue further.

One seed was planted during a conversation with his cousin while in middle school at Punahou. John remembers getting Cs in his classes and just getting by. "My cousin reminded me that I needed to make the most of the opportunity at Punahou since not everyone in our family had the opportunity to attend Punahou School." John said that this conversation sparked his motivation to do better academically and he started putting more effort into his work. Through hard work and perseverance, John was able to sprout this seed and improve his grades to As and Bs.

Another seed that was planted for John was his involvement in sports. John represented his school by competing in football, track and wrestling. He described himself as being "very athletic" but shared, "I wasn't the top athlete on any of the teams." John credited team sports as a very important part of his development because he learned the skills of teamwork and perseverance, both mentally and physically. Because John didn't feel like he was naturally gifted, he said, "I had to work really hard to keep up and built fortitude to keep on going." John likened athletics to entrepreneurialism and said,

> When people are naturally gifted, they don't build the skill set of fortitudes. As an entrepreneur, you need to keep going and focus on your mission. You need to build the disciplines necessary to make your work a lifelong commitment versus doing it right now because you can.

Another lesson that John learned in sports and school is how to face challenges and use them to his advantage. He remembered struggling and described himself as "the

slowest teammate on the baseball team and I struggled to keep up. But I knew that if I worked at it, I could persevere." John added, "Knowing how to bounce back from rejection is important because everything in life is not going to come easy. So, working hard to prove that you will not give up is important."

One summer another seed was planted as John's life was changed when he participated in a youth conservation corps program where he learned about environmental conservation, restoration, education, and cultural awareness. He said, "This is where I discovered my love for the outdoors and how special a place Hawai'i is." This experience planted a seed in John's life to appreciate the islands in a special way.

An additional seed planted and developed during high school was the skill of relating to people. John had the opportunity to work in Punahou's peer-counseling program, the place where John learned more compassion and empathy toward others. The peer-counseling program gave John hands-on experiences to develop his confidence and skills in conflict resolution, relationship building, and building self-esteem in others.

Through the seeds that were planted early in John's life, he developed the skills of hard work, perseverance, teamwork, fortitude, and building relations with others. He also realized that he had an interest in the environment, especially sustainability of the beautiful land in Hawai'i. As these seeds, skills, and interests started to sprout, he developed roots that would hold him firmly into the ground to take in nutrients from the land (wisdom from mentors/people in his life) to help him develop and flourish.

Knowledge and values nurtured by mentors. John explained that "an entrepreneur needs to root." Roots are an important part of a tree because they absorb water and nutrients that a plant needs to thrive. The roots of a person reflect character,

growth, and maturity. John said, "If you don't have deep roots, it's easy to fall and take others down with you when mistakes happen. Deeper roots allow one to withstand the storms, and even sometimes grow because of them." He explained,

> The deeper the roots are for a person, you will know whether that organization or person can withstand a drought; this also tells you if the plant/business is able to sustain itself for a long time. If there is no connection to the land with deep roots, a plant may only be drawing water from the surface. If the plant is rooted in the upper surface of the ground, a strong wind could uproot the plant causing the plant to die or cause damage to the community around it.

As John's seeds sprouted through his high school experiences, roots grew for some interests that have helped him to develop a strong foundation for the tree/business that he was eventually going to grow.

Outside of school, John worked as a busboy next to his grandfather who owned and operated Wailana Coffee House in Waikiki. Fortunately for John, his grandfather reached deep within the roots of his family tree to mentor and share his knowledge and values of business with relatives who were interested or needed a job. Working next to his grandfather, John developed a strong work ethic and learned how much commitment and dedication was needed to build a business and dream that was enough to provide for his family.

As a high schooler, John was given the opportunity to explore entrepreneurship with his grandfather's encouragement. Starting out the same way his grandfather did, John opened a concession stand on the side of Wailana Coffee House when there were events or parades in Waikiki. John remembers selling drinks and snacks to people

walking by. This experience early on gave John the opportunity to explore

entrepreneurship by learning the wants and needs of his customers, providing products

and services to meet those wants and needs, and gaining experience in leading, managing,

and supervising others in the context of running a small business.

While working next to his grandfather, John also learned that work was not just

work. He learned that as an employer, you are also impacting lives of those who work for

you and the patrons who support your business. John watched as his grandfather

interacted with his employees and could see that he believed in them. John's grandfather

gave his employees opportunities to grow within the company, so it wasn't uncommon

that a waitress would eventually be promoted to a manager. John described the restaurant

as "a community of friends and family." His grandfather took care of his workers and

helped them out financially if needed. John said, "He didn't just give them a loan, he

gave them a no interest loan." John described his grandfather's safe when he passed away

as having several IOUs that were never paid back. John said that what he learned most

and will always remember is, "how my grandfather tried to influence the community

through his generosity and kindness. He also showed me that you could go out and forge

something new for the world and do it in a meaningful way."

John believed that the people whom he surrounded himself with made a huge

impact on which he is today. He emphasized the importance of being surrounded and

supported by individuals with optimism and integrity. In addition, having a mentor who

was ahead of him on their entrepreneurial journey, helped him to learn from their shared

entrepreneurial experiences because it was something different than what was learned

from the traditional school system. John said, "I think there are teachers for skills that

can convey information, but a mentor is someone who can be there as a cheerleader and an instructor."

One professor who played a big role in John's development as an entrepreneur at Wharton was Professor Kent (a pseudonym). John remembers Professor Kent teaching through experiences, rather than a textbook because he told his students that in business, it was important to read situations and adapt quickly. While John contemplated his next steps after graduation, Professor Kent helped John to see that his passion led him home to Hawai'i to help the industry of land conservation and to explore entrepreneurship. John remembers vividly being encouraged to "use your skills to influence the rest of the world through what you do and then help create excessive resources so you can then start giving back and making a difference."

As a lifelong learner, John knew that it was important to continue his involvement in professional development programs and networking opportunities with other entrepreneurs. Sean (a pseudonym), the Omidyar Fellows' Director, had a big impact on John's development as a leader. John recalls that Sean knew what he needed even before he did, due to the nature of Sean's experiences. John said that having someone who can relate to what you're going through in business helps one to realize that every company goes through growing pains. While the challenges may differ, an experienced entrepreneur can suggest small tweaks that can make a difference. He also mentioned that the support system provided by Omidyar Fellows and others gave him the courage and guts to push through and dig deep when facing challenges.

John's vision of having his company rooted from watching his grandfather build a community in the workplace that was family-oriented and trusting. His discussion with

Professor Kent encouraged him "to return to Hawaiʻi to pursue his vision and develop a grass-roots organization that makes a difference in the community and changes the world." Lastly, John grew deeper roots as he reached out through networking with other business and community leaders. He believes that he is where he is today because of the continuous encouragement and nurturing of his entrepreneurial spirit from those around him. John said, "My challenges and failures provided me with opportunities to continue learning and growing with support around me."

A trunk that gives life and protection. John described the importance of the trunk of a tree and said,

> The deep roots help the trunk to grow thick and strong, which also reflects the leader's words and actions. Often times people look to see the stability, and one can observe how deep the roots go. If the roots are deep, the tree will start to get bigger and sturdier. But you also have big trees with shallower roots that can be a liability.

John pointed out that big trees are like big companies that are not connected deeply within our communities. He said, "When those companies fall, they sometimes take communities down with them."

A sturdy and stable tree trunk holds up the leafy crown of the tree and connects to the roots. Below the trunk is the roots that help bring the nutrients and water up throughout the tree parts and distributes food that is made through photosynthesis for the tree to grow. John's trunk is Pono Pacific. John described having humble beginnings working out of his mom and dad's home with just $3,000. The resources he used were owned by his family members, but shared with him, which included the computer he

shared with his mom and his uncle's truck that he was allowed to use, when it wasn't

being used for fishing. He said, "We kind of just bootstrapped it together by being

creative and effective." John was also spread thin during the work day because he was

not just leading the vision of the company, he was the accountant who looked at the

finances to figure out if the company could afford to do more and he was the human

resources manager who was hiring and managing a few employees. John said, "Having

the background in accounting, finance and management from college really helped out

because that provided me with the basic skills that I needed in the beginning."

Pono Pacific was the hub of John's vision, the inner bark that was built on small

projects in the community by focusing on producing quality work and building a good

reputation. He was also able to develop the outer layer of the trunk that protects the tree

from injury, disease, insects, and weather. This outer layer was developed through John's

faith. Since high school, John has a strong faith and calls for God's guidance when

making decisions, facing challenges, and celebrating milestones. John said that when he

needs guidance, he thinks about these verses:

Joshua 1:9, Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be

frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever

you go.

Jeremiah 29:11-12, For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans

for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call

upon me and come and pray to me, and I will hear you. (Faithlife, 2016)

One fateful college experience that John remembers while in college was at an

Ivy League championship football game between the University of Pennsylvania and

Harvard. He described a tradition at the University of Pennsylvania, where after the game students tear down the goal post and throw it into the river as a celebration. John described how the school prepared for the events leading up to the win by announcing on the speakers that anyone who came onto the field after the game would be expelled from school. John said that the warning did not prevent students from continuing the tradition. He described watching thousands of kids running on the field and jumping on the goal post to push it down until it finally broke. As a bystander, John walked to the bridge where the post would traditionally get released into the river. The group carrying the post eventually made their way to the area John was standing and explained watching "They threw it over my head. It hit the back of my head and for a second, I was between the railing of the bridge and the goal post." John remembers thinking that he was going to die because the post was so heavy and it was a hard hit. But in the end, John's tooth went through his lip but he was not seriously injured. From that event, John felt that God had protected him and claimed, "I was spared for a reason."

Branches of growth and exploration. Branches grow out of the tree's trunk and often split in different directions, making the tree reach further out. As Pono Pacific grew, John had the desire to expand and develop his team, other leaders, and fulfilling other needs in the industry.

John admits that retaining trust in others when building a core team is an important part key of moving a company forward. As his grandfather modeled for him, he also found that he needed to build good relationships with people and trust in their abilities. John reported that he learned how to manage people and network with the right

teams to make the vision move forward through his experiences. He said,

>When building my team, I sometimes have to take risks on people. That risk has sometimes led to failure for me, because I hired people based on the experiences listed on their resume. But I've learned through the years that what is listed on a resume doesn't tell the whole story. Now, I look at building my team with people who have a growth mindset because I know that we can work, develop, and grow together.

John has had some failures in trusting and believing in the wrong people, but as branches break and grow back in a different place, John has learned from each experience and continued to move forward. John's "broken branches" have not affected his ability to trust and believe in his employees, but has taught him how to choose better people for his team and continue growing again in another area of the trunk.

John saw the need to branch out Pono Pacific further, by creating Kupu Hawai'i, a youth program that focuses on hands-on, service-based job training for Hawai'i's youth across the state. John said that the idea of Kupu evolved while managing some land for a state program. "We saw this as an opportunity to create our own program to be able to empower people to their potential. If we can help them to grow, they will grow to empower others and fulfill their own potential."

Leaves and fruit with seeds. Leaves and fruit grow on the ends of branches as a tree grows. The leaves represent people who work within John's company with specific skills that help the operations run smoothly and the fruit is the opportunities that one might have. John said the leaves are the "administrative components that run the operating team with different skill sets." Others within the organization are the fruit or

opportunity. "These people will grow to their potential then one day move on, and that's fine because they are planting more seeds and empowering others."

Chenoa

Chenoa graduated from Parker School, a small private school in Waimea, Hawai'i, with a 3.8 grade point average. Growing up on an island, she had the urge to explore the mainland which led her to the Univesity of California, Santa Cruz. There she earned a Bachelor's degree in Political Science. She went on to get a job with the Hawai'i Department of Health as a planner and later worked as a Special Assistant for the American Nurses Association in Washington DC. Later, she decided to return home to Hawai'i to further her education by getting a Master's degree.

At the age of 27, Chenoa founded Farnsworth Consulting and applied at the University of Hawai'i's Executive Masters of Business Administration program and two years later, graduated with a 4.0 grade point average.

After graduating, Chenoa co-founded Kolohala Ventures in 2006, a Hawai'i-based venture capital firm that has invested $50 million into Hawai'i-based technology start-ups. In 2009 she became the managing director of Hawai'i Angels that seeds private equity investments in Hawai'i by providing expertise and due diligence to investors.

At present, Chenoa is the Managing Partner of Blue Startups, "a Top 20 Accelerator in the United States focused on helping scalable-technology companies, including web, software and mobile compete on a global scale" (Blue Startups, 2016). Chenoa works with other entrepreneurs and as a corporate entrepreneur within a company that values entrepreneurship thinking. For example, she works closely with a computer

game designer and serial entrepreneur known for revolutionizing the video game industry by securing the rights to Tetris.

