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The commercial home enterprise: Labour with love

Abstract

Within the wider context of critical discourse, this paper examines the personal experiences of commercial home hosts in New Zealand, focusing on issues of copreneurship and work-life balance. When the home has a commercial domain, the impact of hosting on a host's life can be immense; hence the commercial home provides a unique context in which to examine the issue of work-life balance. This paper presents the findings of a study of 12 commercial home hosts conducted to explore the strategies commercial home hosts employ to meet their objectives and maintain a sense of home and a balanced lifestyle. The study employed an interpretive and inductive approach to data collection and analysis. Key themes to emerge from the data elucidate the unique nature of the commercial home as a business, strategies for managing 'work' and 'life' in the commercial home effectively, and the dominant role of women taken in the operation of the commercial home; a role the women enjoy as 'labour with love'. Although gender roles have been widely discussed in the commercial homes literature, the nature and impact of copreneurial activity, and the personal perspective of how life and business is balanced specifically within a commercial home accommodation enterprise remain relatively unexplored. The paper concludes with the authors questioning whether current copreneurship theory is adequate for understanding the commercial home enterprise, given the skewed division of roles and the motivations and life stage of operators. This leads the authors to call for further research on gendered roles in commercial home enterprises.

Keywords:
commercial home; host; work-life balance; copreneurship; New Zealand

Introduction

While there is an expansive body of knowledge on small business (SMEs), what is less well known is why and how business owners choose their operating location (Horgan, 2001). A home-based business is a business operation located in a private residence, usually that of the owner(s). The New Zealand home-based business sector is significant, as according to the global entrepreneurship monitor, presented by Douglas (2004), two-thirds of New Zealand entrepreneurs are home-based (about 214,000). This study also found that home-based entrepreneurs tend to be 'solo' operators with

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few employees. For 64% of respondents, their home-based business is their personal primary source of income.

Business operations located in the home are considered to be relatively cost efficient, as there is a close association between the returns and the owner-manager's effort level. The self-employed often experience greater psychological job involvement in their work role due to their personal responsibility for the survival of the enterprise (Parasuraman & Simmers, 2001). Home-based business operators have been reported as experiencing higher personal satisfaction, customer satisfaction and quality of life than do non-home-based businesses (Walker, 2003). Hundley (2000) also found that home-based self-employment provides men and women with greater scope for adjusting their work efforts to meet their household's needs for productivity and income. Holmes, Smith, and Cane (1997) found differences in age and life stage of male and female home-based business operators, which they theorise can be attributed to the fact these operators are starting businesses as a response to specific critical incidents in their lives.

There are however many associated challenges of home-based business, as found in a study by Wilson and Mitchell (2004); the challenge home-based business operators ranked highest was social environment, that is, the problem of separating work activities from home life. Working long hours can also be an issue for home-based operators, as when the business is located in the home, when does the operator escape work? Feelings of isolation and invisibility can emerge from working in an environment with little or no contact with peers. As such, a home-based business must be carefully balanced in order to maintain the essence of a personal home through fusing private life and work domains.

Work-life balance issues have received significant attention over the last five years in New Zealand and Australia 'with considerable policy activity in relation to issues like workplace and industrial 'flexibility,' care of dependents, leave arrangements and hours of work' (Pocock 2005, p. 198). Key assumptions underlying the concept of work-life balance are that work and life are separate and that balance between the two spheres is sought (Pringle, Olsson & Walker, 2003). Guest (2002, p. 263) advances the 'objective' indicators of balance, primarily 'time at work versus free time', to provide a more subjective definition of work-life balance as being "a perceived balance between work and the rest of life."

Concepts related to work-life balance are often theoretically cloudy and empirically ill-defined (Felstead, Jewson, Phizackles & Walters 2002). These factors underpin the dearth of literature on work-life balance in the small business context. The dearth is not surprising; partly because work-life balance policies in the small business context are generally informal and individually negotiated making them difficult to pick up in surveys, but also because formal work-life balance policies are predominately developed in the context of large organisations, with dedicated HRM departments (Evans, 2001; Galinsky & Bond, 1998). As such, there remains a paucity of knowledge about work-life balance within the context of small tourism enterprises such as the commercial home.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE IN THE COMMERCIAL HOME ENTERPRISE: THE PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

