# A Case Exploring Black Women's Perspectives on Microenterprise Start-up Process in the Caribbean

**Amanda J. Muhammad**
Bowling Green State University
School of Family and Consumer Sciences
413 Johnston Hall, Bowling Green, OH 43403-0059
United States of America

**Lombuso S. Khoza**
University of Maryland Eastern Shore
Department of Human Ecology
Princess Anne, MD. 21853
United States of America

**Abstract**

*Microenterprises (MEs) have played a pivotal role in the lives of women globally for a significant period of time. ME contributions are important to local economies and to individuals' daily wellbeing and this has only intensified in the current global economy. Yet, understanding about how MEs start-up has been limited to traditional frameworks developed from a masculine perspective. An understanding of the gendered perspectives of start-ups is critical for understanding women's ME. This study explores Black women's MEs start-ups through the theoretical framework of a feminine gendered process (Bird & Brush, 2002). Results of the ethnographic study from data collected in Barbados suggested that Bird and Brush's theory provided a reasonable framework for Black Barbadian Women's MEs startup process, which are feminine in nature in response to concepts of reality, actions and interactions, temporal orientation, power motives, and ethics.*

**Keywords:** Microenterprises; women; start-up process; Caribbean

## 1. Introduction

What facilities the start of retailing microenterprises (MEs) is a question of concern for many researchers, potential enterprise owners, and community organizers. Understanding the startup and acquisition process, particularly for women's retailing businesses, is critical for the longevity and continuance of a business simply because many flounder or abandon their ideas during the startup phase (Bird & Brush, 2002; Kim, 2014). It is also critical for an in-depth understanding of how women retailers vary in terms of business network configurations and size (Brush, 1992) as social capital is an integral part of the startup and maintenance processes (Kim, 2014). The use of individual created employment, MEs, is also an integral part of the historical and cultural fibers of many nations (Cutsinger, 1990; Freeman, 2000; Karides, 2005; Muhammad, 2014). ME development, according to Strier (2010), is an autonomous strategy that has provided economic assistance, employment opportunities, and the reduction of local governments' social expenditures and seen as a development strategy to reduce poverty. Yet, despite the praises touted of ME possibilities, missing is the recognition of its variations in national, cultural, and gendered, complexities.

Consistently, social research such as Cutsinger (2000) and Freeman (2000) have recognized the need for more ethnographic work to understand holistically the diverse nature of the differing global sectors. Race and gender discrimination, and higher rates of unemployment for women than men, have historically encouraged a continuous reliance of informal MEs for African-Caribbean women (Massiah, 1986a; Freeman, 1995; Browne, 2002; Karides, 2005). Of special interest is the creation process for women's enterprises, particularly women of color operating in emerging markets.

For example in Barbados, women are more educated and have historically worked alongside men in traditionally male dominated occupations, yet males' earnings out performed females (Bellony, Hoyos, & Nopo, 2010). Seguino's (2003), findings from aggregate data collecting on Barbados, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago, indicate that the national economic conditions and job segregation point to some of the reasons for higher levels of unemployment for women. Thus, self-employment among women has a venerable place in Caribbean society due to the limited opportunities afforded to them.

According the Brush (1992), women's startups are intrinsically linked to their roles as mothers, caretakers, and providers. The integration of work and family roles is much more evident in environments where employment options for women are limited and the caretaking role is highly gendered (Sidan & Al Hakim, 2012). Adkins, Samaras, Gilfillan, and McWee (2013) study on women's motivations for business startups indicated that women were attracted to self-employment due to the flexibility it provided, allowing women the opportunity to manage their multiple roles. The motivation to start businesses due to a desire for work-life balance may lead to a more positive work environment that reflects the characteristics of owner's perceptions about family.

Though it is well established that self-employment is historically and culturally linked, as well as influenced by discrimination (Collins, 2004), what is not fully explored is how these influences impact the creation process of the more informal Afro-Caribbean women ME owners in a newly developed economy. Thus, the study's design explores the process of ME creation in the contemporary market place of Barbados. More precisely, to recognize how black women ME owners describe their ME creation process using Brush and Bird's (2002) personal dimension of the gendered perspectives on the entrepreneurial process enhanced by a context-informed, discourse analysis.