Chenoa likened the journey of an entrepreneur to a climber going up a high mountain. She stated, "No one gets there without a good dose of tragedy along the way."

* * *

Climbing the mountain toward success. When you're on the bottom of the hill, you have the goal of getting to the top, and you can only imagine how you will get there and what experiences you will have on the journey. Similar to entrepreneurialism, Chenoa said that "Many people want to be an entrepreneur because they have an idea. But you need to do more than just have an idea; you have to do it. Start slow and start small." Looking from the bottom of the hill, you need to take the first step to moving forward. Chenoa's response to people's business idea is that "Once you get started moving forward with your business plan, the idea often changes." She explains that you can never know what's ahead and that you have to be ready for how your idea may evolve into something different. She said, "It's a journey."

Acquiring the tools and skills for support. As you're climbing a mountain, you may need to acquire tools essential to help you reach the summit to success. If not, the trek may be challenging and unsuccessful. When starting a business, Chenoa advises, "Be brutally aware of your own shortcomings and supplement them with people who have those skills. Don't be afraid to ask people for help." Chenoa emphasized that the knowledge of experienced entrepreneurs or business people can be a good tool to help someone get started. She added, "Often times there is someone with a great idea, but he/she may not be the person to take the product/service to grow the company. Many

CEOs don't like to admit this." She continued to recommend, "If you can step on the side and build a team that compliments you and bring in the skills you don't have on your team, you can build something great."

Another tool that Chenoa calls attention to is the number of experienced entrepreneurs and business people who can help. She said, "There are a lot of people out there. A lot of people who want to help. A lot of people who are willing to help if they are asked, but they are not asked." As a high school student, Chenoa was bold and fearless because she knew that she had to make money at a job if she wanted to have "fun money" to play on the weekends. Instead of being bummed about her job as the school janitor, who cleaned toilets after school, she asked the Headmaster of the school if she could run a snack shop, splitting the profits evenly with the school. Through this experience, she asked her teachers for help on how to create a budget and financial sheet, asked the students to support her business, and asked for parental help to connect her with other business people in the community. At this young age, she also learned how to develop and maintain relationships with suppliers for snacks and beverages to fill her inventory in her snack shop.

Another tool that helped develop Chenoa's entrepreneurial skills was her participation in a business plan competition for university students. She developed a business plan for a store similar to Whole Foods, which included her mom's natural foods bakery, which was already operating on the island of Hawai'i. In addition, her store would offer healthy choices of organic foods, produce, snacks, etc.

Steady climbing with cheerleaders. As Chenoa described, "like the climber climbing the mountain, the top looks so close." Often to entrepreneurs, striving for

success seems like a simple journey. Chenoa claims that entrepreneurs are "delusional, by definition." Sometimes climbers dangerously continue on their path and ignore the signs of danger to their health or the area that surrounds them. Similarly with entrepreneurs, sometimes they are "overly confident and don't know when to throw in the towel." Chenoa added, "Entrepreneurs need to be confident but not overconfident in themselves and their idea(s)." She emphasized the importance of people who will support an entrepreneur and give advice. Support and advice from others who are encouraging can sometimes drive the entrepreneur to keep going, even when it may be time to quit.

Chenoa has been fortunate to have several cheerleaders in her life who have encouraged her to keep climbing the mountain steadily. Chenoa had a mother who had faith in her and encouraged her to try new things, take risks, and flourish through learning. Chenoa remembers clearly how her mother believed in her, which made her almost fearless. Chenoa said,

> I truly believed that I could do anything. I definitely did think I could fly. I spent a lot of time thinking that I was Peter Pan as a kid. I would just throw myself off of porches and stuff. I guess I have flexible bones because I have never broken one.

Another person who supported Chenoa in her journey was a former boss, Sherry (a pseudonym) who had a lot of confidence in her skill. She said, "Because she believed that I could do all of these things, I figured I must be able to." Chenoa described how she "faked" her confidence to do things as tried them; as she accomplished what Sherry encouraged her to do, she noticed her confidence grew which kept Chenoa going.

Another person that was a cheerleader in Chenoa's journey was Sharon (a pseudonym). Chenoa said, "[Sharon] was another person who had so much confidence in

me, I was so lucky." As Chenoa continued on her journey, developing the skills she needed, the confidence that her cheerleaders had in her "got in her head, which gave her the boost of confidence to step out of her comfort zone and take chances."

Falling and challenges. Chenoa believes that with any journey, there will be tragedy along the way. She said, "That is a given. When you hit that first big boom, it's not about your fall or failure it's about how you act after that fall. What is your response?"

When choosing entrepreneurship as a career path, it is a different option that not many select and can sometimes leave one feeling lonely and confused, not knowing where to go with mixed emotions. Chenoa said, "It is a path that is not considered by everyone and definitely not what your neighbor is doing or even your dad." Without a specific plan that guarantees success, Chenoa emphasizes that entrepreneurs need to be ready for tragedy.

One challenge that Chenoa faced was during the business plan competition, which she entered while getting her Master's degree. It was brought to her attention that she was not a natural presenter, which was imperative in winning the competition because she needed to communicate her vision and dream to the judges. Although she had done well in school and her career until this point, she did not consider developing this skill. However, on this new path, she realized that she had two choices, to work on developing this skill or quit. She chose not to give up and practiced her pitch over and over again. By doing so, she became more comfortable. The more she did it, the better she got. Chenoa said, "I wasn't a natural at it, but I learned by doing it again and again." She said that if entrepreneurs are not able to improve their communication skills, they should find

someone who can communicate clearly with passion. Chenoa advises others to "be

brutally aware of your own shortcomings and supplement them with people who have

those skills. Surround yourself with people who compliment your skills."

Another challenge that Chenoa has faced was learning to be a team player. She

shared, "It was pointed out to me that I tend not to be a team player, so I have to be

conscious of it. It's important to use 'we' instead of 'I.'" Although this disposition has

not come naturally for Chenoa, she said she has consciously worked on it to improve

herself as a person and as a team player. She added that building a team is crucial for the

leader in the company because surrounding yourself with others who have strengths that

the leader lacks helps the company to move forward. She said, "If you're weak in

communication and you can't improve your skill, go and find someone who is better. If

you need a CEO, go find one."

Lastly, a challenge that Chenoa has faced is going into business with others and it

not working out. She said "based on the history of people building businesses,

partnerships in business are the hardest, but the most necessary. Statistically, partnerships

do better than solo founders." She referred to Steve Jobs and Bill Gates as well known

founders of their companies, but Chenoa pointed out that they all had partners. Often

times for businesses "There are two skills that are imperative—vision and execution.

While it is important to think big about how to creatively do something, 99 percent of

business success comes from execution." She explained that there are two perspectives of

having a partnership. The good side is finding someone who compliments your strengths

to create a well-rounded team. However, the bad side can be having poor communication

between the partners. Chenoa said, "In pretty much every situation with partners, it

became personal. Everyone was friends at the start; we started because we were friends."

She continued to talk about how partners may feel that the other was not delivering to the other partners expectations, one might feel that he/she was doing more than the other partner, or the workload was unequal. Based on her experiences, Chenoa advised, "Head on and face the challenges quickly, don't prolong the pain. The faster, the better. Just get it done. Regroup."

Being in the crevice. Chenoa describes resiliency by referring to how one gets back up that matters the most. She said, "Your reaction after going through a challenge is the mark of a true leader or not. You need to have the ability of resiliency in the face of a challenge. It's called being in the crevice."

Chenoa recalls "being in the crevice" at different points in her life but knowing how she responded was the most important thing she could do. When challenges arise, she describes her reaction as "responding with maturity and optimism to move forward. I self-talk to fight back harder and smarter." Chenoa remembers starting out as an entrepreneur and asking herself, "Is this going to work? Should I go get a job?" Six months into starting her business was a tough time, she recalls, especially because "9/11" (the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001) had just occurred and the work she had evaporated. But, she emphasized that she just kept being "optimistic and was able to make it through it."

Chenoa mentioned that sometimes when she is in the crevice, she attends conferences and seminars to re-energize. She said, "I think conferences are so much fun. I love learning new things and meeting new people." She added that sometimes conferences reinforce what you already know, but sometimes you come away with a

good idea that you can implement or use in your business. Chenoa travels nationally and internationally throughout the year for conferences and develops her network to expand her business or refer others she knows.

Sometimes when sitting in the crevice, one needs to take a chance and try something new to pull out of a plateau in life. Chenoa developed her confidence to take risks while doing high school sports. She explained, "My experience in high school sports was positive. It gave me the chance to take risks, maintain good physical health, and learn team skills." Being at a small school, Chenoa and the other students had the opportunity to try everything they wanted to explore. Chenoa tried out for almost every sport—cross country, tennis, soccer, and volleyball. Chenoa explained, "Because there was no cuts or segregation of the students by skill level, the student body was always encouraged to try something new and to take risks." She continued, "Sports was just about trying new things and having fun and not getting caught up in the winner's circle." While Chenoa was exploring sports, she was able to feel successful and develop the confidence to try new things that made her more aware of her strengths and weaknesses.

Making it to the summit. Chenoa has used her experiences, skills, and knowledge to climb the entrepreneurial mountain. After arriving at the summit, she now shares her wisdom as "the queen-bee mentor" to other entrepreneurs who are climbing the mountain. She said, "With the high cost of living, lower compensation for good jobs, and the limited supply of high value jobs in Hawai'i, many of Hawai'i's brightest and talented are leaving Hawai'i for school or work and not returning" (Price, 2016, para. 5). Instead of losing the young and talented people who are interested in business or those who are trying to figure out what they want to do or can do, Chenoa's mission and vision

are to create a place in Hawaiʻi similar to Silicon Valley, staging a start-up ecosystem for business ideas. Today, she has created a space where she helps other entrepreneurs make it to the summit through funding, startup support, marketing to market, and growth. Chenoa said, "I've made this my life's mission: to build an entrepreneurial ecosystem, a diversified economy, so my children can stay here, have good opportunities."

Ed

Ed attended Punahou School, a private college preparatory school located in Honolulu, Hawaiʻi. He graduated with a 2.9 grade point average and continued his higher education at the University of Colorado (CU-Boulder) and graduated with a Bachelor's in Science and Small Business Management and Entrepreneurship.

During the summers of Ed's sophomore and junior years in college, he worked as an intern with CB Richard Ellis, one of the largest real estate companies in the nation. Ed was able to work occassionally at the Denver, Colorado location and also worked in Hawaiʻi during the summer. When Ed graduated, he knew he wanted to return home to Hawaiʻi, so he called CB Richard Ellis to let them know he had graduated and they offered him a full-time position.

In the year 1995, Ed decided to leave his job at CB Richard Ellis, and he and his wife backpacked around the world for a year. While travelling, Ed's interest in cooking grew. When they returned to Hawaiʻi, he took culinary classes at Kapiolani Community College (KCC) and worked at some restaurants. In 2005, Ed opened his first restaurant,

Town. Over the years, he has expanded his delicious delectables at Kaimuki Superette, Mud Hen Water, and Mahina and Sun's.

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

I am lucky! You can choose your friends, but you can't choose your family (Templar, 2013) is inarguably a true statement that can sometimes leave you shortchanged in life. But this was not the case for Ed. He shared, "I was lucky to have a wonderful mother; one that I call a lifetime mentor." He added, "She has always been a dedicated, loving, and selfless mother, who was the best cook I have ever known." As a single mom she worked hard, but her family always came first. Ed said,

> My mom had such an incredible work ethic and there was an understanding that sacrifices were made. She raised my brother and me with the value that family was important. Those values have carried on with me as a father now, and most of everything that I do is for our family.

Traveling to find oneself in an empty bowl filled across the world. Ed remembers his wife telling him, "quit your unfulfilling job and travel the world to find yourself and figure out what is next." Ed did and found himself traveling, exploring and enjoying great cuisine. Ed said, "One day while eating pho in Hanoi, Vietnam, I realized that while eating at new places, I met many different types of people. Food brought people together, made them happy, and nourished their bodies." Ed had an epiphany that "Food is the unifying fabric of humanity, connecting us to the earth and each other" (Kenney, 2015). Ed did not have a background in cooking but realized he wanted to cook and own a restaurant.

After returning to Hawaiʻi from his world travels, Ed learned to cook for the next ten years in the Kapiolani Community College's Culinary program. He also gained experience and knowledge through working in many local restaurants, working with different chefs with different styles, and tried to evolve his style. He had a vision of "having a place for the community to gather where decent food was served."

