Factors Influencing Female Small Business Ownership
within Regional and Urban Environments
in Australia and Fiji

Benidito Waqailiti

Dip.Ed (Arts), B.A., MBA

Department of Marketing
Griffith Business School
Griffith University

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
March 2011
ABSTRACT

The importance of small businesses in contributing to growth in many national economies is widely reported. Although there is some recognition that much of this growth is attributable to the escalation in the number of female-owned enterprises, female business ownership remains markedly under-represented in many world economies. Moreover, this disparity appears more prominent when considering developed and developing country contexts. Curiously, to date, there is a paucity of research explaining the likely reasons underlying these apparent differences. This remains a significant gap in the literature. To remedy this apparent gap in the literature, this research will explore the factors influencing small business ownership and performance in a developing country in the Asia-Pacific region (i.e. Fiji) and subsequently compare these results with data collected in a developed country in the same region (i.e. Australia). A specific objective of this research is to investigate prominent motivational incentives influencing female entrepreneurship (in general) and small business ownership (specifically) within both Australia and Fiji.

Exploratory interviews with a sample of forty female entrepreneurs in regional and urban localities within Australia and Fiji were conducted. Furthermore, equal numbers of participants involved within micro (less than five employees), small (six to ten employees) and medium-sized enterprises (eleven to thirty employees) were recruited for this research. A conceptual model and series of nine propositions (with associated sub-propositions) explaining female small business ownership is presented. Results suggest that female entrepreneurship in developed and developing economies is influenced by personal characteristics of female entrepreneurs (i.e. age, education, prior work experience), balancing work and family demands, personal motivations (push or pull), entrepreneurial orientation and external influences (financial accessibility, social networks and technological influences).

However, discernable differences were observed in relation to the above antecedent and environmental influences when considering the location of the small business enterprise. Moreover, performance differences were observed in relation to Fijian-owned and Australian-owned SMEs. Overall, this research presents a preliminary framework that has practical implications for the key industry stakeholders and governmental authorities wishing to encourage female entrepreneurship in developed economies such as Australia and developing economies in the Asia-Pacific region like Fiji.
This research has contributed to the body of knowledge in small business entrepreneurship. Based upon the extant literature and exploratory analyses, a conceptual model of SME ownership from the female entrepreneur’s perspective was developed. It represents the first comparative empirical analysis of female SME ownership in Australia and Fiji and provides a starting point for future research.

This research has made a valuable contribution in being the first to:

- Investigate female small business ownership in cross country settings (namely, Fiji and Australia);
- Utilise an inductive convergent interviewing technique to clarify and confirm the appropriateness of conceptual model and associated propositions derived through an examination of the extant literature;
- Use a two-stage inductive methodology utilising a cross-national samples;
- Introduce new constructs and reposition existing constructs into female entrepreneurship theory.

In conclusion, this original and comprehensive research has found that Fijian female entrepreneurs tend to develop micro enterprises with limited growth opportunities due to socio-cultural influences and external influences centring upon limited access to finance and new technology. In comparison Australian female entrepreneurs are attracted to high-growth enterprises in an attempt to satisfy intrinsic needs associated with wealth creation and personal development.
STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

I, Benidito Waqailiti, declare this work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

Benidito Waqailiti

March 2011
CHAPTER ONE: THESIS OVERVIEW

1.0 Introduction ................................................................. 1
1.1 Background to Research .................................................. 3
1.2 Research Problem .......................................................... 8
1.3 Justification of Research .................................................... 10
  1.3.1 Theoretical Contribution ............................................... 11
  1.3.2 Practical Contribution ................................................... 12
1.4 Methodology ................................................................. 13
1.5 Definitions and Terminology ............................................. 14
1.6 Delimitations of Research ................................................ 14
1.7 Outline of Thesis ............................................................ 15
1.8 Conclusion ................................................................. 16

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction ................................................................. 17
2.1 The Entrepreneur, Opportunity Recognition and New Venture Creation .... 17
2.2 Cultural Influences on Entrepreneurship .................................. 19
  2.2.1 Entrepreneurship and Fijian Cultural Values ....................... 22
2.3 The Entrepreneur’s Motivational Incentives for Small Business Ownership 26
  2.3.1 Female Entrepreneurship in Urban and Regional Localities ....... 29
2.4 Motivational Incentives for Female Small Business Ownership ............. 30
  2.4.1 Individual Factors ....................................................... 30
    2.4.1.1 Push and Pull Motivations ........................................... 30
    2.4.1.2 Management of Work and Family Conflict ..................... 33
    2.4.1.3 Age .......................................................................... 37
CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS (FIJIAN INTERVIEWS)

5.0 Introduction........................................................................................................... 82
5.1 Presentation of Results........................................................................................ 82
5.2 Results In Relation to Research Propositions...................................................... 82
   5.2.1 Research Proposition One (Push and Pull Motivations).............................. 82
   5.2.2 Research Proposition Two (Work/Family Conflict)......................................... 86
   5.2.3 Research Proposition Three (Age)................................................................. 89
   5.2.4 Research Proposition Four (Entrepreneurial Orientation)............................ 91
   5.2.5 Research Proposition Five (Education)........................................................... 93
   5.2.6 Research Proposition Six (Previous Work Experience)................................. 96
   5.2.7 Research Proposition Seven (Social Capital Accessibility)............................ 98
   5.2.8 Research Proposition Eight (Availability to Finance)...................................... 101
   5.2.9 Research Proposition Nine (Technological Capacity)...................................... 103
5.3 Conclusion............................................................................................................ 106

CHAPTER SIX: RESULTS (AUSTRALIAN INTERVIEWS)

6.0 Introduction........................................................................................................... 107
6.1 Presentation of Results........................................................................................ 107
6.2 Results In Relation to Research Propositions...................................................... 107
   6.2.1 Research Proposition One (Push and Pull Motivations).............................. 107
CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION

7.0 Introduction ................................................................. 133
7.1 Overview ................................................................. 133
7.2 Female Small Business Analysis ........................................ 134
7.3 Discussion of Model Results ........................................... 135
   7.3.1 Conclusions about Push/Pull Motivations (Proposition 1) 135
   7.3.2 Conclusions about Work and Family Conflict (Proposition 2) 137
   7.3.3 Conclusions about Age (Proposition 3) 138
   7.3.4 Conclusions about Entrepreneurial Orientation (Proposition 4) 139
   7.3.5 Conclusions about Education (Proposition 5) 140
   7.3.6 Conclusions about Prior Business Experience (Proposition 6) 142
   7.3.7 Conclusions about Social Capital Accessibility (Proposition 7) 143
   7.3.8 Conclusions about Availability to Finance (Proposition 8) 144
   7.3.9 Conclusions about Technology Capacity (Proposition 9) 145
7.4 Discussion on Regional and Urban Comparisons .................... 146
7.5 Research Implications ................................................ 146
7.6 Limitations .............................................................. 150
7.7 Future Research ....................................................... 150
7.8 Conclusion .............................................................. 150

Appendix A – Description of Fijian Respondents 152
Appendix B - Description of Australian Respondents 155

References 158
# TABLE OF TABLES

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Summary of General Propositions................................................................. 9  
1.1 Definitions and Terminology........................................................................... 14

## CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH PROPOSITIONS

3.1 Summary of General Propositions................................................................. 64

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1 Principles of research Paradigms................................................................. 68
4.2 Guide for Interviews....................................................................................... 73
4.3 Profile of Regional Samples (Fiji and Australia).......................................... 78
4.4 Profile of Urban Samples (Fiji and Australia)............................................... 78

## CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS (FIJIAN INTERVIEWS)

5.1 Push/Pull Motivations................................................................................... 83
5.2 Entrepreneurial Orientation.......................................................................... 91
5.3 Social Capital Accessibility........................................................................... 99
5.4 Availability to Finance.................................................................................. 101
5.3 Technology Capacity..................................................................................... 104

## CHAPTER SIX: RESULTS (AUSTRALIAN INTERVIEWS)

6.1 Push/Pull Motivations.................................................................................. 108
6.2 Entrepreneurial Orientation.......................................................................... 112
6.3 Social Capital Accessibility........................................................................... 117
6.4 Availability to Finance.................................................................................. 123
6.5 Technology Capacity..................................................................................... 126
# TABLE OF FIGURES

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Importance, Justification and Contributions of this Study ........................................ 10

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Model ........................................................................................................ 46

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1 The Convergent Interviewing Process ..................................................................... 71
4.2 Qualitative Data Analysis .......................................................................................... 80
Acknowledgments

I wish to express my most sincere and humble appreciation to Associate Professor Scott Weaven, my Principal Supervisor who has been a source of encouragement and a supportive academic mentor in my PhD journey that has fostered a collegial and mutual friendship.

I would also like to thank my Secondary Supervisor, Associate Professor Debra Grace for her valuable inputs and advice throughout my study and especially for her expertise in the final outcome of this thesis.

I acknowledge my parents, Leone and Makarita Waqailiti for their words of wisdom and love: “Au sa kaya talega vei kemudou dou kerekere ka na soli vei kemudou, dou vakasaqara ka dou na kunea, dou tukituki ka na dolavi vei kemudou.” (Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you - Luke 11:9) has always inspired me daily to persevere and excel and achieve the best that I can do.

My late brother, Manuelli, was a successful small business cane farmer who had the tenacity, perseverance and entrepreneurial drive that has been my role model throughout my academic journey.

My deepest love and respect for my wife, Ledua, a pillar of strength that has always stood beside me and supported me through my explorations into the unknown realities and who has ensured that our family and work commitments are intact.

I wish to thank the Griffith University Marketing Department academic and support staff for their assistance during my PhD journey. I also acknowledge the Ministry of i-Taukei (Indigenous Fijian Affairs) for offering me the scholarship that enabled me to undertake this study. Finally, I express gratitude to my employer the University of the South Pacific for granting me full time study leave to pursue PhD studies at Griffith University Gold Coast Campus.
1.0 Introduction

Female-owned businesses are becoming increasingly important in providing employment and contributing to the national economy in both developed and developing countries. However, both anecdotally and as is evident in the limited empirical research available (Baker, Aldrich & Liou, 1997; Riebe, 2005), it appears that there is a wide disparity between levels of female participation in small business arrangements in developing and developed countries. This lack of information regarding female participation in developed, and particularly developing countries has seriously truncated theory development in this area. To extend our current understanding of female small business ownership and performance in different regional localities, this research will examine the factors influencing female small business ownership in both Fiji and Australia and compare and contrast the salient issues surrounding small business ownership across micro, small and medium enterprises within these two countries in the Asia Pacific region. Thus, this research will extend our current understanding of minorities-ownership of small business in two different settings (i.e. developed and developing countries). Given that it is the first study to examine these issues in Fiji (and compare collected data with data drawn from Australia), this research will provide a better understanding of female entrepreneurship in Small and Medium Enterprise (SME). This new information will inform private sector bodies and public policy, particularly in relation to the types and level of assistance required to ensure the continued growth of female entrepreneurship in contextually and culturally distinct contexts.

The majority of the literature investigating female small business ownership adopts a motivational-incentives theoretical lens to investigate female choices in becoming independent small business owners or entering sole proprietorships. To date, limited empirical examination regarding female small business ownership and performance in urban and regional sectors of Australia and Fiji is found within the extant entrepreneurship and management literatures. For example, while entrepreneurial opportunities and processes (Gordon, 2005) and its relationship with performance (Kaplan & Norton, 1992; Neely, Adams & Kennerley, 2002) have been examined within the entrepreneurship literature, these issues have not been given full consideration in both developed and developing localities. Moreover, prior studies have not adopted and international perspective within the Asia-Pacific region.
Considering the findings from previous studies on factors influencing decisions to operate as independent female small business entrepreneurs, the relationships between antecedent influences, incubator organisations, the business environment and performance, the proposed conceptual model is presented as the investigative framework. Following a review of the extant literature, a conceptual model developed for this research specifies relationships between the identified constructs of age, education, previous work experience, work/family conflict, push/pull motivations, entrepreneurial motivations, finance availability, technological capability, social accessibility and organisational performance.

The conceptual model developed for the study represents a comparative snapshot of female small business entrepreneurs in urban and regional environments of Australia and Fiji which will extend our understanding of female business ownership across system contexts (micro, small and medium sized organisations), and in different intra-country regions (regional and urban environments). Given that prior public sector research suggests that locality is a major influence on female business ownership (Larsson, Hedelin, & Garling, 2003), it was deemed necessary to collect data in different regional and urban environments in order to get a more holistic picture of the factors influencing female small business ownership and performance in these regions. From a pragmatic perspective, this research will assist government, economic and professional bodies through the development of a model (refer to Figure 2.1) which represents a comprehensive illustration of female entrepreneurship. The results of this research lend support to existing theory, whilst at the same time, challenges existing beliefs regarding the current effectiveness of both private and public sector initiatives supporting female entrepreneurship and business performance in both Australia and Fiji. The importance of this research cannot be understated given that although culturally different, Fiji is often economically dependent on Australia. For example, specific Australian-based programmes such as AUSaid support local business initiatives in Fiji. Moreover, female participation in small business is a significant contributor to small business growth and success in many economies (Walker and Brown, 2004). Thus, this comparative research provides a basis for future regulatory reform to encourage future female self-employment, generally, and in the developing economy of Fiji, in particular. In addition, the resultant model informs support groups and financial institutions to better serve aspiring and established female small business owners.

An exploratory methodology using in-depth interviews is adopted as the most appropriate data collection mechanism to address the research issues of this study. Ten female small business owners from both urban and regional areas in Australia and Fiji (total 40 interviewees) participated in this research. Given the subjective nature of this research, the study adopted a
realism paradigmatic approach which sought out live experiences through verbal and written discourse. Data analysis revealed some commonalities, but also significant differences between female owned operators in urban and regional localities in Australia and Fiji.

1.1 Background to the Research

Female-owned businesses are becoming increasingly important to employment and economic growth in many Western and Asian economies (Moore, 2002; Riebe, 2005; Walker & Brown, 2004). Female owned business comprise between one-fourth and one-third of all businesses (Moore, 1999). According to estimates from the United States, women have been starting businesses at a rate more than double that of men since the 1980s (Brush 1992; Dollinger, 1999). In spite of this rapid growth, relatively little empirical research has focused on women business owners or the performance of women owned enterprise (Baker, Aldrich & Liou, 1997; Holmquist & Sundin, 1996).

Even fewer studies have paired investigations of the motivations and performance of female ventures in urban and regional sectors (Fasci & Valdez, 1998; Lerner, Brush, & Hisrich 1997). This is surprising given that small businesses are important contributors to many local economies. In the context of this research, a small business is defined as one that is independently owned and operated but is not dominant in its field of operation. In excess of twenty two million small businesses existed in the United States in 2003, accounting for 99.7 percent of employer businesses (SBA, 2003). Furthermore, small businesses with fewer than twenty employees accounted for 27 percent of US job gains during 2000-2001 (Powell & Amsbary, 2006; SBA, 2003).

In Europe, small businesses are defined as organisations that employ less than fifty people (Europa, 2003). Yet, despite their size, small businesses are seen as significant contributors to the prosperity of national economies. In fact the European Commission views small businesses as the backbone of the European economy (EUC, 2003). More than ninety nine percent of all businesses in Sweden are classified as small to medium enterprises, which means that they employ less than two hundred and fifty people. Of those, ninety four percent are small businesses with less than ten employees (MacGregor & L. Vrazalic, 2006). However, small businesses are not simply scaled down versions of large businesses (Wynarczyk, Watson, Storey, Short, & Keasey, 1993). Although size is a major distinguishing factor, small businesses have a number of other unique features that set them apart from large businesses. Therefore, an extensive review of the available literature was undertaken in order to identify and classify the features of small businesses (MacGregor & Vrazalic, 2006), and to create a
context for the study of small businesses in regionally close economies. In particular, Australia (developed country) and Fiji (a developing country) are compared and contrasted in this research.

Prior studies suggest that small businesses play a critical role in the success of national economies (Riebe, 2005; Still, 2002). Some of the benefits associated with small businesses include job growth, technological innovation, economic diversity and increased local spending (Larwood & Gutek, 1989; Longnecker, 1991; Metzler, 2006). The average small business in the United States of America has three employees and generates between $150,000 and $200,000 in annual revenue. These businesses account for fifty one percent of private sector output, representing ninety six percent of all exporters of goods, and employ thirty eight percent of high tech workers (Research, 2001). Prior research suggests that small businesses located in regional areas are affected by circumstances inherent to their location. Regional areas are of particular interest to governments, because they are typically characterised by high unemployment rates (Larsson, Hedelin, & Garling, 2003), shortage of skilled people, limited access to resources, and a lack of supporting infrastructure. However, recent studies suggest that those features that are related to resource availability, risk taking, and dealing with uncertainty are more prevalent in small businesses located in regional areas compared with metropolitan areas (Lisser, 1999; McElwee & Al-Riyami, 2003; Moore & Buttner, 1997; Morrison, 2000).

In addition, small businesses account for a large proportion of business activity in many developed and developing nations of the world and contribute significantly to local economies. For example, currently thirty two percent of small businesses in Australia are owned and operated by women, with the growth in female-owned small businesses currently exceeding the rates of growth in male owned enterprises (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2002; 2003). However, in comparison, there is limited data available as to the number of female small business owners in urban and regional areas of Fiji. Although the Fijian government suggests that small business initiatives such as the Women’s Social and Economic Development programs started in the early 1990’s (Qalo, 1997), has resulted in over sixty percent of the Fijian workforce being employed within micro and small enterprises, little is known about the current participation of women within small business arrangements (Chandra & Lewai, 2005). In addition, similar comments by Fiji’s Prime Minister, Commodore Voreqe Bainimarama, while opening the regional conference on small business development and entrepreneurship at the University of the South Pacific, suggested that small businesses have generally been neglected in Fiji though they are often recognised as critical players in the economy (Tabucala, 2010). Moreover, he suggested that the factors facilitating or impeding the growth in small
business has largely been ignored (Tabucala, 2010). Given this, it is not surprising that there is limited detail on the number of small businesses in operation, or numbers of females in small business arrangements in Fiji. The only available data on female participation in small business suggests that, as at the end of 1993, there were 14,560 businesses operating throughout Fiji. Of these, 1880 were operated by women, representing about 12.9 percent of Fijian businesses (Chandra & Lewai, 2005). However, informal employment arrangements make it difficult to accurately assess participation rates within urban and particularly regional localities (Reddy, Naidu, & Mohanty, 2004).

Australian research into women-owned businesses has mainly focused on urban or metropolitan areas (Still, Guerin, & Chia, 1990; Walker, 2000). Early research examining organisational choice behaviours identifies female entrepreneurs as typically risk averse individuals operating micro businesses predominantly within traditional retail and services sectors (Sheridan, 2003; Still & Timms, 1999). Generally, social motives are deemed more important than desired financial outcomes, leading some researchers to suggest that female small business owners are ‘satisfiers’ who limit growth in their enterprises in an attempt to maintain control over the future (social) direction of their enterprises (Brush & Hisrich, 1991; Still, Guerin & Chia, 1990). However, the literature suggests that the growth of female-owned enterprises may be limited by external constraints as many women face significant difficulty in obtaining equity investment, appropriate training and ongoing managerial advice (Boden, 2000; Still, 1991).

More recent research suggests that female entrepreneurs are not a homogenous group with some entering small business to realise goals of wealth creation and rapid business growth (Carter, 2001; Still & Soutar, 2001). In particular, these entrepreneurs are more likely ‘pulled’ into self-employment with the view to grow and replicate their business concepts. Previous studies have defined regional areas as geographical areas located outside metropolitan centres and major cities and include inner and outer regions and remote areas (Larsson, et al., 2003). In addition, previous research has identified small businesses located in regional areas are affected by circumstances inherent to their location (Keniry, Blums, Notter, Radford, & Thomson, 2003). Furthermore, regional areas are of particular interest to governments, because they are characterised by high unemployment rates, shortage of skilled people, limited access to resources and a lack of infrastructure (Keniry, et al., 2003).

Recent studies show that those features that are related to resource availability, risk taking and dealing with uncertainty, are more prevalent in small businesses located in regional areas, compared to metropolitan areas (MacGregor & Vrazalic, 2006). Moreover, businesses located
in regional areas have the potential to play a major role in developing those areas. This potential has not gone unnoticed by government organisations (Johansson, 2003). Therefore, this study will examine urban and regional areas, rather than rural and remote areas. However, research by Still (2002) suggests that the range of motivational incentives and factors influencing female entrepreneurship in non-urban regions may not be currently known. Thus, there is a need for research to extend our current understanding of female small business ownership in regional localities.

A scant number of studies indicate that women in Fiji entered entrepreneurial ventures in early 1924 and have been increasing in number to date. For example, from 1924 to 1970 there were a hundred and eighty female business owners. In 1993 from the total 14,560 small businesses operating in Fiji, 1880 (12.9 percent) had been owned and operated by women (Kama, 1995). According to Kama, Fijian women owned thirty four percent of the businesses, while Indo-Fijian women owned forty four percent and twenty two percent of businesses owned by other racial groups. Moreover, in 2003, Small Micro-Enterprise Business Survey claimed that nineteen percent of the firms were run by women. These were small and young enterprises facing problems of working capital and lack of customers (Chandra & Lewai, 2004). This slow increase in female small business ownership is attributed to males’ domination from the past to contemporary era (Planning, 2002). In addition, recent research suggests that women in Fiji have engaged in both formal and informal sectors, excelled as managers in business or public sector organisations, have been in partnership with other enterprises and have contributed significantly to the national economy. Moreover, they provide income to meet the financial, social and cultural needs of their nuclear and extended families (Chandra & Lewai, 2004).

Previous research suggests that socialisation, economic, political and structural impediments to female participation in small businesses in Fiji have received limited attention in the small business literature (Qalo, 1997). Specifically, small business growth appears to be mainly limited by cultural and structural factors. For example, as approximately eighty percent of the land is communally owned in Fiji, female entrepreneurs cannot use property as collateral to secure business-related loans. Furthermore, other constraints experienced by female small business owners in Fiji include the lack of appropriate levels of education and training, difficulty in obtaining credit and the absence of business development support and infrastructure in the rural localities (Reddy, Naidu & Mohanty, 2004). Also, limited access to credit, lack of business skills, inadequate planning and financial management and social cultural factors hinder women’s active participation in businesses. Nevertheless, they still access a very small proportion of business loans (Chandra & Lewai, 2004).
Still other research suggests that Fijian female small businesses tend to have lower sales revenue and profits than male-run businesses, indicating that they may be more risk-averse and more focused on lifestyle considerations. Majority of female entrepreneurs in Fiji tend to concentrate in the services sector and at the smaller end of the size scale (Schaper & Volery, 2004). Female business ownership in Fiji may be categorised into three main ethnic groups as; Indo-Fijians, indigenous Fijians and Others. Previous researchers suggest that Indo-Fijians dominate the economy of Fiji but in reality only 10 percent of the community could be considered as affluent (Qalo, 1997; Rao, 2004; Reddy, Naidu, & Mohanty, 2004). Their hard work has led many to be jealous of them as controlling the wealth of the nation. Indo-Fijian female entrepreneurs are generally individualistic which is consistent with the entrepreneurship culture of freedom, independence, self-sufficiency and materialistic achievements (Hofstede, 2001; Karagiannis, 1999; Kinggudu, 2002; Rao, 2004).

Indigenous Fijian female entrepreneurs are said to be communal, or do things collectively, and this seems to be counterproductive and inconsistent with the core ‘essence’ of entrepreneurship and small business ownership (Ravuvu, 1995). Different types of affirmative action initiatives have been introduced following Fijian independence in 1970, with successive governments encouraging Fijians into entrepreneurship, small businesses still appear to have a limited life. However, after 1987, a small group of entrepreneurs with modern educational entrepreneurship background, with a propensity for hard work, dedication and commitment have survived despite the cultural and social systems that challenged them. This indicates that female business owners who have managed their businesses in the context of Fijian culture and traditional values have not exhibited desired levels of performance (Qalo, 1997; Rao, 2004; Ratuva, 2000).

The third classification of female entrepreneurs is categorised as ‘others’. These include; Chinese, Europeans and Part-Europeans, and Pacific Islanders. Chinese female entrepreneurs are least in number and generally they tend to socialise and interact within their own group. They are considered to be dedicated and display the Confucian value of hard work and thrift (Rao, 2004; Reddy, et al., 2004). Also, European and Part-European female small business owners are considered to be very individualistic compared to other female groups where it is considered to be consistent with the business view in that individualism is the stepping stone to entrepreneurship (Qalo, 1997; Rao, 2004; Riebe, 2005; Shane, 2003).

However, although it appears that academicians and public policy makers are cognisant of the role of cultural values in small business ownership and operation, there has been a paucity of
scholarly enquiry into this issue. Furthermore, to date, little research has been conducted into the motivational incentives for women to enter small business arrangements in developing countries such as Fiji. While some research has examined these issues in developed nations, it is important to use this information as a benchmark when conducting a comparative analysis of small business ownership in developed and developing countries in the same geographic region. Furthermore, data on different types of business arrangements (qualified on employee size) and the ownership of business by gender are difficult to gather and unavailable. Given this, it is currently difficult to determine how many women in Fiji enter as sole proprietors or in co-preneurial (that is, with ‘spouse’ or ‘partner relationships) (Brush, 1992). Next, the research problems and salient research issues are presented.

1.2 Research Problem

As demonstrated in the above discussion, we do not currently know why female participation rates in Fiji are lower than Australia, which is especially surprising given that prior research shows that underdeveloped countries are often more adequately equipped to promote female self-employment than developed countries (Waldinger, Aldrich, Ward, 1990). This research will draw upon our current understanding of female participation in small business and examine the reasons why there is a current disparity between female participation rates within urban and regional environments in Australia and Fiji. Thus, this research will investigate the following overriding research question:

What are the factors influencing female entry into small business ownership within Australia and Fiji?

This thesis aims to examine the factors that influence female small business ownership and business performance, across different ownership arrangements and within regional and urban environments in Australia and Fiji. A comprehensive review of the appropriate literatures leads to the development of a set of general propositions and the preliminary conceptual model of female small business entrepreneurs within urban and regional environments of Fiji and Australia. The set of nine propositions (depicted in Table 1.1) assists in addressing the research problem by proposing the factors that influence female small business ownership and business performance within urban and regional environments in Fiji and Australia. Specifically, these factors include: push/pull motivations, work/family conflict, entrepreneurial orientation, age, education, previous work experience, financial availability, technological capability and social capital accessibility.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Proposition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Push/pull motivations</td>
<td>a) When assessing the self-employment decision, Fijian female entrepreneurs are more likely to be pushed into self-employment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) When assessing the self-employment decision, Australian female small business owners are more likely to be pushed into self-employment due to the influence of individualistic cultural values associated with a desire for independence and personal satisfaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work/Family conflict</td>
<td>a) When assessing the self-employment decision, Fijian female entrepreneurs are more likely to enter micro enterprises due to responsibilities associated with mataqali (extended family).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) When assessing the self-employment decision, Australian female entrepreneurs are more likely to be pulled into self-employment due to the influence of individualistic cultural values associated with matavuvale (nuclear family) and mataqali (extended family).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>a) Fijian female entrepreneurs are more likely to assess the self-employment decision later in life due to the influence of cultural values associated with veidokai (deference) and veirokovi (deference).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) When assessing the self-employment decision, younger Australian entrepreneurs (under the age of 35 years) are more likely to be influenced by their desire to realise intrinsic and extrinsic goals associated with personal development, wealth creation and status.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial orientation</td>
<td>a) When assessing the self-employment decision, Fijian female entrepreneurs are less likely to engage in high risk ventures due to the cultural values of veikauwaitaki (to recognise and feel for), veinanumi (to be considerate) and veirogorogoci (to consult with).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) When assessing the self-employment decision, Australian female entrepreneurs are more likely to be influenced by their desire to work autonomously, be creative and take risks in highly ambiguous environments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>a) When assessing the self employment decision, Fijian female entrepreneurs are more likely to be attracted to traditional female-oriented business sectors due to a lack of previous business-oriented education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) When assessing the self-employment decision, more educated Australian female entrepreneurs are more likely to be attracted to SMEs in non-traditional industries, while less educated female entrepreneurs are more likely to be attracted to SME ownership in traditional industries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous work experience</td>
<td>a) When assessing the self-employment decision, Fijian female entrepreneurs are more likely to enter micro enterprises due to their lack of prior business experience due to cultural values of vakarorogo (compliance) and veidokai (deference).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) When assessing the self-employment decision, Australian female entrepreneurs are more likely to be able to enter non-traditional industries due to their ability to leverage their previous work experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social capital accessibility</td>
<td>a) When assessing the self-employment decision, Fijian female entrepreneurs are less likely to access social capital networks due to the cultural factors of vakarokoroko (deference) and vakarorogo (compliance).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) When assessing the self-employment decision, Australian female entrepreneurs are more likely to access social capital networks in their venture development process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial availability</td>
<td>a) When assessing the self-employment decision, Fijian female entrepreneurs are less likely to access venture finance due to difficulties in acquiring collateral to secure business loans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) When assessing the self-employment decision, Australian female entrepreneurs are more likely to access venture finance due to their ability to utilise personal savings, commercial funds and public sector financing initiatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technological capability</td>
<td>a) When assessing the self-employment decision, Fijian female entrepreneurs are less likely to utilise e-commerce technology in managing the growth of their business enterprises.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) When assessing the self-employment decision, Australian female entrepreneurs are more likely to utilise e-commerce technology in managing the growth of their business enterprises.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.3 Justification for the Research

Research investigating female small business entrepreneurs’ choice in business arrangements is limited and, as such, this study represents the first empirical investigation into the factors influencing female small business ownership and business performance within regional and urban environments in Australia and Fiji. Also, the significance of this research is emphasised by its theoretical and practical contributions. The following sections justify this research on the basis of its theoretical contribution (section 1.3.1) and resultant practical implications (section 1.3.2). Figure 1.1 summarises the importance, justification and contributions of this study and provides the foundation for this research.

Figure 1.1: Importance, Justification and Contribution of this Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMPORTANCE</th>
<th>JUSTIFICATION</th>
<th>CONTRIBUTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female Small Business Entrepreneurs</td>
<td>Limited empirical research focused on women business owners or the performance of women owned enterprise within urban and regional environments of Australia and Fiji.** Gap:** Empirical entrepreneurial marketing research for the need to investigate female small business arrangements in developing and developed economies.** Theoretical:** Validates using motivational incentives for small business ownership. Individual factors influencing small business entry proposed. Development of a preliminary conceptual model of female participation and venture performance in regional and urban areas of Australia and Fiji. Makes contribution to female, small-business entrepreneurship literature regarding female small business entry, between urban and regional areas in developed and developing economies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasingly important to employment and economic growth in Western and Asian economies (Moore, 2002; Riebe, 2005; Walker &amp; Brown, 2004) In Fiji, 19% of small business owned by women (Narsey, 2003) Australia more than 32% of small business owned by women (ABS 2003; Weaven, 2006)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Small Business Entrepreneurs in developed economy. Provide framework to be utilised by female small business owners in developing countries.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTRIBUTION: Practical</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides useful information to women seeking to enter new, business venture of their own. Assist government policy makers, economic planners and professional bodies through the development of preliminary conceptual model. New framework will enhance performance and productivity of female small business in urban and regional areas in Australia and Fiji. Comparative research provide basis for future regulators reform to encourage female self-employment in the developing economy of Fiji</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Developed for this study
1.3.1 Theoretical Contribution

From a theoretical perspective, this research contributes to knowledge gained in understanding factors facilitating and/or impeding female small business ownership and business performance within regional and urban environments in developed economies such as Australia and developing countries like Fiji. In addition, this research investigates the disparity that currently exists in the rates of small business ownership in both Australia and Fiji. Female owned businesses are one of the fastest increasing populations of entrepreneurs and make significant contributions to innovation, job and wealth creation in many Western economies (Moore, 2002; Riebe, 2005; Walker, 2004; Weaven, Isaac, & Herington, 2007). Descriptive statistics from another developed locality (namely the United States of America) (U.S) suggests that the gender gap in terms of entrepreneurial activities and new venture creation has been closing rapidly (Mueller, 2004). The National Foundation for Women Business Owners reported that from 1970 to 1992, the proportion of women-owned businesses grew from five percent to more than thirty three percent (Starr & Yudkin, 1996). The number of self-employed men increased by fifty four percent from 1975 to 1990, while the number of self-employed women more than doubled during the same time period (Devine, 1994). Studies conducted in the late 1990s predicted that by 2000, nearly half of all American businesses would be owned by women (Moore & Buttner, 1997).

Currently, in Australia, more than thirty two percent of small businesses are owned and operated by women, with the growth in female-owned businesses exceeding rates of growth in male-owned enterprises (ABS, 2003). In the United Kingdom, as well as of Europe today, this statistic is also just over fifty percent (Davidson & Burke, 1994; Parkhouse, 2001), in Sweden this number was fifty percent in the late 1980s (Asplund, 1988). However, studies of women entrepreneurs in developing countries are scarce (Allen & Truman, 1993). Moreover, in many third world and developing countries, these statistics are much lower, ranging from thirty to forty three percent although these numbers are slowly climbing (Kephart & Schumacher, 2005). This lack of information is very problematic, since the social structures, work, family, and organised social life vary widely in developing countries (Hisrich & Ozturk, 1999).

Specifically, women have so far played only a peripheral role in the business life of Pacific Island countries. This is due, in large part, to prevailing socio-cultural norms, particularly the view of women's role is first and foremost concerned with the performance of domestic chores and child rearing and, not uncommonly, that business activities are the domain of males (Fairbairn & Dunlop, 2001; Hailey, 1988a). In particular, female participation in small businesses ownership in Fiji is less, compared to developed economies like Australia and the
U.S., due to socialisation, economic, political and structural impediments, which have received limited attention in the small business literature (Qalo, 1997).