## 2. Conceptual Framework

Brush (1992), noted in her most cited paper analyzing past trend in women's entrepreneurship that few studies attempt to investigate the process of acquisition or creation for women businesses. The most often cited research, employ frameworks designed from predominantly male samples, which do not adequately reflect the processes for women, as they are decidedly masculine or traditional in nature. These traditional frameworks dismiss the application to women and the "feminine aspect in theoretical discussion of new venture and venture creation processes raises the risk that our studies may suffer a lack on construct validity" (Bird & Brush, 2002, p. 43). They further proposes that women's varied occupations, social standings, and educational experiences may result in differing startup processes, different sequencing, problems, and outcomes resulting in imperfect theoretical frameworks that do not necessarily apply to all women.

Taking these criticism of traditional venture creation models into consideration, Bird and Brush (2002) constructed a theoretical perspective based on the standpoint that individuals influence how new ventures are constructed and what develops because of those creations, controls how the business is shaped. Critical to enterprise creation and organization are individuals' ethos, intents, and experiences. Of concern was how individuals interpret gendered norms and display those norms in new venture creation. Gender perspectives are learned behaviors attained through biological and social interactions, which influences attitudes, ethos, and actions, and interpreted as masculine or feminine. In addition to gendered perspectives, new venture startup influencers are culture, history, and economic conditions.

Developing a distinctive feminine process required viewing the five broad categories of the process of new organization creation in contrast to traditional or masculine perspectives. The five broad linear processes include:

1. Identifying an opportunity and establishing the resolve create a start-up.
2. Gathering the necessary resources to seek the opportunity.
3. Allocating resources and instituting production and selling procedures.
4. Establishing the venture, organizing, and instituting practices.
5. Making strategic decisions to preserve, cultivate, and reap rewards both internally and externally. (Bird & Brush, 2002)

A distinctively feminine process required envisioning concepts of reality, orientation toward time, actions and interactions, power motive, and ethic to incorporate a wider spectrum on possibilities. Instead of limiting the models to linear progressions, rational decision making, profit driven, long term planning, the spectrum moved to include diffused concepts, circular temporal orientations, and caring organizations responsive to the social good. Bird and Brush (2002) believes that envisioning the entrepreneurial process from a gender perspective is useful for identifying distinctive attributes due to one's gender maturity, which result in a gender-balanced organization.

The gendered process of personal dimension was identified as most germane to this study interested in understanding black women's microenterprise creations.

## 3. Context and Discourse: Historical Perspective of Black Women MEs in the Caribbean and Barbados

Just as gender influence business startups, so too can other race and impersonal other factors such as cultural, historical and economic conditions (Bird & Brush, 2002). Micro entrepreneurial activities, especially informal types in the Caribbean, are marginally located because of racial, class and gender divisions. Understanding Black women's ME creations require understanding of the historical and cultural condition to which the women are subjected.

Despite having the largest female entrepreneurial force, the Caribbean has often been overlooked as a desired site for research in women's micro-scale entrepreneurship (Browne, 2001). There is the assumption that the little islands of the Caribbean are either lacking in entrepreneurial spirit, do not fit the traditional model of business ownership, or assumes to be too similar to British or American perspectives. Researchers have traditionally ignored the cultural differences or found non-English speaking developing countries more alluring, leaving a gap in the research on women's work, particularly entrepreneurial labor.

The context of ME activities among the Black Caribbean population is very much a part of the racial and gendered historical culture, as historian Beckles (1999) asserted in his historically recognition of petty and micro scale activities among slave women. Additionally, as Browne (2001) and Karides (2005) attest, the largest population of women micro-scale enterprising activities can be found in the Caribbean. Petty self-employment activities among women, on islands like Barbados, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago, can be traced back to the plantation system that encouraged the entrepreneurial spirit at least to the point where it decreased slave women's dependence on slave owners. In these English-speaking nations, many Afro-Caribbean women were allowed to own and work plots of land from which they were able to develop produce that was later sold in Sunday markets (Welch, 2003). The women were not limited to produce alone and many were creative in producing or attaining other goods that were also peddled on streets and markets.