Experiences prompt lifelong learning. Ed described himself as a rebellious child, mostly because of his disregard for authority. He said, "I was always kind of a rebel, like a punk rock, skater kid." He added that he wasn't interested in school and was often told that he had potential but did not apply himself. Ed said, "I find that when I'm really interested in something, I can learn it. I am a tactile learner or experiential learner who learns by doing." He emphasized, "My best learning experiences were hands-on, interactive, and experiential."

Ed remembers opening up a lemonade stand as a young child on the side of the road. But his lemonade business was short term with the focus of making some extra money and moving on. He also remembers attending the Explorations program at Kamehameha Schools for a few summers that taught him about land preservation and sustainability, which has led him to feel connected to the land.

He also remembers developing a hypothetical triathlon and cycle apparel business in college with a group of students. Although he knew it was not a business that he would continue, the experience seemed real. "I learned how to develop and run a businesss, make decisions, manage orders and employees, work hard, and manage the time needed to make the business work."

Ed felt that school provided him with a place to learn about his strengths and weaknesses however, never really saw the value in school. He said,

I was never a great student and frequently questioned what was being taught. But, I believe that my experience at Punahou, University of Colorado [at] Boulder, and Kapiolani Community Culinary were invaluable in my growth as a businessman, chef, and person.

Ed continues to attend seminars, trainings, and workshops that help him to stay abreast of important issues related to his industry and are relevant to his life. Every few years he attends a James Beard Foundation Chef Bootcamp to work with other chefs from around the country and discuss pressing food issues. Ed described one of the classes that he recently went to and said

I learned about marine sourcing and how the sourcing was engaged in the slave trade and human trafficking. After learning how many of these people were catching fish and were not being treated well, I decided not to support companies like that. As a business owner, I need to know what is going on in my industry because it makes me reflect on my choices and how it affects people and the environment in a positive or negative way.

In addition to the classes and trainings that Ed has attended, he said he also experienced a lot of growth through his work experiences. While at the YWCA, Ed's boss provided many great opportunities for the employees to grow and learn about themselves and the organization. It was those activities that Ed remembers making an impression on him and his values. His boss guided the employees to see how their

individual values were contributing to the team and organization, which gave each of them a sense of ownership, belonging, and acceptance.

Another thing Ed developed while at the YWCA was an interest in instilling a social mission in a for-profit enterprise. At that time "social entrepreneurship" was becoming a buzzword and people were talking about a triple bottom line: people, planet, and profit. When Ed planned on opening his first business, he knew that he wanted to incorporate the 3 Ps into his vision: bring people together to enjoy a meal together; be mindful of the planet by serving local food that was grown in Hawai'i from responsible food sources; and, be profitable to sustain a healthy business model. Working at different restaurants helped Ed to develop as a leader in the food industry by taking the strengths from his prior bosses, developing his identity, and providing a safe place for others to thrive at what they do best.

Entrepreneurship and risk taking. While continuing his learning as an entrepreneur, Ed recalls an experience during the first week of opening his first restaurant, Town,

> My uncle was one of the ones who helped start Town with a bit of seed capital. So he came in during the first couple weeks of opening. I was super excited that he was there and I asked him what he thought. My uncle responded, 'I think it was amateur.'

Ed could not believe what his uncle told him. It crushed him, but it motivated him to make his business better.

As Ed continued learning and moving forward toward his goals, he maintained

Town Restaurant. Starting out, he utilized the knowledge that he gained from his

business classes when studying at the University of Colorado. However, he said,

> At some point in growing your company, you can't continue to do everything and
>
> wear every hat. You need to surround yourself with people who will complement
>
> your weaknesses. It's not important to spend time developing your weak points
>
> when you can spend the same amount of time developing your strengths.

So instead of continuing to watch his finances, profit and loss, and accounting daily, Ed

decided to hire a Chief Financial Officer. He also relinquished human resources and legal

responsibilities. Ed said, "You start off your business as the jack-of-all trades, but master

of none. You spread yourself really thin, but in the end, it's best to hire people who are

[specifically] experts in those fields." As Ed built his team, he acknowledged the

importance of developing a team that sticks together through succeesses, and failures

because those are lessons everyone could learn from. Ed shared that his company's

hashtag is "#FPP, which means first person plural." When talking about Ed's team, he

said, "We try to make it a habit of using the plurals we, our, ours. We don't allow people

in our organization to say I or my. It's always our, we, ours, us. #FPP—first person

plural."

Rob

Rob attended Henry Opukahaia School, a small private school in Keaau, Hawaiʻi.

He continued to go to a public middle school, Waiakea Intermediate, and in his freshmen

year, was accepted into Kamehameha Schools, Kapalama Campus on the island of Oahu.

After being dismissed from Kamehameha Schools, Rob moved back to Hilo and was

watched over by his father while he attended Waiakea High School. Rob made it out of high school and graduated with a 1.7 grade point average. Rob decided to continue his education at Monterey Peninsula College, junior college in California. He later transferred to California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo and received his Bachelor's degree in Architecture, six years later.

Rob was fortunate to get an internship at a Hawai'i-based company, Wimberly Allison Tong and Goo (WATG), one of the world's leading design consultants for the hospitality, leisure and entertainment industries. He worked in the overseas department that developed buildings in Southeast Asia where he developed architectural designs in Kumpa Lumpur. He later moved into a full-time position back in Hawai'i where he started being more involved in projects where he could infuse his knowledge and the stories of Hawai'i. In 2000, Rob co-founded Watanabe Chun Iopa and Takaki (WCIT) and later became the President in 2001. Since 2011, he has popped up four new companies.

Rob also believes in inspiring the next generation as a published author of children's books. He has written, '*A 'ama Nui,* which was printed in both English and Hawai'i, and *Hale 'olelo*, which is a collection of stories that weaves in the inspiration of design and architecture. In these stories, Rob has a creative way of inspiring children by incorporating the depths of architectural design of an actual home. Rob's stories teach about architecture using Hawai'ian culture, stories, and history of Hawai'i as it invokes legacies of mo'oku'auhau (genealogies), mo'olelo (stories, mo'oka'i (journeys), and mo'owaiwai (valued practices) of the beautiful Hawai'ian islands where he lives.

Rob drew an analogy between being an entrepreneur and an athlete participating in high school sports. As captain of his high school football and baseball teams, Rob was known in high school for his leadership and athleticism. Rob pointed out that "In sports, there is that nature verses nurture theory that people wonder about." Going through entrepreneurialism, Rob said, "In life you are kind of dropped into a situation and you have to find your place. In entrepreneurialism you need to find your passion, your groove."

* * *

An underachieving academic student with goals. For Rob, he knew that he enjoyed mathematics and problem solving. On the day of his high school graduation, his grandmother asked him with tears in her eyes, "So, what are you going to do now?" Rob told her, "I'm going to be an architect." Despite being an underachiever in school, Rob had a real interest in being an architect.

During his first year of college, Rob said, "I had to take all the basic classes again like mechanical drafting, precision drafting, and advanced math." Rob commented, "I took those classes in high school, but I think I just wasn't ready for them. I didn't do well. Once I got to college, I knew I had to do well if I really wanted to do this." Rob pushed forward with perseverance and focus and did well enough to be accepted into California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly) where he started pursuing his interest and passion for architecture and developing the knowledge and skills he needed to do that kind of work. Rob admits, "Besides my early childhood education, going to college really opened my eyes again. My world opened up to design, composition, and materialities."

Once Rob was at Cal Poly studying architecture, he said, "I knew this is what I wanted to do for the rest of my life."

Being alone and growing with mentors. In the year 2000, Rob decided to step out in faith with three other men to grow the business of architecture in Hawaiʻi, and became a partner in Watanabe Chun Iopa Takaki. But as the business starting growing faster than anyone planned and at an uncomfortable rate, Rob found himself alone. Rob explained, "Watanabe decided to leave because the growth was too much and Chun and Takaki passed away unexpectedly." Rob's plans of going into business with three older men for guidance and mentorship faded away quickly, and he was thrust into a position of having to fend for himself. Rob said, "I thought I would have these mentors for at least the first decade of my entrepreneurial period, but I just had to figure out the way."

Right around this period, Rob was accepted into a leadership development program called Pacific Century Fellows (PCF). Rob met some younger guys who were in business. He said, "I was meeting business men who were almost ten years younger than me who were doing well in business and also publishing books." Rob said, "Even though my world was caught up in design, these young business men inpsired me to do more and figure out my business." Rob asked lots of questions about business and started learning that he needed to start surrounding himself with this these people. Rob said, "There was a period in time when I focused on the business aspect. I attended seminars and trainings to learn and be influenced."

Rob kept his ears open and his feelers out for every opportunity to learn. However, he shared, "I'm not really one to have a mentor because my pesonality type is one that tries not to impose. But through business contacts or doing things together I have

learned a lot and have been mentored by many." Rob also mentioned Aron (a pseudonym), a Fellow with whom he built a business relationship, who "opened his business world." Since the relationship has developed Rob has been included in other businesses opportunities that have formed partnerships into investments that diversified his business portfolio.

A few years later, Rob was invited to participate in the Young President's Organization (YPO), an organization that "unites more than 24,000 members in more than 130 countries around the world with the shared mission of becoming better leaders through lifelong learning and idea exchange" (Young Presidents Organization, 2016, para. 1). Rob said, "Initially I thought YPO wasn't for me. But I talked to people in it and they told me how it was lifechanging because of the international resources and people who bring a wealth of knowledge and experience. The organization is made up of people just like me, entrepreneurs trying to figure it out." Rob decided to join. He added, "Another benefit of the organization is being a part of a forum group, which is similar to having a Board of Directors of entrepreneurs who he can talk to about business ideas, challenges in business, and also personal issues." Additionally, Rob said that being a part of a group where people really know what you are going through, or how you're feeling, helps to know that the growth and challenges are normal, because it is not something that you would call your best friend to discuss. Being surrounded by other entrepreneurs enables him to figure it out with a good support system, so he does not feel isolated. Rob commented, "The Pacific Century Fellows program was my undergraduate schooling and YPO is like my graduate program."

While finding his way, Rob developed a friendship with a contractor named Ray (a pseudonym). Rob respects Ray as a successful businessman, so he asked him, "What is the secret to success?" Ray responded,

You are born lucky. You are born with a spirit to pursue. Luck happens to people that are looking for it. They are looking for opportunities and then you take the risk. There is an opportunity on almost every corner. It is just the matter of identifying it, analyzing it to see if it has potential for a positive outcome, and execut[ing].

Playing for team Hawaiian and finding his niche. After working on numerous projects and gaining experience developing projects in South East Asia, Rob learned about designing architecture and integrating culture. His interest led him back to Hawaiʻi where he met a former head of the Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association and a sort of elder statesmen among Native Hawaiian consultants. In a magazine interview, the former head of the Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association shared the following thought, "You can not have a Hawaiian sense of place, if you don't have any Hawaiians" involved in the project being designed. Rob thought about his own identity being Native Hawaiian and had a personal feeling of pride to become that person to design locations in Hawaiʻi that merge the Hawaiian culture, heritage, and traditions. Rob remembers wanting to design architectural designs that told a story of Hawaiʻi and something that embodied a Hawaiʻian sense of place. Rob knew he had a big job ahead of him; although he was part Native Hawaiʻian, he didn't grow up with the culture as a major aspect of his life. In a magazine interview, Rob shared the following thought about his parents, "My mother was a Caucasian from California and my father was Hawaiian from Keaukaha. My dad

was told growing up he was too Hawaiian, so he tried to become more Western" (Hollier, 2014). Growing up, Rob did not remember learning much about his culture, but he knew that at this point in his life it was important to him and it was the right opportunity to learn as he grew within his career.

Find your teammates. Rob stated, "I am fascinated by shows like Survivor. You can try and survive alone or work with a team." Rob adds, "On sports teams, some people are just happy as a part of the team. They are happy to find their little role and contribute. There are others that find a way into leadership positions."

Rob found himself in those lead positions during high school sports which helped him to develop the interpersonal relationship skills that he needed later in life. Those experiences also helped him understand how to work as a team and discover how each person can contribute to making the team better. He said, "Sometimes people think that being an entrepreneur is good because you can have it your way and you don't have to answer to anyone else. That is true if you don't want to deal with the politics of other people." However, Rob adds that once a company develops a certain amount of success, the leader or CEO will realize in order to grow, the company needs to bring in someone or people that have a different skill that the current leader does not have. Rob shared that he saw this when he was leading his company alone, "I have challenges from not being educated thoroughly enough, and I'm bad at numbers. I'm good at math and problem solving, but I am challenged with financial data." So instead of holding his company back from developing further, he hired other people that he could trust to support his mission and vision."