Furthermore, this study will provide a solid theoretical foundation from which future research in this area can proceed and additional knowledge be acquired in the entrepreneurship literature. In particular, this research extends the understanding of the entrepreneur, opportunity recognition and new venture creation. Also, the study examines the motivational incentives for female owned small business enterprises including factors that influence their decision on small business arrangements. Factors such as; push and pull motivations, work and family conflict, age, entrepreneurial orientation, education, prior work experience, social capital accessibility, finance availability and technological capability. Specifically, this research considers the impact of cultural influences on entrepreneurship together with small medium enterprise performance and the promotion of female small businesses within urban and regional areas in developed and developing countries.

1.3.2 Practical Contributions

This study will investigate and assist in understanding the characteristics of women who tend to undertake self-employment opportunities. Moreover, this study attempts to develop a better understanding of females entering small businesses and remain as sole proprietorships. Factors such as why these women seek to enter entrepreneurial endeavours, what forms of assistance they need and what advice they offer to aspiring female entrepreneurs will provide useful information to women seeking to enter new business ventures of their own. Therefore, this research focuses upon the reasons influencing Fijian females to become small business owners, and there is a need to investigate the role of cultural norms in indigenous business ownership in developing countries. Consistent with previous gender-based research, this research evaluates differences between female entrepreneurs separately from male entrepreneurs. In addition, there is little research on entrepreneurship in the context of indigenous female participation and venture performance in urban and regional areas in developing countries like Fiji. As indigenous females are being influenced by western economies, it is important to study and extend the Western-based literature and integration of indigenous values into the suggested framework needed for successful indigenous Fijian female small businesses that will contribute immensely to Fijian small business associations like the Soqosoqo Vakamarama (Women Organisation).

Furthermore, from a practical perspective, this research will assist government policy-makers, economic planners and professional bodies through the development of a model (refer to
which will represent a comprehensive image of female entrepreneurship. It is envisaged that the model will support and challenge existing beliefs and provide a new framework that will enhance the performance and productivity of female small businesses in the urban and regional environments of Australia and Fiji. As Fiji often seeks financial support and guidance from Australia, this comparative research may provide a basis for future regulatory reform to encourage further female self-employment in the developing economy of Fiji. In addition, the model will enable support groups and financial institutions to better serve the aspiring and established female small business owners.

1.4 Methodology

The descriptive and narrative style of reporting for this research tends toward the qualitative paradigm (Healey & Perry, 2000). Such design reflects the research process of working ‘back and forth’ between inductive and deductive models of thinking in a research context (Creswell, 2003). Furthermore, the research is largely exploratory given that little is known about the issue under investigation (Zikmund, 2003). In addition, inductive research is used to gain background information, identify problems, establish potential relationships (between identified constructs) and validate general propositions. A total of forty female small business entrepreneurs are interviewed in a semi-structured format. Participants are selected from a range of industries, ensuring different demographics and reporting of distinct business entry and ownership strategies in order to construct a better understanding of females entering small business.

The study will not include live participant observation, however the study will employ a realism paradigmatic approach in that it represents lived experiences through written discourse (Perry, Riege & Brown, 1999). Moreover, consistent with the recommended in-depth interviewing approach, themes and new areas of interest are identified from anecdotal evidence procured in the face-to-face interviews and content analysed. In addition, document analysis (which refers broadly to various procedures involved in analysing and interpreting data generated from the examination of documents and records relevant to a particular study) (Merrian, 1988) is used to further triangulate collected data. Furthermore, the resultant conceptual model will provide the foundation for future quantitative research to test the model with a larger sample of female small business owners in Australia and Fiji.
1.5 Definitions and Terminology

The key terms of this research are defined below.

Table 1.2: Table of Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Business Incubator</strong></th>
<th>Dedicated premises provided to help firms get established and become profitable (Schaper &amp; Volery, 2004; Schaper, 2004)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collateral</strong></td>
<td>Property used as security for a loan. If the debt is not paid, the lender has the right to sell the collateral to recover the value of the loan (Schaper &amp; Volery, 2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entrepreneurship</strong></td>
<td>The process brought about by individuals of identifying new opportunities and converting them into marketable products or services (Baron &amp; Scott, 2005).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entrepreneurial Opportunities</strong></td>
<td>Those situations in which new products, services and processes can be introduced and sold at greater than their cost of production (Hisrich, 1989).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Home Based Business</strong></td>
<td>An enterprise where all, or most, of the work is performed at or from the owner-operators’ private residence; also known as ‘small office, home office’ (Schaper &amp; Volery, 2004; Shane &amp; Cable, 2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Innovation</strong></td>
<td>The successful implementation of creative ideas within an organisation (Schaper &amp; Volery, 2004).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Leverage</strong></td>
<td>The degree to which a business uses borrowed money; what the debt-equity ratio measures (Schaper &amp; Volery, 2004).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regional areas</strong></td>
<td>Geographical areas located outside metropolitan centres and major cities (Larsson, Hedelin, &amp; Garling, 2003).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Small Business</strong></td>
<td>A small-scale, independent firm usually managed, funded and operated by its owners, whose staff size, financial resources and assets are comparatively limited in scale (Walker &amp; Brown, 2004).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Network</strong></td>
<td>The sum of relationships that a person maintains with other people as a result of social activity (Brown &amp; Segal, 1989).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Urban area</strong></td>
<td>An area of continuous development, include many municipalities or metropolitan areas (Howard, 1996).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.6 Delimitations of Research

Setting parameters for this study establishes its boundaries, exceptions, reservations and qualifications as defined as delimitation and limitations. Delimitations simply refer to how this study is narrowed in scope (Creswell, 2003). As the survey data is exclusively sourced from Australia and Fiji, the first delimitation is female small businesses located only in regional and urban areas. Furthermore, previous conceptual research on female small business entrepreneurship has been conducted in the United States (Powell & Amsbary, 2006), however, there have been no empirical investigations conducted in Australia and Fiji. Although
some of the business formats associated with female small businesses may be similar, it would be hard to separate decisions that are made within Australia and Fiji since Fiji shares a close relationship with Australia (Downer, 2001). Therefore, this research is delimited to the Australian and Fijian female small business sectors.

The investigation of this study largely addresses women in Australia and Fiji who are qualified as small business entrepreneurs. As such, the findings of this research may not be generalisable across international settings. For example, the growth in female small business ownership in the United States has been attributed to easy access of capital from financial institutions and have suggested that female small business is increasing compared to male business entrepreneurs (Powell & Amsbary, 2006). Similarly, there is some evidence that Australian female small business ownership is increasing (Weaven & Herrington, 2006), which contrasts markedly with what is evident in Fiji (Qalo, 1997). However, there have been recent suggestions that cultural attitude may be changing for both venture capitalists and female small business entrepreneurs in Australia and Fiji (Praag, 2003; Qalo, 1997; Still, 2002).

1.7 Outline of Thesis

Chapter One of this thesis provides the background regarding female small business entrepreneurs in Australia and Fiji. The research problem is discussed, following a review of the extant literature, and the proposed research propositions are identified. The theoretical and practical importance and justification for this research is discussed, and the proposed methodological approaches are outlined. The delimitations of the study are also identified and an outline of this thesis is provided.

Chapter Two provides an overview of the literature pertaining to entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial opportunity recognition and new venture creation is provided, with a particular emphasis on the literature examining female ownership of business enterprises. The chapter concludes with a conceptual model (Figure 2.1) that used as a solid framework for this research.

Chapter Three uses the framework developed in Chapter Two to develop the research propositions and research issues of this study.
Chapter Four commences with justifying the choice of the realism research paradigm in this research, followed by a discussion of exploratory and explanatory research. Next, justification of the qualitative stage of the research into female small business ownership is detailed.

Chapter Five outlines the results from the in-depth interviews conducted with female small business owners in Fiji.

Chapter Six outlines the results from the in-depth interviews conducted with female small business owners in Australia.

Chapter Seven presents the discussion of results from in-depth interviews with Fijian and Australian female small business owners. Furthermore, the limitations and future research recommendations are outlined, prior to the thesis conclusion.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an outline of the research contained herein. The ensuing chapter begins with a thorough review of the relevant literatures in order to theoretically substantiate the conceptual model, propositions and research issues of this research. Thus, the contribution of the research is substantiated and the foundations are laid for the appropriate data collection and analysis which addresses the research problem of this thesis.
CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews the available literature relating to the factors influencing female small business entrepreneurship and business performance within urban and rural environments of developed economies (such as Australia) and developing economies (represented by Fiji). Much of the literature pertaining to small business entrepreneurship has been dominated by male-oriented studies within developed countries (rather than in developing) constituencies. This chapter will address this perceived imbalance through the investigation of female small business choice arrangements from the subject disciplines of marketing, business, management and economics. The aim of this literature review is to develop an understanding of the nature and extent of current research so as to better identify areas requiring further investigation and to consider appropriate strategies how these could be implemented within the scope of the research question. This literature review is categorised into six sections. A review of the entrepreneurship, small business and marketing literature will examine the factors influencing female entry into self-employment. Next, entrepreneur opportunity, recognition and cultural influences on entrepreneurship will be discussed. Following this, the motivational incentives for female owned small business and issues surrounding small to medium enterprise performance will be discussed. Then, commentary relating to the identification of gaps in the literature, general propositions relating to female entry into small business arrangements in urban and regional localities in Australia and Fiji will be provided. Finally, a preliminary conceptual model of female participation in small business relationships in Australia and Fiji (with associated propositions) will be presented.

2.1 The Entrepreneur, Opportunity Recognition and New Venture Creation

An entrepreneur may be defined as an individual who creates value by devoting time and effort, assuming the accompanying financial, physical and social risks, so as to receive resulting intrinsic and extrinsic rewards (Hisrich & Peters, 1989; Hisrich & Peters, 1989). Research suggests that entrepreneurial activities are important to economic development and benefit society as a whole (Morrison, 2000). Entrepreneurs create wealth through pursuing opportunities and building businesses that provide jobs for the wider community, provide income in the form of taxes, and contribute to the nation's gross domestic product (Kuratko, Hornsby, & Naffzigger, 1997).
Generally, previous research suggests that opportunity recognition is a definitive element of the entrepreneurship process (Cooper, 1981; Gordon, 2005), and that entrepreneurs take calculated risks in pursuing identified opportunities (Shane, 2003). Thus, entrepreneurship is the process by which business opportunities may be recognised and exploited within existing markets; or one that, through innovation, creates new markets where none had existed previously. In this sense, an entrepreneur is someone who recognises an opportunity and creates a new venture to pursue a visible opportunity for creating market value (Sarasvathy, Dew, Velamuri & Venkataram, 2003).

Within the entrepreneurship literature there are two schools of thought regarding entrepreneurial opportunity (Gordon, 2005). Both schools of thought approach the problem from different ontological perspectives; a social creationist perspective, or a social realist perspective (DeTienne, Chandler, Gaylen, & Douglas, 2003). The social creationist ontological approach considers that opportunities are created by the unique knowledge and skills of the entrepreneur (Sarasvathy, Dew, Velamuri & Venkataram, 2003). In contrast, the social realist ontological perspective states that opportunities result from market forces and are, subsequently, discovered by the entrepreneur. Both perspectives are valid, however when referring to an entrepreneur it is more appropriate to adopt a social realist approach (Darlington & Scott, 2002).

Previous studies have identified three types of theoretical models which may be viewed from a social realist approach and these are active search, passive search and fortuitous discovery (DeTienne, et al., 2003). An active search is where the entrepreneur detects opportunities through purposeful, deliberate and conscious exploration (Cooper & Emory, 1995; Drucker, 1998; Fiet, 2002). Passive search is where the entrepreneur is receptive to, though not engaged in, a formal systematic search process (Ardichvili, Cardozo, & Ray, 2003). Finally, fortuitous discovery is where the entrepreneur is alert to changes in the environment and has an ability to discover opportunities without searching (Gordon, 2005; Kaish & Gilad, 1991).

Therefore, from a social realist approach, entrepreneurs actively search, passively search or fortuitously discover new business opportunities. However, the motivations and cultural influences behind an entrepreneur’s opportunity recognition can vary and there is some evidence of gender-based rationales for small business choice (Birley, 1989). Next, an examination of the cultural influences to enter small business ownership is provided.
2.2 Cultural Influences on Entrepreneurship

Given the nature of this research, discussion regarding the importance of culture and entrepreneurship in explaining female entry into small business ownership and issues surrounding business performance within urban and regional localities in both Australia and Fiji is needed. Previous research suggests that an entrepreneurial culture generates an individual's entrepreneurial disposition and draws upon a variety of psychological, social, economic and environmental factors that include individualism, creativity, innovation, materialism, hard work, vision, savings and investment, punctuality, strategic vision, and government assistance (Rao, 2004). In addition, the importance of culture, how it has been applied to entrepreneurship research and, finally, how certain culture variables (including power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculine and feminine cultures and the individualism/collectivism dichotomy) is thought to influence entrepreneurial activity in both developed and underdeveloped economies, such as in the countries examined in this research i.e. (Australia and Fiji).

According to the individualism/collectivism dichotomy, female entrepreneurship in Australia appears to be linked with individualism (Hofstede, 1980; Schwartz, 1994) while collectivism has been found to be an obstacle to entrepreneurial development for female small business owners in developing nations such as Fiji (Hailey, 1988b; Rakoto, 1975; Ravuvu, 1983). Furthermore, cultural diversity is a characteristic of Australia and Fiji’s population which is evident within ethnic groupings and which appears to be a function of the relationship between sub-cultural groups and entrepreneurial achievement. While Fijian culture remains predominantly guided by social tradition and is generally seen as conservative and collectivist in nature (Ratuva, 2000; Ravuvu, 1991), Australia is characterised by a liberal outlook which mostly reveals individualism (Sheridan & Conway, 2003; Still, 2002; Still & Timms, 1999).

Though the economic factors influencing levels of entrepreneurial activity are clearly important, there remains a high level of unexplained variation across countries when only economic variables are taken into account. Recent research has identified cultural factors in explaining this variation (Hurley, 1999). Hofstede (1980) refers to culture as “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another and includes systems and values” (p.25). As Fijian female entrepreneurs operate within groups, their ‘collective’ mental programming is entirely learnt while Australian female small business operators are guided by ‘individual’ programming suggesting that individual behaviour is markedly different from others and that each person has control over their own decisions. As values are typically determined early in life, they tend to be programmed into individuals.
resulting in behavioural patterns consistent with their cultural context and these behaviours are said to endure over time (Hofstede, 1980).

Culture is defined as patterns of values, ideas and other symbolic-meaningful systems that shapes human behaviour (Schaper & Volery, 2004). Moreover, culture is explained as configurations of stereotyped patterns of learned behaviour which are handed down from one generation to the next (Barnouw, 1979). However, consistent with earlier research, the relationship between culture and economic activity may be explained through reference to the four cultural indices presented by Hofstede involving; power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity and individualism (Hofstede, 1980). This provides a valuable context for understanding societal-level influences upon entrepreneurial behaviour (and in particular SME ownership) in developed and developing countries.

Power distance refers to the degree of power distribution across members of a culture. Variations such as status identity and status equality imply that inequalities are allowed and accepted (Hofstede, 1991). Therefore, low power distance in an egalitarian society is characterised by equal rights for everyone, such as is evident in Australia, while the existence of high or large power distances between nationals magnifies power inequalities, as evident within Fiji (Hofstede, 1980). Moreover, a higher status identity culture environment distributes power unequally, with some possessing more power and societal privileges than others. Status implies social distance and includes concepts of age, gender, and ethnic behaviour (Triandis, 1990). Therefore, one would assume that how hierarchy, power and status are perceived in a culture will impact on resultant entrepreneurial behaviour. In the context of this research, Australia represents a lower status identity culture, while Fiji is generally accepted as a high status identity culture (Hofstede, 1980).

Hofstede’s (1980) next index, relates to individualism-collectivism and is associated with self-interest/group-interest values, in group-out group and familism (Hofstede, 1980). In individualistic cultures the focus is upon individual pursuits. Personal goals hold precedence over group goals and self-interest and the interests of the immediate family is of paramount importance (Triandis, 1990). For instance, Hofstede (1980) suggests that “Everyone for him or herself is an apt description of what prevails in the individualistic culture such as Australia” (p.18). However, collectivist cultures are characterised by out-group interest values, affiliation and goals and therefore, the focus is on collective pursuits. Group congruence ensures the cohesiveness of the extended family system, of which Fiji is an example (Hofstede, 1980).
Next, uncertainty avoidance refers to how a culture manages assertions that future events are uncertain and is reflected in the extent to which ambiguous situations are tolerated and the extent to which institutions insist upon conformity (Hofstede, 1980). Prior research suggests that tolerance for ambiguity is the degree to which members of the society are open to change and innovation (Steesman, Marino, & Weaver, 2000). People in low uncertainty avoidance cultures are inherently more anxious about taking risks than individuals in high uncertainty avoidance nations. High ‘tolerances of ambiguity’ cultures such as Australia are more accepting of uncertainty and the extent to which entrepreneurs tolerate both performance and relational risk will depend on the underlying cultural values held in the entrepreneur’s society (Hofstede, 2001; Schwartz, 1994).

Hofstede’s (1980) final cultural index examines masculinity/femininity values in national cultures and, implies the overall toughness and competitiveness of societal members. In particular, it is the degree to which achievement and aggression are valued (Hofstede, 1980). Moreover, masculine cultures such as Australia are distinguished by their assertiveness which is recognised as a necessary ingredient in the early entrepreneurial developmental process. Whereas in feminine cultures such as Fiji, assertiveness is discouraged as it is seen to be both dysfunctional and unproductive (Hofstede, 1991).

Considering the preceding discussion, Fiji is characterised by high power distance, being collectivist, high uncertainty avoidance and feminist values. Considering collectivism, the term Veikauwaitaki (caring, sharing and expressing concern for the well-being of others) is a normal social protocol in Fiji and financial reward is perceived as an instrument that promotes individual recognition and independence, and is therefore generally not an individual aspiration of Fijian females considering self-employment (Ravuvu, 1991). According to Qalo (1997), the itokatoka (sub-clan or family units) or matavuvale (family) is of greatest importance in the Fijian female small business owners’ life compared to motivations centred on profit maximisation. Traditional customs of sharing and kerrekere (begging for aid) were indeed appropriate when Fijian society was focused on traditional values (Nayacakalou, 1978). However, as Fijian society is becoming more complex this kerrekere mindset appears to be impeding Fijian female small business creation and performance. Hence, an examination into the Fijian cultural values that may impact entrepreneurs to enter small business ownership should be examined in the context of traditional and emergent Fijian values so as to better gauge the current status of Fijian entrepreneurship with a view towards revealing the impediments and factors facilitating growth in female entrepreneurship.
2.2.1 Entrepreneurship and Fijian Cultural Values

Previous research suggests that the entrepreneurial motivations of indigenous entrepreneurs may be somewhat similar to that of non-indigenous entrepreneurs (Kinggudu, 2002). One source of motivation is the incentive of wealth maximisation (Schumpeter, 1934). However, other research suggests lifestyle may be a stronger motivation, for those who value strong family ties (Saffu, 2003), and this is particularly relevant within the Fijian culture. Specifically, the *mataqali* (clan or extended family) holds paramount importance in moderating economic and social investments. Furthermore, previous research suggests that in order to understand Fijian entrepreneurs, one must know the Fijian personality and values so as to reveal the cultural and social obstacles that are hindering business performance and growth (Ratuva, 2000). The most important and commonly used concept of ideal behaviour is termed *vakaturaga*. Specifically, *vakaturaga* relates to how individuals should behave to benefit clan leaders (chiefs). It includes: *veidokai* (respectfulness), *vakarokoroko* (deference), *vakarorogo* (compliance), *yalo malua* (humility), (Ravuvu, 1995). Since indigenous female entrepreneurs live within in a patriarchal society, women are expected to display these cultural values to other men in their social networks. Therefore, societal-level factors may influence women’s decision to enter SME arrangements.

Moreover, a female who displays *vakaturaga* would be indicative of her acceptance of her traditional role in society and would suggest that she would adhere to various traditionally defined obligations and responsibilities. Moreover, a female’s actions are usually focused on service to others and respect and acceptance is achieved through being attentive and complying respectfully to those who hold traditionally defined authority over her (Ravuvu, 1983). Simultaneously, she should act *vakaturaga* in her interaction with people who are socially lower than her, or with whom she has little known established customary relationship. Generally, this traditional value (*vakaturaga*) implies that women should be humble and not arrogant (Ravuvu, 1995).

In addition, a female who is said to be *vakaturaga* will display certain qualities such as *loloma* (love or kindness) to all, irrespective of social status and affiliation and is ready to assist or serve others, and avoid being drawn into unnecessary confrontation with others (Ravuvu, 1983). This may be beneficial in building social networks, but appears contrary to accepted rationales of entrepreneurial behaviours (Gordon, 2005). Moreover, Fijian females adopt behaviours such as respecting others’ views when feelings are challenged and their authority questioned. She is *dau vosota* (has tolerance) and is ready to excuse and forgive anyone who may have challenged her authority. Also, within the context of *vakaturaga*, Fijian females tend...
to be *dauveimaroro* *or* *dauveitaqomaki* (protector or defender) and, thus, ensuring that those around her are not ill-treated (Ravuvu, 1995). This may assist in the creation of fair equitable and sustainable business partnerships, but may restrict a female’s competitive aggressiveness, a necessary trait in building business ventures.

Another important aspect of the *vakaturaga* is the practice of *veidokai*. A Fijian female traditionally complies, more than males, to customary expectations and values such as being *talai rawarawa* (obedient) to her husband, seniors and to other people, or *vakarorogo* (complying) to those who hold authority is also tantamount to displaying *veidokai* (Ravuvu, 1983). Therefore, a female entrepreneur is more likely to rely upon the needs of their partners in deciding to become self-employed (DeMartino & Barbato, 2002). In addition, a *veidokai* female small business owner would be less likely to openly question the sanctity and authority of her husband, senior or chief or the presence of others whom she does not know. On the other hand, a female entrepreneur who is *veidokai* does not impose (without consultation) any idea or action beyond her or traditionally defined boundary of social expectation in her family role. She must concur with others who are going to be affected before making any public propositions, as this is conveyed in *veirogorogoci* (to consult with). Thus, the social links or channels of communication and social actions between individuals or groups of similar and different ranks must be observed and respected. To ignore or neglect the presence of others is not *veidokai* (Ravuvu, 1995). Since Fijian female entrepreneurs are expected to display *veidokai* at all levels in the community, this may limit their success in owning their individual businesses.

Another important aspect of *veidokai* is termed as *veikauwaitaki* (to recognise and feelings for) which is manifested when a person offers or provides services for others on his or her own initiative, or provides support and encouragement to those who are ‘in need’. Consequently, to share the grief and guilt of others and to care for those who are socially deprived or despised for one reason or another are acts of *veikauwaitaki* and to share with others and care for one another are very basic to the Fijian value term, *veinanumi* (to be considerate) is sometimes used to convey the same idea. This could motivate Fijian female entrepreneurs to build social networks within society as they are governed through tradition and customs. Indigenous female operators are more considered as *veikauwaitaki* more than male business owners. Therefore, one’s cultural infallibility and individual arrogance should be suppressed or tolerated for the sake of achieving and maintaining *duavata* (solidarity) and *veilomani* (affection for) others (Ravuvu, 1983).
Current research suggests that entrepreneurial attitude is measured in terms of achievement, innovation, personal control, self-esteem and opportunity recognition (Lindsay, 2005). Individual motivation is an extensive component within entrepreneurial literature (Lee, 1997). Such research has led to the identification of individual traits evident in entrepreneurs. Traits that have been highlighted include that of the need for achievement (McClelland, 1965), risk-taking propensity (Brockhaus, 1980), and internal locus of control (Buttner & Moore, 1997). In addition, self-efficacy and renewed self-confidence through achievement can influence the success of business ventures (Krueger & Brazeal, 1994). As such, wanting to succeed, taking risks and feeling ‘in charge’ of decisions and one’s future, having belief in one’s capabilities and confidence are seen as the fabric of an entrepreneur (Orhan & Scott, 2001). In relation to Fijian female business owners, they have the abilities to be successful and productive, however cultural obligations and social values may limit their individual aspirations and risk tolerances (i.e. be more risk-averse).

From an indigenous perspective, the Fijian social system has clearly not encouraged female entry into small business ownership and business performance in the urban and regional localities. For Fijians with the drive and enthusiasm for entrepreneurship, the Fijian social system has been a major handicap (Qalo, 1997). Spate, a historian, commissioned by the Fiji government to enquire into the economic problems facing the Fijian people, ridiculing of the Vakaviti or (the ‘Fijian’ way) in his influential 1959 report on the economic and social problems faced by Fijians shows that, contrary to common belief, Fijian philosophy is not antithetical to development. It provides manifest examples of a Fijian business using two sets of values intelligently (i.e., those aspects that fit together to achieve the group’s goals), in creating a “global episteme,” or set of global-local discursive practices (Ravuvu, 1983).

Most Fijian small businesses have many management flaws, but they have avoided two downfalls common in Fiji. The first is the tendency by indigenous businesses to ignore management techniques only to struggle and eventually perish (Ravuvu, 1995). The other is to ignore the vakaviti to the extent of becoming exploitative and “un-Fijian” (Qalo, 1997). Furthermore, in assessing the peculiarities of Fijian culture, Ravuvu (1991) suggested that villagers lack regular and reliable sources of income and they find it increasingly difficult to meet cultural obligations. He added that the rights of individuals and small groups were administered under the mataqali (extended family) system. As a result, individuality was suppressed and individuals tended to be punished ruthlessly for any breach of traditional rules. No effort is generally made to encourage them into agriculture, commerce, education and other fields of social and economic development. As a consequence, women are often led to believe that their culture was inimical to business (Ravuvu, 1991). Thus, Fijian female small
business owners are said to always lag behind other indigenous groups (e.g. Indian, Chinese and European female small business operators) (Rao, 2004; Reddy, 2001).

In addition, previous research suggests that Western observers may find it difficult to understand the concept of Fijian entrepreneurship as understood in the western contexts, or in textbooks. Westerners may find it curious that Fijian female small business owners appear to find traditional work more interesting because they can relate to it. Many find business in the entrepreneurial sense an abstraction (Qalo, 1997). However, the Western sense of entrepreneurship emphasises cultural values that are alien to Fijian female entrepreneurs and these are not valued highly in Fijian culture. Such values include: individual acquisitiveness, frugality, and measurement of success in financial term. In particular, entrepreneurship involves sales and profits, and there is a significant emphasis on individual motivation to achieve reward for one’s efforts (Hailey, 1988a). This appears to run contrary to current conceptualisations of female entrepreneurship in developing countries such as Fiji.

From prior research, previous successive governments have been said to be responsible for inhibiting indigenous entrepreneurship in Fiji, particularly in relation to female entrepreneurship (Ravuvu, 1991). The system affords limited or no participation in decision-making and so the role of a female Fijian commoner is simply one that receives orders and subsequently carries them out. As such, this system of administration appears to discourage innovation and idea generation. For this reason and other cultural reasons, Fijian female operators appear to find difficulty in exercising their own initiatives and making rational decisions as is observed in other entrepreneurial settings (Qalo, 1997).

Nayacakalou (1975) suggests that there are two major weaknesses in the Fijian Administration. These relate to the government’s fit with modern Fijian society and its structural approaches to management. In particular, the Fijian administration was said to lack structural adaptation in a situation of rapid change. Moreover, the administration has made any thorough streamlining of Fijian society extremely difficult, that is, it has been said to restrict change. Nayacakalou’s (1978) statement seems to suggest that Fijians are not always proficient in business due to the operational limits in their own society (Nayacakalou, 1978).

On this basis, much needs to be done to convince development gurus and die-hard capitalists to replace the economics of fear based on supply, demand, and scarcity in Fiji’s present mindset, and allow greater space for vakaviti and similar cultural concepts, which are based on mutual trust and respect (Hailey, 1988b). However, these traditional ideas and practices have sometimes been labelled by economic planners and developers as a ‘stumbling blocks’ to the
rapid social and economic progress of the Fijian people, and in particular, female small business owners. In particular, the ideal and practice of veidokai, vakarorogo, and yalo malua are often considered as complacency; veikauwaitaki, veinanumi, and veirogorogoci are commonly considered a hindrance to individual progress; and vakarokoroko is often considered condescending and servile (Ravuvu, 1995). Furthermore, Hailey (1985) suggested that Fijian culture restricts ‘individualism, individual mobility, and thus individualistic entrepreneurial activities’ (p.19).

Given the above discussion, it appears these Fijian values and under the pressure and demands of the new economic and political systems, remain somewhat idealistic and (perhaps) unattainable. They will be practiced only in situations of mutual trust and respect and reciprocal sensitivity. Nevertheless, these attitudes are slow to change and to acquire new ones requires continued effort and appropriate reward. However, the remnants of the old values and beliefs remain and continue to provide as a basis for reflection on the present and future directions of human interaction and relationship in Fiji (Qalo, 1997; Ratuva, 2000; Ravuvu, 1991). Next, entrepreneur’s motivational incentives for small business ownership is discussed so as to provide an understanding of individual-level determinants of entrepreneurship and SME adoption.

2.3 The Entrepreneur’s Motivational Incentives for Small Business Ownership

Early research in the entrepreneurship and small business literatures suggest that the business activities of entrepreneurs are driven by the motivations of individuals, to satisfy intrinsic and extrinsic goals (Birley, 1989; Cooper, 1981; Cromie, 1987). Given this, the ultimate aim of economic development is to create opportunities for personal fulfilment through economic activity (Morrison, 2000). This section outlines the motivational factors that facilitate or impede an individual’s decision to become an entrepreneur and small or medium sized enterprise (NCSMED) owner.

Most research suggests that individuals are driven by personal and financial goals such as the need for control and achievement, operational independence, the minimisation of work and family conflict, and wealth creation (Bird, 1989; Birley & Westhead, 1994; Burns, 1996; Hisrich, 1986; Kuratko, Hornsby & Naffzigger, 1997). Many studies have examined the motivational incentives influencing entrepreneurial behaviour in an attempt to explain and predict entrepreneurial tendencies (Birley, 1989; Cromie, 1987; DeMartino & Barbato, 2002; Stevenson, 1990). Early research by Cooper (1981) divides the influences into the three
categories including antecedent influences (the entrepreneur’s background that affects motivation, perception, skills, and knowledge - these include genetic factors, family influences, education and previous career experiences), incubator organisations (the type of organisation the entrepreneur worked in immediately prior to venture start-up), and environmental factors (prevailing economic conditions/ availability of venture capital, role models and access to support services). However, this model does not examine small business ownership within the context of an individual’s desired intrinsic or extrinsic outcomes (Birley, 1989; Orhan & Scott, 2001).

While most research suggests that intrinsic, rather than financial, reasons tend to be more important drivers of an individual’s self-employment decision (Gray, 1993), more recent research suggests that entrepreneurial motivation is best examined with reference to the goals entrepreneurs seek to achieve through business ownership (Kuratko, Hornsby, & Naffzigger, 1997). In particular, Kuratko, et al.’s (1997) research identifies four factors of entrepreneurial motivation which include extrinsic rewards (acquiring personal wealth, increasing personal income and increasing income opportunities), independence/autonomy (maintain personal freedom, self-employment and to control employment destiny), intrinsic rewards (gaining public recognition, meeting the challenges and obtain personal growth), and family security (secure future for family members, to build a business to pass on to family members). Extrinsic factors were reported as the leading motivation for entrepreneurs in the 1997 study which supports the findings of Hisrich’s (1988) study of Russian entrepreneurs. Similarly, the studies conducted in developing economies in Asia confirm the role of extrinsic motivations on small business ownership (Dhaliwal, 2000; Dhaliwal & Amin, 1995).

However, a study by Robichaud, McGraw and Roger (2001) based on the Kuratko, Hornsby & Naffzigger’s (1997) previous research suggests that independence and autonomy are principle motivations for entrepreneurs and this has additional support in the literature (for example, Cressy, 1995; Newbert, 2003; Still, 2002; Still & Walker, 2003). In particular, Newbert’s (2003) research states that although wealth creation is a significant motivator for starting a small-medium enterprise (SME), some twenty percent of his surveyed entrepreneurs suggested they were motivated to ‘be their own boss’ and eight percent cited independencies as their primary motivations to enter self-employment as their primary motivation. Difficulties experienced within the organisation, such as a perceived lack of opportunity commensurate with effort, low pay and conditions, and the need to escape supervision, may encourage small business start-up (Moore & Buttner, 1997). In addition, unemployment may drive individuals to become self-employed (Still & Guerin, 1991), although the relationship between different types of small

In contrast to earlier research, Newbert’s (2003) research elaborates on the motivational factors of entrepreneurs and earlier research which implies the main motivator of entrepreneurs is future financial gain (Gartner, 1985). Newbert’s (2003) recent study suggests that negative outcomes are more likely when only economic motivations are considered. Hence, modern entrepreneurs do appear to have the capacity to see beyond their economic self-interest and they are both economically and ethically motivated to start new businesses (Newbert, 2003). Current entrepreneurs are not only generating significant social value (in terms of job creation, wealth redistribution, and a lack of discrimination), but are also engaging in these capitalistic ventures with a focus on the betterment of both self and society (Still & Timms, 2000).

From the above discussion, it appears that an entrepreneur’s motivational incentives are dynamic and are a function of the background of individual and environmental factors that are dynamic in nature and in constant transformation. That is, entrepreneurial motivations represent a complex mergence of social, psychological and economic factors (Morrison, 2000). In addition, an inference from these studies are that entrepreneurs do not appear to be a homogenous grouping (Kaufmann, 1999; Morrison, 2000) and there is really no such thing as an all encompassing entrepreneurial profile (Hisrich & Peters, 1989).