In Beckles' (1989) book, a Barbadian historian, he sites F. W. Bayley's 1820's account of the five type of slave hucksters (petty retailers). These women retailed for themselves or slave owner. They were:

1. Self-proprietors
    a. Plantation field women, who produced and sold food items from their gardens directly to individual consumers to earn supplementary incomes;
    b. Field women, who sold produce to other business owner (Business to Business model);
    c. Specialist, often domestics, who sold to consumers as a means to generate main incomes;
    d. Petty hucksters, who sold homemade sweets and drinks on the streets
2. Contact-proprietors
    a. Slave women, who managed stores for their owners.

Even after the abolishment of slavery in 1843, ME activities were still a necessary skill for women of African descent. Though Black women moved into the public space, they were still limited in their ability to enhance their economic status. Black Barbadian women's experiences are similar in some aspects to women of differing racial groups or in other locations, but those similarities only assist in providing a place to start understanding Caribbean women of African descent contemporary start-up process, especially when considering the historical connections between women, informal micro-enterprising activities and survival strategies in Barbadian society.

Additionally, an understanding of the environments (historical, local, and organizational) is central to understanding the individuals and the decision they make as indicated by Brush (1992), and Collins (2004). For Brush (1992), the environment and the woman business owner are inseparable. She noted that women do not see the environment as something separate from themselves. Instead, they view themselves as being entrenched in the environment, made up of a "network of relationships in work, family, and society" (p. 23).

Collins (2004) pointed out that Black women's tie to the historical conditions of slavery and the resulting conditions of racism are essential to understanding Black women's self-identities. As Collins states, "it is impossible to separate the structure and thematic content of thought from the historical and material conditions shaping the lives of its producers" (p. 105). Therefore, in order to understand Black women ME start-up process, an analysis of the environment where these businesses are located is also necessary. The environments impinge the individual and the individual's enterprise creation.

For the Black population of Barbados, the environment has been one of informality, but for its British population it has historically been a formal environment. The British colonizers utilized Barbados as a manufacturing location for sugar, rum, and molasses. The country's industry in great part was due to the slave trade and an enslavement culture even after slavery was legally abolishment in 1834. The economy remained dependent on the sugar industry and cheap or free labor developed by the British Empire until the 1990s when interest turned toward tourism and manufacturing (Central Intelligence Agency, 2012).

The utilization of a gendered approach is necessary in research that focuses on women. The women's historical position of the island is one where race, class, and gender intersected and oppression was encouraged by the plantation system instituted during slavery (Freeman, 2000), thus, this particular group's perspective has not be fully recognized or understood rendering current theoretical perspectives on new venture creations incomplete.

Barbadian Black women's historical position influenced their perceptions of self and their survival strategies resulting in conceptualizations about MEs and the ME startup process that will differ from the governing literature. Utilizing a gendered theoretical position of the of the entrepreneurial process offer opportunities for varied depictions of women's ME creation process. Research questions of interest included:

> Research question 1: How do Black Barbadian Women ME owners describe their organization creation process in their own words?
> Research question 2: Does the personal perspective of the entrepreneurial process provide a reasonable framework for understanding Black Barbadian women's ME organization creation process?

## 4. Methods

### 4.1.1.Ethnography

Gaining an in-depth understanding of Barbadian Black women's ME start-ups, required an ethnographic approach to research. This approach takes into consideration the sensitive nature of the study and is concerned with women's experiences because of its focus on cultural groups shared beliefs, behaviors and ways of communicating (Brush, 1992; Collins, 2000; Creswell, 2007). According to Creswell, the goal is to describe and interpret shared patterns, distinctive to the group and requires researchers to immerse themselves into the day-to-day activities of the culture-sharing group.

