

Meet the “Mompreneurs”: How Self-Employed Women with Children Manage Multiple
Life Roles

by

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Bachelor of Arts, York University, 2001
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Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

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Although there is a strong body of existing research on women's career-life development and on women's entrepreneurship, there is a lack of understanding of the experiences of mother entrepreneurs specifically. This dissertation addresses the question *how do self-employed women with children manage their multiple life roles*. Context and the rationale for conducting the proposed study is discussed, followed by a literature review, which begins by describing the key career development terms, offering an overview of career theory with a focus on women's career development and entrepreneurship, followed by a discussion of modes of inquiry considered appropriate for this study. An outline of the research methodology is presented, with further rationale for a qualitative approach, specifically Grounded Theory. This research includes a description of the basic social problem *Being a Mother Entrepreneur*, as well as proposing a substantive theory to explain how mother entrepreneurs manage their multiple life roles. This process is explained in the core category *Keeping Going*, which is recursively fueled and affected by seven key properties: *feeling supported, making choices, adapting creatively, remembering the push, remembering the pull, envisioning the future, and living my values*. The finding of *Keeping Going* as the basic social process of how mother entrepreneurs manage their multiple life roles, underscores the importance of understanding the role of values on the process of career-life development of self-employed women with children. Finally, implications for further research, including the extension of the proposed substantive theory to other groups, and implications for counselling practice are discussed.

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Dedication

To my parents, for always supporting and encouraging me, and to my children, for inspiring me to *keep going*.

Chapter 1

As the integral role of work in women's lives has become recognized, women's career-life development has garnered considerable interest (Betz, 2005). Research and writing on career development for women through the time of the second-wave feminist movement tended to perpetuate the notion of career as comprised of work outside of the home and often focused on the barriers women face in career-life development (Betz, 2006; Farmer, 1976, 1985). The literature also tended to perpetuate a false dichotomy between locating mothers either at home or at work (Dillaway & Paré, 2008). In particular, research has focused on the negative effect of family life on women's careers and the development of their full potential (Betz, 2006; Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987). While there is evidence for the reality of role conflict and its negative effect on role satisfaction (Cardenas, Major, & Bernas, 2004; McElwain, Korabik, & Rosin, 2005), there is also reason to believe that women do not necessarily experience conflict between paid employment and home/motherhood identities, and that in fact women exercise personal agency in negotiating these roles (Bailey, 2000). There is a growing indication that women are turning to entrepreneurial ventures to satisfy career aspirations while balancing family and motherhood responsibilities (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2006).

For women who choose entrepreneurship as a career-life path, this option may be seen as an opportunity for them to define their career-life path in their own terms, combining authenticity, balance, and challenge (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2006). Forging an independent career as an entrepreneur may be seen as a more attractive option for women who seek to balance paid employment and mothering work, especially as women in 'fast-track' careers are still paid less and receive promotions less frequently than men in similar positions (Mason & Ekman, 2007). Given the current growth of women-owned businesses (CIBC, 2004), it is especially important to

understand the work-life experiences of women who are creating and maintaining entrepreneurial ventures while raising a family.

Problem and Purpose

A large volume of research continues to be devoted to understanding women's career-life paths. However, there is relatively little research on women entrepreneurs. For example, research has looked specifically at the experiences of women who return to paid employment after having children (Baxter, 2008; Goldberg & Perry-Jenkins, 2004; Halpern, 2005; Hock, 1978; Lupton & Schmeid, 2002; Williams et al., 1991) and the experiences of women who leave paid employment in favor of full-time mothering work (Halrynjo & Lyng, 2009; Rubin & Wooten, 2007; Stone, 2007). There is also a focus on the impact of multiple role juggling and work-family balance as being particularly relevant issues in women's career-life development (Betz, 2006; Greenberger & O'Neil, 1993; Hock & DeMeis, 1990; Kirkwood & Tootell, 2008; Scarr, Phillips, & McCartney, 1989; Williams et al., 1991). Furthermore, there is some research indicating that while the multiple roles which women occupy can be demanding, there is also evidence that these multiple roles are integral to women's health and wellbeing (Barnett, 2004; Betz, 2005). However, despite the volume of research on women's career-life development, there is little known about the experiences of 'mompreneurs'—those women who are running their own business while raising children.

Some research does exist that is related to the experiences of mompreneurs. For example, Stone (2007) found that most women who left professional careers to raise children did so mainly due to untenable work situations, including a lack of flexibility—a “push” from work rather than a pull towards a traditional stay-at-home mother lifestyle. This does not mean,

however, that women who create business ventures inspired by their roles as mothers are ‘lifestyle’ entrepreneurs, that is, people who are in business more as a hobby than as a legitimate venture. Women entrepreneurs report identical motivations to male entrepreneurs in their decision to pursue their own businesses (Belcourt, 1990). However, Orhan and Scott (2001) point to the fact that there are unique factors involved in women’s choice of entrepreneurship as a career and that women do not generally become entrepreneurs by necessity. Although women increasingly turn to entrepreneurship in the quest for work-life balance, a recent New Zealand study suggests that despite employing a number of flexible work practices, this sense of balance is not readily achieved (Kirkwood & Tootell, 2008). Thus, there is a need to study in more detail the career-life experiences of mother entrepreneurs.

Schultheiss (2009) points to the need for research to explore women’s work as mothers and mothers’ career development. The objective of the current research project was to understand the career development of women entrepreneurs with children and how they balance their multiple life roles. This began with an exploration of their experiences and understanding of their own career-life development, their motivations for creating their career path, the challenges and benefits of running their own business while raising a family, and what supports have facilitated achieving their goals. It was hoped that their stories would help to shed light on the experience of work-life balance and identity of mother entrepreneurs using grounded theory as research method.

Research Question

The research question asked in this dissertation is: How do self-employed women with children manage the multiple roles in which they are engaged? Prompts to help explore this

question during interviews included: (a) What are the challenges unique to self-employed women with children?; (b) How does entrepreneurship contribute to or challenge their ability to manage multiple roles?; (c) How do self-employed women with children evaluate career-life success and their ability to facilitate multiple role involvement? Expectations of the current research included the possibility that participants who identify as ‘mompreneurs’ may experience reduced role conflict—that creating a business in line with their role as mother may provide a unique opportunity for work-life balance by offering flexibility as well as tapping into their experiences as a mother to foster success in business. It was also expected that these women may experience some stressors similar to women working in paid employment, such as those around division of labour in the home (Goldberg & Perry-Jenkins, 2004), with additional stressors and benefits unique to the entrepreneurial lifestyle.

Given the increasing number of women entrepreneurs who are balancing business with motherhood and the lack of research in this area, it was clear that further inquiry was needed to understand the unique process of managing multiple life roles for these entrepreneurs. In contrast to previous research examining working mothers in paid employment, or stay-at-home mothers, the research described in this dissertation was designed to provide insight on the experiences of self-employed women with children. Given the lack of existing scholarly research focused on Canadian mother entrepreneurs, this research was also intended to provide insight into the unique aspects of the experience of entrepreneurship for Canadian women with children. Additionally, it was hoped that the research would provide ideas for further supporting women’s entrepreneurship and career development.

Researcher Location

I first began to wonder about the experiences of self-employed women with children while on maternity leave with my first child and completing the doctoral seminar course for this degree. I heard other mothers at baby groups talk about their interest in or active engagement in entrepreneurship as a way of maintaining their professional careers or trying out a new type of work, bringing in income, and being able to have more time with their children following the end of maternity leave benefits. I began to think more about the role of mothering work in women's career-lives, and how the mothering role may shape career-life values or goals. As I began to research the topic, I had difficulty finding existing research that specifically addressed the role of mothering in women's career-life development, and I set out to research this particular combination of career-life roles—entrepreneurship and mothering. My interest in the topic was influenced by my own experience of becoming a mother. My role as a doctoral student and researcher encouraged me to see the potential research questions and to seek out answers, ultimately in the form of a Grounded Theory study.

Overview of Dissertation

This dissertation is organized in five chapters. The first chapter has provided a context and the rationale for conducting the proposed study. The second chapter consists of a literature review, which begins by describing the key career development terms, offering an overview of career theory with a focus on women's career development and entrepreneurship, followed by a discussion of modes of inquiry considered appropriate for this study. An outline of the research methodology is presented in Chapter 3, along with the rationale for a qualitative approach, specifically Grounded Theory. Entering assumptions are noted, and the process of inquiry,

including selection of participants, data collection, and analysis procedures are detailed. The results of the investigation are presented in Chapter 4. Further discussion of the study results and implications for future research are presented in Chapter 5. Letters of informed consent and ethical approval certificate, interview protocols, and other supporting documents are included in the Appendices.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

The following chapter contains a review of the evolution of the relevant foundational theories in career development, from traditional to contemporary, with a view to elaborating the themes that are most relevant to understanding the career development of self-employed women with children. In addition, literature specific to women's entrepreneurship is reviewed to provide further context for the current study. This is followed by an exploration of specific research methodologies with the aim of illuminating the most appropriate research approach for this dissertation.

Key Terms

As the field of career development has grown, the meanings of many of the key terms have evolved. It is important, therefore, to have a contemporary understanding of these terms. While terms such as career, work, and occupation were historically often used interchangeably, with more contemporary understandings of career-life development came the realization that these terms are not synonymous. It is vital to understand how these terms are used in a contemporary context in undertaking a study of the careers of self-employed women with children.

An inclusive definition of *work* is used in this dissertation in an effort to avoid the dichotomy between paid and unpaid work (Schultheiss, 2009). Therefore, work is defined as an activity or set of activities with intended goals, from which an individual will ideally derive satisfaction and meaning (Astin, 1984; ATEC, 2004; Hoyt, 1975), and may be paid, volunteer, or family work, for example (Astin, 1984). A *job* encompasses a set of tasks that take place in a particular environment (ATEC, 2004), and may also be paid or unpaid, full or part-time, and of

varying duration. The term *occupation* includes a group of similar jobs or positions within an industry or organization (ATEC, 2004; Super, 1980).

Career involves the combination of all life roles that unfold between and among the things an individual does throughout his or her life (ATEC, 2004; Super, 1980). This understanding of career has evolved from the traditional view of career as work outside of the home (Farmer, 2006). Some contemporary theorists advocate for a broader, subjective view of career as the psychological experience of working (Blustein, Schultheiss, & Flum, 2004). In general, the term career has come to include the multiple roles that an individual balances throughout the process of his or her life. To convey the full scope of career as embedded within multiple life roles, the term *career-life* will be employed in this dissertation.

In contemporary writing and consistent with the above definition of career, *career development* is usually defined as “the lifelong process of managing learning, work, leisure, and transitions in order to move toward a personally determined and evolving preferred future” (ATEC, 2004). Two components are central to this definition, namely: (a) images of (or beliefs about) occupations, and (b) images of (or beliefs about) self. Gottfredson (2002) notes that ‘images of occupations’ are those images people hold about the personalities and work lives of individuals in particular occupations. Images of (or beliefs about) self refer to *self-concept*; that which is described as one’s perception of oneself, being made up of external and internal elements and attributes such as personality, gender, and values.

Defining *entrepreneurship* is also challenging and various theorists take different approaches. Some define entrepreneurship through individual characteristics. For example, an entrepreneur may be defined as an individual who has established his or her own business

(Gartner, 1998). For others, the term entrepreneur is used to characterize someone who has a high capacity for risk taking or innovation (Carland, Hay, Boulton, & Carland, 1984; Deakins, Freel, & Mason, 1996). Others draw a distinction between entrepreneurs as individuals concerned with innovation, growth, and profit, in contrast to small-business owners who focus on a business linked with family interests or with furthering personal goals (Carland et al., 1984). The latter group may or may not be entrepreneurs, depending on the definition of the term. This distinction may not hold, however, as further research has found that the distinction between small business owner and entrepreneur is blurred for many women in business, there being a consideration of personal goals as well as innovation and profit (McKay, 2001).

For the purposes of this dissertation, a definition not dependent on specific personality characteristics is used. An entrepreneur is defined as “someone who perceives an opportunity and creates an organization to pursue it” (Bygrave, 1994, p.2). This definition draws on the qualities of the external environment in encouraging entrepreneurship, as well as embracing personal values and characteristics such as independence, innovativeness, opportunity awareness, and willingness to take risks or pursue a passion. This definition is more inclusive and gender neutral than some traditional definitions of entrepreneurship, which were influenced by the fact that prior to 1980, the majority of entrepreneurs were men (Brush et al., 2006). This definition also differentiates between self-employed women and women who may have flexible or alternative work schedules for paid employment, such as work-from-home or part-time employment arrangements.

The preceding section outlined contemporary views on some key terms relevant to career development. The foundations of these terms will be explored in the following sections, as the theories that have generated contemporary understandings of these terms are described.

Career Development Theories

Career development theories have evolved along with changing social and economic contexts (Farmer, 2006). Traditional career development theories have tended to focus on the career-life development of white males as this was the major composition of the workforce and theoreticians of the time (Brown & Brooks, 1996; Super, 1977). It was not until the 1960s that career theorists began to attend to women's career development (Betz, 2006). Towards the end of the 20th century, the focus of career theories began to change, along with the composition of the workforce, and as the study of the role of gender grew. Research into women's career development began to shed light on the reasons women had developed career patterns that were different from men. For example, Hackett and Betz (1981) studied the role of self-efficacy in women's career-life development, working from the hypothesis that the underrepresentation of women in careers requiring skill in maths and sciences was due to low-self efficacy resulting from males and females having differing early socialization experiences and therefore a lack of experience in mathematics and the sciences for women. Their research supported that hypothesis.

Developments in the area of women's psychology (e.g., Gilligan, 1982; Miller, 1976) brought increasing awareness of the importance of contextual factors and the integral role of relationships in women's lives. Super's (1980) Career-Life Rainbow moved career theories towards a position that is more inclusive of people's multiple life roles and multipotentiality. While researchers interested in women's career development initially attended to the unique

qualities of women's career-lives, there has been a shift in focus towards theories that apply equally well to men and women (for example Astin, 1984; Gottfredson, 1996). Contemporary theorists recognize that interpersonal relationships, as well as achievement in the outside world, are essential for both women and men, and that all individuals have a need to feel that they are utilizing their unique talents and abilities in order to experience optimal well-being (Betz, 2005). The following sections briefly outline the growth of career development theories.

Traditional Career Development Theories

Career development theory can be traced back over a century. In 1909, Frank Parsons outlined a framework for career decision-making that included the importance of self-knowledge, knowledge of requirements and conditions of different occupations, and ideas about the connections between these two aspects—ideas that are still key in some contemporary theories (Brown, 2002). Trait-factor theories (e.g., Holland, 1997) or person-environment-fit models (e.g., Dawis, 2002) tended to focus on an individual's measurable characteristics (such as intelligence or interests) which can be linked to the characteristics of a particular occupational environment to predict successful career choices. Trait-factor theories often contain classification systems and inventories, which in turn, have generated a great deal of data demonstrating individual and occupational differences in aptitudes and interests. Holland's career typology theory, also described as Holland's theory of personalities and work environments, offers one such classification system, which is highly used in career assessments (Spokane, 1996; Spokane, Luchetta, & Richwine, 2002).

Some of the traditional theories have persisted in spite of more contemporary understandings of career. Through its use in career assessment instruments that are still used

today in career counselling, Holland's occupational classification has generated extensive research (Brown, 2002). In addition, other theorists refer to Holland's career areas in describing their own theories and in describing traditional male and female occupational domains (e.g., Betz, 2006; Gottfredson, 1996; Savickas, 2005). Super (1953) offered the first conceptualization of career-life as a developmental process.

Super's Theory

While Super first published his theory in 1953, he continued to revise the theory throughout his life (e.g. 1969; 1980; Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996). Super's ideas about multipotentiality, multiple roles, and lifelong career path development hold particular relevance in conceptualizing the career-lives of self-employed women with children. The following section will outline these key concepts of Super's theory.

Super (1969) states that his theory grew from an interest in creating a dynamic developmental theory that moves beyond the static matching of individuals and jobs to encompass the capacity for change and development throughout the life span. He identified distinct developmental stages, beginning with Growth and continuing through Exploration, Establishment, Maintenance, and Disengagement/Recycling (Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996). This developmental perspective views occupational choice as an ongoing process, rather than a one-time event. Newer theoretical propositions include the idea that career development is a process of developing and implementing occupational self-concepts, and of synthesis or compromise between individual and contextual factors, self-concepts, and reality (Super, et al., 1996). Embedded in Super's developmental conceptualization of career is the concept of multipotentiality: because individuals often have diverse interests and talents, satisfaction may be

found in a variety of career alternatives. How the individual understands and views him or herself (self-concept) is therefore integral to the career development process and has a large influence on individuals' career choices.

Related to the concepts of multipotentiality and career self-concept, Super recognizes that it is the variety of life roles in which people engage that brings satisfaction to their lives. Super developed the Career-Life Rainbow (1980) as a representation of these multiple life roles (different bands of the rainbow), and how they change and develop over time (the arc of the rainbow representing developmental stages) from childhood to life's end. The Career-Life Rainbow provides a visual representation of the multiple roles an individual holds during her/his lifetime, each of which contributes to an individual's career-life satisfaction. This acknowledgement of the centrality of multiple life roles is key in understanding the career-life paths of self-employed women with children.

For Super, the various life roles that people play are enacted in different life theatres. As an example, Super identified nine roles (including student, worker, spouse, homemaker, and parent) and four life "theatres" (home, community, school, and workplace) in which these roles are enacted (1980). Super theorized that the degree of satisfaction individuals experience from work is proportional to the degree to which their self-concepts are implemented in their career-lives, integrated with the life-roles they play in the various theatres of their lives (Super, et al., 1996). The Career-Life Rainbow concept addresses the possibilities for role conflict and role satisfaction, illustrating how the different roles that an individual plays simultaneously, but in different "theatres" of life, impact on each other (Super, 1980). Super's concepts of multipotentiality, multiple roles, and lifelong career path development, illustrated by the career

life rainbow, provide a useful lens for understanding the career-life development of self-employed women with children.

In many ways, with his theory, Super was a harbinger of constructivist and social constructionist revisioning of much traditional career-related knowledge, which focuses on the role of people's interactions with their multiple contexts to understand the career-life development process. In this way, there are important similarities between constructivism and Super's work (Blustein, Schulthies & Flum, 2004).

The preceding section has outlined briefly the historical development of career theories. Traditional career theories mostly sought to provide assistance in finding a match between an individual and a particular occupation (Brown, 2002), placing importance on independent thought and decision-making (Schultheiss, 2003). While these theories may have an application in career counselling through their use in popular assessment tools, with the exception of Super's theory, they do not take into account the complex nature of career-life and the career decision-making process. Beginning with Super's theory first published in 1953, contemporary approaches have developed to take into account these layers of complexity. Today, constructivist and social constructionist views predominate as philosophical perspectives underlying contemporary career development theories.

Contemporary Career Development Perspectives and Theories

Constructivist and social constructionist views of career development emphasize the role of people's interactions with their multiple contexts to understand the career-life development process. In this way, as already noticed, there are important similarities between and an extension of Super's theory and constructivism (Blustein, Schulthies & Flum, 2004). This

section therefore begins with a brief overview of constructivism and social constructionism as the two predominant perspectives underlying contemporary career development theories and ends with Savickas' (2002, 2005) Career Construction Theory, which is, in many ways, is a reframing of Super's seminal theory of career-life development.

Constructivism and Social Constructionism: Two Major Philosophical Perspectives

Underlying Contemporary Career Development Theory

In the introduction to the 3rd edition of *Career Choice and Development* (Brown & Brooks, 1996), constructivism is described as the idea that individuals actively construct their own reality, that all aspects of life are interconnected, and that behaviour can only be understood in the context in which it occurs (1996). Six years later, these same descriptors have been relabelled as social constructionism (Brown, 2002). Young and Collin (2004) note that it is important to distinguish between the unique, though related, concepts of social constructionism and constructivism. Constructivism, which is often used as a generic term, is defined as an individual's cognitive process of meaning and knowledge construction while social constructionism refers to how meaning and knowledge are historically and culturally constructed through social processes (Young & Collin, 2004). Given the lack of clarity between these terms in the literature, for the purposes of this dissertation, the term *constructivism* will be used to refer to the theoretical lens that will be employed to aid in understanding the career-life worlds of self-employed women with children.

Peavy (1996) described constructivist career counselling as a philosophical framework which includes the beliefs that guide individuals as they strive to make meaning in their lives, and in which one's self and realities are co-constructed. Therefore there exist many different

versions of reality. As noted earlier, constructivist and social constructionist lenses call into question much traditional career-related knowledge, focusing on the role of people's interactions with their multiple contexts to understand the career-life development process. In this way, as also noted earlier, there are important similarities among these perspectives and Super's work (Blustein, Schulthies & Flum, 2004), which incorporated the multiple roles and people's locations within multiple life contexts to describe career-life development.

Savickas' Career Construction Theory

Savickas (2002, 2005) offers a reframing of Super's theory which he terms career construction theory. This developmental model incorporates constructivism, social constructionism, and many of Super's main tenets to understand how individuals create their career-life reality. From this perspective, individuals essentially construct careers (and ideas about careers) as they make choices and interact with their social contexts.

Savickas incorporates many of Super's ideas, including the idea that individuals' lives consist of multiple roles, and he organizes his propositions into three main components: vocational personality, life themes, and career adaptability (Savickas, 2005). *Vocational personality* addresses individuals' implementation of vocational self-concepts, while the *life theme* component incorporates an individual's more subjective self-concept. *Career adaptability* is described as focusing on the interaction between person and environment, where the process of career construction is seen as integrating an individual and society, with the ultimate goal being the validation of an individual's self concept by their occupation (Savickas, 2005). Savickas acknowledges that these components build on Super's model of multipotentiality and lifelong career development, drawing on constructivist theory to rearticulate key concepts.

The preceding section has presented an overview of relevant contemporary career theories. Super's theory, which was revised throughout his lifetime, has perhaps had the greatest influence on later theoretical perspectives, such as constructivist and relational models, which take up ideas such as multiple roles and people's locations within multiple life contexts to describe career-life development. The following section will look more specifically at theories dedicated particularly to understanding the role of gender in the career development of women.

Women's Career-Life Development

Through the later decades of the 20th century, research and writing on career development for women tended to perpetuate the notion of career as comprised of work outside of the home and often focused on the barriers women face in career development (Betz, 2006; Farmer, 1976, 1985). The literature also tended to perpetuate a false dichotomy between locating mothers either at home or at work (Dillaway & Paré, 2008). In particular, research was focused on the negative effect of family life on women's careers and the development of their full potential (Betz, 2006; Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987). Farmer and Bohn (1970) found that home-career conflict had a negative effect on women's vocational interests and that if the potential for conflict was reduced, it could further increase women's interest in work outside the home. While there is evidence for the reality of role conflict and its negative effect on role satisfaction (Cardenas, Major, & Bernas, 2004; McElwain, Korabik, & Rosin, 2005), there is also reason to believe that women do not necessarily experience conflict between paid employment and home/motherhood roles, and that in fact women exercise personal agency in negotiating these roles (Bailey, 2000). Career theories that incorporate an awareness of multiple life roles, the importance of context, and the centrality of relationships offer useful lenses for understanding the career-life development of women.

While most women with children do work outside the home—72.9% in 2009, according to Statistics Canada (2011), many women continue to be employed in traditionally female occupations, and women still typically earn less than men (Betz, 2005). Furthermore, women often experience a wage-penalty as a result of the impact of mothering work on their paid employment (Gangl & Ziefle, 2009). In some cases, this is due to a lack of employment flexibility, which does not allow women to balance work and family while pursuing advancement opportunities (Burke & Karambayya, 2004). Betz (2006) states that while the roles of homemaker and mother may be satisfying, these roles do not allow most women to fulfill their full potential. In addition, there are individual and environmental facilitators and barriers to choice. Environmental barriers to occupational choice include gender stereotypes, problems in educational systems, and lack of role models. Individual barriers include work/family conflict and socialized belief systems and behaviour patterns. Environmental facilitators of occupational choice include having a supportive family and encouragement of peers and significant others, and individual facilitators include high self-esteem and delaying marriage and childbirth (Betz, 2005, 2006). While employment rates of women with children have increased steadily since the mid-1970s, women continue to work more commonly in traditionally female occupations and perform more part-time work (Statistics Canada, 2011).

As the integral role of work in women's lives has become recognized, women's career development has garnered considerable interest (Betz, 2005). Women's career development theories focus on the unique characteristics of women's career development as compared to men, and the restrictions on women's opportunities for occupations outside of traditionally female jobs (Betz, 2005; Walsh & Heppner, 2006). The remainder of this section contains a review of some

key models and theories in the area of women's career development in order to provide background and context for the current study.

Relational Models

Relational models of career development have grown from several areas, and are yet another way of viewing the career development of women in particular (Crozier, 1999; Schultheiss, 2003). Miller's (1976) work on women's psychological development first presented the idea that women's development centres around connections with others. Gilligan (1982) presented further evidence of how women's psychological development differed from the process presented in traditional models based on men's experiences which valued independence and autonomy. While career development has traditionally been considered as an individual enterprise, relational perspectives of career development see individuals within various relational systems, such as family or origin or romantic relationships (Farber, 1996; Schultheiss, 2003, 2007). Furthermore, relational perspectives honour the beneficial nature of relatedness and interconnectivity, seeing these as qualities or needs which are central to human functioning and will enhance growth in other areas of life including career (Blustein, 2001; Flum, 2001; Schultheiss, 2003, 2007). Blustein (2001) stresses the importance of viewing work and relational functioning as integrated aspects of life.

Schultheiss's (2007) *relational cultural model* is offered as a meta-theory of career-life development. Drawing from the research of constructivist career researchers, Schultheiss describes four tenets of the relational cultural paradigm:

“These include (a) the influence of the family as critical to understanding the complexities of vocational development, (b) the psychological experience of work as embedded within

relational contexts (e.g., social, familial, and cultural), (c) the interface of work and family life, and (d) relational discourse as a challenge to the cultural script of individualism” (Schultheiss 2007, pp. 192-193).

Schultheiss’s model may be particularly useful for understanding the multiple contexts and roles within which self-employed women with children are located throughout their career-life development. For example, the model provides an explanation for how the paid work of mother entrepreneurs may be intrinsically linked to their mothering work and how their interpersonal relationships influence their choice to become self-employed. Given existing research which provides evidence of the experience of role conflict and family-related distractions for mothers who work outside the home (Cardenas, Major, & Bernas, 2004), as well as research that supports the beneficial nature of multiple roles (Barnett, 2004), relational models may help to interpret how women’s career-lives are shaped by their interpersonal relationships.

Mainiero and Sullivan (2005) use the metaphor of a kaleidoscope to describe their relational model of women’s career development. They suggest that women in particular appreciate how changes in one part of a person’s life create changes within others and that “women shift the pattern of their careers by rotating different aspects of their lives to arrange their roles and relationships in new ways.” (p. 111). Further, relational cultural models highlight the role of ethnicity, sexuality, class, and other variables of diversity. These variables are important considerations in understanding the career-life paths of self-employed women with children.

Career Self-efficacy Theory

Hackett and Betz's (1981) Career Self-Efficacy theory was sparked by an interest in the underrepresentation of women in math, science, and technical careers, and builds on previous work that focused on the role of socialization in women's career development (e.g., Farmer, 1976). Bandura's concept of self-efficacy provides a basis for Hackett and Betz's work, who suggest that women have low self-efficacy in many career-related variables as a result of early socialization experiences. The result is that women do not realize their full scope of abilities and tend to be underrepresented in many fields. Lack of math experience due to low self-efficacy eliminates many lucrative career options for women (Betz, 2005).

Career self-efficacy research has revealed that people's beliefs about their skills, and the outcomes of using their skills, were stronger predictors of behaviour than actual skill level or performance outcomes (Betz & Hackett, 1981, 2006). The tone of Hackett and Betz's first publication is rather discouraging as women are painted as having such low efficacy expectations that they seldom achieve their potential (Hackett & Betz, 1981). However at that time, the number of women in male-dominated professions was lower than today (Betz, 2006) and entrepreneurship has traditionally been male dominated. Thus, self-efficacy may be useful in understanding the career development of self-employed women with children, especially since the number of female entrepreneurs is increasing (CIBC, 2004). This suggests that women's self-efficacy beliefs regarding entrepreneurship may have shifted also.

Gottfredson's Theory of Circumscription, Compromise and Change

Gottfredson's theory of circumscription and compromise was initially developed as a means for explaining gender and class differences, with a focus on the barriers that individuals

face in career development. For Gottfredson (1996, 2005), career choice represents an individual's implementation of a social identity. Additionally, the theory explains how cognitions of self and occupations develop, how an occupation is chosen through eliminating options, and how individuals compromise their goals over the course of their careers (Gottfredson, 2002; Gottfredson & Lapan, 1997).

Key ideas in Gottfredson's theory include that of self-concept and beliefs about occupations, both of which develop through the process of circumscription and compromise (Gottfredson, 1996). Self-concept is essentially how one views the self, based on consistent patterns of behaviour, feelings, and beliefs, as well as hopes and fears about ones self (Gottfredson, 2005, p. 76). Gottfredson states that individuals are active agents in the creation of the self, within the context of biological and genetic heritage, combined with interaction in one's environment. Circumscription involves ruling out unacceptable career options based on perceived lack of fit with one's emerging self-concept. This results in a cognitive map of possible occupations. Images of occupations are essentially how one views various occupations including the typical personalities of people who work in a particular occupation. The process of circumscription typically evolves over four developmental stages.

The first stage of circumscription, in early childhood, is referred to as orientation to size and power. During this time, children become aware of the fact that adults have roles in the world and that they will one day take on such roles as adults themselves. Next, around the age of 6, children begin to reject jobs that they do not see as compatible with their gender identities, and they begin to categorize particular jobs as masculine or feminine (orientation to sex roles) (Gottfredson, 1996, 2005). By age 9, children become capable of more abstract reasoning and

begin to classify jobs on the basis of social status (orientation to social values). The resulting judgements form beliefs about the tolerable effort and status level boundaries in an individual's cognitive map of occupations. Along with sex-type, occupations are now considered to be acceptable or unacceptable based on the level of prestige they offer and the amount of effort or risk of failure they present. Around age 14, circumscription becomes a conscious process, as young adults engage in career exploration in anticipation of adulthood. Career options are included or excluded on the basis of fit with personal values, interests, personality, and ideas about work-life balance. This stage is referred to as orientation to internal unique self.

As individuals mature from childhood through adolescence and adulthood, their cognitive map, combined with their self-concept, shapes a range of career alternatives that they find acceptable. Varying degrees of compromise occur as individuals make choices that lead them away from their most preferred occupations, to those that are most accessible. The external reality (barriers and opportunities) leads to compromise in what Betz and Hackett (1981) refer to as the structure of opportunity. An individual's tolerable sextype boundaries, and the level of occupational prestige and aspiration, together with perceived tolerable effort, define the zone of acceptable career alternatives that an individual may contemplate (Gottfredson, 1996).

Astin's Theory

Astin (1984) developed a model that combined an awareness of psychological variables with social context—what she terms a *need-based sociopsychological* view. Astin's model builds on Hackett and Betz's (1981) self-efficacy approach and Gottfredson's (1981) theory, as well as incorporating Roe's (1956) ideas about needs fulfillment in career and the influential role of early childhood experiences. Astin's theory includes four basic principles.