Even if an individual has a strong motivational drive that propels them towards small and medium enterprise (SME) ownership, there are numerous barriers that may impede an individual’s drive towards self-employment (Hisrich & Peters, 1989). Generally, there appears some consensus in the business literature in regard to the types of barriers entrepreneurs face in entering small business (for example, Birley, 1989; Carter, 1994; Fielden & Dawe, 2004; Shane, 2003). For instance, Shane (2003) reported that entrepreneurial barriers include a lack of knowledge/expertise, training and recruitment of suitable employees, role models, business networks, and difficulty in obtaining start-up capital. These barriers are considered in a later section of this chapter.

In summary, the above examination of the literature pertaining to entrepreneurial motivational incentives shows that there has been significant research in this area. However, more research is necessary to identify the motivations and characteristics of entrepreneurs as these individuals are a heterogeneous grouping and the environment in which they operate is continually changing. In particular, researchers have cited a need to investigate gender-based
rationales for small business choice (Robichaud, McGraw, & Roger, 2001; Stevenson, 1990). Previous research suggests that females have unique reasons for starting businesses (Fischer, 1993). In addition, the interplay between individual incentives and societal level influences on entrepreneurial behaviour in developing countries has had limited investigation in the organisational choice literature. Female entrepreneurship in urban and regional communalities within developed and developing economies is presented in the ensuing section.

2.3.1 Female Entrepreneurship in Urban and Regional Localities

Previous research suggests that female entrepreneurship in urban and regional environments have identified job creating potential and capacities for increasing economic growth due to their growing numbers and diverse economic activities (Levent, et al., 2003). In addition, female small business owners tend to seek opportunities for their innovative and creative economic activities in big cities and metropolis which having different management styles and different approaches as those in regional sectors (Martin, 1993). However, female small business entrepreneurs in urban and regional environments share some common problems and issues regardless of their location and ethnicity. Moreover, female small business entrepreneurs from these areas are regarded as minorities in urban and regional economic life (Levent, et al., 2003; Longnecker, 1991; Metzler, 2006). They are considered to be minority since they face a male dominated business environment; however, urban and regional female small business operators are heterogeneous with numerous qualifications, experiences, and resources and operating within a variety of social contexts (Krueger & Brazeal, 1994; Levent, et al., 2003; Mankelow & Merrilees, 2001).

Recent research indicates that female entrepreneurs in urban and regional localities who own and operate their own businesses are increasing in numbers throughout the world owing to the introduction of better work concepts such as more flexible working hours, and work environments that are gradually becoming more favourable for women (Lee-Gosselin & Grise, 1990; Loscocco & Leicht, 1993). Furthermore, female small business owners are becoming more prominent not only in the industries where they are traditionally active, but also in less traditional or non-traditional sectors such as; manufacturing, construction and transportation (Levent, et al., 2003). For instance, there is some evidence that female entrepreneurs are tapping into new growth areas like financial services and communication (MacGregor & Vrazalic, 2006) which is especially prominent in developed economies that are increasingly involved in international trade and other forms of globalisation (through the advance of new technologies, particularly ICTs) (Moore, 1999; Porter, 2001; Still, 2002).
Moreover, current studies suggest that urban and regional women small business owners focus on relationships and they see their businesses within an interconnected system of relationships that include family, community and business (Brush, 1992). Furthermore, most female entrepreneurs have different demographic background, motivation, education and prior occupational experiences (Brush, 1992; Buttner & Moore, 1997). Also, urban and regional women entrepreneurs in developed and developing countries concentrate on their business strategies, problems, management styles, acquisition of capital and social capital accessibility (Cliff, 1998; Cromie, 1994; Verheul & Thurik, 2001). As such, motivational incentives governing small business choice, from the female’s perspective, is further discussed.

2.4 Motivational Incentives for Female Owned Small Business Enterprises

This section presents a literature review of motivational incentives explaining female small business ownership. These factors are specific to both the individual and environmental context and for ease of discussion are discussed under the appropriate categories of individual factors and environmental factors.

2.4.1 Individual Factors

Individual motivational factors fall into the following categories i.e. push and pull motivations, work and family conflict, age, entrepreneurial orientation, educational background, prior business experience and social capital accessibility.

2.4.1.1 Push and Pull Motivations

Previous research suggests that an examination of female entrepreneurship is important in extending previous entrepreneurial studies that exclude gender-based analysis and assume that women behave in a similar fashion to men (Gartner, 1988). Models of entrepreneurship are historically male-based (Stevenson, 1990), which may be inadequate when used to explain the experiences of female entrepreneurs. Even though the motivational incentives of all entrepreneurs may be classified into the categories that are mentioned previously, it is likely that the entrepreneurial motives of men and women will differ, which appears to have some support in the literature (e.g., Devana, 1987; Lanwood & Gutek, 1989; Tucker, 1985). It is widely recognised that the importance of female entrepreneurship and its contribution to the economy is growing and, therefore, most research in relation to female business owners has concentrated on what motivates them to create new ventures. Overall, a majority of studies
found quite similar motivations between men and women, with independence and the need for self-achievement always ranked highly by entrepreneurs (Hisrich, 1989).

Early research in the small business literature suggested that there is more similarity than difference in the motives of male and female entrepreneurs (Birley, 1989; Cromie, 1994). Generally, individuals enter self-employment due to ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors (Bird, 1989) or some combination thereof (Still & Walker, 2003). However, more recent research (Brunetto, 2005; Buttner & Moore, 1997; Larwood & Gutek, 1989) considers there is a difference in the entrepreneurial motivation between men and women. In particular, gender-based differences in small business entry are due to socialisation factors (Orhan & Scott, 2001; Still & Walker, 2003). While male business owners tend to be motivated to achieve efficiency, objectivity, and transactions, females appear to place value on subjectivity and building sustainable relationships (Fried, 1989). The most commonly cited reasons that motivate females to pursue entrepreneurial opportunities are categorised into push and pull factors (Buttner & Moore, 1997; Still, 2002; Still & Walker, 2003; Walker, 2000).

Push factors are predominantly based upon extrinsic motivators and come from the individual having limited control in their current employment situation (Walker, 2000). For example, women may be pushed into self-employment due to a lack of employment opportunities, redundancy, and problems with supervision (Still, 2002). Therefore, many of these individuals may be classified as reluctant entrepreneurs (Walker, 2000). Commonly cited push factors for female entrepreneurs are a need for more work flexibility due to family responsibilities and glass ceiling effects which refer to the lack of promotional opportunities in organisations (Walker, 2000). Push factors are couched in work-related necessity, such as unemployment, glass ceiling, redundancy, recession, financial reasons (inadequate family income), dissatisfaction with being employed, or the need to accommodate work and home roles simultaneously. In particular, glass ceiling effects refer to a seemingly impenetrable barrier that prevents female mid-managers from moving up to the executive suite (Buttner & Moore, 1997). Experienced women may leave organisations due to the lack of recognition and advancement opportunities within salaried employment (Hisrich & Brush, 1985).

The factors detailed above are often cited within the dual-career and family business literature as driving the growth of copreneurial ventures (Rosti & Chelli 2005) in which marital partners own and manage businesses together (Stoner, Richard, Hartman, & Arora, 1990). Generally, the majority of research suggests that female copreneurial roles are defined along traditional care-giving roles at home (Hisrich & Brush, 1984) and secretarial/bookkeeping functions at work (Martin, 1993). However, recent research suggests that gender roles within copreneurial
relationships are changing with women entering self-employment to realise both personal and financial goals (de Bruin & Lewis, 2004). In addition, the need for occupational flexibility and managing work and family conflict is also identified as an important factor encouraging female entrepreneurship (Orhan & Scott, 2001).

Alternatively, pull factors are those that are intrinsically based and centre around an individual’s need for control (Still, 2002) and are pulled into self-employment to realise perceived opportunities (Robinson, 2001). Early research suggests that pull factors are related to a need for independence, need for achievement, financial reasons (desire for profit-wealth), personal development, self-fulfilment, social status and power (Orhan & Scott, 2001). More recent research acknowledges that pull motivations for female small business entry includes a desire for wealth, career advancement, social status and power, self-fulfilment, independence, entrepreneurial drive, fulfilling personal ambition, to leverage acquired skills, and to capitalise upon potentially profitable business opportunities (Loscocco, & Leicht., 1993; Robinson, 2001; Still, 2002; Still & Walker, 2003). The desire for career advancement and self-fulfilment relates to a female’s internal motives of proving her abilities, not only to family and peers, but also to herself, through entrepreneurial activity.

Apart from negative incentives, women may enter small business in order to gain independence and autonomy (Davis, 2002) and build cooperative networks (Rosa & Hamilton, 1994). Although the need for independence is often quoted as the most important motivator of women starting businesses (Cromie, 1987), there is some evidence that economic motives are becoming increasingly important, particularly with reference to wealth creation, status building, and power (Orhan & Scott, 2001). However, most research endorses the view that female entrepreneurs value intrinsic motivations and, in particular, social contributions such as building favourable client networks and contributing to the local community, (Still & Timms, 2000) over future economic gain (Brush, Carter, Gatewood, & Hart, 2004). Most research suggests that women are pushed into self-employment (Still & Walker, 2003) although there is no consensus in the literature regarding this issue (Weaven & Herrington, 2006). The extant entrepreneurship literature depicts the motive for going into business as an individualist affair (Saffu, 2003).

The entrepreneurship literature is replete with motives for going into business. These include economic motives (Casson, 1982; Schumpeter, 1934), psychological motives (McClelland, 1965) and sociological (Grunhagen, 2000; LeVine, 1966). While individualism or individual rationality is a common thread that runs through an entrepreneur’s motives in advanced nations, the opposite appears the case in the South Pacific Island countries (Saffu, 2003).
Being collectivist cultures, the motives of indigenous South Pacific Island entrepreneurs are deeply rooted in their relationships with the local community and culture (Mamman & Saffu, 1995).

Generally, within South Pacific Island countries, even though economic security and profit may be major motives, these motivations are not necessarily of paramount importance (Hailey, 1988c). However, the limited studies on female entrepreneurship in developing countries indicate that female entrepreneurs start their business with strong economic motivations such as generating extra income (Brush 1992; Fischer, 1993). Other studies show the contradictory result that non-economic motives, such as being independent, are more important in some countries than others (Letowski, 2001). Furthermore, it is currently unknown whether this is the case for females in Fiji or whether motivations will differ within the context of different geographies and economies. Nevertheless, intuitively, push and pull factors should influence female entrepreneurs decisions to engage in small business participation in Fiji.

2.4.1.2 Management of Work and Family Conflict.

The issue of work and family balance has been widely reported in the family business literature (Birley, 1989; Buttner & Moore, 1997; Robichaud, et al., 2001; Still & Timms, 2000). Women appear to require schedules that allow them to balance work and family commitments because they are primarily responsible for domestic duties (Loscocco, & Leicht., 1993). In many cases, females are expected to accommodate the needs of home duties and children even when involved in full-time employment. Entrepreneurship provides an additional work alternative when job opportunities are unavailable or do not fulfil all of a person’s needs (Tigges & Green, 1994). A major reason that female entrepreneurs start their own businesses is to gain added independence and flexibility that is realisable within their current employment.

However, the work and family hypothesis has not received full support in the literature. For example, Buttner and Moore (1997) state that while family issues were important to women managers, their career choices were not influenced by family concerns any more then were men’s. More recent research suggests that other social motives such as independence and flexibility are higher ranking motives influencing female entrepreneurial activities (Robichaud, et al., 2001; Still & Walker, 2003; Walker, 2004). In addition, Still (2002), reports that professional growth, power and money are driving women to enter self-employment.

Work and family conflict is defined as a form of inter-role conflict arising from difficulties managing work and family responsibilities (Stoner, et al., 1990). As a result, obtaining rewards in one domain requires forgoing rewards in another (Walker & Brown, 2004). Fielden et al.,
(2003) identify three major forms of work-family conflict which are time based, strain based and behaviour based. These forms of conflict are couched in a role scarcity perspective which implies that persons have fixed amounts of time and energy to expand (Shane & Cable, 2002).

Previous research on managing work and family conflict focuses on methods of coping with resultant negative emotions. Kelly (1988) applies the taxonomy of coping with responses previously identified by Hisrich (1986) including structural role definition (altering the expectations of others), personal role definition (altering one’s own expectations) and reactive role behaviour (responding to all demands). Verheul and Thurick (2001) suggest the need for individuals to have access to psychological resources and social support in strengthening their coping ability. While these authors present various internal means of handling work and family conflict, there is less research on methods to reduce sources of this conflict within the context of small business ownership (Morrison, 2000).

Previous study on gender and entrepreneurship has found that male and female entrepreneurs differ in their motivations and that, in particular; female entrepreneurs are motivated by the desire to balance the demands of career and potential life (Fielden, Davidson, Dawe, & Makin, 2003). However, some research suggests that women choose entrepreneurship to create their own desired balance between career and personal life/family (Buttner & Moore, 1997). Moore (2002) observes that the early research suggested that female entrepreneurs were traditional and adhered to stereotypical gender work roles. Women were portrayed as more family oriented, lacking previous work experience, possessing low educational levels and creating ventures with limited scale and scope (Srinivasan, 1986).

Moore (2002) notes in the 1980s, the direction of gender and entrepreneurship studies began to shift. The new generation of female entrepreneurs exhibits relatively high education levels, greater professional experience and a desire to lead more complex companies. Moore and Buttner (1997) note further categorisation of female entrepreneurs emerged in the 1990s and differentiating between ‘intentional entrepreneurs’ and ‘career climbers’. The former, being motivated by factors such as achievement, independence, and self-actualisation (Orhan, 2001), while the latter, were driven to entrepreneurship by either environmental factors related to downsizing, systematic discrimination in the corporate world and leaving after hitting the glass ceiling (Sarri & Trihopoulou, 2005).

Later research defines ambitious or high growth oriented female entrepreneurs as women who have intention and motivation to develop high growth ventures. They possess the personal characteristics of vision, energy and opportunism (Breen, Calvert, & Oliver 1995). In a
comparison of high and low growth oriented female entrepreneurs, Birley and Westhead (1994) found that ambitious women have the intention to emphasise market growth and technological change, possess stronger commitment to the success of their businesses, and have greater willingness to sacrifice personal needs for the good of their ventures. Unlike lifestyle entrepreneurs, who are primarily motivated to support a particular lifestyle or generate family income, ambitious or growth-oriented entrepreneurs are motivated to start and develop larger, highly visible and more valuable firms (Hurley, 1999).

Recent research describes work and family conflict as positively correlated with venture role demands, which are based on the amount of hours spent within the workplace (Brush, et al., 2004). In addition, other factors such as industry requirements and the aspirations of the entrepreneur, family role demands (Brush, Carter, Gatewood & Hart, 2004), marital status (Blau, Ferber, & Winker, 1998) and relative salience of family (Burdette, 1990) impact upon work and family balance. Work and family conflict is expected to be particularly significant for female entrepreneurs who desire high growth. Female entrepreneurs who are not ambitious or high-growth oriented may be able to reduce or limit the scope of their firms in order to reduce work and family conflict, but scaling back is not considered a viable option for women seeking high growth (Shane, 2003).

Work-family conflict negatively impacts venture performance by lowering the well-being of the entrepreneur and, subsequently, hindering work performance (Shelton, 2006). Work-family conflict is positively correlated both with venture role demands, which are based on hours worked (Huang, Hammer, Neal & Perrin, 2004), industry requirements, and the aspirations of the entrepreneur; and family role demands, which depend on the number and ages of dependent children (Huang, et al., 2004), marital status (Blau, et al., 1998) , and relative salience of family (Noor, 2004) . According to Loscocco et al., (1991) the time spent by the entrepreneur for taking care of the children reduces venture life span and they find that family-related role conflict negatively impacts owner income in small businesses.

High growth-oriented women entrepreneurs may find it necessary to invest additional time over and above the higher workload undertaken by all entrepreneurs in order to acquire necessary capital and to win important clients. These longer hours of work are likely to result in increased work and family conflict (Bates, 1995) . However, the level of work and family conflict can be lowered by management strategies, which reduce conflict by altering the level and configuration of the family and/or venture demands that fuel dissonance between work and family roles (Aspaas, 2004) . Reducing the level of work and family conflict is expected to enhance an individual’s well being more than using internal coping mechanisms to handle that
conflict and higher levels of entrepreneurial well being should translate into better venture performance. Therefore, work-family management strategies are to be an important determinant of venture choice and performance for female entrepreneurs.

Most of the previous research on managing work-family conflict focuses on methods of coping with the resulting negative emotions. Kirchmeyer (1993) applies the taxonomy of coping with responses such as structural role definition (altering the expectations of others), personal role definition (altering one’s own expectations) and reactive role behaviour (responding to all demands) to the work-family area. Ashforth (2000), Edwards and Rothbard (2000), Greenhaus and Parasuraman (1999) and Lambert (1990) present psychological tactics such as segmentation, compensation, accommodation and boundary management. In addition, Becker and Moen (1999) and Moen and Yu (2000) identify a number of externally oriented methods of lowering work-family conflict, including postponing children, hiring assistance with childcare and household duties, and scaling back work, and non-work but they stop short of discussing how to choose the optimal strategy.

Given the research focus on ambitious female entrepreneurs who desire high growth, Shelton (2006) defines these women who have the intention and motivation to develop high-growth ventures. They possess the personal characteristics of vision, energy, and opportunism (Morrison, 2000). In a comparison of high and low growth oriented female entrepreneurs, Lambert (1990) find that ambitious women have the intention to emphasise market growth and technological change, possess stronger commitment to the success of their businesses, and have greater willingness to sacrifice for their ventures. Unlike lifestyle entrepreneurs who are primarily motivated to support a particular lifestyle or generate family income, ambitious or growth oriented entrepreneurs are motivated to start and develop larger, highly visible and more valuable firms (Martin, 1993). Thus, high growth female entrepreneurs are defined as ambitious women who have succeeded in creating high growth ventures (Shelton, 2006).

Thus, managing the demands of both work and family is a continuing challenge for female entrepreneurs. Research by Still and Timms (2000) found that female small business owners in Australia were predominantly motivated to start businesses due to lifestyle issues, that is, flexibility, and the ability to balance work with their relationships and family. Recent research suggests that managing work and family conflict is an important consideration for female entrepreneurs entering self-employment within rural communities in Australia (Still & Walker, 2003), and other earlier research indicates that family demands influence small business venture choice in developing economies (Brockhaust, 1980).
2.4.1.3 Age

There are some suggestions, in the Australian small business literature, that the age of female entrepreneurs appeared to mediate the choice of business model. It appears that the average age of the entrepreneurs examined in the study was thirty to forty five years (McClelland, 1965). This corresponds with past literature although it should be noted that many of these businesses have been established more than two years and, therefore, the average age of the female entrepreneur at start-up may be lower (Goffee, and Scase, 1985). This may lend some credibility to previous research suggesting that younger women (under the age of thirty five years) appear to be attracted to self-employment, as small business operators, in order to realise personal goals of professional development, building a growth-oriented business, and creating wealth (Still & Walker, 2003).

Demographic characteristics that appear to be of special interest are the age of business owners, when they first started their business venture, marital status, level of education and family background. Research suggests that female entrepreneurs tend to start their business at an older age than men, usually by making an attempt to re-enter the job market after having completed their family obligations (Sarri & Trihopoulou, 2005). Notwithstanding this, there is evidence that the percentage of young women entering business activity (age less than thirty five years) is considerable in developed nations such as Australia (ABS, 2003a).

In addition, an increasing trend has also observed among women who start their businesses at an age over fifty five years. In South Pacific island societies, age and maturity are respected and are viewed as valuable business assets. For instance, in Western Samoa older entrepreneurs are more likely to receive the respect and status necessary for their businesses to function profitably (Croulet & Sio, 1986). According to Hailey (1987) mature entrepreneurs are often well-established members of the local community with extensive family and social networks and have been able to control the demands and obligations associated with the responsibilities. However, we have limited information as to the age of women entering small business in rural communities in Australia and do not know how age influences women to participate in entrepreneurial activities within Fiji (i.e. developing country).

2.4.1.4 Entrepreneurial Orientation

Entrepreneurial orientation is defined as the degree to which an organisation exhibits proactive, risk-taking, innovative tendencies (Brockhaust, 1980). This tendency to engage in entrepreneurial activity differs in each organisational setting and is dependent on the firm’s and individual entrepreneur’s strategic posture. Wright and McCue (1996) agree that entrepreneurial orientation is a combination of three dimensions: innovativeness, pro-
activeness and risk-taking. In practice, Karagiannis (1999) five item pro-activeness measure of organisational entrepreneurship is commonly used. The five items tap into the firm’s productivity towards new techniques, competitive posture, risk-taking activity, environmental boldness and decision-making style.

San et al., (2003) use six criterion to define entrepreneurial orientation that include: propensity to take risks; tendency to engage in strategic planning activities; ability to identify customer needs and wants; level of innovation, ability to persevere in making the vision of the business a reality and ability to identify new opportunities. Wright and McCue (1996) propose that innovativeness, market pro-activeness, risk taking, employee autonomy and competitive scanning are necessary requirements for entrepreneurial orientation.

Originally, Brockhaust (1980) described entrepreneurial orientation to involve innovative products, to undertake somewhat risky ventures and to be proactively orientated. The entrepreneurial orientation dimensions are said to be related to success because they influence how situations are perceived and what strategic decisions are taken (Cantzler & Leijon, 2005). Entrepreneurial orientation describes a firm which relates to environmental uncertainty in an innovative, pro-active and aggressive manner. Entrepreneurs with a high degree of entrepreneurial orientation tend to engage in some type of proactive environmental opportunity scanning (San & Chung, 2003). A majority of female small business owners reported their intention to rapidly grow the size of their businesses. Previous research classifies female small business owners as entrepreneurial, demonstrating a high need for achievement and a low need for power, which is consistent with an entrepreneurial orientation (Capowski, 1992).

Later research describes entrepreneurial orientation of an organisation as a dimension of strategic posture represented by a firm’s risk taking propensity, tendency to act in a competitively aggressive and proactive manner, and reliance on frequent product innovation (Carter, Gartner & Reynolds, 1996). Organisations are said to have an entrepreneurial orientation when a group of innovator organisational members are working together, producing fresh ideas and they are provided with a prevailing atmosphere conducive to acting on those ideas (Mallory, 1996). Creating an entrepreneurial orientation, however, has turned out to be a more multi-faceted task for organisations than ever before.

Covin and Slevin (1983) describe entrepreneurial orientation to be involved in innovative products, to undertake somewhat risky ventures and to be proactively orientated. Lumpkin and Dess (1996) incorporate two additional dimensions: autonomy (propensity to act
autonomously) and competitive aggressiveness (tendency to act aggressively towards competitors). However, Covin and Slevin (1989) argue that all dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation were interrelated and overlapped and should be related to success because they influence how situations are perceived and what strategic decisions are taken. Lumpkin and Dess (1996, p.140) describe autonomy as “the ability and will to be self-directed in the pursuit of opportunities”. Thus, an autonomous owner is motivated to act and make decisions independently. It helps a business owner to be successful, because self-direction allows quick and self-reliant decisions (Frese & De Kruif, 2000). Competitive aggressiveness refers to the will to outperform competitors and keep them from entering the same market. Competitively aggressive business owners try to secure a large share of the market and are, therefore, more likely to be successful (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996).

Innovation leads to the tendency to engage in and support new ideas, experimentation and creative processes that may result in new products, services or technological processes. Innovative orientation should be positively related to success because with new ideas, one can capture important segments of the market (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). Risk taking involves the willingness to commit significant resources to opportunities, which have a chance to fail. Risk taking can be seen as venturing into the unknown, for example, investing in unexplored technologies (Frese & De Kruif, 2000). Risk taking should allow the owners to make lucrative deals and it should, therefore, be positively related to success (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996).

However, a female’s entrepreneurial orientation may relate to their choice of industry (Coates, 1991). Generally, there is some evidence that women who are pulled into self-employment view small business as an opportunity to seek out new product and service additions, collect needed information, modify product and service offerings, and implement novel marketing strategies to ensure sustainable competitive advantages (Weaven & Herrington, 2006). However, it is not certain how an individual’s entrepreneurial orientation influences a female’s self-employment decision. In addition, we do not currently know if differences exist between female entrepreneurs in regional and urban localities in Australia or Fiji.

2.4.1.5 Educational Background.
Early research suggests that human capital elements including an individual’s age, educational background and business experience may impact upon a female’s inclination to create new business ventures (Boden & Nucci, 2000). In particular, education has been suggested as an important variable influencing entry and mobility into a market, as well as access to capital (Arinaitwe, 2006). Previous research suggests that education affects self-employment entry in certain industrial sectors (Gartner, 1988) and more highly educated
owners are more likely to establish new firms within non-traditional areas (Bates, 1995). Although education has been identified as a variable affecting success of small businesses, less attention has been given to the role of education in new venture creation (Lisser, 1999; Loscocco, & Leicht, 1993).

Prior research by Denchant and Lamky (2005) suggests that businesses are directly influenced by the values and philosophies of business owners. An individual's values are often developed through their formal education process, suggesting that education level might have an impact on small business creation and ongoing performance (Still & Timms, 2000). An individual's level of formal education also reflects cognitive abilities and qualities, including a tolerance of ambiguity (Woodul, 1987). In addition, higher levels of education are associated with an ability to process information and to discriminate between wide varieties of perceived business alternatives (Dollinger, 1999). In Walker's (2004) study of Australian entrepreneurs, male entrepreneurs were found to possess more formal education than female entrepreneurs, although recent research suggests that this is changing with more women entering non-traditional industries due to increased education levels.

Educational background is said to influence entrepreneurial ability, entrepreneurial choice, and firm performance (Robinson, 2001). Kelly (1988) suggests that women may be disadvantaged due to a lack of formal education and experience and, therefore, often lack the required knowledge and skills necessary in developing a new business opportunity. Traditionally, women have pursued undergraduate degrees in liberal arts as opposed to business, engineering or technical subjects, which appears to have limited their entry into traditional or masculine business sectors (Hisrich & Brush, 1984).

Research suggests that 'country of origin' effects may influence both education levels and business ownership. For example, in Holland, the level of education is high; with 41 percent of women entrepreneurs attending higher vocational education and 35 percent having attended university. Similarly, in Australia, a majority of independent small business owners possess degrees in both traditional and non-traditional areas (Still & Soutar, 2001; Walker, 2000). However, there is some suggestion that lower levels of education are not necessarily related to small business ownership in developing countries (Stevenson, 1990). In Fiji, evidence shows that more men are trained than women at the tertiary level though women perform better at schools. International donor organisations like AusAID provide assistance in micro credit and micro-enterprise development and different agencies have identified the lack of any policy that encourages the education or 'up-skill' of women, or for training of trainers (UNDP, 2002). However, the Ministry of Women and Culture (2002), suggests that the Ministry of
Education and Youth to provide gender sensitising training in educational and training institutions, the inclusion of business courses and vocational training institutes to actively campaign for more women to train as entrepreneurs. This is an area of concern considering that more than 80 per cent of microfinance clients in Fiji are women (NCSMED, 2006).

A closer examination of the literature shows that women are bridging the education gap in developed countries. Whilst Carter (1994) find a substantial gender gap in educational levels as well as the relevance of professional qualifications to the business, Buttner and Moore’s (1997) study suggests that a high level of education is possessed by female entrepreneurs. Similarly, Still and Soutar (2001) confirm that the majority of women business owners in Australia have professional qualifications and have had some tertiary education. In comparative studies they appear better educated than both the average woman and the typical male entrepreneur. However, we do not currently know whether education levels significantly influence a female’s choice to enter self-employment and, moreover, how female educational levels in undeveloped economies such as Fiji are related to small business ownership.

2.4.1.6 Prior Business Experience.

Previous research regarding business experience has highlighted the predominance of women in the ‘traditional’ industries that is, service and retail (Birley, 1989) such as teaching, office administration or secretarial areas (Hisrich & Brush, 1984) rather than executive managerial, scientific or technical positions (Waldinger, Aldrich, Ward, 1990). Thomas (1999) suggests that most women lack many of the basic commercial networks and contact acquired through prior managerial employment. While access to social capital is linked to self-employment creation and success (Bates, 1995; Robinson, 2001), women generally have less managerial and work experience than men (Srinivasan, 1986). In particular, women may lack the requisite skills, experience and confidence in business management, finance, sales and marketing and employment relations (Walker, 2000). This may be due to a female’s socialisation process (Fischer, 1993) and external barriers and constraints (Still & Walker, 2003).

Recent research suggests that an individual’s choice of the business model is largely reliant upon the possession of transferable managerial-level competencies rather than previous industry-level experience. However, previous work experience has been linked to firm performance within the entrepreneurship literature (Ibeh, 2004). Carter (1994), for example, highlights the importance of the previous managerial competencies in entrepreneurial technology firms in the United Kingdom. Similarly, Brockhaust (1980) determined that previous
business experience is associated with superior business acumen, attitudes towards uncertainty and entrepreneurial performance. Although previous research suggests that most independent self-employed women have extensive prior experience within the industry that they choose to enter (Moore & Buttner, 1997) we do not currently know if this is the case in both regional and urban areas in Fiji and Australia.

2.4.1.7 Social Capital Accessibility

Previous research in North America suggests that social capital in the form of usable business networks plays an important role in the creation, survival and success of female owned firms (Rosa & Hamilton, 1994). This network concept is not new, dating back to the 1930’s in organisational choice research and at least the 1950s in anthropology and sociology research (Parkhe, 1993). Past studies have shown how entrepreneurial networks enhance entrepreneurship (Gordon, 2005). However, the actual process of networking is less well documented. Organisational researchers have begun to recognise that interpersonal relationships have a crucial role to play in the success of individuals (Gartner, 1990). In particular, those economic exchanges are influenced by the level of trust and familiarity between economic agents (Fielden & Dawe, 2004). However there is some suggestion that successful entrepreneurs do invest in social interactions through engaging in bonding, empathy, reciprocity and trust (Fiet’s 2002).

In Sarasvathy et al’s (2003) research, most female business owners suggest that they were initially attracted to the business model as it presented an opportunity to build a network of business owners that provided local marketing and managerial expertise during the initial stages of the new venture start-up (Sarasvathy, Dew, Velamuri & Venkataram, 2003). This appears consistent with previous research suggesting that female entrepreneurs seek mentors to compensate for a lack of business skills and experience (Hisrich, 1989).

Recent research suggests that the application of the network concept by social science researchers has intensified in recent years in recognition of the importance of informal relationships (Birley, 1989). Networking can provide a valuable source of inspiration and facilitates the exchange of experiences between entrepreneurs and professional organisations and enhance survivability (Hisrich, & Peters, 2002). By supplementing the entrepreneur’s own business resources, the network improves the likelihood of future venture success and the likelihood that individual entrepreneurs will enter self-employment (Harden, 1985). While there is some evidence that independent business owners have access to business networks and mentors in Fiji, we do not currently know if social capital accessibility differs between new ventures that are created in rural or urban areas. Moreover, the role of social networks in
business creation in developing countries has only received limited attention in the literature, and no gender-based explanations currently exist (Yusuf, 2002).

2.4.2 Environmental Factors

Motivational factors, from an environmental perspective, include availability to finance and technological capabilities.

2.4.2.1 Availability of Finance

The supply of finance available for small business start-up in developing countries significantly impacts upon venture growth and development (Lisser, 1999). Lisser (1999) suggests that the growth of SME’s is necessary in sustaining economic growth in and alleviating poverty in developing countries (McCarthy, 2003). In particular, research suggests that small businesses tend to utilise labour intensive technologies, which has a positive impact on employment generation. Increasing financial availability and accessibility to small businesses in developing countries has been a central theme of public policy initiatives (Shane, 2003). However, difficulties associated with raising finance and, in particular, developing loan proposals may restrict new venture growth in developing countries. In addition, difficulties in acquiring collateral security for securing business loans may inhibit new venture growth and creation in developing countries (Srinivasan, 1986).

There is also some evidence to suggest that, often, resistance from family members proves to be the greatest barrier for female entrepreneurs (Babaeva & Chirikova, 1997), as well as the problems of overcoming cultural conditioning (McKay 2001). This is often the case in developing countries were a woman’s primary role is as a wife and mother and traditional practices still restrict women to maintaining their maternal role and other family bound tasks (McElwee & Al-Riyami, 2003). In this sense, women may be restricted from seeking new venture finance in these situations (Brush, 1992).

Indeed the literature suggests that obtaining start-up financing and credit (Hisrich & Brush, 1984; Schwartz, 1976), cash flow management in early operations (Hisrich & Brush, 1984; Scott, 1996) and financial planning (Hisrich & Brush, 1984) are significant barriers for women entering SMEs. In addition, other external barriers specific to growth are industry factors such as the level of demand and the intensity of competition (McGee, 1992); lack of knowledge of exporting (Leonidou, 1994) and customs and legal issues. Internal barriers may include the managerial skills and knowledge of the entrepreneur (OGorman, 2001). Whilst these problems are common to all businesses regardless of owner gender it is argued that they are
exacerbated for women particularly in the area of finance due to their lack of experience and networks in the field (Brush, 1992).

Overall, there is some consensus in SME research in developing countries that difficulty in mobilising large-scale financial resources and assets to create competitive advantages against larger international companies restrict new venture growth and performance (McCarthy, 2003). Also, difficulties associated with higher transaction costs associated with working capital acquisition have been reported (Srinivasan, 1986). In addition, poor management and accounting practices have impeded the ability of small scale businesses to try to raise finance (Lisser, 1999). Similarly, in Australia capital accessibility has been cited as a factor inhibiting female entrepreneurship (Still & Walker, 2003). However, we do not currently know to what extent female entrepreneurship is affected by capital accessibility in different regional and geographic locations.

