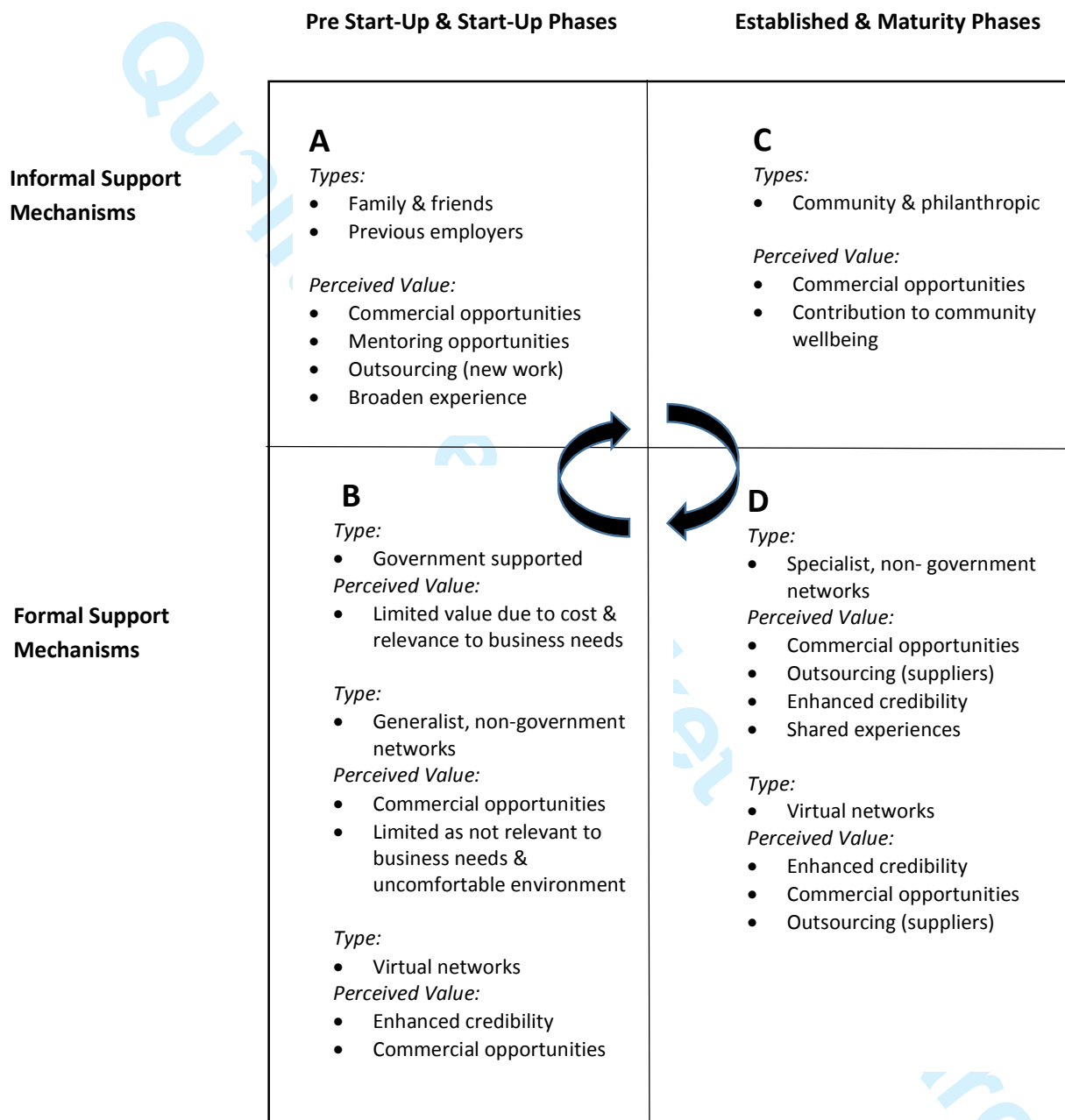


Figure I: Support mechanisms used by women owned marketing services SMEs



1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

SME	Location	Age of Business (yrs)	Service	Owner's Age	Approximate Annual Turnover (£)	No. of permanent staff (excl. owner)
1	Midlands	10	Marketing Communications	44	60k	1
2	Midlands	<1	Marketing Strategy	28	5k	0
3	Midlands	3	Market Research	37	15k	0
4	Midlands	2	Marketing Strategy	40	10k	0
5	Midlands	3	New Product Development	36	25k	0
6	Midlands	6	Customer Relationship Management	*	22k	0
7	Midlands	8	Digital Marketing	42	*	3
8	Midlands	1	Marketing Strategy	38	15k	0
9	Midlands	2	Customer Relationship Management	40	30k	0
10	Midlands	5	Marketing Strategy	44	20k	0
11	Midlands	6	Marketing Strategy	46	35k	0
12	Midlands	3	Marketing Strategy	36	30k	0
13	Midlands	1	Marketing Strategy	38	*	0
14	North West	3	Customer Relationship Management	39	22k	0
15	North West	3	Marketing Strategy	42	17k	0
16	North West	2	Marketing Strategy	36	*	0
17	North West	7	Marketing Strategy	34	32k	0
18	North West	1	Marketing Strategy	37	8k	0
19	North West	2	Marketing Communications	41	*	0
20	North West	3	Marketing Strategy	42	15k	0
21	Wales	2	Marketing Strategy	35	*	0
22	Wales	6	Digital Marketing	*	40k	0
23	Wales	<1	Marketing Strategy	30	8k	0
24	Wales	3	Marketing Strategy	35	20k	0
25	Wales	4	Marketing Communications	41	25k	0
26	Wales	4	Marketing Strategy	42	26k	0

*information not provided

Table 1: Profile of SMEs

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Generic Theme	Sub Themes	Specific Themes	Example Extract
Informal Network	A. Family and Friends	A1. Mentoring A2. Business opportunities A2.1 Diversification/ new sector A3. Unpaid work	<i>A2: "Through a friend, I got involved in working with self-employed creatives, training them in marketing"</i>
	B. Local Community	B1. Unpaid work B2. Philanthropic work B3. Paid work B4. Wider business opportunities	<i>B2: "I've been involved in charity work and I think you've got to keep a balance...I get worried about people who all they do is focus on the money side of things."</i>

Table 2: Extract from coding template



Female entrepreneurial networking in the marketing services sector

Introduction

Networks are key for market development, as sources of supply and a catalyst for new venture creation and thus essential to entrepreneurial development (Jack, Moulton, Anderson and Drakopoulou Dodd, 2010). For this paper, networks are defined as the 'individuals an entrepreneur is in contact with for business-relevant purposes' (Sullivan and Marvel, 2011, p.189). As Greve and Salaff (2003) identified, the nature of the network varies depending on the life stage of the small and medium sized enterprise (SME). Furthermore, at a theoretical level, similarities can be drawn between the skills required to network and those used by SMEs and marketers, such as client relationship building and PR (Resnick, Cheng, Brindley and Foster, 2011). Morris, Schindehutte and LaForge (2002) argue that SMEs rely heavily on personal networks to support their business activity because they do not have the resources to engage in sophisticated marketing initiatives. For SMEs, marketing is therefore a creative entrepreneurial process (Yang and Gabrielsson, 2017) and one which is a 'social, personal activity and not only an organizational function' (Hills, Hultman and Miles, 2008, p. 104). This reflects Morris *et al.*'s (2002, p. 5) wider definition of entrepreneurial marketing, namely, "*the proactive identification and exploitation of opportunities for acquiring and retaining profitable customers through innovative approaches to risk management, resource leveraging and value creation*".