While building his team, Rob said that it hasn't been easy because sometimes you have to take leaps of faith with people. He said, "Sometimes it works out and sometimes it doesn't, but you don't look back at the situation and say 'shucks, I shouldn't have done that.' Because it is all learning along the way."

The underdog who succeeded. Thinking like an athlete, Rob also takes lessons from his past. He said that when he faces challenges, he does not just cave in and go home to cry about it. "I figure out how to get back up on the horse and do it again." Thinking long term, Rob has learned that "It's not just about starting the business, but also keeping it running. Thinking about sustainability and the cycles of economies." Rob explained that like all businesses, his has a "cycle of economy, so it is important to reach out, maintain good relationships, and touch bases with clients." To avoid the dramatic ups and downs, Rob has tried to diversify his investments and involvement in different business sectors that integrate architecture.

Every day is "an opportunity to succeed on every corner." Rob explained that in trying to grow his business, "We go and compete in areas that may be underserved if I think there is opportunity. Rob said, "We have popped up four small businesses in the past five years, and now I have a network and backbone that no regular start-up can compete with. I have a ten thousand square foot space that we own." Rob explained that if he sees an opportunity in the marketplace, he carves out a space and starts up a small company, and often it is a service related to his architecture business. He said, "If I need to popup an archaeology company with two people, I carve out space in my building and see if it can grow." Since growing, and being able to do this, Rob described the

experience and said, "It is a bit of risk, but it is exciting to see if these things can blossom. It is empowering, but a bit overwhelming."

In the process of raising three children along with his wife, Rob tries to inspire and empower them as they figure out their strengths and interests as individuals. Another investment project that he has been involved in is publishing books that nurture creativity. Rob said, "It is my hope that through my stories, I am nurturing creativity. I think it is important to be creative and also think logically about what you're going to do with your creation." He adds, "I think raising kids as free thinkers and exploring a variety of solutions helps children to think that problems can be solved in many ways."

Christine

Christine attended Kalani High School, a public school in Honolulu, Hawai'i. She graduated with a 3.5 grade point average and continued her education at Kapiolani Community College. Later she transferred to the University of Hawai'i, Manoa where she declared a major in political science so that she could be a lawyer or an accountant.

She took a side job at a small real estate development company where her interest in the industry grew, so she changed her major to finance and started taking classes at Honolulu Community College, as well as Hawai'i Pacific University. When Christine graduated, and she had a breadth of experience under her belt on a small scale, her boss encouraged her to learn from larger companies. She moved to Castle and Cooke as a Project Coordinator in Planning and Engineering and ended in the position as Senior Project Coordinator Project Development and Acquisitions after five years. She was then recruited by another large development company called Alexander & Baldwin (A&B

Properties) as a project manager and became the Vice President of Development after five years.

In 1999, Christine founded Avalon Development Company. Over the past seventeen years, Christine's boutique company has grown to become the Avalon Group, a multifaceted real estate business that manages a $350 million portfolio of properties across Hawai'i in partnership with multinational companies and financial giants in real estate around the world.

* * *

My beloved mother. As a young girl, Christine remembers watching her mother working hard to support the family. As an immigrant, her mom had difficulty getting a job because she had limited English language skills. So instead, she was an entrepreneur who tried many businesses to make ends meet. Christine remembers her mom gathering what she could to sell things at the swap meet and also buying a "bakery" that sold day old bread and pastries for a discount. She would buy the day-old goods from the bakery and then turned around to sell them. Her mother also bought a mart that sold a variety of grocery items, but all three endeavors were colossal failures. Christine knows that her mom never became rich, but she always managed to pay her bills and support the family as best as she could. Through watching her mother, Christine learned a little about entrepreneurship, taking risks, working hard, and not giving up.

A smile, a glow, and hope. One day, when Christine was a junior in high school, she wanted to take control of her life without finances being a burden any longer. She packed her stuff and ran away from home. Because she worked three jobs, she figured she had enough money to support herself and rented an apartment for $175 per month.

Despite gaining her independence, she described the experience and said, "I remember being miserable because I was surrounded with a lot of other teenagers and adults who were struggling in life, many who were involved in prostitution or drugs." Christine could barely afford the rent, and remembers, " I would boil water at a neighbors' to have warm water to shower." Christine stuck it out for a little while, but the depressed atmosphere started getting to her. Eventually, she noticed a boy and girl in the hall that lived in the building. They stood out because every day they had big smiles on their faces. "They just glowed," Christine said. So one day she stopped them and asked them why they were so happy. They told her, "We are just college students, we go to school." That's when Christine realized they had what she wanted—a smile, a glow, and hope. By going to college, they were hoping to create a better life, and were excited about their future. Christine said, "It was then that I decided to go back home to save my money because I wanted to go to college one day."

Motivation for a better life. Christine had hope for her future and attended college classes with a declared major in political science, with plans to become a lawyer or an accountant one day. Needing to pay for her classes, Christine took a job with a very small real estate company that was owned and operated by an attorney. Christine was the only other employee besides the owner, so she had a lot of responsibility.

She remembers often crying and thinking how life wasn't fair because of her family's financial struggles and was envious of the opportunities others had, but her boss reminded her to focus on herself and what she was doing to move her life forward. She said, "He told me not to compare myself to anybody else because if I continued to do that, I would always lose." He also pointed out to her that "There will always be

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somebody better, richer, or more educated than you, but it does not matter because you can not change that; you can change yourself and who you become." Christine's boss encouraged her to focus on creating the future she wanted.

While working, Christine was expected to do many things from typing to drafting legal documents. Christine never complained about the responsibilities, but saw it as an opportunity and experience to learn something new. She said,

> My boss was a big role model in my life at that time. He told me as I was learning things that no matter how smart we are, we can't do things on our own. There will always be someone that you are going to need to guide you. Luckily, my boss was that person.

Christine remembers the rich work experience that she gained through creating a marketing plan, doing design work, and executing it. Gaining hands-on experiences at work, Christine remembers the motivation to learn more,

> So I started changing my educational plan in college to support the knowledge I needed in the office. When I started doing some accounting work at the office, I registered to take some accounting classes. When I was learning in class how to manage a budget and create financial reports, I was really doing it at work.

Christine eventually changed her major to Finance. Continuing to gain lots of experience and success from the small development real estate company, Christine said, "I didn't want changes." But her boss encouraged her to grow further by gaining more experience in larger companies. She remembers being scared because she did not have her college degree and she knew less than other people. But her boss encouraged her to go and see how the big companies worked and let her know that if things did not work out she could

always return to work with him. Christine decided she had nothing to lose and changed her perspective in using this as an opportunity to become more educated and grow. She said, "when I saw the move as an investment to learn, it no longer became scary."

Investing in herself. Christine moved to Castle and Cook and realized that by gaining skills and experiences in the small real estate development company, she was familiar with almost all of the departments in the larger company. Christine recalls being confident because of the different experiences she had from sales to marketing to advertising to leafing, so Castle and Cook could use her skills wherever they needed. Christine recollects her goal was to help everyone on the team toward success. She said, "Sometimes I even did their work. It didn't matter who got the credit because I got the opportunity to learn while helping others and the end goal was helping the company to succeed."

Christine continued to invest in herself through more experiences, and eventually moved to Alexander & Baldwin (A&B) Properties. Because of all of her experiences thus far, she became a project manager. Christine recalled clearly a turning point in her career that ignited a fire, "I was negotiating a huge multi-million dollar sale that I ended up losing. I lost the bid to someone else for thousands of dollars short. I was so disappointed when the decision did not turn in my favor." Thinking back on that experience, Christine remembers thinking to herself, "Now what?" Knowing that she needed to move forward, she decided to use all of the knowledge and experiences she had to start her company.

In 1999, Christine invested in herself and opened Avalon Development Company. Success did not come right away. Christine remembers working harder than she ever had before. She said, "As the CEO of the company, you need to be the hardest worker in the

company. You need to be the first one in the office and the last one out. You also need to be doing whatever it takes to make the vision happen." She also experienced another change, she was thinking about her business 24-hours a day because it wasn't just her livelihood that she was thinking about, but the employees who she hired. She said, "The first three years were very stressful. I would review my financial reports to crunch numbers and sit in front of my checkbook, hoping to make payroll." Within three years, Christine remembers, "My company finally hit a comfortable place financially where there was more money coming in than going out. I decided to invest again by using the millions I had into land for projects to grow bigger and succeed." She was fortunate to acquire the land she wanted but hit another big challenge when the economy took a downturn in 2008. She recalled feeling uneasy because she had just invested the millions of dollars that she gained and the lenders who she was counting on refused to fund her projects because it was too risky. Christine remembers that many companies and individuals were defaulting on their loans and filing for bankruptcy. She said, "It was a stressful time because many people continually asked me if I was going to file bankruptcy and take a loss." But Christine had integrity. She said, "I knew that if I did not pay back the bank what I owed, I wouldn't be able to continue to do business in Hawai'i for the next thirty years. My financial investment was in me and my company for the long-term." She went to the lender and said, "here is my share. I'm going to write you a check and give you a promise that you'll get your money within the first year." Christine worked hard to pay the bank back every penny by working as a consultant, a broker, a property manager, and whatever her company could do. She said, "I saw larger

companies filing for bankruptcy and small companies going out of business, but I never gave up, and it didn't matter what other companies were doing."

Her investment, hard work and integrity paid off in the end when the economy made its way back and people started building and developing plans again. Christine said, "When I went to the banks to get my lenders support, they went out of their way to help me finance my projects." Looking back, Christine said "That experience made my company better. In the long game, I was able to raise one hundred fifty million dollars, because I didn't walk away from a ten million dollar obligation."

The greater good. Christine said, "As an entrepreneur, you need to continually learn how to think bigger and to support the community that supports your business for the greater good." She said, "I need to take myself out of my business and understand what is going on in my community. I can be a better leader for my business and employees if I understand affordable housing, park planning, or transportation. I participate in many of these things even if it has nothing to do with my industry." She added, "The sheer number of people supporting the community are independent businesses. They are people like me who started a business out of nothing, worked hard, and gave up their weekends to build their business so that they can give back to the community. In Hawaiʻi, we are 98 percent entrepreneurs." Christine encourages entrepreneurs to invest in themselves, their dream, and the community that supports them.

Cross-Case Analysis

The following section provides a cross-case analysis of the data gathered from all of the case studies. The following section is organized by the key themes and sub-themes

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that emerged from the study. The categories include rich experiences, influential people, an optimistic attitude, and having purpose and passion.

Rich experiences that shaped their future. Five different lives with a range of rich experiences have provided hands-on opportunities for participants in this study to lead, innovate, and take risks. All five participants acknowledged that earlier experiences in life helped to prepare them for what was yet to come in leading their companies. John said, "I was someone who was able to study entrepreneurialism in college. But I don't think that it was just about the classes that I took. It's about the experiences that I've had that have also helped to shape me and get me where I am now."

Working as a team. The three male participants acknowledged that sports was a big part of their lives and provided experiences that developed their leadership, teamwork, communication, and perseverance. Rob said, "As a captain, you need to have those interpersonal relationships to understand how to push each player to perform. Just like in the work place, you're working with so many different personalities with different motivations." John shared how not being the best athlete on the team pushed him physically and emotionally to work hard, get better, and contribute to helping his team. Stankovich (2011) points out that athletes develop mental toughness and fortitude while competing on the field, but they also need to also realize that in real life, it is healthy to seek help from others by working as a team. The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry states that participation in team sports allows children to learn skills that will carry over into their adult life. Among the skills named are leadership, teamwork, and high self-esteem (Sutton, 2015).

Extracurricular activities and programs. Four out of five participants identified extracurricular activities and programs that played a role in their developmental journey as an entrepreneur. Chenoa managed the school's snack shop and Christine participated in the Junior Achievement's business program. Both learned basic business skills of identifying a need, creating a product, dealing with business people, taking a product/service to market, and providing customer service. Christine said, "My Junior Achievement experience gave me exposure to talking to business people." Chenoa remembered identifying the need and described the experience as, "It was a fun learning experience to earn money. It was better than cleaning toilets. I also learned so much more because I learned from my teacher who was giving me advice."

John and Ed both were introduced to environmental programs at an earlier age that develop a sense of connection to the earth. Ed said,

> At Punahou, we had a small Hawaiʻian studies unit about values. The Kamehameha Explorations program gave me one week to immerse myself into working in the land. Because of these experiences, when I opened my business, I knew that we would incorporate some of the native Hawaiʻian values, which also included farming.