### 4.1.2.Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection procedures included ethnographic conversations, observations, field notes and semi-structured interviews. This type of layered approach to data collection enriches understandings and efficiency (Walcott, 1994), and provides multiple opportunities for clarify facts and environment (Brush, 1992; Boxhill, 2003). Preliminary observations took place in Bridgetown, Barbados and aided in identify potential participants. Purposeful sampling and participants' agreement concluded the selection process. Observations, ethnographic conversations, and semi-structured interviews occurred during the summer months of 2010, 2012, and 2015 with five Black women ME owners.

After selection, participants observation occurred in the ME space for one week in 2010. During this time, the researchers participated in conversational interviews, service activities, and photo and field-notes documentation. Weeklong observations concluded with semi-structured in-depth interviews reflecting the researchers' observations, literature reviews, and research interest with each lasting approximately 45 minutes to an hour. Additional visits in 2010, 2012, and 2015 occurred sporadically as a means to identify the evolution of the ME, to maintain relationships, and to gain a deep understanding of the culturing sharing group. Transcriptions of semi-structured interviews occurred after each field site visit and compared to field notes. Bird and Brush's conceptual framework for feminine start-up processes created the basis for coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), and final analysis rest on concurrent comparative analysis, and reflective and analytic memos (Ely, Vinz, Downing, & Margaret, 2001) with the goal of fitting the date into the feminine process frameworks.

### 4.1.3.The Participants

Five ME owners were selected from observations and self-identifying as a business owner. They were all participant in vending activities in either major foot traffic areas, open and indoor markets, and tourist specific venues. All of the women owned their MEs for an average of 21 years in varying locations. The participants either sole sold mass-produced or individually designed and constructed apparel and accessories. All but two had similar socio-economic background, and their ages ranged from 32 to 67 (averaging 51 years) at the initial point of data collection. Four of the women were married or previously and only one had no children.

Only two of the women were born in Barbados. Each of the five ME owners, as young girls, had seen other women participating in self-employment activities. Each found themselves interested in ME activities because of their historical connection to the trade and varied in educational levels and prior work experiences.

## 5. Results

An analysis of the women ME owner experiences through the frameworks of gendered and Black feminist perspectives formed basis for the identified micro-organizational creation themes. Analysis of data began by viewing it through a gendered perspective and then reinterpreted to include Black feminist thought with the intent of re-envisioning Black women's ME views. The model of gender impact on new venture creation included gender maturity, gendered process, and gender-balanced organization. Reframing these to include racial awareness resulted in an extension on new venture creations on the part of Black Caribbean women. This approach attempts to conceptual themes not only from a more general feminist perspective but from a Black feminist standpoint, which speaks to the complexities of startup process and illustrate the ways in which historical oppression, race, class, and gender are interrelated components of ME owners realities.

### 5.1.1.Personal Process of ME Start-ups

#### 5.1.1.1. Concept of reality

All of the participant ME owners described their processes of starting their new ventures from a non-linear, less focused perspective. *Concept of reality* is a dimension of the gender perspectives on the entrepreneurial process. Their related justifications for organizing included (a) family, (b) the formal employment system, and (c) religious or personal beliefs.

When the concept of reality was compared to the traditions (masculine) versus personal (feminine), the ME owners described their venturing and organizational processes in less traditional entrepreneurial means or rationales and lacked clear vision. For them, family played a pivotal part in the timing of their decisions to enterprise. For example, one of the ME owners, Faith, reported waiting years to start her business because her father disapproved of her venturing out on her own despite her recognition of an opportunity in the environment, when he had the connections to provide her with a job that was less risky. Similarly, Sue, the main caretaker of two grandchildren, observed an opportunity to enhance her meager income when she observed others of her immigrant group members selling products in the streets of Barbados and thought it was a brilliant idea. Sue described the objections she received from her daughter, the children's mother, who believed she was not able to participate in such activities. However, Sue pursued the opportunity despite the objections because of the advantages of little to no overhead and an ample supply of merchandise.

While some received messages of discouragement, other were emboldened to pursue enterprising endeavors by family members and friends. It appeared that individuals within personal networks played a critical role in MEs owners' decisions to pursue enterprise creation. Karen and Nia had extensive knowledge of self-created venturing activities as a result mothers, who also owned MEs during their childhood. This prior knowledge provided them with the knowledge and confidence necessary to embark on their ME endeavors. Others reported such as Queen, receiving financial investments from family members and friends in support of their ME start up and maintenance.