Astin's first principle is that work behaviour is motivated activity intended to satisfy three basic needs: survival, pleasure, and contribution. Survival needs refer to the necessity of earning money to ensure food, shelter, and other items. Pleasure needs refer to the intrinsic pleasure of generative work activities and accomplishments. Contribution needs refer to the belief that individuals have a need to feel they are contributing to society and the well-being of others. Astin suggests that these needs are interactive and incorporate other needs such as achievement and recognition.

Astin's second principle is that career choices are based on the perception of the availability of various types of work and the ability of work to satisfy these basic needs. Astin suggests that while needs are the same for both men and women, expectations about the types of work that are accessible, differ, largely due to early socialization experiences.

Astin's third principle is that expectations about careers are shaped through early perceptions of the structure of opportunity as well as through early socialization experiences. Early socialization includes the types of play that children engage in, household chores performed as children, and early work experiences, which differ by gender. For example, it is noted that boys tend to engage in more outdoor play and outside chores, while girls have historically engaged in more indoor play and in-home chores. Astin notes also that girls' early socialization experiences tend to be restricted more to pleasure and contribution needs, whereas boys experience more in the area of survival needs. These differences translate into distinct adult skills and roles for women and men and shape expectations of the types of careers accessible to different genders.

Astin's fourth principle refers to how expectations that have developed through the early perceptions of the structure of opportunity and early socialization experiences can be modified through changes in the structure of opportunity. Astin notes that changes in the structure of opportunity have been more dramatic than changes in the early socialization experiences of children, and includes trends that have impacted the role of women in family life, such as declining birth rate and increased divorce rate, in addition to economic changes, discrimination, and sex-typing of jobs. Changes in expectations lead to changes in career and work behaviour.

Astin states that her theory is intended to apply to both men and women. She believes that the basic work motivation and needs of both genders are the same. However, choices are shaped differently by early socialization experiences and subsequent opportunities. From this perspective, both women and men have a restricted or expanded range of career options, depending on their socialization experiences and their perceptions of opportunities.

Synthesis

The theoretical perspectives described in the preceding sections have all informed the basis of the current study. However, there are some overarching ideas that are particularly relevant for understanding the career development of women entrepreneurs with young children, and bear both repeating and emphasizing. These key ideas include: multiple life roles, constructivist and social constructionist views of career-life development, relational views of career-life development, and a lifespan view of career-life development. These are summarized briefly below.

The concept of multiple life roles is particularly useful in understanding the work-life experiences of self-employed women with children as they are pursuing at least two types of

work—the work of running their business as well as their mothering work. Schultheiss (2009) notes that it is important to specifically honour the mothering work that women are doing as an aspect of their career-lives and the current research seeks to understand how self-employed women with children balance their various work roles, including mothering. Super's (1980) career-life rainbow provides a good way to understand the different roles that individuals play over their career-lives. Additionally, the concept of multipotentiality (Super, 1980) offers a way to understand that people can find success in a variety of different work roles. Therefore, as career-lives evolve, they offer opportunities to implement different aspects of one's self-concept, to take on new roles, and try different types of work, including entrepreneurship. While individuals may have made compromises in earlier stages of their career-life development (Gottfredson, 2005), multipotentiality offers an explanation for how individuals may derive satisfaction from a variety of career paths.

Constructivist and social constructionist views and influences on career development theories highlight the importance of understanding individuals within their life contexts as well as understanding the process of individual meaning-making in career-life development. In this research, it has been important to understand individuals' cognitive process of meaning and knowledge construction while also bearing in mind how meaning and knowledge are historically and culturally constructed through social processes.

Adding a relational lens to conceptualizations of career-life development is another important way of understanding the multiple life roles of self-employed women with children. A relational perspective takes into account the interconnectivity of multiple roles and how changes in one area of a relational system impact other areas (e.g., Blustein, 2001; Flum, 2001;

Schultheiss, 2003; 2007). Mainiero and Sullivan's (2006) metaphor of a kaleidoscope helps to understand the ways that shifts in one aspect of the career-life creates different patterns throughout the career-life space, with these patterns continually shifting over the lifespan. Given the importance of relationships in women's career-lives, how women balance and manage their multiple roles through the evolution of their business and the growth and changes in their families, are important factors to understand.

Lifespan approaches to career development also provide a useful lens for understanding the career-life development of self-employed women with children, as career decisions are not a single point event (e.g. Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996). Viewing the career-life as continually evolving is a more accurate means for understanding this process, taking into account how individuals may modify expectations as their perceptions of the structure of opportunity change.

Women and Entrepreneurship

The preceding sections draw from the career development literature to provide a theoretical foundation for understanding the career-life development of self-employed women with children. The bulk of career development research to date has looked specifically at the experiences of women who return to paid employment outside of the home after having children (Baxter, 2008; Goldberg & Perry-Jenkins, 2004; Halpern, 2005; Hock, 1978; Lupton & Schmeid, 2002; Williams et al., 1991) and the experiences of women who leave paid employment in favor of full-time mothering work (Halrynjo & Lyng, 2009; Rubin & Wooten, 2007; Stone, 2007). There is also a focus on multiple role juggling and work-family balance as being particularly relevant issues in women's career-life development (Betz, 2006; Greenberger & O'Neil, 1993;

Hock & DeMeis, 1990; Kirkwood & Tootell, 2008; Scarr, Phillips, & McCartney, 1989; Williams et al., 1991).

Hewlett (2002) suggests that ‘having it all’ remains a myth for women in advanced careers, as half of the women aged 41-55 in her survey of ultra-achieving career women were childless, yet interviews revealed that many of the women regretted not having children. Further, this was not the case for ultra-achieving men, as less than one fifth of ultra-achieving men were childless. Kephart and Schumacker (2005) propose that women’s entrepreneurship is the solution more women are taking in an attempt to crack the ‘glass ceiling.’ While a large volume of research continues to be devoted to understanding women’s career-life paths, there is still a relatively small, but growing, research base in the area of women’s entrepreneurship (Brush et al., 2006; Hughes et al., 2012). Moreover, research on women’s entrepreneurship tends to exist in the areas of business and management but is seldom found in the career development literature.

Given the rise of women’s entrepreneurship, it is important to examine this topic with an eye to the career-life development of women entrepreneurs. Just as initial career development theories focussed on the experiences of males, so too did initial research on entrepreneurship (Mirchandani, 1999). Prior to 1980, the majority of entrepreneurial businesses were started by men; as a result initial research on entrepreneurship as a career-life choice focused on male entrepreneurs (Brush et al., 2006). Studying women entrepreneurs as a distinct group was not seen as important, because entrepreneurial behaviour was assumed to be consistent across populations (Brush et al., 2006). Research on women’s entrepreneurship has tended to focus on the growth and performance of women’s enterprises (Ahl, 2006; Hughes et al., 2012). However

women in entrepreneurship have unique characteristics and ways of creating their entrepreneurial lifestyles (Brush, 1992). DeTienne and Chandler (2007) found that there are differences in the opportunity identification processes for women and men. Even though some progress has been made, there still is criticism of research on women in entrepreneurship because it has largely failed to take into account the gendered nature of work in comparing male and female entrepreneurs (Ahl, 2006, Bird & Brush, 2002; Hughes et al. 2012). Further, there also is a lack of research specifically examining the differences between women entrepreneurs with and without children.

Bygrave (1994) offers a definition of entrepreneur that does not reference particular gender-based personality characteristics: “someone who perceives an opportunity and creates an organization to pursue it” (p.2). Similarly, Kirkwood and Tootell (2008) define an entrepreneur simply as someone who starts a new business venture (p. 289). Calás, Smircich, and Bourne invite a reframing of entrepreneurship from “an economic activity with possible social change outcomes to entrepreneurship as a social change activity with a variety of possible outcomes” (2009, p. 553). While a review of early research on women business owners found that there are many similarities between women and men entrepreneurs, there are also important differences in terms of how women make the career-life choice to enter entrepreneurship, as well as the experiences of women in entrepreneurship, including business goals and characteristics, and management styles (Brush, 1992; Kirkwood, 2009; Winn, 2005). Accordingly, this literature is summarized briefly below in order to provide further context for understanding factors influencing the career paths of women entrepreneurs.

Women Entering Entrepreneurship

As the earlier review of career-life theories has illustrated, the process of arriving in any particular career is a complex one. For women who make the decision to enter entrepreneurship, numerous variables influence this process, including their multiple life roles, the evolution of their career-lives over the lifespan, and their relational experiences. The terms “push” and “pull” are often used when describing the factors that lead women to consider entrepreneurship (Brush, 1992; Buttner & Moore, 1997; Kirkwood, 2009; Orhan & Scott, 2001; Walker & Webster, 2007). Push factors include external elements, such as perceived lack of opportunity, insufficient income, or difficulty in achieving balance among multiple career-life roles. Pull factors include internal motivators such as desire to be one’s own boss, flexibility, or personal achievement. The studies discussed below examine the complex factors involved in pursuing entrepreneurship as a career-life role for women.

Carter and Cannon (1992) identified five distinct groups of women entrepreneurs in their case study research employing structured questionnaires and open-ended interview questions. Young women who enter entrepreneurship as an alternative to unemployment were termed “drifters.” Well-educated women with less experience but strong aspirations were termed “young achievers,” while well educated women with considerable experience were termed “achievers.” Women who become self-employed as a means of earning after a career break were labelled “returners”, while women over 45 who have always been involved in a family business were labelled “traditionalists.” These categories illustrate the variety of pathways that might lead a woman into entrepreneurship as a career-life role, and how a move into entrepreneurship can be shaped by career-life stage, previous experience, and relationships.

Orhan and Scott (2001) point to the fact that there are unique factors involved in women's choice of entrepreneurship as a career, as compared to men, and that women do not generally become entrepreneurs by necessity. The case study research conducted by these authors involved in-depth semi-structured interviews of 25 French women entrepreneurs. Each interview was analysed in relation to categories developed from gender literature, the individual's general background, and the time frame for deciding to enter entrepreneurship (p. 235). The authors found antecedents to the more general "push" and "pull" factors, including a woman's gender socialization, noting that women become entrepreneurs via several different routes. For example, a high proportion of the women interviewed followed a path termed "evolution of women" where participants had post-secondary qualifications including graduate degrees, or managerial qualifications gained through experience.

Orhan and Scott (2001) developed a matrix to represent combinations of gender and entrepreneurial attitudes, with some cases fitting into several categories. This resulted in the identification of numerous pathways and reasons for women entering entrepreneurship. These ranged from push factors such as "no other choice," where entrepreneurship is an alternative to unemployment, to natural succession (such as taking over or joining a family business). Other pathways identified included entrepreneurship by chance, informed entrepreneur (influenced by pull factors), and pure entrepreneur (where entrepreneurship was seen as a natural progression both in terms of lifestyle and profession).

Achieving greater work-family life balance is often noted as a factor influencing the move to entrepreneurship as a career-life option. Kirkwood (2009) used semi-structured interviews and grounded theory analysis to examine the role that spouses play, and the

expectations that spouses had of each other, as individuals transition into entrepreneurship. She found that women and men present different expectations of their spouses when embarking on business ventures. Women tend to consider the effects of starting a business on their spouses and children, and tend to look to their husbands for business advice, support, and encouragement. Men on the other hand, tend to assume their wives will be supportive. Additionally, women were motivated more so than men by the “pull” to achieve a greater work-life balance through their choice of entrepreneurship, considering their children and a desire for independence as motivators.

Similarly, in a large survey of graduates of an MBA graduate program comparing men and women MBA entrepreneurs, DeMartino and Barbato (2003) found that women are drawn to entrepreneurship for family and lifestyle reasons, significantly more so than for advancement or wealth creation. Analysis of survey results compared male and female entrepreneurs, with further comparisons based on marital and dependent child status. Differences were even more pronounced when comparing married men and women MBA entrepreneurs with children, whereas there were no significant differences between married men with children and unmarried men without children.

Low and Chiang (2010) also discuss the importance of family in the career-life move to entrepreneurship in their study of women entrepreneurs. Utilizing in-depth interviews with open-ended questions, the researchers identified love as the primary factor motivating immigrant Chinese women in Australia and Canada to pursue entrepreneurship. Some of the women interviewed “were pushed or pulled into starting a home-based business as a result of their love

for the family as wives and mothers” (p. 20). For these women, love represented giving time to the family.

Winn (2004) conducted unstructured interviews with women entrepreneurs both with and without children who made the move to entrepreneurship after working in a large organization. These women sought flexibility and personal autonomy in their work, while also generating income for their families. Winn notes that women’s choice of business was shaped by the other life-roles comprised by the women’s family situations. The sample of women in this study is unique in that all of the participants were familiar with working in a large venture. Interestingly, there were still experiences of surprise (both positive and negative) in the experience of entrepreneurship, and many of the women interviewed did not continue their business, finding their hopes for greater career-life balance through entrepreneurship were not realized.

Income generation while balancing multiple roles is also an important consideration in women’s move to entrepreneurship. Loscocco and Smith-Hunter (2004) examined existing data from a study of women’s small businesses, home-based women entrepreneurs and their counterparts with businesses located outside the home. While the women engaged in home-based business experienced less work-family conflict, home-based business also tended to be less economically successful. Thus, the authors suggest that home-based businesses may be a more appropriate option for women who experience lesser financial need (Loscocco & Smith-Hunter, 2004),

Brush (2002) suggests the perspective that women business owners view their businesses as a cooperative network of relationships, rather than a separate profit-making entity.

McClelland, Swail, Bell, and Ibbotson (2005) conducted an internet-based study of women-

owned businesses across six countries to gather information through company websites and online media; followed by email correspondence with business owners to address any gaps in information. The results of their research suggest that more than a desire for personal balance, there is a strong desire for women entrepreneurs to make a social contribution and to help others, creating a better life for their family and the larger community (p. 95). Interestingly, this study also found that for Canadian women in particular, work-family balance is less of a consideration, and it was suggested that less traditional gender roles in families as well as well-developed child-care provision in workplaces may contribute to this.

While there are a variety of descriptors for the factors influencing women's move to entrepreneurship, there appear to be some common themes. For women who choose entrepreneurship as a career-life path, desire for challenge and independence, meaningful work, family considerations including multiple role balance, and income generation are all considerations. While the terms "push" and "pull" are often used when describing these factors, the research discussed above illustrates how the process of embarking on entrepreneurship as a career-life path is a complex one influenced by a woman's multiple life roles. The following section will review how a woman's career-life also influences the form a venture takes once the choice is made to pursue entrepreneurship.

Women's Ventures

It is important to note that the variety of factors leading women to enter entrepreneurship also influence the form ventures take, their business goals and characteristics, the ways the businesses continue to grow, and the individual management styles. Women in entrepreneurship also tend to place more weight on non-monetary goals than men do, placing less emphasis on

growth and profit (e.g., Buttner & Moore, 1997; Lee-Gosselin & Grise, 1990; Malach-Pines & Schartz, 2008; McClelland, Swail, Bell, & Ibbotson, 2005). Historically, the size and growth of women's businesses have also been impacted by gender attitudes which made it difficult for women to obtain financing, resulting in businesses that started or remained small due to a lack of growth capital (Brush, 1992; Mirchandani, 1999; Winn, 2005). In fact, despite the many gains made by women entrepreneurs, women-owned businesses continue to be fewer and smaller than those headed by men (Winn, 2004). This is not to say, however, that women's businesses are merely hobby-type ventures, as women operate businesses across a wide range of industries (McClelland et al., 2005; Winn, 2004). The majority of women's businesses tend to be service oriented, however education and work experience are important determining factors in women's businesses (Orhan & Scott, 2001; Winn, 2004). Studies of the growth and size of women-owned businesses, as well as other characteristics of women's ventures are reviewed below.

From their survey research of 400 women entrepreneurs and 75 in-depth follow up interviews, Lee-Gosselin and Grise (1990) describe an orientation to valuing a business that is 'small and stable.' Business owners described this as a choice in balancing a professional business with the demands of other career-life roles. Similarly, Morris, Miyasaki, Watters, and Coombes (2006) employed a survey to investigate the factors impacting an individual's growth orientation and, by extension, venture growth. They found that factors such as goals and aspirations, women's identity, and type of venture tended to influence the size and growth of the venture. They conclude that the size of ventures represents a deliberate choice by women entrepreneurs. Women seem to be very aware of the costs and benefits that accompany growth.

Gundry and Welsch (2001) also investigated women entrepreneurs' business size, conducting a survey of over 800 entrepreneurs from a range of industries, comparing survey results with growth measures based on business sales, as well as statistics on industry average growth rates. Distinct differences were found between those women who were operating high-growth (termed "ambitious") as opposed to low-growth (termed "status quo") businesses, with high-growth orientation involving a stronger entrepreneurial intensity including willingness to make personal sacrifices for the business, stronger commitment to the success of the business, and strategic intention to emphasize growth. This study also illustrates the lack of homogeneity among women entrepreneurs, as the number of high ($n = 240$) and low growth ($n = 263$) entrepreneurs were very similar, while over one third of respondents did not fit either orientation strongly.

Loscocco and Smith-Hunter (2004) focussed on women operating home-based businesses, using data from an existing women's small business project to compare home-based women entrepreneurs to their counterparts with businesses located outside the home. Findings indicated that while home-based business may be less economically successful, the women engaged in home-based business experienced less work-family conflict. In another study focussing on both men and women home-based business owners, employing surveys and focus groups, Walker and Webster (2004) found that home-based entrepreneurs encountered the perception that their businesses were extended hobbies and not "serious" ventures. This was despite the business owner's belief to the contrary and despite the financial and social contributions these businesses made to the economy and society. As such, there may also be less recognition of these ventures as legitimate or successful businesses.

Business success has traditionally been measured using financial criteria. Given women's mixed approach to business growth, it is important to examine other, non-financial related characteristics of business success. Walker and Brown (2004), in a survey of male and female small business owners on measures of business success, found that personal satisfaction and achievement, pride in the job, and a flexible lifestyle were generally valued higher than financial rewards. In the internet-based study of women-owned businesses described earlier (McClelland, Swail, Bell & Ibbotson, 2005), the businesses surveyed are described as "socially oriented" meaning that making a contribution to community, the environment, or disadvantaged groups are important considerations in the operation of a successful business.

As the research discussed above illustrates, there are many dynamics influencing women's career-life experiences in entrepreneurship and the look and feel of women's businesses. For women, the role of family and children are often prominent in the shift to entrepreneurship. Choices about the growth and management of a business are impacted by other life roles and shaped by women's ideas about success (Buttner & Moore, 1997). There are also conflicting accounts regarding women's experiences of balancing multiple roles, and how entrepreneurship can both facilitate and challenge this (Kirkwood & Tootell, 2008; McClelland, Swail, Bell, & Ibbotson, 2006; Winn, 2004). Existing literature on the topic of self-employed women's experiences of balancing their multiple life roles will be reviewed below.

Multiple Role Balance in Entrepreneurship

Women who are engaged in mothering work and entrepreneurship will have many roles to balance in their lives. While the multiple roles that women occupy can be demanding, there is

also evidence that these multiple roles are integral to women's health and wellbeing (Barnett, 2004; Betz, 2005).

As noted earlier in this review, women's entrepreneurship has been presented as a solution for women keen to combine achievement in the realm of paid work with family life (Kephart & Schumacker, 2005). In contrast to the ultra-achieving employed executive women without children interviewed by Hewlett (2002), a study comparing women employees and women entrepreneurs in Singapore suggested that entrepreneurship may be a career-life choice that allows women greater flexibility and income, so that they may actually mother more children (Lee, 1997). The experience of combining mothering work with entrepreneurship is one that has had little treatment in the existing literature and most studies of women in entrepreneurship do not specifically distinguish between women entrepreneurs with or without children.

Shelton (2006) presents a conceptual framework examining the possible strategies for managing multiple role involvement, and the implementation of such strategies, by high- and low-growth entrepreneurs. Three main strategies for managing multiple roles are identified: role elimination, role reduction, and role sharing. Shelton suggests that mitigating work-family conflict is essential for venture growth, and that high-growth entrepreneurs will more successfully implement these strategies. Specifically, it is suggested that successful high-growth female entrepreneurs who place a high level of salience on the family role will implement participative management strategies that allow reduced involvement in the venture, thereby reducing work-family conflict.

Loscocco and Smith-Hunter (2004) found that women who operated home-based businesses experienced less work-family conflict than women who operated businesses outside of their homes. It was noted that there were no statistically significant differences between these two groups in terms of how many children these women had (if any) or the ages of their children. However, the reader is reminded that there also was less economic success for those operating home-based businesses. In their large survey of home-based businesses, Walker, Wang, and Redmond (2008) found having dependent children was a key determining variable for entrepreneurs who were attracted to home-based business ownership for the flexibility and means of creating work-family balance. However this research also found costs in terms of income, which conflicted with participants' hopes of earning money as a strong motivating factor. However, as discussed in the previous section on women's experiences of entrepreneurship, choosing to keep ventures small and manageable was one strategy identified for maintaining a balance between business and other life roles (e.g., Lee-Gosselin & Grise, 1990; Morris, Miyasaki, Watters, & Coombes, 2006). Weighing the costs and benefits of flexibility in terms of income is an important dynamic in the understanding of multiple role balance for self-employed women with children.

To further expand on the findings of Winn (2004), whose study of self-employed women with and without children was described earlier, for many women entrepreneurs the demands of entrepreneurship are not compatible with family life. For some women, the demands of entrepreneurship had the effect of postponing or circumventing their earlier plans for a family. For those women with children, their expectation that entrepreneurship would facilitate their childcare role or responsibilities was not generally realized. Winn also found that married

women with children were the least likely to succeed in business, unless their husbands were also involved in the venture. However being in business with a spouse had its own challenges for several participants, with business-related conflict leading to or contributing to an eventual divorce.

Kirkwood and Tootell (2008) sought to specifically examine both how male and female entrepreneurs experience work-family conflict, and identify their strategies for achieving work-family balance. Business owners were mailed a survey and a subset of respondents agreed to participate in follow-up semi-structured interviews. Analysis was conducted using a constant comparison approach aimed at grounded theory building (p.290). While the study included both male and female entrepreneurs, the researchers concluded that only females experienced work-family conflict. Additionally, the authors found that despite employing a variety of flexible work practices, a sense of work-life balance was difficult to achieve for many female entrepreneurs and particularly those with children. Interestingly, a theme of limited attachment to the maternal role was also identified, with some of the women with children expressing a sense of not identifying with a caregiving role. Three interrelated dimensions of work-family conflict were identified: job-parent conflict, job-homemaker conflict, and job-spouse conflict, with results pointing to job-parent conflict as the most prominent issue affecting work-life balance for those participants with children. As other studies do not differentiate between these dimensions of work-family conflict, there is a lack of depth in the literature as to the specifics and extent of job-parent conflict.

This finding that job-parent conflict is identified by women entrepreneurs with children themselves as a prominent issue affecting work-life balance raises a question as to the

perspectives of children of women entrepreneurs on their experience of growing up with a self-employed mother. One study specifically examined the impact of mothers' entrepreneurship on children (Schindehutte, Morris, & Brennan, 2003). Cross-sectional surveys followed by interviews of entrepreneurs and their teenaged children, or follow-up surveys of adult children were used to explore the experiences of mothers in entrepreneurship from both sides of the family relationship. The authors found that women entrepreneurs felt that while owning a business did disrupt family life, the impact on children was positive. The children included in the study agreed that the overall experience of having an entrepreneurial mother was positive.

Jennings and McDougald (2007) note that theory and research in the area of entrepreneurs' work-family experiences is markedly absent. For women who choose entrepreneurship as a career-life path, this option may be seen as an opportunity to define their career-life path in their own terms, combining authenticity, balance, and challenge, while blending different life roles in creating their career-life paths (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005, 2006). However Green and Cohen (1995) are critical of the seeming advantages of entrepreneurship for women in enhancing work-family balance, as women accept personal responsibility in negotiating the competing demands of paid and unpaid work, while existing social gender inequalities remain unchallenged. De Bruin, Brush, and Welter (2006) also note that it is important not only to understand the differences between male and female entrepreneurs, but also the differences within groups of women entrepreneurs. While existing research has included both women with and without children (e.g., Kirkwood & Tootell, 2008; McKay, 2001, Winn 2004), there remains the need to understand the unique experiences of women who are combining mothering work and entrepreneurship, particularly given the lack of focus on

mothering work in women's career development research (Schultheiss, 2009). For this reason, the present study was conducted to look specifically at the experiences of self-employed women with children, their unique experiences in combining multiple life roles including mothering and entrepreneurship, and their experiences of multiple role balance.

Women with Children: Career Development and Entrepreneurship

Literatures

Summarized above were literatures on career-life theory and women's entrepreneurship. As literature on career-life theories and entrepreneurship are presented in different ways within the unique disciplines, these are two independent but not mutually exclusive literatures. Both areas were summarized with particular attention to providing context for understanding factors influencing the career-life paths of women entrepreneurs with children.

On the one hand, career development research has largely focused on the experiences of women who return to paid employment outside of the home after having children (Baxter, 2008; Goldberg & Perry-Jenkins, 2004; Halpern, 2005; Hock, 1978; Lupton & Schmeid, 2002; Williams et al., 1991); the experiences of women who leave paid employment in favor of full-time mothering work (Halrynjo & Lyng, 2009; Rubin & Wooten, 2007; Stone, 2007); and on multiple role juggling and work-family balance as being particularly relevant issues in women's career-life development (Betz, 2006; Greenberger & O'Neil, 1993; Hock & DeMeis, 1990; Kirkwood & Tootell, 2008; Scarr, Phillips, & McCartney, 1989; Williams et al., 1991). On the other hand, entrepreneurship research has proposed women's entrepreneurship as the solution more women are taking in an attempt to manage work-family balance and to crack the 'glass ceiling' (Kephart & Schumacker, 2005). While a large volume of research continues to be

devoted to understanding women's career-life paths, the relatively small, but growing, research base in the area of women's entrepreneurship (Brush et al., 2006; Hughes et al., 2012) tends to exist in the areas of business and management. In effect, the area of women's entrepreneurship is seldom found in the career development literature.

A predominating conclusion arising from the summary of career-development theories was that the concept of multiple role balance is key to understanding the experiences of self-employed women with children (Super, 1980; Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996). This was further highlighted in reviewing the research on women in entrepreneurship, as desire for work-life balance and family considerations are variables often identified in precipitating the move to entrepreneurship (e.g., Collins-Dodd, Gordon, & Smart, 2004; Schindehutte, Morris, & Brennan, 2001). While existing entrepreneurship research has included both women with and without children (e.g., Kirkwood & Tootell, 2008; McKay, 2001, Winn 2004), there remains the need to understand the unique experiences of women who are combining mothering work and entrepreneurship, particularly given the lack of focus on mothering work in women's career development research (Schultheiss, 2009). For this reason, the present study was conducted to look specifically at the experiences of self-employed women with children, their unique experiences in combining multiple life roles including mothering and entrepreneurship, and their experiences of multiple role balance.

Research Approaches

Reviewing the existing literature on career development research, entrepreneurship, and women entrepreneurs in particular, produced evidence to support several possible qualitative approaches to the present research. Narrative, phenomenology, case study, and grounded theory

methods all offered potentially effective ways to approach the questions proposed for the research. Gartner and Birley (2002) specifically mention these four methods of inquiry in the *Journal of Business Venturing* and of these four, grounded theory and narrative approaches are noted to be most prevalent within career development research (Blustein et al., 2005).

Sorting out methodology and method was important in order that the results of the current research project might add to the existing body of evidence regarding women entrepreneurs. Methodological congruence—fit between the research problem, questions, method, and data—is of prime concern in aiming to produce the best possible project outcome (Morse & Richards, 2002). Neergaard and Ulhøi (2007) note that quality in existing qualitative research on entrepreneurship is often lacking, therefore it is especially important, in seeking to make a contribution to this field, to ensure that steps are taken to promote quality in the inquiry. Selecting a method appropriate for the research question and having a clear research strategy and procedures for data collection and analysis were essential in this respect.

As virtually all of the studies reviewed were qualitative studies, a rationale for using a qualitative approach in this dissertation research is presented below. This is followed by a brief review of the four more specific methods that were most prevalent in the literature, namely: narrative, phenomenology, case study, and grounded theory.

Qualitative Inquiry

Blustein, Kenna, Murphy, DeVoy, and DeWine (2005) note that qualitative research methods have become increasingly influential in the fields of counselling and vocational psychology over the past two decades, particularly in the exploration of phenomena where there is a lack of existing scholarly knowledge. While quantitative approaches including large scale

surveys have also been employed in researching women's entrepreneurship, a qualitative approach allows for a more detailed and in-depth picture; to go beyond description to uncover meanings and themes across participants (Blustein et al., 2005; Neergaard & Ulhoi, 2007).

Denzin and Lincoln (2005), offer an initial definition of qualitative research as “a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible [...through] a series of representations” (p.3). An important first step to undertaking a qualitative study therefore includes understanding and acknowledging the role of the researcher, and the researcher's values and biases (Blustein et al. 2005; Cresswell, 2007; Janesick, 1994). Neergaard and Ulhoi note that the goal of qualitative research “is to develop concepts that enhance the understanding of social phenomena in natural settings, with due emphasis on the meanings, experiences and views of all participants” (p.2). This attention to understanding contextualized meanings, experiences, and views is particularly relevant in seeking to understand the experiences of self-employed women with children, who occupy multiple life roles.

Sorting out the methods used in existing studies was difficult because of the lack of precision and lack of specificity in the descriptions of the methodology used in the research. For example, in the bulk of the articles reviewed, the methodological approach was identified as simply “qualitative” (e.g., Fenwick, 2002; Kirkwood & Tootell, 2008; Low & Chiang, 2010; McKay, 2001; Orhan & Scott, 2001), which is a rather imprecise descriptor. Another example is Hughes (2003) who simply states that in-depth interviews were conducted to examine the issue of push-pull factors in women's entrepreneurship in greater detail than previous survey data. However, terms such as “case analysis results” (Orhan & Scott, 2001, p. 235) or “constant

comparison method” (e.g., Kirkwood, 2009; Kirkwood & Tootell, 2008) were frequently used also, suggesting the use of more specific qualitative methods, such as case study or grounded theory. Most often it was not clear whether case studies represented a way of doing research (i.e., a method) or were a means for obtaining data that were used within the framework of a different “meta” method such as grounded theory.

The most common form of inquiry found was case study, often combined with other methods (e.g., Anthias & Mehta, 2006; Cope, 2005; Fadahunsi & Rosa, 2002; Kodithuwakku & Rosa, 2002; Low & Chiang, 2010). Many of the articles in the area of business and entrepreneurship referred to building theory from case study research (e.g. Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Wilson & Vlosky, 1997), suggesting a combination of case study and grounded theory methods was used. Neergaard and Ulhoi (2007) note that “a grounded theory study may well be a case study, and vice versa” (p. 9).

Phenomenology was mentioned as another possible approach for exploring the lived experiences of entrepreneurial individuals (Berglund, 2007), while other authors made reference to narrative approaches (e.g., Downing, 2005; Johansson, 2004). However, often it was not clearly stated whether people’s stories represented a research method, or were a means of obtaining data that were analyzed using data analysis techniques or strategies from another method. Morse and Richards (2002) note that the same techniques for analyzing data are used in each of the different qualitative methods, but that these strategies are employed in different ways, producing different results, depending on the method.