Studies have explored the nature of networking and the relationship it has with small firm marketing in a range of sectors (Gilmore, 2006). More generally, research has examined the interface between entrepreneurship and marketing in different sectoral contexts and examined the impact of different variables such as size and age of business on

1
2
3 entrepreneurial marketing (Yang and Gabrielsson, 2017; Kilenthong, Hultman and Hills, 2016;
4
5 Crick and Crick, 2016). However, it is unclear how self-employed female *marketers* draw
6
7 upon their professional skills in practice to network and market their business effectively.
8
9 For those who have held corporate marketing roles before venturing into self-employment,
10
11 it is also worth considering the extent to which the corporate entrepreneurial behaviour of
12
13 these individuals is extrapolated to a SME marketing services context. Evidence suggests, for
14
15 example, that marketers move into self-employment after gaining experience in a corporate
16
17 role first (Foster and Brindley, 2010). Female marketers are of interest here, since although
18
19 the marketing profession is feminised (Wheatley, Foster and Brindley, 2011) and skills such
20
21 as relationship building can be associated with feminine traits (Martinez and Aldrich, 2011),
22
23 little is known about the self-employment experiences of women providing marketing
24
25 services. The aim of this paper, therefore, is to understand how self-employed women who
26
27 have their own marketing services businesses, build, use and value networks over the life-
28
29 cycle of their business. Rather than considering networks and support at one stage of the
30
31 business lifecycle, the study draws upon the 'life-span perspective of the entrepreneur'
32
33 (Foss, 2010, 96) by encouraging the participants to recount their experiences of support
34
35 over the duration of their business. At a more general level, the study, therefore, attempts
36
37 to explore the gender/marketing/entrepreneurship interface and thus contributes to the
38
39 entrepreneurial marketing literature.
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49

50 The paper adopts the view that women are not a homogenous group by moving away from
51
52 a comparison with men and focussing on the different intra-group experiences of women
53
54 (Ahl, 2006). The study, therefore, addresses the concerns expressed by Brush, de Bruin and
55
56 Welter (2009) and Cohoon, Wadhwa and Mitchell (2010, p.1) who point to women
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 entrepreneurs being an understudied group and that ‘...our ignorance of this important
4 demographic is a serious blind spot in any effort to increase the total number of
5 entrepreneurs.’ Moreover, by adopting a qualitative in-depth approach, this study makes a
6 methodological contribution by enabling the women to voice their own experiences and
7 construct for themselves what entrepreneurship means to them and how they
8 identify/perceive networks, a perspective that for Foss (2010) has been largely absent in
9 network scholarship. The study concentrates on one area, that is marketing services, within
10 the tertiary sector, which along with the primary and secondary sectors, constitute the
11 three sectors of the private economy (Maroto-Sanchez, 2012). This means that industry
12 variables which may influence the experiences of these women are kept to a minimum. It
13 also provides an opportunity for the study to capture experiences from a service sector that
14 is feminised (Korczyński, 2002). The focus on marketing services, therefore, adds depth and
15 rigour to the study as it enables the exploration of how a specific sectoral context might
16 affect women’s self-employment (Beetles and Harris, 2005). This focus also provides the
17 opportunity to investigate the extent to which, the skills the women use to network for their
18 own business, share similarities with the skills associated with marketing activity and their
19 entrepreneurial skills used in previous corporate marketing roles (Gilmore, Carson and
20 Grant, 2001a). The study also has practical implications. By exploring the real-life
21 experiences of self-employed women marketers over the life-span of their business, policy
22 developments can be tailored more effectively towards women’s self-employment needs.
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51

52 The paper begins by discussing the theoretical framework of the study by exploring the
53 notions of networks and women’s self-employment, in addition to the marketing services
54 sector context. The approach to primary data collection is then explained, followed by a
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 discussion of the findings. Finally, a model is proposed that encapsulates the support
4
5 mechanisms self-employed women build, use and value over the life-span of their
6
7 marketing businesses.
8

9 10 11 12 **Literature Review**

13
14 To start, grow and sustain a business, an entrepreneur's propensity to develop and maintain
15
16 networks is an important part of the entrepreneurial process (Jack *et al.*, 2010). The
17
18 gathering together of the necessary resources at different times of the business life-cycle
19
20 (Birley, 1985), has often led to the view that without a particular set of resources the
21
22 business is deficient. It has been suggested that network ties, namely '...persons with whom
23
24 the entrepreneur has a relationship and that are helpful to the entrepreneur...' can help to
25
26 lessen the knowledge and resource deficiencies an SME might have (Sullivan and Marvel,
27
28 2011, p. 189). These ties can be both strong and weak depending upon, for example,
29
30 closeness of the relationship (Granovetter, 1973; Jack, 2005). Other strands of literature
31
32 have focussed on how many actors make up a business's network and studies such as Birley
33
34 (1985), have adopted a quantitative methodology and addressed questions such as whether
35
36 the network has dyadic or multiple network ties (Larson, 1992). A further strand has
37
38 focussed on how networks evolve over time (Greve and Salaff, 2003; Jack *et al.*, 2010) and
39
40 although this has an evolutionary viewpoint, emphasising elements such as access to social
41
42 capital (Renzulli, Aldrich and Moody, 2000), it links back to resource capability at different
43
44 stages of the business life-cycle. One aspect of resource capability has been explored by
45
46 Orser and Elliott (2015, p. 5) who have proposed a continuum of gender influence on
47
48 venture creation. This ranges from 'no gender influence' to 'gender awareness' (where
49
50 gender differences exist but do not influence actions or decisions), through to 'gendered
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 process' (where being female enhances or impedes SME performance). Similarly, when
4
5 gender is introduced as an explanatory variable in network research, some research has
6
7 added to the 'women as deficient' agenda, whilst other studies have not identified any
8
9 significant differences between genders (Cohoon *et al.*, 2010). Studies suggest that
10
11 entrepreneurs use networks in a strategic manner, women are disadvantaged compared to
12
13 men, weak ties lead to men's success, strong ties hold women back (Granovetter, 1973).
14
15 Others propose that women are inherently relational (Martinez and Aldrich, 2011), arguing
16
17 that '...entrepreneurial networking is particularly important for women' because women's
18
19 self-worth '...is shaped by a sense of connection to others' (Klyver and Grant, 2010, p. 213).
20
21 These hegemonies identify a blind spot though in research on women and networks that is
22
23 exacerbated by the masculine construction of entrepreneurship and constructs that see an
24
25 entrepreneur as a 'hero' (Wilson and Tagg, 2010). Indeed Foss (2010, p.88) argues that
26
27 network research is based upon 'hegemonic voices' which can limit the discourse associated
28
29 with gender and entrepreneurial support.
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37

38 A further dimension is that existing industry experience and the ties that surround women
39
40 at start-up, influence both what type of business is set-up, its location and the long-term
41
42 viability of the business. Loscocco and Bird (2012, p.210) argue that it is 'vitally important to
43
44 analyse the social interaction processes through which women make (constrained) choices
45
46 about what kind of businesses to start, where to locate them and how much time to give
47
48 them....'. Sectoral choice is often determined by educational background (Sharafizad, 2011)
49
50 and is further limited when educational attainment translates into whether someone has a
51
52 professional or non-professional career. Self-employed women in professional sectors are
53
54 'less likely to view paid work as highly central' although home-based self-employed
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 professional women reap more economic benefit from those in non-professional sectors
4
5 (Loscocco and Bird 2012, p.208). These situational impacts thus exert an influence on
6
7 network choice and their usage (Foss, 2010; Sharafizad, 2011). As Foss (2010, p.93) posits
8
9 'networking is not a detached activity, unaffected by place and time,' rather gender 'shapes
10
11 –patterns of social interaction' (Hanson and Blake, 2009, p.137). Where we live and work
12
13 therefore, determines who we know and who we speak to.
14
15

16
17
18
19 Previous works have emphasised the criticality of networks to start-ups: '....it is difficult to
20
21 see how venture creation is possible without access to an effective set of network
22
23 relationships' (Drakopoulou Dodd and Patra, 2002, p.117). However, in a similar fashion to
24
25 sectoral choice, women's divergent roles mean that '... the excessive amount of time spent
26
27 on network maintenance and development must surely carry considerable opportunity cost'
28
29 (Drakopoulou Dodd and Patra, 2002, p.130). A cost which may account for Audet, Berger-
30
31 Douce and St-Jean's (2007) conclusion that women are sceptical about networks and thus
32
33 use them less, although this may be related to other considerations such as perceived
34
35 usefulness. Indeed, Audet *et al.* (2007, p.554) found some evidence to suggest that
36
37 'excessive networking (more than three times a year) might be counter-productive'.
38
39 However, another explanation is proffered by McGregor and Tweed (2002, p.430) whose
40
41 study found that networked female businesses are smaller and home-based '...suggesting
42
43 that informal support, rather than institutionalized linkages' are more relevant.
44
45
46
47
48
49