Prior experiences in the formal work environment coupled with the resistance for being in the system (formal means of income generations, which can be political or restrictive in nature) provided the catalyst that motivated the black women ME owners toward venture creation. Sue indicated that despite her employment as a cook with the first local police commissioner's wife, she was unable to generate enough of an income to sustain herself, her grandchildren and an ailing daughter which encouraged her need to develop other means for enhancing her income. Though her ME started out of a necessity, it evolve into her main source of income. Queen, Nia and Karen, all expressed a desire for not being part of the formal employment system. Experiences with racism, lack of personal life, inability to self-express, and being under someone else control as reasons behind decisions to self-enterprise.

Religious and personal beliefs were also a major contributor to some of the ME owners decisions to create MEs. Nia and Queen directly or indirectly indicated that their religious beliefs were an influence in their decisions to be self-sufficient. Their religious doctrine based in Rastafarianism, which supports the individualism and rejection of colonialism and oppression. According to Edmonds (2003), the Rastafarian culture erupted in response to the stress and distress brought on by economic hardship, marginalization, and national estrangement enacted on black in Jamaica and later spread throughout the Caribbean and the world.

### 5.1.1.2. Action and interactions

The idiosyncrasies of each participant were evident in their *actions and interactions*. As Bird and Brush (2002) stated, "when actions and interactions are more emotional, personally motivated, relational, cooperative, and caring the venture created will likely reflect the idiosyncrasies of the founder (p. 48)". All of the participants' actions and interactions appeared emotionally or personally motivated. Statements by the participants frequently indicated that the basis for decisions depended on personal liked or dislike versus what was best for the business. Queen for example identified two primary reason for most of her actions. Her personality quirk of being a little too harsh which requires her or need to withdraw to get work done and her love and commitment to black people and all things African. Queen's acceptance of her verbally direct approach to customer service has taught her to say little to individuals she does not know versus altering her personality to attack more customers.

In contrast, initiations for Karen, Nia's, and Sue's ME motivations were family histories and their commitments to immediate family members. Store hours and the inclusion of family into the day to day activities of the ME were indicators of the women's ME preferences. Karen and Nia, the participants with the youngest children ME hours of operations depended on their children's school schedules and other activities or companions availability to support with childcare needs.

Participants also mentioned, love for their crafts, arts, culture, and self-reliance, as motivators for their actions and interactions. When asked about a personal or business philosophy, participants like Queen stated "My personal philosophy about myself is that I love me…my business wish is a personal preference, strictly Afrocentric in every way possible shape, form or fashion." Profits or business growth were only vaguely point out by the participants as they recognized the necessity of increased income but even within these statements, participants were conservative in their ideals of profits for as Nia put it, "…you always have to keep things manageable." Profits or business growth were never but above the things they loved or their commitments to family or community even when they recognized that they were not always accepted or appreciated by the larger community creating a distinctive culture that is relational, cooperative, and caring in nature.

### 5.1.1.3. Orientation toward time

Rationales for ME creations ultimately determined participants' *temporal orientation,* influenced by their (a) level of commitment to the ME, and (b) the strategies utilized to attain short and long term goals. Enterprise creation is dependent on individual behaviors, influenced by individual perceptions because of external forces and how individuals' implement the options available to them (Shaver & Scott, 1991). Experiences with external forces for black women seem to be indicators of how they respond to time orientation in the areas of long term and short term planning, leases, loans, business registration, marketing and over all commitment.

*Rationales:* The participants' experiences as black women informed their MEs rationales. Startup rationales included motherhood or family relationship (family situation), un or under-employment, entrepreneurship spirit, or historical oppression/discrimination. Prior experiences influenced an immediacy perspective (what is within their immediate control) versus a future orientated (less control of the outcomes) perspective. The majority of the women focus on ME locations and structures that allowed for flexibility in physical movement and time. All of the participants began the business from their homes to some degree though they varied in product distribution methods. Producer ME owners, initially manufactured but not always sold products from their homes. Instead, they depended direct sales methods for distribution, or street vending initially. Over time, all of the participants were able to move their business outside of the home to informal or formal retailing structures. Despite the fact that all of the participants had their business for an average of 21 years, which would indicate ME longevity, they all naturally seemed to describe their orientation to time in an ambiguous manner with focus on the more immediate. The participants who developed business plans in order to gain accesses to more formal retailing outlets developed by the local government were more likely to discuss long term perspectives but they also admitted that for the most part they think about the day to day rather than the tomorrows.