A 'commercial home' refers to types of accommodation where visitors or guests pay to stay in private homes (Lynch, 2005). Examples include bed and breakfasts, farmstays, guest houses, small family hotels, homestays, historic houses, self-catering accommodation, timeshares, etc. With its context being the 'home', the commercial home recog-

nises the fusion of the commercial, social and private domains of hospitality proposed by Lashley (2000). A commercial home allows interaction between a host and/or family usually living upon the premises and with whom public space is, to a degree, shared. Furthermore, the commercial domain is important as a commercial home has to generate an income (Lynch, 2005); although, it may not be the sole objective. Thus, consideration of private, commercial and social settings become important in the study of commercial homes. Moreover, the commercial home becomes an ideal context for the study of work-life balance within small home-based tourism and hospitality businesses.

Lynch (2005) identifies the commercial home sector as a numerically important yet often neglected part of the commercial accommodation sector. Previous research has identified the significance of the home setting in the construction of the 'hospitality' experience from the guest's perspective (Lynch, 2000; Lynch & MacWhannell, 2000). However, a focus on the host's relationship and experiences of their commercial home are also important as this ultimately impacts on the experience provided for guests. Studies that have examined the host's relationship with their commercial home have discussed issues of lifestyle motivations (Di Domenico, 2003; Lynch, 1998; Lowe, 1988; Morrison, Baum & Andrew, 2001; Tzschentke, 2004), the contributions of personal networks (Di Domenico, 2002; Lowe, 1988; Lynch, Halcro, Buick & Johns, 2004; Morrison, 1996), and host-guest dynamics (Pearce, 1990; Stringer, 1981; Tucker & Keen, 2005).

A discussion of the profile of commercial home hosts in relation to their demographic profile, entrepreneurial type, geographical, employment, economic factors, characteristic of the home business, and guest profile is overviewed by Lynch (2005). However, these studies have focused predominantly on the construction of the product or performance of the home hosting experience, rather than examining the personal relationship that hosts have with their commercial home, and specifically, how they maintain work-life balance when the nature of their work is home-based. Indeed, Di Domenico (2003) articulates in her study of the hospitality lifestyle entrepreneur the desire among hosts to have 'a clearer line between work and private leisure time' (Di Domenico, 2003, p. 255).

More generally within the tourism literature, there has been increasing attention given to the study of lifestyle entrepreneurship (Ateljević & Doorne, 2000; Morrison et al., 2001). Such studies have given prominence to the significance of personal values in business performance. Previous studies into family business in tourism and hospitality, wherein the distinguishing characteristic is that of the family owner nature of the business, has proffered how families, their goals, life-cycles and interrelationships can affect the running of a business (Getz & Carlsen, 2000; Getz, Carlsen & Morrison, 2004). One important perspective evidenced in the published literature is the impact of copreneurship on the business venture. Copreneurship describes couples (with a marital or pseudo-marital link) who share ownership of, commitment to, and responsibility for a venture (Barnett & Barnett, 1988). Ponthieu and Caudill define the phenomenon specifically as "married couples who jointly own and jointly operate business organizations or who otherwise share risk, ownership, responsibility, and management by working together in any phase of business venturing" (1993, p. 3). Copreneurship represents an opportunity for couples engaging in self-employment to manage their work and family responsibilities more flexibly and effectively (Smith, 2000).

Higher numbers of women entering self-employment, couples from working from home and the relative ease of entry to self-employment via franchising are also factors seen as contributing to the increase in numbers of copreneurs (Fitzgerald & Muske, 2002). However, empirical research is grounded in acknowledgement of the fact that considering copreneurial couples as 'outliers' in terms of the field of entrepreneurship and self-employment research is outmoded (Tompson & Tompson, 2000). de Bruin and Lewis (2004) stress that statistical difficulties in many countries make it not possible to give accurate figures of copreneurship, but that one figure that is indicative of the potential impact of copreneurial activity in a broader form is the increasing numbers of "unpaid family workers" that are recorded by government statistical agencies.

According to Marshack (1994, p. 49), the term copreneur represents more than the simple equation of marital partner plus business partner as "co-entrepreneurial couples represent the dynamic interaction of the systems of love and work." This conclusion also represents the need for the elimination of the cultural myth that views home and work domains as separate (Marshack, 1994); a point especially relevant in the context of SMEs in which there is often little or no distinction between the contexts of home and work. Tompson and Tompson (2000) went so far as to describe the copreneurial venture as being akin to the couple's offspring: since they created it, they tend to cherish, protect and nurture it more than business partners who don't have the same attachment between them.