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) note that each interpretive practice employed in qualitative research “makes the world visible in a different way,” (p.4) adding that this frequently means the

use of more than one interpretive practice in any study. Thus, this exploration of methods was intended to uncover the best possible combination of interpretive practices for the proposed study. The following sections will review each of the four potential qualitative methods, the analysis process, and challenges. Considerations for ensuring rigour in the current study are also discussed.

Narrative

Narrative methods are comprised of a number of approaches that share common assumptions about knowledge (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Cresswell, (2007) states that narrative research is most suited to “capturing the detailed stories or life experiences of a single life or the lives of a small number of individuals” (p. 55). The term narrative can be found describing participants stories in studies with various methodological designs, and “narrative” is a term used to describe various texts or discourses (Chase, 2005). Pinnegar and Daynes (2006) see narrative as both a method of inquiry and the phenomenon under investigation. It is interesting to note that in the third edition of the *Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, the chapter on Narrative Inquiry (Chase, 2005) is found in the section on methods of collecting and analyzing empirical materials, rather than in the section on strategies of inquiry.

Analysis. Blustein et al. (2005) note that there are two different analytical traditions in narrative inquiry—linguistic and psychological. Gergen (1999) presents the psychological narrative form of analysis, where narratives are understood as social constructions grounded in participants’ contexts. Initial stories collected from participants are referred to as "field texts", and the researcher combines multiple sources of information to "re-story" the individual's story within a chronological framework (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Contextual information is

essential to situate individuals' stories, and Clandinin and Connelly (2000) describe a three-dimensional narrative inquiry space comprised of interaction between the personal and social; continuity of past, present, and future; and place. Often, but not always, narratives are coded to discover themes that add insight to the story (Blustein et al., 2005). Throughout the research process, it is essential to actively involve participants in a collaborative manner (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Challenges. Challenges in narrative inquiry include the need for extensive collaboration with participants (Cresswell, 2007). The researchers' own values, background, and beliefs shape how participants' stories are retold, and it is essential that the researcher is reflective about their influence on the outcome when constructing the narrative (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2006). Given the diversity of narrative techniques and traditions, it may be difficult to evaluate the results of narrative inquiry, however implementing techniques for ensuring quality in the study, as discussed later in this chapter, can address this challenge.

Phenomenology

Phenomenological studies are designed to describe the meaning individuals make of lived experiences of a particular phenomenon, and may be seen as best addressing questions about the meaning or "essence" of an experience in the context of four existential elements: relationships to things, people, events, and situations (Morse & Richards, 2002; van Manen, 1990). Bentz and Shapiro (1998) note that phenomenological inquiry with individuals "involves listening to, watching, and generally engaging in empathic understanding of another person" (p. 99). With initial roots in the philosophy of Edmund Husserl, phenomenology has evolved into two distinct branches: hermeneutic or interpretive phenomenology, and empirical or descriptive

phenomenology (Berglund, 2007; Lopez & Willis, 2004; Morse & Richards, 2002; van Manen, 1990). Further, Moustakas (1994) describes heuristic phenomenology as a type of autobiographical research and transcendental phenomenology. Given its roots in two connected though distinct philosophical traditions, these philosophical roots are important in understanding the branches of phenomenological inquiry.

Lopez and Willis (2004) stress the importance of differentiating between descriptive and interpretive phenomenology, and of being explicit in one's phenomenological approach. Descriptive phenomenology is defined as rooted in Husserl's philosophical thought, which is epistemological in focus, aimed at describing the life world and essence of individuals' lived experience (Berglund, 2007; Lopez & Willis, 2004). Interpretive phenomenology (rooted in Heidegger's ontological philosophical hermeneutics) focuses on meaning rather than solely describing, that is: "what humans experience rather than what they consciously know" (Lopez & Willis, p. 728). Hermeneutic phenomenology also draws attention to the existential qualities of being, and the shared qualities of culture, practices, and history (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998; Berglund, 2007; van Manen, 1990).

Analysis. Data sources for phenomenology are primarily recorded, in-depth conversations, and phenomenological literature (Morse & Richards, 2002; van Manen, 1990). In one recent phenomenological study however, Berglund (2007) employed note taking rather than recordings for data collection, arguing that "the method does not demand detailed content or textual analysis" (p. 83). Cresswell (2007) favours Moustakas' (1994) systematic approach to data analysis, which involves identifying significant statements in interview transcripts, and developing clusters of meaning by grouping these statements into themes. These statements and

themes are further shaped into a textural description of participants' experiences and structural description of the context or setting (Moustakas, 1994). The researcher is at the centre of data analysis, and the role of the researcher must be explicitly described throughout the research processes through phenomenological reflection, memoing and reflective writing (Morse & Richards, 2002; Moustakas, 1994).

Challenges. As phenomenological inquiry draws primarily from recorded interviews, this method alone would not provide the same richness or breadth of results achieved from combining a variety data sources. The term 'bracketing'—the practice of setting aside pre-existing personal knowledge, assumptions, and expectations about the research subject—is often found in descriptions of phenomenology (Cresswell, 2007; LeVasseur, 2003; Morse & Richards, 2002). LeVasseur (2003) notes that while bracketing has been used as a technique to lend rigour to descriptive phenomenological inquiry, bracketing is not desirable or even possible in interpretive phenomenology, a perspective shared by van Manen (1990). Rather, the researcher must make existing understandings and knowledge explicit, cultivating curiosity of these initial ideas through reflexivity. Further, Lopez and Willis (2004) suggest that "presuppositions or expert knowledge on the part of the researcher are valuable guides to inquiry and, in fact, make the inquiry a meaningful undertaking" (p. 729). The debate about bracketing continues, however, as not all researchers share the perspective that bracketing is impossible in interpretive phenomenology (Berghlund, 2007; Cresswell, 2007; Morse & Richards, 2002).

Case Study

Gillham (2000) describes qualitative research as allowing the researcher to view a case from the inside out, and to see things from the perspectives of those involved (p.11). Denzin and

Lincoln (2005) group case study into the category of strategies of inquiry, despite the fact that the article written for the volume by Stake (2005), identifies the case as a data source which can be studied by various methods. Stake (2005) states that case study is not a methodological choice, but rather a choice of what is to be studied, however Yin (2009) presents case study as a comprehensive method of conducting research. Cresswell (2007) also chooses to present case study as a method in his review of qualitative methodologies. Perren and Ram (2004) note that case study has a long history in management research and more recently in entrepreneurship research, though case study researchers often adopt very different paradigms, such as an objective versus subjective perspective.

From the review of the research literature, it appears that case study can be considered either a method of inquiry or a source of data. For example, Low and Chiang (2010) identify case study in the title of their publication, however in the text, they speak more generally of a qualitative approach, and refer to “careful readings of our informants’ narratives” (p. 15). Stake (2005) and Makela and Turcan (2007) do not consider case study a distinct methodology, rather an object of study. It appears that many researchers resolve this potential lack of methodological structure in case study research by adopting grounded theory techniques in their analysis.

Gillham (2000), in exploring case study research methods, begins by defining the case as: “a unit of human activity embedded in the real world; which can only be studied or understood in context; which exists in the here and now; that merges in with its context so that precise boundaries are difficult to draw” (p. 2). Case study is also defined as a main method by Gillham, with various sub-methods such as interviews and observations within. A case is constructed by combining various types of evidence (such as interviews, direct observations, archival records,

and physical artifacts) and creating a chain of evidence or narrative account (Gillham, 2000; Yin, 2009). The incorporation of multiple sources of data in case study provides triangulation of sources (Yin, 2009).

Case study as a method of inquiry is held to be effective in addressing "how and why" questions, and is well suited to exploring the experiences of participants where contexts are explicitly named as a significant and inextricable part of the phenomenon as it involves in-depth investigation of a phenomenon within its real-life context (Stake, 2005; Yin, 2009). For Stake (1995, 2005), the key epistemological question centers on what can be learned about a single case, with the emphasis on designing a study to optimize understanding of that unique case. In terms of method in casework, Stake (2005) suggests that the researcher engage in continual reflection, and to seek the particular in the case more than the ordinary.

Types of case study. *Intrinsic case study* is defined as a case study undertaken with the central goal of gaining deeper understanding of the particular case—with this understanding of the particular case being the primary goal, rather than the study being a means of generalizing (Stake, 2005). Stake notes that even within the qualitative paradigm, intrinsic case studies are not seen as relevant as instrumental case studies, from which generalizations may be drawn. In contrast to intrinsic case studies, the aim in *instrumental case studies* is to provide insight into a larger issue. The case is analyzed for the purposes of illuminating this external question (Stake, 2005). *Multiple or collective case study* involves a collection of instrumental cases which are examined in order to understand a shared phenomenon (Cresswell, 2007; Stake, 2005).

Analysis. Yin (2009) notes that analysis of case study evidence is one of the most challenging aspects of case study research due to the lack of development of analytic procedures.

Stake (1995) describes direct interpretation of individual instances and categorical aggregation, and a search for patterns and meaning, in his discussion of case study analysis. Techniques for case study analysis tend to draw on grounded theory analytic processes (Eisenhardt, 1989; Makela & Turcan, 2007; Yin, 2009). As mentioned previously, multiple data sources allow for triangulation of findings, providing confidence in results. Four general strategies for analysis that are described by Yin (2009) include relying on theoretical propositions that led to the development of the case, developing a descriptive framework to organize the case, using both qualitative and quantitative data when appropriate, and examining rival explanations. Yin also outlines four principles which should apply regardless of specific analysis techniques: analysis should demonstrate attention to all evidence, all major rival interpretations, and most significant aspects of the case, and should incorporate awareness of current knowledge in the topic area.

Challenges. Cases are often pre-identified, and even in large collective case studies, sample size is too small to allow for random selection (Stake 2005). As noted above, case study research is implicitly grounded theory research through its use of grounded theory techniques (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2009). In reviewing the literature on case study, and in particular examining case study within the field of entrepreneurship research, a strong link between case study and grounded theory is found. In fact, case study is described as a method for developing theory in an often cited article on case study research which draws heavily on Glaser and Strauss' ideas (Eisenhardt, 1989). Gilham (2003) also blurs the line between case study and grounded theory, stating that the case study researcher “develops *grounded theory*” by working inductively from the evidence in the research setting (p. 12). Grounded Theory as a distinct approach is reviewed below.

Grounded Theory

Grounded theory was first proposed by Glaser and Strauss in 1967 as a method of generating theory to understand processes, with the theory being 'grounded' in data obtained from individuals who have all experienced the phenomenon (Glaser & Strauss, 1999, p. 1).

Morse and Richards (2002) suggest that grounded theory best addresses questions of interaction and process, and stress that, as a method, grounded theory is appropriate when the researcher seeks “to learn *from* the participants how to understand a process or a situation” (p. 55).

Grounded theory begins with the study of a *basic social problem*. The basic social problem is the essential issue of concern to the population being studied, while the *basic social process* is what they do to resolve it. Often, the basic social problem will form the core category in a grounded theory study (Schreiber, 2001). There are currently several different approaches to grounded theory research (Cresswell, 2007; Makela & Turcan, 2007). Makela and Turcan (2007) note that grounded theory was initially aligned with a positivistic paradigm; however there has been movement in later years. Strauss and his colleague Corbin (1998) took grounded theory research in a direction that Glaser (1992) ultimately did not approve of—a very structured, systematic approach to theory building, resulting in differing approaches within the grounded theory tradition. Glaser (1992) and Charmaz (2000) suggest that the large set of procedures proposed by Strauss and Corbin could distract the researcher from the data, resulting in poor theory building. Eisenhardt (1989) proposes a case study approach to grounded theory, and Charmaz (2006) applies a constructivist lens to grounded theory.

Constructivist Grounded Theory. Grounded theory may offer a particularly good fit with a constructivist orientation, as constructivist researchers often focus on processes of

interactions and meaning making (Cresswell, 2007). Charmaz (2006) offers a constructivist revision of Glaser and Strauss' original propositions regarding grounded theory, and suggests that grounded theory methods offer analytical tools to make various approaches to qualitative data sharper and more insightful. Grounded theory methods are defined as “systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to construct theories ‘grounded’ in the data themselves” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 2). Constructivist grounded theory assumes a relativist approach and acknowledges multiple realities and views of researcher and participants.

Analysis. Grounded theory research questions should begin as flexible in order to allow in-depth exploration, and become narrower as the process progresses (Blustein et al., 2005), emerging as it were, from the data. Grounded theory data primarily consist of recorded interviews, participant and nonparticipant observations, conversations recorded in journals and field notes (Morse & Richards, 2002), and the researcher's memoing. Strauss and Corbin (1998) offer detailed procedures for data analysis through microscopic examination of data and several levels of coding—the analytic processes through which data are fractured, conceptualized, and integrated to form theory” (p. 3). Coding is intended to be both systematic and creative, as the researcher considers alternative meanings and develops concepts to form the building blocks of theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Coding begins with open coding (seeking major categories), then proceeds to axial (where a visual model is constructed and codes are related to each other) and selective coding. Selective coding involves developing a core category and propositions from the model to describe the interrelationships of categories—the actual theory statement (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Strauss and Corbin also propose a conditional/consequential matrix to stimulate the analyst's thinking about the relationships between levels of conditions and process.

According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), the aim of a grounded theory researcher is to collect interview data to saturate categories (units of information) through a constant comparative data analysis process (i.e., comparing incident to incident, incident to category, and category to category). That is, data analysis is ongoing throughout the research process to develop and elaborate the theory through the emerging categories by engaging in deductive reasoning, posing and checking hypotheses as the inquiry proceeds (Charmaz, 2006). Charmaz's systematic approach draws on earlier grounded theory data analysis procedures, but does not propose to be as structured and systematic an approach to analysis as Strauss and Corbin. She notes, "the guidelines offer a set of general principles and heuristic devices rather than formulaic rules" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 2). Charmaz also proposes a reflexive stance towards actions, contexts, and constructions of these, in data analysis, describing grounded theory as an inductive, comparative, and interactive approach to inquiry offering open-ended strategies.

Theoretical and purposive sampling is used to drive data collection as the theory evolves and suggests opportunities to discover variations and saturation (Blustein et al., 2005; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Purposive sampling involves the recruitment of participants based on demographic criteria identified at the outset of the research, while theoretical sampling is a specific type of purposive sampling, where initial data analysis informs the theoretical sampling (Hood, 2006). The researcher is also called on to engage in analytic writing from the beginning of the project through memo-writing and the posing and answering of analytic questions through the coding process, cultivating theoretical sensitivity (Charmaz, 2006). Makela and Turcan (2007) note that a true grounded theory analysis must involve an iterative rotation between data, emerging theory, and existing literature to produce results.

Challenges. Challenges in pursuing grounded theory research include the complexity and demands of this approach (Cresswell, 2007; Morse & Richards, 2002). Makela and Turcan (2007), in reviewing recent grounded theory research on entrepreneurship, found that despite identifying grounded theory as a method, many grounded theory studies were actually descriptive, failing to contribute rigorous theory.

Rigour in Qualitative Research

Corbin and Strauss (1998) suggest that qualitative analysis is both science and art—maintaining a degree of scientific rigour while also employing creativity and flexibility in taking up these procedures. As qualitative research methods and analysis are not standardized in the way that quantitative procedures are, and are also based on a fundamentally different set of assumptions, qualitative methods cannot be subjected to the validity and reliability measures of quantitative methods (Lee, Mitchell, & Sablinski, 1999; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). It is still important, however, to examine how qualities of validity and reliability are achieved in qualitative research, and to this end there is a diverse and confusing array of ideas in the literature (Cresswell & Miller, 2000), likely reflecting the different criteria for judging quality depending on the epistemological and ontological perspectives of the researcher (Wigren, 2007).

A primary means for ensuring credibility and quality is in the use of clearly identified and systematic procedures for conducting the research (Cresswell, 2007; Patton, 2002). Rigorous methods and detailed description of the data collection and analysis process is important in increasing the reliability and credibility of results, particularly in grounded theory research where the aim is to create a new theoretical framework (Makela & Turcan, 2007). Triangulation of data sources also increases credibility by ensuring that findings are not only the result of one source

or approach, and by demonstrating convergence of findings across sources (Cresswell & Miller, 2000; Patton, 2002; Yin, 2009). Theoretical and purposive sampling is important in order to ensure that the best informants for theory-building are included in the data—both representative and divergent cases (Cresswell, 2007; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) offered parallel criteria for evaluating the rigour of qualitative research, adopting the term “trustworthiness” as opposed to validity and reliability. These criteria are: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Kreftig (1991) elaborates on Lincoln and Guba’s ideas on trustworthiness in qualitative research, offering concrete strategies to ensure these criteria are met—proposed qualitative equivalents of the quantitative criteria of internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity. Strategies include triangulation of data, member checking, peer examination, code-recode procedures, clear description of research methods, and researcher reflexivity through journals or memoing.

Morse et al. (2002) argue that different terminology for quantitative and qualitative research may in fact reduce the scientific legitimacy of qualitative research by marginalizing qualitative methods. They suggest “verification strategies that ensure both reliability and validity of data are activities such as ensuring methodological coherence, sampling sufficiency, developing a dynamic relationship between sampling, data collection and analysis, thinking theoretically, and theory development” in addition to emphasizing the importance of investigator responsiveness in ensuring quality (p. 18). The strategies suggested are integral to the methodological processes of grounded theory. Adhering to the process of concurrent data collection and analysis, theoretical sampling, and sampling for saturation therefore serve to

ensure the reliability and validity of the data. Peer review of both the data coding and theory development can further address these issues.

Cresswell and Miller (2000) suggest that the qualitative lens through which validity is conceptualized and the paradigm assumptions brought to the research determine the researcher's choice of means for determining the validity of inferences drawn from the data. Guba and Lincoln (1989) describe social constructionist criteria for evaluating qualitative research, including fairness and ontological authenticity. Wigren (2007) notes that there are several distinct groups to take into account in regards to judging quality, including the participants in the study, the academic community, as well as policy-makers and the public. Member checking is perhaps the most crucial step in establishing credibility and involves seeking participants' confirmation of the representativeness of the analysis of their experiences (Cresswell & Miller, 2000; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Collaboration with participants throughout the research process is an extension of member checking. Another term that is frequently found in qualitative literature is in reference to the use of "thick descriptions" which refers to the use of deep and detailed accounts of data to create a sensation of reality for the reader (Cresswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

The Current Study

While the existence of networking organizations such as Entrepreneurial Moms, International and Enterprising Moms Network, and *Mompreneur*, a Canadian business magazine for women, are evidence of the existence of a large number of women entrepreneurs with children, there is a lack of published scholarly research on the career development of self-employed women with children. One-third of women entrepreneurs have children under 12 and it

is estimated that over 60% of women entrepreneurs are in business as a way of balancing work and family (CIBC, 2004). For many mother entrepreneurs, the balancing of work and family are two aspects of their career that are intrinsically connected, as the term “mompreneur” suggests (Parlapiano & Cobe, 1996). Given the finding that job-parent conflict is a primary source of work-life conflict and that some self-employed women with children do not identify with a caregiver role (Kirkwood & Tootell, 2008), further understanding of the experiences of self-employed women with children may offer insight into how self-employed women with children experience their multiple life roles, the degree of balance and satisfaction they experience, and how greater balance may be achieved.

Purpose

The present research focuses on Canadian self-employed women with children. The research is designed to provide an understanding of the career-lives of these women, drawing on constructivist career theory, coupled with other relevant aspects of current career development theory, to assist in understanding the ways that self-employed women with children balance their various roles through the lifespan. Given the understandings offered by existing research on the ways that women’s roles are intrinsically linked, and how women conceptualize their career-lives (e.g., Mainiero & Sullivan, 2006; Schultheiss 2003, 2007, 2009), a relational approach as described earlier in this chapter, combined with an appreciation of other areas of career-development theory, has the potential to provide an important perspective on the career-lives of self-employed women with children. The purpose of this research, therefore, is to understand the career-life experiences and multiple roles of Canadian self-employed women with children.

Methodology

Morse and Richards (2002) state the major reasons for working qualitatively are that the research question requires it, and that the data demand it. In arriving at the research questions for this project, it became apparent that interviews and observations as opposed both to quantitative data and other forms of qualitative data (e.g., photographs), would provide the most appropriate answers by allowing participants to provide their unique meanings and experiences of balancing the roles of motherhood and entrepreneur in their own words. Adopting a qualitative approach, and eliciting these experiences in participants' own words, will provide rich and complex data to illuminate the experiences of multiple roles involved in the work-life balance of self-employed women with children.

Given the range of methods represented in the existing literature, there were several options to consider in approaching the proposed research questions. Blustein et al. (2005) review exemplary qualitative research in the field of career development, noting studies in the areas of women's working experiences and the study of work and relationships employing grounded theory and narrative methods respectively. Cope (2005) notes the effectiveness of a phenomenological case study approach, where phenomenological interviews form the primary data source in a study of six cases of practicing entrepreneurs. Kirkwood & Tootell (2008), in their study of work-life balance with male and female entrepreneurs, employ grounded theory techniques; though do not specifically name grounded theory as their method.

Given the call for qualitative research that moves beyond description to explore new areas in entrepreneurship (Neergaard & Ulhoi, 2007), an interpretive qualitative approach was deemed necessary. As described earlier in this chapter, constructivist grounded theory

acknowledges multiple realities and views of researcher and participants (Charmaz, 2006). Employing constructivist grounded theory techniques to understanding the unique cases of self-employed women with children who identify both with their mothering work and entrepreneurship revealed itself as the most appropriate method for approaching the proposed questions, as this approach offers the opportunity to construct theory about this underexplored population and to understand some of the conflicting information about the compatibility of mothering work with entrepreneurship (Kirkwood & Tootell, 2008). It is hoped that exploring the multiple roles of mothering work and entrepreneurship for self-employed women with children through a constructivist grounded theory approach using case studies as an additional data source will allow for new theory to be discovered, shedding light on the experiences of these unique entrepreneurs.

Grounded Theory was selected as the most appropriate method for the present study. Grounded Theory offers both a rigorous process of for inquiry as well as being a method proven useful in earlier entrepreneurship research. In addition, as one of the aims of this study is to understand *how* self-employed women with children conceptualize or make sense of their multiple life roles, Grounded Theory offers an opportunity to develop a theory to describe this experience, and therefore, to enable the generation of, at least, initial hypotheses to further inquiry and understanding of this contemporary social phenomenon. The possibilities for theory construction that is clearly grounded in and emergent from the data of participants, as well as the flexible but well established data analysis techniques were two benefits identified for using a grounded theory approach to the research questions. However it also made sense to construct case studies of the individual entrepreneurs in order to provide data triangulation and more

clearly address participants' locations in context. Eisenhardt's (1989) proposal for building theories from case study research, as well as later work by case study theorists (Gillham, 2000; Yin, 2009), provide strong support for this approach. Eisenhardt (1989) notes that linked approach of case study and grounded theory is especially appropriate for new topic areas, and that theories constructed using this method are then testable using quantitative approaches.

Entering Assumptions

Mason (2002) notes that "qualitative research requires a highly active engagement from its practitioners," (p.4). In the spirit of active reflexivity, with the aim of increasing the credibility of the study, assumptions were examined throughout the research process. Specific assumptions include the following:

- 1) That multiple life roles, including that of entrepreneur and mother, will hold various meanings for different women, and that experiences of balancing these roles and the significance placed on roles will be influenced by the meanings and values the women hold in regards to these roles.
- 2) That participants will honestly inform the researcher with data describing the experience of balancing multiple life roles that include mother and entrepreneur.
- 3) That qualitative research is a meaningful pursuit, and that the current research will help to provide additional understanding of the experiences of self-employed women with children and how they balance their multiple life roles.
- 4) That researcher reflexivity is key throughout the research and analysis process, through memo writing and journaling, in order to cultivate theoretical sensitivity and be open to the theory emerging from the data.

Research Question

This research was designed to examine *how* self-employed women with children balance their various career-life roles, including mothering. The overarching question addressed in this research project is: How do self-employed women with children manage the multiple roles in which they are engaged?

During interviews, further prompts were used to help obtain a comprehensive answer the research question. These included:

- 1) What are the challenges unique to self-employed women with children?
- 2) How does entrepreneurship contribute to or challenge their ability to manage multiple roles?
- 3) How do self-employed women with children evaluate career-life success and their ability to facilitate multiple role involvement?

Conclusion

Traditional career theories focused primarily on the experience of white males, with later efforts on the part of career development scholars aimed at generating career theory that is more applicable to women and diverse individuals. The preceding review has provided an outline of existing career theories, with a view to understanding women's career development in particular. The aim was to provide a review from traditional to contemporary theories in order to appreciate how understandings of career development have evolved, and how theories have become more inclusive of women's career development experiences.

Further, literature on entrepreneurship as a career-life path for women was explored. Research on women's entrepreneurship tended to be found in the areas of business and

management, and despite the rise of women's entrepreneurship in recent decades, there is still a relatively small research base. Unique characteristics of women-owned businesses and the paths of women entering entrepreneurship were explored, as well as the topic of multiple-role balance in entrepreneurship. The lack of research specifically examining the experiences of women entrepreneurs with children was noted.

Earlier theorists, in incorporating the concept of self-efficacy to explain the career development of women, suggested that women had not historically found success in male-documented professions due to lack of self-efficacy (Hackett & Betz, 1981). Astin (1984) offered a reframing – that while research supports the former self-efficacy theory, it may also be true that women gravitated towards care giving, relationship-focused occupations precisely because of high self-efficacy in these areas. Constructivist and relational models would support this view in valuing relatedness in career development. Further, Astin suggested that effort must be directed to raising the status of traditional 'women's work.' Twenty five years later, Schultheiss (2009) echoed this, noting that there is still a need for research in the area of mothers' work and the career-life development of mothers. The current study aimed to address this need by providing insight into the career-life experiences of women who are combining both entrepreneurship and mothering work. The following chapter presents the specific methodology used in the current study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

As described in the previous chapter, the choice of Grounded Theory followed logically from the review of the literature on women's entrepreneurship and the review of methodology. Therefore, I chose a Grounded Theory method to investigate the research questions listed at the end of Chapter Two. Grounded Theory has been identified as a useful method for exploring areas where existing research is sparse (Kirkwood & Tootell, 2008). By moving beyond description to build theory regarding basic social problems and corresponding basic social processes used to solve, resolve, or process (Glasser, 1978) them, Grounded Theory was ideally suited for studying the ways in which self-employed women with children manage their multiple life roles. Below, I outline the specific research process employed in the present study. Prior to beginning data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Board (protocol 11-006). No adverse events occurred during the process of conducting this research.

Target Population and Participant Recruitment

Initial purposive sampling was used to recruit participants who met the basic study criteria. Participants in the study were women parenting at least one child under the age of 18, were self-employed, and identified themselves as "mompreneurs," that is, they saw their roles as mother and entrepreneur as both important. Participants had operated their business for a minimum of at least 2 years, indicating a good chance of business success (Leung, Zhang, Wong, & Foo, 2006). Size of business was deemed to be not important for this study as previous research has found that many woman-owned businesses remain small by choice (e.g., Morris, Miyasaki, Watters, & Coombes, 2006). Likewise having employees was not required as

Canadian women's businesses are more likely to be sole-proprietor operations (CIBC, 2004). On average, participants had operated their businesses for 5.9 years, with the range being 2-18 years in operation. In all, data were obtained from seventeen participants. See Table 1 for participant demographic information. See Table 2 for participants' business profiles.

Recruitment

I recruited participants in several ways. I requested the forwarding of a group e-mail to the members of the Victoria Business Moms network through the website MeetupVictoria.com, a public networking group with over 125 members. The group e-mail to the Victoria Business Moms group resulted in seven completed interviews. Following the initial purposive sample recruitment and initial or opening data coding and analysis, recruitment proceeded with theoretical sampling. Theoretical sampling is based on the results of initial data analysis, and continues until the research is complete (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The theoretical sampling process will be further described later in this chapter. Using snowball sampling (i.e., the referral of additional participants by initial participants) to help facilitate theoretical sampling led to two further interviews. Direct invitations were also made via e-mail or in person to business owners who identified themselves as mothers in their advertising and/or place of business, by using such phrases as "mompreneur" or "mom owned and operated." This resulted in a further seven completed interviews. Participants were also identified and invited through the lists of nominees for the Mom Entrepreneur of the Year award, a subsection of the Canadian website SavvyMom.ca which led to one further interview. One final interview was conducted through a referral from a colleague who knew about my research project.

Data Collection, Analysis and Theoretical Sampling

Data analysis begins immediately upon the collection of initial data, and the results of initial coding and analysis inform further (theoretical) sampling, which will be described at the end of this section. The emerging theory shapes ongoing data collection, a process referred to as theoretical sampling. Theoretical sampling is a recursive and simultaneous process of data collecting, coding, and analyzing to generate theory (Schreiber, 2001, p. 64). That is, data are coded and analyzed as quickly as possible after collection so that as categories begin to emerge from within the data, the researcher can choose new research cases to compare with ones that have already been sampled. This is different from the apriori probabilistic sampling design used in quantitative research where the goal is to obtain a representative sample. Rather, the goal of theoretical sampling is to develop as much understanding of analyzed cases as possible and this is why it is the emerging theory that drives the sampling process. Theoretical sampling can be viewed as a form of data triangulation: using independent pieces of information to get a wider perspective (Schreiber, 2001, p. 64) and clearer picture of the phenomenon under study. Glaser (1978) refers to this process as the systematic generation of theory, whereby a theory, grounded in the data, emerges through an inductive process, as opposed to the deductive process of confirming hypotheses as practiced in traditional empirical research. I discuss theoretical sampling further on page 77. The following section will outline this systematic and recursive process, beginning with initial data collection, through coding, analysis, ongoing memoing and theoretical sampling, and further coding, analyzing, and memoing.

Interview Data Collection

Interview questions. The initial interview protocol was a semi-structured format comprised of open-ended questions regarding participants' experience of managing their multiple life roles, as well as additional prompts about how and why participants came to start their business, their reasons for choosing entrepreneurship, and their ideas about career-life success (see Appendix C). As noted by Charmaz (2006), the first question in an interview, plus some verbal prompts, may suffice if participants are so inclined to share their stories. The focus was on hearing participants' explanations of how they managed their multiple life roles, rather than asking the specific questions in the protocol. Thus, I followed participants' leads while asking for clarification and expansion as appropriate to address the research question and the emerging theory. After the first several interviews, I no longer needed to rely on the interview protocol, and as the theory began to take shape, prompts were modified to reflect the emerging theory. For example, changing the wording of the research question from 'balance' to 'manage' and including explicit discussion about a participant's process as it confirmed or challenged the emerging theory was essential (for example, the importance of *living my values* or *feeling supported*). Interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed to allow for analysis of the text. Interviews lasted between forty-five and ninety minutes, with transcription ranging between 26 and 40 pages of double-spaced text.

When participants agreed to participate in the study, I forwarded them the demographic questionnaire and the interview questions so that they could have time to think about the topics we would be discussing. This included the listing of core values, which would be discussed further in the interview, as well as an account of how time was divided among multiple life roles.

Demographic survey. An initial brief demographic questionnaire provided background and contextual information. See Appendix B. Questions included age, length of time operating business, location of business, marital status, number and ages of children, childcare arrangements, educational background, income level and the degree to which they were satisfied with their current income level, and whether participants engaged in any paid employment besides their business.

Observational notes. I made observational notes regarding the place of business, including layout and environment, and concrete actions such as observed interactions between the business owner and her clients were made for businesses with a physical location versus online presence.