50
51
52 Moving away from start-up, it is pertinent to examine how women develop and interact
53
54 with networks from a longitudinal perspective. There has been a call for further research
55
56 which explores the fluidity of women's networks over time (Klyver and Grant, 2010).
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 Alakaleek, Cooper and Bock (2014) identified 3 types of networks: personal, business and
4
5 clients. Each of these networks play a different role at different stages of the business life-
6
7 cycle. Munch, Miller McPherson and Smith-Lovin (1997), for example, argued that because
8
9 of childrearing responsibilities, women will typically rearrange their network composition to
10
11 favour kin over other contacts. This preference for family support may lessen as children
12
13 become older, supporting the idea that networks are not static.
14
15
16
17

18
19 As Maclaren and Catterall (2000) argue, knowledge of women working in professions like
20
21 medicine, teaching and banking is evident, yet the experience of women working in
22
23 professions like marketing is largely anecdotal. Investigating the support mechanisms used
24
25 by SMEs in the professional services sector, therefore, is of interest as the success of these
26
27 enterprises is largely dependent upon the reputation of the business and thus, the use of
28
29 networks (Neergaard, Shaw and Carter, 2005). Furthermore, the SME service sector is
30
31 largely populated by women owned businesses and a high proportion of these are in
32
33 marketing and allied professions, and as Brindley *et al.* (2014) found, choice of business for
34
35 women is often based on their previous work experience. This minimises the risk of
36
37 venturing into completely uncharted territory with a new enterprise. Working for a large
38
39 organisation and engaging in corporate entrepreneurial behaviour, such as responding
40
41 quickly to a change in market conditions, may also support the move into self-employment
42
43 more generally (Bhide, 1986).
44
45
46
47
48
49

50
51 By remaining as marketers, one of the structural barriers to start-up, namely knowledge of
52
53 the industry, is removed as expertise and skills are transferred (Brindley *et al.*, 2014;
54
55 Mirchandani, 1999). The focus can then be on the other structural factors/processes that
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 support or inhibit new venture creation. If one reflects on marketing as a profession,
4
5 communication, planning (tactical and strategic), relationship development and promotional
6
7 skills are cornerstones of the profession and are thus transferable to self-employment and
8
9 networking. Indeed, entrepreneurial marketing (EM) ‘...lies at the interface between a
10
11 market orientation and an entrepreneurial orientation’ (Morris *et al.*, 2002, p.6) and is
12
13 characterised by its network-relationship-creative perspective where customers and the
14
15 entrepreneur act as co-creators of the business (Morrish, Miles and Deacon, 2010). Drawing
16
17 upon Morris *et al.*’s (2002) seven dimensions of entrepreneurial marketing, networking in
18
19 an SME context can help the organisation to leverage resources and by collaborating within
20
21 their network, enable the SME to proactively manage an unpredictable external
22
23 environment. Yet as O’Cass and Morrish (2016) suggest, our understanding of the marketing
24
25 and entrepreneurship dynamic is still limited from a theoretical and empirical perspective.
26
27 Added to the fact that knowledge of women’s entrepreneurial experiences represents “...a
28
29 serious blind spot” (Cohoon *et al.*, 2010, p.1), further research that provides women’s own
30
31 perspectives/experiences of networking in an entrepreneurial and marketing context is
32
33 required. The aim of this study therefore is to explore how self-employed women in the
34
35 marketing services sector build, use and value networks and support mechanisms over the
36
37 lifetime of their business.
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47

48 **Methodology**

49
50 Gartner (2010, p.12) argues that ‘narrative scholarship can best address issues in
51
52 entrepreneurship that are concerned with entrepreneurial intentions and actions and their
53
54 interrelationships with circumstances...’. For this reason, the study adopted a qualitative
55
56 approach to data collection since it has an emphasis on investigating respondents’
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 interpretations whilst taking account of the research context (Bryman, 1989) and so enables
4
5 the participants' social construction of reality to be explored (Neergaard *et al.*, 2005).
6
7 Adopting a qualitative approach also provided an opportunity to explore the interface
8
9 between how the women networked and the extent to which they drew upon their
10
11 marketing skills and previous experience, whilst at the same time acknowledging the SME
12
13 marketing context they operated in. In-depth interviews with 26 self-employed women
14
15 based in three different areas of the UK were conducted: the Midlands (n=13), North West
16
17 (n=7) and Wales (n=6). At this point, theoretical saturation was reached with no new
18
19 themes emerging from the interview materials (Bowen, 2008). Purposive and snowball
20
21 sampling were used to select participants (Bryman and Bell, 2015). The researchers used
22
23 their personal and professional contacts to access suitable businesses in the first instance
24
25 and then gained referrals to other interviewees from the participants. This led to the
26
27 interviews being conducted in three areas of the UK, with the most carried out in the
28
29 Midlands, where the researchers were based. Using snowball and purposive sampling
30
31 ensured that the participants had the knowledge to respond to the questions (i.e. they were
32
33 all female marketing SME owners) but also helped to overcome any reluctance by the SMEs
34
35 to engage in research and academia, as reported in other studies (Short, Ketchen, Combs
36
37 and Ireland, 2010). Snowball sampling, in particular, can be helpful in identifying hard-to-
38
39 reach populations (Faugier and Sargeant, 1997). It was important to include businesses
40
41 which varied according to which marketing services were provided, turnover and how long
42
43 they had been established as this was likely to have an impact on the support mechanisms
44
45 used. So, for example, the newest business had only been established four months and the
46
47 oldest had been running for ten years. The highest annual turnover was reported to be £60k
48
49 and the lowest between £5k and £10k. Services offered by the women in the sample were
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 varied and included market research (n=1), marketing communications (n=3), NPD (n=1),
4
5 digital marketing (n=2), CRM (n=3) and marketing strategy (n=16). Two participants
6
7 employed staff on a permanent basis and these were the oldest businesses in the sample.
8
9 All the women had previously worked in corporate marketing roles for a minimum of ten
10
11 years prior to becoming a self-employed marketer. The average age of the women
12
13 interviewed was 38 years old. Table 1 provides a profile of the SMEs in the sample.
14
15

16
17
18
19
20 INSERT TABLE 1 HERE
21
22
23

24 All the interviews were conducted with the owner of the business and used a set of
25
26 questions around *a priori* themes drawn from the literature. Each interview was 60-90
27
28 minutes and conducted in a convenient location to both the researcher and respondent.
29
30 Participants were encouraged to tell their personal stories about managing and starting
31
32 their business (Perren and Ram, 2004). Like the study by Neergaard *et al.* (2005, p.350), this
33
34 approach enables an understanding of ‘...why and how the networking behaviour of a
35
36 business owner changes over time...’. The interviews therefore attempted to capture the
37
38 participants’ ‘voices’ by providing rich descriptions of the women’s experiences over their
39
40 entire working life history to date (Atkinson, 2002). Themes explored in the interviews
41
42 included the participant’s career history, their reasons for moving into self-employment,
43
44 their experiences of running their business, their own professional experiences as a
45
46 marketer and the support mechanisms they had used whilst being self-employed. All the
47
48 interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed and analysed thematically, using a system of
49
50 coding called Template Analysis (King, 2004). The development of a list of codes (the
51
52 ‘Template’) enabled the researchers to make sense of the large amounts of rich textual data
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 in a rigorous, structured manner (Waring and Wainwright, 2008). A coding 'template' was
4
5 developed which highlighted broad themes and then more narrow themes important to the
6
7 study. The generic themes were informed by the literature and research questions (for
8
9 example, the importance of informal networks for women) and the specific themes
10
11 emerged from the data (for example, the use of outsourcing to fulfil contracts). An extract
12
13 of the coding is presented in Table 2.
14
15

16
17 INSERT TABLE 2 HERE
18
19

20
21
22 The 'Template' was then applied to all the interview transcripts to aid the interpretation of
23
24 the data and included both *a priori* codes and codes generated inductively. The final themes
25
26 developed from this analysis enabled explanatory model building. As a last stage in the
27
28 analysis, the findings were presented to a selection of participants at a workshop for
29
30 feedback. Respondent validation in the form of comments made by the women were then
31
32 incorporated into the model building (Bloor, 1978).
33
34
35
36
37