2.4.2.2 Technological Capabilities

Previous research has suggested that there has been a shift from a traditional male-dominated manufacturing economy to a retail and service sector-based economy that has resulted in females taking far greater levels of participation in new venture creation and management (Cox, 1999; Teltscher, 2002). The advent of affordable technology has given rise to more flexible working arrangements that have the potential to facilitate global participation and interaction. These changes have led to a greater equality in the make-up of the workforce (Singh, 2001; Teltscher, 2002), in small businesses. Furthermore, in some areas of the small business sector in developing countries, in excess of 70 percent of the workforce is female, with 24 percent of these small businesses being owned or managed by women (Schmidt & Parker, 2003).

Recent research suggests that internet technologies such as electronic commerce (e-commerce) have experienced phenomenal growth. Viewed as a potential 'pot of gold' for small business growth and expansion, e-commerce involves the application of web-based information technologies toward automating business processes, transactions and work flows and buying and selling information products and services using computer networks (Kalakota & Whinston, 1997). E-commerce has the potential to become a major source of competitive advantage to small businesses, because it is a cost effective way to reach customers globally and to compete on a par with larger counterparts (Schmidt & Parker, 2003). Governments worldwide have recognised this and have created various funding schemes and initiatives in order to facilitate e-commerce adoption in small businesses (Johansson, 2003).
Prior studies by Singh (2001) and Simon (2001) suggest that females use the internet as a tool, while males consider it something to be mastered. Studies have also suggested that males were less anxious than females about using computing technology (Gilroy & Desai, 1986; Meier & Lambert, 1991). However, according to Gebler (2000), female internet users, in developed nations, exceed that of male users. The implications of this event are significant, considering the previous research into the use of the internet by females.

However, the literature identifies that one of the main difficulties that potential entrepreneurs face is accessibility to usable technological resources. Despite great technological advancements globally, small-scale businesses are hindered by their lack of technological implementation (Davis, 2002). Without this technology, these small businesses find it difficult to compete and grow (Arinaitwe, 2006). Large organisations appear to have greater access to technology to expand their businesses and become increasingly competitive. Small businesses tend to use mundane technologies and focus on low cost inputs such as inexpensive labour. In addition, there is extensive evidence that female entrepreneurs tend not to enter masculine (high technology) industries or make use of technology in sustaining competitive advantages in the marketplace (Haines, 1999). Moreover, there is evidence that females in developing economies are significantly underrepresented in both access to technology and in the application of such technology. In particular only 8 percent of women in developing nations have access to the internet (Grunhagen, 2000).

2.5 Conceptual Model

Synthesising the preceding literatures, three potential key areas that influence female small business ownership are revealed i.e. demographic influences, personal influences and environmental influences. In order to effectively establish a framework to guide the development of the research propositions, the conceptual model developed, and adopted, for this study appears in Figure 2.1. The model shows the factors influencing a female small business entrepreneur’s choice to become self-employed. Thus, the model builds on previous female small business entrepreneurship theoretical models (for example, Lerner, et.al; 1997; Rao, 2004), so as to extend current knowledge from the female small business’s perspective.
2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a comprehensive overview of the extant literatures pertaining to the research domains relevant to this investigation. In doing so, a theoretical foundation is laid for research in this important area i.e. female small business ownership. The conceptual model, appearing in Figure 2.1, provides a sound framework for the development of research propositions in Chapter Three.
CHAPTER THREE: Research Propositions

3.0 Introduction

The preceding chapter provides a basis for the development of the research propositions of this study. This chapter discusses each research proposition, individually, thus resulting in the presentation of the conceptual model of this study (Figure 3.1). Furthermore, conceptual model variations across female business participation in developed and developing countries and across regional and urban geographic areas are proposed.

3.1 Push/Pull Motivations (Proposition 1)

Prior research suggest that female small business entrepreneurs are either 'pulled' or 'pushed' into starting a business has been used extensively in the literature (Buttner & Moore, 1997; Gray, 1993). A ‘pull motivation is associated with individual having a reasonably strong positive internal desire to start a business venture. The opposite motivation is ‘push’, which is associated with a possible equally strong desire, but based on negative reasons (Walker & Brown, 2004). Specifically, a number of pull motivation factors, identified in the literature, include: the desire for personal freedom, independence gained from being one's own boss, personal satisfaction, a less rigid more flexible lifestyle and greater job satisfaction (Birley & Westhead, 1994; Brush & Hisrich, 1991; Loscocco & Leicht, 1993; Walker & Brown, 2004).

In addition, previous research has explained the factors motivating female small business entrepreneurs to start their own businesses. Some researchers suggests that innate personality traits represent primary motivators, while others believe external and situational factors (push-pull) are more relevant (Hisrich & Ozturk, 1999; Sarri & Trihopoulou, 2005). Personality traits such as; the need for achievement, a tolerance for ambiguity, a desire to innovate, a propensity for risk taking and a preference for locus of control, have all been shown to influence entrepreneurial activity (Collins, Hanges, & Locke, 2004). Moreover, push/pull factors often determine whether a female entrepreneur will take the initiative to launch a new business venture (Sheridan & Conway, 2003). In addition, female entrepreneurs are often “pushed” into starting a business by external negative conditions such as; unemployment and retrenchment, a low paying job with little upward mobility and desire to escape supervision (Curran & Blackburn, 2001; Moore & Buttner, 1997). However, “pull”
factors such as the desire to be one’s own boss, increased wealth, lifestyle change or use of one’s experience and knowledge may also attract females to consider business ownership (Birley & Westhead, 1994).

However, the entrepreneurship literature is replete with motives for going into business. These include economic motives (Casson, 1982; Schumpeter, 1934), psychological motives (McClelland, 1965) and sociological (Grunhagen, 2000; LeVine, 1966). Generally pull factors are related to a need for independence, need for achievement, financial reasons (desire for profit-wealth), personal development, self-fulfilment, social status and power (Orhan & Scott, 2001). Moreover, recent research acknowledges that pull motivations for Australian female small business entry includes a desire for wealth, career advancement, social status and power, self-fulfilment, independence, entrepreneurial drive, fulfilling personal ambition, to leverage acquired skills, and to capitalise upon potentially profitable business opportunities (Loscocco & Leicht., 1993; Robinson, 2001; Still, 2002; Still & Walker, 2003). The desire for career advancement and self-fulfilment relates to a female’s internal motives of proving her abilities, not only to family and peers, but also to herself, through entrepreneurial activity.

Also, previous studies in relation to entrepreneurial motivation in developed countries such as Australia, suggest how motivation relates to business success and grouped motivation factors into: extrinsic rewards, independence/autonomy, intrinsic rewards and family security (Kuratko, Hornsby & Naffzigger, 1997; Robichaud, et al., 2001). Furthermore, Wang et al. (2006) recommends that “pull” motivations are more important motivators than the “push” motivations for female entrepreneurs in developed countries such as the US and Australia where they are highly motivated by the (cultural) need for independence. However, some evidence suggests Fijian female urban entrepreneurs are motivated by “pull” factors while regional female small business owners tend to be “pushed” into collectivist states (Qalo, 1997; Rao, 2004; Reddy, et al., 2004).

Apart from negative incentives, women may enter small business in order to gain independence and autonomy (Davis, 2002) and build cooperative networks (Rosa & Hamilton, 1994). Although the need for independence is often quoted as the most important motivator of women starting businesses (Cromie, 1987), there is some evidence that economic motives are becoming increasingly important, particularly with reference to wealth creation, status building and power (Orhan & Scott, 2001). However, most research endorses the view that female entrepreneurs value intrinsic motivations and, in particular, social contributions such as building favourable client networks and contributing to the local community (Still & Timms, 2000) over future economic gain (Brush, et al., 2004). Most research suggests that women are
pushed into self-employment (Still & Walker, 2003) although there is no consensus in the literature regarding this issue (Weaven & Herrington, 2006). The extant entrepreneurship literature depicts the motive for going into business as an ‘individualist’ affair (Saffu, 2003).

While individualism or individual rationality is a common thread that runs through entrepreneur’s motives in advanced nations, the opposite is the case in the South Pacific island countries (Saffu, 2003). Being collectivist cultures, the motives of indigenous Fijian female entrepreneurs are deeply rooted in their relationships with the vanua (local community and culture) (Mamman & Saffu, 1995). Furthermore, cultural factors and gender may also affect the motivations of female small business owners. Previous research on entrepreneurship in developing countries suggests that this activity is heavily dominated by males. As Fiji is characterised by weak economic conditions, female small business entrepreneurs tend to be primarily motivated by the desire to increase income (Baldacchino, 1999), whereas Australian female small business owners are motivated by the desire to exploit a business opportunity and achieve personal freedom (Gray, 1993). However, recent studies comparing the motivations of men and women in establishing their own businesses in developed economies found that autonomy, achievement, and job satisfaction were significant motivators (Burke, Fitzroy, & Nolan, 2002; Walker & Brown, 2004; Wang, Walker, & Redmond, 2006). Alternatively, women small business owners in developing countries are more likely to label career dissatisfaction and child rearing as reasons to enter independent business arrangements (Srinivasan, 1995; Teo, 1996).

Moreover, Fiji, being a patrilineal society, is more likely to push Fijian female entrepreneurs into self employment. The vaka-viti (Fijian Way or Fijian rationality) dictates a maintenance of close relationships with the local community. This is significant given the strong family connections among Fijian culture, especially in relation to the mataqali or ‘extended family’. In addition, indigenous female entrepreneurs may find it difficult to escape cultural values like; veikauwaitaki, veinanumi and veirogorogoci which are significant obstacles to their progress and growth.

However, Australia is an individualistic culture and as such, female small business entrepreneurs tend to be ‘pulled’ into commercial activities. As stated above, pull factors are those that are intrinsically based and centre around an individual’s need for control (Still, 2002) and are pulled into self-employment to realise perceived opportunities (Robinson, 2001). In addition, early research suggests that pull factors are related to a need for independence, need for achievement, financial reasons (desire for profit-wealth), personal development, self-fulfilment, social status and power (Orhan & Scott, 2001). Furthermore, pull motivations for
female small business entry includes a desire for wealth, career advancement, social status and power, self-fulfilment, independence, entrepreneurial drive, fulfilling personal ambition, to leverage acquired skills, and to capitalise upon potentially profitable business opportunities. The desire for career advancement and self-fulfilment relates to a female’s internal motives of proving her abilities, not only to family and peers, but also to herself, through entrepreneurial activity.

Given the above arguments it is proposed that:

- **a)** When assessing self-employed decision, Fijian women entrepreneurs are more likely to be pushed into self-employment
- **b)** When assessing the self-employed decisions, Australian female small business owners are more likely to be pulled into self-employment.

### 3.2 Work and Family Conflict (Proposition 2)

Previous studies in work-family conflict are commonly based upon role theory as: ‘a form of inter role conflict, in which the demands of work and family roles are incompatible in some respect, so that participation in one role is more difficult because of participation in the other role’ (Hassan, Dollard, & Winefield, 2010). Previous entrepreneurial gender-based research has determined that male and female entrepreneurs differ in their motivations and that female entrepreneurs are motivated by the desire to balance the demands of career and potential life (Fielden, et al., 2003). The literature suggests that work and family conflict may differ on cultural lines. Some differences include how work and family roles are divided, the meaning of work, the nature of the organisations and individuals’ relationships with superiors (Hassan, et al., 2010). However, (and recalling that women choose entrepreneurship to create their own desired balance between career and personal life/family (Buttner & Moore, 1997)), Fijian female entrepreneurs may find some restrictions due to their need to foster a large immediate family and maintain traditional and stereotypical gender work roles (Moore, 2002). In comparison, Australian female small business operators start their own businesses to benefit from additional independence and flexibility than is realisable within their current work situations (Still & Timms, 2000).

To reiterate, the issue of work and family balance has been widely reported in the family business literature (Birley, 1989; Buttner & Moore, 1997; Robichaud, et al., 2001; Still &
Timms, 2000). Women appear to require defined schedules that allow them to balance work and family commitments because they are primarily responsible for domestic duties (Loscocco, & Leicht., 1993). In many cases, females are expected to accommodate the needs of home duties and children even when involved in full-time employment. However, in Australia, female small business entrepreneurs are more individualistic (Hofstede, 2001), and tend to keep work and family relationships separate, whereas collectivist cultures (Hofstede, 2001) such as in Fiji usually require some solid combination of domestic and work related duties. In addition, Australian female small business entrepreneurs view work as more important for family survival which may result in family members being more accepting of the level of work being conducted in the home environment. In this sense, the family domain may be perceived as more flexible than the work domain and such flexibility serves as a resource for entrepreneurial activity (Shaffer, Joplin, Francesco & Lau, 2005).

Work is often viewed in developed economies as a means of improving oneself, whereas in developing countries work is a way of supporting the family (Lindsay, 2005). As female small business owners in Fiji are members of a collectivist society, they work to live and to attain a meaningful life and happiness through commitment to family welfare (Hassan, et al., 2010). In particular, indigenous female small business owners income is used to support the family, pay for siblings education, purchase necessary household items and assist in the improvement of the family’s well-being (Rao, 2004; Ravuvu, 1995; Reddy, et al., 2004). While this is not entirely dissimilar to that exhibited in developed economies, the difference appears to lie in the emphasis afforded to family well-being. Similarly, Indo-Fijian, Chinese and European female small business entrepreneurs in regional and urban localities (in Fiji) are supported and encouraged by their family members to enter self-employment (Qalo, 1997; Riebe, 2005). However, workplaces for female small business owners in Australia exemplify environments where cost-benefit relationships between employers and employees are valued (Noor, 2004; Still, 2002; Stoner, et al., 1990), whereas, the emphasis is on paternalistic values in the Fijian workplace (Nayacakalou, 1978; Rakoto, 1975; Rao, 2004). Therefore, assuming a female’s decision to become a small business entrepreneur, one would expect Fijian women to enter micro (and flexible) business arrangements so as to maintain their obligations to their immediate and extended family. Thus, it is posited that:

a) Given that Fiji is a patriarchal society, Fijian female entrepreneurs are more likely to enter micro enterprises when they have fulfilled their matavuvale (nuclear family) and mataqali (extended family) responsibilities.

b) Given that Australia constitutes an egalitarian society, females are more likely to enter small business arrangements to replace work and family commitments.
3.3 Age (Proposition 3)

Previous studies suggest that female small business owners in the baby boomer generation tended to face strong cultural pressures or family pressures to stay at home, go into part-time work, follow conventional women’s work such as domestic work, nursing, teaching and social work during their working careers (McKay, 2001). Moreover, Carter (1994) classifies female entrepreneurial activity as a function of age. She identifies five groups including, the *drifters* who are young women selecting self-employment over unemployment, the *young achievers* those are aspiring, inexperienced and well educated, the *achievers* who are being well educated with considerable relevant work experience, the *returners*, those who chose self-employment (typically organised around domestic responsibilities) as a way back into economic activity after a career break, and, the *traditionalists* who are women over forty five who had always worked in a family business. Interestingly, prior research indicates that female small business entrepreneurs in developed and developing economies ran successful businesses with profits running for, at least, three continuous years (Carter & Anderson, 2001; Curran & Blackburn, 2001). Both old and young female entrepreneurs also possessed a wide range of previous work experience, educational attainment and they sought self-employment to augment their income and keep active, focus on new challenges and actively participate within their community (Deakins, 1996; DeMartino & Barbato, 2002).

Further research suggests that older and younger women entrepreneurs in urban and regional sectors of developed and developing countries are confronted with a variety of challenges in developing and running their businesses (McKay, 2001). These challenges include: obtaining capital (Buttner & Moore, 1997), acquiring appropriate training (Hisrich & Brush, 1985; Walker, 2000), resistance from relatives, friends and family (Blau, Ferber, & Winker, 1998; Brush, et al., 2004) and overcoming cultural conditioning and discrimination (Buttner & Moore, 1997; Oeltjen, 1992). Specifically, older women entrepreneurs have limited (or no) formal business education, given that, when they were young, education typically prepared them for traditional roles in; nursing, teaching and social work (Noor, 2004; Orhan & Scott, 2001). However, this lack of business education did not necessarily exclude them from developing successful businesses as they often utilised their considerable life experiences in these roles. In addition, older female small business owners tend to believe that their age would prevent them from finding meaningful and challenging jobs (Rosa & Hamilton, 1994; Sarasvathy, Dew, Velamuri & Venkataram, 2003). However, younger female small business owners have the opportunities to pursue a business education that enhances the profitability and growth of their enterprises (O’Gorman, 2001).
Current research suggests that older women entrepreneurs have different motivations to enter business than younger women and similar research findings support the perspective that gendered processes are implicit in organisational structure when considering small business choice (McKay, 2001). That is, generational perceptions influence women differently. For example, what is considered acceptable for a younger woman today, such as have a demanding and successful career, was not acceptable for the past generations of women (Triandis, 1990; Walker & Brown, 2004). Generational perceptions can influence women in their decision to become a small business owner at least in three ways. First, generational pressures of an earlier era may discourage women from placing personal growth above family needs. Second, some female may look towards business ownership as a vehicle to realise entrepreneurial desires frustrated by gender roles and generational perceptions experienced outside the scope of the family. In particular, older women may find ageism and sexism difficult to overcome in engaging in formal employment (McKay, 2001). Finally, some women entrepreneurs may outlive their partners and this independence may free them to develop certain unique aspects of their personalities through entrepreneurship (McKay, 2001; Triandis, 1990).

Demographic characteristics that appear to be of special interest are the age of business owners, when they first started their business venture, marital status, level of education and family background (Fried, 1989; Gilroy & Desai, 1986; Rosti & Chelli, 2005). Notwithstanding, there is evidence that the percentage of young women entering business activity (age less than thirty five years) is considerable in developed nations, such as Australia (ABS, 2003a). However, in Fiji, female small business entrepreneurs tend to start their business later in life compared to males after the completion of their family and cultural obligations are fulfilled (Sarri & Trihopoulou, 2005).

In addition, an increasing trend has been observed amongst women who start their businesses at an age over fifty five years. In South Pacific Island societies, age and maturity is respected by the incumbent population and older people are viewed as valuable business assets. For instance, in Western Samoa (a neighbouring country of Fiji) older entrepreneurs are more likely to receive the respect and status necessary for their businesses to function profitably (Croulet & Sio, 1986). According to Hailey (1987) mature entrepreneurs are often well-established members of the local community with extensive family and social networks and have been able to control the demands and obligations associated with the responsibilities. However, we have limited information as to the age of women entering small
business in rural communities in Australia and do not know how age influences women to participate in entrepreneurial activities within Fiji.

Thus, from the above discussion the following proposition it is postulated that:

a) **Younger Fijian female entrepreneurs are more likely to enter into small business late in life as characteristics such as veidokai (respectfulness) and veirokovi (deference) are more common in older cohorts.**

b) **In Australia, and younger female (under the age of thirty five years) are more likely to be attracted to self-employment as small business operators than older women.**

3.4 **Entrepreneurial Orientation (Proposition 4)**

Entrepreneurial orientation refers to the processes, practices, and decision-making activities used by entrepreneurs that lead to the initiation of an entrepreneurial firm (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). Female small business owners in developed and developing economies that are high in entrepreneurial orientation tend to display characteristics such as pro-activeness, risk taking, and innovativeness (Covin & Slevin, 1989). Specifically, pro-activeness refers to an opportunity-seeking, forward looking perspective that involves introducing new products ahead of the competition (Kropp, Lindsay & Shoham, 2008). In addition, risk-taking involves a tendency to take bold actions, such as venturing into the new and unknown markets, committing a large portion of resources to ventures with uncertain outcomes and heavy levels of borrowing (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). Also, innovativeness includes a willingness to support creativity and experimentation in introducing new products, becoming technological leaders, and developing new processes (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). Furthermore, women small business owners conceptualise pro-activeness as a mindset focusing on introducing new products or services in anticipation of future demands and as a method of shaping the local environment. Some of the activities linked with pro-activeness include new opportunity identification and evaluation, identification and monitoring of market trends and new venture team formation (Kropp, et al., 2008). Moreover, opportunity recognition is one of the main elements of the entrepreneurial process and having a pro-activeness mindset leads to developing a vision for a new business idea so as to capitalise on a business opportunity (Bird, 1989). Female small business owners have to be involved in making the new entry decisions that involves actively monitoring the environment, researching the market, arranging finance and writing a business plan (Kropp, et al., 2008).
Current research describes entrepreneurial orientation of an organisation as a dimension of strategic posture represented by a firm’s risk taking propensity, tendency to act in a competitively aggressive and proactive manner, and reliance on frequent product innovation (Carter, Gartner & Reynolds, 1996). Specifically, in Fiji, female small business operators are said to have an entrepreneurial orientation when a group of innovator organisational members are working together, producing fresh ideas within a prevailing atmosphere conducive to acting on those ideas (Mallory, 1996). However, creating an entrepreneurial orientation has turned out to be a more multifaceted task for organisations than ever before in both developed and developing localities (Mallory, 1996).

However, Australian female small business owners describe entrepreneurial orientation to be involved in innovative products, to undertake somewhat risky ventures and to be proactively orientated (San & Chung, 2003; Schaper & Volery, 2004; Still & Walker, 2003). Lumpkin and Dess (1996) incorporate two additional dimensions: autonomy (propensity to act autonomously) and competitive aggressiveness (tendency to act aggressively towards competitors). Furthermore, Covin and Slevin (1989) argue that all dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation were interrelated and overlapped and should be related to success because they influence how situations are perceived and what strategic decisions are taken. Lumpkin and Dess (1996, p.140) describe autonomy as “the ability and will to be self-directed in the pursuit of opportunities”. Thus, an autonomous owner is motivated to act and make decisions independently. This characteristic helps business owners to be successful, because self-direction allows quick and self-reliant decisions (Frese & De Kruif, 2000). Competitive aggressiveness refers to an individual’s desire to outperform competitors and keep them from entering the same market. Competitively aggressive business owners try to secure a large share of the market and are, therefore, more likely to be successful (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). Thus, given the above discussion relating to the influence of societal-level and individual-level orientations towards entrepreneurship, the following propositions are presented.

a) In a collectivist society such as Fiji, a group’s entrepreneurial orientation will be more likely to influence a female’s entry into small business ownership than an individual’s entrepreneurial orientation.

b) In an individualistic society such as Australia, a female’s individual entrepreneurial orientation is likely to influence her decision to enter small business arrangements.
3.5 Education (Proposition 5)

Previous research suggests that societies’ increasing attention to education has focused on facilitating business start-ups and entrepreneurial attitudes of present and future female small business entrepreneurs (Petridou, Sarri & Kyrgidou, 2009). Laukkanen (2000) suggests that, “vocational institutions and universities are conceptualised as a societal innovation system, and that entrepreneurship education, when embedded in such system, could be regarded, not only as a task of producing entrepreneurially oriented competent individuals, but also reproducing the social mechanisms that underpin and facilitate the birth and growth of businesses and firms” (p.26). Furthermore, entrepreneurship programs for female small business owners should involve interactive learning, experienced-based learning, role models, business and community links (Praag, 2003), touching issues related to social experiences that may influence an individual’s desire to pursue a career and providing those skills that will contribute to successful entrepreneurial activity (Laukkanen, 2000). In addition, with the recognition of female entrepreneurship’s growing importance to the economic and the social well-being of countries the number and variety of course offerings accompanied by equal increases in student enrolment has been observed around the world (Petridou, et al., 2009). Several entrepreneurial programs have now extended beyond the typical teaching methods of lectures, including use of guest speakers, case studies and role models and have focused on the use of new technologies (Still, 2002).

Previous research suggests that human capital elements including an individual’s age, educational background and business experience may impact upon a female’s inclination to create new business ventures (Boden & Nucci, 2000). In particular, education has been suggested as an important variable influencing entry and mobility into a market, as well as access to capital (Arinaitwe, 2006). An individual’s level of formal education also reflects cognitive abilities and qualities, including a tolerance of ambiguity which is particularly relevant in entrepreneurial activities (Woodul, 1987). In addition, higher levels of education are associated with an ability to process information and to discriminate between wide varieties of perceived business alternatives (Dollinger, 1999). In Walker’s (2004) study of Australian entrepreneurs, male entrepreneurs were found to possess higher levels of formal education than female entrepreneurs, although recent research suggests that this is changing with more women entering non-traditional industries due to increased education opportunities (Coleman, 2004).
Within the Fijian context, evidence shows that more men than women receive training at a tertiary level although women perform better in education. International donor organisations like AusAID provide assistance in micro-credit and micro-enterprise development and different agencies have identified the lack of any policy that encourages the education or up-skilling of women, or for training of trainers (United Nations Development Program (UNDP), 2002). However, a press release from the Ministry of Women and Culture (2002), suggests that the Ministry of Education and Youth should provide gender sensitising training in educational and training institutions to encourage entrepreneurial activity of Fijian women. This is an area of concern considering that more than 80 percent of microfinance clients in Fiji are women (NCSMED, 2006).

Therefore, on the basis of the preceding discussion, it is proposed that:

a) *In a high power distance cultures such as Fiji, women entrepreneurs are more likely to have pursued less business-oriented education which appears to limit their entry into self-employment and particularly masculine-oriented industries.*

b) *In a low power status culture such as Australia, Australian females are more likely to have high levels of business education, and are therefore more likely to enter self-employment, in a variety of industries.*

### 3.6 Prior Business Experience (Proposition 6)

Previous research suggests that gender differences exist in the work and career experiences of female small business owners in developed and developing economies (Burke, et al., 2002). Moreover, female entrepreneurs in developing countries are mainly engaged as middle managers, often employed in front desk and housekeeping activities, personnel training and conference and banqueting. In comparison, female small business owners in developing countries tend to be employed in finance and control, property and security and purchasing which ultimately leads to a host of high level managerial positions (Baun, Locke & Smith, 2001; Buttnner & Moore, 1997). Similar studies conducted in Australia indicate that prior to setting up their ventures a majority of female business owners had substantial business experience (Hisrich & Ozturk, 1999; Moore, 1999). However, the types of experience women possess prior to setting up their new venture is not considered homogenous across countries. For example, most American female small business owners had experience in businesses similar to their current one, whereas in Australia a majority of women small business operators
had previous managerial experience in different industries to the industry in which they currently operated (Longnecker, 1991; Morris, Miyasaki, Watters & Coombes, 2006). However, in general, most female small business entrepreneurs tend to start their businesses in areas in which they have had some experience, and since retail or professional sectors are probably what they are already familiar with, it appears more likely that their start-up businesses are in these sectors (McKay, 2001; Moore & Buttner, 1997).

Past research has highlighted the predominance of women in what is considered ‘traditional’ industries (i.e. service and retail) (Birley, 1989) in teaching, office administration or secretarial areas (Hisrich & Brush, 1984) rather than executive managerial, scientific or technical positions (Waldinger, Aldrich & Ward, 1990). Thomas (1999) suggests that most women lack access to commercial networks and contacts acquired through prior managerial-level employment. While access to social capital is linked to self-employment creation and success (Bates, 1995; Robinson, 2001), women generally possess less managerial and work experience than men (Srinivasan, 1986). In particular, women may lack the requisite skills, experience and confidence in business management, finance, sales and marketing and employment relations (Walker, 2000). This may be due to a female’s socialisation process (Fischer, 1993) and external barriers and constraints (Still & Walker, 2003). Based on the preceding commentary, the following propositions are put forth.

a) In a patriarchal society such as Fiji, females are less likely to enter self-employment due to a lack of prior business experience.

b) In a democratic society such as Australia, female entrepreneurs are more likely to possess prior business/management experience.

3.7 Social Capital Accessibility (Proposition 7)

Previous studies define social capital as the productive value that accrues to individuals and groups from the social network relations amongst them (Shane & Cable, 2002). Social capital theory can be used within the business context to explain outcomes by exploring three distinct dimensions: structural, relational and cognitive (Wharton & Brunetto, 2007). Entrepreneurship scholars explain structural social capital through analysing the number of contacts that occur which connects individuals (Still & Walker, 2003). While cognitive social capital refers to the types of understandings that develop amongst individuals depending on a shared meaning of language, codes and culture (Shaffer, et al., 2005; Shane & Cable, 2002). Finally, relational
social capital involves the underlying nature of relationships that guide how individuals behave and the resulting impact of their exchanges, referring to the rules and norms concerning trust, reciprocity and obligation behaviours (Wharton & Brunetto, 2007). In addition, within business networks comprising female small business entrepreneurs there is often an absence of traditional hierarchical and market relationship that normally governs behaviour and practices (Shane & Cable, 2002). Therefore, without trust, female small business owners are devoid of any mechanisms for controlling the expected behaviour and obligation of other entrepreneurs and their hidden motivations (Wharton & Brunetto, 2007). Singh (2001) examined the benefits of networking/clustering for female small business entrepreneurs seeking business opportunities and found the benefits of successful networking to include; accelerated innovation diffusion, increased productivity, profitability, sales, market knowledge and exports (Singh, 2001; Verheul & Thurik, 2001) and the development of a business climate that promotes innovative spin-offs for other firms (Watson & Newby, 2009).

Other commentary suggests that small business entrepreneurs use social networks to identify business opportunities and that social network theory assumes that it is possible to examine the linkages between defined groups of connected people as a system due to the characteristics they display (Birley & Westhead, 1994). Specifically, female small business networks comprise linkages between different enterprises or firms undertaking similar economic activities within a confined region surrounding business operations (Breen, Calvert, & Oliver, 1995). Moreover, these entrepreneurial networks are more formally organised and include role models, problem-solving and information sharing mechanisms. Given that female entrepreneurs typically have limited availability to networks, they may also have limited access to new sources of potential business opportunities (Carter, 1994; Coy, Shipley, Omer & Khan, 2007).

More recent research examines how entrepreneurial networks enhance entrepreneurship, however, the actual process of networking is less well documented (Gordon, 2005). Organisational researchers have begun to recognise that interpersonal relationships have a crucial role to play in the success of individuals (Gartner, 1990). In particular, those economic exchanges are influenced by the level of trust and familiarity between economic agents (Fielden & Dawe, 2004). Evidence presented by Fiet’s (2002) study suggests that successful entrepreneurs should invest in social interactions. One way of recognising the articulation of networks is through the idea of embeddedness. Embeddedness appears to mirror the multiple dimensions of relationship marketing and according to Morris et al. (2006), consist of bonding, empathy, reciprocity and trust.
In Sarasvathy et al’s (2003) research, most female business owners nominated that they were initially attracted to the business model as it presented an opportunity to build a network of business owners so as to provide assistance in local marketing and management during the initial stages of the new venture start-up (Sarasvathy, Dew, Velamuri & Venkataram, 2003). This appears consistent with previous research suggesting that female entrepreneurs seek mentors to compensate for a lack of business skills and experience (Hisrich, 1989). However, it appears that network accessibility will be moderated by specific cultural contexts, with female entrepreneurs in less developed countries being somewhat limited by their cultural value set encouraging humility, compliance and respectfulness in their local communities. In comparison, female entrepreneurs in developed countries may have access to public and private sector advise and formal mechanisms that encourage the exchange of information through formal business networks. Thus, it is proposed that:

a) In feminine cultures such as Fiji, females are less likely to enter self-employment due to difficulty in accessing assistance, for business networks.

b) In a masculine culture such as Australia, females are more likely to enter self-employment due to perception of minimising risk through having access to business networks.

3.8 Availability of Finance (Proposition 8)

The supply of finance available for small business ventures in developing countries significantly impacts upon venture growth and development (Lisser, 1999). Lisser (1999) suggests that the growth of SME’s is necessary in sustaining economic growth (and thus alleviating poverty) in developing countries (McCarthy, 2003). In particular, research suggests that small businesses tend to utilise labour intensive technologies, which has a positive impact on employment generation. Increasing financial availability and accessibility to small businesses in developing countries has been a central theme of public policy initiatives (Shane, 2003). However, difficulties associated with raising finance and, in particular, developing loan proposals may restrict new venture growth in developing countries. In addition, problems associated with acquiring collateral security for securing business loans may inhibit new venture growth and creation in these nations (Srinivasan, 1986). Furthermore, providing finance to female small businesses has been the goal for both governments and donor agencies in developed and developing countries, but to date, little has been achieved, especially in less developed economies (Lee, 1997). This may be due to financial institutions’
perceptions that the risks and transaction costs involved in dealing with small businesses are too high. This is particularly the case for female small businesses in developing economies. Despite their geographic location, many SMEs cannot mobilise large-scale financial resources or generate the assets necessary in creating competitive advantage with businesses in developed countries (Lee & Denslow, 2005; Mallory, 1996).

Recent research suggests that financial problems i.e. (as lack of funds) constrain the development and growth of female small businesses because many small businesses are unable to access the same kinds of growth funding often available to large firms (Watson & Newby, 2009). Watson and Newby’s research suggests a strong link between the availability of finance and female small business growth implying there may be major barriers preventing small business owners’ access to equity (Woodward, 1997). In addition, many female small business entrepreneurs may be discouraged from applying for funding from financial institutions because they are of the opinion that their application will be rejected (Verheul & Thurik, 2001). Moreover, many female small business owners avoid accessing external funding given the risks involved and the potential for them to (ultimately) lose control of their firms (Watson & Newby, 2009).

Overall, it appears that female small business owners often experience greater difficulty than men in obtaining working capital for their enterprises (Brush, 1992), and the lending policies of many financial institutions have disadvantaged female small business entrepreneurs. As a result, female entrepreneurs have had to rely on personal and family financial resources which are often insufficient and lead to business failure (Watson & Newby, 2009). Moreover, there is some evidence that resistance from family members is the single greatest barrier for female entrepreneurs (Babaeva & Chirikova, 1997), together with problems of overcoming cultural conditioning (McKay, 2001). This is often the case in developing countries were a woman’s primary role is as a wife and mother, and traditional practices restrict women to their maternal role and other family bound task-roles (McElwee & Al-Riyami, 2003). However, it is not only gender issues that can hinder the start-up and growth phases of the small firm. Current research emphasises the role of financial aspects of venture start-up and management as significant obstacles for women (Brush, 1992). From the above discussion, it is proposed that:

a) In patriarchal societies, such as Fiji, female entrepreneurs are less likely to enter self-employment due to the difficulties in accessing venture finance.

b) In egalitarian societies, such as Australia, female entrepreneurs are more likely to enter self-employment due to ease in accessing finance.
3.9 Technology (Proposition 9)

Prior studies by Singh (2001) and Simon (2001) suggest that females use the internet as a tool, while males consider it as something to be ‘mastered’. Other research suggests that that males are less anxious than females in relation to using computing technology (Gilroy & Desai, 1986; Meier & Lambert, 1991). When considering geographic regions, it appears that female internet users in developed nations exceed the number of male users (Gebler, 2000). However, in comparing access to technology in underdeveloped economies is significantly lower (Singh, 2000).