Memos. Throughout the data analysis process I engaged in memo-writing in order to make my involvement in the analysis explicit as well as to identify and analyze my own ideas about the coding (Charmaz, 2006). This was a place to ask myself analytic questions, to examine my understandings of the data, and to remain accountable as the instrument of analysis in the process. Glaser (1978) stresses the importance of ongoing theoretical memoing to get “out of” the data and think at a more conceptual, theoretical level. As Charmaz (2006) points out, memos are instrumental in the reporting of results as they hold the road map of analysis and the processes, beliefs, and assumptions involved with developing coding categories.

Glaser (1978) stresses that without the ongoing process of memoing, one is not truly doing grounded theory research. The goals of memoing, according to Glaser, are to “theoretically develop *ideas* (codes), with complete *freedom* into a memo *fund*, that is highly *sortable*” (p. 83). Memos, aimed at raising descriptions of what is found in the data to a theoretical level, are

records of the ideas that arose in engaging in the data. Glaser also stresses the importance of interrupting the coding process to record these ideas. Memos include thoughts regarding the development of properties of each category, leading to operational definitions and thoughts about connections between categories and/or their properties. Memoing also helps to integrate connections among categories to generate theory as well as identifying links between the emerging theory and existing theories.

Glaser (1978, p. 57) suggests one continually ask three questions: “What is this data a study of?” “What category does this incident indicate” and, so importantly, “What is actually happening in the data?” Recursively and conscientiously asking these questions encourages and keeps one’s focus on the basic social problem and processes (i.e., “What is the main problem of the participants, and how are they trying to solve it?”), and keep the researcher “theoretically sensitive” as coding continues to higher levels. Memos recorded during theoretical sampling help to draw out theoretical properties of the code and support saturation by defining the boundaries of the code, the conditions under which it is evident, the significance of the code and its connections to other codes in the data, as well as raising questions about ‘negative’ cases. For example, theoretical memoing led me to seeking out mother entrepreneurs in less traditional fields, where there was less of a direct link between the business and mothering roles. Please see Appendix D for examples of theoretical memoing.

Data Coding and Analysis Procedures

All interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed for analysis. To ensure accurate transcription and to facilitate ongoing data analysis, I transcribed interview data as soon as possible after interviews were completed. Online and archival material, when available, was

transferred into word documents to allow coding alongside interview transcripts, observational notes, and memos.

The data analysis strategy followed five basic steps as described by Corbin and Strauss (2008). These are described below.

Orientation. Transcripts and other material were read once for overall meaning. The aim was to gain an overall impression of the data. Impressions were noted in memos in order to assist in promoting theoretical sensitivity. All memos were dated, titled, and filed for later reference (Schreiber, 2001).

Initial coding. Initially, line-by-line, open coding (Glaser, 1978) was used to identify concepts or meaningful segments of data. Questions asked to facilitate initial coding included those noted above that essentially ask: What is going on here? What is this data a study of? What do the data suggest? (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1999). Words that suggested action or that summarized or distinguished individual pieces of data were used to further categorize segments (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Thus, codes and categories emerged from the initial coding of the data, rather than imposing a priori theoretical coding on the data set. Open coding of initial interviews identified where there were gaps in the data. Gaps exist in the data where there seems to be missing information, or where the data poses questions that the initial coding cannot answer. Open coding and memoing identifies these gaps and also encourages the researcher to make explicit any assumptions that need to be examined, which in turn guided the theoretical sampling to make the data set more complete, as will be described later in this chapter. This identification of gaps and seeking of cases to fill these gaps continued through the theoretical sampling process until saturation was reached.

I employed *Dedoose*, a web-based qualitative analysis program, to assist in organizing transcripts, and to assist in reviewing coded excerpts across interview transcripts and other sources of data. *Dedoose* provided tools to organize the most frequent codes with examples of data categorized within, in order to facilitate further coding. Where possible, participants' own labels were used for coding categories. These in-vivo codes (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008) added authenticity to the coding structure and helped to make sure that the theoretical constructs developed from the data reflected the participants' views. For example, Judi used the word "sustainability" to describe one of her overarching core values, and Linda used the word "juggling" as opposed to balancing and these became coding categories. There were several instances where a concept from the literature was identified to fit the data, for example, the concept of 'push' and 'pull' factors. When existing concepts from the literature fit the data, this is known as "emergent fit" (Schreiber, 2001).

Axial coding. Once similarities were identified in the concepts identified during open coding, a second round of coding was used to cluster the initial codes into larger categories and to specify the properties and dimensions of a category. Corbin and Strauss (2008) refer to this process as 'axial' as it involves relating codes around the 'axis' of a category, synthesizing large amounts of data that have been fractured during initial coding into a coherent whole. Visual representations of data coding including large "mind map" illustrations of the data were helpful at this stage to illustrate relationships between codes. Corbin and Strauss (2008) suggest that diagrams, charts, and maps are critical tools for constructing grounded theory analysis, as well as providing useful demonstrations of relationships in final research reports.

A constant comparative method was used to establish distinctions between units of data, for example comparing statements or observational incidents within and between participants (Glaser & Strauss, 1999). Constant comparison is also used at this stage in comparing and relating subcategories to categories, comparing categories to new data, describing the properties and dimensions of the categories, and exploring variation in the data with further reconceptualizing of the categories and relationships as required (Glaser, 1978). For example, different strategies that women described for managing their multiple roles were clustered together under the category “Adapting Creatively” and the properties and dimensions of this category were explored through memoing. “Adapting Creatively” was understood to include both those concrete adaptations that women made to accommodate role overlap, as well as more subtle adaptations in attitude. Theoretical comparisons also were used to facilitate thinking about the data in different ways and to provide a range of possible meanings when the intent of a selection was not readily apparent (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Interview data were considered to have reached saturation when no new information was being discovered about the categories or their properties, I felt sure that all categories showed depth and breadth of understanding of the particular phenomenon, and relationships to other categories had been clarified. Corbin and Strauss (2008) caution that only when each category has been explored in depth, identifying properties and dimensions under different conditions, can the researcher state that saturation has been reached. This means “until (a) no new or relevant data seem to emerge regarding a category, (b) the category is well developed in terms of its properties and dimensions demonstrating variation, and (c) the relationships among categories are well established and validated” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 263), grounded theorists cannot

consider their data saturated. Even then, however, it is possible that further data collection could continue.

Theoretical coding. Theoretical coding was undertaken to integrate the major or substantive categories into overall hypotheses (Glaser, 1992). The goal was to discover the unifying themes that drew the categories together as a set of interrelated concepts, in other words, to produce a draft theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Arriving at the central category involved looking for the central concern or basic social problem for the women who participated in the study. Glaser's (1978) properties of a core category provided helpful questions to ask in seeking out the central category. Specifically, this meant questioning whether the category had "grab," that is, significant explanatory power and carry-through, allowing for further analysis rather than a dead end (Schreiber, 2001). Glaser stresses that the theory as a whole must have "grab," and it must have fit, relevance, and it must work, and be modifiable (1978, p. 4). That is, data must not be forced to fit pre-selected categories, but the categories and theory must fit the data. Further, the categories must be continually *refit* to the data, as additional data are collected, and *emergent fit* must be developed as new data work with pre-existing categories. Further, a theory *works* when it is able to explain and interpret what is happening in the area of study, and it is *relevant*.

The theory was refined through a review for internal consistency and gaps in logic, filling in poorly developed categories and trimming excess, working towards validating the theoretical scheme (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Glaser's coding families provided frameworks to test and question the emerging theory. For example, once many of the first level concepts were clustered into categories, these categories were examined for relationships between and among Glaser's

“Six C’s” coding family: Causes, Contexts, Contingencies, Consequences, Covariances, and Conditions” (1978, p. 74). This included questioning what “contexts” certain ways of managing multiple roles occurred in, or the “consequences” of choices about prioritizing different roles.

Validation. The final step in data analysis was that of asking participants to review the results of the final coding of their data and the organizational coding tables for accuracy of interpretation and coding. This step also allowed participants to validate interpretations or suggest revisions to make interpretation of their data more accurate. Validation of categories by the majority of participants is an important part of ensuring the validity and accuracy of the coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In addition, the theoretical model was reviewed with additional entrepreneurs, both women and men, and with a group of fellow grounded theory researchers.

Theoretical Sampling

As I stated at the outset of this chapter, an integral aspect of conducting Grounded Theory research and analysis is that of theoretical sampling. Theoretical sampling is based on the results of initial data coding and analysis, and continues until data saturation is complete (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 263). Theoretical sampling involves open coding and constant comparison of all new data prior to increasing the sample size (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). As described earlier, following open coding of the initial interviews, I identified gaps in the data through reflection and memoing, and used theoretical sampling to identify additional sources of data in order to achieve saturation.

Ideas and categories that emerged from open coding in initial data analysis led to my seeking further participants for collecting interview data. I conducted 10 further interviews after coding and analyzing the initial purposive sample of seven participants. After I had collected and

analyzed interview data from 12 participants, it was clear that the data were insufficiently saturated in non-traditional fields of female self-employment or entrepreneurship. I thus sought and recruited participants in industries or fields that are less traditional areas of employment for women, such as Engineering, Finance, and Information Technology. In total, another 6 participants contributed interview data. Saturation was reached when no new information was discovered from subsequent interviews. Although I felt that saturation had likely been reached after the completion of the seventeenth interview, I adopted a conservative approach and elected to look at other sources of data for data triangulation in order to provide further variation in both the types of businesses and in how self-employed mothers manage their multiple life roles, to provide additional confidence in the saturation of categories. I consulted and drew from archival sources (as well as from my observational notes and memos), and used constant comparison to further understand and refine my categories. Data analysis and data collection were therefore both guided by the progression of the research as I asked questions and engaged in memoing throughout the coding process, identifying additional sources of data to provide answers.

Archival materials. I consulted business advertising and promotional materials such as websites, blogs, and Facebook pages, as well as newspaper and online media coverage of the business and/or business owner, to confirm, elaborate, and augment the interview data. In total, I collected data from over 200 secondary sources such as media reports, industry statistics, and information from company web sites and social media. Please note that items such as media reports were counted individually (e.g., number of newspaper articles), while social media such as *Facebook* or *Twitter* were counted only once (e.g., either the business used *Facebook* or not).

If posts in social media such as *Facebook* or *Twitter* were counted individually, the number of additional sources would be much higher than 200.

The following section will present the coding structure developed towards the end of theoretical coding, once data saturation had been achieved.

Coding Structure

During second-level, or axial coding, a coding structure began to develop, which was further refined during the theoretical coding process. As Glaser (1978) notes, the purpose of grounded theory is to account for a pattern of behavior which is relevant and problematic for those involved, through generating theory around the core category that emerges from the data. As initial open-code concepts began to amalgamate into categories, I began to formulate hypotheses about the relationships between and among categories, using Glaser's (1978) coding families as guides. Drawing maps or charts to illustrate these relationships was helpful in conceptualizing the data. Table 3 outlines the final coding structure that was developed through the data analysis process described above. Chapter 4 will further elaborate on the results of the coding, including the understanding of relationships between and among categories as developed through theoretical coding. More detailed description and excerpts of participants' interview data will also be provided to further illustrate the research findings. Please see Appendix E for an example of the progression from open codes, through axial coding, to a sub-category (*Feeling supported*).

Trustworthiness

The rigorous method of Grounded Theory incorporates many means for ensuring the trustworthiness of the data. The constant comparison method involves careful comparison of data

to data, data to existing categories, the relationships of codes to categories, as well exploring the relationships between categories, ensuring the accuracy of the coding process. Further, participant checks ensured that data were being accurately understood and coded. Accuracy is further enhanced by comparing the results of coding interview data with additional data sources through a process of triangulation. For example, a photo of a sign in Judy's shop window offering a discount to cyclists became a triangulated data source that supported the in-vivo code of "sustainability" which Judi named as one of her core values.

The process of memoing is itself a means of enhancing trustworthiness by ensuring researcher reflexivity and documenting the research process. Theoretical sampling, another unique aspect of Grounded Theory method, also enhances trustworthiness of the data by ensuring new data are collected to both confirm and challenge the developing theory. Finally, peer review was obtained both through a group of fellow Grounded Theorists at the University of Victoria, to whom I was able to present my work and receive feedback on, and through working through theoretical coding with my co-supervisor Dr. Tasker.

Reflection and Reflexivity

As has been illustrating in outlining the Grounded Theory method, researcher reflexivity was an integral aspect of conducting the research. Specifically, ongoing analytic and theoretical memoing was essential in order to capture my process of understanding what was emerging from the data, and in thinking theoretically about the data. Glaser (1978) notes that if the researcher is not actively memoing, then one is not doing Grounded Theory. As most researchers engaged in an area of inquiry, I had a personal interest in the topic. I also shared some characteristics with the participants, namely my gender and role as a mother. As such, memoing was essential as in

ensuring that I was rigorous and scrupulous in coding the data in accordance with participants' meanings, and not inferring based on any personal experience I had with aspects of the phenomenon. Appendix D contains some examples of the memos created during data analysis.

Conclusion

In summary, I used a Grounded Theory approach, which followed logically from my initial review of the literature on women's entrepreneurship, to investigate the research questions listed at the end of Chapter Two. In this chapter I have described in detail the specific research process that I employed in the present study, with an introduction to participant demographics, theoretical sampling, and data coding and analysis procedures. In the following chapter, I will note the findings of the study, providing additional exploration of the core and supporting categories through excerpts of participant interviews. Finally, I will outline the emerging Grounded Theory explaining how self-employed women with children manage their multiple life roles.

Chapter 4: Findings

Glaser (1978) states that the purpose of grounded theory is to “account for a pattern of behavior which is relevant and problematic for those involved” (p. 93). This is accomplished through the generation of theory around the core category. Schreiber (2001) notes that the first goal of the researcher is to “understand the shared basic social problem from the participants’ perspective [...] so that the grounded theory will reflect what participants do to resolve it.” In this way, the category of *Being a Mother Entrepreneur* presents an understanding of the problem women entrepreneurs experience in being a mother entrepreneur, most particularly the challenges of combining the roles of mothering and entrepreneurship among other life roles, within a particular social context.

The category *Keeping Going* represents the Basic Social Process of *how* self-employed mothers manage their multiple life roles so that they can continue on with their entrepreneurship. Self-employed women with children are motivated to manage their multiple roles by a strong sense that they are *living their values* (to which their hopes for the future contribute). In other words, self-employed women with children see entrepreneurship as a means to living their values in the present and to laying the groundwork for their envisioned future. In order to “stay the course” amid changing demand experiences of “balance” among their multiple roles, self-employed women with children engage very deliberately and effortfully in a (basic social) process of *Keeping Going*. They make use of supports and resources from a necessary base of *feeling supported* and develop creative strategies to help them manage their multiple roles, *making choices* and *adapting* based on their long-term vision which is shaped by core values, and by *remembering the push* factors that led to the choice of entrepreneurship in the first place.

There is a *remembering* [of] *the pull* to entrepreneurship as a means to *living* [their] *values* in the present and, together with an *envisioning* [of] *the future*, to build and move towards a hoped-for future. Figure 1 provides a visual overview of the theory. I will next describe participant profiles, followed by a description of the overall context *Being a Mother Entrepreneur*, and finally the core category, *Keeping Going*.

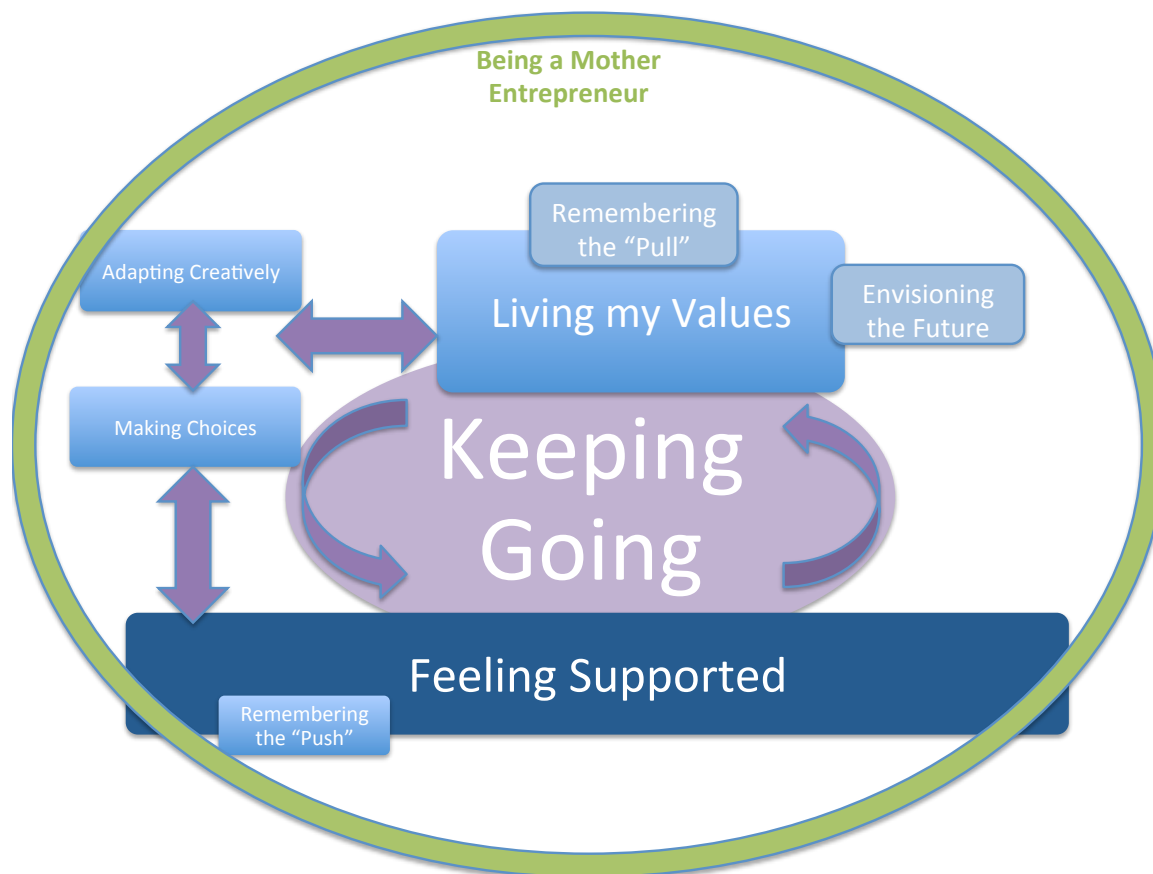


Figure 1. Visual representation of findings

Participants

Tables 1-3 in Chapter 3 present demographic data regarding the individual women interviewed and their businesses. Some of the participants in the study were long-time

entrepreneurs, or had had a longstanding vision to enter entrepreneurship, while for others, the journey into entrepreneurship was unexpected. Some were entrepreneurs before becoming mothers while others entered into entrepreneurship after becoming mothers, specifically with the goal of increasing balance between multiple life roles. Following, I provide a brief sketch of each participant and the context of her work as an entrepreneur.

For the majority of the women interviewed, the transition to entrepreneurship was gradual. Others had different paths. Lucy, a financial planner with three teenage children, has always been self-employed, though in different types of work—“It’s all I’ve known.” Katrina, a small-business consultant and mother of one, was self-employed for many years before becoming a mother, and had in fact started and sold a previous business before starting her current venture. Nina, a chiropractor and mother of two, had a relatively well-established business when she became pregnant with her first child. She shared the clinic space with other health professionals, and was able to hire a locum chiropractor part-time to cover her practice while she took short maternity leaves with both of her children. Juna, owner of a children’s arts academy, took over an established business prior to the birth of her first child, and further developed and expanded the business while also providing the majority of care for her newborn. Isabella, a musician and music teacher, noted that she had always had the vision of self-employment in mind, building on the example of her own childhood music teacher to create a studio while also maintaining the performing aspect of her career, while also raising her family. Ginger, an engineering consultant and mother of one, took a leap, leaving traditional paid employment to pursue entrepreneurship, building on her professional skills and network.

As I noted however, entry into entrepreneurship was varied and for many of the woman I interviewed, gradual. Several women started their businesses while they had another source of income such as paid employment or maternity leave benefits. For Anna, a mother of two with a production company focused on events for mothers and families, paid employment in addition to her business helped to provide the necessary financial support for her family as her business continued to grow to a more profitable entity. Linda, a mother of two and web designer who caters to small businesses, began the business gradually, working part-time from home while on maternity leave. For Cheryl, the inspiration for pursuing entrepreneurship full time was gradual, and she began doing the work while on maternity leave with her second child. Avery, a mother of two, maintained two businesses after deciding not to return to paid employment following her maternity leave with her oldest child. She started both a private counselling practice, building on her professional training, and an organic children's clothing line.

Many although not all of the women interviewed identified their entrepreneurship as being linked to or rooted somehow in their mothering work, creating and developing businesses that catered to mothers, children, and families with children. Cheryl, a mother of two, who started a production company that hosts family-focused events, had also noted this feature of other mother entrepreneurs. "I have met so many women entrepreneurs who have started their business as a result of new-mommyhood, after discovering some kind of service or product gap that needs filling." For Cheryl, as many other participants, the inspiration for pursuing entrepreneurship full time was gradual, and she began doing the work while on maternity leave with her second child. Eva, a mother of three, the youngest of whom is still a teen, and the entrepreneur with the longest running current business in this study (18 years), described how

her business evolved with her interests, building on previous teaching skills to become a childbirth educator after the birth of her first child, then a doula, and eventually opening a centre that includes both retail and classes for young families. Judi, a mother of five, whose business grew from a home-based healthy boxed-lunch delivery service that was inspired by a desire to provide healthy school lunch option, started while on parental leave and then continued while working full-time at a not-for-profit agency. Her business grew to a whole foods catering business, restaurant, and cooking school, moving from her home to a restaurant location as the business grew and she required space to prepare food and store supplies. Similarly, Ann, a mother of one, started her baby and mother retail shop gradually from home, beginning an online shop selling eco-conscious family goods that she had sourced for herself, while also still running a home-based daycare. Eventually the store expanded from online sales, to a small storefront as her need for storage increased. As the business grew, she later moved into a larger space. While Tessa, a mother of four, started her home-based salon while on maternity leave with her second child, hiring a nanny to look after her two children, she eventually began informally offering childcare for her longstanding clients. As her business grew, and she had two more children, she developed the business to cater more specifically to mothers on certain days of the week, offering childcare on those days for mothers to be able to make appointments and have care for their children. Kate, a mother of two, began her craft and parenting blog while on maternity leave with her older child, noting that at first, it was just for family and friends. As her readership grew, however, and she became a more active part of the blogging community, she came to realize she could make money through Google ads, e-books, and promotions with craft companies. Kelly, a mother of two, also developed her business while on maternity leave with

her older child. A teacher who had recently moved to a new city for her husband's work, starting a daycare had always been in the back of her mind as a way to enable her to stay home with her children during their early years, and the poor job market for teachers at the time provided additional incentive.

As illustrated above, many of the women described an evolution of their businesses along the way. For Kanna, a mother of one and personal trainer and health coach, her business evolved to adapt to changes in her life, as she moved to a smaller city where there was less demand for traditional personal training, and developed a focus on new mothers as she herself became a mother to her son. Along the way, there were episodes of serendipity that contributed to business longevity or development. Katrina also relocated to another city with her business, and describes applying for a job in the new city because she was unsure if the move would work out for her business. She expressed relief, in hindsight, that she was not hired. For Maisy, an organic farmer and mother of three, the option for early retirement due to downsizing was the incentive she needed to make the move into her second career of organic farming.

Core Category: Being a Mother Entrepreneur

As illustrated in Figure 1, the overarching category of *Being a Mother Entrepreneur* represents the basic social problem (Glaser, 1978; Schreiber, 2001) that this research was designed to study, and the context within which self-employed mothers experience their multiple life roles. *Being a Mother Entrepreneur* includes factors that may be experienced by all working parents. Financial issues, experiences of pressures and work-family conflict, mixed feelings about using childcare and the lack of quality, affordable childcare – all of which were issues

consistently identified. Role overlap or conflict was the most frequent experience identified, with multiple examples from each participant.

While self-employed women with children identified challenges unique to their situation as entrepreneurs, several of the women commented, like Eva, that “I think the kind of challenges that you face as a self employed mother are the same as the ones you face as a employed mother because you’ve still got issues around child care, around balancing work and home and although you know employers may make your life difficult by requiring difficult hours or expecting a lot of work from you, if you’re self-employed you expect that from yourself and your clients expect that from you. So I don’t know that it’s that different. The difference is that it is *my* choice.” The importance of this element of choice will be explored further within the second core category, later in this chapter.

The core category *Being a Mother Entrepreneur* comprises four properties: (a) Understanding that ‘The buck stops here’, (b) Experiencing Role overlap/conflict, (c) Childcare issues, and (d) Redefining balance.

Understanding That ‘The Buck Stops Here’

A central tenet in starting this research project was the awareness that self-employed women with children were living multiple life roles over-and-above those of mothering work and business owner. As Eva’s comment above suggests, the pressures and demands of entrepreneurship and the investment and responsibility one has in a business, present a unique dimension to the experience of managing multiple life roles. This is key to understanding how the experience of self-employed women with children is different from mothers who work in traditional paid employment, and for understanding how mother entrepreneurs differ from other

entrepreneurs. Because mothers tend to take primary responsibility for household organizing and childcare in traditional two-parent families (Milan, Keown & Urquijo, 2011), the number of multiple roles that mother entrepreneurs fulfill and the amount of time devoted to these is greater than for male entrepreneurs, leading to increased experiences of role overlap/conflict, which I will discuss further in the next section.

The number of roles that self-employed women with children must fulfill, many of them unpaid, heightened the pressure participants felt from *understanding that the buck stops here*: other roles and responsibilities contribute to the challenge of managing their investment in and commitment to their business. Each of the women spoke in some way about the pressures and demands they experienced, and the extent to which time was a factor. For Isabella, a performance musician, carving out time to practice was difficult. While this was time that she enjoyed, as well as being a necessity for her to effectively perform, prioritizing the time was problematic: “I find now as a working mother, practicing is a challenge. Because practicing is one of those things that, you don’t get paid to practice, but you have to practice, so, just to find childcare for practice is really hard. So, I end up squishing it around times where my husband is home or whatever, so I don’t get nearly as much as I would like.” She also noted the challenge of fitting in other unpaid tasks such as creating and updating websites or advertising. “I’d say there’s a fair amount of things that you need to do that don’t result immediately in a pay cheque, but need to be done, in order to kind of move forward with everything. So, fitting those in, I’d say, especially when you know the time I’ve got to work in a day is limited, that’s a challenge.”

This speaks to a key element of the experience of being a “mompreneur”—the extent to which women felt a sense of personal investment in their role of business owner, and a sense of

their professional identities being intrinsically linked with that of their business. That is, the impact of the sense of responsibility from being invested in the business is illustrated. Judy summed up this sense of investment and responsibility to her business, saying “It’s like a baby,” a sentiment that was echoed by others. For Maisy, leaving her farm during growing season was unthinkable. “Nothing else can happen once we get the seeds planted [indoors in the late winter]. Until the garden is put to bed in the fall, I can’t leave, there is just no one else who knows what to do and when, what to look for, sees the overall picture.” This sense of investment in the business, of needing to be there, was an interesting parallel to the mothering role.

Cheryl noted, “I think that when you work for yourself you can’t sort of have someone fill in for you, necessarily. You know, you can have people help you with stuff, but in the end you’re responsible for making things the way they need to be and to keep up the quality.” This investment in the business, while a positive in terms of the rewards participants reported and the sense of pride they have in their ventures, also adds to a sense of pressure at times. As Cheryl’s comment reveals, it can be difficult or even impossible to step away from a business. While Nina was able to have a locum chiropractor cover her practice while she took a short maternity leave after the birth of her son, for others, leaving the business to others—even for a short time, was not an option.

Performing the wide variety of additional and often unpaid tasks in order to start and maintain a functioning business was an important aspect of the experience for self-employed women with children, and one that may not have been anticipated when the plan of start a venture was first formed. As Ann stated “I think just the time is the hard part, it’s that it takes so much time [...] Some people say it’s like a well oiled machine now with their business, like I

just show up and do this or do that and but I don't think that they realize all the things that they are doing to keep it that way.” Judi shared this sentiment “that’s the main thing for the not good side, is just how much time it takes, so much time. You think ‘Oh, I’ve got a great concept, I’m just going to put it out there and I’m going to be flooded.’ Not the case. Still now, it still requires a lot of effort, but it’s fun effort. This kind of business anyway is hugely time consuming.”

Katrina notes: “If I’m not here, there’s no one else to answer the phone, there’s no one else to pick up the mail, there is nobody else billing, because I’m a consultant so I must be putting in the hours in order to get money. So, yeah, I’d say there’s probably less flexibility as a self employed person, in my industry, than there is if I was working in my industry and had a job. [...] So, I guess the experience of being a self-employed mother is that it does increase the pressure sometimes.”

While the experience of fulfilling multiple roles within the business is a common one for entrepreneurs in general, *understanding that ‘the buck stops here’* encompasses the central paradox that many self-employed women with children experienced, a paradox this is managed through the process of *keeping going*, which will be explored later. Although flexibility and autonomy were part of the initial ‘pulls’ to entrepreneurship, the sense of investment and responsibility in the business places some limitations on the amount of flexibility that it is possible to attain, leading to experiences of role overlap/conflict. A counter force is that of the ‘push’ factors which women remember as having motivated them to look beyond traditional paid employment to choose entrepreneurship in the first place. The centrality of choice will be explored further in the basic social process category later in this chapter. Additionally, it is important to acknowledge the amount of responsibility that mother entrepreneurs have in

managing their households and caring for children, a point that will be discussed further in the final chapter.

Experiencing Role Overlap/Conflict

The issue of role overlap or role conflict was identified by each of the participants. While some aspects of this experience are unique to the experience of self-employed mothers, others may be very similar to that of employed mothers. Avery shared about this experience on days when she is working in her private practice: “The majority of my day or a good portion of my day is spent with my counseling hat on but I’m also mother and wife before I leave the house and often times even when I’m at work I’m texting my husband to make sure everything is ok and thinking about dinner and planning that between clients and then it’s like, I’m grocery shopping on my way home and stuff.”

In addition, there were those experiences that may be common to all working mothers – the challenge of fitting in time for other roles, such as time with partners, social and leisure time, and personal time. Finding the time to just be with one’s partner was often identified as a challenge, particularly for the women with younger children. Avery noted that the needs of their young children are so immediate, while it often feels like a spouse can wait. “It’s probably not a very good balance in terms of husband and wife, my wife role versus my mother role. I’d definitely say the kids’ needs are more important, it’s like he can take care of himself, so, in terms of that role, I don’t think my husband and I have enough time together.” Like time for connecting with partners, relationships with friends and time just for oneself were also challenging roles to fit in for many of the women.

Each of the women interviewed also identified with their roles as mothers, and placed importance on their mothering work. Mothering work and being there for their children was clearly a motivating value for many of the participants to enter entrepreneurship. Consistent with previous research (Kirkwood & Tootell, 2008), the most common experience of role overlap and conflict was that of job-parent conflict.

For mother entrepreneurs with a home-based portion to their business, having their children at home while they are working can be a challenge. For example, Isabella shared about the challenges she experiences at times when she teaches music lessons in her home while her son is cared for by someone in another part of the house. “It’s hard for him to know I’m there but he can’t come see me.” Similarly Avery shared about her young son’s frustration at times when she is trying to finish up something for work, and Linda shared about the challenges of trying to work from home around a baby’s schedule.