38 **Findings**

39
40 The analysis revealed two main themes which reflected the study's research aim. Firstly, the
41
42 types of support mechanisms with which the participants engaged in throughout the
43
44 lifetime of the business and secondly, the value these support mechanisms presented to the
45
46 business. Within each of these overarching themes further sub-themes emerged. Overall,
47
48 all the women reported that they had engaged with several different formal and informal
49
50 networks and support mechanisms over the lifetime of the business. All participants
51
52 emphasised that the key to success was to be selective when choosing which networks and
53
54 support mechanisms to engage with, whilst at the same time recognising that it took a
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 considerable amount of time for the business to benefit from involvement in the more
4
5 formal networks. Hence, the nature of the networks the women were involved in had
6
7 changed as the businesses had matured and their support requirements had altered. In all
8
9 cases, the participants used networks and wider support mechanisms to promote their
10
11 business. The following section provides a more detailed analysis of the support
12
13 mechanisms used by the women and the perceived value of these networks:
14
15
16
17
18
19

20 ***Types of support mechanisms***

21 *Family and friends*

22
23 Although not regarded as a 'network' by participants, family and friends were used by 14 of
24
25 the participants to help support the start-up phase, both in terms of commercial
26
27 opportunities and mentoring, as one woman reported "*When I set-up I had a number of*
28
29 *clients who were friends who said 'we'd like you to do so many days'...*". Similarly, another
30
31 respondent stated that "*I do work for my husband's boss in marketing...so it tends to be a lot*
32
33 *of people who know you in another context*". Work for family and friends often led to
34
35 operating in unfamiliar sectors but the participants viewed this as important work as they
36
37 found it interesting and it enabled them to gain more experience. One participant working
38
39 as a marketing strategy expert commented that "*I've done a lot of work recently with two*
40
41 *friends...one has a pottery and the other one has a micro-brewery.*" Opportunities generated
42
43 through family and friends did not always lead to paid work but still enabled the business
44
45 owner to broaden their expertise and enhance their reputation. In some cases, the women
46
47 also had family or friends as unofficial mentors, supporting them in their decision-making.
48
49 One woman reported that an ex-colleague had become her mentor and provided her with
50
51 invaluable business advice, "*We meet every couple of weeks...so if I've got questions or you*
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 know, concerns about things, I speak it over with him and he points me in the right direction.

4
5 He's been very, very supportive."
6
7

8 9 10 *Philanthropic and community based networks*

11
12 Nine women had made a conscious decision to work on a volunteer basis for their local
13 community whilst still managing their own business. They saw this as an opportunity to 'give
14 something back' to society whilst making use of their business skills. Activities included
15 sitting on charity boards, working on the parish council and organising local events. As one
16 woman stated, "For the last three years, we have a local arts and music festival that
17 happens in the village where I live ... I've been doing the PR and marketing for it but also the
18 fundraising and the sponsorship. I started to do it initially because I wanted to support the
19 local community." Similarly, another interviewee explained how she helped local charities, "I
20 do a bit of pro-bono work here and there when I come across a cause that interests me." For
21 some, these altruistic activities had led to commercial opportunities, particularly once the
22 business had been established. A respondent who had helped to promote for free an
23 exhibition in her village said "...I do their local promotion because all the local community
24 members are all people that are fairly important....I do them some favours and I've had
25 some work out of that". Another interviewee explained how being associated with charity
26 work had helped her business, "...we do give a certain amount of our time to do pro-bono
27 work for some charity projects...potentially there's always a marketing opportunity there
28 and having our name associated with certain charity projects has value to the business and
29 kind of underlies our social values".
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54

55 56 57 *Previous employers*

58
59
60

1
2
3 Previous corporate employers were a source of commercial opportunities for the
4
5 participants, especially in the start-up phase. Describing her move into self-employment,
6
7 one interviewee explained *"I bought a laptop and then went to talk to all the people that I'd*
8
9 *worked with. And just sort of put feelers out with the people I knew from my career and*
10
11 *went from there."* For twelve of the women, the fact that their previous employer was
12
13 interested in outsourcing work to them, had provided the impetus they needed to start
14
15 their business. One participant who had taken voluntary redundancy from her employer
16
17 explained that *"I was going to try colleges, universities for some lecturing work...but I got*
18
19 *approached by my former employer to do a report for them. And they didn't give me any*
20
21 *more work but that led me on to thinking that's a possibility..."* Another interviewee
22
23 explained how she could service clients who no longer wanted to work with her previous
24
25 employer. She explained that this made her move into self-employment less risky *"...as soon*
26
27 *as I told my clients I was leaving, they all followed me, I was very lucky. So it wasn't a big*
28
29 *jump to set-up."*

38 *Formal, government related support*

39
40 Nearly all the participants (n=24) had engaged with formal, government related support
41
42 during the start-up phase. This included, for example, organisations like Chambers of
43
44 Commerce and regional government initiatives established to support SMEs in the area.
45
46 However, for most participants these support mechanisms were not valued, given the
47
48 membership costs and the quality of advice provided, which was increasingly diminishing
49
50 because of UK public sector cuts. Some women also believed that female-owned businesses,
51
52 were often overlooked by government support because they were regarded as small,
53
54 lifestyle businesses and not worthy of attention. One woman who had support from a
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 government agency felt that it had "...a reputation of mainly working with middle-aged
4
5 white men".
6
7
8
9

10 11 12 13 14 15 *Formal, non-government support* 16

17 All participants had been involved in formal networks that were not government related.
18
19 This included sector based networks some of which were women only, such as WIRE a not-
20 for-profit organisation aimed to support rural business women, and generic organisations
21 such as the Federation for Small Businesses. These networks were not only a source of new
22 clients but also a mechanism for sourcing reliable suppliers to their business in the maturity
23 phase. As one participant remarked, attendance at networking events enabled people to
24 "...buy off each other" and could be mutually beneficial to the female business owner and
25 the supplier, often another woman. Outsourcing work meant that they could take on larger
26 contracts without employing staff and was a flexible approach favoured in the current
27 economic climate, where clients were looking to complete projects within short timescales.
28
29 It also meant the businesses could remain home-based, as recruiting a larger workforce did
30 not require more office space. Outsourcing also enhanced the reputation of the business as
31 the SME could appear larger than it was. Describing her preference for outsourcing work to
32 other women, one participant said "*I do sometimes recruit in associates or partners to work*
33 *on particular projects...and they're people I've bumped into and a lot of the time I will only*
34 *work with other women. There's quite a good affinity there with the kind of work, costings,*
35 *pricing and profitability...*"
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 Nonetheless, formal non-specialist networks were regarded as too intimidating for most of
4
5 the participants in the start-up business phase, as one woman explained “...when I first
6
7 started up, you could walk into a room and be the only woman. I’m a fairly confident person
8
9 but even that fazes me, faced with a load of grey-suited men or people trying to sell me
10
11 things”. Similarly, women only networks that lacked specialist business support, were not
12
13 rated highly by the participants, as one interviewee explained “You go to the events and
14
15 they’re talking about nail polish or what colour to wear...and I’m thinking I want to know
16
17 about my tax return”. However, as the women became more experienced and their
18
19 businesses more established, specialist, focused networks were sought, such as WIRE, since
20
21 these were regarded as much more useful. The women therefore became more selective
22
23 when choosing which formal networks to engage with. A more specialist network meant
24
25 working with competitors to share experiences, as one interviewee explained “I think
26
27 women in business tend to build their own networks together...I have three or four people
28
29 who I can ring and say ‘I’ve had a dreadful day’...so I think women working on their own are
30
31 very supportive of one another”. Involvement in these networks often led to guest speaking
32
33 opportunities, which not only enhanced their credibility but also led to further work. The
34
35 value of this activity was highlighted by one participant’s comments “I think my public
36
37 speaking is probably one of our biggest marketing strategies” and similarly another woman
38
39 who was asked how she marketed her business said “....mainly through networking, things
40
41 like giving talks at appropriate places....where I think there might be a few appropriate
42
43 people in the audience”.