Similarly, Dorsen, Carlson, and Goodyear (2006) found that providing adolescents and teens with experiences may motivate them to consider the industry as they go into the workplace.

Jack-of-all-departments. Christine, Ed, John, and Rob had many different experiences that provided them with the opportunity to adapt and engage in a variety of tasks. Starting off with a small company, Ed learned that he had to do "anything to make

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my business succeed." He further explained that included cooking, management, surrounding himself with good and organized people, understanding numbers to analyze the finances, and understanding legal and insurance to cover his workers. Christine also described how working in a smaller company allowed her to learn the different functions of each department from sales to marketing to advertising. When moving to a larger company, Christine was able to help in various departments because of her prior experience. She said, "When I started my own company, I knew how every department worked and was able to anticipate what was going to happen next, which helped me stay one step ahead.

An entrepreneur often feels stretched with the need to juggle and develop a variety skills in different departments to make sure his/her company succeeds. Finding someone else who is an expert with these skills is more helpful when trying to grow the company and allow the entrepreneur to focus on moving towards his/her vision. Ed stated that he tends to spend his energy by using his strengths and finds other people who have other strengths to develop other areas to help his business excel. Rob also admitted to having challenges in helping his company thrive when he was not doing things on a day-to-day basis that used his strengths. He said, "I hire people that I trust. I know what I don't know, and in some cases I have no interest in learning that." Rob added that he finds people to handle things in his business that he does not know much about or may not utilize his strengths. "We built a team that we can go and compete in areas that may be underserved because there is opportunity." Rob advised that if you build a team around you with various strengths, it helps with sustaining a business when the economy cycles.

Influential people who shaped future entrepreneurs. All five participants had influential people in their lives that helped shape who they are as entrepreneurs and community leaders. One factor that highly affected participants' success was the encouragement and support they received from peers and colleagues.

Christine and Ed discussed the strong influence their bosses had on them during important times in their lives. Their bosses had earlier experiences as business owners, so they helped guide them not to make the same mistakes. Christine's boss told her, "No matter how smart we are, we can't always do it on our own. There will be people in your life that you are going to need to guide you." Shefsky (1994), who interviewed 200 entrepreneurs and drew from their experiences said, "Learn from those who have already done it" (p. 7).

Chenoa and John acknowledged educators who influenced them to take risks and step out of their comfort zone to take a path less travelled. Chenoa said, "They all believed I could do things, so I started believing in myself that I could do those things. I basically faked it till I made it. It just worked for me."

Family influences. All five participants acknowledged family members who influenced their attitudes toward entrepreneurship. Interestingly, four participants acknowledged their mother as a person who encouraged home experiences that provided learning. Ed mentioned that his mother worked a lot but was a role model. She provided her children with different experiences to learn from herself, other family members, or programs in the community so that her boys would be prepared for life. Christine said, "I saw my mom fail at many ventures. But because she failed, I saw her bounce right back. It's not the end of the world; it's a learning experience." Fox (2016) conducted research

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on raising kids who take risks and find purpose in life, and found that all of the young entrepreneurs she met, basically provided the same response, "I had a mom who believed in me. She told me I could accomplish anything I put my mind to" (para. 4). Chenoa's mom was an entrepreneur and encouraged Chenoa to always try different things in school and out of school activities. This fostered Chenoa's ability to take risks and pursue her desires and interests.

A supportive network. One factor that influences the success of entrepreneurs is the connection to a supportive resource that includes family and friends who make up the entrepreneur's biggest supporters. These supporters encourage the entrepreneur to carry out his/her vision and are willing to provide advice or work support to help the company reach its goals.

In general, participants in this study acknowledged people as an important factor in entrepreneurial success for two reasons: 1) An entrepreneur puts together a team of people to support his/her vision and goals and 2) People choose to or not to support your business which affects its success. John expressed, "I think nowadays it is becoming more popular for people to see that it is not just about having a business but also knowing that you care." He added, "In order to build a strong team and maintain it, you need to know how to work with different personalities and utilize the strengths of different individuals with different motivations. You can have a company that stands apart from others if you know how to manage it all."

All participants brought other people together to help carry out their vision, in a supportive network, mentoring relationship, or employee team. Rob said, "I know my weaknesses so I find people who I trust because I don't want to learn it." Ed also advised,

"It's more important to spend time building your strengths rather than weaknesses because you can always hire people to complement your strengths." Ed added, "Working alone can only do so much. Working with others allows each person to focus on what they specialize in. Bringing excellence together can create something fascinating that can move the whole ship forward." Based on his research findings on successful entrepreneurs, Shefsky (1994) found that to work hard and work smart you need to do what it takes to make the dream real by bringing together others or hiring people who you can share your dream with and build it together.

In addition, Christine said, "You need to create a network of people who you can trust and ask questions of." Rob also acknowledged, "Having a network of experienced people, who are on the same journey of entrepreneurship, who can advise me and share with me their struggles and moments is different than a conversation with your best friend." Entrepreneur, Jim Rohn told Greene (2013) in a magazine interview that having a network of entrepreneurial friends could improve your odds of success by having people who understand your struggles and can give much-needed insight.

Facing challenges with optimism. The journey of entrepreneurs was not an easy path for any of the five participants. It came with mistakes, challenges, and a lot of learning experiences. Each participant explained how having an optimistic attitude coupled with resiliency was key in promoting their success. Ed said, "You learn from experiences and will continue to make mistakes. I make mistakes over and over and over

again. But I learn from them so I know what to do and what not to do." Shefsky (1994,) states:

> The entrepreneurs' natural adaption to the ultimate challenges were possible because of the strength these people gained dealing with earlier difficulties. The entrepreneurs were able to create an asset out of being different because they never let their earlier differences become a liability. (p. 115)

Christine described her optimistic thinking when faced with challenges,

> You've got two kinds of mental choices to make: 1) you can be that person who is likely to succeed because you are looking for solutions, having optimism; or, 2) you can be that person who is finding all of the problems and asking 'why isn't this working?' When I'm talking to people, I don't want to know why you can't do it, I want you to tell me the different ways that we are going to make things happen!

A successful international entrepreneur, Steimle (2014) shared that entrepreneurs make lots of mistakes. He advised aspiring entrepreneurs to avoid mistakes by learning from others. He said, "A wise man learns by the experience of others; a fool, by his own" (para. 2). Rob mentioned how his membership with different professional groups and having entrepreneurial friends helped him to grow as an entrepreneur and learn from others. He described how the relationships build within the group's circle of trust that shared ideas, beliefs, and experiences in a safe environment without judgment.

Connecting passion with purpose. One driving force that permeated throughout each entrepreneurs' business success was the passion and purpose they had for what they were doing. All entrepreneurs continuously shared about how they would strategically

make decisions for their company to attain their goals and never lost passion for their purpose. Ultimately, their purpose and passion were similarly focused on providing a better life and more opportunity for their family and children, along with a better Hawaiʻi for the present and future.

While creating their business ideas, all five participants had a purpose bigger than providing a quality service or product and to make a profit. In addition, they all had the aim of contributing to solving a social problem that would affect change. Christine's purpose of being involved in community service is to support the community that supports her business. Ed and John have created companies that supports the preservation and conservation of the land that feeds us and nourishes our bodies, with the need to sustain this for the future. Rob represents his cultural group of Native Hawaiʻians to bring a sense of what is Hawaiʻian to culturally informative architectural designs. Chenoa is focused on developing a sustainable entrepreneurial and startup environment in HawaiʻI, so that people can create jobs for themselves and others without having to move because of the high cost of living or lack of opportunities. In Patel's (2015) article summarizing the skills required for an entrepreneur to succeed, he stated, "In the end, the best and most enduring motivation is to make a positive change in the world" (para. 19).

Summary of Cross-Case Analysis

Through the cross case analysis emerged a number of important themes in regards to educational experiences that played a role in the development of successful entrepreneurs.The major themes are broken down into the categories of rich experiences, influential people, how challenges were faced, and purpose and passion.

Participants shared numerous important educational experiences that have played a role in their development as a successful entrepreneur. The most significant findings focused on early entrepreneurial experiences and the nurturing of an entrepreneurial mindset, which affected participants' values and attitudes about the choices they could make as their careers evolved. Additionally, participants were dedicated to building a good life for themselves and their families and developing a better Hawai'i for the present and future.

When examining how early experiences played a role in the development of an entrepreneur, participants highlighted influential people that nurtured their entrepreneurial spirit. Furthermore, optimism was pointed out as an important disposition that played a significant role in the development of skills and overcoming challenges that entrepreneurs faced, which is discussed further in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

Findings, Implications, Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore the role that educational experiences had on the development of successful entrepreneurs in Hawaiʻi. To gain a better understanding of the growth of these entrepreneurs, a case study was conducted to further understand: 1) the key knowledge, skills, and dispositions of entrepreneurs in Hawaiʻi; 2) the educational experiences that supported the development of successful entrepreneurs; and 3) whether entrepreneurs are born or made. This last chapter presents the study's findings, limitations, and implications. Finally, the chapter will conclude with a reflection and final thoughts, including possible next steps for further research.

Findings

Research question #1. What impact have educational experiences supported the development of successful entrepreneurs?

In this study, educational experiences are referred to as formal, informal, non-formal, and experiential practices that played a role in the development of successful entrepreneurs. These experiences were moments where participants were engaging in learning experiences that empowered and prepared them as active, creative, and knowledgeable entrepreneurs as they developed their vision.

All of the participants were educated in Hawaiʻi but had different experiences that developed their entrepreneurial knowledge as a child through young adulthood. All participants acknowledged that it was a combination of formal schooling, experiential, non-formal, and informal experiences that helped them develop the knowledge, skills,

and dispositions of an entrepreneur in several ways. It helped them to develop knowledge of business, discipline, awareness of self, perseverance, and resiliency.

Participants reflected on their formal educational experiences and described the different experiences that they had. Each experience played a different role in their development as entrepreneurs. The findings reflected that two participants did not perform well in school and were considered underachievers because teachers did not feel their academic work was commensurate with their potential. Participants described their early formal learning environment as being traditional and disengaging, compared to the hands-on, project-based, and experiential learning students are offered today. Not performing well academically, both participants recalled their motivation being ignited later in life when they realized their interest and passion of what they wanted to accomplish in their respective careers.

Some of the other findings that were mentioned by entrepreneurs as impacting their development were learning about themselves and developing an awareness of their strengths and weaknesses. Another useful skill that participants gained through formal educational experiences was the discipline to self-monitor oneself in completing tasks and sticking to deadlines. Foremost, school was the first opportunity where participants experienced having failures and challenges in their lives and learned resilience to pick one's self up, keep going, and surrounding oneself with a team that complemented their skills.

Entrepreneurialism was not a prevalent area of study when these participants attended college, but many of them took general business classes that provided a basic

foundation of business knowledge. This wisdom was key in starting the foundation of their companies to manage, maintain, and project for future growth.

While education in a formal setting is all encompassing, experiential education played a big role in the development for several participants. Having the experience of working in business and observing others ignited an entrepreneurial interest. Having hands-on experience helped a couple of participants realizing their strengths in managing finances, working with people, creating a vision, setting goals, and implementing plans. Hands-on experiences also provided participants with an acceptance that they needed to build a team that balanced skills along with their strengths and weaknesses.

One non-formal educational experience that participants mentioned that played a role in their development was the participation in exclusive leadership development organizations for business, community, and entrepreneurial leaders. All participants valued learning and shared that networking with similar professionals helped to support the achievement of their goals, encouraged opportunities for personal growth and change, and provided a network with other professionals who could help with projects. These networks also provided an opportunity for shared experiences and learning that supported their developing leadership. Hall (2012) encourages entrepreneurs to participate in entrepreneurial organizations. He says, "Besides a curated network of relationships, organizations also provide excellent opportunities to give back, mentor others, and find resources to help businesses in need" (para. 2).

One of the harsh realities of entrepreneurialism is that it does not promise success or have a cookie cutter road map. Entrepreneurs shared that having a mentor was another significant experience that informally played a role in their development. Having

someone as a role model for guidance to learn from, ask questions, helps to avoid mistakes, and provides mental and emotional support through the journey of entrepreneurship was important. Many participants mentioned their mother as the first mentor in their life who believed in them, inspired them to dream big, taught them resilience, and provided consistent support physically, mentally, and emotionally throughout the journey of entrepreneurship. Other influential people in participants' life were other family members, bosses, professors, friends, business associates, and coaches. Eugenio (2016) stated that the right mentor might provide valuable connections, timely advice, and spiritual and moral guidance that will leapfrog an entrepreneur to success. Several participants mentioned mentors who were instrumental in key business decisions and guiding them through challenging times, while coming up positive in the end. Morris (2012) studied top performing companies in New York to identify entrepreneurial advantage. His study revealed that many of the top performing founders had strong personal connections with other founders of other companies. Morris also pointed out, "33 percent of founders who are mentored by successful entrepreneurs went on to become top performers" (para. 11).