*Level of Commitment:* The level of commitment is a direct reflection of what the participants encountered in their everyday lives. The women's social and economic positions highly influenced their level of ME resistance. Motivation for ME start up determined each participant's level of commitment. Individuals who started their ME as a survival strategy were less likely to indicate a long-term commitment to their businesses. Participants such as Karen and Sue appeared least committed and gave little attention to the specifics of ME organization.

*Strategies:* Once they resolved to maintain their resilience, the participants enacted strategies for continuation. Strategies for sustainability required a positive outlook and love for their chosen occupation or consideration for the individuals who benefit from the work. Discussions about plans were vastly positive in nature but lacked concreate evidence to support the possibility of growth or longevity contrary to what their apparent resilience. Longevity appeared not to be dependent on formal business planning but on individual resilience, dependent on adaptability and ambiguity. For example Karen, a street vendor, was vague in her description of whom she identified as her ideal target market because as she stated "it depended on who was buying". Sue was also uncertain about how long she planned to sustain her business because she needed to adapt to the health of her daughter and to her need for additional incomes. Nia's resilience was evident in her ability to maintain her ME despite the desire to be unbound by rent or loans. Resilience was also evident in the participants desire to sustain their MEs because of the love for what they did or for whom they did it. The participants mentioned love for family, culture, arts, and community as justifications for sustaining their businesses despite economic hardships. Nia and Queen discussed the challenges of going without necessities such as groceries in the hopes of developing their love for the potential of their ME into the future.

Temporal Orientation: The women's temporal orientation reflected their rationales, level of commitment, and strategies. Those individuals who interpreted their ME as an outlet for creative or entrepreneurial spirit endeavors were more likely to envision their ME from the long-term perspective, while those who utilized their ME as a survival strategy were more likely to envision their ME from a short-term perspective. However, despite how or why the participants began their businesses they all have maintain a decent length of longevity. This longevity may be a result of higher than norm employment rates and limited public assistance in Barbados, which encouraged the women to construct other ways of earning incomes.

#### 5.1.1.4. Power motive

Power motives were identified as the rationales for venturing and directly influence business growth patterns (Gilligan & Attanucci, 1988). The participants' power motives were predominately about contributing to the social good more than for self-benefit which significantly shaped their business ideologies and subsequent growth patterns. Participants supported the community through teaching in formal and informal way as indicted by Faith, Nia, and Queen's experiences; all three taught classes directly related to their MEs or to their personal loves (Afro Caribbean dance and arts), which influenced their MEs. Some reported feeling obligated to help others, by either creating summer camps or participating in government sanctioned training programs to enhance the skills of the Barbadian youth or other interested stakeholders. Other participants empowered others in smaller ways though dissemination of information about how to startup MEs, supply acquisition or attaining vending licenses. Strategic alliances and cooperative arrangements were a necessary part of all the participants ME arrangements especially for those without employees. The simple task of taking a lunch break or attaining merchandise required cooperative arrangements between neighboring stalls, family members, or community networks. Many of the participants sold goods for other part-time craft persons or bartered for supplies and necessities. The lack of available funds necessary to attain complete self-reliance influenced these behaviors but many of the participants attained self-actualization needs though their ability to assist others individually or though their ME arrangements.

#### 5.1.1.5. Feminine Ethic

From a feminine ethic perspective of the entrepreneurial process, all of the Black women participants described ME responsibilities in response to others, as a desire to solidify relationships, or through their willingness to share information. Bird and Brush (2002), decribed a more feminine entrepreneurial ethic as an approach that is responsive to others, open and caring.

