INTRODUCTION

Of the forty million businesses in the world, only 2.6 million of those businesses are Black owned. To understand the barriers and opportunities for business ownership for Black entrepreneurs. Researchers conducted a qualitative interview with six Black owned businesses in London, England and will conduct interviews with six similar businesses throughout Wisconsin. Through face-to-face interviews, researchers asked business owners twenty questions about the process of beginning, financing, and sustaining a business. Business owners shared their most significant challenges and opportunities.

According to the African American Population Report, between 2007 and 2012 Black owned businesses in the United States increased 34.5% to 2.6 million Black firms. Yet, more than 95% of these businesses are sole proprietorship or partnerships with no paid employees. This study helped researchers to understand how black owned businesses are able to overcome barriers to establish themselves and grow. Upon return to UW-Eau Claire, student research teams participated in a one credit independent study in their major to complete the analysis of their research data collection. Data gleaned from this study will inform African Americans, seeking to start a business, about the experiences of established Black business owners in developing their respective businesses.

RESULTS

- Why did you start your business?
- Challenges getting your business off the ground?
- Where did you acquire funding?
- Would things have been easier if you were someone else?

RECOMMENDATIONS

To conclude our interviews, we asked each business owner for some advice that they would give to future minority business owners. The most popular answers were connecting with people who will help you and keep you motivated, go to programs that will help you learn more about business and be prepared to sacrifice your time and money.

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