Work equality between the copreneurial partners is frequently more perception than reality (Rowe & Hong, 2000) as symmetrical partnerships are rare (Baines & Wheelock, 1998). Instead, it was more typical to find women working in a clerical or support capacity in the firm. Marshack's (1994) comparative study between dual-career couples and copreneurial couples in the United States found decision-making and responsibilities were not equal. Instead, work (at home and in the business) was arranged around traditional sex orientations. Lewis and Harris (2005) stress that this represents an interesting potential paradox: the tenets of the construct of copreneurship are undermined by the actual experiences of those so labelled. Smith (2000) explains that a dynamic of gender-based biases in the workplace historically been ascribed to large organisations is alive and well in some copreneurial ventures. She stresses that male partners are often largely responsible for decision making in the firms, and spend a larger proportion of their time working in the business than did the female partner. This in turn created perceptions by external parties such as customers that the male was the 'boss'.

Whilst gender roles have been widely discussed in the commercial homes literature (for example, Buick, 2003; Kinnaird & Hall, 1994; Lynch, 1999; Whatmore, 1991), the nature and impact of copreneurial activity, and the personal perspective of how life and business is balanced specifically within a commercial home accommodation enterprise remain relatively unexplored. As such, several questions guided this study from a host's perspective. The purpose of this paper is to report on the personal experiences and views of hosts operating a commercial home in relation to how they define it as a home versus a business, strategies to maintain work-life balance, and the operational control of the home taken on by the females in the copreneurial enterprise.

Methods

To address the research questions outlined above, and in order to examine the personal experiences of hosts operating a commercial home for its impacts on work-life balance, an interpretive approach to research design was employed. The approach thus followed previous experiential tourism studies that have applied qualitative approaches (e.g. McIntosh & Siggs, 2005). In-depth conversational interviews were conducted with 12 home hosts in both an urban (Auckland) and rural (Waikato) region of New Zealand in April 2006. The stories of the hosts are presented and discussed to encourage readers to consider how researchers may frame research to hear personal experiences and how they can be used to extend and challenge existing ways of conceptualising and understanding experiences in tourism.

Nine sites were visited in total, as husband and wife couples were interviewed at three sites. At the other six sites, four women and two men were interviewed individually. All respondents interviewed were owners of their commercial home; most had been in business for less than five years; none employed additional staff to help in the commercial home; the majority did not own any other business; and the largest proportion of their guests were international visitors. All participants were aged over 40 years old, with the clear majority aged over 60 years old. Only three hosts interviewed have children living in their home at present which is not surprising, given the age of the majority of interviewees most of their children have long since left home.

Each interview lasted approximately one to one and a half hours. Commercial home businesses were identified from a search of internet sites (e.g. www.athomenz.org.nz). Questions posed in the in-depth interviews related to the business characteristics of the commercial home; major influences in establishing the commercial home enterprise; the experience they provide for guests; the extent to which the commercial home is a home and the extent to which it is a business; private/public zones within the home; their experiences of running the venture (best experiences and worst experiences); lessons they have learned from hosting; personal behaviour around guests; strategies for managing work-life balance; nature of host's partner/children's relationship with the commercial home. Each interview was tape recorded and later transcribed for accuracy of data. Data analysis was inductive, and each author conducted the analysis independently and then together to increase the validity of the research. Three key themes emerging from the data are elaborated below in relation to the work-life balance issues of commercial home hosts.

Study findings

HOW MUCH 'BUSINESS' IS IN THE COMMERCIAL HOME BUSINESS?

To determine how the commercial home was conceptualised in terms of the degree to which it is considered a home or a business, participants were asked to position their lodging on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being a business and 10 being a home. Overall, it is clear that the large majority position their premises as a home, both in terms of their own thinking, which is also further reinforced by the guest's ability to relax and treat it as if they were at home.

"A home; a ten. The business side of it is supplementary, that's about all it is."

"Well, we're a home more than a business. I mean to be perfectly honest we're not making much money out of it. It is our home, if people want to come and stay here, they come, we treat them as we would treat friends or relatives."

"It's a ten, it's a still a home because the bed and breakfast is such a small part of it."

"Yes a home for sure. 90% of the guests give me a hug when they leave."