While entrepreneurship may have initially offered an opportunity to reduce role conflict by combining mothering and business work, the reality often did not match this hope. Ann noted: “When I first started doing it, it was so I could stay home with [my daughter] and then after that, now that we opened the store, it’s been a little bit more challenging because I can’t actually have her here with me even though I thought I was going to be able to.” Cheryl had also initially hoped that she would be able to run her business from home, while having her children with her, however this brought unanticipated challenges. “It was, ah-ha, I can’t do all this and have professional conversations on the phone with kids screaming in the background, and that’s not fair for my kids.”

Combining one's business with mothering work consistently presented challenges regarding role overlap. Linda spoke about the challenges of keeping her business running without any childcare support when her oldest was a baby. "Honestly, it's all a bit of a blur now, but I just remember feeling so anxious all the time, like as soon as he would go to sleep I was running to my desk, trying to get as much done as possible before he woke up, and then I'd be in the middle of something and trying to finish after he was awake, and just feeling like, am I giving him enough attention, am I doing a good job at anything?"

For Juna, the realities of running her children's arts academy while mothering a newborn brought unexpected challenges. While her partner was an active and willing support (the couple had planned for him to take on the primary caregiver role so that Juna could continue her active role in the school), Juna found that her commitment to exclusive breast feeding meant that she was still the one who was providing the majority of the child care, which was challenging as she continued to teach classes and perform her other roles in the business.

A common element to the experience of role overlap or conflict was that of reconciling feelings of guilt. Avery spoke about the challenges of trying to work from home while caring for her young son "There's a lot of guilt though that is involved, it's part of the mix. You know, if I get frustrated with him because I'm just trying to finish one little piece of something before we go and do something else, there's that guilt comes up around he's only two and half and he doesn't really understand when I say I'm working what that means or how important that is or whatever so there's definitely guilt around that." Judi shared about her conflicted feelings when working on her business start-up during her parental leave with her youngest child. "I was half focused on her but I was also running around setting up bank accounts, buying products and

setting up a website and meeting with suppliers and marketing and all the things you do to set up a business while she slept or while she played in the play pen but I wasn't always focusing on her so I felt about guilty about that and then the other kids you know still needed mom's attention which they got but only in part."

In addition to feelings of guilt, many women spoke about the challenge to prioritize themselves among their multiple roles. Avery, who was pregnant with her second child at the time of our initial interview, noted, "I think that when it comes down to it there's very little time that's just for me. Everything else seems to get done at some point or another but then, there isn't a lot of time left in the day for just having a nap which would be great right now." Keeping oneself on the schedule amid experiences of role overlap and conflict was challenging.

Childcare Issues

Childcare issues and the challenges related to reconciling expectations regarding self-employment and its compatibility with mothering work were also consistently identified. For several of the women interviewed, there was a specific desire to avoid the use of childcare. Others spoke about having to come to terms with the need to use childcare, despite an initial desire not to. Many spoke about feelings of guilt or reluctance regarding paid childcare, as well as the lack of quality, affordable, flexible childcare. Kanna, a personal trainer and wellness consultant noted, "I didn't think it was going to be this hard to go to just 30 minutes of client meetings—finding a babysitter, or daycare type of thing, or finding clients who could understand my sudden cancelation." For women who were partnered, the onus was typically on the mother to deal with childcare issues.

Linda shared “Before I became a mother, I thought a lot about the challenges of being an entrepreneur and having children. Parental leave wasn’t an option, then, and even though it is now, I really don’t know any entrepreneur who could actually use a year of parental leave. But I used to wish it was, it really sounded like wow, that would be great to take a year off. But now that I’m actually doing it [running her own business while also being the primary caregiver for her children], the biggest issue is actually childcare.” Others also spoke about the lack of feasibility of opting in to Employment Insurance benefits for parental leave, as there was a need to continue working to sustain the business. For mother entrepreneurs who require childcare in order to continue to run their businesses, cost and availability of care for infants and toddlers as well as the lack of part-time or flexible childcare was a barrier.

Redefining balance

While “work-life balance” is a common phrase in the existing literature, many of the women interviewed questioned the idea of balance. Cheryl, for example, said: “Well, to be quite honest, I think balance is a myth” while Nina noted, “I think it’s more a matter of juggling, than balancing.” Kate talked about how, looking objectively at her life, it often felt that there was “no real balance,” on individual days, but yet she felt that overall, she was happy with how it all evened out over time – the ebbs and flows were an expected part of the developmental process of a family with young children.

Despite the challenges of role overlap and conflict, the majority of women interviewed reported feeling that their experience of balance between their multiple life roles was better than “OK.” About one-third of the women interviewed felt that their experience of balance was really ok, and another third felt it was between barely ok and really ok. Very few were “sort of not ok”

with their current balance, and none identified as feeling no sense of balance. Further, the vast majority reported that they were happy with the degree of balance, even if they were not among the one-third who felt their sense of balance was really good. Overwhelmingly, this was due to the sense that for the most part they were in charge of the process of balancing their multiple life roles. This element of choice is key to the basic social process of *how* self-employed women with children managed their multiple life roles – by *Keeping Going*, through *making choices* and *adapting*, *remembering the push and pull* to entrepreneurship, *envisioning the future* and *feeling supported* to a greater or lesser extent as they stay the course they have charted.

Basic Social Process: Keeping Going

Developing a theory of *how* self-employed women with children managed their multiple life roles was the primary objective of this study. *Keeping Going* represents the here-and-now process of managing multiple roles and values, which supports and facilitates staying the course over the longer term. The basic social process discovered in the data—*Keeping Going*—is informed by and informs seven domains of influence or (intentional, active use of) strategy. Figure 1 (p. 86) offers a visual representation of this process. As such, the final model is dynamic and reciprocal, with the domains at right of the process-model providing inspiration and motivation to keep going (*living my values*), while the dimensions at the left of the model represent more concrete strategies, and the foundation (*feeling supported*) representing key facilitating factors.

In order to stay the course as entrepreneurs while managing multiple life roles, self-employed women with children need to experience *feeling supported*, and develop creative strategies to help them manage these roles, *making choices* and *adapting* based on a long-term

vision which is shaped by core values and *remembering the “push”* factors that led to the choice of entrepreneurship in the first place. There is an intentional *remembering [of] the “pull”* to entrepreneurship as a way to keep on living these values and to set the stage for what they are *envisioning [for] the future*. A key domain of influence that emerged from the data was that self-employed women with children were motivated to manage their multiple roles by a strong sense that they were *living their values*. Each of the individual domains will be discussed below, with explanation of the dynamic and mutually influencing nature of these domains.

Feeling Supported

The necessity of feeling and being supported was critical to *Keeping Going*. Actively accessing supports and feeling supported in order to keep going was named by each of the women interviewed. Having sufficient financial means to keep going was essential, if not required for *keeping going*. For some, *feeling supported* involved formal support or training programs providing practical or financial support. Local small business networks were also frequently cited as a source of support. For others, support came in the form of mentoring relationships, work related informal support, or relationships with friends and family or informal support networks. Many women identified other mothers and other mother entrepreneurs specifically, as a significant source of support. The primary source of support identified was that of a partner/spouse.

Some, such as Ginger, also identified government-sponsored programs or other initiatives that supported their transition into entrepreneurship. “When I first went and started looking into my own business, I went to Business Victoria, and they were huge. I signed up for their “Fire Starter” program [...] They helped me with naming my business and deciding if I wanted to

incorporate or not, to set up the accounting system and taxes and all that kind of stuff so I did use them as a support.” Katrina cited the federal self-employment program she had access to while on Employment Insurance benefits, while Avery benefitted from support from the Canadian Youth Business Foundation, which provided low-interest financing and mentorship. Cheryl shared about the impact of winning the “Mompreneur of the Year” award sponsored by the Canadian company Savvy Mom, which provided financial support that enabled her to grow her business, as well as the opportunity to work with a productivity specialist. Isabella noted however, that becoming and remaining a self-employed musician involved “a lot of figuring it out on your own.”

The majority of participants named informal mentoring or local small business community support. Several women, such as Anna and Avery, started their businesses with the support of partners who brought complementary skills and were also mothers. Many women were pleasantly surprised at the level of support found among other mother-entrepreneurs. Kanna noted: “Definitely friendships. Like support from your friends, especially mothers with their own businesses. So they know how you’ve been struggling, they can share any sort of concerns that you have. If I need more resources for networking, or I need more, I don’t know, information about something. Definitely other women, mothers’ network is key, especially on this island because it’s a very tight, small community, and once you are in there you have lots of support.” Kate also spoke about the importance of her community supports. As her husband is in the military, and the family is stationed away from their extended family, relying on her community supports – particularly other mothers – was key. “I wouldn’t have been able to do this without the community, especially other mothers, that I’ve built as I’ve built the business. There’s just no

way.” These community supports were instrumental in supporting and sustaining the shift to entrepreneurship.

Many women described a positive surprise in terms of the support network that was found in other local or mother-owned businesses, such as for Avery: “We’ve become this network, and certainly by putting on fairs and attending things, I’ve met an enormous amount of women who are doing the same thing for a lot of the same reasons, so that’s been a really neat surprise, and I’ve met a lot of really great women and talented business people.” Ann also expressed surprise that “the guy who owns the building here [where Ann rents her store], he gives out flyers for us every Tuesday, he gives out thirty or fifty flyers or something, which I think is, like I couldn’t do that, I don’t have the time and I just think it’s so nice that he would think to add ours in with his while he’s doing it because it’s not like he charges us money for it or anything. It’s just sort of a nice ‘I want to support you’ kind of thing, and I think what I’m really surprised about is how much all the locally owned businesses try to support each other.”

For others, support came through an individual relationship or mentor. Isabella shared “My flute teacher, she has been a real role model to me, from when I was younger, and I remember she had young kids when I was taking lessons. Not that my life is identical to hers, but I could kind of see how she balanced it. She always had babysitters in the afternoons when she taught and she had [more senior] students teach [for her], and so when I was getting ready to have kids, I was like, well that’s how I’ll do it.” Many of the women recounted a mentor or role model that they encountered earlier in their careers. Lucy spoke about her initial struggle with the “old boys network” she found when she became a financial planner, and about the influence of a more senior woman in the network of financial planners she belonged to. “She was great.

She took me aside one day and said ‘Set your course the way you want it to go’ [...] that the most valuable piece of advice that anyone’s ever given, that whether you’re a woman, man, self-employed, whatever, set your course in life and follow it. That was very valuable.”

Ann’s brother was supportive for her, particularly as she opened her first storefront location. “He has his masters in statistics which I could never do but so he’s really like ok you need to sell this much stuff to make this much and I’m like ok that’s a lot of diapers, you know, like that’s how I see it.” Kate also described how her husband’s friend, and accountant, was supportive for her in helping to monetize her blog and utilize accounting software to prepare for her first year in submitting a tax return for her business, while Avery’s husband (who has a business degree) provided consulting and support. Eva also found that someone with previous experience was helpful for her in starting out: “This women I met, who is also a child birth educator, she had done this before, she’d run a store before, so she set up the retail part and my husband and I and her husband, we build the store. We sort of tore down the existing walls and built new ones and created an actual store that would work.”

Although some women shared about some initial reluctance to hiring staff – as Katrina joked, “I have a three year old, I don’t need employees” – having a team in one’s business was identified as a strong source of support. Ginger noted, “it’s almost like the stress is less when you start hiring people” and later “I do work with two other moms, and it just happened that way.” Despite not being a business linked to mothering work, when looking to create a team in her business, the aspect of social support was a strong consideration: “That’s a huge reason for me wanting to grow the business, too, is that social aspect, cause the three of us make a good little team, we have coffee together and we have ideas, I’m not just by myself.” At our initial

interview, Ann expressed that she felt some resistance to hiring staff, due to the additional stresses that managing staff can bring. When I checked in with her a couple of months later, however, she had already hired some part-time help, and found that the most logical choice for her mother and baby store, was other mothers.

Many of the women spoke about the support they experienced from their own mothers, and from extended family. Often, this came in terms of practical support. Although her mother did not initially share the vision Judi had for her entrepreneurial career, “that being said she said to me right away, I’ll do whatever you need, I’ll take care of your kids for you, I’ll cook for you, I’ll clean for you.” Ann, a single parent, shared about how being able to rely on family for short periods made her life easier “just that I had my parents around to help with child care and everything so if I had to mail something I could drop her off and then go to the post office rather than try and drag a two year old and boxes and do the balancing act. I think just that I had a lot of family help.” Informal childcare was a primary way that extended family supported participants. Even though they might not have used family support for childcare regularly, knowing that the support was there and available was an important contributor to feeling supported.

Mothers’ support also came in a more direct encouragement of women’s entrepreneurship. Avery’s mother, also a therapist, connected Avery with a collective to use office space for her private practice. Linda’s mother had been an independent consultant before her own retirement, and encouraged Linda to make the leap to entrepreneurship. Juna, who had completed an undergraduate degree in Fine Arts and planned to become a high-school teacher, describes how she felt fortunate to take over her mother’s established art-school business, and expand it to make it her own “she made me a proposal, and it sounded like the perfect fit for me.

There weren't good prospects for teaching, and so I thought, yes, this is what I can do. And she really encouraged me to see that, to see the possibilities."

A significant area of support identified by all of the partnered participants was that of their spouse—both in terms of the spouse's income and in terms of emotional and/or practical support. When asked about supports that enabled her to start her business, Ginger quickly stated "Oh, my husband, 100%, he said whatever you need to do, we'll make it work. He works a 9-5 job so he brings in the mortgage payments and car payments and stuff like that. He's #1, he's the one that allowed me to kind of go there." Judi also spoke about how instrumental her husband's income support was, noting "obviously when you have children you can't take the same amount of risk as if you have no children, when you're responsible for other people you can't just decide to do something as risky as starting your own business, so absolutely I think the first thing was we looked at our finances and we realized that we could probably live on his income for a period of time, and that has absolutely been the case." For Nina, the ability to take a maternity leave from her private practice was partly dependent on her husband's stable employment: "We were able to save, but I had to think about keeping the business running, and paying someone else to take over my patients while I was off. It would have been very difficult without his salary." Similarly, Maisy's husband remained at his office job when she took early retirement to start her business.

Eva, whose husband had a stable job with the government, mused about this dynamic of partner support: "This is something I wonder about 'mompreneurs,' is whether in fact it's one of the things that makes it possible, is that there is another bread winner who can sort of be a palliative as you move over to the next thing." Notably, there were few single parents in the

sample, despite efforts to include more single parents through theoretical sampling. One potential participant, a single parent who initially agreed to an interview but had to withdraw, was forced to close her business and return to paid employment after experiencing a marketing fraud.

For the two single parents in the sample, both had previously well-established sources of income to support their transition to their current business as well as support from a co-parent and/or extended family. Relationships beyond a partner—extended family and friends, as well as support networks in the community—while cited as important supports by all participants, may be particularly important for single mothers transitioning to entrepreneurship.

In addition to financial support, partners were an important source of emotional and practical support for the majority of participants. While Judi and Maisy's husbands did have some concerns about the risks involved in entrepreneurship, they did support their partners to take that risk. Anna noted, "My husband is very supportive, and is excited to see me so excited for something. So he's been a huge influence in that respect." Katrina also noted the importance of her husband's encouragement, stating "my husband was extremely supportive, he did not want me to get a job, he was fed up with me going out there at job interviews, he wanted me to do this, and he's always wanted me to do this, so his pride in me kind of keeps pushing me forward."

While feeling supported was instrumental, there were times when some of the participants identified they did not feel supported. Juna and her husband experienced some struggles after he was laid off from his job just before the birth of their first child, and when Kate's military husband is away on deployment, his absence creates some challenges. Tessa shared that her husband was not particularly supportive, either of her business or with parenting tasks, leading her to look to friends and family and even her older children for support. For each

of the women interviewed, *feeling supported* directly contributed to their ability to manage their multiple life roles. While there were times that making choices could contribute to feeling supported, when there was a lack of feeling supported, there was still an opportunity to make choices—to continue the business or not; to make other choices and further *adapt* in order to continue to manage their multiple life roles. Each of these sources contributed to the sense of feeling supported, which enabled women to *keep going* in managing their career-life roles.

There were also tensions involved as women integrated these supports and resources, which is illustrated in the feedback arrow between *feeling supported* and *making choices*—there are choices to make in accessing and accepting support that may help or hinder the ability to keep going. For example, several women mentioned hiring help with house-keeping, but as Cheryl names, there was some hesitancy in sharing about this resource: “Hiring a house keeper. I feel kind of embarrassed to say that but we do get one once in awhile. Not weekly or anything.”

Making Choices

An important part of managing multiple roles that each of the women identified was that of making choices about what to prioritize at different times, in order to manage multiple roles and in particular, experiences of role overlap/conflict. As illustrated in the previous section, feeling supported is linked with the process of making choices. In addition, making choices is connected to the process of adapting—choices made led to particular adaptations, while adapting to the challenges of managing multiple life roles necessitated certain choices. Yes, there are conflicts, competing priorities, and challenges, but as Nina stated, jokingly quoting a *Sex in the City* character, “I choose my choice.” The element of intentional and active choice is key in helping to sustain momentum and keep going as mother entrepreneurs face the often-challenging

work of managing multiple life roles. Choices are informed by the sense of *living my values* and by *envisioning the future* as well as *remembering the pull*, which will be further described in a later section.

The main area of choices for mother entrepreneurs in this study was that of decisions around business growth and role overlap. All of the participants talked about choices they had made around postponing business growth and development as a way of helping to manage their multiple life roles and continue to live in alignment with their core values. Participants shared examples of downsizing and realigning their businesses, diversifying products, and engaging in role reduction and role sharing through the process of hiring staff. Judy made a decision to scale back her business, closing the busy restaurant side of her business, in order to focus on other aspects of the business and free up more time for family. Katrina shared “for the first couple years of [my son’s] life I wanted to keep my business really small, I didn’t want to take on too many projects, I think I was going easy on myself and just in the last six months I think I’ve started feeling like it’s time for things to pick up.” Maisy shared about choosing to stagger the expansion of her business as a function of her children’s increasing independence: she incrementally expanded her market garden business through growing new crops as her children got older and she had more time to devote to her garden. Ginger spoke of the process of embracing delegation through hiring staff—a choice she made that led to her feeling more supported and enhancing her ability to manage her multiple life roles, a choice that other participants also spoke about.

Judi discussed the choices she made to forego some aspects of marketing due to the demands of her young family: “I think that my business suffered in the sense that some of the

important things that you need to do for a business, marketing, networking, being out there, getting your name out there didn't happen because I felt like that was a bit of a soft thing, like you couldn't not be here to open the restaurant at 11am but you could not get that ad in the paper or you could not get your Facebook page updated or not attend a networking session, so I didn't do those things." Because of the choice she made to prioritize her young family, there were consequences (slower growth of her business) but also subsequent choices regarding where to devote time and energy among her career-life roles. Kanna also shared about this decision to prioritize her child's needs: "It's maybe not professional, but if my son is sick and has high high fever and has to be taken to emergency, I would choose to do so." Such choices were an ongoing element of managing multiple life roles.

Cheryl talked about the choice to forego certain opportunities, including opportunities for financial gain, while her children were younger: "I miss some opportunities, you know work wise out there in the community, different opportunities that have been presented to me because I choose to not make work my main focus." She added, "Maybe in a couple years as my kids get older, we're all kind of growing and evolving and I might make different choices down the line, but right now when they're little, my daughter is just starting kindergarten I want to be able to be there in the morning and in the afternoon when she's done, right now."

Other participants with younger children echoed this sentiment. For example Linda, Kate, and Tessa talked about how their businesses continued to grow gradually as their children got older. Kanna shared about the choice to shift the focus of the business when her second child is born "I think I will maybe focus on nutrition counselling online so just change the method of my business. But that's the flexibility too, right? Your own business you can change whatever way

you want to.” Ann spoke about the choice to open a storefront for her online business: “I was leery about having a store, but the driving factor with the store was that I had to either move or get a store, because I needed space, separate storage space so that [my daughter] isn’t getting into things. And the website and [providing] part-time daycare was not enough, I knew I had to do something else.” She chose to take the leap into expanding her online mother and baby needs store into a physical location as a way to manage her multiple roles, although that choice brought new challenges to manage, as she found she was not able to have her child with her during store hours as business continued to grow.

In addition to decisions around the growth of the business, there were choices around how to organize time in order to manage multiple roles. For example Eva, whose children were older (two had already left home for university), stated: “I would rather work very hard and then crash for three or four days than have it be a constant slog [...]. It works better for me to work, especially if I get passionate about something, I’d rather work very hard for several days and then take a few days off.” Eva also shared: “I escape for short periods of time, [...] during the year I take singing lessons, and so on Thursday afternoons I leave the store at three-thirty and I go sing my singing lesson for two hours, or I sing for an hour and then I take a lesson for an hour, and nobody expects me for those times, they know I’m gone. And the fact that to be able to do that I have to work late on Tuesday and Wednesday, that’s ok. Or, I know I’m going to work on Saturday but I’ll take Friday afternoon off and go and have a pedicure and meet a friend for coffee and that makes it ok. I don’t have to have two solid weekend days to make it.” She also spoke about the choice around when to take on more clients or not, so as to provide breaks in her year: “for August-September I’m not going to have any doula clients, I’ll take some time off to

be with my family, help settle the kids at university, go visit my parents.” Avery spoke about the choice to only work in her private therapy practice one day per week, on Saturdays when her husband could be home with the children, Nina chose to work three longer days and one half day in order to have more full days home with her children, while Lucy shared about her way of organizing her time to provide several focused days of work per week, in order to have other days that she could be more flexible to pursue other things. When Isabella’s first child was born, her husband took parental leave from his job, in order to facilitate her continued focus on her work as a musician and music teacher.

There were also choices to be made about social connections and time for oneself – things that many participants noted they valued, but which were difficult roles to accommodate. As Katrina stated, “I don’t really have a social life. I would say that’s something that I have kind of allowed to become less important. I have Facebook, and social media are great for making you feel like you’re connected to people, but I probably go out and actually see my friends maybe once every three months.” While many of the participants lamented this lack of time with friends, they also valued social connection, and noted that opportunities to connect with friends, though rare, became that much more meaningful. As Avery noted, “certainly days where I try and make arrangements to connect with a friend or something without children always helps me to feel a bit more balanced. And I mean I say that I need to do it more, but I do occasionally manage to figure that one out and do that and that’s always nice.” While it may not have been as often as they would have liked, this was the nature of making choices among the multiple life roles that mother entrepreneurs experienced.

Making the choice to prioritize time for oneself often involved carving out time through a set ‘appointment’ in their schedule. Anna shared about her weekly dance and yoga class: “having the one night a week that’s just for me, and if my husband’s working evenings my parents are on call and take care of the boys and put them to bed and it is huge for my mental sanity, to take that hour and a half, two hours, one evening a week.” Isabella also shared about “building in a little bit more time” for herself in her weekly schedule. Although many of the women interviewed mentioned that there was not as much time for connecting with friends, or spending time alone, as they would like, there was a sense of choosing to keep oneself on the priority list.

Connecting with partners (outside of the parenting role) was also a challenge. Several participants cited booking in a standard lunch or evening date as a way to ensure time to connect with a partner. Nina and her husband came up with a creative compromise to the traditional date night, by prioritizing an at-home date night. “For me, I’m a very frugal person, I like being frugal, and for me it just doesn’t make sense to spend money on a babysitter, spend money to go out. So, we feed the kids something simple, then set them up with a movie – it’s a treat for them too – and we have take-out, or we’ll cook together. And we have a romantic dinner. Or, we’ll have a movie night at home once the kids are in bed. But those nights are sacred, at least once a week. It’s our time to reconnect.” For Judi, there was a sense of pride regarding the time she was able to carve out with her husband: “my husband and I try really hard, I’ve always tried really hard to have time to ourselves so I would say we go out on “dates” if you will, more often than most of my friends who aren’t self-employed, mostly because I make a point of making sure that it happens.”

Kate spoke about the choice to share her ‘real life’ with other mothers through her blog. “I could drive myself crazy looking at all the perfect lives on Pinterest, the beautiful play rooms, the pristine kitchens. And then I just thought, I’m not going to buy into this. This is not what real life looks like all the time. And so I show pictures of my living room covered in toys, and my messy craft room, as well as the beautiful things that I make and the moments of absolute perfection. That is real balance.” Linda described having zones in her house where she deliberately chose to prioritize—“as long as the kitchen is clean, I can let go of the other stuff.” Cheryl talked about the choice to focus more on family and her business, less on other tasks: “you know, gone are the days when you can be at home doing five loads of laundry and sweeping the floors and doing all the dishes and trying to, you know, weed the garden so that it looks presentable.”

The element of choice was central to participants’ experiences of managing multiple roles. Although they experienced challenges, the fact that they were able to make choices that continued to align with their values enabled them to keep going. As Avery shared, “If I start to think I wish [my son] had somewhere to go for a couple hours a day, it’s like well, I have that choice, I could put him in a daycare, but I chose not to for reasons, so that’s what makes it ok.” Choices are informed by values, and in turn the ability to make choices helped mother entrepreneurs to *keep going* in managing their multiple life roles. This importance of the element of choice will be discussed further in the final chapter.

In addition to the specific choices women made, there was also the choice to let go of guilt that often arose in regards to those choices. Lucy, whose children are now teenagers, shared how in retrospect she was able to let go of guilt around choices that took her away from her

children at times: “It’s getting over the fact that you can’t always be there 24/7 when you’re self employed for your kids, and getting over the guilt of that, and looking back now I see they wouldn’t have needed me any more than that [...] looking back now, that’s my thing, not my kids going ‘Mom, you were missing that’...they were fine with it.” This choice to let go of guilt and reaffirm confidence in one’s choices was key. In addition to making choices, there is the process of *adapting* to the particular demands of the career-life path they have chosen.

Adapting Creatively

Adapting involved both concrete structural adaptations to support maintenance of the business, such as adapting to the demands of a traditional work-week while maintaining the flexibility to be present with children during some business hours, as well as psychological adaptations, such as adapting expectations. For many women, structural adaptations included gaining additional skills and taking on additional roles in their business. Using technology and social media to adapt to role overlap was another feature many women described. Many found that social time was found more and more online, in moments snatched here and there, between other tasks and roles. The adaptations made are consistently linked to the core values identified.

Several of the women interviewed identified the challenge of adapting to the additional skills that were required of them as entrepreneurs. For example, Ginger shared how developing a marketing strategy to bring in new business was a new skill for her: “That’s something that I’ve never done, I never had that in the firm that I used to work at, I never did that, so marketing is a tough thing for me.” Kate described the challenges in learning html and other internet publishing skills, and how to protect her original content after experiencing the theft of her feeds to another web site. “It has been a huge learning curve, things I had never thought about, never expected to

have to deal with.” In adapting to the emerging needs of her business, Anna shared “I think that there’s a lot that I didn’t know I was getting myself in for, and a lot of it really great. [...] Like there’s elements that have surprised me in myself, in what I’ve shown myself that I can do, which has been exciting, it’s like wow, I’m really good at this, and that’s neat, and it’s fantastic to have that feeling.” For Juna, adapting meant taking some additional business and accounting courses and learning to balance her personal finances in relation to her business.

Some participants initially hoped to combine mothering work with working on their business from home, but found that these expectations had to be adapted. For example, Cheryl soon recognized the need for support and arrived at a compromise—to use part-time childcare. However there was also the challenge of reconciling herself with this choice. “That was difficult because I thought that I’d never ever need to use child care, I don’t know why. I grew up never being in childcare, my mom was a stay at home mom. So that was a challenge for me, the guilt of you know putting my kids in child care and feeling like somebody else is raising them, you know, but I don’t really feel like that anymore.”

Adapting might also mean revising one’s ideas about a typical workweek, or adapting to the rhythms of busy and slow times in one’s business. Juna noted that recital season is a particularly busy time, where other things take a back seat. For others, adapting meant adjusting their finances and planning for the ebbs and flows of income. Isabella spoke about the variability of her work as a musician “In any given month, too, I can have a lot of gigs or I can have no gigs. Like, it really varies. So, I think I’ve gotten either quite used to it or ok with it. [...] And also just being careful of money, like in terms of on a month where I’ve got a lot of money coming in, putting aside for another month, like I know in the summer I don’t have nearly as

much money because I don't teach as much, so putting money aside or coming up with things that will fill that gap." Tessa, a salon owner, also spoke about this variability and the need to plan ahead for slow times: "In December, it is so busy, people have holiday parties, that sort of thing, and then summer is wedding season, so I'm working every weekend, but it balances out, because then there are the slower months, and I have to plan ahead for that. It's up and down."

Sometimes, adapting meant adapting expectations regarding business growth, or adapting to the element of uncertainty. Avery shared "Another surprise is how affected entrepreneurship is by the economy, right? Like we're not talking about government or health care, where there is stability of that job and that income is fairly consistent despite what's happening in the economy. When you own your own business—and it just so happens that both my businesses are ones that people can go without when times are tough..." Juna echoes this, noting: "This [children's arts classes] is an extra, right, and there are so many competing options for extracurriculars, so families really need to believe in the importance of the arts, to want to spend money on this, and we have had to really work hard to convince people too. That was a big adjustment for me – mentally, and emotionally I guess." Adapting one's expectations about entrepreneurship in the face of changing social and economic conditions was a common thread.

Adapting also meant getting creative with scheduling and using technology. As Kate stated, "you get really good at using small chunks of time efficiently. Like, I can have 30 minutes while my son watches a show, and the baby is napping, and I can update my social media or edit some photos for a post, something small. I work when they are asleep. It's hard because I need to get enough sleep to keep up with them during the day, but also want to capitalize on that time when they are asleep to get things done." Anna noted that being a home-based business meant

adapting to the lack of definition between work and home: “you can’t turn the business off, like it’s 11 o’clock at night and because of the miracles of modern technology I can continue to send out inquiry emails [...] I think especially being home based it is harder to have the clearly defined roles right, it’s easy to check twitter and easy to check and see if you have any emails that need to be responded to or, just sort a couple more piles of paper, and, so instead of having an 8 hour work day you have a 20 hour work day that’s blocked into 10 minute intervals here and there.” For Ginger, technology became a tool for adapting her schedule, allowing her to manage her multiple roles within the norms of her industry. “I have an engineering business which is a little tricky, because it’s a very male dominated field, but as far as my clients are concerned they don’t know when I work. I’m very good at kind of masking the hours and with technology today, you know you always have your smart phone or whatever so no matter if I’m walking to school I can be corresponding with clients so it’s having that front of, of still the old-school 9-5 Monday to Friday job cause it’s still very prevalent in the Engineering field anyways.”

Kelly also talked about adapting to life as a home-based daycare provider, noting that she accepted the need to prioritize her sleep and have an earlier bedtime: “I have had periods of terrible insomnia since having kids, and I just really respect my need for sleep now – if I don’t sleep, I cannot be as patient with the kids. So, I do my best to respect my rhythms and really try not to be too hard on myself.” Many, like Cheryl, talked about simply “being more relaxed. [...] I find that something’s got to give and that is the tidiness of our house, the weeds that are growing in the garden, and stuff like that. Something’s got to give. I still feel the pressure to you know have a less messy house, but whatever.” Although there was still pressure experienced to

devote time or energy to other roles, *adapting* to changing demands or conditions was one way that women manage their roles and *keep going*.