44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55 *Virtual networks*
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 All the women used virtual networking such as LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook to generate
4
5 business and enhance credibility. In the maturity phase, virtual networks were also used to
6
7 source suppliers. The women explained how they had used social media as part of their
8
9 networking activities, *"I use things like LinkedIn looking for contacts"*. One participant stated
10
11 that social media was important for generating business because *"...the way that you get*
12
13 *the paying customers is through recommendations on LinkedIn"* and similarly another
14
15 interviewee explained that *"...we drive a lot of business through our website and we use*
16
17 *social networking...things like Twitter and Facebook do help connect you with potential*
18
19 *customers"*. Describing how online networking had helped her business in other ways, a
20
21 different participant explained *"I'm using LinkedIn quite heavily and interestingly I hadn't*
22
23 *realised a by-product of using the chat forums is that my website's moved up Google...and*
24
25 *through LinkedIn I've also met up with ex-colleagues."*
26
27
28
29
30
31
32

33
34 In sum, female marketers were using a combination of support mechanisms throughout the
35
36 lifetime of the business (Figure 1). Whilst the nature of the support did not appear to be
37
38 static and lessened/increased in importance depending on the SME's activities (as denoted
39
40 by the circular arrows on Figure 1), there were two distinct phases in terms of network
41
42 usage: start-up and maturity. Networking was thus, an evolutionary process. Apart from
43
44 virtual networks, the nature and type of support mechanisms altered when the credibility of
45
46 the business became more established. Initially, the women were involved in formal
47
48 networks that were open-to-all (B) but as the business matured the formal support became
49
50 less reliant on government initiatives and more specialised and suited to the needs of the
51
52 business (D). The informal support mechanisms were not regarded as 'networks' but were a
53
54 source of commercial opportunities and as the business matured, the women felt able to
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 'promote' their business to the wider community (A & C). Previous employers outsourced
4
5 work to the female business owner in the start-up phases (A) and in the established phases,
6
7 the female owners outsourced work to others through their involvement in specialist
8
9 networks (D). This suggests that the women benefitted from being on the receiving end of
10
11 the outsourcing and through commissioning work to others. Outsourcing, for these women,
12
13 was therefore a multi-directional phenomenon and closely linked to their networking
14
15 activities.
16
17

18
19
20 INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE
21

22 Discussion

23
24 The aim of this paper was to explore the support mechanisms self-employed women
25
26 providing marketing services use throughout the lifetime of their business and to establish
27
28 the perceived value of these networks. The study has addressed a wider call for further
29
30 research relating to '...how people acquire, build, use and benefit from networks...' (Hanson
31
32 and Blake, 2009, p.145) and the call for networking research to move away from cross-
33
34 sectional studies of gender and networks (Foss, 2010; Klyver and Grant, 2010; Martinez and
35
36 Aldrich, 2011). The model (Fig.1) developed in this paper goes someway to answering this
37
38 call by not focussing solely on the start-up stage but by exploring the women's use of
39
40 networks throughout the lifetime of the business. It became evident that support came
41
42 from two overarching sources - formal and informal. However, under these two broad
43
44 categories, the women used several different mechanisms depending upon which stage in
45
46 the process of setting up and managing their business they were in and in addition, the level
47
48 of credibility of the business. This supports Martinez and Aldrich's (2011, p.9) view which
49
50 identified that '...[R]ather than confirming that one type of network connection is better
51
52 than the other, the literature has pointed out the contingent nature of networks' values'.
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 What is also interesting are the narratives the women used to describe their experiences.
4
5 This is a key contribution of the paper in that the methodology has given voice to the
6
7 women, thus 'acknowledging the significance of the personal reflections of entrepreneurs
8
9 on their networking activities' (Foss 2010, p.89). There appears to be a semantics issue, in
10
11 that the women did not describe family, friends and the community as networks, despite
12
13 these offering some of the most valuable support to the women. Networks were seen as
14
15 the formal, government related agencies, such as Chambers of Commerce. Further
16
17 exploration of the women's narratives also finds that 'networking' is an amorphous,
18
19 interchangeable term. Some of the smaller or sectoral networks are not described as such
20
21 by the women but still fit with theoretical understandings of what a network constitutes
22
23 (Birley, 1985; Gilmore, Carson, Cummins, O'Donnell and Gallagher, 2001b).
24
25
26
27
28
29
30

31 It is acknowledged that the findings support existing research on networks in new business
32
33 creation, such as the use of family and friends in the initial phase of business development
34
35 (Renzulli *et al.*, 2000; Alakaleek, 2014; Alsos, Carter and Ljunggren, 2014). What is salient is
36
37 that as women who had previously worked in prominent corporate roles, they were not
38
39 blind to how and what the networking opportunities were. Instead, it was a conscious
40
41 choice to use kin/friends at the initial stage, particularly as this support was key to the
42
43 home-based location of their business and their managing of multiple roles. As Greve and
44
45 Salaff (2003, p.2) report '...contacts are often informal and non-work connections. These
46
47 relations may extend across professional networks, reaching friends and colleagues from
48
49 earlier jobs'. The findings also support the idea that family/ friends act as mentors
50
51 (Terjessen and Sullivan, 2011). Mattis (2004) for example, found that 46% of SME owners in
52
53 their study had a mentor or role model when starting out and were typically family (parents
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 or spouse). The study also supports the notion that useful networks take a while to develop
4
5 and engagement with these alters as the business gains credibility (Greve and Salaff, 2003).
6
7
8 Network theory discusses the length and durability of ties and how much effort must be put
9
10 in to make involvement in the network beneficial. It highlights how '...each phase of
11
12 establishing a business requires a different emphasis on networking' (Ibid, p.16). Formal
13
14 business support, for instance was, after the first taste, discarded by the women as they
15
16 became disengaged from these networks because of their perceived male orientation.
17
18 Indeed, Audet *et al.* (2007) proposed that the focus of agencies is often financial assistance
19
20 and, as women do not always want financial capital, this support does not meet their needs.
21
22 Similarly, Davidsson and Honig (2003) found that being a member of a business network
23
24 (such as Chambers of Commerce) was the only type of industry association used more
25
26 frequently by men. Furthermore, in the establishment phase according to Greve and Salaff
27
28 (2003), networks are likely to contract. This study finds that women's networks become
29
30 more specialist as the business evolved, particularly for the long-established businesses but
31
32 also, in contrast, that the women engage with new networks, such as the local community.
33
34 This reflects Jack *et al.*'s (2010, p.333) observation that the networking process is
35
36 'profoundly social' but in this study, as well as being a way for women to navigate their
37
38 conflicting roles and multiple identities (Warren, 2004), it was also a business decision. By
39
40 regularly engaging with the community and other networks such as friends, previous
41
42 employers and social media, the women used existing and new relationships to generate
43
44 work. They adopted innovative approaches to customer acquisition which reflects a core
45
46 component of entrepreneurial marketing, that is market orientation, and specifically
47
48 '...customer equity, visceral relationships and an emotional dimension to the firm's
49
50 marketing efforts' (Morris *et al.*, 2002, p.7).
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Despite the support for existing research, this study makes several new theoretical, practical and methodological contributions as a result of researching atypical groups i.e. women and is sector specific. This issue of sector specificity answers methodological criticisms that entrepreneurship research is too heterogeneous and lacks consideration of minority owned SMEs. Indeed, previous networking research has identified the situational influence on networks (Brush, 1999), so by focussing on a particular sector (marketing services), one gender (women) and one size of business (micro/small) reduces the potential for variance in the findings. This methodological approach therefore addresses the call by Henry, Foss and Ahl (2016) who state that gender and entrepreneurship research should adopt ‘...sector, region and country explorations...’ (p.235) and ‘...more focused qualitative and innovative methodologies such as in-depth interviews, life histories, case studies, ethnography or discourse analysis...’ (p.236). What has emerged as new theoretical findings concern the dynamic fluidity of how the women use support mechanisms – a finding that was revealed as a result of employing a qualitative, narrative methodology and which is unlikely to have been discovered using a quantitative approach (Hill, McGowan and Drummond, 1999). The women were using different aspects of social capital to access support mechanisms and as Hanson and Blake (2009, p. 137) observe gender shapes ‘...patterns of social interaction, that is, with whom one interacts and the situations and processes of interaction’.