Recent research suggests that internet technologies such as electronic commerce (e-commerce) have experienced phenomenal growth (Gebler, 2000). Viewed as a source of income for generations fuelling small business growth and expansion, e-commerce involves the application of web-based information technologies toward automating business processes, transactions and work flows and buying and selling information products and services using computer networks (Kalakota & Whinston, 1997). E-commerce has the potential to become a major source of competitive advantage to small businesses, because it is a cost effective way to reach customers globally and to compete on a par with larger counterparts (Schmidt & Parker, 2003). Given these apparent advantage, governments worldwide have instigated various funding schemes and initiatives in an attempt to facilitate e-commerce adoption in small businesses (Johansson, 2003).

The advent of affordable technology has given rise to more flexible working arrangements that have the potential to facilitate global participation and interaction (Simon, 2001). These changes have led to greater equality in the makeup of the workforce (Singh, 2001; Telttscher, 2002), and have opened new opportunities for female entrepreneurs. Furthermore, it is evident that in some areas of the small business sector more than 70 percent of the workforce is female, with 24 percent of these small businesses being owned or managed by women (Schmidt & Parker, 2003). However, female small businesses in developing economies continue to face the lack of technological infrastructure, thus, making it difficult for female business to compete.

In addition, small businesses in developing nations tend to use mundane technologies which particularly focus on low cost inputs such as cheap labour and land (Baun, et al., 2001). Also, these small businesses are involved in traditional business roles such as; blacksmiths, potters
and weavers and their typical customers are often drawn from low and middle classes (Coleman, 2004). However, female small business owners in developed countries take advantage of technology to expand their business and become increasingly competitive. Moreover, high internet penetration and information technology have enabled them to be competitive in the globalised marketplace (Fielden, et al., 2003).

Current research suggests that e-commerce adoption enables female small businesses in regional sectors to play a major role in developing such areas. This is particularly important as regional areas have high unemployment rates, shortage of skilled people, limited access to resources and lack of infrastructure (Keniry, Blums, Notter, Radford, & Thomson, 2003). Given the above discussion, the following propositions are presented.

   a) In low tolerance of ambiguity cultures such as Fiji, female entrepreneurs are less likely to enter self-employment arrangements in industries that are reliant on e-commerce business models

   b) In high tolerance of ambiguity cultures such as Australia, female entrepreneurs are more likely to become self-employed in industries requiring e-commerce business models to reduce competitive advantage.

The preceding discussions provide the foundation for the research propositions of this study as outlined in Table 3.1
Table 3.1: Summary of General Propositions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Proposition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Push/pull motivations    | P1  a) When assessing the self-employment decision, Fijian female entrepreneurs are more likely to be pushed into self-employment due to the influence of their communal and cultural value systems like vakarokoroko (deference) and vakarorogo (compliance).  
  b) When assessing the self-employment decision, Australian female small business owners are more likely to be pulled into self-employment due to the influence of individualistic cultural values associated with a desire for independence and personal satisfaction. |
| Work/Family conflict     | P2  a) When assessing the self-employment decision, Fijian female entrepreneurs are more likely to enter micro enterprises due to responsibilities associated with matavuvale (nuclear family) and mataqali (extended family).  
  b) When assessing the self-employment decision, Australian female small business owners are more likely to be influenced by their desire for work flexibility to assist in balancing work and family commitments. |
| Age                      | P3  a) Fijian female entrepreneurs are more likely to assess the self-employment decision later in life due to the influence of cultural values associated with veidokai (respectfulness) veirokovi (deference).  
  b) When assessing the self-employment decision, younger Australian entrepreneurs (under the age of 35 years) are more likely to be influenced by their desire to realise intrinsic and extrinsic goals associated with personal development, wealth creation and status. |
| Entrepreneurial orientation | P4  a) When assessing the self-employment decision, Fijian female entrepreneurs are less likely to engage in high risk ventures due to the cultural values of veikauwaitaki (to recognise and feel for), veinanumi (to be considerate) and veirogorogoci (to consult with).  
  b) When assessing the self-employment decision, Australian female entrepreneurs are more likely to be influenced by their desire to work autonomously, be creative and take risks in highly ambiguous environments. |
| Education                | P5  a) When assessing the self-employment decision, Fijian female entrepreneurs are more likely to be attracted to traditional female-oriented business sectors due to a lack of previous business-oriented education.  
  b) When assessing the self-employment decision, more educated Australian female entrepreneurs are more likely to be attracted to SMEs in non-traditional industries, while less educated female entrepreneurs are more likely to be attracted to SME ownership in traditional industries. |
| Previous work experience | P6  a) When assessing the self-employment decision, Fijian female entrepreneurs are more likely to enter micro enterprises due to their lack of prior business experience due to cultural values of vakarorogo (compliance) and veidokai (respectfulness).  
  b) When assessing the self-employment decision, Australian female entrepreneurs are more likely to be able to enter non-traditional industries due to their ability to leverage their previous work experience. |
| Social capital accessibility | P7  a) When assessing the self-employment decision, Fijian female entrepreneurs are less likely to access social capital networks due to the cultural factors of vakarokoroko (deference) and vakarorogo (compliance).  
  b) When assessing the self-employment decision, Australian female entrepreneurs are more likely to access social capital networks in their venture development process. |
| Financial availability    | P8  a) When assessing the self-employment decision, Fijian female entrepreneurs are less likely to access venture finance due to difficulties in acquiring collateral to secure business loans.  
  b) When assessing the self-employment decision, Australian female entrepreneurs are more likely to access venture finance due to their ability to utilise personal savings, commercial funds and public sector financing initiatives. |
| Technological capability  | P9  a) When assessing the self-employment decision, Fijian female entrepreneurs are less likely to utilise e-commerce technology in managing the growth of their business enterprises.  
  b) When assessing the self-employment decision, Australian female entrepreneurs are more likely to utilise e-commerce technology in managing the growth of their business enterprises. |
3.10 Research Issues

Given that it is proposed that female entrepreneurs in developing countries will tend to enter smaller enterprises and are somewhat influenced by cultural, technological, family and social capital constraints, it would be expected that differences will exist between female entrepreneurs in developing and developed countries. Thus, the first research issue relating to the proposed conceptual model is:

RI1. To what extent does the conceptual model of female self employment (appearing in Figure 2.1) differ across developing and developed economies?

As previous research attests small and medium sized enterprises in regional areas may encounter some location disadvantages as compared to ventures in urban localities (Larsson, Hedelin, & Garling, 2003). These impediments may relate to the availability of finance, network accessibility, market constraints, value chain appropriation and technological constraints. On this basis, it would be expected that there would be distinct differences in, not only the antecedent factors influencing the self-employment decision, but also the outcomes associated with the self-employment decision. Thus the second research issue is:

RI2. To what extent does the conceptual model of female self employment (appearing in Figure 2.1) differ across urban and regional areas of developing and developed economies?

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the nine research propositions of this study. In doing so, a comprehensive conceptual model has been developed and three important research issues have been highlighted. In order to address these research propositions and issues a sound research methodology must be employed. Chapter Four outlines the research design adopted for this research, through the presentation of the methodological decisions made and the data collection strategies employed.
CHAPTER FOUR: Research Design

4.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research design and methodological approaches adopted to appropriately address the research propositions and research issues of this study. The ensuing discussion begins with an overview of the ontological, epistemological and methodological philosophical underpinnings of research, in general, which provides justification for the chosen research paradigm. More specifically, the chapter progresses with an outline of the data collection tactics, sampling method and analytical tools used to process the data. Finally issues relating to validity, reliability and ethical considerations are discussed.

4.1 Research Paradigms

A paradigm refers to a basic orientation to theory and research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Paradigms include a set of assumptions about the world, the research techniques to be used and the important answers to be solved (Neuman, 2003). It is important that the researchers choose the ideal paradigm in order to guide them towards addressing the research problem. Each paradigmatic approach is supported by ontological, epistemological and methodological philosophical explanations (Perry, et al., 1999). Ontology is a description of existing reality in that the right concepts and relationship are examined. Epistemology focuses upon the relationship between reality and the researcher and how knowledge about that reality becomes known to the researcher. Methodology describes the techniques used by researchers to investigate reality (Creswell, 2003). Four predominant paradigms include positivism, critical theory, constructivism and realism (Healey & Perry, 2000) and these are briefly discussed (and summarised in Table 4.1) in order to justify the adoption of an appropriate paradigm.

4.1.1 Positivism

Positivism assumes that natural and social sciences measure independent facts about a single apprehensible reality composed of discrete elements whose nature can be known and categorised (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Moreover, the objectives of the research inquiry often
include the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables that are consistent across time and context (Johnson, 1997). The primary data collection techniques include controlled experiments and sample surveys which are outcome-oriented and assume natural laws and mechanisms, with the primary mode of the research inquiry being theory-testing or deduction (Perry, et al., 1997). Data is collected in a structured manner with the researcher being removed from the phenomenon of interest and the resultant data, analysis and conclusions are argued to be “value free” due to their objective characteristics (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

4.1.2 Critical Theory

Critical theory assumes apprehensive social realities, incorporating historically situated structures. Specifically, researchers using critical theory aim at critiquing and transforming social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender values (Perry, et al., 1999). Examples of critical theory researchers are Marxists, feminists, and action researchers. Thus research inquiries are often long-term ethnographic and historical studies of organisational processes and structures (Perry, et al., 1997). Assumptions are essentially subjective and hence knowledge is grounded in social and historical routines and is therefore value-dependent and value-free (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

4.1.3 Constructivism

From a constructivist's perspective, truth is a construction which refers to a particular belief system held in a particular context (Perry, et al., 1999). Realities appear as multiple realities which are socially and experientially based intangible mental constructions of individuals. The underlying premise is that meaning has more value than measurement, for perception itself is the most important reality (Perry, et al., 1997). Furthermore, Guba & Lincoln (1994) suggest that knowledge creation is dependent on the interaction between the researcher and respondent, that is, the researcher has to be a “passionate participant during his or her field work” (p.112). Constructivism adopts a relativism ontology and an example of a constructivist would be a psychologist or a researcher of organisation culture.
4.1.3 Realism

Generally, the realism paradigm promotes an understanding of the common reality of an economic system in which many people operate independently (Perry, et al., 1999). That is, realists believe that there is a "real" world to discover even if it is only imperfectly and probabilistically apprehensible (Godfrey & Hill, 1995; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Merrian, 1988). Moreover, perception is not reality as constructivists and critical theorists might believe, instead, a perception for realists is a window on to reality from which a picture of reality can be triangulated with other perceptions (Perry, et al., 1999). Specifically, realists acknowledge the difference between the world and particular perception of it, and the pre-eminent importance of that world (Perry, et al., 1997). Furthermore, constructivists and critical theories consider there are many realities, while realists consider there is only one reality although several perceptions of that reality must be triangulated to obtain a better picture of it (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Table 4.1 Principles of Research Paradigms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSITIVISM</th>
<th>REALISM</th>
<th>CRITICAL THEORY</th>
<th>CONSTRUCTIVISM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ontology</strong> (The nature of reality)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naive realism</td>
<td>Reality is real and apprehensible</td>
<td>Critical realism: reality is &quot;real&quot; but only imperfectly and probabilistically apprehensible and so triangulation from many sources is required to try to know it</td>
<td>Historical realism: “virtual” reality shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, and ethnic and gender values, crystallized over time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Epistemology</strong> (The nature of relationship between the researcher and the reality)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectivist: findings true</td>
<td>Modified objectivist: findings probably true</td>
<td>Subjectivist: value mediated findings</td>
<td>Subjectivist: created findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Methodology</strong> (How the researcher finds reality)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiments/surveys:</td>
<td>Case studies/convergent interviewing:</td>
<td>Dialogic/Dialectical:</td>
<td>Hermeneutical/dialectical:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verification of hypotheses: chiefly quantitative methods</td>
<td>Triangulation, interpretation of research issues by qualitative and quantitative methods such as structural equation modelling</td>
<td>Researcher is a “transformative intellectual” who changes the social world within which participants live</td>
<td>Researcher is a “passionate participant” within the world being investigated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Perry, et al., 1999)
4.2 Choice of Realism Paradigm

Research relating to business and marketing has been criticised in recent years for not capturing real world complexity (Perry, et al., 1999). Current research suggests that a mix of methodologies and a consideration of the three scientific paradigms used in marketing research can assist in answering such criticisms as these (Perry, et al., 1999). However, rather than a mixed-methodological approach, realism approaches aim to explain, in detail, objective realities (Perry, et al., 1999). Realism is defined as the view that entities exist independently of being perceived, or independently of the theories surrounding them (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). In addition, the adoption of a realism paradigm is most relevant when an area of inquiry lacks a definitive theoretical underpinning and is without well defined and tested constructs (Patton, 1990; Perry, et al., 1999).

Most of the existing Western-oriented research does not acknowledge the specific role of culture, in this research context, which is now viewed as a major factor in small business research (Ravuvu, 1983; Srinivasan, 1992; Teo, 1996). Moreover, as detailed in the literature review, societies which practiced individualism are more likely to produce female entrepreneurs than those that value collectivism (Hofstede, 1991; Rao, 2004; Ratuva, 2000). Thus there is an effect between entrepreneurial behaviour and individualism. On this basis, the realism paradigm was considered appropriate due to the deficiency of well defined and tested theory in this area.

4.3 Research Design

The choice of any research design is a framework or blueprint for conducting the market research project. It specifies the details of the procedures necessary for obtaining the information needed to structure and/or solve research problems (Burns & Brush, 2003; Malhotra, et al., 2002). Having chosen the most appropriate research paradigm, the relevant methodology becomes clearer, however, there are still many decisions to make in relation to particular data collection mechanisms and analytical tools.

A qualitative research design is chosen for this study in order to clarify problems, test the conceptual model and verify the research propositions/issues generated from the literature. The aim of this research is to identify factors that influence the decisions of female entrepreneurs in engaging and performing small business within urban and regional sectors in
Australia and Fiji. A detailed study of the literature resulted in the development of the conceptual model (Figure 3.1) and representing a set of general propositions (Table 3.1).

4.3.1. Qualitative Methods

In line with the chosen research paradigm (Realism), qualitative methods are used because they encourage value discovery over the verification of theory. Such methods allow participants to articulate their own interpretations which enhance the discovery of new insights and perspectives (Aaker, Kumar & Day, 2001). Therefore, in-depth issues can be explored in a much less structured manner as opposed to quantitative methods (Langer, 1987). Qualitative research encompasses various data collection mechanisms, such as observations, interviews and questionnaires, document and text analysis and the analysis of the researchers experiences and impressions (Myer, 1994). Such techniques are argued to produce richer, more meaningful results over, and above, that of quantitative methods (Deshpande, 1983). Given that the research propositions and issues are already clearly defined, the most appropriate method of data collection was deemed to be the in-depth interview. In particular, *convergent interviewing* was adopted for this research.

4.3.2 In-Depth Interviews

An in-depth interview is a qualitative technique in the form of a face-to-face encounter between the researcher and informants directed toward understanding informants’ perspectives on their lives, experiences or situations as expressed in their own words (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). Interviews are often unstructured in nature, and conducted with considerable flexibility to ensure that important underlying themes are free to emerge (Minichiello, Aroni, & Hays, 2008). The interviewer’s role is a facilitator of knowledge generation therefore they are active listeners and passive participants in the process (Lukas, Hair, Bush, & Ortinau, 2004; Malhotra, et al., 2002; Mason, 1996). The researcher’s role, strictly as a facilitator, is an important one that, undertaken correctly, will reduce interviewer bias contaminating the resultant data. One interviewing technique, used effectively to eliminate potential bias, is convergent interviewing.

4.3.2.1 Choice of Convergent Interviewing

The technique of convergent interviewing involves conducting a series of interviews, whereby each preceding interview informs the next interview. The purpose of this technique is to gain a “series of successive approximations” (Dick, 1990, p. 3) that eventuates in a consensus about important information via the testing of respondent agreement and disagreement. In this
sense, the information gained is respondent-driven rather than researcher-driven which eliminates the possibility of bias and enhances the accuracy of the data. Thus, as the interviewing process progresses, the interviews become more structured (as opposed to the initial interviews which are largely unstructured). However, the structured nature (of the latter interviews) is dictated by the respondent pool, rather than the investigator (Dick, 1990). The investigator is merely a facilitator of consensus and this facilitation is achieved through the use of probe questions to clarify and expand on issues arising from the respondents (Dick, 1990). Thus, the primary advantage of using convergent interviewing is that the resultant data is not biased by the researcher’s opinions, feeling or attitudes or, in addition, the extent to which the researcher has knowledge of the subject matter. This was particularly important for this study in order to eliminate the potential of cultural bias contaminating the results. For clarity, the convergent interviewing process is depicted in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 The Convergent Interviewing Process
4.4 Preparing for Data Collection

There are number of issues that need to be considered in preparation for data collection. They include planning for the interview, sample selection, preparing for analysis, the maximisation of valid and reliable result data, and ethical considerations. The ensuing sections discuss each of these issues.

4.4.1 Planning the Interview

Two key issues worthy of careful planning prior to the interview is the interview protocol (or guide) and the sample selection. Given the nature of convergent interviewing, the interview protocol for each interview varies as interviews progressed from being largely unstructured, to be being semi-structured. As depicted in Figure 4.1, each interview serves to inform the interview protocols of future interviews (Dick, 1990). Thus, initial interviews are quite broad to enable the identification of as many important issues as possible. Therefore, for this study, where the research focus is on female small business participation, initial interviews opened with a broad question, developed the research objectives of the study in mind (see below).

“Could you please explain what influenced you to become a small business owner?”

However, in order to ensure the research propositions were addressed in the interviews, it was necessary to develop a bank of questions that could be used as a guide throughout the interviews and this interview guide appears in Table 4.2. Subsequently, probe questions were used to flesh out rich information and detail in relation to important issues and themes and confirm areas of agreement and disagreements during the interview (Lukas, Hair, Bush, & Ortinau, 2004; Mason, 1996). Furthermore, interviewees were asked to volunteer any other information they felt was relevant to the topic. As the interviewing process progressed the questioning became more structured until all emerging themes reached saturation point.
Table 4.2  Guide for Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Push/Pull Motivations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why did you enter into small business?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What important decisions did you have to consider prior or when entering into small business?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have there ever been times when you wanted to give up, and if so what motivated you through?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work/Family Conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you work on your own or with a partner?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is work/family conflict an obstacle to your business performance?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you manage/balance work and family commitments?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How old were you when you entered into small business?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What year did you own this small business?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial Orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think are some of the essential characteristics of a successful entrepreneur?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a business owner, how innovative are you in managing your business?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What strategies do you adopt in risk taking?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe how proactive you are with the product/service of the business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the highest level of education you completed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could you explain how education is regarded to be an important component in running a business?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What industry did you involve in prior to becoming self employed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What skills, abilities, and experiences do you wish you had more knowledge of when starting your business?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the beginning what were some of the business skills you were lacking and what did you do about it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Capital Accessibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe how efficient and effective is networking?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain how difficult/easy to build your network within your locality/externally?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you value networking is a source of inspiration and facilitates the exchange of experiences between entrepreneurs and professional organisations?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance Availability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe how difficult/easy it is to acquire finance from banks/government?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To what extent do you believe that you have been financially discriminated compared to males or with other female entrepreneurs?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What sources of security do you acquire in securing business loans?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technological Capability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explain how modern technology enhances your business?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe how the internet will boost your business performance?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How reliable and accessible are these new technologies?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4.2. Sample Selection

Two key considerations in sampling is sample selection and sample size (Malhotra, et al., 2002). A sample should be representative of the wider population of interest (Mason, 1996). Therefore, with qualitative research a purposeful sampling method is often used, to ensure the respondent pool represents differed aspects of the wider population characteristics (McMurray, Pace, & Scott, 2004). In order to gain access to interviewees who fitted the characteristics required i.e. female small business owners in Australia and New Zealand, two publicly available lists were used (i.e. from Small Business Council of Australia for the Australian sample and from the Micro-Enterprise Unit of Fiji for the Fijian sample). Within these purposeful samples, individuals were randomly selected from the lists and contacted to
encourage participation in the study. In relation to sample size, given the chosen method of interviewing (i.e. convergent interviewing), sample size could not be predetermined. However, as a guide, to ensure equal representation of female small business owners in Austral and Fiji (and with an equal spread across urban and regional geographic areas), an initial sample of 40 people were identified as a starting point for interviewing. Interviews achieved stable patterns of convergence (agreement) and divergence (disagreement) within this sample so there was no need to identify further respondents.

4.4.3 Anticipated Analysis

Each interview was content analysis after the transcription of the interview and when the final transcript had been validated with the researcher’s summary notes. This was a methodical processes which occurred after each interview so that ensuing interviews could be informed from previous interviews (i.e. convergent interviewing). The process ceased when thematic saturation (i.e. no new themes emerging) was evident (Bryman & Burgess, 1994; Carson, et al., 2001).

4.4.4. Reliability and Validity

The reliability and validity of qualitative research is difficult to establish as it is subject to individual perceptions and measures are difficult to calculate statistically (for example, Smith 1984; Woodward 1997). However the procedural and structural safeguards associated with the convergent interviewing technique maximises the validity and reliability of the resultant findings (Dick 1990). The ensuing discussion addresses issues relating to descriptive validity, interpretative validity, theoretical validity and reliability.
There are three types of validity that specifically pertain to qualitative research i.e. descriptive validity, interpretive validity and theoretical validity. Descriptive validity refers to the accuracy of the reported descriptive information. Thus, descriptive validity can be addressed by having two researchers present at the interview or, alternatively, recording the interview and comparing transcripts with written notes. The later method was used for this research, in that, the interviews were recorded, transcribed and reconciled with the notes of the interviewer. Interpretive validity, on the other hand, is associated more with meaning (rather than description) and reflects how well the interviewee’s “viewpoints, thoughts, feelings, intentions and experiences” (Johnson 1997, p. 285) are reflected in the data. On this basis, throughout the interviews, and at the conclusion of the interviews, the researcher clarified his summary notes with the interviewee to ensure that the meaning, as intended, was accurately recorded. Finally, theoretical validity relates to how well and why the findings explain the phenomenon under study (Maxwell 1992). As the goal of theory development is reliant on new knowledge, in the form of new concepts and relationships, theoretical validity is particularly important. (Maxwell 1992). Theory triangulation (Denzin 1989) is used to address theoretical validation and, as such, this was undertaken in this study. This involved continually testing the appropriateness of theoretical explanations for the proposed inductive propositions throughout the interviews. During the course of the interviews, every effort was made to identify alternative and dissimilar theories that would explain proposed relationships in order to break simplistic associations (Eisenhardt 1989a).

Reliability is related to the consistency of the results, in that, if the study was replicated then it would be expected that similar results would be attained (Emory & Cooper 1991; Sekaran 2003). In other words, reliability is concerned with the stability and consistency of measurement during the research process and is central to the replicatability of this study in the future (Cooper & Emory 1995; Sekaran 2003; Zikmund 2000). The reliability of the findings derived from the interviews was achieved through structural and operational procedures such as recording, transcribing, writing, examining and interpreting interview data in the research findings (Dick 1990; Lincoln & Guba 1994; Seidman 1998).

4.4.5 Ethical Considerations

Prior to conducting the research, ethics clearance was sought from Griffith University. Griffith University conducts research in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans and the application, in relation to this research, was approved on 1/10/2007. The associated protocol number is (GU Ref No: MKT/05/07/HREC).
4.5 Data Collection

The main objective of this research is to extend to the body of accumulated knowledge (Creswell, 2003) regarding the motivational incentives for female entrepreneurs to enter self-employment and the factors influencing the performance of female small business entrepreneurs in developed and developing countries. In Chapter two, relevant theories were reviewed and gaps within the existing epistemological and ontological were identified. Qualitative, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with female entrepreneurs in the regional and urban environments of Australia and Fiji using the convergent interviewing technique. The final section of this Chapter outlines the profiles of the interviewee samples, discusses the techniques used during data collection (interviews) and explains the analytical process.

4.6 Profiles of Samples

In order to adequately describe the samples used for data analysis, information in relation to location, industry type, commencement year of small business, age, marital status, number of children and whether the respondent was the first born child in their family, was collected. Tables 5.1 and 5.2 give provide comparative tables for the regional respondents (Fiji and Australia) (Refer Table 5.1) and the urban respondents (Fiji and Australia) (refer to Table 5.2).

Overall, the demographic information shows that the majority of female entrepreneurs in both samples were married or in a relationship and more than half the sample had children. In both countries, more than half of female small business owners were not first born, so no conclusive evidence can be drawn from this information although previous research suggests that first born children are more likely to enter independent business operations (Lee, 1997; Stevenson, 1990). The average age of female small business owners in Fiji was forty-four years. Previous research suggests that age may moderate the decisions to engage in small business (Walker, 2000), however, this hypothesis is not unanimously confirmed within the extant literature (Cooper, 1981).
4.7 The Interview

During the course of the interviews every effort was made to establish rapport with the respondent, probe for further information with gentle directives and validate the meanings of discourse, as interpreted by the interviewer, with the interviewee (Armstrong 1985; Carson, et al. 2001; Dick 1990; Guba & Lincoln 1994; Woodward 1997; Yin 1994). It was important that the respondent be clear on the value of the research and indicated voluntary consent to participate in the research. Further, the nature of convergent interviewing was explained, and the researcher’s role as an active listener and passive participant was outlined (Woodward 1997). Prior to commencing the interview, interviewees were reassured that their participation was anonymous and confidentiality was a high priority. Interviewees were informed that the interviews would be recorded, however upon transcription the recording would be destroyed.

In line with the purpose of convergent interviewing, during the course of the interview, questions from the interviewer were kept to an absolute minimum. Probing questions were used when the interviewees lapsed into periods of silence and when more clarification of the issues was required. Interviewees were asked to provide examples throughout in order to clarify the meaning recorded in the interviewer’s notes (Bogdan & Taylor 1989). When information from interviewees had been exhausted and no more new themes/concepts were being discussed the interviewer brought the interview to a close. However, prior to concluding the interview, the interviewer presented his summary notes to the interviewee in order to validate the accuracy of interpretation of the discourse.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Marital</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>First?</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Marital</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>First?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FJR01</td>
<td>Nightclub</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes-2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>R01</td>
<td>Gold Coast (A)</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes-3</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FJR02</td>
<td>Handicraft</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes-5</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>R02</td>
<td>Gold Coast (B)</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes-2</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FJR03</td>
<td>Handicraft</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes-2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>R03</td>
<td>Gold Coast (C)</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes-2</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FJR04</td>
<td>Retail- Food</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes-3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>R04</td>
<td>Fruit &amp; Veggie Wash</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes-2</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FJR05</td>
<td>Piggery &amp; canteen</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes-3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>R05</td>
<td>Furniture design and production</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FJR06</td>
<td>Market vendor</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes-2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>R06</td>
<td>Paints and texture coatings</td>
<td>1980</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes-1</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FJR07</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes-1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>R07</td>
<td>Fruit &amp; Veggie</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes-1</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FJR08</td>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes-3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>R08</td>
<td>Garments through boutiques</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes-3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FJR09</td>
<td>Adventure Cruise</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes-2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>R09</td>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes-2</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FJR10</td>
<td>Resort</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>Yes-2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>R10</td>
<td>On line gift service</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes-1</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 4.4: Profile of Urban Samples (Fiji and Australia)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Marital</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>First?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FJU01- Lautoka</td>
<td>Vendor</td>
<td>1983</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes-2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FJU02- Lautoka</td>
<td>Canteen</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes-1</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FJU03- Lautoka</td>
<td>Tailor</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes-2</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FJU04- Lautoka</td>
<td>Handicraft</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes-3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FJU05- Lautoka</td>
<td>Vendor</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes-2</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FJU06- Suva</td>
<td>Law Firm</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FJU07- Labasa</td>
<td>Rentals</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Single parent</td>
<td>Yes-1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FJU08- Labasa</td>
<td>Pharmacy</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FJU09- Labasa</td>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>Yes-2</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FJU10- Lautoka</td>
<td>Nightclub</td>
<td>1987</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes-4</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Marital</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>First?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AU01- Brisbane</td>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes-2</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AU02- Brisbane</td>
<td>Hospitality</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes-1</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AU03- Brisbane</td>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes-4</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AU04- Brisbane</td>
<td>Consultancy</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes-3</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AU05- Brisbane</td>
<td>Consultancy</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AU06- Brisbane</td>
<td>Service</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes-2</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AU07- Brisbane</td>
<td>Consultancy</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes-3</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AU08- Brisbane</td>
<td>Hospitality</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AU09- Brisbane</td>
<td>Service</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes-2</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AU10- Brisbane</td>
<td>Retail</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Yes-1</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

79
4.8 Data Analysis

Creswell’s (2003) model of qualitative data analysis as show in figure 5.1 was used as a guide to data analysis. Figures 5.1 depicts a process whereby interviews are firstly transcribed and then given a general read over by the researcher in order to gain a general understanding the highlighted issues. The coding process then begins resulting in the generation of a number of central themes (or categories) within the data. Having identified the common themes, verbatim narratives are extracted from the data that exemplify and provide empirical evidence of the emergent themes.

Figure 4.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

Finally, it was important to undertake progressive interpretation throughout the analysis process. This involved a comparison of the information given by each respondent and the summary notes of the interview (with particular emphasis placed upon areas of agreement and disagreement). This allowed for overlapping or redundant issues to be eliminated and new and emerging themes to be revealed (Batonda 1998).
4.9 Conclusion

This chapter outlines the methodology adopted for this study. This research is embedded in the realism paradigm and, as such, qualitative methods of data collection are outlined. In particular, the convergent interview was selected as the most appropriate mechanism of data collection in order to address the research propositions and issues of this study. The research design was developed to maximise validity and reliability and ethical issues, relating to the conduct of the research, were addressed in the ethics protocol submitted and, subsequently, approved by Griffith University. The chapter concludes with a description of the resultant respondent samples along with a discussion of the actual data collection and resulting analysis. For clarity, the results are presented in two chapters - Chapters Five for the Fijian results and Chapter Six outlines the Australian results.
CHAPTER FIVE: Results (Fijian Interviews)

5.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the results pertaining to twenty interviews with Fijian female business owners in urban and regional areas. For the purposes of clarity and ease of interpretation, the results are presented in line with the research propositions proposed in Chapter Three. The results are presented in tabular format (where applicable), followed by a discussion of the results, which includes direct quotes from interviewees as supporting evidence of the key findings.

5.1 Presentation of Results

The ensuing sections follow the sequence of the research propositions of this study. Tables 5.1 to 5.5 are interpreted in the following manner. The purpose of the tables is to highlight respondent agreements and disagreements with the research propositions. These are coded as a tick (√) which symbolises respondent agreement, an (X) representing disagreement with the proposition and, finally, a (*) is shown if the issue was not raised, or that the respondent was neutral on the issue. Respondent names are represented by alphabetical symbols to ensure respondent anonymity.

5.2 Results in Relation to Research Propositions

The following sections outline the results in relation to the research propositions of this study which cover areas such as push and pull motivations, entrepreneurial orientation, social capital accessibility, availability to finance, technology capability, financial performance, learning and growth, internal business processes and customers.

5.2.1 Research Proposition One (Push and Pull Motivations)

When assessing the self-employment decision, Fijian female entrepreneurs are more likely to be pushed into self-employment due to the influence of their communal and cultural value systems like vakarokoroko (deference) and vakarorogo (compliance).
As shown in Table 5.1, issues raised in terms of push and pull strategies were categorised under the following themes; lack of employment opportunities, glass ceiling effects, redundancy, inadequate family income (*push motivations*) and Independence, need for achievement, personal development, self-fulfilment, social status and power and leveraged acquired skills (*pull motivations*).

### Table 5.1 Push/Pull Motivations

| Interviewer Code | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T |
| **Push Motivations** |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Lack of employment opportunities | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Glass ceiling effects | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Redundancy | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Inadequate family income | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| **Pull Motivations** |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Independence | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Need for achievement | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Personal development | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Self-fulfilment | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Social status & power | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Leverage acquired skills | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

The results revealed that fully 55 percent of indigenous female entrepreneurs were ‘pushed’ into small business operation due to cultural values of *vakaviti, veikauweitaki, veinanumi* and *veirogorogoci*. In comparison, only a slight minority of non-indigenous females (accounting for 45 percent of the total Fijian sample) were ‘pulled’ into entrepreneurial endeavours due to the contextual influence of their *individualistic* culture. Overall, fully 90 percent of female entrepreneurs stated that due to lack of future employment opportunities, they decided to enter independent small business operations, while 10 percent claimed that limitations on career advancement or ‘glass ceiling’ effects were prominent reasons in their decision to start new ventures.
In addition, a majority (85 percent) of females entered entrepreneurial ventures as they had experienced inadequate family income which is an important factor that is often nominated in the small business literature. Moreover, a majority of interviewees self-reported that they had largely based their decision to enter an entrepreneurial venture upon recommendations from members of their immediate family or close friends in the local community. Of the 9 interviewees who were not indigenous to Fiji, only 3 female entrepreneurs nominated that they sought to be independent business owners to satisfy a personal ambition, while 2 interviewees stated that they engaged in small business for realise a business dream, and 10 percent of the sample had chosen SME ownership to realise improvements in their social status and power in the community. In addition, only 3 interviewees reported that they believed SME ownership would allow them to enter industries in which they had some prior experience, thus allowing them to leverage acquired skills. Overall, all participants agreed that a ‘need for achievement’ and ‘self-fulfilment’ were important (although not primary) motivational incentives in their decision to become small business owners.