Participants ME commitments included family, community, history, cultural ties, as well as personal ethos as a part of the feminine ethic. For example Sue's ME reasons were related to her daughter and grandchildren's wellbeing, while Queen indicated a commitment to community, history, and cultural ties. Nia spoke of being true to herself and her religion and Faith dedication was to the arts. As for Karen responsibilities, they also rested with her children and the desire to "keep a roof over their heads and food on the table". These commitments were the impetuses for their interactions with customers, neighboring businesses, and the community at large as they enhanced the possibilities of maintaining their MEs. Much discussion was given to learning to get along with competing vendors and unruly customers. The feminine ethic of assisting in mediating conflict was also evident among the older participants whom the younger vendors appeared to respect and sought for advice. All of the participants seemed willing to share their opinions and expertise in an attempt to help others reach their full potential as a form of empowerment.

In ending their critical analysis of entrepreneurship, Jones and Spicer (2009) suggested that perhaps "what we find when we unmask the entrepreneur is the face of the other" (p. 119), the face that symbolizes the ethical moment or event.

## 6. Conclusion

There is no doubt to the importance of MEs to local governments' economies. Understanding the start-up process is critically important to the survival of businesses as it is a pivotal time in the organization's life cycle. Understanding women's ME start-ups are equally as vital as they are at least one means many women use to generate incomes and attain autonomy. By exploring the process of ME start-ups in the Caribbean through participants' own words and seeing how these processes fit into the personal perspective of the entrepreneurial process, the study helps in understanding Black Barbadian women's MEs.

The ethnographic study results from the data collected showed that the way Barbadian ME owners describe their start-up process could be compared to Bird and Brush's (2002) personal process of the gender perspectives on the entrepreneurship. Concepts of reality for Barbadian Black women ME owners justification were related to family, formal employment systems and religious or personal beliefs. The participants seemed to have a strong commitment to their MEs despite lacking in the traditional perspectives of ME rationales. Actions and interactions for MEs were personally or emotionally motivated with a preference toward personal likes or dislikes versus standard business practices. Love for personal relationship or culture motivated many the participants' actions and interactions. Orientation toward times depended greatly on ME rationales, which influenced their levels of commitment and the strategies utilized to attain long and short-term goals. Participants who were identified as creating the ME as a survival strategy versus love were less likely to invest in specific short or long term strategies to grow the MEs. Participants' power motives were predominantly socially related. These social motives allowed for strategic alliances and cooperative arrangements that allowed the ME owner flexibilities she could not maintain without them and reflected a feminine ethic of responsiveness to other.

The study's findings have several important contributions and implications. The enriched data provides increase understanding and awareness of Black Caribbean women's experiences that are missing from current research on gender's role in start-up and survival literature for ME development. This supports Bird and Brush's (2002) thesis that organizations are gendered and traditional models do not necessary reflect women's perspectives. The study's findings suggested that the processes for women can be vague and non-linear and that a broader perspective is necessary for understanding women's vaying conditions. Therefore, ME researchers may want to use the study's findings as an example for recognizing and evaluating MEs varied start-up processes. The findings will also enable other stakeholders as they support women's entrepreneurship activities.

While the research provides valuable insights there are still limitations. Though this gendered model is useful for understanding women in general is does not reflect all of the challenges of Black women. As Bird and Brush notes, women are varied, contexts are varied, and experiences are varied. Black women are subjected to oppressions that are not experiences by all women, which may result in different sequencing, problems, and outcomes if those perspectives are included into the theoretical model, making the model imperfect. Additionally, the awareness of the researcher's perceptions of Black woman's stories is a personal one, yet bigger than individual. When viewed from an outsider's perspective it is limiting in its ability to completely understand or generalize for all women's experiences given the geographic location and that each participant had a different path to travel to business ownership. These different stories enable the researcher to view the experiences with a different lens and offers a different view.

The identification of factors linked to ME start-up and survival of Black women in other Caribbean locations is necessary to enrich the existing literature. These factors can be triangulated to address the way forward in these experiences. Using gendered, racial, ethnic, and cultural lenses can examine the influence of the business organization, processes, and environment as it affects ME start-ups and survival of Black women.

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