A further theoretical contribution of the paper concerns the start-up phase of the business and the use of outsourcing through the women’s networks. Here, women were often undertaking work from previous employers, which provided the essential working capital and entrance into the market. This links to the ‘corporate incubator’ idea proposed by

1
2
3 Moore and Buttner (1997) which highlights the importance of gaining business experience
4
5 in large organisations before becoming self-employed. The women's foray into self-
6
7 employment was not necessarily because of a soured employer-employee relationship but
8
9 was based on trust and mutual benefit and value of their worth. The former employers
10
11 were in effect outsourcing work to the women owned businesses because of varying
12
13 economic and structural reasons. In a similar vein, findings by Terjessen and Sullivan (2011)
14
15 also examined entrepreneurs who had made the transition into self-employment from
16
17 organisational employment. They found that for female entrepreneurs, a relationship from
18
19 their corporate employment had transferred into a 'mentor-protégé' relationship when they
20
21 became self-employed and that this had led to new opportunities and work for the SME.
22
23
24
25
26
27
28

29 In this study, the outsourcing had a wider currency. At the beginning, the women were
30
31 outsourced to, but as the business gained credibility, the participants provided
32
33 opportunities for other women owned SMEs on an outsourcing basis. This in effect created
34
35 a virtuous circle where the credibility of the businesses involved is enhanced i.e. the
36
37 business that is providing the outsourcing opportunity and those asked to work on the
38
39 project. Although entrepreneurs are often regarded as being individualistic and self-serving
40
41 (Wagener, Gorgievskia and Rijdsikb, 2010) this outsourcing relationship would suggest that
42
43 relationships over-ride competitive behaviour. So, whilst this study demonstrates that
44
45 outsourcing is used by both large organisations and SMEs and this entrepreneurial
46
47 behaviour is employed for similar reasons i.e. to achieve leaner operations and encourage
48
49 flexibility and market responsiveness (Park, Lee and Morgan, 2011), the participants in this
50
51 study approached outsourcing in a collaborative way, using potential competitors as
52
53 partners. Indeed, this supports the findings by Jayawarna, Jones and Marlow (2015) who
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 found that female entrepreneurs compared to their male counterparts, adopted a more
4
5 participative, conciliatory approach to managing. This also fits with Morris *et al.*'s (2002, p7-
6
7 8) conceptualisation of entrepreneurial marketing, specifically the 'risk management' and
8
9 'risk leveraging' dimensions. They argue that collaboration with other firms can help to
10
11 reduce risk and aid performance in SMEs because it enables resources '...to be quickly
12
13 committed or withdrawn'. Resource leveraging and mitigating risk through outsourcing also
14
15 enables '...other people's resources to accomplish the marketer's purpose'. As Drakopolou
16
17 Dodd and Patra (2002, p.132) report '[E]xamining co-operation and alliance may offer us
18
19 greater understanding than the concept of competition...'. The women in our sample are
20
21 operating very similar businesses in terms of offer to market but are more than happy to
22
23 work with other women that in other categorisations would be competitors. Like Jack *et al.*
24
25 (2010, p.333) found, networks are effective where there is 'affinity, shared attitudes and
26
27 trust...'. Indeed, how our women work together supports the work of Jones and Parry (2011)
28
29 who found that networking with others in the same sector was important as it provided
30
31 indirect business support. Collaborating with other women in their network to help fulfil
32
33 contracts also echoes work by Orser and Elliott (2015, p. 19) who found that female
34
35 entrepreneurs in their study engaged in 'entrepreneurial feminism'. Like the study
36
37 presented here, their female participants provided opportunities to other women by sharing
38
39 their power rather than competing for resources and so expressed '...feminist values
40
41 through their enterprises'.
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51

52 A further theoretical contribution concerns how these women used community engagement
53
54 as a form of networking thus making a link between the locale and the female-owned
55
56 business. This finding addresses the criticism that previous studies have not investigated the
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 degree of importance female entrepreneurs place on local networks and the spatial aspects
4
5 of networking (Hanson and Blake, 2009). The participants engaged in various philanthropic
6
7 activities which supported their businesses. This reflects the work of Martinez and Aldrich
8
9 (2011, p.20) who argue that 'Contacts created through voluntary associations...help owners
10
11 overcome the limitations of their original more identity-based networks'. This finding also
12
13 reinforces the observations made by Hills *et al.* (2008) which state that an important
14
15 element of entrepreneurial marketing concerns opportunity recognition and this is
16
17 facilitated through the entrepreneur's constant and close engagement with the market – in
18
19 this case the participants' wider community involvement. The development of relationships
20
21 with the community was not always seen as a business strategy but perceived as a mutually
22
23 beneficial relationship because it enabled the women to 'give something back to their
24
25 community'. The reciprocal arrangements between the women and their locale thus
26
27 supports the notion of 'mindful entrepreneurial marketing' where entrepreneurial
28
29 marketing and social responsibility come together to achieve a successful marketing
30
31 campaign which '...does right by the society....' (Whalen, Uslay, Pascal, Omura, McAuley,
32
33 Kasouf, Jones, Hultman, Hills, Hansen, Gilmore, Giglierano, Eggers and Deacon, 2015, p. 14).
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42

43 **Conclusions and Recommendations**

44
45 In conclusion, by capturing female self-employed marketers 'voices', this qualitative
46
47 research has moved away from an 'objectivist approach' which has dominated women's
48
49 entrepreneurship research (Hughes, Jennings, Brush, Carter and Welter, 2012, p. 431) and
50
51 surfaced the actual support mechanisms that have been utilised and valued by women
52
53 marketers. This support helps to create and sustain their businesses in a way that capitalises
54
55 on their professional and social experiences in innovative ways, such as multi-directional
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 outsourcing. The findings thus respond to Greve and Salaff's (2003, p.17) call '... to learn
4
5 more about the network composition of female and male entrepreneurs'. Moreover, the
6
7 research has responded to a call for networking research that listens 'to entrepreneurs own
8
9 stories' (Foss, 2010, p.97) and explorations of how networks are embedded in cultural
10
11 discourses and structures (Hanson and Blake, 2009).
12
13

14
15
16
17 The theoretical contribution of this study is encapsulated in a new model (see Figure 1)
18
19 which shows the key support mechanisms used by the women throughout the lifetime of
20
21 their business. These support mechanisms demonstrate that the women are embedded in a
22
23 network which consists of several heterogenous ties, all of which help to support the
24
25 business by providing access to knowledge and resources that the business may be deficient
26
27 in (Sullivan and Marvel, 2011). Even though the model is represented as a matrix, it is
28
29 implicit that women can move between the four quadrants, as support is not a static
30
31 process. The model therefore addresses Brush's (1992) suggestion that research should
32
33 recognise that for self-employed women, their business, networks and their individual
34
35 development are synergistically linked.
36
37
38
39
40
41
42

43 It is acknowledged that the model explores networks only at a particular point in time, is UK
44
45 centric, sector specific and cannot determine when the transitions between the phases take
46
47 place, which is a wider criticism of matrix models (Jobber, 2010). Future research into other
48
49 feminised industries e.g. retailing or in other professions, where relationship building is not
50
51 a professional attribute, would assess the generalisability of the model. Aspects of the
52
53 model that warrant further work include the importance of social media as a support
54
55 mechanism and whether there is a sectoral bias in this. Although the women had
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 developed their identity as marketers, they did not use the marketing professional body as a
4
5 network, which in other professions, such as accountancy, may be more prevalent. They did
6
7 however, draw upon their expertise gained from their previous corporate marketing roles.
8
9 How relationships develop through the life-cycle of the business and the extent to which
10
11 these may be a gendered aspect or part of the professional marketing skills set, therefore
12
13 needs further consideration. In addition, the women's involvement in philanthropic
14
15 activities requires exploration to determine whether community work is an actual
16
17 opportunity or negatively impacting upon their work/life balance. Related to this, it would
18
19 be of interest to explore in greater detail the extent to which pro bono work can help to
20
21 develop networks. It would also be beneficial to understand the extent to which outsourcing
22
23 to other women owned SMEs continues as a supportive mechanism as the assumption
24
25 would be that this stops once the business has sufficient internal resources. However,
26
27 women may not want this if it is indicative of a growth strategy involving employing staff
28
29 and taking on larger premises (Constantinidis, Cornet and Asandel, 2006).
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37