It is evident that educational experiences played a role in the development of successful entrepreneurs in Hawai'i. The integration of formal, non-formal, informal and experiential educational experiences were highly significant in each participant's learning. Participants shared through their stories that their learning was active, quick, and broad. While developing as an entrepreneur, their learning was applied quickly and assessed through success or failure. It continues to be apparent that entrepreneurial

learning comes from a combination of structured learning opportunities, in addition to their own and others' shared experiences.

Research question #2. What are some key knowledge, skills, and dispositions of successful entrepreneurs?

Knowledge. The findings suggest key knowledge that entrepreneurs should have to start and run their business successfully include the knowledge of finance, industry, marketing, and an amalgamation of different jobs.

The first area of knowledge that emerged from the study was the importance of entrepreneurs knowing finance. The data from the previous chapter points to three areas of finance to know: 1) how to read a financial statement; 2) how to project what cash flow will be and where it will come from; and, 3) how to manage funds to support your company's actions and goals. A couple of entrepreneurs brought up the point that some people believe that you can just hire a CFO to manage a company's finances, but also advised that not knowing one's books can lead to a financial disaster where a company runs out of operating money or is unable to pay back lenders.

The second important area of knowledge is to know about one's industry in a broader sense. Because people are doing business worldwide, it is important to know what is happening in different areas of the world. Participants shared that involvement in local, national, and international organizations was important in keeping abreast of what was happening on a global level to help understand where one's industry fit in and the impact one's company could have.

The third critical area of knowledge was marketing. One participant described marketing as the act of branding a company's products and services to the public who

will support a company financially through sales. Other participating entrepreneurs defined marketing as the perception of what one's company is about and its mission. Notably, participants described the benefits of building the public's perception of a company delivered positive results in building community relationships with customers and developing associations with other companies in the industry, and related industries.

The fourth fundamental area of knowledge that emerged from this study was the depth and breadth of knowledge that participants had about how to run their company. Through their various work experiences, participants learned how to wear different hats to fulfill different roles in the company ranging from janitorial work to accounting and human resources, from marketing to CEO. Whatever job that needed to be done day-to-day, when these entrepreneurs started, they stepped up and did it.

Lastly, another significant theme that resonated in each participant interview, was learning every day, through each experience, and taking the time to attend continuing educational or professional development programs. Being an example to employees by gaining knowledge and growing one's perspective through educational opportunities was important in keeping the company up to date on industry standards and innovative practices. Entrepreneurs shared their learning with employees and had discussions about how their company could implement innovative and mindful practices to lead their industry.

Skills. In addition to having knowledge, one must have the skills to take action on an opportunity and execute. "Skill is essentially applied knowledge" (Lyons, 2010). The skills that emerged from the study were vision and focus, hard work and drive, effective communication, connecting and developing value-based relationships, and storytelling.

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The first important set of skills that emerged in the study was a combination of vision and focus. Not only is it important to foresee and plan where the company is going, but it is also important to do whatever it takes to make the company succeed and not get distracted by other opportunities. Participants echoed that having vision and being able to communicate it was an important skill because of the need to share the company's goals and direction with others who they needed to ask for financing or hiring of new employees. It was also mentioned that vision is important for an entrepreneur because it can be used as a reminder of the dream when the company hit bumps in the road.

When a company is in its first three years, participants commented that there are many things to do and a lot of responsibility that makes it easy for an entrepreneur to feel spread thin and pulled in many different directions which may distract an entrepreneur from the goals of the company. The findings advise aspiring entrepreneurs to give a company at least three years to get up and running, focusing on getting the finances in the positive and paying lenders back if any. The focus is key, but participants shared this might sometimes be exhausting as participants found themselves thinking about their business during the day and evening.

Entrepreneurs noted having a strong work ethic and the drive to stay competitive, keep growing, and maintain a foundation of happy customers motivated them to keep progressing toward their vision. All five participants mentioned continued learning in their industry and out of their industry to understand how their businesses also affect the community. Rob also mentioned that he continues to invest in new businesses that can provide a service to the architecture industry if he feels it can be done better. This is to provide his customers with great customer service and experts to compliment what he

may be doing. Participants stated that the life of an entrepreneur is not as glamorous as most people think because it is a lot of work, which they said sometimes, is a cause of entrepreneurs quitting and companies closing down.

The ability to meet people, connect, and develop a value-based relationship can help a business to grow, in the short term and sustain beneficial relationships in the long term. One participant described how her relationships were forged when the economy went bad and she made sure that every penny of the loan was paid back on time. The result of not closing down proved fruitful when the company needed another loan to expand. Another company invested time to develop leaders within their company to help reach organizational goals and provide employees with the sense of team and added value.

Participating entrepreneurs in this study highlighted communication as an essential skill that allows entrepreneurs to deal with people—partners, employees, customers, and investors. When discussing the role that effective communication had on entrepreneurs, it was emphasized that it entailed listening to other's concerns, reading body language, and communicating ideas in a clear, concise, persuasive, and purposeful way. Although effective communication was a challenge for some of the participants when they started in the business, it was a skill that was honed through practice. Messerschmitt and Stuck (2008) state that the value of effective communication can bring success to convincing others of an idea, and why it is important to support you, buy from you, or invest in you.

Another reason participants stated that effective communication is an important skill is because they spend most of their days working with others to turn their ideas,

goals, and dreams into reality. Although people often don't like being coined a salesperson, many entrepreneurs need to sell their thoughts and vision of a project, which many participants did through storytelling to share information, break down barriers, build connections, and develop a sense of interdependence. Participating entrepreneurs described their selling technique as a way to explain to others the connection of the entrepreneur's actions, that was instilled in the product, that was rooted and connected to the place. According to Ditkoff (2015), storytelling is imperative when doing business because it helps to make meaning of something and helps to create engagement and understanding of each other.

Dispositions. Each and every person in this world is born unique. Although children may be created by the same two parents, each child's physical traits and personalities or dispositions vary, which affects their behaviors. This study looked closely at entrepreneurs and the inherent qualities of mind and character that might suggest entrepreneurs share common dispositions. Notably, the findings suggest that the participants dispositions echoed taking a calculated risk with an optimistic attitude, being resilient, being a team player, the purpose of positively affecting the community locally and globally, and having love for learning.

When describing an entrepreneur's disposition, risk taker often pops up on the list (Aileron, 2013; Bernstein, 2011; Clifford, 2013; Daley, 2013; Demers, 2014; Devenney, 2015; Kavilanz, 2013; Mandell, 1995; Shane, 2010; Tobak, 2016; and de Haan, 2010). While none of the participants described themselves as a risk taker, they described themselves as entrepreneurs who were courageous enough to take calculated risks. Optimism and having hope and confidence was key. Shefsky (1994) describes

entrepreneurs' risk taking as, "merely one factor in the equation; risk is a flashing yellow traffic light that you glance at as you whiz by on the highway of business" (p. 83). All of the participants advised that when you go into entrepreneurship, you just need to do things and not look back.

Having a vision and becoming an entrepreneur is a calculated risk, all on its own. It is the risk of the unknown journey and outcome that will include good things, along with challenges and failures. The findings reveal that participants in the study never regretted the risks they took. Despite some losses, the participants saw taking risks as an opportunity to learn and grow. The entrepreneurs did not ponder on their failures but were resilient to pick themselves up and keep going. One participant summed it up by stating "every failure for me was a lesson, and I think that is what made me a stronger person and a better entrepreneur."

For an entrepreneur who starts up a company and leads people, being a team player is an essential disposition for success. The findings indicate that all the participants had experienced playing on a team in their younger years. These experiences helped them to understand that a team can accomplish more than a single individual. Participants described how a team is able to support the strengths and weaknesses of one another to create something greater. The findings also reveal that entrepreneurs are aware of their weaknesses, and finding others to support those weaknesses will strengthen the company.

Amidst the celebrations and challenges that each participant faced on their journey, their passion and purpose to positively affect the community locally and globally was a significant part of their vision. Many of the participants made reference to stewardship that led their purpose to provide a better land, opportunity, and community in

which their children can raise their families. One participant captured the essence of stewardship toward the greater good as she said that there are multiple criteria for success in her business. She doesn't just look at her profit and loss statements, but asks these questions when considering a project: 1) Is it good for Hawai'i?; 2) By doing this, am I strengthening my place in the community or weakening it?; and 3) How is what we are going to do, affect others?

In summary, there are key knowledge, skills and dispositions that help an entrepreneur to succeed. The knowledge gained through educational experiences prepare an entrepreneur for business and management of the business. Skills are developed throughout one's lifetime and as self-awareness grows, one is able to appreciate their own strengths and limitations. Dispositions are identified traits that a person is born with; however, studies (Shane, 2010) show that sometimes dispositions are ignited through educational experiences that provide opportunities for aspiring entrepreneurs to explore. Although this study identifies key knowledge, skills, and dispositions of successful entrepreneurs, it was also determined that a person can develop a team to work with other people to complement knowledge, skills, and dispositions that an entrepreneur may lack to find balance in their company, in order to develop a more successful company.

Research question #3. Are entrepreneurs born or made?

Given the results of the study, as highlighted in the data analysis, the answer to the question of whether entrepreneurs are born or made is debatable. This study continued to ask the important question to hear the perspectives of participating entrepreneurs and their stance on whether entrepreneurs are born or made. The findings share an inconclusive stance on the nature/nurture debate.

Entrepreneurs are born. A few participants felt that entrepreneurs are born because of a certain "something" that they feel within themselves that drives them to take the road less traveled; one that is challenging, exciting, and rewarding once success is attained. A few participants described a trait that caused them to feel defiant, rebellious, along with the need to go against authority or a crowd. Participants described moments of getting in trouble from authority figures for not staying on a straight and narrow academic traditional path, while others were fortunate to have their creative path nurtured by someone in their lives. Some participants mentioned a drive to fulfill a bigger purpose in life, instead of taking the path of being an employee and working a nine-to-five job that includes less responsibility to other people and fewer demands. Participants expressed that if they were an employee within a company, their life would not be as fulfilled. Ed could not explain the drive that he felt within himself that caused him to do what he does every day. He found it challenging to explain to people why he hasn't slowed down in all of his years of working, building, expanding, and continually innovating.

Entrepreneurs are made. Other participants took the stance that entrepreneurs are made and developed through their experiences. Based on Christine's experiences she stated, "They [entrepreneurs] tend to be children of parents who have started businesses of their own. Children get to see what their parents experience." Seeing her mother fail and start over again several times, Christine had no reservations about trying to start something of her own because she knew that every experience was an opportunity to learn, whether she succeeded or failed. Lindquist, Sol, and Praag (2015) researched to see the effects of entrepreneurial parents and the effects on their children and found that

"parental entrepreneurship increases the probability of children's entrepreneurship by 60 percent" (p. 269).

In addition to the influences that parents had on shaping entrepreneurs, other individuals who may have influenced an entrepreneur's values and attitudes included bosses, friends, and business associates through the social contexts that they shared. Through her job, Christine found a role model who provided a number of opportunities that ignited her entrepreneurial spirit and interest in business. Gibb and Ritchie (1981) examined the characteristics and the effects of changes in entrepreneurs and their personal relationships. They found that entrepreneur's personalities grow within the environment that they are in and the experiences they have. Their research findings appear to indicate that social contexts and reference groups shape a person.

Rob described himself as a "made" entrepreneur by saying that he has a chip on his shoulder because of the work and experiences that he has gone through to get him where he is today. Yakowicz (2016) highlighted Stangler's stance that entrepreneurs can be made through exposure and educational experiences through formal education and social networks. "A lot of entrepreneurs have a chip on their shoulder because there was an experience that they went through." He continued and emphasized that "entrepreneurs would rather say that they were made through their hard work than just being born a successful entrepreneur" (para. 13).

Born with a gift. experiences made an entrepreneur. In general, participants felt entrepreneurs are both, born and made. They believe that entrepreneurs are born with instinct and desire; are made through experiences; entrepreneurs use their drive to create solutions; are willing to blaze one's own path while taking calculated risks.

Participants believed that there are probably more entrepreneurs who are interested in entrepreneurial activities than entrepreneurs that actually exist. Based on limited experiences that a person may have, it may or may not unlock the entrepreneurial instinct, desire, and interest. This could also depend on the person's need to be self-reliant, achievement motivation, the environment of where this person is located, the availability of supports for entrepreneurialism, and the confidence this person may have to actually take the risk to pursue entrepreneurial desires. Devenney (2015) believes that entrepreneurs need both to succeed, the right combination balance of natural abilities and the right environment.