While hosts were adamant that they did not act in a formal manner towards guests as they were technically 'in their own home', they did stress that it is important to make some effort when hosting. The hosts spoke of striving to make guests comfortable and acting in the hosting role such as being dressed in suitable attire for hosting, for example changing out of the gardening clothes prior to interacting with guests.

"Well, I might put a clean pair of trousers. ..I think that it's a bit of give and take; we accept them as they are as long as they accept us as we are. Within the bounds of good manners, but its no good trying to pretend you're somebody you're not because you soon get found out."

"Just care about them and look after them and you want them to enjoy it and have good impressions of their time. Just be thoughtful I think is important too, and fuss over them a little bit."

"It should be clean, tidy, well presented, colourful and you have to be prepared for emergencies with people. So our theme was to make it a home away from home."

Most of the participants do not rely on the commercial side of their home for substantial income; instead they described it as generating 'pocket money', and that they could not live on it as a sole form of income. As most of the participants are in a comfortable financial position in their retirement, they do not need to generate a substantial income from the commercial home, and thus, the home was not predominantly perceived as a commercial domain:

"This is not my livelihood; it's just a bit of fun and meeting people from around the world and having contacts. It contributes a little to my income but not that much."

"I think when the day comes where I see them as a commercial, you know pushing them through, will be the day that I stop because that doesn't interest me at all. Having said that, I have the luxury of not depending on it for my livelihood and I enjoy the fact that it's small and intimate."

"It's just a little bit of icing on the cake. It'll be a little bit of spending money overseas for me I think... It's not a money making thing. We'd never make a living doing this."

Often, hosts had more personal motivations for establishing the commercial home, such as the desire to remain in a large family home. In particular, as the house has appreciated in value due to the significant growth in the New Zealand property market over the last ten years, this further lessened the reliance on generating a commercial gain from the home enterprise, as the following quotes demonstrate:

"No, we're not doing it for the money. We're doing it because we like people and because we like the home, this house, and it's been a good investment. We just had a valuation on it the other day and it's been a very good investment."

"Our children don't live at home anymore. I think it's different if you've got young children at home I think it would make it quite hard. For us it has been a timing thing as well as the children have left home."

However, a more important financial motivation for the commercial home is the tax benefits the owners of which could take advantage of, primarily by claiming household expenses related to the commercial home.

"If we were using it as a business as a sole income, we would have to work a lot harder at marketing it. There's no pressure here, anybody who comes is a bonus for us, and yes you could make money out of it, I mean we're not working at a loss, and of course you've got all the tax advantages too, which are very nice."

"Yes, we decorated… The bedrooms were suffering from having three children, so we revamped them completely, had them made back into two bedrooms and redecorated down there. It was all stuff that needed to be done. It was just a tax deductible expense."

STRATEGIES TO MAINTAIN THE SENSE OF HOME AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE

In the early days of hosting, several participants spoke about being 'on edge', 'uptight', 'nervous', which led them to invest huge amounts of time and energy and even over-hosting guests.

"I think when we started it was difficult to know, to what degree people wanted to communicate."

"I know when I first started, it was big! The whole thing seemed huge and you want to get it right and the cooking, the timing."

As they gain more experience though, the activity of preparing the home for guests, providing hospitality, engaging with guests, and cleaning up once they depart all seems less daunting. Along with a more relaxed and confident attitude, the participants had also established routines and systems that enable them to look after the commercial side of the home efficiently, thus having more time to enjoy hosting and other activities in their lives.

"Yeah, and that's why you've just got to learn to relax and they've just basically got to take you as they find you. You've got to be yourself, so just relax and enjoy it."

"You have to hone up on your organisational skills and you have to be very compatible and you can't think of you as an individual having certain tasks to perform and leave the others to your partner. You've got to be prepared to step in and do whatever's necessary."

Capacity limits were set in consideration of, and in consultation with, wider life stakeholders such as friends and family. Although many of the participants said that their family supports their hosting endeavours, this was balanced with the demands from wider family to be able to 'come home' for celebrations such as birthdays and Christmas to have the home for just family, without guests.

"I had one yesterday which I had to turn away because they wanted to turn up on the 24th and 25th of December… My daughters are most unimpressed so I've taken a solemn vow that I will not have people at Christmas no matter how nice as I've got to respect my family."

"No, I'm very lucky that if it is my golf morning, I don't think I've ever had to cancel it because people are off early, and I just walk to golf. If I feel that it is going to inconvenience me, then I don't take them. That's why I don't take a lot of people."