Remembering the Push

Existing literature on the transition to entrepreneurship uses the terms *push* and *pull* to describe factors in the transition to entrepreneurship (Orhan & Scott, 2001). These themes were present in the stories that were shared by participants about the motivation to pursue and continue in entrepreneurship. Many women talked about the lack of opportunities they experienced in paid employment, or a lack of opportunity for rewarding paid employment as a factor that “pushed” them to consider and which reminded them now of *why* entrepreneurship. Ginger described: “I was training to be a project manager and they [employer] just weren’t facilitating it, and I thought, well I’m going to have to do it myself.” She made the choice to leave her job without anything firm to go on to. Kelly felt the push to start a home based daycare due to a lack of teaching opportunities in the city she and her husband were planning to move to due to a transfer in his job, and likewise Kate was also pushed to start her blog as a way of having an outlet that could transfer with the family when her husband was relocated by the military.

Workplace constraints were another area that provided a “push” to entrepreneurship. Judi spoke about a work situation that had become untenable, leading her to make the jump to full-time entrepreneurship sooner than she had envisioned. Cheryl remembers a definitive moment when she realized “I also didn’t want to work for others any more, I just remember when I was pregnant with my son and I was working for someone else and I just remember that I really had to go to the bathroom and the timing was just not right and I couldn’t go and I just remember

thinking, this is a basic human right and screw all these guys, I'm so not going to do this anymore.”

Kana shared how starting her own business gave her the opportunity to escape some of the restrictions on her income, fees that were charged for her services and the type of services she could provide when she made the move from working for a large gym to start her own personal training and health consultant business. Similarly Tessa found that the experience of working in a salon, while positive in some ways, pushed her into considering entrepreneurship due to the portion of her earnings kept by the salon, restrictions on her schedule, and challenging experiences with changing management. In this way, many women felt “pushed” out of paid employment that challenged their ability to *live their values*. On the other side of this are also the pull factors, those factors that drew women to entrepreneurship, rather than pushing them towards it. Pull factors, which are also informed by and inform mother entrepreneur's sense of *living their values* are explored below.

Remembering the Pull

Remembering the pull to entrepreneurship is integral to process of managing multiple life roles and to remaining in entrepreneurship as a way of *living my values*. In this category, a counterpart to the experience of *remembering the push*, women talked about a continual recommitment to entrepreneurship due to the sense that entrepreneurship provides the opportunity for *living her values*. Pulls include creating space for their mothering role, the ability to be flexible or autonomous, and personal challenge/reward.

Many participants shared about this sense of remembering the pull in reaffirming their choice to *keep going*—that despite the challenges, as Avery stated, “I wouldn't have it any other

way, do you know what I mean? Sometimes I have to remind myself that this is a choice I made because this felt like the best choice for our family.” Anna also described the pull of her mothering role: “Well...I really like playing with my boys. Which is a big part of this. I like that my boys have never been in daycare and between grandparents and being able to arrange work schedules and what-not, that we’ve been able to spend a lot of time going to kindergym and swimming and playgrounds and being able to do those kinds of things.” Although there are challenges in managing multiple life roles as a mother entrepreneur, remembering this pull supports the choice to continually re-commit to their current career-life path.

Creating space for their mothering role and “being there” with their children was a pull for many women in making the transition to entrepreneurship. For Ginger, this pull to entrepreneurship was clear: “I have a daughter who is 6 and one of the reasons why I am self-employed, the main reason, that is that I don’t want her in any sort of care, if I can avoid it.” For Kelly, an elementary school teacher, starting a home-based licensed child-care centre became a way to spend more time with her young children and still earn income. Avery described how a private therapy practice was always in the back of her mind as she pursued her undergraduate and graduate training, as a way of having more flexibility to balance work and anticipated family commitments. When she has difficult days, she notes “I have to remember that it was the choice and I made the choice for a reason cause it’s what I wanted and what I value and what I believe, even though it’s not always easy, but I don’t think the alternatives are that easy either.” Being there with her children was something she valued, and entrepreneurship was one element that helped her to make time for that role – this valuing of their mothering work will be discussed further in the final section.

The pull that enabled women to create more space for their mothering role was that of flexibility or autonomy—the ability to make choices. For Eva, this pull to entrepreneurship grew directly from her mothering role, as she experienced a period of full-time mothering work after moving to a new country for her husband’s post-doctoral placement, due to a combination of child care issues and challenges with employment in a foreign country. She explained: “So I stayed home, and after two years of staying at home I realized that it was going to be difficult to work for anybody else. Somehow the experience of having run my own life, and I guess that was the first time I’d ever done that right, I’d been in school where somebody else runs your life and then I’d worked for a big company where somebody else runs your life and then I’d been really self-employed as a mother and run my own life and made my own schedule and set my own priorities and decided what I would do when and not had to answer to anyone other than me.” Cheryl stated simply: “I like being my own boss.” This sense of being in charge of one’s own life and schedule, or as Linda stated (quoting the title of an entrepreneurship book for women) “being the boss of me” was a strong pull to entrepreneurship.

Katrina, however, challenged the idea that entrepreneurship is any more flexible than paid employment. “I defy anyone to say I have more flexibility because I’m an entrepreneur, that is utterly not true, and I would go so far as to say any women who is successful enough in their business that they have people counting on them has no more flexibility and in fact less flexibility than a parent who has a job.” While entrepreneurship did not necessarily offer more flexibility, there was the pull of autonomy that Katrina described as she reflected on her relief that she was not been hired at a job she applied for when she moved to a new city.

Ginger noted that the ability to be in charge of her own schedule was a strong pull to entrepreneurship; “that’s the reason I went into business because I didn’t want to work the 9-5 Monday to Friday, oh there’s an emergency I have to leave.” Maisy shared a similar comment in expressing her relief at not having to ask for permission from a boss when needing time off. The pull of autonomy was also true for Linda, who looked to the example of her own mother’s self-employment, and for Nina, who shared that one of the pulls of her chosen profession of chiropractor was the fact that it offered the opportunity to set her own schedule to fit with her other life roles. The perceived autonomy of entrepreneurship was a strong pull, with several women, like Lucy and Ann, half-jokingly commenting that they would “make terrible employees,” noting that the combination of autonomy and personal challenge/reward was a strong pull to the entrepreneurial lifestyle. Thus, while the initial goal of flexibility may have been less attainable than first hoped, *remembering the pull* highlights the importance of the ability to *make choices*—remembering this particular pull is one that helps women to keep going in the face of challenges.

This leads to the final “pull” to entrepreneurship—the opportunity for personal challenge or reward. Lucy elaborated: “If I’m started on something I want to keep going until it’s done and the idea of a 9 to 5 to me is tough, because sometimes I feel I have the drive and I want to push forward and it would be very tough for me that I couldn’t reap the benefits if I was driven to work harder.” This opportunity to challenge oneself and directly experience the rewards of one’s creativity and hard work was shared by others as well. There was a sense of excitement in creating and building a business that grew directly from one’s own talent and hard work.

Isabella shared how remembering the pull to continue pursuing her longstanding career-life goal of being a musician kept her going at times: “you know there’s been a couple points in my life where I’ve been like, do I need to quit this? And it’s usually been because of something financial [...] but every time that it’s come I just felt that I just couldn’t do it. Like I’ve applied for other jobs, in the past, and I just, it just never felt right, [...] I just could never stop.”

Remembering the pull to entrepreneurship as a way of continuing to live in alignment with one’s values and career-life goals was key.

For Kanna, entrepreneurship was an opportunity to pursue the pull of a passion: “I started my business because I love what I do so my passion was leading me to my business.” Kate, a self-described “mommy blogger,” starting her blog as a new stay-at-home mom gave her a creative and social outlet that she was sorely missing. “At first it was just a personal blog, for friends and family, because really I was very lonely. I’m a huge extravert, and it was hard being at home at first. But as [the blog] began to grow, it really became my way to connect with other moms and to recreate that feeling of ... a community [...] And then with the number of hits I was getting, I started to realize I could bring in some income too.” Turning a passion into a career, or building a business career with the goal of attaining success directly from one’s skills and talent was a key theme.

Pulls to entrepreneurship, including the goal of creating space for their mothering role, the ability to be flexible or autonomous, and the opportunity for personal challenge or reward were key in helping mother entrepreneurs to sustain momentum and *keep going* in managing their multiple life roles. Combining the pull of a personal passion with the rewards of an income

was key for many women, yet for some, there was also some tension in the area of finances, which will be discussed later.

Envisioning the Future

As noted in the previous section on *making choices*, the choices that women make at one point in their business development are often linked to the developmental stage of their family. *Envisioning the future* also connects with mother entrepreneurs' sense of *living my values* and encourages them to *keep going* towards that future in which they continue to presently live in alignment with their values, managing their evolving multiple life roles. Many participants shared about this desire to look back in the future and recognize that they had managed their multiple life roles in accordance with their values. As Cheryl stated, "I would like to be able to look back and say ok, I did the best that I could with my kids, I tried to make a difference in the parenting community, that affected people positively and their families. To me that is really the main thing." Others also shared about this desire, such as Judi, who, speaking about her passion for sustainability and environmentalism noted "I will be satisfied when I've made a difference."

When asked about their goals for the future, participants often noted the fact that children would be older, freeing up more time to nurture or expand the business. For participants with younger children, there were also some tentative hopes expressed that their children might one day become involved in the business. For example Ginger shared "I'm trying to picture my daughter when she's even in high school you know, she's still going to need me around, but it probably will change, I'll be able to branch out more, I'll be able to do more things and maybe she'll help, like maybe one day she'll help, I don't know." Avery shared "I can see myself as the kids get older expanding those ventures and putting more energy as their needs become less. I

don't mean less significant or important, but less demanding maybe." Isabella spoke about her desire to travel more to pursue the performing aspect of her career, once her children were older and more independent.

Cheryl mused about taking on new opportunities in future, "maybe in a couple years as my kids get older. We're all kind of growing and evolving and I might make different choices down the line." For Ginger, there were plans to expand, but to maintain some flexibility: "I'd like to open an office. Right now we're in a room above my garage, so the three of us are kind of squished in there, which works fine for now, but the next step will be having an office with a storefront and hiring more people. And I can see it doing that, I can see it growing [...] I don't want it to be huge, I don't see opening offices all over BC or anything like that, I would be fine just having one office here in Victoria. Because that seems to be what every engineering firm does they get big, big, and then implode. I don't want to do that. And that way I can still be here in town and doing the school hour thing." Others also expressed this desire to expand, but not too much.

Financial rewards were understandably part of the vision women held of their business and personal envisioned futures, yet for some, as Eva named, there was also some embarrassment or guilt around the goal to gain financially from their businesses. Eva, who supported pregnant and nursing mothers as part of her business, noted that she felt some guilt about taking money for a service that she felt should be a basic right. Others with primarily service oriented businesses also expressed this tension, or shied away from the discussion of finances altogether in our interviews, although for others, financial rewards were very much a part of their vision of the future.

For Lucy, her vision of the future included increased earnings, as she saw an opportunity to directly benefit from increased time devoted to her business. For Judi, her vision of the future included having a sense that she had made a difference in terms of environmental sustainability, in addition to increased earnings with more time available to devote to other roles: “my ideal will be to bring down the amount of time I put into my business to 30% of the time I have but to be getting paid the equivalent of what I would be making if I was working fulltime.” Eva also had a long-term vision of her business: “it’s one of my goals to create a business that will be self-perpetuating and be able to carry itself forward even when I decide to step away. It might take another ten or fifteen years to decide to do that but I would like to create an institution that will continue and I would like to be able to sell it and make some money from it to provide for my future. That’s the goal.”

Living my Values

Although, as discussed in the previous section, many women spoke about flexibility as a pull to entrepreneurship, others challenged the idea of flexibility, noting that for sole proprietors, there may actually be less flexibility as one is invested in and responsible for the business. The theme that applied to both of these situations, however, was that of autonomy to make choices in accordance with their values, and a sense of valuing oneself. Overwhelmingly, when participants talked about what helped them to keep going, despite the elusive nature of balance between their multiple life roles, there was the sense that they were living in alignment with their values—following a career-life path of their own choosing and in line with their core self. Integrity, living a meaningful life, and making a meaningful contribution were key themes of values that

participants described. Prioritizing family and mothering work—“being there”—was a value that came across very clearly among the participants in this study.

Self. Connected with the valuing of mothering work and the value of integrity, is the sense of valuing oneself; of valuing self-respect, self-fulfillment and self-care. Although many of the women interviewed mentioned that there was not as much time for this as they would like, there was a sense of choosing to keep oneself on the priority list (as noted earlier). As Katrina stated “There’s me as a woman and I try to keep her happy [...] I try and keep that side of me.” Later she elaborated: “the experience of motherhood, although it was really wacky for two years there, hasn’t changed me fundamentally, hasn’t put a dent in my ambition, I’m still me.” Anna also shared about this valuing of herself in the decision to pursue her venture: “Through the whole process I’ve been making a lot of choices that, that come from family, definitely, but are also about me, and it’s the first time in a lot of years that I’ve been making choices about me, and so putting myself back on the priority list has been huge.”

While self-care, “me time,” or personal wellness were identified as priorities by all of the participants, fitting this role into their many others was also challenging. As discussed earlier in the context of role overlap/conflict, having time with friends was a form of self-care for some of the participants. Self-care included nurturing other relationships. Eva noted: “I guess for me a good life is one where you’ve made a lot of connections and maintained them, so you know I’ve made some connections with my children, and I maintain it, and it’s a good relationship and its good relationship with my husband, with my friends and my community and with my colleagues and the people I work with.” Self-care also meant time solely for oneself.

Kelly recognized that she needed this time to recharge after the demanding work of being “on” all day as a daycare provider for preschool aged children. “It’s hard to take that time out for me, to take that time away from my kids, from our family. But I’ve come to realize that they benefit from the time away as much as I do.” She found that scheduling a yoga class once per week, and taking a shorter time for home practice several other evenings per week provided the “mindful pause” she needed. She valued and saw benefit from her practice of self-care.

For women whose children were older, finding space for themselves was perhaps somewhat less challenging than for those women whose children were under 5. Lucy, whose children are teens, talked about how the discovery of running and yoga provided a way of maintaining self-care and enhancing her experience of balance. Eva also spoke about taking time out to do something personally meaningful for herself “I escape for short periods of time, so you know I’ll, during the year I take singing lessons, and so on Thursday afternoons I leave the store at three-thirty and I go and I sing for an hour and then I take a lesson for an hour, and nobody expects me for those times, they know I’m gone.” There was a sense that nurturing oneself was a valuable endeavor, and one which participants consistently named.

Integrity and meaning. Different participants used different words to describe the values that motivated them. For Judi, the word sustainability encompassed several key values. “Even better would be the word sustainability because that applies as well to the dynamics and sustainability of the home front and that’s why I closed the restaurant it wasn’t sustainable in either place. I couldn’t sustain the degree of time commitment but also it wasn’t sustainable for my husband, it wasn’t sustainable for my kids. There was burnout. But at the same time the main

value for the business is that it be environmentally sustainable, [...] that it would make money but wouldn't compromise the environment."

Others, like Katrina, described this sense of integrity as a need for congruency between her business and self: "I think that because I'm in the field of strategic planning I tend to be very clear about my own strategic plan you know. I kind of should have, I should be the role model if I'm saying you should do this kind of planning." The business, as a separate entity, was often described as an extension of the professional self. For Linda, "the initial inspiration was based on filling a need both in the community and in myself that was lacking since I'd been home with my baby. I loved being with my daughter, I really loved the rewards of being a full-time mom, but I also felt I needed something more to fuel the inner me." There was a drive to make a meaningful contribution both to the community and for oneself.

Many participants echoed this value of living with integrity and making a meaningful contribution. For example, Juna stated: "I love my work. It feels meaningful – I have a purpose, I am being creative, I feel like I am making my own small contribution." Cheryl described: "I love doing the work, I loved helping families, and I just wanted to kind of do something that sort of made me feel like I was making a difference, a real difference in people's lives. [...] being able to build something and see it come together and see it be worthwhile." Anna echoed this, stating simply "it's being able to build something."

Many also described, like Isabella, a more personal dimension to the drive to live in alignment with her value of meaningful work: "I've always felt really strongly that whatever I was doing I wanted to really love doing, and I really do...I'm really very very infrequently unhappy with what I'm doing. Usually it has to do with something that's not really the heart of

what I'm doing, it's usually some peripheral problem, and I was always willing to sacrifice say some financial stability or whatever for that." The value of living in alignment with one's core values of integrity and meaning was a strong motivating factor. The following section will explore further the motivation to live in alignment with the valuing of mothering work.

Mothering. As Judy stated, speaking to the decision to scale back her business in order to have more time with her family, "as a Mompreneur, money never makes up for the other stuff." This was a sentiment shared by others as well. There was a continual reminding of the value of their mothering work, in recognizing their own value in this role, the value in being there for their family—as Ann stated "I value time with [my daughter.]" Ginger noted, "There's some days where I may not be working and then I start to feel like I'm not doing anything but I am because the other half of my job is looking after my daughter." Although the women themselves were able to recognize the value of their mothering work – because it was something they themselves valued – there was also the sense that this value was not shared or supported by society in general, making the need to continually remind oneself about the importance of this value all the more important.

Many women shared about the need to consciously remind themselves that they valued and saw value in their mothering work. Avery shared about how she continued to prioritize and value her mothering role "I really do think as unrewarding as society makes motherhood to feel sometimes, do you know what I mean? There isn't a lot of patting on the back for...you get pats on the back for working and for bringing in a good income. There aren't a lot of pats on the back for doing a good job as a mom. But I think in terms of values, that's like number one, is to be there, to feel like my kids always have, they can count on me. [...] I want to be the mom who

does support her kids by being physically present [...] I don't think it matters how old your kids get, I still think they need their parents." The importance of being there, of being physically present and available to their children was key for many participants.

Cheryl shared about how she lived her valuing of her mothering work "what I do is try to create a version of that where I am available to them you know and flexible with my schedule so that I can be available to do those things and really be a part of my kids life. So that's important to me. 'Cause time goes by so fast and I want to, you know, be a real part of my kids life." Judy described how her value of self care overlapped with her valuing of her mothering work: "I prioritize that the kids need me, that I need to be able to sleep enough so that I'm not cranky with the kids, they still need to eat well, sleep well, get their homework done, have lessons...make sure that they still do all the good things." Valuing mothering work meant valuing oneself. In this way, the valuing of oneself, although often a challenge to fit in to a busy life, was an important part of living with integrity.

Katrina shared about how becoming a mother brought a new dimension to her life, leading her to become more clear about her career-life direction: "having to, forcing myself to really really articulate what I wanted to become, because dear god now I'm a mom and all this stuff. Before that in Vancouver I didn't have a really clear idea of what I wanted my life to become so it's kind of been a gift you know, I think I can say that." Others also shared about how having children forced them to become more intentional about their direction and the ways in which they were managing their life roles. As Kelly stated "I wonder now what I used to do with my time, before I had kids, and I don't know that I really thought about my future as concretely. Now that I have these little beings that I am responsible for, it has changed a lot

about how I think about my life...it's like it's not just my life anymore, or I'm not just me, I'm also their mom, and that's huge." Avery alluded to this sense of responsibility as she described reminding herself when she experienced difficult days that she had chosen self-employment to be present with her children because "it's what I wanted and what I value and what I believe, even though it's not always easy, but I don't think the alternatives are that easy either." There was a strong sense among each of the participants that they valued their mothering work, and that this value shaped how their career-lives continued to evolve.

As illustrated in Figure 1, *living my values* is a key domain of influence that supports and draws mother entrepreneurs to *keep going* in managing their multiple life roles. Within a context that includes the challenges of role overlap and conflict, having a strong sense of living ones values provides the touchstone to remind women of why they made and continue to make the choices they do to manage their multiple life roles. Central to these is a valuing of the self, of living a life of integrity and meaning, and of valuing the mothering role and being there for one's family.

Conclusion

The context and core categories that I have described in this chapter provide a description of the participants and the general social context of *being a mother entrepreneur*, as well as illustrating the emerging theory of *how* self-employed mothers manage their multiple life roles. Self-employed women with children are motivated to manage their multiple roles by a strong sense that they are *living their values*. *Envisioning the future* as well as *remembering the pull* to entrepreneurship inform and are informed by these core values. In order to *keep going* amid changing experiences of managing their multiple life roles, there is a need for *feeling supported*,

making choices, and *adapting* based on an envisioned future, which is shaped by and shapes core values. In addition to the pulls to entrepreneurship that link to their core values, there is also *remembering the push* to entrepreneurship as a lifestyle, as opposed to traditional paid employment. In the following chapter, I will discuss the implications of this research for theory and research, the implications and applications to counselling and career development work, as well as further explore the links to existing research.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Implications

Historically, there has been a focus on the impact of multiple role juggling and work-life or work-family balance as being particularly relevant issues in women's career-life development (Betz, 2006; Greenberger & O'Neil, 1993; Hock & DeMeis, 1990; Kirkwood & Tootell, 2008; Scarr, Phillips, & McCartney, 1989; Williams et al., 1991). In reviewing the existing literature, I found that research on women's entrepreneurship tended to be conducted in the areas of business and management. Despite the rise of women's entrepreneurship in recent decades, and the volume of research on women's career-life development, there was still relatively little known about the career-life development of mother entrepreneurs. Schultheiss (2009) suggested that there is a need for research in the area of mothers' work and the career-life development of mothers.

From my review of the literature, the need to understand more accurately the career-life experiences of mothers, and mother entrepreneurs specifically, was clear. The lack of methodological clarity among some existing studies of women's entrepreneurship, as described in the literature review, also suggests that research methods employed in the limited number of studies of women's entrepreneurship have not enabled us to understand sufficiently mother entrepreneurs' perspectives and experiences of managing their multiple career-life roles. I therefore designed my study as a Grounded Theory study to further explore the experience of combining entrepreneurship and motherhood, and to achieve an understanding of how mother entrepreneurs manage their multiple life roles in the context of challenges to multiple role balance as described in earlier research (e.g. Kirkwood & Tootell, 2008). The findings from my study will add to this relatively new body of literature on mother entrepreneurs.

In the following sections I will further discuss and synthesize the findings of this study, Specifically, I will consider the findings in relation to previous research, and I will explore the implications for counselling, including directions for therapists and clients. Finally, I will discuss the strengths and limitations of the current study and propose insights for theory building and directions for future research.

Discussion

This study was designed to discover the basic social process by which self-employed women with children balance their multiple life roles. Accordingly, I used grounded theory as my research method. Grounded theory begins with an assumption that participants share a problematic situation, and is designed to discover the process by which this basic social problem is resolved. An assumption in undertaking this research was that self-employed women with children would identify with both the roles of entrepreneur and mother, and that the values and meaning they associate with those roles, among others, would influence the ways in which they managed their career-life roles. The first goal in conducting grounded theory research is to understand the basic social problem from the participants' perspective, and then to discover what participants do to resolve it (Schreiber, 2001). As such, the first step in this research was to fully understand the basic social problem for mother entrepreneurs, which is represented in the outer circle of the visual model presented in Figure 1 in Chapter 4.

Throughout the process of conducting this research, I was alert to sensitizing concepts—those ideas or understandings from the literature and my existing knowledge base that I held about the phenomenon of study—and was careful to explore these through the existing literature in order to fully clarify these ideas and challenge them through constant comparison with the

data (Charmaz, 2006; Schreiber, 2001). Schreiber notes that a review of the academic literature ahead of data collection and analysis is often of limited use as “it rarely is focused on the problem of a given population as identified by that population” (2001, p. 58). I had, however, completed a literature review of both academic and popular literature prior to beginning the research in order to broadly assess my interest in the topic of mother entrepreneurs and to more fully explicate the existing conceptualizations and sensitizing concepts I brought to the subject (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Glaser, 1978). In the coding of my data I was scrupulous in keeping alert to sensitizing concepts when I recognized something explicitly in my data (e.g., the concept of balance) or when I caught myself reaching too quickly to an existing theoretical concept (e.g., circumscription, compromise) or framework (e.g., Super’s theories), or to an overarching philosophical perspective (e.g., feminism). Later in my discussion, I work to establish “a conversation” with the existing literature that I reviewed, describing linkages to the existing literature and what new insights, based on my research findings, I think my work can add to the existing career counseling literature and meta-theory. Exploring sensitizing concepts such as women’s economies and mothering work through additional sources such as non-academic literature and media was important in rounding out the understanding of these topics as the research progressed. At several points I was referred to articles or online resources such as TED Talks by the women I interviewed, and there was also a great deal of conversation in the media about combining motherhood with careers outside the home during the time that I was working on this research. Anne-Marie Slaughter’s article in the Atlantic “Why women still can’t have it all” ignited a flurry of replies in the media, and Sheryl Sandberg’s book *Lean In* also led to a great deal of debate. Writings about motherhood, including those that explicitly identified as

feminist, such as Badinter's (2013) *The Conflict*, were also important sources to explore. I used the resources that participants referenced or that I encountered in the course of this research to constantly compare against the interview data, and against what might have been deductively-driven preconceptions on my behalf. This exploration of sensitizing concepts resulted in a great deal of linked memos, which eventually informed the characterization of the basic social condition of *being a mother entrepreneur* as it relates to my participants. In the following discussion, I examine what being a mother entrepreneur "looks" like for my participants and compare and contrast this with established characterizations and descriptions that exist in the literature. This description and discussion provides context for the greater discussion of the grounded theory established from the data in this study, which speaks to the process of *how* mother entrepreneurs manage their multiple roles.

The Basic Social Problem: Being a Mother Entrepreneur

A particular focus as the research unfolded was in exploring the intersections between mothering and entrepreneurship as integral to understanding the basic social problem of *being a mother entrepreneur*. In approaching this research, some of the literature on women's entrepreneurship, as well as anecdotal evidence I examined, suggested that indeed for some mother entrepreneurs there was an important link between their mothering work and their businesses. In response, I selected to define mother entrepreneurs for this study as 'self-employed women with children,' and potential participants agreed with the statement that they identified both with their roles as mother and entrepreneur.

Interestingly, as I have been working on this dissertation research others have also been working to better understand this link between this population's mothering work and their

businesses. The term “momprenneur” was even included in the 2011 Collins English Dictionary, which defines a mompreneur as simply “a mother who combines running a business enterprise with looking after her children.” At least a handful of definitions of the term “momprenneur” have been suggested over the past several years (e.g. Duberly and Carrigan, 2011; Ekinsmythe, 2011; Richomme-Huet, Vial, & d’Andria, 2013), and a study published last year in the *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business* provided empirical evidence of the link between mothering work and entrepreneurship.

Richomme-Huet, Vial, and d’Andria (2013) cite earlier definitions from recent conference papers that define mumpreneurship as, for example, “mothers who balance family and starting and managing a business” (Ho et al. as cited in Richomme-Huet, Vial, & d’Andria, 2013, p. 255) and “female business owners actively balancing the roles of mother and entrepreneur” (Korsgaard, 2007, as cited in Richomme-Huet, Vial, & d’Andria, 2013, p. 255), but Richomme-Huet, Vial, and d’Andria define “mumpreneurship” more narrowly by specifically linking the business opportunity that is developed *to the experience of having children*. For Richomme-Huet’s group, mumpreneurship is “the creation of a new business venture by a woman who identifies as both a mother and a business woman, is motivated primarily by achieving work-life balance, *and picks an opportunity linked to the particular experience of having children*” (italics not in the original). This also implies that true “mumpreneurs” become entrepreneurs only *after* having children; however the authors note that their survey data do not provide information about whether venture creation coincides with the experience of motherhood. The experiences of being a mother entrepreneur as found in the current study both support and differ from this most recent definition of mumpreneurship.

While each of the participants in my study identified with their roles as mothers and business owners, not all identified as “mompreneurs” nor would they meet the definition that Richomme-Huet, Vial, and d’Andria (2013) propose. For example, not all of the participants in the current research have chosen a business opportunity that is clearly “linked to the experience of having children” (Richomme-Huet, Vial, & d’Andria, 2013, p. 256), such as Ginger, who runs an engineering firm, or Nina, a chiropractor. By the definition presented above, then, some of the women who voluntarily participated in the current study might not be considered “mumpreneurs” and yet they clearly identified with their roles both as mother and as business owner, highlighting one of the limitations of this most recent definition. It is important not to assume that all mother entrepreneurs are “mompreneurs” or that the mothering role is less important to mother entrepreneurs whose businesses are less clearly linked to their mothering role.

This lack of clarity about the definition of “mompreneur” in the emerging literature is problematic, and applying the term “mompreneur” more broadly to all self-employed women with children may hide important differences within this group, depending on the timing of business start-up and having children, the relatedness of the business opportunity development and line of business to the experience of having children, and needs in supporting work-family balance.

Further to their definition of mumpreneurship, Richomme-Huet, Vial, and d’Andria (2013) also point to the existence of two subgroups of mumpreneurs—those who created a company in harmony with their identity as a mother, and those who launched a venture because of the opportunity of having time to build their project while having a baby. For those in my

sample who had started their business after becoming mothers, these two subgroups were confirmed. For example, in the case of Eva, who became a childbirth educator and doula after becoming a mother, or Ann, who started her mother and baby store after identifying a need she experienced as a mother. For these women, there is a sense of the venture creation as being linked to their gender role identity (Leung, 2011), and to their identity as both a mother and a business woman, *and* who picked an opportunity linked to the particular experience of having children (Richomme-Huet, Vial, & d'Andria, 2013). Others, like Cheryl and Kate specifically identify the opportunity of time during maternity leave as a key factor. Judy's story spans both of these sub-groups, as her business is both linked to her identity as a mother and was launched while taking parental leave with her youngest child. While all my participants identified with their mothering role (despite the fact that not all of them owned and ran businesses linked to the experience of having children or which related to the family-service market), this was not the case for Kirkwood and Tootell (2008) who used a mixed sample of women entrepreneurs with and without children and did not differentiate in terms of mother entrepreneurs or "mompreneurs". The criterion of identification with the mothering role for self-employed women with children as a definitional condition of mompreneurship was not fully supported by Kirkwood and Tootell, who only identified a theme of limited attachment to the maternal role among many of their participants.

Interestingly however, although Kirkwood and Tootell (2008) did not speak specifically about the phenomenon of "mompreneurship," but rather focussed on the issue of work-family "balance," they also found that despite employing a variety of flexible work practices, a sense of work-life balance was particularly difficult to achieve for the mother entrepreneurs in their

sample. While achieving greater work-life balance was a strong pull factor for the majority of the women in my study, as the results presented in Chapter 4 suggest, it seems that the participants in my study have come to realize that the complex reality of managing multiple work-family roles cannot be fully captured by the term “balance.” More so, for my participants, a lack of balance does not necessarily imply a lack of satisfaction with the state of multiple work-family role management.

As illustrated in the previous chapter, despite experiences of role overlap and conflict, the majority of women interviewed were satisfied with how their roles averaged out over time. While entrepreneurship may increase the sense of pressure women experience, there is also a sense that the autonomy and agency afforded by entrepreneurship—specifically, the ability to make choices and adapt in accordance with one's values—makes all the difference. This is consistent with existing research that suggested that while the multiple roles which women occupy can be demanding, these multiple roles are integral to women's health and wellbeing (Barnett, 2004; Betz, 2005). Rather than focusing on the potentially unattainable ‘holy grail’ of balance (Belkin, as cited in Mainiero & Sullivan, 2006), the stories of the women in this study point to a sense of motivation to live in alignment with their life values, which produces a sense of satisfaction despite fluctuating subjective experiences of ‘balance.’ This element of *making choices* was key to the basic social process of *how* self-employed women with children managed their multiple life roles, which will be discussed further in a later section.