The debate continues as to whether or not an entrepreneur is born or made. A person is born with inherent traits and skills that may be developed over time. In time, Christine described igniting one of her personality genes that released her inner self. She said,

> I was very shy up until the point that I became known as the new immigrant in Hawaiʻi, and then I was faced with trying to fit in. The failures I had to go through each day. Every time I succeeded in one thing or another, it made me much stronger and confident — somehow the 'innate me' came out.

Comparing an entrepreneur to a leader, Shane (2010) stated,

> Whether you become a leader or not isn't simply a choice that you make. And it isn't just the result of how your parents raised you or what you learned in school. It comes, at least in part, from what you were born with, your DNA (p. 147).

Shane (2010) strongly believes that a person carrying these types of genes needs to have experiences and opportunities to ignite the interest and passion to bring that innate personality out.

Implications for Entrepreneurs and Those Who Desire to be Successful Entrepreneurs

While there is limited evidence to the question whether successful entrepreneurs are born or made, the findings of this study suggest formal, informal, and non-formal educational experiences are important components and contribute to the success of entrepreneurs. Students should try to find value in their formal educational experiences to build their knowledge of business management, marketing, and finance. Others, who do not have the opportunity to access formal business education, but are interested in entrepreneurship, should take advantage of learning opportunities that promote and increase business knowledge that can be gained through finding a mentor, networking with other entrepreneurs, part-time employment, working in the family business, or other entrepreneurial experiences.

The results of this study suggest that entrepreneurs also need to learn effective skills—the ability to develop a vision with focus, have a strong work ethic, communicate effectively, be a team player, and build a network that will support their ideas. It seems that the best way to get a taste of entrepreneurialism is just to jump in and get started. If an entrepreneur knows their strengths and weaknesses, it is best to find a partner or build a team that may balance out one's weaknesses.

Participants in this study expressed times in their life when they felt like they did not fit in. They were unsettled with where they were because of the need to explore new

ideas, along with the desire to be innovative, more autonomous, maintain control, and take risks with bigger rewards. Entrepreneurs are known to defy conventional views about how to do things and will more often than not, choose the unbeaten path to explore new things. They may use the fundamental knowledge needed to conduct business, such as finance, leadership, business models, and sales strategies, but may approach it in a new and unique way that hasn't been done before. Often these people become isolated for being different and not conforming to the rest of the group at school or in the workplace. Research (Ladimeji, 2016,;Shane, 2010; and Bariso, 2014) indicates that these are qualities of an entrepreneur. Participants in this study described different times that they felt they did not fit in so they created their path in life, challenged the status quo, and fearlessly climbed to the top in their industry. Through the educational experiences they had earlier in life, they used those experiences as the foundational knowledge to take risks, innovate, and make sound financial decisions. Aspiring entrepreneurs are advised that they will work harder than ever before, accept that their journey will not follow an ordinary path, will need to innovative using alternative solutions to a problem, and surround oneself with people who can support their goals.

Implications for Educators

A parallel exists between participants who had educational experiences that exposed them to entrepreneurship and those who had knowledge, skills and dispositions of an entrepreneur. More than ever, entrepreneurial skills are important due to changes in the economy. There is growing global accessibility to resources through technology to utilize services and provide these resources for more people. Seeing people get displaced in their jobs, by a robot that can be programmed to do the same job, has shown that a

college degree is not enough. Perhaps the traditional education system needs to have options for those who want to pursue vocational jobs and those who desire to have an open education that develops the mindset of an entrepreneur, allowing for active and experiential learning where knowledge and skills are learned through hands-on and relevant interests.

According to Foster (2017), one school district in Acton, Texas has partnered with a billionaire to develop a K-12 curriculum that prepares students to develop the skills and mindset of an entrepreneur. Employers are starting to see a generational shift of workers who do not stay at one company for long, job hopping and looking to move-up in positions, or are displaced from the company. The Acton school district believes increased exposure to entrepreneurship at all ages can lead to students thinking entrepreneurially and may affect their ideas about what they want to do when they become older. Currently, schools are teaching 21st-century skills, such as working with others, critical thinking, problem solving, and creativity, but these are being taught within the walls of a classroom. Perhaps active and experiential learning will allow students to take more field trips to explore innovative jobs, talk to professionals, set-up more apprenticeships, and create private and public partnerships, to support hands-on experiences and applied learning from the classroom to real life work experiences.

In addition to having 21st-century skills, it is highly suggested that students learn to develop a growth mindset. Entrepreneurs take risks in their daily decisions, big business decisions, investments, and expansion deals without any promise of a positive result. Regardless, being able to take risks and have an optimistic mindset were qualities that each participant spoke of as critical in decision-making. This growth and optimistic

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mindset helped participants' businesses grow, improve and accomplish great things. The participants' stories suggest that in the event the risks they take do not succeed in the way they hope or plan, they must be resilient and see the journey as learning lessons along the way. They must pick themselves up from failure and continue moving on, which includes taking more risks.

Many described how mentors were key in helping them reflect on each experience and utilizing an opportunity for growth and learning. Successful entrepreneurs must display optimism when working toward any successful entrepreneurial venture because the work of an entrepreneur is a direct result of effort, learning, persistence, and strategy. An entrepreneur who thinks work will be easy and glamorous will not be ready when challenged. It is important that educators teach students to persevere with determination, and maintain an optimistic outlook on the results of their efforts, as life is full of challenges, disappointments, and learning opportunities.

Currently, schools in Hawai'i are moving toward student-driven inquiry and project based learning. This is a step forward to encourage students to take risks and pursue their interests. However, with report cards and grades still being the primary source of evidence in learning, students are focused on the outcome of earning good or bad grades. I would propose that our schools begin implementing students' reflections within assessments of their learning. The emphasis of accomplishments may focus more on what was learned, how it was learned, and the impact the learning makes on oneself or the wider community. For the school subjects that develop basic skills needed within the application of work, such as math, student reflections could concentrate on the relevance and importance of how that skill will be useful in one's life. This will connect learning to

real life practical skills for a person to live and contribute to a community successfully. Boud (1995) suggests that assessments should be integrated and a beneficial part of the learning process because it stimulates longer-term adoption and approach to studying. He finds that when students are assessed for their learning, there is a higher motivation to do well.

The results of this study also suggest a weak connection between academic success and an individual's success as an entrepreneur. This study included two participants who were told at some time in their academic lives that they were not performing up to their potential and were underperforming in school. They both managed to do well in their careers and become leaders in their communities and respective industries. The interviews suggested that participants did not necessarily perform well in school because either they learned in different ways from than the ways they were being taught, or they did not see the importance of doing well in school at the time. However, participants began doing well in their lives when they were able to focus and develop their areas of interest through experiential learning opportunities. In addition, as they became aware of the impact that their educational experiences had in preparing them for their careers and developing the knowledge needed, their self-efficacy increased. Therefore, I suggest that there are potential and important benefits for schools to offer more experiential learning for students to make learning more interactive, connecting it to real life experiences, and encouraging the adoption of utilizing new knowledge and skills. These suggestions are not with the intent that all students will become entrepreneurs, but with the hope that students will consider their career choices differently. The

development of an entrepreneurial mind could teach students to appreciate the different ways in which ideas may be developed utilizing the effectual process.

Implications for Future Research

This study explored the role that formal, informal and non-formal educational experiences played in the development and success of Hawaiʻi entrepreneurs during a time when not many formal or informal educational opportunities were available. Most of the participants in this study are middle-aged (between the ages of 30-60 years old); thus, future research might focus on other generations of entrepreneurs who had limited educational opportunities available, yet developed an interest, the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and the know-how to succeed as an entrepreneur. Examining the experiences of entrepreneurs from different time periods could help to provide a broader view of entrepreneurial development and the influence that educational experiences played in their development and success. An extended study of generational entrepreneurs could also take a look at how current educational opportunities are affecting the success of new businesspersons in Hawaiʻi. Examining how these programs have developed entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, and dispositions, may make it possible to better understand the effectiveness of these programs and provide further evidence as to whether entrepreneurs can be taught entrepreneurship effectively?

Another area of future research could focus on different types of entrepreneurs— Lifestyle entrepreneurs, habitual entrepreneurs, mompreneurs, you-tube entrepreneurs, franchise entrepreneurs, and small- and large- business owners—comparing the types of knowledge, skills, and dispositions that promote success. Participants in this study were mostly small business and multi-business owners, thus comparing other type of

entrepreneurs or business owners and their development may provide insights into the factors that attributed to their success. Different types of successful entrepreneurs may also provide different perspectives on the effect of educational experiences that played a role in their development. It would be helpful to understand which educational experiences changed over time and how it affected the development of knowledge, skills, and dispositions in the journey to success.

There are many barriers women face in their career choices due to gender. Some of these challenges are the *glass ceiling*. This phenomenon often leads to women not being promoted to a lead position in a company or not receiving equal pay as their male counterparts. There were two females who participated in this study and shared their entrepreneurial journey. Both women mentioned how being an entrepreneur encouraged creative problem solving, to be in control of their learning ability, and to work toward personal and professional goals. Neither of them mentioned feeling held back because of their gender; however, one participant mentioned that she has noted that women entrepreneurs had less confidence than men entrepreneurs. According to Davenport (2017), "Low confidence makes us doubt our abilities and judgment and prevents us from taking calculated risks, setting ambitious goals, and acting on them" (para. 3). Perhaps future research could explore whether female entrepreneurs have the ability to succeed equally, more, or less than male entrepreneurs. Further studies could focus on the educational experiences that females are currently being offered to develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of an entrepreneur. Perhaps if they can develop these qualities to know how to start and run a business, their confidence would be higher which may affect their success in the long run.

Another future study could focus on the influence that the culture of Hawaiʻi plays in the success of entrepreneurs, specifically the support that the community provides local businesses and entrepreneurs. Participants in this study reflected on the importance of building and supporting their community within their company's mission. "To whom much is given, much is expected" was a phrase one participant mentioned. Understanding the influence of an entrepreneur's values of supporting the community and how the community supports entrepreneurs may provide a better understanding of the impact that culture has on entrepreneurial and business success. An extension study to look at how starting a business within different cultures in various locations, socio-economic status, and government support may or may not affect the success of a new venture.

An Entrepreneurial Perspective on Learning

Upon reflecting on the findings and implications of this study, I came to realize that entrepreneurship is a complex phenomenon. Regardless of the different types of entrepreneurs, a person who has taken a risk to start a business and is trying to move from an idea to something bigger is an entrepreneur. One participant questioned my thoughts about whether I thought an old couple who started and owned a store for 30 years would be considered an entrepreneur or just a business owner? After examining the results of this study, I believe that the terms entrepreneur and business owners are synonymous. Entrepreneurs of all types have many similar experiences but at different intensities. Comparatively, business owners who have purchased a systemized franchise, created a lifestyle business, expanded to an international multi-location business owner, or started up a company from ideation, will go through similar stages from start-up to growth.

These stages include creating an idea, developing a process, planning a market strategy, being innovative, expanding, sustaining oneself in business, increasing profitability, and reaching out to the community. While every entrepreneur's journey does not happen in a predetermined order, many entrepreneurs experience points in their company's development when they must reflect, re-evaluate, goal set, and plan how to execute to move forward. Every company has its story; nevertheless, the evolution of an entrepreneur and their educational experiences are often relevant.

The findings of this study prompted me to begin reflecting on the development and growth that my husband and I have experienced as entrepreneurs and business owners. Conducting this study provided me with an external perspective, particularly as I listened to participants' stories as they recalled triumphs, challenges, and learning experiences. Unconsciously, I also held an insider perspective as I reflected on the lessons from their experiences and recalled similar experiences and feelings that I had. I realized that the business partnership I have with my husband provides a balance that utilizes the different strengths and weaknesses we possess. Upon reminiscing on my business development and experiences, I was fascinated to share in many of the same sentiments with participants about entrepreneurship—the mindset, actions, and attitudes. Perhaps our interest in entrepreneurship, the drive for being innovative and taking chances to create something better and bigger, helped me to connect with these entrepreneurs.