38 The study has several implications for practice. The research demonstrates that networking
39
40 activity changes over the life-cycle of the participants' business. Self-employed women
41
42 providing a marketing service, therefore, need to review and reflect upon the usefulness of
43
44 their networking activity in line with the way their business evolves, ensuring it is continually
45
46 'fit for purpose' and does not detract from revenue generation. For those facilitating formal
47
48 networks, such as Chambers of Commerce, the study suggests that women are unlikely to
49
50 engage with formal, government support unless these organisations adopt a more inclusive
51
52 approach, which provides more meaningful support to female-owned SMEs. Agencies like
53
54 these therefore, need to be creative with their support, by moving away from the traditional,
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 male oriented views of entrepreneurship. Rather than providing support based on the
4
5 notion that success equates to financial gains and rapid growth, the agencies could consider
6
7 success from an alternative position such as the ability to achieve a favourable work-life
8
9 balance. This then, might translate into different types of support initiatives. A voucher
10
11 scheme, for example, would allow these women to access business advice pertinent to their
12
13 particular needs and subsidised venues would enable these women to host their own
14
15 networking events. Indeed, the findings of this study underscore the value these women
16
17 placed on networking within their local community and their own self-generated
18
19 communities of practice. Policymakers could therefore work more closely with the
20
21 geographical and/or professional communities in which these women are located to provide
22
23 a co-created notion of support, which considers the needs of the women owned SMEs in the
24
25 context in which they operate. Interestingly, the women in this study did not make any
26
27 reference to professional marketing bodies, such as the Chartered Institute of Marketing
28
29 (CIM) in the UK, as part of their networking activity. Whilst it is not clear why this was, it
30
31 does suggest that there is a role to play for professional marketing organisations in
32
33 supporting SMEs. Rather than focusing upon providing support for corporate marketing
34
35 professionals, bodies like the CIM could provide more specialist support for marketers
36
37 operating in the SME sector.
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

References

- Ahl, H. (2006), "Why research on women entrepreneurs needs new directions," *Entrepreneurship, Theory and Practice*, September, Vol. 30 No. 5, pp. 595-621.
- Alakaleek, W., Cooper, S. and, Bock, A. (2014), "Networking for venture creation and development: exploring the activities of female technology entrepreneurs in Jordan," paper presented at the ISBE International Conference, November, Manchester.
- Alsos, G., Carter, S., and Ljunggren, E. (2014), "Kinship and business: how entrepreneurial households facilitate business growth", *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, Vol. 26 No. 1-2, pp. 97-122.
- Atkinson, R. (2002), "The life story interview", in Gubrium, J. and Holstein, J (Ed.), *Handbook of Interview Research: Context and Method*, Sage, London, pp. 121-140.
- Audet J., Berger-Douce, S. and St.-Jean, E. (2007), "Perceptual barriers preventing small business owners from using public support services: evidence from Canada," *International Journal of Entrepreneurship*, Vol. 11, pp. 27-48.
- Beetles, A., and L. Harris L. (2005), "Marketing, gender and feminism: a synthesis and research agenda," *The Marketing Review*, Vol. 5 No. 4, pp. 205-231.
- Bhide, A. (1986), "Hustle as strategy", *Harvard Business Review*, Vol. 64 No. 5, pp. 59-65.
- Birley, S. (1985), "The role of networks in the entrepreneurial process", *Journal of Business Venturing*, Vol. 1 No. 1, pp. 107-117.
- Bloor, M. (1978), "On the analysis of observational data: a discussion of the worth and uses of inductive techniques and respondent validation," *Sociology*, Vol. 12 No. 3, pp. 545-552.
- Bowen, G. (2008), "Naturalistic inquiry and the saturation concept: a research note", *Qualitative Research*, Vol. 8 No. 1, pp. 137-152.
- Brindley, C., Foster, C. and Wheatley, D., (2014), "Career transitions in marketing: from corporate life to self-employment", in Kelly, L (Ed.), *Entrepreneurial women: new management and leadership models. Vol. 1.* Praeger, Santa Barbara, California, pp. 121-138.
- Brush, C.G. (1992), "Research on women business owners past trends, a new perspective and future directions," *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, Vol. 16 No. 4, pp. 5- 30.
- Brush, C. (1999), "Review of women entrepreneurs: moving beyond the glass ceiling," *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 24 No. 30, pp. 586-589.
- Brush, C.G., de Bruin, A., and Welter, F. (2009), "A gender-aware framework for women's entrepreneurship," *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, Vol. 1 No. 1, pp. 8-24.

- 1
2
3 Bryman, A. (1989), *Research Methods and Organization Studies*. Routledge, London.
- 4
5 Bryman, A. and Bell, E. (2015), *Business Research Methods*, 4th Ed., Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- 6
7
8 Cohoon, J.M., Wadhwa, V. and Mitchell, L. (2010), *The anatomy of an entrepreneur: Are successful women*
9 *entrepreneurs different from men?*, Kaufmann Foundation, Kansas City.
- 10
11 Constantiniadis, C., Cornet, A. and Asandei, S. (2006), "Financing of women-owned ventures: the impact of
12 gender and other owner- and firm-related variables," *Venture Capital*, Vol. 8 No. 2, pp. 133-157.
- 13
14
15 Crick, D. and Crick, J. (2016) "Coopetition at the sports marketing/entrepreneurship interface: a case study of a
16 Taekwondo organisation", *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, Vol. 34 No. 2, pp.169-187.
- 17
18
19 Davidsson, P. and Honig, B. (2003), "The role of social and human capital among nascent entrepreneurs,"
20 *Journal of Business Venturing*, Vol. 18 No. 3, pp. 301- 31.
- 21
22
23 Drakopoulou Dodd, S. and, Patra, E. (2002), "National differences in entrepreneurial networking",
24 *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, Vol. 14 No. 2, pp. 117-134.
- 25
26
27 Faugier, J. and Sargeant, M. (1997), "Sampling hard to reach populations", *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, Vol.
28 26 No. 4, pp. 790-797.
- 29
30
31 Foss L. (2010), "Research on entrepreneur networks: the case for a constructionist feminist theory perspective,"
32 *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, Vol. 2 No. 1, pp. 83-102.
- 33
34
35 Foster, C. and Brindley, C., (2010), "Marketing women: a sector experience", *33rd ISBE (Institute for Small*
36 *Business and Entrepreneurship) Annual Conference*, London, November 2010, London.
- 37
38
39 Gartner, W.B. (2010), "A new path to the waterfall: A narrative on a use of entrepreneurial narrative,"
40 *International Small Business Journal*, Vol. 28 No. 6, pp. 6-19.
- 41
42
43 Gilmore, A.D., Carson, D., and Grant, K. (2001a), "SME marketing in practice", *Marketing Intelligence &*
44 *Planning*, Vol. 19 No.1, pp. 6-11.
- 45
46
47 Gilmore, A., Carson, D. Cummins, A. O'Donnell, A. and Gallagher, D. (2001b), "Networking as an
48 entrepreneurial aid to export marketing," *Journal of Research in Marketing and Entrepreneurship*, Vol. 3 No. 3,
49 pp. 139-143.
- 50
51
52 Gilmore, A., Carson, D. and Rocks, S. (2006), "Networking in SMEs: evaluating its contribution to marketing
53 activity", *International Business Review*, Vol 15 No. 3, pp. 278-293.
- 54
55
56 Granovetter, M. (1973), "The strength of weak ties", *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 78 No. 6, pp. 1360-79.
- 57
58
59
60

1
2
3 Greve, A. and Salaff, J. (2003), "Social networks and entrepreneurship," *Entrepreneurship, Theory and Practice*,
4 Vol. 28 No.1 , pp. 1-22.

5
6 Hanson, S. and Blake, M. (2009), "Gender and entrepreneurial networks," *Regional Studies*, Vol. 43 No.1, pp.
7 135-149.

8
9 Henry, C., Foss, L. and Ahl. H. (2016), "Gender and entrepreneurship research: a review of methodological
10 approaches", *International Small Business Journal*, Vol. 34 No. 3, pp. 217-241.

11
12 Hill, J., McGowan, P. and Drummond, P. (1999), "The development and application of a qualitative approach to
13 researching the marketing networks of small firm entrepreneurs", *Qualitative Market Research: An
14 International Journal*, Vol. 2 No. 2, pp. 71 – 81.

15
16 Hills, G., Hultman, C. and Miles, M. (2008), "The evolution and development of entrepreneurial marketing",
17 *Journal of Small Business Management*, Vol. 46 No. 1, pp. 99-112.