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN COPRENEURIAL COMMERCIAL HOME

The female participants tended to assume responsibility for catering and most other domestic tasks associated with running the commercial home and hosting guests. About half of the participants offered an evening meal as an additional service, which guests were asked to (ideally) book in advance. The provision of a meal enabled many of the hosts to demonstrate high quality hospitality and value for money to their guests. More often than not a three course meal was offered to a guest for NZ$20 - $30, so there is only a small profit margin (if any) available to the host from this activity.

> "We charge $20 for the three course meal. It is very good value, people say we don't charge enough, but we say we're doing it because we enjoy it and as long as we cover reasonable costs. I don't know whether we do."

> "You start cooking mid afternoon, because everything's homemade. I don't rush out and buy a pavlova or a something. I do everything. I make my own bread. I think that's part of the experience, if they're going to come."

Beyond merely adding value to their 'product' sold, a much stronger motivation for providing an evening meal was for the host to have the opportunity to experience intrinsic pleasure and pride in preparing and serving New Zealand style home cooking, and to demonstrate their skills in this area. Many of the hosts spoke of their love of cooking, although there is also an element of 'smart productivity' by those who cook for guests frequently. They had established tried and trusted recipes, had a staple array of ingredients always on hand, and are confident multi-taskers who can work quickly in the kitchen. The following quotes also indicate the pride in serving New Zealand favourites:

> "Well, we have a three course meal. We might have soup, or a fresh salad, or mixed vegetable or hors d'oeuvres or something like that. Some sort of fish dish, and potato. I've got quite a few good recipes. Devilled chicken, and we grow all our own vegetables, well 90% of our own vegetables so we have fresh vegetables. It can be either salad or cooked or whatever and then for the sweets could be pavlova, it depends whether they're from overseas or not. Rhubarb pie, apple crumble, anything like that."

> "Chicken's a good favourite, and there's all sorts of things you can do with chicken. Sometimes it's a three course meal, mainly in the winter it would be a three course. It might be a roast. It's a good wholesome meal, a tasty meal. And dessert, in summer its usually fresh fruit and ice-cream and wine. A glass of wine theoretically, but we usually end up drinking a bottle! I'll do a roast, and when I have three guests or so on, we are able to have a lovely big leg of lamb but it is always a good home-cooked meal and fresh vegetables, and a dessert."

For many of the female hosts, their experience of hosting friends and family over the years without earning revenue, provided excellent training and the confidence to embark on running the commercial home enterprise to paying guests:

> "Yeah I think you've got to be relaxed and be used to people and be yourself and don't be fazed when you've got about half a dozen people walking in for breakfast. As I said I've done it all my life and my mother did it."

> "I've been hosting people for nothing for donkey's years; the only difference is that these jokers are paying for it. It's the only difference. We lived down on a station in the East Coast for twenty years and if we had two weekends a year for just the two of us we were lucky."

Discussion and conclusion

Three key themes are reported from the study of commercial home hosts in New Zealand. Firstly, the degree to which hosts consider their enterprise a home versus a business; secondly, the strategies used by hosts to maintain a sense of home and work-life balance; and thirdly, the dominant role of the women in the copreneurial arrangement. Findings showed that hosts predominantly view their commercial home as a home first and foremost rather than a business; as a place for family and relaxation; 'of being at home'. This is perhaps in contrast to some other forms of commercial accommodation (McIntosh & Siggs, 2005). According to Lynch (2005), a commercial home has to generate an income, although, it may not be the sole objective. This was found to be very much the case in the study reported in this paper, as many participants do not rely on the commercial side of their home for substantial income. Instead, many described it as generating 'pocket money', and that they could not live on it as a sole form of income, or as was often the case given that many of the participants are in a comfortable financial position in their retirement, they do not need to generate income. Despite the strong finding that they have a home first and the business is very much secondary, the longer they had had the commercial home, the more knowledge they had amassed enabling them to achieve greater productivity and strategies to maintain work-life balance.

Many hosts reported that they had got smarter at hosting over time, becoming less 'on edge' and 'nervous' as they became more experienced at hosting, and being more prepared in preparing the home for guests. As they gain more experience though, the activity of preparing the home for guests, providing hospitality, engaging with guests, and cleaning up once they depart all seems less daunting. Along with a more relaxed and confident attitude, the participants had also established and learned routines and systems that enable them to look after the commercial side of the home efficiently, thus having more time to enjoy hosting and other activities in their lives.