The results also revealed that approximately one quarter (25 percent) of the female small business owners were extrinsically motivated because they perceived themselves to have limited control in their previous (often salaried) employment. In support of this contention, one interviewee provided the following response.

'I used to be a pharmacist in government hospitals, but now I run my own pharmacy. I no longer experience the chain of command, sometimes having to wait for decisions from those in authority only to find your order or request being knocked back. Here, I make the decision, do whatever I want to do...I love to be independent and to be my own boss in this pharmaceutical services. Also, I like to put in practice what I learn from university but in the ministry there is some restrictions and they are not ready to accept change.' (FJU08)

Overall, while a strong majority of females in the Fijian sample (18 in total) nominated that they had been motivated to enter self-employment due to limited employment opportunities, only a small minority reported that forced redundancies or ongoing work-related issues with their supervisors were important in their decision to enter self-employment. Other issues nominated by a minority of interviewees related to rigid working conditions and the desire for increased levels of flexibility to accommodate family demands. Only a weak minority (3 in total) indicated that they preferred to start their own business due to ‘glass ceiling’ effects in their current salaried employment. Moreover, most respondents did not identify intrinsic motivation such as
the desire for social status and power or leveraging their existing business skills to gain financial advantage. The following statement (FJU06) is indicative of a majority of responses.

‘...the options at that time were not very big. The first option was to migrate, second was to work in another law firm, third was to work in a commercial organization or some other corporate or other body or lastly to set my own. The option to work in another law firm was not very attractive nor work in another commercial company... so in 2002 there was not a lot of options available except to start my own, so here I am.’

Although a strong minority of Fijian women nominated that the need for independence or professional development was important in their decision to enter small business ownership, most interviewees did in fact cite intrinsic motivations such as the need to fulfil personal ambitions (i.e. need for achievement). For instance, a respondent from a regional area in Fiji stated:

‘You know I love being active and love to preserve the story and culture, and being very environmentally aware... I have the passion and my parents have been in the tourism industry in Fiji, owning a Resort. And I think I always have the craving in tourism...I just want to make a difference’ (FJR09).

During the course of the interviews, a majority of the female business owners identified factors centring upon achieving some financial security, accommodating a personal entrepreneurial ‘drive’ and capitalising upon potentially profitable business opportunities when recounting the reasons for entering self-employment. For instance, an interviewee from an urban area in Fiji stated that:

‘Since my father was a businessman in the area, I used to help him during my childhood and most of those times I was with him running the business. From here I started my own grocery shop and video outlet. Later I managed to diversify into driving school, petrol station and car rentals so I could realise my dreams.’(FJU07).

Research proposition 1 suggested that female entrepreneurs were driven by a (to a larger extent) extrinsic and (to a lesser extent) intrinsic motivational-incentives which would have ‘pushed’ them to become independent business owners. The findings suggest that this was the case for a majority of female small business operators that were interviewed. Thus, proposition 1 (a) is strongly supported by the majority of Fijian interviewees. Interestingly, it
appears that female entrepreneurs in both regional and urban localities were ‘pushed’ into self-employment mainly to remedy a perceived lack of business opportunity and achieve some financial security. Next, issues surrounding work and family conflict are examined.

5.2.1 Research Proposition Two (Work/Family Conflict)

When assessing the self-employment decision, Fijian female entrepreneurs are more likely to enter micro enterprises due to responsibilities associated with matavuvale (nuclear family) and mataqali (extended family).

The results show that all female small business owners had been married, although around fifteen percent of the interviewees were divorced. Ninety five percent of the respondents have children, five percent have no sibling responsibility, and fifteen percent were classified as single parents. On this basis it is not surprising that all female entrepreneurs agreed that they had to consider balancing both work and family commitments when considering their work situations. This is a particularly pertinent issue given the plethora of studies examining work and family balance in the recent family business literature (Robichaud, et al., 2001). Given that Fiji is a patriarchal society, women are viewed to be responsible for most if not all domestic duties. During the course of the interviews, a majority (17 in total) an majority of women indicated that their culture required a solid commitment to accommodate the needs of home chores and the needs of their children even though they maintained full-time employment.

For instance, the following quotation is indicative of a majority of responses.

‘I make sure that my children come first. I walk with them to school and then I go and organise my handicraft stall. As soon as they finished school at 3.30pm, that is also the closing time for my business. We go straight home; they do their homework while I cook dinner. After dinner my husband, children and I spent quality time on something new that we learnt during the day. A very close knit family despite whatever profit I make.’(FJR02)

A strong majority of female entrepreneurs agreed that work and family obligations needed to be well-managed otherwise the family would suffer in the eyes of the community. Some interviewees reported that they resigned from their previous work due to difficulties associated with allocating sufficient time to family activities (e.g. assisting children with their homework, picking children up from School etc). However, a minority of interviewees did nominate that families were often treated as ‘secondary’ considerations in that corporate world which was
viewed as too demanding requiring considerable time which was often devoted to meetings and work-based activities (away from the household).

For instance, interviewee FJR07 suggested that:

‘I balance family and work. I make sure that I organise the farm with the farm manager taking full responsibility, while I see that my daughter receive quality education. Before going to bed I check, comment and sign the manager’s daily record book, also I discuss with my daughter of any school problem.’

However, two female entrepreneurs commented that as Fiji was currently experiencing a economic downturn, they felt that there was an increasing need to personally look after children due to difficulties associated with funding at-home assistance. Moreover, a majority of interviewees believed the economic conditions were such that they were required to allocate a majority of their time to work so as to ensure that they met financial commitments associated with their children’s secondary and tertiary education. Interestingly, seven interviewees mentioned the importance of working in SME’s to show their dependents the value of work and as a viable alternative to relying upon government assistance (which is a common practice amongst Fijian nationals). These findings lend some support to current research suggesting that entrepreneurship provides an additional work alternative when job opportunities are unavailable or do not currently fulfil all of the person’s intrinsic and extrinsic needs (Tigges & Green, 1994).

For instance, one interviewee FJU05 stated:

‘In the meantime, I have two children schooling in a boarding school. Every weekend I talked to them on the phone to discuss about their school work. Any problem that they face I make sure that it is solved at the earliest instance. My husband and I worked full time running the business. Through our family dedication and commitment, we have diversified our business. It also allows us to finance some help at home. I hope my children will appreciate what we are doing so that our aim for our children in having a prosperous future will be realised.’

One other area of interest relates to those interviewees that did not have any dependent children. It appears logical that work and family balance will be of lesser significance to females in these circumstances. Other social motives centering upon issues such as independence and financial security should take precedence when considering self-
employment options. Although research suggests that professional growth, power and status are driving women to enter self-employment in developed countries (Still, 2002), it appears that this may only apply to those female entrepreneurs without tangible family commitments.

As a respondent, without children said:

‘I don’t have a child and my husband works with me. With only my husband to look after, my business opens throughout the week, opening at 8am and closing at 6pm. We live upstairs in the same building, so we devote most of our time in the business. I must say that we are doing very well and this is attributed to our understanding of each other. The business is our child in every sense of the word. We planned, nurtured, owned and committed to it, if it dies so do we.’ (FJU08)

In the context of general proposition 2, this research suggests that female entrepreneurs in urban and regional areas of Fiji who have demonstrated an understanding and commitment towards balancing work and family are more likely to engage in small business ownership. Salient reasons for females starting their own businesses were largely couched in areas such as independence and flexibility. As most interviewees were experienced in the corporate world, they were cognisant that work and family conflict was present in salaried employment and these issues were important factors they considered before entering SME ownership. In particular, a majority of female entrepreneurs agreed that one of the reasons they chose to resign from their previous work was related to difficulties in accommodating (often competing) family and work demands. This appears consistent with prior research defining work and family conflict as a form of inter-role conflict arising from difficulties managing work and family responsibilities (Stoner, et al., 1990). As a result, most female entrepreneurs in Fiji would be more aptly classified as life-style entrepreneurs. They are primarily motivated to support a particular life-style which focuses on both managing family demands and generating sufficient family income to assist in providing a future for their children (Hurley, 1999). Therefore, in relation to general proposition 2, managing work and family is a factor that significantly influences a female’s decisions to enter self-employment. The results also suggest that both female entrepreneurs in urban and regional environments in Fiji are affected by this issue and no discernable differences were found between the two cohorts. Thus general proposition 2 is strongly supported in this research. Next, age influences on small business choice are investigated.
5.2.3 Research Proposition Three (Age)

Fijian female entrepreneurs are more likely to assess the self-employment decision later in life due to the influence of cultural values associated with veidokai (respectfulness) veirokovi (deference).

From the results, the average age of female small business owners in the Fijian sample was forty four years. Only five percent of the female entrepreneurs were aged under thirty five years indicating that most female entrepreneurs entered small business at a later stage in life. For instance, one interviewee indicated:

‘At twenty after I left high school I started with sewing. I got married at an early age, and my husband’s wage could not make ends meet as a consequence, I look for available options. I began to sell home made puddings, cakes and sandwiches to school children and employees in the sugar mills.’ (FJU01)

Similarly, another interviewee drawn from an urban area in Fiji (FJU03) stated:

‘At thirty six, I commenced my small tailoring business just to support my husband and children. And we were very poor when we got married, living in a poor farming area, the factory where my husband worked had to be closed, thus I then realised I can capitalise on my strength… that is to sew dresses and shirts for Fijians.’

This suggests that female ownership of small businesses in Fiji is more likely when females have access to sufficient wealth (and finance) to enter self-employment. This is consistent with similar findings in Fiji, but at odds with research conducted in developed nations (e.g. Australia) in which younger women (under the age of thirty five years) appear to be attracted to self-employment as small business operators due to the availability of finance (Still & Walker, 2003). As a point of comparison Still and Walker (2003) reported that only thirty percent of female entrepreneurs commenced their business when they are over fifty years, which appears significantly lower than that observed in this research in the Fijian sample.

As respondent FJR10 said:

‘Maybe I am probably quite a bit older than anybody else you’re going to be interviewing, I’m sixty three.’ With my age and previous work environment abroad is very different…hmm, in our country it is the more mature people are encouraged to be
entrepreneurial, encouraged to create new ideas, to ask questions and to challenge.'(FJR10)

Apart from the Australian-based research (cited above), these results appear to be in agreement with prior research suggesting that female entrepreneurs tend to start their business at an older age than men (Sarri & Trihopoulou, 2005). Specifically, in Fiji and in the South Pacific islands it is common to note that most women start their business when they are over fifty five years as cultural sensitivities appear to value age and maturity which are perceived as valuable business assets (Croulet & Sio, 1986).

For example, on regional female entrepreneur (FJR04) explained:

‘I started my shop in the village at the age of sixty when I borrowed some money from the micro-finance unit. I started this little grocery shop in the village with the help of my son in law and daughter. For the past five years my business has grown and expand due to the customers who treated me with respect because of my age and the effort of giving them good service with affordable price.’

Thus, based on the research findings, age appears to be a factor in a female entrepreneur’s (employment) decision-set. As female entrepreneurs in Fiji, operate within a patriarchal society they tend to experience traditional (cultural) obstacles which may not be evident within more developed economies. For instance, it is customary for older females to receive tribal respect which may translate into all aspects of social and business life. Thus, although age may be considered an asset or hindrance in the business world, most female small business operators indicated that age did not constitute a significant barrier to entering small business. It is evident from the micro-finance scheme that age is not the paramount decision factor. They provide financial assistance to any female entrepreneur irrespective of age so long as they meet the micro-finance unit’s criteria. Therefore, to address general proposition 3, age significantly influences a female’s decisions to enter self-employment. It affects both female entrepreneurs in urban and regional environments in Fiji as they need assistance and motivation to begin their business. Thus general proposition 3 is strongly supported in this research. Next, entrepreneurial orientation influences on small business choice are investigated.
5.2.4 Research Proposition Four (Entrepreneurial Orientation)

When assessing the self-employment decision, Fijian female entrepreneurs are less likely engage in high risk ventures due to the cultural values of veikauwaitaki (to recognise and feelings for), veinanumi (to be considerate) and veirogorogoci (to consult with).

Themes identified for this research proposition included proactiveness, risk-taking and innovativeness.

Table 5.2 Entrepreneurial Orientation

| Interviewer Code | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T |
| Proactiveness    | √ | x | x | √ | x | √ | x | √ | x | √ | x | √ | x | √ | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Risk-taking      | √ | x | x | √ | x | √ | x | √ | x | √ | x | √ | x | √ | x | x | x | √ | x | x | x | x |
| Innovativeness   | x | x | x | √ | √ | x | √ | x | √ | x | √ | x | √ | x | √ | x | x | √ | x | x | x | x |

Each of the twenty female entrepreneurs interviewed indicated that they needed to be very cautious about being too innovative, or taking unnecessary risks. Exactly half of the sample agreed that being pro-active was important to remain competitive and that innovativeness was critical in ensuring that new products (and services) that accommodated unmet needs in the marketplace. A majority of respondents suggested that as Fiji constituted a small island economy, they were heavily reliant upon accurate strategic planning activities, so as to identify new opportunities and act on them to gain competitive advantage. However, it became apparent in the interviews that most female entrepreneurs believed that excessive risk-taking could deplete resources and impact upon venture success. Moreover, many of the respondents were somewhat concerned that new product failures would depredate the reputation of the business in both business circles and their local community. While previous research describes entrepreneurial orientation to be involved in innovative products, undertake somewhat risky ventures and to be pro-actively orientated (Brockhaust, 1980), it appears that excessive (and risky) innovation may prove detrimental in female-owned entrepreneurial ventures in developing economies such as Fiji.
Overall, an emergent theme within this research was that due to Fiji's political and economic uncertainty, female entrepreneurs are required to be more strategic with their decisions in order to realise venture success and survival. While a strong minority of respondents indicated that they perceived that success was (for the most part) beyond their control, most were motivated to seek out innovative solutions to known problems and would take some risks in order to build their chances of success in unstable economic environments.

For example, interviewee FJU02 commented:

‘During these difficult times I’m experiencing financial problems, mainly with my customers not paying their debt in time. Some have totally disappeared but that challenged me to create better and trustful customers. It is a big risk giving products from my canteen so I have to put a limit on how much each customer is entitled to borrow depending on their repayment mode.’

Similarly, another respondent (FJU01) suggested that:

‘Business is slowing down but I’m hopeful that it’ll pick up soon. Some have closed their operations but I told my husband that we are going to expand… it’s a risk I’ve to take but I believe that we can serve the workers needs and wants at the government depot. I opened a small restaurant and also selling other goods like cigarettes. He manages it for five days (weekends closed) while I run the core business in the market. Now we are turning it around after the previous owner could not cope with the rent repayments. We are experiencing a good profit compared to the business in the market within the five days.’

Furthermore, another female small business owner (FJR10) said:

‘I am very innovative. For example, Fiji takes wholesale legislation rules from some place and applies them across the board without any thought process. It is cut and paste, it’s kind of operation here. But I design my workplace to be safe so that my workers can be more productive and pro active. Policies are adhered to but most of the rules I simplified for them to read and understand. There is hardly any accident in this resort because I have monthly meetings with their group OHS representatives.’
Thus, in the context of general proposition 4, female entrepreneurs appear to exhibit some aspect of the ‘true’ entrepreneur, however, entrepreneurial activity is somewhat curtailed by economic circumstances and community values. Some female owners displayed risk taking behaviours particularly in relation to expanding and diversifying their businesses. Overall, most interviewees were risk averse and they would prefer to concentrate and develop their existing business through taking conservative (and methodical) actions that were not perceived as too exploitative by their customers and wider community. For example, in traditional industries such as handicrafts, female owners were somewhat innovative and pro-active in recreating local raw materials to add value, however this was often qualified to activities concerning events that were important to the local community. In comparison, most other SMEs were less innovative in their approaches to identifying and capitalising on new (emergent) opportunities. Therefore in addressing general proposition 4, entrepreneurial orientation does influence a female’s decision to enter self-employment in both urban and regional environments in Fiji, however, most female entrepreneurs’ ‘entrepreneurial orientation’ was constrained by concerns regarding the internal economic environment and community values. Thus general proposition 4 is strongly supported in this research. Next, education influences on small business choice are investigated.

### 5.2.5 Research Proposition Five (Education)

> When assessing the self employment decision, Fijian female entrepreneurs are more likely to be attracted to traditional female-oriented business sectors due to a lack of previous business-oriented education.

All female interviewees agreed that education is the major component in the decision to enter self-employment and is a critical component in the ongoing success and survival of any business. They acknowledged that in the context of current economic trends business owners needed to have the knowledge, skills and ability to forsee and adapt to changes to ensure competitiveness. Past research suggests that in developing countries like Fiji, many indigenous communities tend to undertake small business projects to boost the living standards, but many do not have an understanding of how to run a business and especially in the lack of financial understanding (Tabucala, 2010). Some female business owners stated that the government needed to establish more vocational institutions in urban and regional areas to cater for the growing demands of school leavers from secondary schools. Moreover, a majority of interviewees were concerned that secondary education was not applicable in the context of SME ownership. However, a majority of female interviewees did not possess tertiary qualifications, and many suggested that until the curriculum was altered to accommodate more
vocationally-oriented outcomes, higher-level education would be less relevant in the context of new venture creation and operation.

Considering the Fijian sample, all of interviewees possessed a primary education, while fifty five percent had secondary education and thirty percent attained higher education. Fifty five percent of the respondents commented that they had completed finance and business studies which greatly assisted them in the business operation.

As interviewee FJR04 recollected:

‘The highest level of education I reached was primary level at class six. I could not move further due to lack of finance and my parents were struggling to foot the school fees for my brothers and sisters. So I was employed at a hotel as a cleaner and then waitress. This led me to give my daughter the highest education she could attained because I believe with the right education one can prosper in whatever field of life’.

Although most interviewees valued education as one of the important tools in assisting small business management, most suggested that higher education was not always available and did not fully impede small business ownership. From the results, it appeared that in developing countries (such as Fiji) female entrepreneurs often embarked on business ownership with limited education. Most revealed that they wished to enrol in courses that were relevant and meaningful to increase productivity and efficiency in their businesses.

Respondent FJR01 said:

‘I reached high school with form five, I didn’t go any further, I just learn for 1 year and had to work to support my parents. I believe that education is very important; it helps us in making right decisions and calculates the right amount of goods to be ordered, bought and sold. Now, if given the chance I would prefer to learn something about finance and accounting.’

While it appears plausible that achieving higher education (e.g. Bachelors or Masters degrees) would help in developing an understanding of business marketing and developing a sustainable business culture, it did not appear that this was available or important in the decision to first enter self-employment. This appears to contradict previous research suggesting that education affects self employment entry and more highly educated owners are more likely to establish new firms within the non-traditional areas (Bates, 1995).
Another interviewee said:

‘I received my primary education in the regional area in Fiji, secondary education in urban area while my tertiary education at the University of Hawaii with bachelor in commerce majoring in marketing. Education definitely helps me in running our small business…you never stop learning. With education, I definitely love what I supposed to do in the business, able to manage change and think out of the box too, to make it work.’ But I am probably the exception. Come to think of it, I didn’t consider education as my primary motivation to enter business in the first instance (FJR09)

Similarly, a respondent from the urban area in Fiji acknowledged the value of education.

‘I am thankful since I have a diploma in business studies from the Fiji Institute of Technology. It helped me in running my restaurant, how I market it to the customers and how to manage the stiff competition from similar business within the locality. With the difficult economic situation facing Fiji today, I’m so fortunate that my education have shaped me to make the right business decisions at the right time. My book work and inventory are up to date…yes I follow my business plan.’(FJU09)

Interestingly, some female entrepreneurs believed that culture impacted on the type of education that has been designed and received by Fijian residents. Cultural values and philosophies are imprinted and taught to children in schools at an early age. This will collaborate with prior research which suggested that businesses are directly influenced by the values and philosophies (Denchant & Lamky, 2005) and an individual’s values are often developed through their formal education process (Still & Timms, 2000). In this way, respondents suggested that Fiji’s culture may in fact teach students to consider that academia and small business ownership are separate considerations. To lend support for this contention, many interviewees confirmed that they believed that although education was important, it was not inherently an important consideration in their initial decision to become an SME owner.

As, respondent FJR10 experienced education in Fiji as:

‘I find education to be one of the biggest challenges. Teachers are not taught how to teach, they are taught how to shout facts and the children are taught to memorise those facts and that is not education. You don’t question your elders, you don’t challenge, and
you don’t ask things. They are culturally not encouraged to question and therefore they
don’t carry it forward in the school environment, so if they don’t get it…they just loose
out. So, no the thought of education wasn’t at the top of my mind when I first started my
business, it was more about the community and how I could exist within our value
system’

From the research findings, education seems to occupy a strange position in developing
countries such as Fiji. Whilst many agreed that it was important in business ownership, it
appeared that they had arrived at this conclusion once being in business for a number of
years. In this sense they had developed an understanding of ‘how to learn’ and how education
could assist them in their business operation. However, most agreed that it was of lesser
importance in the context of their initial ‘decision-set’ in deciding to enter self-employment.
Most agreed that the type of education in Fiji had somewhat inculcated the local population
regarding traditional values which had separated the relationship between academic and
business activities. This distinction was something that changed with increasing tenure in
SMEs. One final point is that most interviewees believed that there was also a separation
between the types of degrees that women and men pursued and this had some subsequent
impact on their likely choice of profession. This appears consistent with previous research
suggesting that women have pursued undergraduate degrees in liberal arts as opposed to
business which have limited their entry into the business sectors (Hisrich & Brush, 1984).

Thus, although the results suggest that most interviewees believed that education was
significantly associated with business ownership and success, it appears that most Fijian
women did not consider that education was necessary in their decision to enter self-
employment. Only minor differences were reported between interviewees in regional and
urban environments, with rural entrepreneurs suggesting that their educational levels had
suffered due to locational disadvantages. Thus general proposition 5 was only partially
supported in this research. Next, previous work experience influences on small business
choice are investigated.

5.2.6 Research Proposition Six (Previous Work Experience)

When assessing the self-employment decision, Fijian female entrepreneurs are more
likely to enter micro enterprises due to their lack of prior business experience due to
cultural values of vakarorogo (compliance) and veidokai (respectfulness).

All interviewees in the sample possessed work experiences from government departments,
non-government organisations (NGOs) and private sector firms. Forty five percent of the
interviewees had work experience in retail industry, twenty five percent engaged in marketing and sales, ten percent were employed in financial institutions and twenty percent had worked in business organisations.

Previous research suggests that women may lack the requisite skills, experience and confidence in business management (Walker, 2000) and that a majority of independent self-employed women have extensive prior experience within the industry that they choose to enter (Moore & Buttner, 1997). In the case of this research, it appears that most interviewees did not possess skills that were easily transferred to their current self-employment situation. For instance, one female entrepreneur commented:

‘An Indian businessman used to come to my village and gave me money to buy kava for him, so I was the agent. From there I could tell how much profit he used to make when selling to other customers. Eventually I was encouraged to do similar business in the market. Now I’m a wholesaler and retailer. But my experience as a sales clerk did not really help me with this, it was a new enterprise’ (FJU05)

Similarly, a respondent with diverse portfolio in the urban described her business as:

‘I used to work with my aunty in running the business... She taught me how to handle the business...hands on experience. From there, I was confident to venture out on my own, despite the fact that I didn’t have that much business experience. Nevertheless, I manage to own several small businesses, although I have to ask advice all the time...more experience would have helped me’(FJU10)

However, another interviewee nominated benefits associated with prior business exposure:

‘When I finished high school I worked at the Sheraton Fiji Resort. I was in management training and all different positions from housekeeping to kitchen, front desk, bar and other positions in the resort, and then I was promoted to sales and marketing executive. I worked for Key Three Media, a media company creating bigger corporate events and also some marketing events in San Francisco for two and half years. With such exposure my husband and I started an adventure cruise, which is a five night adventure cruise in the remote areas in the northern islands of Fiji focusing on culture, education and environment.’(FJR09)
Similarly another respondent (FJR03) said:

‘Since I left high school I was working in a hotel resort for about six years then I resigned for personal reason. Most tourists are interested in my village because of its history and legend and they love to come and see and hear the stories of the First Landing (ancestral Fijians first landing when they departed Africa). Having the confidence to interact and communicate with tourists I began a tour guide…besides my handicraft small business.’

General proposition 6 suggested that female entrepreneurs who entered small business did not really do so on the basis of their prior business experience. While a majority possessed business experience (predominantly within service industries), only a minority have capitalised on previous learning and training provided by their previous employers. Instead, a common theme in the interviews related to how women in Fiji were often precluded from gaining necessary (and relevant) business experience due to their position in society. In particular, most suggested that they had entered fairly menial professions due to their place within the tribe and due to their willingness to comply with family and community wishes. Therefore, previous work experience does appear to impact the female’s decisions to enter self-employment, but women generally do not possess the business skills (eg. Marketing, personnel management) that would be of assistance in managing SMEs. Given this, it appears that female entrepreneurs encounter difficulty in entering industry sectors in which they have had prior business experience. Having analysed the data, it appears that this is common in both regional and urban environments, so no obvious distinction can be made in this regard. Next, social capital accessibility influences on small business choice are investigated.

5.2.7 Research Proposition Seven (Social Capital Accessibility)

When assessing the self-employment decision, Fijian female entrepreneurs are less likely to access social capital networks due to the cultural factors of vakarokoroko (deference) and vakarorogo (compliance).

Themes for this proposition are categorised as mentoring, networking, professional membership, informal relationships, and advisors.
Of the twenty female entrepreneurs that were interviewed, fifty five percent revealed that they were cognisant of the importance of networking in both professional and social circles, whilst forty five percent detailed specific relationships with both mentors and role models. Female entrepreneurs suggested that networking can provide a valuable source of inspiration and facilitate the exchange of experience among entrepreneurs. Some interviewees confirmed that through networking their business was able to grow, prosper and survive. Others utilised networking activities to seek an active business mentor as they understood that they lacked some competencies in business management. Overall, all female entrepreneurs in Fiji acknowledged the importance of networking as networking was seen as a valuable method of procuring needed information on industry trends, customer groups and unmet needs in the marketplace. This perspicacity helped them in deciding when and how to enter SME arrangements. This is consistent with the literature that suggests that social capital in the form of usable business networks played an important role in the creation, survival and success of female owned firms (Rosa & Hamilton, 1994). However, whilst a strong minority of female small business owners cited their experience in networking with friends and family members, it appears that accessing social capital was difficult in developing nations, such as Fiji. The following two quotations provide different viewpoints on the value of social capital. For instance, one respondent FJU10 described their experience with networking as:

“For me to be on my own I can’t survive, I need other people’s ideas and experiences. Oh yeah! Networking is very important because without it I can’t do much. Especially for my nightclub and home stay…my business friends from abroad and local will tell me what sort of modern music are liked by those who frequent the nightclub. Previous customers in the home stay always recommend my businesses to those interested.”
Alternatively FJU08 stated:

‘Oh sure, networking is a must. In the country we have the Fiji Pharmaceutical Society so whenever there’s any news they email to all pharmacists. Any information regarding new drugs or laws concerning the dispensation of any drug they will let us know immediately. Usually, I have up dates and that’s tremendous. But when I was starting out it was difficult. I mean I did speak with my elders, but it was clear that I was on my own. It’s like getting information (as a woman) is hard. We are not really valued in the business world the same – it’s a very male dominated society. I knew this, but still went into it.

Similarly, another entrepreneur commented:

‘Really, networking is very important. If you have to move ahead you’ve got to be able to communicate with people in Fiji and overseas. Also you have to know what is going on in the industry. Absolutely paramount, especially for tourism because it’s international. I rely on information from my friends and professional organisations like the Fiji Visitors Bureau But I know this now, not so much when I started. My family wasn’t even that interested. I mean, it was because I was going into a new area and I couldn’t make them give me the information. It just is not done that way.’ (FJR09).

General proposition 7 suggested that women would be more likely to find difficulty in accessing sufficient social capital and that was a consideration in their decision to enter small business which is supported in this research. From the interview data, it appears that many women entered small business to leverage social capital that they acquired once in their SME. In this sense, it appears that a majority of women sought out a business vehicle that would be conducive to gaining further access to social capital. Now, a majority of interviewees utilised this capital from professional bodies (e.g. industry and governmental bodies) and extended family networks. Overall, the results appear to lend partial support to findings in the entrepreneurship literature in developed countries. In particular individuals that do not have sufficient access to networking may not be part of entrepreneurial culture and may less likely to enter small business (Still & Timms, 2000). In Fiji, it appears that female entrepreneurs understand the value of social networks, but are less likely to access them prior to entering self-employment. In this sense, the desire for networking connectedness could be a driving motivational incentive to enter self-employment. Importantly, there were only marginal differences between the urban and regional cohorts. Perhaps the main distinction was that
entrepreneurs from regional areas were more constrained in their ability to access timelby and relevant information prior to entering small business ownership. In the next section, the influence of ‘availability of finance’ on small business choice is investigated.

5.2.8 Research Proposition Eight (Availability to Finance)

When assessing the self-employment decision, Fijian female entrepreneurs are less likely to access venture finance due to difficulties in acquiring collateral to secure business loans.

Themes relevant to this research proposition include loans and from financial institutions, family assistance and savings.

Table 5.4 Availability to Finance

| Interviewer Code | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T |
| Loan from financial institutions | √ | √ | √ | √ | x | √ | x | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | x | √ | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Family assistance | √ | x | x | x | √ | x | x | √ | x | x | x | √ | x | x | x | x | x | √ | x |
| Savings | √ | x | x | x | √ | x | x | √ | x | x | x | √ | x | x | x | x | √ | √ | √ |

The interview data reveal that female entrepreneurs in Fiji are very reliant upon finance to start their small businesses. Fifty five percent of the respondents depend on loans from financial institutions, twenty five percent received finance from family members and twenty percent injected their personal savings into the new venture. Within developing economies such as Fiji, the initial investment may be smaller (than in developed locations) and is generally used to acquire basic necessities for family members whilst the business is being established. Although government through its agencies like the Fiji Development Bank and Micro-Finance Unit has been established to implement various public policy initiatives to generate small business ownership, it appears that most respondents found difficulty in acquiring loans due to issues surrounding collateral security.
Overall, a majority of female entrepreneurs suggested that access to start-up capital influenced their decisions to commence their small businesses. Some indicated that they managed to start their business through redundancy packages while a minority revealed that they used their pension fund to initially start the venture. Most female small business operators claimed that access to finance from financial intermediaries increased high-levels of perceived risk and many felt that it was unnecessarily difficult to engage with big commercial banks so it was more favourable to obtain finance from the micro-finance unit or seek finance from family members.

Furthermore, some female owners claimed that male entrepreneurs had greater to finance because they have collateral such as land (which is consistent with Fiji’s patriarchal culture). This appears consistent with past research suggesting that cultural conditioning (Oeltjen, 1992), and traditional practices still restrict women to their maternal role and other family bound tasks (McElwee & Al-Riyami, 2003). Moreover, small businesses in developing countries find it difficult in mobilising large-scale financial resources and assets to create competitive advantages against larger international companies from developed countries (McCarthy, 2003). In support of this contention, one interviewee (FJR01) stated:

‘I went to the Development Bank and it was a hassle, they asked to fill so much paper work and to wait for the result, but at the end I was unsuccessful. So I tried Micro-Finance and it is easy, just fill in the form in the morning and afternoon I got the finance. And the loan repayment is within your means, you are able to survive. I am one of their best clients, never default in any loan repayment because I always pay in advance. That’s how I manage to have the nightclub and now Micro-Finance is willing to fund me if I’ll have a restaurant in town. But this was my problem all the way through. I had to start with a different business because I couldn’t raise the finance. I think its because I am a woman.’

Similarly, an indigenous female entrepreneur commented on the Fijian ‘mindset’ and how cultural conditioning and economic circumstances influence a female’s assessment and choice of business model.

‘As Fijians we can’t manage what small things we have. We tend to think that any small amount of money is not of great value so we spend it lavishly. There is no word such as savings in our dictionary. Even staying in the village we need to budget and save then we don’t have to borrow from the bank. Otherwise, the existence of the Micro-Finance Unit is a big boost for female entrepreneurs in the village. They provide money so that I
can bring my produce to the market that is why I’m here everyday. At the end of the day I repay my loan and now we have established a good relationship.’(FJR06)

Similarly, an Indian small business owner said:

‘Every time I obtain loan from the Micro-Finance because I establish an excellent rapport with the officers. Without hesitation, they receive my application form in the morning by afternoon they ring me to collect the money. In the commercial banks too many forms to fill, interest rate is high and the loan repayment is incredible, they almost take all your savings.’(FJU03)

However, a highly successful female entrepreneur (in an urban area) suggested:

‘…Maybe due to my business portfolios the commercial banks in town have shown interest in me. I started with Bank of Baroda then moved to Merchant Bank of Fiji, now I have ANZ. They almost provide the same interest rate and any amount of money that I can borrow. Yeah, finance for me is not a real concern I don’t see any issue with being a woman, although some of my friends don’t agree with me.’(FJU07)

General proposition 8 suggested that women in Fiji face more difficulty in accessing finance that may be the case with men or people in developed economies. Generally, finance availability and accessibility was cited as the main factor in determining the commencement of any small business in Fiji. The results reveal that women do, indeed, face difficulties in obtaining finance due largely to cultural conditioning (evident in financial institutions) and difficulties in raising collateral to secure loans. Moreover, financial factors appear to influence a female entrepreneur’s choice of business model, with many entering micro enterprises (sometimes in different industries) due to restrictions placed on obtaining finance for their preferred business choices. Next, the impact of technological capabilities of a female entrepreneur’s small business choice is investigated.