This leads to the idea of *balance* as an analogy for or way to characterize an optimal or healthy work-life dynamic. As balance is the term most commonly used in the existing popular and academic literature, initially, my question in approaching this research was regarding how

self-employed women with children *balance* their multiple life roles. ‘Work-life balance’ is a common phrase in the existing literature and today’s social cultural milieu, and carries with it the implication that ‘balance’ is in fact a desirable and attainable state. It soon became clear however that balance, while something that was often talked about, was not a realistic or even desirable aspiration for participants in my study, as many women questioned or rejected the idea of balance. While participants sometimes used the term balance, many different in vivo codes emerged as more accurate descriptors, including “juggling,” “running,” and “organizing.” I selected one of these in vivo codes, “manage,” to replace balance as a more neutral descriptor of the process that women experienced. Interestingly, I later learned that this conceptualization of managing rather than balancing work-life roles is closer to the French term for work-life balance: *consiliation travail-famille*. Mathieu (2014) interprets this to mean that rather than balance, *consilier* implies a dynamic managing of roles in relation to each other, rather than a state of equilibrium. Given my findings, I extend Mathieu’s interpretation to say that rather than balance, *consilier* implies a dynamic managing of roles in relation to each other *and to one’s values and choices*, rather than to a state of equilibrium.

Previous research has suggested that women’s businesses tend to be located in ‘traditionally female’ industries, such as retail, hospitality, and service (Greene et al., 2003). While the majority of the sample does have businesses that fall into one of these categories, a strength of the theoretical sampling that drove this research was the inclusion of several women with businesses that might be considered outside the realm of traditional industries for women—namely engineering, business, technology, finance, and agriculture. The sample I achieved supports previous research that found that women operate businesses across a wide range of

industries, and that these businesses are not merely hobby-type ventures (McClelland et al., 2005; Winn, 2004).

The theoretical sample I achieved is also different in some key demographic features from the French sample presented by Richomme-Huet, Vial, and d'Andria (2013), who found that mother entrepreneurs were “more likely to live as a couple, older, less educated, and to have either had no previous work experience or engage in activities different from their previous profession” (p. 265). By contrast, all of the women in my study had some form of post-secondary education, over one third had graduate degrees, and the average age of the women interviewed was 35. All of the women had work experience prior to starting her current business (whether traditional paid employment or previous entrepreneurship) and many were pursuing businesses in line with previous training or experience. In general, the sample I achieved is more similar to previous research which has found that the ‘average woman entrepreneur is middle class, with post-secondary education, and is married with children and a supportive spouse with a well-paying occupation (Belcourt, 1990; Greene et al., 2003). In my sample, only one of the participants was single, and one divorced.

Beyond empirical definitions of mother entrepreneurship, it is also a common perspective that mother entrepreneurs are in a work-at-home scenario, running home-based businesses while also caring for their children. Participants in my sample do not reflect this stereotype: over half of the participants in the current sample had either mobile or brick and mortar locations for their business either in addition to or in lieu of a home-based location of business. Also, Loscocco and Smith-Hunter (2004) found that women who operated home-based businesses experienced less work-family conflict than women who operated businesses outside of their homes, but, and as

illustrated in Chapter 4, while less work-family conflict might have been the hope of some of the participants I interviewed who worked from home, this was not the case for all of them. Several participants described to me the process of realizing that doing both jobs (working from home, mothering from home) at once was not feasible. There appeared in fact to be more direct work-family conflict for those women who were attempting to run their businesses from home while their young children were also in the home. While there may not have been formal childcare arrangements in place to help mitigate this conflict, many of the women relied on informal support from friends or family. Only one of the women I interviewed had no childcare support in order to devote time to their businesses.

Whether businesses were home-based or operated from outside of home, for participant mother entrepreneurs who required childcare in order to continue to run their businesses, cost and availability of care for infants and toddlers, as well as the lack of part-time or flexible childcare, presented challenges to managing the roles of entrepreneur and mother. For those who started a home-based business as a way of adding some additional income to the family rather than working in paid employment outside the home, there would have been a very small benefit to the family of returning to previous work outside the home, once the cost of childcare was deducted. Kelly, for example, recognized that she was making more with her home-based daycare that she would have from her former wage as a teacher, once childcare costs for two pre-school aged children were deducted.

The childcare needs of mother entrepreneurs may not fit into the schedule of traditional group daycares, which typically require full-time registration, are open during typical business hours, and also expect that children will be present in the program during set hours (for example,

being present by a certain time in the morning) so as to allow for the flow of the program's schedule. Mother entrepreneurs may need or desire more flexibility—for example part-time or occasional care, or different hours of care, as illustrated in Katrina's case. She had to leave her business location during the most creative and productive time of her day in order to pick up her son on time. This presents an additional challenge to finding a workable childcare solution. In exploring stories of entrepreneurs outside of those who were directly interviewed for the study, I learned of a couple in Vancouver who had started a flexible childcare centre. These "co-preneurs" were responding to a need they themselves had experienced and one that they identified among other entrepreneurs.

For women who had given birth to children after establishing their businesses, the lack of feasibility of opting in to Employment Insurance benefits for parental leave was an issue. While the program ostensibly offers entrepreneurial parents a choice to take leave, for the women I spoke to, there was a need to continue working to sustain the business, which precluded their ability to take advantage of this program. While some entrepreneurs may be able to take advantage of the program, its current structure indicates a lack of appreciation for the nature of small businesses, particularly perhaps women's businesses, to which a network of social relationships, a steady client base, and repeat business are central.

The basic social condition of *being a mother entrepreneur* assumes and involves a separate and prior process of *becoming* a mother entrepreneur. Although examining typologies of women's entrepreneurship was not the focus of the current research, in the case of the theoretical sample that I achieved, the overall process of becoming a mother entrepreneur seems to fit with the complex matrix of women's pathways to entering entrepreneurship identified by Orhan and

Scott (2001). While they share the common role of being mothers, the women I spoke to describe a diverse range of pathways and reasons for why and how they entered entrepreneurship that fit with many of those identified by Orhan and Scott. For example, several of the women's paths would fit the idea 'evolution of women' where participants had post-secondary qualifications or managerial qualifications gained through experience. Give a participant example for "evolution of women" category. Juna's experience is an illustration of Orhan and Scott's concept of 'natural succession' (taking over and expanding a family business), and there were several examples of being an 'informed entrepreneur' (influenced by pull factors), such as Eva's experience of translating her teaching experience *and* mothering experience into employment that would allow her to continue to 'run her own life.' Kate's story of turning a blog into a business represents 'entrepreneur by chance', while Katrina and Nina's stories offer examples of the 'pure entrepreneur,' (where entrepreneurship was seen as a natural progression both in terms of lifestyle and profession). Irrespectively however of the pathways and reasons for how participants got to entrepreneurship, all of my participants share a common current centering point, which is the belief that as of now, they are busy *living [their] values* and *creating [their envisioned] futures*.

Once the basic social problem contained in the experience of being a mother entrepreneur was more fully understood, generating a substantive theory from the data to explain the process of *how* mother entrepreneurs in this sample managed their multiple work, life, and mothering roles became possible. In this next section, I explore the proposed theory of *keeping going* as the process of managing multiple life roles that emerged from the data.

“Keeping Going”: A Theory of How Mother Entrepreneurs

Manage Multiple Life Roles

Schreiber (2001) notes that a good grounded theory study should result in “the construction of a parsimonious theory with concepts linked together in explanatory relationships that, in accounting for the variation in the data, explains how participants resolve their basic social problem” (p. 78). Although my initial research question was aimed at understanding how self-employed women with children *balance* their multiple roles, it became clear that balance was a sensitizing concept that required challenging through ongoing comparison with the data. In fact, the process that emerged reflects an indirect achievement of fluctuating balance, or, ongoing, mutually influencing *managing* actions that enable mother entrepreneurs to *keep going* in their multiple life roles. Figure 1 depicts the model developed from the theory.

The model presented in Figure 1 depicts the iterative, recursive nature of the theory of *Keeping Going*. In this substantive theory, the level of abstraction represented in the core categories provides a set of hypotheses for testing in future research. Key differences unique to different groups will likely be found within the expression of properties of the individual categories. For example, while the particular values within the category of *living my values* will likely differ among groups—such as male entrepreneurs with and without children, or women entrepreneurs without children—what remains constant is the fact that values and a looking to the future drive the process of *keeping going*. It is also essential to note that the categories are not mutually exclusive. Rather, each category is essential in maintaining the recursive nature of the process. Without any one component, the theory loses its explanatory power.

The first proposition of this theory is that mother entrepreneurs *keep going* because they are motivated by values that include integrity and meaning in their work, self-fulfillment or challenge, and a valuing of the mothering role. In other words, there is a drive to honour their multiple life roles and to achieve a career-life that provides opportunities to *live [their] values*. The second proposition is that, in order for this type of higher-order, self-actualizing action to happen, self-employed women with children must have their more basic needs met—that is, *feeling supported* which includes maintaining family income, supportive relationships with partners and others, and having the instrumental supports required to maintain the business. Third, when mother entrepreneurs are *feeling supported*, they are able to manage their multiple career-life roles through *making choices* and *adapting creatively* which, in turn, facilitate their *keeping going*. Each of the women I spoke to noted that this process requires courage and openness—whether this was in terms of stretching oneself to develop new skills, to stay the course through periods of financial uncertainty, to take the risk to leave additional paid work in order to devote time to the business, to make the choice to scale back business growth until a future time, or to honour their valuing of the mothering role in a society which does not fully reciprocate this value. The fourth and final proposition is that, when these conditions are in place, it becomes realistic for mother entrepreneurs to *remember the pull* and to be encouraged by *living their values* and *envisioning the future*. Managing multiple roles is therefore indirectly achieved.

Each of these conditions, whether viewing the process from the foundation up, or from the upper “pull” down, is necessary. While the core upward pull of *living my values*, which is informed by *remembering the push and pull* and *envisioning the future*, provides important

motivating conditions, these alone would not be sufficient to enable mother entrepreneurs to *keep going*. However, the three mutually influencing facilitating conditions of *feeling supported*, *making choices*, and *adapting creatively* are absolutely necessary—and, *feeling supported*, the primary or most basic condition or need of all three. The experience of those participants who closed their businesses after our interview are evidence of the necessity of these conditions—without *feeling supported* (mainly in terms of financial security, but in one case because of divorce), it becomes impossible to continue to make choices and adapt creatively, thus the process of managing multiple roles breaks down and the mother entrepreneur is unable to *keep going*. When she does feel supported, she is able to access her ability to think and *adapt creatively*, *making choices* that are informed by the necessary condition of *living my values*. This overarching pull comprises both a vision of the future and an understanding of the past, which shape the ways that present values are enacted through *making choices* and *adapting creatively*.

In summary, the theory of *Keeping Going* proposes that self-employed women with children manage their multiple life roles through a continuous process of *making choices*, *adapting creatively*, and *remembering the push and pull* that occurs through paying attention to their various roles and responsibilities, when they *feel supported*. This foundation is enhanced and informed by an overarching goal or pull to *living [their] values*, key to which is *remembering the pull* that drew them to entrepreneurship in the first place (which is answered in the ability to *make choices*), and *envisioning the future*. *Remembering the push* provides additional motivation to *keep going*, drawing from the context of their previous career-life experiences. As such, “balance” or managing of their multiple life roles is indirectly achieved as self-employed women with children *keep going*.

This research has highlighted the importance of understanding mother entrepreneurs within the contexts of her life experiences, values, roles, needs, and relationships. The women interviewed talked about the choices they made in relation to their values, central to which was that of valuing their families and their roles as mothers. The pull to entrepreneurship included a strong desire to live their core values—to both honour the mothering role and maintain an income-generating career. The category *Keeping Going* represents the Basic Social Process of *how* self-employed mothers manage their multiple life roles. As illustrated in Figure 1, mutually influencing relationships exist between and among these components. At the foundation of the model is the necessary experience of *feeling supported*, which is informed by *remembering the push*. This in turn leads to *making choices* and *adapting creatively* in relationship with *living my values*. *Living my values* includes the properties of *remembering the pull* and *envisioning the future*. These findings are congruent with constructivist and relational models of career development, which highlight the interconnectivity of multiple roles and how changes in one area of a relational system impact other areas (e.g., Blustein, 2001; Flum, 2001; Schultheiss, 2003; 2007). The following sections will review the model from a more meta level.

Foundational Conditions

Foundational to *Keeping Going* is the condition of *feeling supported*, which facilitates the interactive processes of *making choices* and *adapting creatively*. Also part of this foundation is the sense of *remembering the push*, which informs and influences the sense of *feeling supported*. The category of *feeling supported* is consistent with self-in-relation models of women's development (e.g. Miller, 1976), as well as previous research that suggests that a spouse and family's support is key to the success of mother entrepreneurs (Greene et al., 2003; Kirkwood,

2009; Nel, Maritz, & Thongprovati, 2010). Kirkwood (2009) found that women tended to look to their husbands for business advice, support, and encouragement, and this was certainly the case in the current research.

Sheryl Sandberg's *Lean In* model garnered quite a bit of attention during the time that this research was ongoing. I was first referred to Sandberg's *Lean In* ideal by one of the women I interviewed, who suggested I watch Sandberg's TED talk "*Why we have too few women leaders*" (2010). In that talk, Sandberg urges women to do three things, including 'sit at the table' and 'don't leave before you leave'—to stop underestimating their abilities and to continue to put themselves forward for opportunities until they actually leave the workplace to have their child. Sandberg's other suggestion is for women to make their partner 'a real partner,' and for many of the women I spoke to, who cited their husband's emotional and practical support as instrumental, this was key. Emotional support came in the form of a partner's direct encouragement of their entrepreneurship, such as Katrina's husband's urging her not to look for other jobs. Practical support came in the form of a partner's financial support of the family, such as Judy's husband's agreement that the family could live on his income when Judy left her job to focus on the business. Support also included active co-parenting and sharing in household chores, such as laundry and cleaning.

Yet, recent research indicates that women in general perform the majority of unpaid work in the home and remain the primary caregivers for children, with women spending more than double the amount of time per week on childcare than men (Milan, Keown, & Urquijo, 2011). Further, aside from childcare, men reported spending, on average, 8.3 hours on unpaid domestic work, while women spent more than one and a half times this amount—13.8 hours (Milan,

Keown, & Urquijo, 2011). For the women interviewed in this study, particularly those with younger children, primary responsibility for child care lay with them despite the fact that it may not always be convenient. This included such things as finding and organizing childcare arrangements, picking children up from school or daycare, organizing appointments and extracurricular activities, and so on. For example, Katrina noted that making it to daycare pickup on time meant that she had to leave work during the most productive time of her day. Cheryl described how she and her husband would look at each other when a child was sick, thinking who would take the day off tomorrow. Most often, this was Cheryl. Because self-employed women with children have choice, this was often perceived as flexibility, whether or not that may be the case.

While the majority of the women I interviewed did experience the support of spouses, statistics indicate that more work remains to be done in this area. Green and Cohen (1995) are critical of the seeming advantages of entrepreneurship for women in enhancing work-family balance. This is because women tend to accept personal responsibility in negotiating the competing demands of paid and unpaid work, while existing social gender inequalities remain unchallenged. Perhaps, as Anne-Marie Slaughter (2013) suggests, removing the gendered labeling of parenting work may help to address this issue, by framing the problem “less in terms of men and women and instead start thinking about caretakers and bread-winners.”

The necessities of *making choices* and *adapting creatively* are also key to *Keeping Going*, the basic process underlying how mother entrepreneurs managed their multiple roles. *Making choices* and *adapting creatively* represent the constant juggling and reconciling of the demands, decision-making, and contingencies of mother entrepreneurship. These findings support earlier

theory and research in the areas of life-long career development and constructivist views of career development (for example, Gottfredson, Savickas, 2005; Peavy, 1996; Savickas, 2005; Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996), which will be discussed further in the later section on theoretical insights. Mother entrepreneurs are always paying attention to their various roles, and weighing the demands against available time and resources. While mothers working in paid employment are as likely to be similarly involved in paying attention to their various roles and weighing their demands against available time and resources, there appear to be some differences unique to mother entrepreneurs. For example, there is the element of identification with the business, and seeing the business as an extension of oneself or one's family. Taking a vacation from the business is less feasible than taking a vacation from traditional paid employment. Further, there are the myriad hidden or indirect jobs within the role of entrepreneur that self-employed women with children must consider, from maintaining social media to maintaining a physical business location, to emptying the trash cans.

A particular category of choices—that of business growth decisions—supports previous research that suggests women entrepreneurs in general value having a business that is 'small and stable,' and that women make deliberate choices about business growth to balance the demands of a professional business with those of other career-life roles, consciously weighing the costs and benefits that accompany growth in accordance with overall goals and aspirations (Lee-Gosselin & Grise, 1990; Morris, Miyasaki, Watters, & Coombes, 2006). However the visions that women have of the future indicate that this is an evolving choice process, as many participants suggested they will make different choices in the future when they have more space in managing their roles to devote more time to the business. *This* is also consistent with Mainiero

and Sullivan's (2006) metaphor of a kaleidoscope, which helps to understand the ways that shifts in one aspect of the career-life creates different patterns throughout the career-life space, with these patterns continually shifting over the lifespan. In particular, Mainiero and Sullivan's description of the *synergic* approach to negotiating balance fits with the aspect of *making choices* that women in this research described, placing less emphasis on one aspect of their career-life, while prioritizing others. For example, *making choices* to keep businesses smaller enabled women to *keep going* while they held in mind a vision of the future where they would be free to pursue greater business growth.

While early research on women's career-life development was influenced by important developments in women's psychology such as Gilligan (1982) and Miller's (1976) work, which brought awareness to the importance of relationships and connectedness in women's development, there seems to remain a tension in women's career-life development as mothering work has been somehow marginalized as women have developed careers outside the home. The women that I interviewed were passionate about their entrepreneurship and they were *making choices* and *adapting creatively* to also perform their mothering work in a way that fit their values. O'Reilly (2011) has coined the term 'matricentric feminism' to bring focus to the idea mothers have specific needs and concerns above and beyond women in general.

In negotiating multiple roles and in relation to the specific choices and adaptations women made with regards to the development of their career-life roles, there were often feelings of guilt. For some there were feelings of guilt about the decisions to put career development second, but more often it was about not being there for their children as much as they might like. Adaptations that involved technology, such as using smart phones that allowed women to remain

in touch with the ongoing responsibilities of their business while also being there with their children, or social media networking which allowed them to raise their business profiles at little cost, but with investment of time and attention, brought mixed feelings as the overlap of roles brought on by the creative use of technology created tensions. The supportive role of technology in the management of multiple roles was clear as these tools provided some flexibility to be physically present with their children while also attending to the needs of the business. Interestingly, importance of technology for the participants in this research was contrary to the findings of Richomme-Huett, Vial and d'Andreas, who report that mumpreneurs in their sample were less likely to use the internet or have a website than women without children.

Yet as this relationship with technology is negotiated among multiple roles, several women spoke about feelings of guilt when their children would try to block the door to their office or say things like “no phone Mommy” when they picked up their smart phones. Participants spoke about the feeling of needing to “be on,” “plugged into,” or “on call” for their business; that it was hard to “switch off” because the business, and its sustainability and success, was *their* “business.” The issue of guilt is even one that Sheryl Sandberg speaks to in her TED talk, noting, “This is hard. I feel guilty sometimes. I know no women, whether they are at home or whether they’re in the workforce, who don’t feel that sometimes” (2010). Yet for the women interviewed in this research, the dichotomy between home and work was less apparent. There was a sense that their choice of entrepreneurship was a choice to have both (among other) roles, and *adapting creatively* also involved adapting expectations and reconciling mixed feelings about the inevitable experiences of role overlap or conflict.

Letting go of guilt was a supportive decision-choice for women, which enabled them to feel more confident about their choices. Cheryl spoke about letting go of the guilt of having to use childcare, something she had not envisioned having to do. Lucy, whose children are now teenagers, shared how in retrospect she was able to let go of guilt around choices that took her away from her children at times: “It’s getting over the fact that you can’t always be there 24/7 when you’re self-employed for your kids, and getting over the guilt of that, and looking back now I see they wouldn’t have needed me any more than that [...] looking back now, that’s my thing, not my kids going ‘Mom, you were missing that’...they were fine with it.” This choice to let go of guilt and reaffirm confidence in one’s choices was key, but not easy.

The process of making choices continued, of course, after the time of our initial interview. In the almost three years since I began collecting data, several (4 of the total 17) of the women I initially interviewed have closed their businesses, while two others had taken a temporary break due to the birth of a new baby. This is similar to the findings of Winn (2004), who found that many of the women interviewed in her sample did not continue their business, finding their hopes for greater balance through entrepreneurship were not realized. When I checked in with women in my sample who had closed their ventures, it seemed that this decision tended to have been motivated more as a result of financial pressures, which highlights the importance of the condition of *feeling supported*. If these women had not lacked feeling supported financially, namely by sufficient income from their businesses to sustain or offset the amount of energy they had to put into maintaining it, they would likely still be working as mother entrepreneurs.

Remembering the push that led to entrepreneurship in the first place, is a fourth foundation necessary to keeping going. This supports previous research that has found common “push” factors for women entering entrepreneurship (Brush, 1992; Buttner & Moore, 1997; Kirkwood, 2009; Orhan & Scott, 2001; Walker & Webster, 2007). Push factors highlight some of the lingering challenges shared by women who are combining paid employment and mothering. *Remembering the push* brought to mind, for example, the lack of opportunity, insufficient income, or challenges to managing multiple roles that are avoided through the choice of entrepreneurship. Among my participants, challenges to managing multiple roles, including inflexible work schedules and the unavailability of part-time work, were perhaps some of the strongest push factors. However, push factors coupled with the “pull” of values and autonomy was also important. This supports Orhan and Scott’s (2001) findings that women do not typically enter entrepreneurship due to necessity.

The Big Pull: Living My Values

At the top right of the model, providing a draw or motivating influence—or, sense of purpose—for *keeping going* is the concept of *living my values*, which is influenced strongly by a sense of *remembering the pull* and *envisioning the future*. Here, women continually reaffirm their commitment to entrepreneurship as a way of combining their multiple roles and honouring a commitment to their mothering work, living with integrity and meaning, satisfying personal goals and laying the foundation for the satisfying of later-in-life goals. What differentiates the mother entrepreneurs in the current sample from other entrepreneurs or mothers working in traditional paid employment are the particular choices and core values located in the properties of these categories. That is, the substantive theory developed from this data may possibly be

extended to use with other groups—core values, along with multiple roles, form an important part of one's career-life process. The importance of values as a motivating influence in career-life decision making and satisfaction with life roles has also been noted in Brown's values-based, holistic model of career and life-role choices and satisfaction (Brown, 1996; Brown & Crace, 1996).

For the participants in this study, motherhood was a particularly influential role. Richomme-Huet, Vial and d'Andria (2013) note that in the context of motherhood, identity shapes motivation, and in turn triggers action (in the form of opportunity identification and development). Even though not all of the women in this research have developed an opportunity directly linked to their experience of motherhood, opportunity development is shaped by their motivation to balance multiple life roles and honour their values, which are key aspects of identity. This process of career-life development as implementation of self-concept is supported by theories of career development, which will be discussed further in the following section.

Living my values begins with *remembering the pull*, a counterpart to the *push* described earlier and an important reminder of where mother entrepreneurs have been and want to be as represented respectfully, in and through their choice of entrepreneurship. *Remembering the pull* supports previous research which described pull factors as internal motivators such as a desire to be one's own boss, desire for flexibility, or personal achievement (Brush, 1992; Buttner & Moore, 1997; Kirkwood, 2009; Orhan & Scott, 2001; Walker & Webster, 2007). Kirkwood (2009) found that women tend to consider the effects of starting a business on their spouses and children and were motivated more so than men by the "pull" to achieve a greater work-life balance through their choice of entrepreneurship. This finding was echoed in the current research

as women clearly valued their relationships with their spouses and children, identified with their mothering role, and consistently described a desire for independence as motivators. This also contains some similarities to the findings of Low and Chiang (2010), who found that the Chinese-Australian and Chinese-Canadian women interviewed in their study were pushed or pulled into entrepreneurship “as a result of their love for the family as wives and mothers” (p. 20). While there are cultural differences between the samples, again, there is the theme of valuing the role of mother (and partner) in making the choice to pursue entrepreneurship with consideration to the intersection of work and family.

Further, the results of the current research suggest that a pull to living their values, primarily around family and independence, was more important than wealth for the majority of participants. This supports the conclusions of DeMartino and Barbato (2003) who found that women are drawn to entrepreneurship for family and lifestyle reasons, significantly more so than for advancement or wealth creation. Indeed, while many of the women interviewed were making relatively modest incomes from their businesses, the majority were satisfied with the income the business produced. The benefits of entrepreneurship in enabling women to *live [their] values* were weighed against any reduced income in the process of *making choices* and *adapting*.

Similarly to Winn (2004), whose research with women entrepreneurs both with and without children found that women sought flexibility and personal autonomy in their work while also generating income for their families, in this study, autonomy was clearly something that motivated women to keep going. Income generation was an aspect of *feeling supported* and a necessary reality that was part of the experience of being a mother entrepreneur for participants in this study, however it did not emerge as a core value beyond the connection to provide for the

family. Further, wealth generation was not a motivating value, although increased financial security was often part of the vision women held of the future. Rather, ideas of success that are held in *envisioning the future* are shaped much more by core values of integrity and meaning—making a difference through their business. This supports previous research, which suggests that women in entrepreneurship tend to place less emphasis on growth and profit, and place more weight on non-monetary goals than men in entrepreneurship do (e.g., Buttner & Moore, 1997; Lee-Gosselin & Grise, 1990; Malach-Pines & Schartz, 2008; McClelland, Swail, Bell, & Ibbotson, 2005).

In an interesting parallel to the mothering role, several participants also referred to the business as being like another child, or as an extension of the family. A parenting metaphor, as suggested by Cardon et al. (2005) “may offer additional insights in that it captures the entrepreneur’s creation and nurturing of the (dependent) new venture and hints at notions of passion, nurturance, and identification” (p.26). In this way, the business becomes an entity that houses the mother entrepreneur’s values, providing a vehicle for *integrity and meaning*. The business was also often described as an extension and reflection of the self, and as such living in alignment with their values was key. This supports previous research by McClelland, Swail, Bell, and Ibbotson (2005), who found that women entrepreneurs were motivated more by a strong desire to using the self (through their business) to making a social contribution and to helping others, to creating a better life for their family and the larger community, than a desire for personal gain.

Several of the women I spoke to made direct or indirect references to a tension in their understanding of feminism and how this related to or fit with their choice to live their values and

prioritize their relationships and mothering work. Avery noted a sense of having disappointed a former supervisor when she elected not to return to her full-time position after her maternity leave. Kate, a former women's studies major, described "a sinking feeling" upon reading about the upcoming release of Elizabeth Badinter's *The Conflict*, which posed the assertion that "good motherhood" was setting back feminism. As I delved into some of the feminist writings on motherhood, I was confronted by the dichotomy that exists for some feminists, who, rather than seeking to raise the status of mothering work, maintain the role of mother as a traditional stereotype that limits women. I was reminded of Astin's (1984) suggestion that previous research on self-efficacy could be interpreted to support the idea that women gravitate to certain positions as a result of high self-efficacy in those areas. However Badinter's concern is that current ideals of "good motherhood" – which have evolved in response to developmental psychology research that has raised awareness of the importance of early development – place additional pressures on mothers today that may undermine women's ability to succeed in other types of work (Badinter, 2011).

The core valuing of the self also connects with the vision women held of their futures, and the choices that are made in the lower part of the model are arrived at with a view to the future. For example, for those women who had younger children there was a sense that there would be more time to devote to oneself and to promoting additional growth in the business when children were older. While many of the women described not having as much time for themselves as they wished, there was an acknowledgement of the importance of prioritizing themselves, and working hard to manage their multiple roles in order to stay the course in entrepreneurship was part of this. Further, there was an understanding that certain developmental

stages of their family meant short-term sacrifice of time for self; however this was reconciled through actively *making choices* and *adapting* in line with *living my values*.

Theoretical Insights

The following section will outline more specifically the connections between the theoretical insights of the current research and some key career development theories outlined in the literature review. In discussing the findings of the present research and as a way to establish their relevance and value, it is important to reflect on the career development literature and existing theories. From the review of theoretical literature presented earlier in this dissertation, several overarching concepts emerge as being of particular importance from constructivist and relational theories of career-life development: the concept of multiple life roles (and multipotentiality), a lifespan view of career-life development, and constructivist and relational views of career-life development. The present study and resultant theory it proposes of how mother entrepreneurs manage multiple work-life roles by *keeping going*, support in large part these key aspects of career theory but also challenge and add to the existing literature in important ways.

The process of managing multiple life roles that self-employed women with children experience supports constructivist theories of career development. Specifically, the processes involved in the meta-process of *keeping going* illustrate how mother entrepreneurs stay committed to the course and remain engaged with and deliberate in their values and beliefs as they interact with their social contexts and make meaning and choices to shape their career-life process (Peavy, 1996; Savickas, 2005) and envisioned futures.

Viewing the career-life as continually evolving is a more accurate means for understanding this process, taking into account how individuals may modify values and expectations as their perceptions of the structure of opportunity change (Astin, 1984; Gottfredson, 2002). In particular, *remembering the pull and push*, as well as *envisioning the future* illustrate how expectations of the structure of opportunity can be modified through career-life experiences. For several of the women in this study, for example, the experience of autonomy while on maternity leave reshaped expectations about the structure of opportunity for future career-life development. Further, Super's (1980) concept of multipotentiality offers another useful lens for understanding how mother entrepreneurs find success and meaning in a variety of different work roles. As career-lives evolve, there are opportunities to implement different aspects of one's self-concept, to take on new roles, and try different types of work, as choices are made with regards to multiple role management.

The centrality of *living my values* as a motivating factor that helps sustain mother entrepreneurs can also be understood through contemporary and constructivist career theories which view implementation of self-concept as a key element of the career-life development process (e.g. Gottfredson, Savickas, 2005; Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996). In this case, the values that mother entrepreneurs hold are an integral part of their self-concept, which they implement by *making choices* and *adapting creatively* in transitions between and among multiple life roles, as the self-concept is expressed (Savickas, 2005) and refined. This research also supports lifespan approaches to career, as *keeping going* illustrates how career decisions are not a single point event, but rather an ongoing process that is informed by a sense of *living [ones] values* (e.g. Super, Savickas, & Super, 1996) and *envisioning the future*.

As suggested in the literature review, a relational lens (e.g., Blustein, 2001; Flum, 2001; Schultheiss, 2003; 2007), which takes into account the interconnectivity of multiple roles and how changes in one area of a relational system impact other areas, is helpful in understanding the complex and mutually influencing interactions involved in the career-life development and multiple role management of self-employed women with children. In particular, the four tenets of Schultheiss' (2007) relational cultural paradigm are present in this research. These include the importance of family influence in understanding the complexities of career-life development, which is seen in the role of *feeling supported* in enabling mother entrepreneurs to *keep going* as well as in the role of values around family and mothering in motivating and shaping *making choices* and *adapting creatively*. The embeddedness of the psychological experience of work within relational contexts and the interface of work and family life are illustrated both in the contextual experience of *being a mother entrepreneur* which includes role overlap and conflict, as well as in the complex interactions inherent in the process of *keeping going*. Finally, in demonstrating how clearly relational contexts influence the career-life development of mother entrepreneurs, this research supports the challenge of relational discourse as alternative to the cultural script of individualism.