Several participants had set limits on their capacity to host in both active and passive ways. Active strategies included, for example, by blocking out nights as not available, excusing themselves from guest interaction when they had to go out for the night due to another obligation, or giving priority to family and friends coming to stay. However, some more passive strategies used to set capacity limits were also found, for example not answering the phone, not offering a dinner, or not actively marketing the home. Whether the strategies were active or passive, they were undertaken by the hosts in order to preserve enthusiasm and energy for the commercial home, and to balance other obligations they have in their lives. Frequently, hosts reported that they scheduled hosting around personal and family events, responsibilities and circumstances; choosing consciously not to host during these times.

While one partner was found to assume a much greater responsibility for the venture, which is not surprising as few partners in copreneurship arrangements report an equal sharing of tasks and division of responsibility (Ponthieu & Caudill, 1993). However, what was surprising in relation to most studies of copreneurship was that the dominant role taken in the enterprise was by the female partner. In this study, the women undertook most of the roles around care of guests and domestic operations of the home. This is not surprising given the nature of the venture, that is, hosting guests in the domestic domain and is commonplace in home hosting whereby the hosting enterprise remains a secondary income activity (Pearce, 1990; Stringer, 1981). It is typical of mature aged women to be comfortable with gendered roles in the house arranged around traditional sex orientations. While work equality between the copreneurial partners is frequently more perception than reality (Rowe & Hong, 2000), the women in this study were very

happy that they assumed much greater control over the operation of the commercial home.

The couples in the study did represent the copreneurial dynamic interaction of the systems of love and work (Marshack, 1994). "Copreneurs are portrayed as having a unique opportunity to achieve control and satisfaction in both the work and family domains; the couples are examining family values, seeking to nurture family relationships, finding greater intimacy, and incorporating human concerns into a business" (Muske & Fitzgerald, 2006, p. 193). These authors go further to suggest that as the partners near retirement, working together can become more appealing as income needs can often be less demanding. It could also be proposed that a diminished need for income at their life stage also places less pressure in a reciprocal manner on the business and their relationship.

Although while structurally the many of the enterprises fall into the realm of copreneurship due to the married couples who share ownership of and commitment to (Barnett & Barnett, 1988), the large responsibility for the operation of the commercial home enterprise was found to be assumed by the women. The host behaviours found in this study around nurturing guests are in line with Tompson and Tompson's (2000) description of the copreneurial venture as being 'akin to the couple's offspring which they cherish, protect and nurture the venture in hence it's customers, the guests.

Considering the findings in this study, the authors question if copreneurship is a completely adequate theory for understanding women's roles in the commercial home. Technically the commercial home fits the definition of copreneurship, but largely because it is typical for married/legal partners in New Zealand to both 'own' the house legally. The house in the case of the commercial home is the business premises. However, the findings in this study challenge usual copreneurship patterns, as the women have a much more dominant role in the venture than do the men. While the findings and discussion in this paper offer alternative perspectives from other studies of copreneurship in terms of gendered roles, drawing on women's entrepreneurship theory would also be useful for scholars studying commercial home enterprises. De Bruin, Brush and Welter (2007, p. 334) in their quest for a coherent framework for women's entrepreneurship research, state that "there is some doubt as to whether current research approaches and methodologies adequately incorporate the "reality" of women's entrepreneurship". In this study, the personal life stage of mature women was potentially found to be a strong motivator for embarking on the establishment and operation of a commercial home enterprise. Many of the female participants had grown up watching and learning from their mothers who hosted guests to the family home, and this is something the participants have naturally described themselves as doing for most of their lives in their own homes. This has required considerable labour, but is something that they enjoy, so the decision to do it as an enterprise was reached quite easily; perhaps it could be described as a labour of love. Thus, it seems the field of women's entrepreneurship, as does the field of copreneurship, requires more dialogue and research.

Further to studying the individual commercial home operators from a gendered perspective, greater research which considers the way in which the home-based business and the home-based business's owner are closely interrelated (Storey, 1994) by the links between the business life-cycle model and the 'life-cycle' of the business owner, or their family, or on the relationship between personality, personal 'life course events' and business milestones would also be beneficial for understanding commercial home

enterprises and their owners. In short, the commercial home environment poses a unique context for a wealth of future research to consider the intersections of 'home' and 'business' and the copreneurial enterprise.

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