5.2.9 Research Proposition Nine (Technological Capacity)

When assessing the self-employment decision, Fijian female entrepreneurs are less likely to utilise e-commerce technology in managing the growth of their business enterprises.
Themes relevant to this research proposition include web-based information, e-commerce, internet, automated business processes and purchasing and selling.

Table 5.5  Technological Capacity

| Interviewer Code | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T |
| Web-based information | x | x | x | x | √ | x | x | √ | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| e-commerce       | x | x | x | x | √ | x | x | √ | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Internet         | x | x | x | x | √ | x | x | √ | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Automate business process | x | x | x | x | √ | x | x | √ | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Purchasing & selling | x | x | x | x | √ | x | x | √ | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |

Most female small business owners in regional and urban areas still utilise traditional equipment in maintaining business operations. These could be due to the lack of capital to purchase new technologies, and lack of experience and knowledge on how to use these technologies. The interviews revealed that only twenty percent of the respondents claimed they utilised web based information in product procurement or marketing. For those who have acquired modern technologies they report significant improvements in efficiency, however, the uptake of technology appears fairly small. Although previous research asserts that there has been a shift from a traditional male dominated manufacturing economy to a retail and service sector-based economy that has seen females taking far greater levels of participation (Teltscher, 2002), this does not appear to be the case in developing economies such as Fiji. Some female entrepreneurs indicated that with modern technologies available such as the internet and e-commerce most cannot afford to purchase nor can they effectively integrate this new technology into their business models. However, of the interviewees that had access to new technology, most reported that it had improved operations to some extent.

For instance, one interviewee in the regional sector commented:

‘I only market through the internet. I have only just been able to start this and I don’t have the money to do heavy duty marketing. I have relationships with a few travel agents but …the travel industry is a volume industry, they are interested with booking of hundreds of rooms not a small operation like mine. So, I would say ninety five per cent of
my bookings come off my website or links that I have with other websites. I got one in the United States specifically for honeymooners, one in New Zealand and one in Australia.’(FJR10)

Similar remarks were made by interviewee FJR09:

‘We rely mainly through the internet for everything we do. Since last year we have been using Skype which allows us to make and change…like people wanting to book our cruise in America will dial a number in America or a number in Australia and it comes to me in my office in Fiji through my computer. This is huge technology and relatively that puts you ahead of the business front. The only problem is that I didn’t know where to get the information to start this earlier. It has been a huge learning curve for me and expensive to boot.’

A female urban small business operator said:

‘Modern technology is good especially in running your own business. If I’m in Australia or America I can contact my manager in Fiji to find out about the business on day to day basis. If you can afford it then it is one of the most valuable assets in the business. And the business like mine I need to be on internet because I rely on internal and external customers needing rental cars.’(FJU07)

However, respondent FJU01 described the importance of technology to her small business as:

‘I have heard of the internet, website etc. but in my situation I really don’t need sophisticated technology. My small business requires me at the moment to cater for my family’s needs on a daily basis. I simply possess very simple basic cooking utensils to bake my cakes and cookies, still my customers love them…most place advance orders when I visit them. But one day when my business grows I am determined to have those modern technologies and people all over will know and taste what I produce.’

In the context of general proposition 9, it was asserted that investment in technology would prove to be a risky proposition in Fijian SMEs. Depending on the type of industries that females were engaged in, those in the traditional industries like handicraft appeared not to require sophisticated technologies, as most still prefer to do things manually. However, majority of female small business owners believe that the use of modern technologies would greatly assist them in managing their businesses, although many suggested that the risk
involved in acquiring the right form of technology as well as the added investment cost precluded them from doing this earlier. Overall, a majority of female entrepreneurs did consider the risks involved in acquiring new technology in their initial assessment of entering small business. Therefore, this proposition received majority support. Next, concluding comments are provided regarding data gathered from interviews with Fijian female entrepreneurs.

5.3 Conclusion

This chapter presented the results of the in-depth interviews conducted with female entrepreneurs in both urban and regional environments of Fiji. First, a profile of the sample was presented, detailing the demographic information of each respondent. Then the interview process and environment was detailed. Information concerning the nine propositions investigating the extent to which push/pull motivations, age, education, business experience, work/family conflict, entrepreneurial orientation, finance availability, technological capability and social capital accessibility influence a female’s decision to become a small business owner was provided. The next chapter (Chapter Five) will discuss to what extent the general propositions will influence a female entrepreneur’s decision to enter small business in regional and urban localities in Australia.
CHAPTER SIX: Results – Australian Interviews

6.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the results pertaining to twenty interviews with Australian female business owners in urban and regional areas. For the purposes of clarity and ease of interpretation, the results are presented in line with the research propositions proposed in Chapter Three. The results are presented in tabular format (where applicable), followed by a discussion of the results, which includes direct quotes from interviewees as supporting evidence of the key findings.

6.1 Presentation of Results

The ensuing sections follow the sequence of the research propositions of this study. Tables 6.1 to 6.5 are interpreted in the following manner. The purpose of the tables is to highlight respondent agreements and disagreements with the research propositions. These are coded as a tick (√) which symbolises respondent agreement, an (X) representing disagreement with the proposition and, finally, a (*) is shown if the issue was not raised, or that the respondent was neutral on the issue. Respondent names are represented by alphabetical symbols to ensure respondent anonymity.

6.2 Results in Relation to Research Propositions

The following sections outline the results in relation to the research propositions of this study which cover areas such as push and pull motivations, entrepreneurial orientation, social capital accessibility, availability to finance, technology capability, financial performance, learning and growth, internal business processes and customers.

6.2.1 Research Proposition One (Push and Pull Motivations)

When assessing the self-employment decision, Australian female small business owners are more likely to be pulled into self-employment due to the influence of individualistic cultural values associated with a desire for independence and personal satisfaction.
As shown in Table 6.1, issues raised in terms of push and pull strategies were categorised under the following themes; lack of employment opportunities, glass ceiling effects, redundancy, inadequate family income (push motivations) and Independence, need for achievement, personal development, self-fulfilment, social status and power and leveraged acquired skills (pull motivations).

Table 6.1  Push/Pull Motivations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>REGIONAL</th>
<th>URBAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviewer Code</strong></td>
<td>A B C D</td>
<td>F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Push Motivations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of employment opportunities</td>
<td>x x x √ √ x x x √ √ x x x x x x x</td>
<td>x √ √ x x x x x x x x x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glass ceiling effects</td>
<td>x x √ √ √ x √ x x √ √</td>
<td>x √ x x x x x √ x x x x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redundancy</td>
<td>x x x x x x x x x x x</td>
<td>x x x x x x x x x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate family income</td>
<td>√ √ x √ x x x x x x x</td>
<td>√ √ x √ x x x x x x x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pull Motivations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>√ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √</td>
<td>√ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for achievement</td>
<td>√ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √</td>
<td>√ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal development</td>
<td>√ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √</td>
<td>√ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-fulfilment</td>
<td>√ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √</td>
<td>√ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social status &amp; power</td>
<td>√ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √</td>
<td>√ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leverage acquired skills</td>
<td>√ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √</td>
<td>√ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √ √</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Previous research has indicated that ‘push’ factors in a female entrepreneurs self employment assessment include the desire for additional work flexibility due to family responsibilities, ‘glass ceiling effects’ (which refer to the lack of promotional opportunities available to women in organisations) and redundancy issues (Walker, 2000). Only a minority of Australian female entrepreneurs that were interviewed indicated that lack of employment opportunities, glass ceiling effects and inadequate family income were salient issues that pushed them to become independent small business owners. From the sample, only five were classified to be ‘pushed’ into self-employment, of which thirty five percent sought self-employment due to lack of current employment opportunities and only fifteen percent had experienced significant glass ceiling effects. One interviewee in this cohort explained (AU05):
‘I had to do something, because I wasn’t going to be able to go any further in the organisation. I had done everything right, but the ‘boys’ at the top had all the power and control. It just wasn’t going to happen for a woman in this firm’.

Similarly, another interviewee (AUR05) stated that:

“At first I could not believe that women are still earning less than their male counterparts but it is a reality, it exists in most occupations and there is strong evidence to suggest that this is indeed the case. For instance, any woman who has worked in such a dominated industry as I have will tell you that males are much more likely to be promoted ahead of females with equivalent qualifications and experience. This glass ceiling effect is hard enough to swallow without the added insult that when a male climbs the ladder of his profession, he will be better compensated for his efforts than a woman in the same position. Thus, with lack of income and glass ceiling effects have resulted in women being motivated to explore the opportunities of small business arrangements.”

However, a majority of respondents did suggest that pull motivations were more prominent in their decision to enter self employment. Prior research has acknowledged that pull factors are related to a need for independence, need for achievement, financial reasons, personal development, self-fulfilment, social status and power (Orhan & Scott, 2001). However, more recent research suggested that pull motivations for female small business entry includes a desire for wealth, career advancement, social status and power, independence, entrepreneurial drive, fulfilling personal ambition, leveraging acquired skills, and to capitalise upon potentially profitable business opportunities (Loscocco & Leicht, 1993; Robinson, 2001; Still, 2002; Still & Walker, 2003). An example of an interviewee citing ‘pull’ factors in the decision to enter SME ownership is provided below (AU04)

‘Considering being independent, I’m motivated by my capability and knowledge to control my own destiny and create my own opportunities. Being completely responsible for how successful you are is extremely motivating, because at the end of the day, whether things are really great or really bad, it is you that will be accountable for the reason. My staff also motivates me, because of their trust in me, their dedication and commitment to our vision’.
Furthermore, respondent (AU 06) stated that:

“Admitting and making mistakes encourage me to perform and be productive in running my small business. Entrepreneurs who have started their own business will know that early on it is one long series of hurdles. For instance, I think my biggest hurdle has been experiencing a bad business partnership a couple of years ago that nearly close the operation of my business venture. But in retrospect, such obstacles are the things that make us stronger. I’ve made lots of errors, but would not have it any other way because when you make a blunder and learn from it, your ability to grow your company and overcome the next impediment grows exponentially. Making such problems can be very empowering when you come out the other side wiser and smarter so that you can meet your personal goals.”

Of the twenty female entrepreneurs interviewed, a total of 15 interviewees agreed that the main motivating factors that pulled them to become independent business owners were a desire for independence, need for achievement, work-family management, social status and power, personal development, self-fulfilment, and to leverage acquired skills.

For example, one female entrepreneur, (AU 09) stated that:

“My small business is a flourishing specialising in women’s shoes, men’s shoes, boots and handbags. I started in 1994 and have experienced ups and downs as years roll by. Three years later I concentrated on working women and men as my target market due to the increasing work demand for women and men. My customers now are able to contact me through my website, as I informed them of the new stock that will be on sale. Seriously, women will be in the shop first to look and test these new products and most will purchase them instantly. Promoting my catalogue on line to such market have proven to be a success and productive considering these women and men are too busy to shop in a busy environment. Thus, my venture is serving my customers need and seriously I am a firm believer in customer satisfaction.”

Similarly, interviewee AUR03 commented that:

“As for me I survive on being very productive and the best motivation for me is satisfied and happy customers. As a consequence, my small business receive the bulk of our business on referral from existing clients mainly through word of mouth and we rarely advertise so it is paramount that every job is completed to the highest quality standards.
My team and I do feel happy knowing that the customer is completely satisfied with our product and service.”

Within the entrepreneurship literature it is widely reported that female small business entrepreneurs (predominantly within developed economies) enter small business arrangements in order to gain some independence and autonomy (Davis, 2002) and build cooperative networks (Rosa & Hamilton, 1994). Although the need for independence is often quoted as the most important motivator of women starting businesses (Cromie, 1987), there is some evidence that economic motives are becoming increasingly important, particularly with reference to wealth creation, status building, and power (Orhan & Scott, 2001). However, overall, most research endorses the view that female entrepreneurs value intrinsic motivations and, in particular, social contributions such as building favourable client networks and contributing to the local community, (Still & Timms, 2000) over future economic gain (Brush, Carter, Gatewood, & Hart, 2004).

In support of this contention, one interviewee (AU05) described her motivations to enter self-employment as:

“Being invited and attended networking breakfast in previous years, I experienced such networking event with hundreds of female entrepreneurs wanting to learn and achieve better performance in their own ventures. I discussed my business with entrepreneurs in the same business, each sharing the thrills and frills they experienced with their line of business. This is an incredible event because it motivated me to pursue and implement new ideas. Now, I experience better results and my team members are proud of our achievements.”

As detailed in the entrepreneurship literature female small business owners in developed economies appear to possess different motives for going into business than is evident within developing localities. In particular, the majority of Australian female small business interviewees labelled economic motives (Casson, 1982; Schumpeter, 1934), as paramount followed by psychological motives (McClelland, 1965) and sociological motives (Grunhagen, 2000; LeVine, 1966). These motives are reinforced with individualism or individual rationality which is a common thread that runs through female small business entrepreneurs in advanced nations.

Thus general proposition 1 received strong support in this research. Whilst both push and pull motivations significantly influence a female’s decisions to enter self-employment, it is pull...
motivational incentives that are of significant value in the female entrepreneur’s decision to enter self-employment in developed nations. The results suggest that no real differences exist in urban and regional localities, although there was some mention that family income constraints were more prevalent in regional locations. In the next section, issues surrounding the management of work and family conflict and small business choice is investigated.

6.2.2 Research Proposition Two (Work/Family Conflict)

When assessing the self-employment decision, Australian female entrepreneurs are more likely to be influenced by their desire for work flexibility to assist in balancing work and family commitments.

All interviewees were married or in relationship with a ‘significant other’. Fully seventy percent of the respondents had between two or three children while around twenty five percent have one dependent child. Only 1 interviewee had no dependent responsibilities. All the interviewees agreed that they had to balance work and family but they did not see it as a constraining obstacle.

Previous studies have suggested that female entrepreneurs are motivated by the desire to balance the demands of career and potential life (Fielden, et al., 2003). This lends some support to the suggestion that women choose entrepreneurship to create their own desired balance between career and personal life/family (Buttner & Moore, 1997). This was also confirmed in the interviews. For instance, one interviewee (AU02) commented that:

“I could not have succeeded without the support of my family and friends especially my husband; he is contributing so much and has been very supportive, I am very lucky.”

All of the twenty female interviewees resoundingly agreed that they strove to balance work and family commitments and this is consistent with previous research suggesting that entrepreneurial ventures afford a level of flexibility that is not achievable in salaried employment (Robichaud, et al., 2001; Still & Walker, 2003; Walker, & Brown, 2004). As one female entrepreneur (AUR06) said, “My business employs local mums who needed flexible working hours, but were also willing to work extra hours during peak times and take cuts during quieter times, win-win scenario.”
In addition, other research on work and family identify three major forms of work-family conflict which are time based, strained based and behaviour based. These forms of conflict are couched in a role scarcity perspective which implies that persons have fixed amounts of time and energy to expand (Fielden, et al., 2003; Shane, 2003). Overall, a strong majority of interviewees nominated time-based pressure that was of considerable importance in their decision to enter small business arrangements.

The following comment is indicative of a majority of interviewee responses.

“While on maternity leave, I was still employed as full time but like so many other mums soon realised I needed to get back to work quicker due to financial reasons. The money was not enough to support my family. But when I negotiated with my then employer for flexible working hours, he was a little less interested about the arrangement; I had no alternative but made the decisions that being available to my daughter was more important than having a fulltime income. I discussed the option with my partner to resign, calculated how much money was needed to support the family and then to search for the possibility of part-time employment. So working for myself was the only real option if I wanted to keep my family together.”

However, recent research suggests that gender roles within copreneurial relationships are changing with Australian women entering self-employment to realise both personal and financial goals (de Bruin & Lewis, 2004). In addition, the need for occupational flexibility and managing work and family conflict is also identified as an important factor encouraging Australian female small business interviewees choice in small business engagement (Orhan & Scott, 2001). For example, one respondent (AU08) explained that:

“My husband, who is always supportive, visionary and entrepreneur, is ever prepared to lend a helping hand when needed. He has taught me not to panic when confronted with chaotic situations but I could alter things with the way I handle it. Above all I must learn to balance my work and family and not hindering my social and community interactions. Sure the money was important, but my family is more important than just that.”

Similarly, another interviewee (AUR07) detailed how important it was to ensure that family members supported the self-employment decision.

“Family support is crucial in running a successful business. I am very lucky to have a supportive team of people around me. My son and I have worked so hard to build our
Based on the findings of this research it appears that a strong majority of the respondents are classified as ambitious female entrepreneurs who desire to be involved in high growth ventures. Shelton (2006) defines these women who have the intention and motivation to develop successful businesses (known as gazelle organisations) in a short period of time. Moreover, they possess the personal characteristics centring on vision, energy, and opportunism (Morrison, 2000). In a comparison of high and low growth oriented female entrepreneurs, Lambert (1990) found that ambitious women in developed economies such as Australia possess the intention to emphasise market growth and technological change, have stronger commitment to the success of their businesses, and have a greater willingness for personal sacrifice to ensure the success of their ventures. Other respondents categorised as lifestyle entrepreneurs are primarily motivated to support a particular lifestyle or generate some family income to meet personal lifestyle goals. In comparison ambitious or growth oriented entrepreneurs are motivated to start and develop larger, highly visible and thus, more valuable firms (Martin, 1993). Thus, high growth female entrepreneurs in the sample are defined as ambitious women who have succeeded in creating high growth ventures both in the urban and regional environments of Australia (Shelton, 2006).

Thus, managing the demands of both work and family is a continuing challenge for female entrepreneurs. Research by Still and Timms (2000) found that female small business owners in Australia were predominantly motivated to start businesses due to lifestyle issues, that is, work and leisure time flexibility, and the ability to balance work with their relationships and family. This was confirmed in the results in which lends strong support to general proposition 2. The interviews revealed that Australian female entrepreneurs evaluate working situation and choose desired business models that will reduce the level of work and family conflict and enhancing their well being and ultimately foster improved venture performance, which has support in the literature (Aspaas, 2004; Hisrich & Peters, 2002). What was surprising was that all interviewees were cognisant of this issue and that all had considered work and family conflict as a relevant and important determinant of their decision to enter self employment. The next section (Section 5.3.3) will examine the role of age in the female entrepreneur’s decision to enter SME arrangements.
6.2.3 Research Proposition Three (Age)

When assessing the self-employment decision, younger Australian entrepreneurs (under the age of 35 years) are more likely to be influenced by their desire to realise intrinsic and extrinsic goals associated with personal development, wealth creation and personal status.

Early seminal research conducted by McClelland (1965) suggested that the age of female entrepreneurs appeared to mediate their choice of business model. In addition, he calculated that the average age of the entrepreneurs examined in the study was forty years. While this study was conducted over forty years ago, the results still appear to correspond with the mean age of female small business owners in urban and regional areas that were interviewed (in this research) in Australia (38.7 years). Fully forty five percent of female entrepreneurs are under thirty eight years indicating that they commenced their small business at an early age.

For instance, on interviewee (AUR04) suggested that:

“After leaving school and marrying at twenty one, having two children I started my small business at the age of twenty seven. My husband and children encouraged me to embark with the small business and they were very supportive especially during the take off stage. With the family enthusiasm I was motivated to expand and diversify the business.”

This result is not surprising given that in Australia the majority of younger women entering into small business engagements is reported as being less than thirty five years (ABS, 2003a). Moreover, recent research noted that many of these small businesses have been established more than two years and, therefore, the average age of the female entrepreneur at start up may technically, be lower (Goffee & Scase, 1985).

As female business owner (AUR01) recalled,

“As a young entrepreneur at late twenties, I had the tenacity, and sense of direction of wanting to be my own boss. With the vision I develop some short and long term goals as I believe it is useless trying to operate any endeavours aimlessly. This has proved to be one of the reasons of my success since I am committed to the plan and honestly see that the business is heading towards the right direction. Young and old small business owner must be true to your business plan or your business will fail.”
Similarly, another interviewee (AU09) stated,

“When I was at high school (aged sixteen) I always dreamt of owning a small business and at the age of twenty seven I started my hair salon business since I had work experience from previous salons in the locality. This generated supplementary income for the family after investing an adequate amount into the business as cash flows. Now I am more determined and optimistic that my business will be productive in the coming years.”

In the context of general proposition 3, the findings imply that female entrepreneurs in urban and regional areas of Australia do not encounter age as a barrier to enter self-employment. Furthermore, this confirms previous research suggesting that younger women under the age of thirty five years appear to be attracted to self-employment as small business operators in order to realise personal goals of professional development, building a growth-oriented business, and creating wealth (Still & Walker, 2003). Thus based on the research findings, age does not appear to present a significant barrier to small business ownership. From the findings more than half of the sample were between twenty to thirty years of age. Although, it is evident that age is not the main decision factor for entering SME ownership, however it is also viewed as not precluding these entrepreneurs from receiving financial assistance from lending institutions. Next, entrepreneurial orientation influences on small business choice are investigated.

6.2.4 Research Proposition Four (Entrepreneurial Orientation)

When assessing the self-employment decision, Australian female entrepreneurs are more likely to be influenced by their desire to work autonomously, be creative and take risks in highly ambiguous environments.

Themes identified for this research proposition included proactiveness, risk-taking and innovativeness.
Table 6.2  Entrepreneurial Orientation

| Interviewer Code | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T |
| Pro-activeness   | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Risk-taking      | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Innovativeness   | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

All interviewees agreed that being pro-active, adopting a risk taking approach and fostering innovation were necessary elements of engaging in an ‘entrepreneurial orientation’. This is broadly consistent with previous research suggesting that to engage in entrepreneurial activity is dependent upon an entrepreneur’s strategic posture (Brockhaust, 1980). The interview data reveal that a strong majority of interviewees had high entrepreneurial tendencies shown in their approach to marketing, personnel management (e.g. performance management and reward systems) and approaches to innovation and new product development. For example, a female interviewee from a regional area in Australia suggested that (AUR01):

“After conducting a thorough market research I develop my business to suit my customers’ wants and needs. I develop a strong relationship with my existing customers, suppliers and stakeholders and it is them that provide me the competitive advantage over my competitors. Furthermore, with the determination, customer focus, flexibility and resilience I can always adapt to change, it is a risk that I have to accept.”

Moreover, another respondent (AUR08) commented:

“I believe that I have to be innovative with new and better ways of running my small business. My vision and values have to be aligned with the brand in the product so that my customers can assist in its promotion. I know that others try to copy what we produce but my team is adamant that the intangibles cannot be emulated.”

Also, the results drawn from the interviews indicate that Australian female small business owners had a high tolerance for risk-taking, were actively engaged in strategic planning
activities, were able to identify customer needs and wants, foster innovative practices in their firms and had the ability to persevere to ensure that the vision of the business was realised, which has some support in the entrepreneurship literature (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). To highlight this point, one female commented (AU10):

“With my business I have to know at what stage of the product life cycle my product is in the market. Surely, I do not want obsolete products since my target market is searching for modern products in the market. Maybe I need to change or transform the product by adding value so as to retain existing customers even at a meagre profit a risk that had to be accepted.”

Similarly another interviewee detailed her approach to strategically managing her SME (AUR02).

“I always try and be more proactive than reactive in operating my small business. By having a clear and detailed business plan this will ensure that your vision and goals are achieved. One is challenged to keep on going when things are getting tough but I never give up, it helps me to be more determined to create better new ideas that will bring a big difference and make my venture more unique.”

In addition, the following comment demonstrates a female entrepreneur’s understanding of how an entrepreneurial orientation is equated with business success (Cantzler & Leijon, 2005) (AUR09).

“When I commenced my small business I first relied on the types of accommodation available and the services preferred by middle to low income earners. I make sure that what the customers want is readily accessible, available and affordable. It is indeed a great investment in order to provide the best quality accommodation in the area since I am surrounded with similar line of business. I know of the high risk involved but I am more determined with better return.”

In the context of general proposition 4, female entrepreneurs in Australia appear closely aligned to entrepreneurs exhibiting an optimum entrepreneur orientation. Thus, general proposition 4 received majority support. In addition all of the dimensions of the classic ‘entrepreneurial orientation’ were nominated by all respondents. Importantly, no discernable differences were observed between entrepreneurs in regional and urban localities, which
appears to contradict previous studies (e.g. Still and Walker 2003). In the next section the role of education and the female entrepreneur's self employment decision is examined.

6.2.5 Research Proposition Five (Education)

When assessing the self-employment decision, more educated Australian female entrepreneurs are more likely to be attracted to SMEs in non-traditional industries, while less educated female entrepreneurs are more likely to be attracted to SME ownership in traditional industries.

All female entrepreneurs in the sample had achieved primary, secondary and higher education. A total majority of interviewees self-nominated that education plays a pivotal role in the start-up and ongoing management of their small business. Fully sixty percent of the respondents had studied finance and had attended business skill workshops which they believed had greatly assisted and enhanced their small business performance. Moreover, these interviewees believed that their education (as operationalised as their knowledge, skills and abilities) had influenced their decision to enter self-employment. For example, the following response is indicative of a majority of these high-growth female entrepreneurs that were interviewed:

“In any successful business procedures, structures and systems have to be in place and owners and staff need to adhere to so that clear directions and instructions are implemented. Proper systems will teach and motivate every one in the organisation to be effective and efficient. Business owners have to constantly monitor the performance and productivity of the staff and business venture. I knew these things because I had the fortune of having a good education. This really influenced my decision to enter business as I was confident that I could manage the business, pay back the bank and build a successful enterprise”

Although, early entrepreneurship research highlighted a wide disparity between women and men in relation to educational opportunity and attainment (Carter 1994), a closer examination of the literature shows that Australian women small business entrepreneurs are bridging the education gap in developed countries. Whilst Carter (1994) find a substantial gender gap in educational levels as well as the relevance of professional qualifications to the business, Buttner and Moore’s (1997) study suggests that high educational attainment is present in female entrepreneur cohorts, particularly in developed economies as opposed to that seen in developing countries. Similarly, Still and Soutar (2001) confirm that the majority of women business owners in Australia have professional qualifications and have completed some
tertiary education. In comparative studies they appear better educated than both the average woman and the typical male entrepreneur. For instance, a female entrepreneur (AU07) stated,

“At the end of 1994 I enrolled at the University and completed a business course which assisted me in writing my business plan. I decided to be on part time rather than on full time employment while my venture commenced. I experienced the struggle in the early stage of its beginning but I was more determined to see my business grow and develop. I can proudly say that having the necessary educational background enabled me to strive for excellence and survival.”

Another area of consideration related to the female entrepreneur’s educational background and if this influenced her choice of industry. Previous research suggests that an individual’s values are often developed through their formal education, indicating that levels of education might have an impact on small business creation and ongoing performance (Still & Timms, 2000). In this research, it appeared that a majority of respondents chose industries in which they had had some prior experience. Importantly, some of the more educated females were able to use their ‘transferable skills’ across industries, while less educated individuals tended to choose traditional service industries in which they had prior business experience. For instance (AUR05) suggested that:

“Having heaps of experience to operate a small business is insufficient. I felt that I should possess the essential education to qualify me in managing my business operation if I was going to successfully start up in a sector in which I had limited knowledge. Having obtained my MBA, I can proudly proclaim that it gave me the advantage to be more productive and profitable. Indeed experience and education go hand in hand.”

With all of the respondents achieving some form of higher education, 80 percent used their knowledge to diversify into the different markets. Generally, these individuals chose to enter into non traditional areas such as finance and accountancy. This corresponds with recent research which suggests that businesses are directly influenced by the values and philosophies of business owners (Sarri & Trihopoulou, 2005; Tucker, 1985). However, high levels of education are associated with an ability to process information and to discriminate between wide varieties of business alternatives (Dollinger, 1999). This finding lends support to previous research suggesting that there is trend towards female entrepreneurs entering non-traditional industries due to increased education levels (Walker & Brown, 2004). For example one female interviewee (AUR04) suggested:
“Always ensure that you have measurable goals and that everyone in the organisation is aware of it. With clear objectives these should motivate everyone to perform and be productive in whatever they do. I encourage and teach my team to design our business goals and bottom-up communication is the mode of operation that is effectively implemented. I act as a mentor in that I do not want anyone to do anything I would not do, so I have to play a leading role by coaching them, allow mistakes and fix them as you go along. I have noted an overwhelming increase in staff morale, less absenteeism and increase in business profitability.”

Thus, from the results, proposition 5 received strong support. The findings suggest that education is a major factor in addressing the female entrepreneur’s self-employment decision. However, it appears that no distinctions were obvious between rural and urban areas, which may suggest that the educational system in Australia is accessible to all constituents regardless of location or gender. In the next section (Section 6.2.6), the role of an individual’s previous work experience and the choice of self-employment will be investigated.

6.2.6 Research Proposition Six (Previous Work Experience)

When assessing the self-employment decision, Australian female entrepreneurs are more likely to be able to enter non-traditional industries due to their ability to leverage their previous work experience.

All of the (twenty) female entrepreneurs that were interviewed indicated that they had previous work experience from statutory bodies, government departments, non-government organisations and the private sectors. All had previously worked in the service industry while seventy five percent had prior work experience with the retail sector. In addition, sixty percent of the respondents have some business management experience, while seventy five percent of the interviewees also have some sales background and marketing and promotion knowledge. For example one interviewee (AU01) commented that:

“For more than ten years I worked as an operation officer and an administrator of a successful company. It did not appear to me that my work experience would eventually one day help me to achieve the dream of owning a successful small business. It is amazing how I used that previous knowledge and skills in assisting me with the daily operation of my small business.”
Moreover, some of the interviewees reported that they believed that prior business experience was definitively linked to venture performance, which echoes previous entrepreneurship research (Ibeh, 2004). Moreover, Carter (1994) suggested that the importance of the previous managerial competencies in entrepreneurial technology firms in the United Kingdom is also applicable to Australian female small business entrepreneurs. Similarly, Brockhaust (1980) determined that previous business experience was associated with superior business acumen, attitudes towards uncertainty and entrepreneurial performance. For example, one interviewee (AU10) commented,

‘After leaving high school I had always wished of having my own retail business. I was first employed as an assistant customer officer, marketing assistant and administrator of a large company. During those years I always had the desire to achieve my dream of running and owning my own business in the retail industry. My previous work experience has tremendously assisted me in the early phase of the business operation. I have seen an increase in market share and the accumulated profits over the years.’

Moreover, respondent (AUR01) declared that:

“Before starting my small business I was employed as an executive of a large company and was responsible for issues such as marketing, staffing and finance. It was through this vast work experience that gave me the confidence to commence my own business. It was a big risk but I knew how to manage and solve similar issues as they arise. Efficiency and increase employee productivity within my business tend to be of similar results as in my previous work environment.”

Furthermore, previous research suggests that most Australian independent self-employed women have extensive prior experience within the industry that they choose to enter (Moore & Buttner, 1997). The following commentary is indicative of a majority of responses (AU02).

“I experience a diverse work background in industries such as hospitality, non-government organisation, retail and the tourism sector. I fully support that education alone is not the key to small business success. Prior work experience and education should be the driving force in running a profitable small business. I acknowledge that previous work experience is one of the important factors that help me having an increase in revenue and customer loyalty.”
Overall, the results of this research suggested that a majority of Australian female small business owners experienced working in traditional (feminine) industries such as; service and retail (Birley, 1989), teaching, office administration and secretarial areas (Hisrich & Brush, 1984) rather than executive managerial, scientific or technical positions (Waldinger, Aldrich, & Ward, 1990). However, current research suggests that an Australian female entrepreneur’s choice of the business model is largely reliant upon the possession of transferable managerial-level competencies rather than previous industry-level experience (Ibeh, 2004; Walker, 2004). Therefore, upon the basis of the above discussion, general proposition 6 received strong support in this research. Overall, a majority of female entrepreneurs in Australia suggested that previous business experience was an important consideration in the self-employment decision process. In particular, a majority of interviewees chose to enter an industry in which they had prior experience so that they could leverage their existing talents, abilities, knowledge and skills in similar settings. The influence of social capital accessibility upon an individual’s self-employment decision is presented in the subsequent section (6.2.7).

6.2.7 Research Proposition Seven (Social Capital Accessibility)

When assessing the self-employment decision, Australian female entrepreneurs are more likely to access social capital networks in their venture development process.

Themes for this proposition are categorised as mentoring, networking, professional membership, informal relationships, and advisors.

Table 6.3 Social Capital Accessibility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewer Code</th>
<th>A B C D E F G H I J</th>
<th>K L M N O P Q R S T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentor/role model</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional membership in women’s organisation</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal relationship</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisors</td>
<td>✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During the course of the interviews it became apparent that all interviewees agreed that social capital accessibility was of great importance in their initial decision to enter SME ownership. Overall there was consensus that networking, mentoring and having role models were of paramount importance in assisting them to access advice in times of need. They also recounted the benefits of being associated with professional organisations, especially women’s-only organisations (e.g. Zonta international). Moreover a strong majority of interviewees believed that advisors and informal social networks had a profound impact on the ‘bottom line’ performance of their SMEs. For example, a female entrepreneur from an urban area in Australia (AU03) suggested that:

“In the past I have contacted some great influential people that assisted other small business owners how to increase income and market share. They have greatly improved my business. Also I have employed business consultants to share their knowledge and expertise to help manage my business, and often found their results successful. Sharing knowledge and information with my team is rewarding since it will allow us to work closely with one another.”

In general, the Australian female small business cohorts perceived social networks as both important and necessary in ensuring firm survival, which supports previous research on social interactions (Fiet 2002). One way of recognising the articulation of networks is through the idea of embeddedness. Embeddedness appears to mirror the multiple dimensions of relationship marketing (Fielden & Dawe, 2004) and these, according to Morris et al. (2006), consist of bonding, empathy, reciprocity and trust. Each of these dimensions were raised by interviewees during the course of their discussions relating to social capital. For example one female SME owner (R10) stated,

“Get yourself good advisors and utilise their experiences…these are encouraging comments from one of my first mentors. But they have to be ones that you rally trust. Its all about relationships and how you extract value from these relationships. Nowadays one can use the internet to extract how to start a small business, but I am very conservative in that I employ successful entrepreneurs who are result oriented. Next, is to implement what your advisors suggest and then monitor your business growth. Always share your failures and success with your mentors.”