Growing up, I always had big dreams and goals of what I wanted to do and how I wanted to live. I knew that business owners controlled how much money they made based on their efforts and the efforts of others. However, I decided to become an educator

because of my parents' influence, though I was always interested in starting a business. When I met my husband, he was an independent contractor working with a multi-level marketing company that allowed an individual to sell products, build a team to sell products, and expand one's team internationally. The business plan was organized in a pyramid structure, very similar to a small business that had employees working beside you to earn additional residual income. That multi-level company eventually closed, but the two of us knew that we worked well together as a team and wanted to create a business to support our lifestyle. Within a few years, we partnered with a product manufacturer and have been able to create a small lifestyle business that provides for our family's needs. What I have learned through this study is that we have been successful because of our entrepreneurial drive, mindset of being optimistic, taking calculated risks, and maintaining a balance of strengths between the two of us to maintain a strong team. I believe that we are successful entrepreneurs because of our ability to identify opportunity, take risks to try new things, and turn our ideas into action. There have been many challenges while our businesses developed that made us stop to evaluate and decide whether to keep our company going or shut it down. Being optimistic about getting out of a rut and persevering made me want to continue to push myself to believe in myself, take risks, and know that our hard work will continue to build our company and grow. This study reflected that entrepreneurs appear to emulate similar attitudes of persevering through challenging times, keeping a focus on the bigger goals (personal, community, or business), and doing whatever it takes to achieve success.

An Educational Perspective

In discussing the findings and implications of my research, I've also reflected on the impact it has made on my personal growth and perspective as an educator. Conducting this study gave me an insider perspective as I listened to the lessons and experiences of participants and gained encouragement with the educational experiences they shared. It was refreshing to hear about formal educational experiences and educational leaders who made an impact on a few of the participants, as I strive daily to make a positive impact on my students' lives through the development of knowledge, skills, mindset, and attitudes as they consider their future. Unfortunately, some of my personal inner fears were supported with some of the experiences they shared regarding the challenges that our educational system is currently facing.

A few participants mentioned feeling disinterested and being unengaged while in school because of the inability to see the relevance of subjects or being uninspired to conform to the ideas of what was being taught. The same participants mentioned the excitement they felt about the new approaches that they have seen used in classrooms currently, with their own children.

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21) created the "Framework for 21st Century Learning," in 2002. The program was developed with input from business leaders, education experts, and educators to define and illustrate the skills and knowledge that the next generation needs to succeed in the workplace, life, and society. P21's framework focuses on developing the 4 Cs (creativity, critical thinking, communication, collaboration), technology skills (access and utilize information, media, and technology), and life and career skills (flexibility and adaptability, initiative and self-direction, social

and cross-cultural skills, productivity and accountability) (Partnership for 21st Century Learning, 2016). In addition, a popular and new approach to promoting P21 is through Project-Based Learning (PBL), which is student-driven and teacher-facilitated. With this approach, students pursue knowledge by learning through inquiry. Students develop questions and discover answers to their questions through exploration, access to resources, and research (Bell, 2010).

The Department of Education (DOE) recently issued a 2017-2020 Strategic Plan that challenges schools to close the achievement gap and ensure equity and excellence for all students. The central focus of the plan is to: 1) empower students through relevant and rigorous learning opportunities to prepare students for career, college, and community goals; 2) support well-rounded curriculum and expand learning beyond reading and mathematics; and, 3) focus on Hawaiʻi-specific values, sense of place, and preparation for students to be local and global leaders (Hawaiʻi Public Schools, 2017).

In addressing the strategic plan educators are encouraged to provide students more opportunities to develop 21st century learning skills through relevant, rigorous, and engaged project-based learning. Through relevant and experiential learning experiences, students should develop skills that successful entrepreneurs need—effective communication, networking, building relationships, innovation, critical thinking, and risk taking. In addition, we must also consider integrating technology. Technology is becoming a more predominant way of communicating, accessing information, products, and services around the world. Furthermore, studies (Alex, 2007) show that technology brings benefits to students in the classroom because it makes learning fun, improves retention rate of information, helps students to learn at their own pace, is a relevant and

real life skills, and prepares students for the future. The use of technology also supports

the strategic plan goal of "cultivating a school environment where attendance is valued,

encouraged, and supported" (Hawai'i Public Schools, 2017). Technology may also be

utilized to develop a well-rounded educational experience for the student who will learn

new information and develop new skills at a personalized pace, level, and learning style.

Educators who utilize technology, should consider a blended learning

environment that combines the development of 21st century skills through traditional

instruction and flipping the classroom for students to access content through online

technology that creates personalized learning paths. These learning paths, guided by

integrative technology, provide students opportunities to develop of grade-appropriate

knowledge, study skills, and technological skills that will be used in the workplace.

Blending online learning with supplemental face-to-face conferences and small group

learning helps students to develop skills for collaboration, building of relationships,

critical thinking, and development of weak skills identified through the data collected

from students' performance.

We know that not all students have equal access to technology, but this is

something that we need to address in order to provide equal educational opportunities for

students and 'budding' entrepreneurs. Being able to provide old and new pedagogic

interventions in our classrooms will help benefit all students. If educators find the

challenge of a technology resource gap it is important for educators to provide

opportunities for students to strengthen 21st century skills, along with technology skills.

Rich learning can still occur through activities that encourage communication and

collaboration through small group and partner projects, Socratic questioning that

develops critical thinking, building of connections to prior or new knowledge, and opportunities to innovate through brainstorming sessions to solve problems through paper and pencil formative assessments, creative drama, innovative projects, and/or poster presentations.

As an educator, I struggle daily with the ability to deliver an effective lesson while meeting the different learning needs of my students. Through this research, I began to understand that more important than covering the pre-determined curriculum that has been prescribed for the grade level I am teaching, it is more imperative that I prepare my students for life and the work place by developing their skills to be an effective communicator, networker, relationship builder, innovator, critical thinker, risk taker, and technology user. Los Angeles art teacher Ginger Rose Fox told NEA Today (2014), "We talk all the time about making our kids college and career ready—even at such a young age. Let's make them life-ready first."

One key disposition that emerged from this study is having a growth mindset. A growth mindset will help students to get farther in life because they will not give up when working through uncertainty and ambiguity to discover possible solutions and rich learning will occur. Students will also learn how to be resilient, if the end to the means may be different than one thought. Another key life skill that emerged from this research is the ability to love learning and having a sense of curiosity. Participants shared that they learned best when they were aware of their strengths and weaknesses, and the learning opportunities became relevant. Unfortunately, although the United States government tries to provide equal opportunities for all children to have access to a public education, some areas in our nation face external barriers, such as poverty, that affect the

development of a growth mindset in students. It is recommended that educators focus on developing the right attitudes through modeling, providing hope, being positive, and encouraging students to focus on setting goals. Students can learn to value hard work and feeling accomplished, while learning to support their growth and development of new skills and knowledge. Ultimately, this study suggests that educators provide opportunities for students to feel empowered and engaged in their learning through rigorous, relevant, and project-based experiences. In the process of developing these skills and dispositions of gaining new knowledge, educators should support students' growth while learning and encourage them to make a positive difference in the life of others and the community.

Conclusion

Educational experiences and life experiences play an important role in the development of entrepreneurs. Educational experiences provide learning through formal learning, informal, non-formal and experiential, all which develop a person's knowledge, skills, and dispositions. While it remains uncertain whether entrepreneurs are born or made, this study has shed some light on the life experiences and developmental journeys of successful entrepreneurs. Each journey was different, but an integral part of their learning adventure that has taught them to set goals, to evaluate their place and strategies to move forward, and to execute their plans. Ultimately, learning and growing through each experience has helped these entrepreneurs to face challenges and overcome problems that would overwhelm most people. The essential factors that got them to a place of success was having drive and focus, developing key relationships with others, and possessing an optimistic attitude that identifies solutions and creative ways of solving problems. Together, their educational and life experiences provided them with an

understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses and the resources they needed to

utilize to succeed.

Appendix A

Participant Information Form

Name _____

High School _____

Location: City, State _____

Estimated High School GPA _____

College _____

Location: City, State _____

Estimated College GPA _____

College _____

Location: City, State _____

Estimated College GPA _____

Highest Level of Education Attained _____

Work History:

Company/Organization _____

Position/Title _____

Number of years employed _____

Company/Organization _____

Position/Title _____

Number of years employed _____

Company/Organization _____

Position/Title _____

Number of years employed _____

Entrepreneur Education/Training: *(if applicable)*

Name of institution/school _____

Class taken _____

Name of institution/school _____

Class taken _____

Consent to Participant in Research Project

"Entrepreneurship Education: The Lives of Successful Entrepreneurs and their

Educational Experience"

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAIʻI AT MĀNOA

My name is Kari Leong. I am a doctoral student at the UNIVERSITY OF HAWAIʻI AT MĀNOA in the Doctor of Education in Professional Educational Practice program. As part of the requirements for earning my doctorate degree, I am conducting a research study. The purpose of my project is to examine the lives of successful entrepreneurs and explore the role of educational experience in the development of knowledge, skills, and dispositions that promote entrepreneurship as a career pathway. I am asking you to participate because you are:

- In the age range of 31-80 years old.
- An entrepreneur who started with an idea and built a business that has existed for more than 10 years
- A successful entrepreneur in the current industry

Activities and Time Commitment: If you participate in this project, I will meet with you twice at a location and time that is convenient for you. The first meeting will be an individual interview. The one-to-one interview will consist of about 9-10 questions and will take an hour. The second meeting will be a focus group with five entrepreneurs. The focus group will consist of about 6-8 open-ended questions to allow participants an opportunity to build upon the responses they provided in the interviews. It will take an hour.

I will audio-record the interviews and focus group so that so that I can transcribe the recordings and analyze the data collected.

Benefits and Risks: There will be no direct benefit to you for participating in this interview. The results of this project may help improve entrepreneurship education in schools. I believe there is little risk to you in participating in this research project. You may become stressed or uncomfortable answering any of the interview questions or discussing topics with me during the interview or focus group. If you do become stressed or uncomfortable, you can skip the question or take a break. You can also stop the interview or you can withdraw from the project altogether.

Privacy and Confidentiality: I will keep all information in a safe place. Only my University of Hawaiʻi advisor and I will have access to the information. The University of Hawaiʻi Human Studies also has the right to review research records for this study. After the conclusion of the study, I will destroy the audio recordings and any other sources of data. When I report the results of my research project, I will not use your

name. I will not use any other personal identifying information that can identify you. I will use pseudonyms (fake names) and report my findings in a way that protects your privacy and confidentiality to the extent allowed by law.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation in this project is completely voluntary. You may stop participating at any time. If you stop being in the study, there will be no penalty or loss to you. Your choice to participate or not participate will not affect your rights to services at the University of Hawaiʻi.

Questions: If you have any questions about this study, please call me at 225-5274 or email me at kleong@Hawaiʻi.edu. You may also contact my advisor, Dr. Steven Shiraki, Ph.D., at 808-285-8892 or at shirakis@Hawaiʻi.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the UH Human Studies Program at 808.956.5007 or uhirb@Hawaiʻi.edu.

If you agree to participate in this project, please sign and date the following signature page and return it to: Kari Leong at kleong@Hawaiʻi.edu or fax 1-928-563-4428.
Please keep the section above for your records.

Tear or cut here

Signature(s) for Consent:

I give permission to join the research project entitled,
"Entrepreneurship Education: The Lives of Successful Entrepreneurs and their Educational Experience"

Please initial next to either "Yes" or "No" to the following:

_____ Yes   _____ No   I consent to be audio recorded for the interview/partner
interview portion of this research.

Name of Participant (Print):
_____

Participant's Signature:
_____

Date: _____

Signature of the Person Obtaining Consent:
_____

Date: _____

Appendix C

Interview Questions

What age were you when you first thought about becoming an entrepreneur and how did you arrive at that realization?

How did you develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of an entrepreneur?

In what ways did your formal education experience aid your growth and development as an entrepreneur?

Please describe the first major challenge you confronted as an entrepreneur and what lesson was learned from that experience?

What is the greatest lesson you learned that had an impact on the entrepreneur you became?

What advice would you give to any aspiring entrepreneurs?

How may the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of entrepreneurship be applied to any career?

Reflecting on your educational experience, what are the four most important things that you learned about entrepreneurship?

What do schools need to do to prepare and develop entrepreneurs?

Partner Interview Questions

Do you believe entrepreneurs are born or made?

What are the key knowledge, skills, and dispositions a successful entrepreneur possesses?

Consider a skill or disposition that is second nature to you. In what ways might this skill or disposition may be nurtured?

Please provide an analogy or metaphor that captures the learning curve of an entrepreneur?

What do you think is the best way for someone to learn to become an entrepreneur?

How might schools teach the key knowledge, skills, and disposition of an entrepreneur? In your experience do you think success in school may be a predictor of an entrepreneur's success? If so, how? If not, why?

Other than entrepreneurship, what other careers did you consider and why?

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