Descriptively, the sample challenges the emerging definitional tendency to lump together all mother entrepreneurs as “mompreneurs,” as participants in the current study identified with the role of mother and business owner regardless of the type of industry or opportunity development their business involves. This is important because existing research that identifies “mompreneurs” as a distinct sub-group of entrepreneurs for whom the multiple life roles of mother and entrepreneur are key aspects of their identity (Richomme-Huet, Vial, & d'Andria,

2013), conflates the terms mother entrepreneurs and “mumpreneurs.” While mother entrepreneurs are a sub-group of entrepreneurs, and “mompreneurs” are perhaps a more specific sub-group of mother entrepreneurs, Richomme-Huet Vial, & d’Andria’s (2013) conclusion about the key characteristics of “mumpreneurs” not only hides differences and similarities between these two groups of mothers, but also how both differ from and are similar to women entrepreneurs more generally, to father entrepreneurs, and entrepreneurs overall.

Implications for Counselling and Career Development Practice

The current research offers insights for counsellors and career development practitioners working with mother entrepreneurs specifically, and mothers with other work roles more generally. A further model developed from the theory suggests a general career counselling model for assessing the process of *keeping going* for individuals enacting multiple roles in a diverse range of career-life paths. This model, based on the model of an engine, was suggested by one of my co-supervisors, and is illustrated in Figure 2. The *keeping going* process of managing multiple life roles that emerged from the data involves past, present, and future perspectives in that it indicates the influences of past experiences (in this case, remembering push factors); the importance of understanding the roles of a client’s current context and desire to live according to her core values (and remembering or holding onto these as pull factors); and the importance of eliciting and envisioning a clear sense of future goals (and remembering these as pull factors). The *Keeping Going* theory provides deeper understanding of the intersections between multiple life roles, particularly of mothering work and entrepreneurship work. Because of the level of abstraction achieved through grounded theory analysis, the process described in the *keeping going* theoretical model can be applied in approaching entrepreneurs in general, as a

way of assessing the strengths and challenges that are being experienced. The particular exists in the properties of the individual categories.

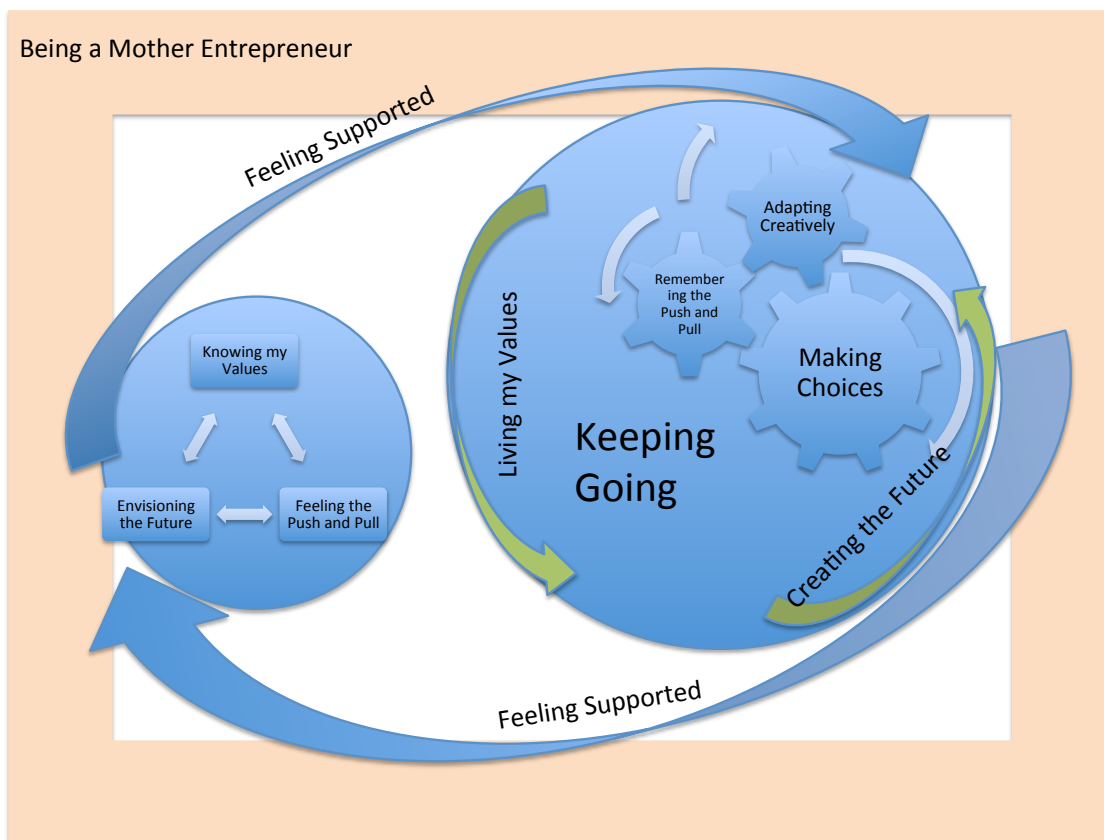


Figure 2. The process of keeping going¹

Further, this research specifically illustrates how changes in one area of a relational system impact other areas in the process of *keeping going*, as well as highlighting the centrality of the relational systems of mothering in shaping the career-life development of self-employed women with children. This highlights the importance for counsellors in understanding the meanings, needs, values, and influence the mothering role holds for individual clients, and the

¹ With thanks to Dr. S. Tasker

support structure available to them. Figure 2 provides a tool for assessing present state (values, goals for the future, push and pull factors, existence of supports) in creating movement in the present to drive the process of *keeping going*.

Central to this is also the role of choice. While existing literature on entrepreneurship tends to focus on constraints (A. Leung, personal communication, February 14, 2014), the current study highlights the importance of choice, something that is valued by the women I interviewed and one of the initial pulls that they remembered which helped them to *keep going*. In this way, the proposed model also offers connections with Solution Focussed and Reality Therapy models of counselling (Corey, 2009, p. 317, p. 377).

Sensitivity to the connotations of the term “mompreneur” is also essential for counsellors and career development practitioners. From the time I first began this research there has been continued development of the understanding of “Mompreneurs” as a unique subset of entrepreneurs within the business community. As described earlier, new definitions of the term “mompreneur” have been suggested over the past several years (e.g. Collins, 2011; Duberly and Carrigan, 2011; Ekinsmythe, 2011; Richomme-Huet, Vial, & d’Andria, 2013). Throughout the course of the research, in engaging with the literature and in speaking with mother entrepreneurs, I encountered the tension around the term “mompreneur” (Lewis, 2010; Korgaard, 2007). It was important to me to check out the connotations that people held of the term as I proceeded through the research. While often people commented that the catchy term could be a way of raising awareness and drawing attention to the synergistic nature of the two roles, others that I spoke to rejected the label of ‘mompreneur.’

While recent definitions offered in the literature highlight the importance of and interconnectivity between both roles, there was also a sense among some of the women I spoke with that the term “mompreneur” may be demeaning or diminishing in that it trivializes the work that mother entrepreneurs are doing, and does not fully capture the complexity of their career-life experiences. O’Reilly (2011) notes that “motherhood is the unfinished business of feminism” and this tension was clear in the stories I heard. For example, in Ginger’s self-reminder that the other half of her job *is* her mothering work, or Avery’s sense of having disappointed her former supervisor when she chose not to return to her full-time job after the birth of her first child. If “feminism is for everybody” (hooks, 2000) and intended to equally support and value the choices of all people, the enduring fact that mothering work and women’s unpaid work in general is still not highly valued in our society remains a challenge for women who hope to combine the equally challenging careers of motherhood and entrepreneurship. Even in my doctoral seminar class, when I first presented the idea of this research to a group of colleagues, another student stated, “I bet you’ll get a lot of LDS [Church of Jesus Christ and Latter Day Saints] women who do knitting.” The discussion that followed led to the suggestion of the term ‘self-employed woman with children’, which I have employed, as well as simply ‘mother entrepreneur’, which perhaps more respectfully and actively highlights the two main roles these women are enacting in their career-lives. In moving forward, it will be important for counsellors and career development practitioners to be aware of the varying definitions of ‘mumpreneurship,’ the different connotations that individuals may hold about the term ‘mompreneur’ as well as to consider the role of mothering in a woman’s self-concept and career-life development.

Strengths of the Study

Previous research suggests that women's businesses tend to be located in 'traditionally female' industries, such as retail, hospitality, and service (Greene et al., 2003). While the majority of the sample does have businesses that fall into one of these categories, a strength of the theoretical sampling that drove this research was the inclusion of several women with businesses that might be considered outside the realm of traditional industries for women—namely engineering, business, technology, finance, and agriculture. Although these women are operating businesses that are not clearly linked to their experience of motherhood, they nonetheless identified with their roles both of mother and business owner. This study also demonstrates some key differences from the most recent research identifying “mumpreneurs” as a distinct group of mother entrepreneurs are running businesses that are clearly linked to the experience of having children (Richomme-Huet, Vial, & d'Andria, 2013).

Further, this study moves beyond description to offer an understanding and explanation of the complex process of how self-employed women with children manage their multiple life roles. Previous research aimed at understanding the phenomenon of “mumpreneurship” has been largely devoted to the important task of identifying and describing the unique characteristics of identity, motivation, and opportunity recognition for this group. Most recently, Richomme-Huet, Vial, and d'Andria (2013) found that “mumpreneurship appears to be an experience of woman entrepreneurship shaped by the particular context of motherhood” (p. 262). This dissertation research examines the process for mother entrepreneurs of resolving the basic social problem inherent in this description—that of role overlap/conflict, among other challenges experienced in the embedded, relational contexts that mother entrepreneurs inhabit. This research highlights the

recursive, ongoing nature of the process, and the necessity of the foundational element of *feeling supported*, which leads to possibilities for *making choices*, and *adapting creatively* and the continued choice to *keep going* in managing the multiple life roles involved in being a mother entrepreneur. At the core of this process—the major pull that drives the continued process of keeping going is that of *living ones values*. While all entrepreneurs (and perhaps all individuals) are motivated both implicitly and explicitly by core values, this research highlights the valuing of the mothering role as a unique dimension to the process of managing multiple life roles for self-employed women with children.

Previous research in the area of women's entrepreneurship has been criticized for a failure to take into account the gendered nature of work in comparing male and female entrepreneurs (Ahl, 2006, Bird & Brush, 2002; Hughes et al. 2012). While this dissertation research does not compare male and female entrepreneurs, by focusing specifically on mother entrepreneurs, this research does shed light on the experiences of mother entrepreneurs who are combining a role very much tied with gender, with that of entrepreneur.

Limitations

A limitation of this study is that few single parents are represented in the sample. In general, the sample I achieved is similar to previous research which has found that the 'average' woman entrepreneur is middle class, with post-secondary education, and is married with children and a supportive spouse with a well-paying occupation (Belcourt, 1990; Greene et al., 2003). Following completion of data analysis, I was able to consult with two additional single mothers who were engaged in entrepreneurship, who were able to lend anecdotal support to the theory that has been discovered in this research. A second potential limitation was that I did not directly

interview any father entrepreneurs for comparison, although I did again consult with two father entrepreneurs who suggested that their experience of business creation and development did involve less focus or consideration of time with or impact on family as key motivating values than the model developed from the current data would suggest. This perspective fits with previous research that suggests that men have not traditionally considered the impact of entrepreneurship on their families as much as women might, and that male entrepreneurs tend not to experience work-family conflict (Kirkwood, 2009; Kirkwood & Tootell, 2008), however the current study interviewed only women and therefore does not capture the comparison of this earlier research.

Directions for Future Research

A theme that emerged but was not fully saturated in the current research was the idea of modeling for one's children's development, perhaps even including children in the business. Specifically, there was the idea of wanting to model for their children that women can succeed in business, to model the values of independence and perseverance, and that it is possible to combine both mothering and additional career roles. Given research findings regarding the experience of job-parent conflict (Kirkwood, 2009), future research could also more explicitly examine the impact of the business on children by specifically exploring the perspectives of children of women entrepreneurs on their experiences of growing up with a self-employed mother. While participants in my study had the perception that their being in business was positive for their children, several participants did mention that it would be interesting to speak directly with their children about this. Only one previous study has specifically examined the impact of mothers' entrepreneurship on children, employing interviews of entrepreneurs and

their teenaged children, or follow-up surveys of adult children (Schindehutte, Morris, & Brennan, 2003). Future research could perhaps explore the attitudes and experiences of younger children who are being raised by entrepreneurial mothers. Further, while the current research suggests increased experiences of role overlap/conflict for women with young children, future research might more specifically look at the role of the age of children on mother entrepreneurs' experiences of managing multiple roles.

Future research could also explore the suggestion that the impact of entrepreneurship on their families is less influential for men entering entrepreneurship, and that male entrepreneurs tend not to experience work-family conflict (Kirkwood, 2009; Kirkwood & Tootell, 2008). Looking more specifically at the experiences of "co-preneurs" (couples who are in business together) with children might provide additional insights. Further, as fathers continue to take a more active role in parenting, this finding may shift as a new generation of father entrepreneurs emerges, particularly in Canada where federal parental benefits may be accessed by either parent.

Future research could continue to explicitly explore the intersections between mothering work and entrepreneurship, particularly in terms of the role of the experience of mothering work in opportunity identification for "mumpreneurs," (Richomme-Huet, Vial, & d'Andria, 2013). Future research would also be strengthened by exploring more explicitly the dimensions of culture and ethnicity. While the results of the current research supports some of the conclusions of previous research with Chinese-Canadian and Chinese-Australian women entrepreneurs (Low & Chiang, 2010) and Japanese mother entrepreneurs (Leung, 2011), I had only two women of colour in my sample. Further, as discussed earlier, some of the differences between the current

research and that of Richomme-Huet, Vial, and d'Andria (2013), suggests that there may be key differences between Canadian mother entrepreneurs and French.

While the sample interviewed in this research would seem to suggest that the mothering role is central to a mother entrepreneur's experience of entrepreneurship regardless of the type of business, the most recent definition and empirical evidence of "mumpreneurship" places importance on the link between the business opportunity and the mothering role. It may be useful for some to preserve a definition of a distinct sub-group of entrepreneurs identified as "mumpreneurs" as those whose businesses are more obviously linked to the experience of having children, however it is important not to assume that mother entrepreneurs whose ventures are focused in less traditional industries have less attachment to the mothering role. Future studies need to carefully define the "mompeneur" or mother entrepreneur sample, and to delineate between the two so that findings are interpretable.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research provides both support and contrast to previous research on women's career-development generally, and mother entrepreneurs specifically. Particularly, this research underscores the importance of understanding the role of values and multiple life roles on the implementation of self-concept in career-life. Implications for counselling and career development were discussed, as well as strengths and limitations. Finally, directions for future research were suggested.

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Table 1

Participant Demographic Information¹

<u>Participant</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Educational Background</u>	<u>Marital Status</u>	<u>Ages of Children</u>	<u>Childcare Arrangements</u>	<u>Annual Family Income</u>
DD – 01 Kanna	33	Undergrad	Married	2	home sitter	200 000
DD-02 Isabella	30	Graduate	Married	2.5, a	spouse, family, sitters	106 000
DD-03 Anna H.	33	Trade	Married	5, 2	spouse, family	30 000
DD-04 Avery	34	Graduate	Married	2.5, a	spouse, family	50 000
DD-05 Katrina	34	Graduate	Married	3	group daycare	100 000
DD-06 Ginger	36	Trade	Married	6	school	150 000
DD-07 Lucy	40	undergrad + certificate	Divorced	14, 16, 17	school	120 000
DD-08 Eva	50	Graduate	Married	17, 20 ^b , 22 ^b	n/a	120 000
DD-09 Cheryl	36	College	Married	7, 5	p/t childcare, school	100 000
DD-10 Ann	22	College	Single	2	family	
DD-11 Judi	45	Graduate	Married	5, 8, 12, 16, 17	daycare/school	120 000
DD-12 Tessa	37	Trade	Married	2, 7, 9, 12	p/t nanny	90 000
DD-13 Kate	34	Undergrad	Married	5, 2	none	55 000
DD-14 Kelly	34	Undergrad	Married	2, 4	n/a	110 000
DD-15 Linda	33	Undergrad	Married	10 months, 3	preschool	120 000
DD-16 Maisy	45	undergrad	Married	12, 14	school	95 000
DD-17 Nina	49	graduate	Married	7, 9	school	
DD-18 Juna	36	undergrad	Married	3	spouse, family	

1 some participants chose not to answer some of the questions, therefore, the table contains some empty cells.

a participant was expecting another child at the time of interview

b older children who were no longer living at home at the time of the interview, but who did live at home during the majority of the time the business was operating

Table 2

Participant Business Profiles¹

<u>Participant</u>	<u>Location of Business</u>	<u>Type of Business</u>	<u>Years Operating Business</u>	<u>Annual Business Income</u>	<u>Satisfaction with Current ABI²</u>	<u>Paid Work Outside Business</u>
DD – 01 Kanna	home & mobile	Personal training and health coach	3	30 000	4	Yes
DD-02 Isabella	home	Musician and music teacher	7	34 000	4	No
DD-03 Anna	home	Events production	3	1 000	2	Yes
DD-04 Avery	home & web/office	Counselling private practice & children's clothing line	2	6 000	2	No
DD-05 Katrina	office	Small business consulting	7	50 000	3	No
DD-06 Ginger	home-based	Engineering	2	75 000	4	No
DD-07 Lucy	home & office	Financial planner	9	120 000	4	No
DD-08 Eva	brick & mortar +home	Baby & family centre: retail plus classes	18		3.5	No
DD-09 Cheryl	home	Events production	5		4	No
DD-10 Ann	brick & mortar + web	Retail: baby & family products	1.5		4	No
DD-11 Judi	brick & mortar	Catering and cooking classes	6	24 000	2	No
DD-12 Tessa	home	Hair stylist	8	12 000	2	No
DD-13 Kate	home & web	Craft blogger	5		2	No (continued)

Table 2 continued

Participant Business Profiles¹

<u>Participant</u>	<u>Location of Business</u>	<u>Type of Business</u>	<u>Years Operating Business</u>	<u>Annual Business Income</u>	<u>Satisfaction with Current ABI²</u>	<u>Paid Work Outside Business</u>
DD-14 Kelly	home	Daycare provider	6	15 000	4	No
DD-15 Linda	home & web	Web design	2	30 000	4	No
DD-16 Maisy	home & mobile	Organic farmer	3	30 000	4	No
DD-17 Nina	brick & mortar	Chiropractor	12		4	No
DD-18 Juna	brick & mortar	Children's Arts Academy	5		4	No

- 1 some participants chose not to answer some of the questions, therefore, the Table contains some empty cells.
 2 on a scale from 1 (Very Unsatisfied) to 5 (Very Satisfied)

Table 3*Major categories of participant responses*Basic Social Problem: Being a Mother
Entrepreneur

Living multiple roles
 Role overlap/conflict
 Childcare issues
 Redefining balance

Basic Social Process: Keeping Going

Feeling supported
 Making Choices
 Adapting Creatively
 Remembering the Push
 Living my Values
 Envisioning the Future
 Remembering the Pull

Appendix A Informed Consent Form

Meet the Mompreneurs: Career-Life Paths of Self-Employed Women with Children

You are invited to participate in a study entitled Meet the Mompreneurs: Life-Career Paths of Self-Employed Women with Children that is being conducted by Rebecca Hudson Breen.

I am a graduate student in the department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies at the University of Victoria and you may contact me if you have further questions by email at rehb@shaw.ca or telephone at (250) 858-5757.

As a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a degree in Educational Psychology. It is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Bryan Hiebert. You may contact my supervisor by email at bhiebert@uvic.ca or by telephone at (250) 721-7856.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this research project is to understand the experience of “mompreneurs” or self-employed women with children. This includes understanding how self-employed women with children manage the work-family balance; understanding any challenges unique to self-employed women with children; understanding how entrepreneurship contributes to or challenges your ability to manage multiple life roles; and understanding how self-employed women with children evaluate life-career success.

Importance of this Research

Research of this type is important because there is growing indication that women are turning to entrepreneurial ventures to satisfy career aspirations while balancing family and motherhood. Despite a large volume of research on women's life-career development, there is little known about the experiences of ‘mompreneurs.’ It is important to understand the work-life experiences of self-employed women with children in order to provide services and supports to these entrepreneurs and their families, as well as to provide education and support to women who are considering entering entrepreneurship as a way of balancing work and family.

Participant Selection

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a self-employed woman who has at least one child under 18 that you parent on a regular basis, and you identify with your roles as a mother and a business owner.

What is involved

If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research, your participation will include a single 1-2 hour audio-taped interview, conducted with me, the primary researcher, Rebecca Hudson Breen. The interview will occur in a quiet location of mutual convenience. Options may include your home or business, in a private room at the local university, or in a public library study room. For

participants outside of Vancouver Island, Skype or telephone may be used for our interview, which would again be conducted at your convenience. You will be asked questions regarding how you came to start your business, your reasons for choosing entrepreneurship, what your experiences of balancing entrepreneurship with motherhood have been, and how you define life-career success. You will also be asked to complete a brief demographic survey, which includes information such as age, income, marital status, education background, etc. I will also review your business advertising (including website, Facebook fan page, etc.), and if possible visit your place of business in order to get to know and understand your business better. After your interview has been completed, the recording will be transcribed and analyzed, and you will be asked to review the data themes for accuracy. Approximately 1-2 hours will be required for your data analysis review.

Inconvenience

Participation in this study may cause some inconvenience to you, including the commitment of time to participate in the interviews (1-2 hours) and to review the analysis of your interview data (an additional 1-2 hours). You may also require childcare during your time of participation in the study, or if it would be more convenient for you, your child(ren) may be present during the interview.

Risks

There are some potential risks to you by participating in this research and they include the possibility that you could feel fatigued or stressed due to your participation in the research, as the time devoted to participation adds an additional demand to your schedule. To prevent or to deal with these risks the following steps will be taken: Interview questions will be discussed verbally prior to conducting interviews, and you have the right to temporarily or permanently end the interview, and to withdraw at any time without explanation. You are also free to refrain from answering any questions you do not wish to answer. I will also work with you to ensure that interviews are scheduled at a time of day that is convenient for you, as well as being at a time when you are not experiencing increased demands in other areas of your life.

Benefits

The potential benefits of your participation in this research include the opportunity to reflect on personal experiences of balancing mothering work with entrepreneurship, as well as an opportunity to share personal thoughts, understandings, and meanings about your experiences of work-life balance and multiple roles as a self-employed woman with (a) child(ren).

Potential benefits to society include an opportunity for participants to help others in society to better understand the experiences of self-employed women with children, and how women balance the roles of entrepreneur and mother.

Benefits to the state of knowledge include the opportunity for participants to contribute to new knowledge about the experiences self-employed women with children, and what supports have aided them or would be beneficial in future for other self-employed women with children. This

may help to generate services and further research studies on the subject of mindfulness practices for wellness, and the impact of shared experience.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If we are acquainted with each other prior to this research, you should feel no obligation to participate due to this prior relationship. If you do decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you do withdraw from the study your data will not be used, and any recordings or transcription of interview data will be destroyed.

On-going Consent

To make sure that you continue to consent to participate in this research, I will review this informed consent form with you prior to subsequent meetings, such as when I provide the data analysis for your review, in order to confirm your on-going consent.

Anonymity

In terms of protecting your anonymity, only partial anonymity can be maintained if you are involved in 'snowballing' (word of mouth) recruitment. The snowballing process makes it possible for participants to know each other. If you are recruited to the study via snowball sampling, the participant who contacts you to tell you about the study will know you have been referred to the study, though not whether you choose to participate. If you refer someone to the study, the potential participant may know that you have participated in the study. For those individuals who were not involved in 'word of mouth' sampling (i.e. those individuals who responded to a direct invitation from the researcher and did not refer any other participants), your anonymity will be completely protected.

Efforts to maintain participant anonymity, regardless of the recruitment measure, will include replacing your name on the data by identification numbers and by using pseudonyms in place of your real name and your business name in final written reports. Other identifying information such as your location will also be changed. Your name will not appear on the data, thesis, published articles, or any other material used in presentations for others. And finally, your signed consent form will be kept separately from any recorded data. If you choose, you may waive the use of a pseudonym, and be identified by your own name and business name in the results.

Confidentiality

Your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data will be protected by placing all research data (i.e. questionnaire results, signed consent form, audiotapes, written transcriptions, and any additional paperwork, etc.) within a locked filing cabinet located within my personal residence. All electronic files will be located on my personal computer, which is password protected, and the backup of these files will also be stored in the locked filing cabinet. Please note that I will be the only person with access to any identifying data (i.e. signed consent forms).

Dissemination of Results

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be shared with others in the following ways: 1) a summary and/or a full copy of the research report will be made available to you, the participant, if interested; 2) the results of the study will contribute to my PhD dissertation; 3) the results of the study will potentially contribute to a published article; and 4) the results of this study will be presented at a professional and/or scholarly conference.

Disposal of Data

Data from this study will be disposed of once all requirements for the dissertation have been completed. Electronic data will be erased and written transcripts, notes and drafts will be shredded through University of Victoria Confidential Shredding. Audiotapes will be erased at University of Victoria Computer Services.

Contacts

Individuals that may be contacted regarding this study include Rebecca Hudson Breen and Dr. Bryan Hiebert, at the contacts provided at the beginning of this consent form.

In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545 or ethics@uvic.ca).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of participation in this study and that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers.

WAIVING CONFIDENTIALITY

I agree to have my responses attributed to me by name in the results.

_____ (Participant to provide initials)

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.

Appendix B
Demographic Information

Age (please check)

20-25 26-30 31-35 36-40 41-45 46-50 51-55 55+

Length of time operating your business: _____ years

Location(s) of your business (e.g. home-based, web-based, etc):

Marital status: _____

How many children do you have? _____

What are their age(s)? _____

What are your childcare arrangements?

What is your educational background? Please check all that apply.

High school diploma

College diploma

Undergraduate degree

Graduate degree

Trade certificate

Other (please describe)

On a scale of 1-10 (10 being the most satisfied) how satisfied are you with your current income from your business?

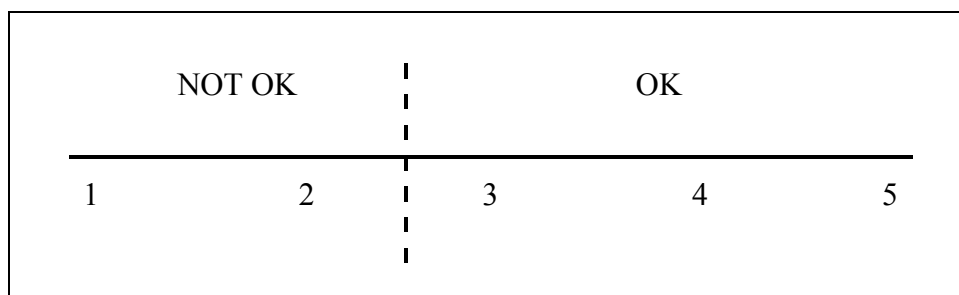
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Do you have paid employment besides your business? ____ Yes ____ No

Appendix C

Initial Interview Protocol

- 1) Please tell me about your experience of being a self-employed woman with (a) child(ren).
- 2) What led you to start your own business?
 - a) What supports enabled you to make the shift to starting your own business?
 - b) What challenges have you experienced? How have you addressed these challenges?
- 3) Please tell me about your business and what your reasons were for choosing this type of venture?
- 4) Tell me about the different roles you play and the kinds of activities you do. How much time do you devote to these different roles and activities?
 - a) How do you balance your multiple roles?
 - b) Please quantify the degree of balance you experience using the following process.
 - i) First decide whether the degree of balance you experience is OK or Not OK.
 - ii) Then, quantify the degree of balance by circling the appropriate number.
 - If it is Not OK, is it really out of balance (1) or almost OK (2).
 - If your degree of balance is OK, is it just barely ok (3), really good (5) or somewhere in between barely OK and really good (4)?



- c) What values can you identify that are motivating the ways that you are balancing your multiple roles.
 - i) Look at the brainstorm list – what else would you add? If you had to choose only three, what would your top three be?

- 5) How happy are you with the degree of balance you have now?
- a) To what extent does your degree of balance feel right for you?
 - b) What things are you doing to create a feeling of balance?
 - c) How does entrepreneurship make it easier or more challenging for you to balance your multiple roles?
 - d) In what ways have you been surprised – in good or not so good ways – by the reality of being an entrepreneur/mother?
- 6) Looking into the future, how will you define *your* life-career success?
- a) To what degree will your ideas and expectations about being an entrepreneur/mother have been fulfilled?

Appendix D

Memoing Examples

Memoing was integral to the realization that the word ‘balance’ in the initial research question had to change. For example, the following excerpt from Kana’s transcript and it’s linked memo: *“I think I connect them [roles]. Cause I can’t do one thing and forget about three.”*

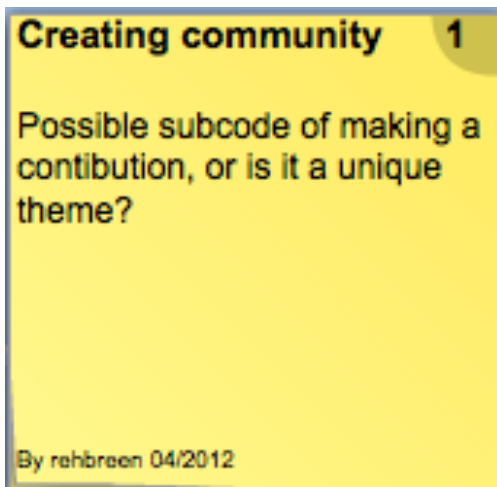
Memo: again, not balancing...what is this suggesting? is role overlap/conflict not necessarily problematic, but rather a strategy for 'balancing'

= In vivo code "combining." how does this compare to existing in vivo code "balance is a myth?" Does this also suggest that balance is not the 'goal.' What is the process if not balance?

The following are additional examples of memos created within the Dedoose framework:



This memo contributed to the development of the sub-category “Understanding that the buck stops here” which forms an important dimension of the Basic Social Problem of *Being a Mother Entrepreneur*.



This memo illustrates an aspect of theoretical coding. Through the process of theoretical sampling and theoretical saturation, the concept of creating community became a dimension of the sub-category “Integrity and Meaning” within *Living my Values*.

Appendix E
Progression of Coding

Sample Open Code excerpts	Axial Codes	Category
<p>“My husband”</p> <p>“He [husband] works for the government, so he has a steady income”</p> <p>“She [mentor] was really helpful”</p> <p>“I wouldn’t have known what to do without them [small business support agency]”</p> <p>“Other mothers in business”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spouse’s Income • Spouse’s Support/ Encouragement re: business • Spouse’s support – household & coparenting • Professional Development • Mentoring (personal) • Mentoring (formal programs) • Relationships (family) • Relationships (friends, community) • Other mothers in business • Other sources of income/funding 	<p><i>Feeling Supported:</i></p> <p>instrumental, financial and emotional dimensions = (theoretical) process of feeling supported</p>