18
19 Hughes, K., Jennings, J., Brush, C., Carter, S. and Welter, F. (2012), "Extending women's entrepreneurship
20 research in new directions", *Entrepreneurship, Theory & Practice*, Vol. 36 No. 3, pp. 429-442.

21
22 Jack, S. (2005), "The role, use and activation of strong and weak network ties: a qualitative analysis", *Journal of
23 Management Studies*, Vol. 42, No.6, pp. 1233-1259.

24
25 Jack, S.L., Moul, S., Anderson, A. and Drakopoulou Dodd, S. (2010), "An entrepreneurial network: evolving
26 patterns of change," *International Small Business Journal*, Vol. 28 No. 4, pp. 315-337.

27
28 Jayawarna, D., Jones, O. and Marlow, S. (2015), "The influence of gender upon social networks and
29 bootstrapping behaviours", *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, Vol. 31 No. 3, pp. 316-329.

30
31 Jobber, D. (2010), *Principles and Practice of Marketing*, McGraw-Hill Education, Maidenhead.

32
33 Jones, R. and Parry, S. (2011), "Business support for new technology-based firms: A study of entrepreneurs in
34 North Wales", *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Research*, Vol. 17 No.6, pp. 645-662.

35
36 Kilenthong, P., Hultman, C. and Hills, G. (2016) "Entrepreneurial marketing behaviours: impact of firm age, firm
37 size and firm's founder", *Journal of Research in Marketing and Entrepreneurship*, Vol. 18 No. 1, pp.127-145.

38
39 King, N. (2004), "Using templates in the thematic analysis of text," in Cassell, C. and Symon, G. (Ed) *Essential
40 guide to qualitative methods in organizational research*, Sage, London, pp. 256-270.

41
42 Klyver, K. and Grant, S. (2010), "Gender differences in entrepreneurial networking and participation,"
43 *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, Vol. 2, No.3, pp. 213-227.

44
45 Korczynski, M. (2002), *Human Resource Management in Service Work*. Palgrave Macmillan, London.

46
47 Larson, A. (1992), "Network dyads in entrepreneurial settings: a study of the governance of exchange
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

relationships," *American Science Quarterly*, Vol. 37 No. 1, pp. 76-104.

Loscocco, K. and Bird, S. (2012), "Gendered paths: why women lag behind men in small business success," *Work and Occupations*, Vol. 39 No.2, pp. 183-219.

Maclaren, P. and Catterall, M. (2000), "Bridging the knowledge divide: issues on the feminisation of marketing practice," *Journal of Marketing Management*, Vol. 16 No. 6, pp. 635-646.

Maroto-Sanchez, A. (2012), "Productivity in the services sector: conventional and current explanations," *The Service Industries Journal*, Vol. 32 No. 5, pp. 719-746.

Martinez, M. A. and Aldrich, H. (2011), "Networking strategies for entrepreneurs: balancing cohesion and diversity," *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Research*, Vol. 17 No.1, pp. 7-38.

Mattis, M. (2004), "Women entrepreneurs: out from under the glass ceiling," *Women in Management Review*, Vol. 19 No. 3, pp. 154-163.

McGregor, J. and Tweed, D. (2002), "Profiling a new generation of female small business owners in New Zealand: networking, mentoring and growth," *Gender, Work and Organisation*, Vol. 9 No.4, pp. 421-438.

Mirchandani, K. (1999), "Feminist insight on gendered work: new directions in research on women and entrepreneurship", *Gender, Work and Organisation*, Vol.6 No. 4, pp.224-35.

Moore, D.P. and Buttner, E. (1997), *Women entrepreneurs: Moving Beyond the Glass Ceiling*. Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Morris, M., Schindehutte, M. and LaForge, R. (2002), "Entrepreneurial marketing: a construct for integrating emerging entrepreneurship and marketing perspectives", *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, Vol. 10 No. 4, pp. 1-19.

Morrish, S., Miles, M. and Deacon, J. (2010), "Entrepreneurial marketing: acknowledging the entrepreneur and customer-centric interrelationship", *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, Vol. 18 No.4, pp.303-316.

Munch, A., Miller McPherson, J. and Smith-Lovin, L. (1997), "Gender, children and social contact: The effects of childrearing for men and women", *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 62 No.4, pp. 509-20.

Neergaard, H., Shaw, E. and Carter, S. (2005), "The impact of gender, social capital and networks on business ownership: a research agenda", *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Research*, Vol. 11 No. 5, pp. 338-357.

O'Cass, A. and Morrish, S. (2016), "Anatomy of entrepreneurial marketing", *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, Vol. 24 No. 1, pp. 2-4.

- 1
2
3 Orser, B. and Elliott, C. (2015), *Feminine capital: Unlocking the power of women entrepreneurs*. Stanford
4 Business Books, Stanford.
5
6
7 Park, J., Lee, S. and Morgan, R. (2011), "A negative side of outsourcing marketing functions and market-based
8 learning process", *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, Vol. 19 No. 5, pp.471-486.
9
10 Perren, L. and Ram, M. (2004), "Case-study methods in small business and entrepreneurial research: mapping
11 boundaries and perspectives," *International Small Business Journal*, Vol. 22 No.1, pp. 83-99.
12
13
14 Renzulli, L.A., Aldrich, H.E and Moody, J. (2000), "Family matters: gender, networks and entrepreneurial
15 outcomes," *Social Forces*, Vol. 79 No. 2, pp. 523-46.
16
17
18 Resnick, S., Cheng, R., Brindley, C. and Foster, C. (2011), "Aligning teaching and practice: a study of SME
19 marketing", *Journal of Research in Marketing and Entrepreneurship*, Vol. 13 No. 1, pp. 37-46.
20
21
22 Sharafizad, J. (2011), "Determinants of business networking behaviour of women in small business," *Small
23 Enterprise Research*, Vol. 18 No. 2, pp. 158-160.
24
25
26 Short, J., Ketchen, D., Combs, J. and Ireland, R.D. (2010), "Research methods in entrepreneurship:
27 opportunities and challenges," *Organizational Research Methods*, Vol. 13 No.1, pp. 6-15.
28
29
30 Sullivan, D. and Marvel, M. (2011), "How entrepreneurs' knowledge and network ties relate to the number of
31 employees in new SMEs", *Journal of Small Business Management*, Vol. 49 No. 2, pp. 185-206.
32
33
34 Terjessen, S. and Sullivan, E. (2011), "The role of developmental relationships in the transition to
35 entrepreneurship: a qualitative study and agenda for future research", *Career Development International*,
36 Vol 16 No. 5, pp. 482-506.
37
38
39 Wagener, S., Gorgievskia, M. and Rijdsdijk, S. (2010) "Businessman or host? Individual differences between
40 entrepreneurs and small business owners in the hospitality industry", *The Service Industries Journal*, Vol. 30 No.
41 9, pp. 1513-1527.
42
43
44 Waring, T. and Wainwright, D. (2008), "Issues and challenges in the use of template analysis: two
45 comparative case studies from the field", *The Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods*, Vol. 6 No.1, pp.
46 85-94.
47
48
49 Warren, L. (2004), "Negotiating entrepreneurial identities: communities of practice and changing discourses,"
50 *Entrepreneurship and Innovation*, Vol. 5 No. 1, pp. 25-35.
51
52
53 Whalen, P., Uslay, C., Pascal, V., Omura, G., McAuley, A., Kasouf, C., Jones, R., Hultman, C., Hills, G., Hansen, G.,
54 Gilmore, A., Giglierano, J., Eggers, F. and Deacon, J. (2016), "Anatomy of competitive advantage: towards a
55 contingency theory of entrepreneurial marketing", *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, Vol 24 No. 1, pp. 5-19.
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 Wheatley, D., Foster, C. and Brindley, C., (2011). "Women's careers in marketing: self-employment in Europe",
4 *Regional Studies Association Annual Conference*, Newcastle University, Newcastle, April 2011.

5
6
7 Wilson, F. and Tagg, S. (2010), "Social constructionism and personal constructivism, getting the business
8 owner's view of the role of sex and gender", *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, Vol. 2 No.1,
9 pp. 66-82.

10
11 Yang, M. and Gabrielsson, P. (2017), "Entrepreneurial marketing of international high-tech business-to-
12 business
13 new ventures: A decision-making process perspective", *Industrial Marketing Management*, Vol. 64 July, pp.
14 147-160.
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60