Moreover female respondent (AUR05) commented that:
“When not engaging in the operation of my small business I spent time reading through the many publications I subscribe to. There are so many interesting and beneficial articles that challenge me to move ahead with my business. It is noteworthy to find out how innovative female small business entrepreneurs become especially with their great achievements.”

In addition, the interviews revealed that most Australian female entrepreneurs believed that by utilising their own business resources (including formal and informal lines of communication with third parties), it was more likely that the venture would prosper. This supports previous research by Harden (1985) suggesting that social networks not only improve the likelihood of future venture success but also the likelihood that individual entrepreneurs will enter self-employment (Harden, 1985). This is illustrated in the following commentary (AU10).

“To aspiring female entrepreneurs my advice is to have the determination and a good network support system that will assist you along from the commencement to the maturity stage of your business. Through female entrepreneur network you can receive some excellent opportunities and the assistance they provide is invaluable. It will help grow the business so it becomes a sustainable business proposition.”

Furthermore interviewee (AU04) stated that,

“Be prepared to share new ideas and information with your colleagues who are very supportive of each other in starting and developing your business. It is important that you identify similar entrepreneurs who would assist you with your product or service. In this way you will grow and evolve into a bigger and better business.”

Thus, from the results it appears that female entrepreneurs were initially attracted to the business model as it presented an opportunity to build (and extract value from) a network of business owners that provided local marketing and managerial expertise during the initial stages of the new venture start-up. This appears consistent with previous research suggesting that female entrepreneurs will seek mentors to compensate for a lack of business skills, but they are more likely to be proficient at extracting value from those networks (Sarasvathy, Dew, Velamuri & Venkataram, 2003). For instance, interviewee (AUR06) said that:

“Building good relationship is one of the key elements to the success of my business. I strive really hard on my relationships with staff, customers, suppliers and industry
contacts. It is advisable to invest your time and energy in establishing good relationship and make sure that these people acknowledge your excellent service like providing a short email just to inform them that you cared about them."

Thus, based on the preceding discussion, general proposition 7 is strongly supported in this research. Not only do female entrepreneurs in Australia have better access to social networks (than in developing nations), it appears that these individuals are not culturally constrained in developing and exploiting these formal and informal sources of social capital. Moreover, all interviewees nominated that networking, having mentors or role models, joining professional women’s organisations, using advisors and informal relationships have impacted the performance of their small business. Next, the influence of financial resource availability on the female entrepreneur’s decision to enter small business arrangements will be investigated.

6.2.8 Research Proposition Eight (Availability to Finance)

When assessing the self-employment decision, Australian female entrepreneurs are more likely to access venture finance due to their ability to utilise personal savings, commercial funds and public sector financing initiatives.

Themes relevant to this research proposition include loans and from financial institutions, family assistance and savings.

Table 6.4 Availability to Finance

| Interviewer Code | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T |
| Loan from financial institutions | x | √ | x | √ | x | x | x | x | x | x | √ | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Family assistance | √ | √ | √ | x | x | √ | √ | √ | √ | x | x | √ | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Savings | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |

A total of 20 female small business operators that were interviewed indicated that finance (from a myriad of sources) was available from financial institutions, family assistance and
personal savings. The female small business owners would use either one or combination of the three modes to fund their ventures. Five of the interviewees had secured loans from financial institutions, while eight received financial assistance from family members and seven hand funded their venture from their own personal savings. For instance the following respondent (AU09) commented,

“I used my savings to start the business and in order to develop and grow the business I needed to apply for loan at the bank under the small business program. They provided the finance that enabled the business taking off at a satisfactory rate. My loan repayment had been paid off before the agreed time to overcome the high interest rate.”

Furthermore, a strong majority of interviewees agreed that obtaining start-up financing and credit (Hisrich & Brush, 1984; Schwartz, 1976), cash flow management in early operations (Hisrich & Brush, 1984; Scott, 1996) and financial planning (Hisrich & Brush, 1984) have were of significant importance for women entering SMEs in urban and regional localities.

As female entrepreneur (AUR09) recalled,

“Some entrepreneurs used up their savings to commence their businesses. As for me I find part-time and casual jobs so as to find the necessary fund for the business start-up. My savings is there for contingency measures and will only be used in crisis situations. Through this approach I ensure that the business will not bankrupt in its early formative years as I invest my wages into the small business, while my husband’s income is used for family expenses. I work out how much I need for monthly operation and used my wages but not savings. Now my business can afford to fund itself, but I still work two and half days a week, while four and half days spent for my family and business. I am certain that it will do better in the future.”

Overall, there is some consensus with the Australian female small business respondents in that they experienced difficulty in mobilising large-scale financial resources and assets to create competitive advantages against larger international companies that would restrict new venture growth and performance (McCarthy, 2003). For example one interviewee (AU03) stated that:

“Having established a good business incubator I capitalise on my niche market aiming that I am an expert in the business. I need to have the sustainable competitive advantage since I faced stiff competition in the market. Finance was obtained from my
savings and my husband contributed the remainder. This is used in the business operation such as advertising and promotional activities focussing entirely on my target market. Use finance wisely at every opportunity in order to get better return.”

In the context of general proposition 8, female entrepreneurs in Australia appear to have access to finance from a variety of sources. All female small business owners that were interviewed used a combination of personal savings and family assistance to finance their SME start-ups. Therefore, the proposition that greater access to funds to finance SME development encourages SME ownership is strongly supported in this research. However, it appears that financial institutions marginally favour lending to female entrepreneurs that are located in urban locations, although observed differences in urban and regional localities is small. Next, issues surrounding technological capability and associated influences on small business choice are investigated.

6.2.9 Research Proposition Nine (Technological Capacity)

When assessing the self-employment decision, Australian female entrepreneurs are more likely to utilise e-commerce technology in managing the growth of their business enterprises.

Themes relevant to this research proposition include web-based information, e-commerce, internet, automated business processes and purchasing and selling.

Table 6.5 Technological Capacity

| Interviewer Code | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T |
| Web-based information | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| e-commerce | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Internet | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Automate business process | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
| Purchasing & selling | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ | √ |
All interviewees agreed that with modern technology influenced their decision to enter self-employment. Moreover, a strong majority reported that this was an important influence on future firm-level productivity. In particular, most relied upon utilising web based information, internet service infrastructure with their suppliers (i.e. intranets) and other automated business process. Moreover, most interviewees possessed transactional websites for the purchasing and selling of their products or services.

During the course of the interviews, it became apparent that most interviewees believed that the advent of affordable technology has given rise to more flexible working arrangements that have the potential to facilitate participation and interaction with their products and services on a national and global level. Moreover, they agreed that these changes have led to a greater equality in the make-up of the workforce (Singh, 2001; Teltscher, 2002), allowing many of their employees to work flexible hours (e.g. home-based activities). This may account for recent research suggesting that in some areas of the small business sector more than seventy percent of the workforce is female, with twenty four percent of these small businesses being owned or managed by women (Schmidt & Parker, 2003). For instance, one female small business owner (AU01) stated,

“Nowadays I advertise mainly in newspapers while television is used only when special events occur. But most of my clients and customers are the results of referral, repeat business and word of mouth. Since I lodged my website there has been an increasing enquiry about the service. I have to provide accurate and pertinent information to my target market to take advantage of the product or service that is offered. But its also good for my employees. They can work from home because they can converse with clients online and provide relevant information to my suppliers through our intranet.”

Australian female small business respondents agreed that internet technologies such as electronic commerce (e-commerce) have experienced phenomenal growth in recent years which had changed methods of doing business and (ultimately) business performance. In addition, they classified the internet as a potential ‘pot of gold’ for small business growth and expansion. Specific areas nominated by all respondents included the application of web-based information technologies necessary for automating business processes, e-commerce transactional facilities and supply chain integration, all of which have some support in the electronic commerce literature (Kalakota & Whinston, 1997). For example, a female entrepreneur (AU 05) in an urban region in Australia commented:
“As the business is prospering and expanding I receive suggestions and advice from my loyal customers and suppliers on better ideas through the internet. After the launching of the business website, existing and potential customers enquire and use the service as we establish a network with similar area of interest. I knew that technology was going to be important in my small business, I just didn’t realise how important it was going to be”

Australian female small business interviewees confirmed that e-commerce has the potential to become a major source of competitive advantage to small businesses, because it provides a cost effective way to reach customers globally and to compete on a par with (often) larger and more financial counterparts. This has some support in the literature, suggesting that electronic commerce is promulgating a fairer and more competitive global business environment (Schmidt & Parker, 2003). Also, they agreed that governments worldwide have recognised this and have created various funding schemes and initiatives in order to facilitate e-commerce adoption in small businesses, which lends some support to previous research (Johansson, 2003). As an example one female business operator (R10) described e-commerce as:

“When online gift service it is important for me to have aggressive marketing promotion such as being listed in business directories and be available through online networks. In my business I heavily rely on modern technology especially with more people searching in the internet to find goods and services and I make sure that customers can find me online. Therefore, I must ensure that my professional website is accessible and reliable so as to have a better business image. We have local and international customers from America, United Kingdom and New Zealand purchasing online. I would not have started this business unless I had access to this sort of marketing mechanism”

Prior studies by Singh (2001) and Simon (2001), suggest that Australian female small business owners generally experience that women use the internet as a tool, while males consider it something to be mastered. Moreover, males tend to be less anxious than females about using computing technology (Gilroy & Desai, 1986; Meier & Lambert, 1991). However, according to Gebler (2000), female internet users in developed nations such as Australia exceed male users and the implications of this event are significant, considering the previous research into the use of the internet by females. In support of this assertion, this research found that all females were very experienced with new technologies which had influenced their decision to enter self-employment and had subsequently assisted them in creating competitive and sustainable enterprises. For example, (AUR03) stated:
“My team is familiar with any modern technology that is beneficial to the business. For instance, we Skype (Voice over IP…internet protocol technology) regardless where we are and what time of the day, it does not make any difference as long as we serve our customers and see that the work is satisfactorily performed. This assist in enhancing our customer relationship and it has really boosted our productivity. I run a lot of sessions with this new technology. Just being a woman doesn’t mean we can’t do these types of things. In fact, in my women’s business breakfasts, it seems as though we are better than men at this sort of stuff.”

However, the literature identifies that one of the main difficulties that potential entrepreneurs face is accessibility to usable technological resources. Despite great technological advancements globally, small-scale businesses are hindered by their lack of technological implementation (Davis, 2002). Without this technology, these small businesses find it difficult to compete and grow (Arinaitwe, 2006). Large organisations appear to have greater access to technology to expand their businesses and become increasingly competitive. The data in this research suggests that this is still the case with some of the interviewees nominating that the cost of new technology and implementation is sometimes excessive in the context of small business arrangements. However, most interviewees suggested that they had to work ‘differently’ or ‘smarter’ to achieve the desired outcomes. For instance a female entrepreneur (AU06) stated that:

“As I face strong competition from large organisation I desperately need an assistant to respond to business emails and correspond with customers’ reports and proposals. Through the availability of modern technology I can access these correspondents or wherever I will be the assistant will send the report to me for checking and proofreading. It has to be a fast turnaround service; everything completed and sent out immediately. My assistant will be responsible for the operational area while I concentrate on strategic issues. Its just about being a little more focused on how to do things at a smaller cost. This is the way that you can use your technology to get the same results as the bigger firms out there”

Similarly another female entrepreneur (AUR08) commented,

“Being in a family relationship my husband and I use simple modern technology in different ways to help in contacting each other when serving our existing customers that reside at long distance from our home. For example, my husband could send his documents as audio file to a server for download. Using quickscribe digital transcription
Thus the proposition (general proposition 9) centring upon the influence of technology and small business choice was strongly supported in this research. From the results it appears that female entrepreneurs in developed nations such as Australia have considerable access to new technology, and this was a consideration in their decision-set to enter small business arrangements. Moreover, all interviewees believed that technological improvements had positively impacted on ‘bottom-line’ productivity in their organisations. Although there was some evidence of reliability issues that Australian female entrepreneurs faced in regional areas of Australia, it did not appear to significantly impact upon overall firm profitability. Next, a brief summary of the qualitative results from Australian sample selection will be provided.

6.3 Conclusion

This chapter provided the results of the in-depth interviews conducted with female entrepreneurs in both urban and regional environments of Australia. First, a profile of the sample was presented, detailing the demographic information of each respondent. Then the interview process and environment was detailed. Information concerning the nine propositions investigating the extent to which push/pull motivations, age, education, business experience, work/family conflict, entrepreneurial orientation, finance availability, technological capability and social capital accessibility influence a female’s decision to become a small business owner was provided. The next chapter (Chapter Seven) will compare and contrast the findings obtained from results of in-depth interviews of female small business entrepreneurs within urban and regional environments of Australia and Fiji.
CHAPTER SEVEN: Discussion

7.0 Introduction

This chapter will compare and contrast female small business ownership and business performance in Australia and Fiji and is organised into six sections. After the introduction (section 7.0), a brief overview (section 7.1) to justify the need to investigate small business choice from female small business owner’s perspective, a review of the small business analysis is presented in section 7.2. In section 7.3 – 7.5, discussion of model results are suggested to explain a female’s motivational choice in small business arrangements. Section 7.6 describes research implications, followed in section 7.7 presenting limitations of the study with suggestions in future research made in section 7.8 and section 7.9 with concluding comments.

7.1 Overview

Individuals, public and private sector bodies within both Australia and Fiji recognise the importance of entrepreneurship in fostering innovation, economic growth and employment. Moreover, there is widespread academic and practical recognition of the worth of female entrepreneurship in terms of financial (economic growth, employment) and non-financial (e.g. creativity, innovation, community involvement) contributions. Furthermore, small business enterprises have not only been at the forefront of the move toward economic progress and prosperity of the free-market western economies, but they have also become the primary engine of employment growth in many less developed countries of the world (Coy, et al., 2007).

In the previous two chapters, findings from in-depth interviews with female entrepreneurs were presented. As in Chapter Four, it provides an example of female small business ownership in developing economies like Fiji. In addition, Chapter Five detailed female small business operators in developed economies such as Australia. In this chapter, a comprehensive analysis of Australia and Fiji will be made so that similarities and differences in each country can be revealed. This approach will highlight the key advantages of each country that may have some associate application in other countries (under examination) so as to assist in remedying identified problems in each host nation.
7.2 Female Small Business Analysis

As detailed in Chapter 2, female owned businesses are one of the fastest increasing populations of entrepreneurs and make significant contributions to innovation, job and wealth creation in many Western economies (Moore, 2002; Riebe, 2005; Walker, 2004; Weaven, 2006). Descriptive information relating to female owned businesses in the U.S. and Australia suggest that the gender gap in terms of entrepreneurial activities and new venture creation has been closing rapidly (Mueller, 2004; Still and Walter 2003). The National Foundation for Women Business Owners reported that from 1970 to 1992, the proportion of women-owned businesses grew from five percent to more than 33 percent (Starr & Yudkin, 1996). The number of self-employed men increased by fifty four percent from 1975 to 1990, while the number of self-employed women more than doubled during the same time period (Devine, 1994). Studies conducted in the late 1990s predicted that by 2000, nearly half of all American businesses would be owned by women (Moore & Buttner, 1997).

Currently in Australia more than thirty two percent of small businesses are owned and operated by women, with the growth in female-owned businesses exceeding rates of growth in male-owned enterprises (ABS, 2003). In other developed nations such as the United Kingdom, this statistic is also just over fifty percent (Fielden, et al., 2003; Parkhouse, 2001), while in Sweden this number has exceeded fifty percent since the late 1980s (Asplund, 1988). However, prior studies of female entrepreneurship in developing countries are scarce (Allen & Truman, 1993). Moreover, in many third world and developing countries, reported participation statistics are much lower, ranging from thirty to forty three percent although there is some evidence that these numbers are slowly climbing (Kephart & Schumacher, 2005). However, overall, this lack of information is very problematic, especially given that social structures, work, family, and cultural influences vary widely in developing countries (Hisrich & Ozturk, 1999).

Specifically, to date, women have so far played only a peripheral role in the business life of Pacific Island countries. This is due, in large part, to prevailing socio-cultural norms, particularly the view of women’s role is first and foremost concerned with the performance of domestic chores and child rearing and, not uncommonly, that business activities are the domain of males (Fairbairn & Dunlop, 2001; Hailey, 1988b). In particular, female participation in small businesses ownership in Fiji is significantly lower in comparison to that observed in developed economies like Australia and the U.S. due to socialisation, economic, political and structural impediments, which have received limited attention in the small business literature (Qalo, 1997). Although these studies provide valuable information as to the benefits
associated with female small business, they do not fully inform the multitude of factors influencing female small business ownership and business performance within regional and urban areas of Australia and Fiji. Thus this research presents a conceptual model of female participation in SME ownership, highlighting key antecedent influences to the self-employment decision and associated performance ramifications resulting from SME ownership. Comparative discussion regarding female small business ownership in geographically close countries such as Australia and Fiji are discussed in the following sections.

7.3 Discussion of Model Results

The following sections, which relate to the discussion of the general research propositions and research issues, follow the sequential flow of the propositions as presented in the results chapters (Chapters 5 and 6).

7.3.1 Conclusions about Push/Pull Motivations (Proposition 1)

In Chapter 2, it was theorised that there was a significant relationship between push and pull motivational incentives and the self-employment decisions for women small business entrepreneurs in Australia and Fiji. With individualism dominating the entrepreneurial environment in Australia, female small business owners are more likely to be pulled into self-employment (Breen, et al., 1995; Still & Walker, 2003). In comparison, Fijian female entrepreneurs were posited to be pushed into self-employment due primarily to their communal and cultural values (Hofstede, 2001; Qalo, 1997) like vakarokoroko and vakarorogo. The purpose of these propositions were to identify factors that pushed or pulled female small business entrepreneurs in deciding to enter self employment, choose an appropriate business model and achieve specific performance outcomes. From the collected data, issues surrounding collectivism, individualism and entrepreneurial traits/personalities appear important variables that will be discussed to better understand motivational differences influencing female entrepreneurs' choice to enter SME arrangements. Also, the aim of these propositions was to assess the relevance of Hofstede's cultural index and confirm the appropriateness of previous research examining push/pull motivations in the context of female business ownership.

The results from the qualitative in-depth interviews with Fijian and Australian female small business entrepreneurs indicated a significant association between push/pull motivations in a
female’s decision to become an independent small business owner. The confirmation of support for this proposition is consistent with previous research, suggesting that organisational and national cultural effects both facilitate and impede a female’s decision to enter self-employment (Cromie, 1987; Still & Walker, 2003). In particular, a country’s entrepreneurial culture together with prevailing individual personality traits, contributes to psychological, social, economic and environmental outcomes such as individualism, innovation, creativity, savings, investment, risk taking and government incentives (Lerner, Brush, et al., 1997).

In the context of this research, culture has been termed incorporating both individualist or collectivist (Hofstede, 1991) elements and entrepreneurial activity is generally more associated with individualism. Since Australian female small business owners exist within an individualistic society, it is no surprise that they are generally pulled into self-employment compared to Fijian female small business entrepreneurs who are pushed into small business due collectivist cultural constraints. Moreover, of the 40 percent of the non-indigenous Fijian interviewees, all displayed more individualistic tendencies suggesting that Fijian cultural values do impact the self-employment decision. Importantly, this cohort also reported greater success in their ventures than their indigenous counterparts. This was largely due to an obligation on the part of indigenous entrepreneurs to fulfil family obligations above commercial interests.

Moreover, Australian female small business owners are more committed and focused in their entrepreneurial drive since they valued independence, flexibility and a desire to realise personal (intrinsic) goals. These pull factors often centred upon realising personal growth and professional development goals. However, extrinsic outcomes were also valued and these individuals would often take a longer-term orientation towards business ownership, often re-investing profits from the venture so as to ensure future financial growth. In comparison, Fijian indigenous female small business owners are pushed into entrepreneurship by such factors as a lack of employment opportunities or glass ceiling restrictions. Often, these individuals would operate with shoe string budget and generate meagre marginal profit. Their daily income was mostly used to cover expenses incurred from small loans and the remainder has to cater for family and clan obligations. In comparison to the Australian female entrepreneur cohort, there was little (and often insufficient) income that was retained in the form of savings or working capital for their enterprise. Somewhat of concern was that many of the Fijian entrepreneurs would tend to obtain further finance to maintain their business operations long-term.

Based from the literature review and results from qualitative data, indigenous female small business owners in Fiji adhere to cultural obligations like vakarokoroko and vakarorogo within a collectivist environment. Non indigenous female small business entrepreneurs including;
Indo-Fijians, Chinese and Europeans were more individualistic in their entrepreneurial approach and thus had more operational flexibility in their approach to small business management. Specifically, the results showed that Fijian female small business owners are pushed into entrepreneurship due to *vakaviti* which is within their cultural values and beliefs. Living in a collectivist culture, respondents cited lack of employment opportunities; redundancy and inadequate family income were reasons that influenced their decision to be entrepreneurs. In addition, interviewees agreed that the present political situation was not conducive for small business operation and public policy initiatives were deficient in their approach to, and funding of female entrepreneurial ventures. During the current political crisis, indigenous female entrepreneurs made marginal profit due to the *mataqali* (extended family), *matavuvale* (nuclear family), *vanau* (local community and culture) and *lotu* (religion) obligations which had to be considered prior before commercial interests. However, non-Fijian female entrepreneurs earned superior profits as they were able to devote most of their resources to the business prior to allocating remaining profits to the family unit. Thus, apart from the initial motivational incentives to enter self employment, these results suggest that, in any given situation, entrepreneurs that are individualistic performed better than those in collectivist cultures.

Moreover, the findings derived from interviews with Australian female small business owners suggest that female entrepreneurs often possessed distinct entrepreneurial traits and behaviours centring upon hard work (often at the exclusion of other family demands), considerable strategic planning, risk-taking propensity, and opportunity in small business operation. Glass ceiling effect and redundancy were considered less important factors influencing their decisions to become small business owners. Next, conclusions about work and family conflict will be discussed.

### 7.3.2 Conclusions about Work and Family Conflict (Proposition 2)

In this research it was proposed that different work and family demands would influence a female entrepreneur’s decision to enter self-employment within to different contexts, that is, Australia and Fiji. The interview data showed there was a relationship between work and family conflict and decision in having small business choice within urban and regional environments. Overall, the findings were consistent with previous research suggesting that Fijian cultural influences somewhat restrict business development as a cultural milieu creates considerable hindrance to business (Reddy, 2001). This has some support in the literature, with Reddy (2001) concluding that female small business owners are ‘expected to assist relatives, kin, and members of the extended family, and others in community’ (p.102). As Fijian
female entrepreneurs operating within a patriarchal society, they are obligated to satisfy family and communal commitments prior to engaging profit seeking in their small businesses. This may explain the results in this research in which Fijian indigenous female small business entrepreneurs routinely performed below those enterprises administered by Chinese, Indian, European and part-European female small business owners in Fiji.

In comparison, Australian female small business entrepreneurs operating in an egalitarian society have additional flexibility in managing both family and work commitments. Although all female entrepreneurs have labelled work and family to be of considerable importance, it appeared that they did not face the same cultural or structural impediments evident within Fiji. Many operated their businesses within a precinct close to their family or with accessibility to child care, and although many were in a copreneurial relationship, they were often allowed (and encouraged) to assume a leadership role in the business. As such, the Australian female cohort appeared to be supported in allocating needed time to their ventures and overall realised significantly higher returns on their investment in comparison to their Fijian counterparts. Moreover, this profit allowed them to grow their business (often beyond micro and small ventures) which, again, was not evident in Fiji to the same extent. In the next section (Section 7.3.3) comparative conclusions regarding antecedent effects of age on the self-employment decision are discussed.

7.3.3 Conclusions about Age (Proposition 3)

Research proposition 3 proposed that a female’s age would influence their decision to enter small business arrangements, and that discernable differences would be evident within developed and developing economies. The results indicate that there was a significant relationship between age and the decision to become a female entrepreneur. Thus, the confirmation of this proposition is consistent with prior research in that indigenous Fijian female small business entrepreneurs operating within the context of invasive tradition values and culture obligations, age is a determining factor in a female’s decision-set to become an entrepreneur. Older females who are considered to be more mature, appear to be more likely to positively view entrepreneurship as a viable activity, which lends further support to prior research investigating this issue (Fairbairn & Dunlop, 2001). In particular, the results reveal that younger females are expected to show more respect and deference to older females in the local community. In this regard younger females do not appear to command the same level of support in considering self-employment opportunities. Cultural factors such as veidokai and veirokovi appeared to impede small business ownership for this cohort. Despite
these cultural values favouring older females within the community, other factors appeared to influence resultant firm-level productivity, with many only achieving marginal levels of revenue from their enterprises.

In comparison, in a plural (and open) society such as Australia, age does not appear to impact upon the self-employment decision, or on the operation of small business arrangements. This is evident from this research in that younger females (who were often driven by intrinsic motivations centring upon self-fulfilment, profit generation and personal development) were able to enter small business arrangements. Furthermore, both older and younger female small business entrepreneurs demonstrated proficiency in achieving high income and high-profit business enterprises. Next, conclusions about entrepreneurial orientation will be discussed.

7.3.4 Conclusions about Entrepreneurial Orientation (Proposition 4)

The next research area concerned the relationship between a female’s entrepreneurial orientation and the choice to enter small business arrangements. Overall, the data showed that both Australian and Fijian female small business owners were drawn to enter self employment to gain greater autonomy, assume some risk and capitalise on emergent business opportunities. However, notable differences between the two cohorts (i.e. Australian and Fijian) were revealed. In particular, as individualism encourages entrepreneurship, Australian female small business owners’ tended to exhibit a greater desire for autonomy, innovation, proactivity and risk-taking. In particular, all interviewees detailed how they had a focus on keeping abreast of changing patterns in customer demand tastes and preferences. This focus on gathering marketing intelligence and acting on emergent opportunities was characteristic of this cohort group.

However, in comparison, indigenous Fijian female small business owners would tend to only assume low risk options in their choice of business model and as a result, often would only realise minimum return. This low-risk propensity was juxtaposed with cultural constrains such as veikauwaitaki, veinanumi and veirogorogoci which were generally not supportive of commercial (profit-oriented) principles. These cultural values state that women need to be considerate and be empathetic to everyone’s needs in the community. By not responding or contributing in money or in kind could lead to ostracism in the community and could jeopardise networking with other female small business owners in the region. Fijian culture dictates that Fijian female business owners are expected to serve the needs of the family and community
first before embarking on profit maximisation. From this research, Fijian female small business operators in regional and urban environments agreed that veikauwaitaki, veinanumi and veirogorogoci are cultural impediments in which created a mindset that did not endorse entrepreneurial ideals focusing on profit generation and maximisation.

Moreover, Fijian female small business entrepreneurs (in comparison to Australian female entrepreneurs) did not display proactive or innovative business practices as many of their ventures were ‘micro’ enterprises utilising local materials for a local market. In this way, Fijian female entrepreneurs exercised a quasi-entrepreneurial orientation which was dominated by a different cultural value set to that observed in Australia. Overall, cultural effects appeared to take precedence in relation to the local populations entrepreneurial orientation, with Fijian female entrepreneurs being somewhat restricted in their choice of business model and approach to venture growth. As was evident from the data, Australian female entrepreneurs entered small business ownership with a ‘global mindset’ while their Fijian counterparts were oriented towards local market outcomes. This appears due to the competing demands placed on Fijian entrepreneurs by the cultural values of veikauwaitaki, veinanumi and veirogorogoci.

Thus, Australian small business entrepreneurs appear to possess higher levels of autonomy in entrepreneurial decision making, thus allowing a more centralised approach to discerning new (and emergent) entrepreneurial opportunities for future growth (Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). Importantly, this independence appears to resonate with the true meaning of possessing an ‘entrepreneurial orientation’, which is somewhat restricted in Fijian cultural contexts due to adding an additional layer of management (i.e. family and community leaders) in the entrepreneurial decision-making process. In the next section, conclusions about education and the self-employment decision will be discussed.

7.3.5 Conclusions about Education (Proposition 5)

Research proposition 5 proposed a relationship between women small business entrepreneurs' education and the self-employment decision. Data drawn from in-depth interviews showed that there is some association between education and female small business ownership. Overall, the results appear consistent with previous research suggesting that Australian female small business owners received higher-level (and relevant) business-related education which is often necessary in facilitating subsequent business growth. However, in comparison, Fijian female small business owners did not appear to have the same level of educational support, although there is some evidence that this is changing (e.g.}
Ministry of Women and Culture and Ministry of Education Youth and Sport provided vocational education). This lack of educational support is an area of concern given that in excess of 80 percent of microfinance clients in Fiji are women. Furthermore, the results reveal that Australian female small business entrepreneurs view that primary and secondary education is inadequate in preparing women to enter small business arrangements. Most asserted that higher education within relevant business disciplines was necessary in providing individual’s with the tools to effectively manage small business operations. Nominated educational areas included marketing, finance and general business related degrees.

In comparison to the Australian results, all female entrepreneurs in Fiji had primary education with only a minority achieving a secondary-level education and only a few obtaining higher educational outcomes. Importantly, most Fijian entrepreneurs did not view education as precluding them from entering non-traditional industries as was proposed in this research. Although most believed that education was important in informing methods of business management, it was deemed of lesser importance in their initial decision-set when considering small business as a self-employment alternative.

However, as was evident from the data, those with a higher level of educational attainment did report higher venture growth rates and firm survival rates. Specifically, a few indigenous female small business operators claimed that veidokai and veinanumi were prominent reasons for a lack of educational opportunities as these cultural elements did not encourage women to enter higher-education due to the predilection for the community to expect that women should maintain a subservient relationship with men, focusing instead upon family responsibilities at the expense of formal education. As suggested above, this general proposition only received partial support as the data revealed that most Fijian female entrepreneurs did not fully endorse the view that educational attainment restricted entry into non-traditional (or masculine) industry sectors.

However, interviewee data revealed that the educational landscape is changing. Many interviewees reported that following satisfaction of domestic responsibilities they would find time to study from home through distance flexible learning. Courses focusing on management, marketing, economics and business studies were viewed as important in maximising the likely survival of their ventures. They stated that they needed to be mindful that their studies do not impinge family commitments. Overall, Australian female small business owners appeared to have more opportunities in attaining business education compared to Fijian female entrepreneurs. This was largely due to the accessibility (financial and locational) of educational institutions in each region. Women small business entrepreneurs in regional and
urban localities in Australia could easily access institutions such as Universities (through on-site or flexible delivery methods) and Technical and Further Education (Tafe) institutions that offered a myriad of commercial studies and business training courses. In distinct contrast, Fijian entrepreneurs did not only have restricted access to these organisations, but there was a general consensus that the local community did not view vocational business courses as applicable for women as they were considered to assume a role as ‘homemaker’ and ‘wife’ in Fijian society. While this seems to highlight negative cultural influences in Fiji, it is evident that approaches to minority-education will need to adapt and change, especially given the pervasive nature of female entrepreneurship in developing countries such as Fiji. Next, conclusions about prior business experience and female self employment will be discussed.

7.3.6 Conclusions about Prior Business Experience (Proposition 6)

In this research it was proposed that a relationship existed between prior business experience and female small business choice. The results of this research indicate that there an individual's prior business experience does influence a female entrepreneurs' decision to enter self-employment. It appears that Fijian female small business owners are mainly engaged within traditional industries such as tailoring, handicrafts, food catering and small retail outlets (village-based). A few had indicated that such industries were chosen on the basis of family member recommendations. All Fijian female respondents had some previous work experience predominantly within service-dominated industries (e.g. cleaners, secretarial duties, cashiers, supermarket attendants, chef in takeaway outlets, public service and hotel clerical duties). This appears to resonate with earlier research examining female participation in small businesses overseas (Dant and Brush 1999). The findings suggest that the experience gained from previous employment does assist in small business management. However, the identified lack of small business experience did appear to restrict Fijian female entrepreneur's entry into specific markets. Specifically, indigenous females adhering to vakarorogo and veidokai generally realised their business goals by operating in small scale as market vendors and street hawkers.

In comparison, Australian female small business owners possessed a wide range of previous work experience form such areas as the civil service, corporate management, hospitality, tourism, retailing and manufacturing. Some commenced their small business following the termination of a work contract or after ceasing salaried employment. Interestingly, all business owners from the study agreed that previous work experience had assisted them in choosing a relevant industry to be involved in. However, the findings suggest that Australian female
entrepreneurs were better able to leverage their existing skills in alternative business models and industries. Moreover, they were effective in utilising their knowledge to generate high-level revenue and market share outcomes. In the next section (Section 7.3.7) general conclusions regarding the impact social capital accessibility upon small business choice will be discussed.

7.3.7 Conclusions about Social Capital Accessibility (Proposition 7)

The relationship between social capital accessibility and female small business ownership was investigated in Proposition 7. Data from in-depth interviews confirmed a significant association between social accessibility and female small business owners’ decisions to be self-employed. The confirmation of support for this proposition is consistent with previous research in the context of networking-theory within the small business and entrepreneurship literatures. Specifically, Fijian female small business owners who value networking as an important ingredient in small business operation and success agreed that they needed professional advice and instructions from those that have been successful in similar areas of business. The data revealed that access to appropriate advice came from a variety of sources including, friends and family, professional bodies and government institutions. In particular, indigenous females found difficulty in accessing appropriate mentors and advisors and often lacked sufficient confidence to discuss issues surrounding small business entry and operation. Importantly, it appears that this cohort is somewhat disadvantaged due to their inability to share information with other female small business owners. This is not the case in developing countries such as Australia in which women’s organisations are both prevalent and easily accessible. As many interviewees revealed, the sharing of information relating to misfortunes, grievances and obstacles that are faced in business was often considered as both dysfunctional and unproductive by both peers and local community groups. From the study indigenous female business entrepreneurs appeared to favour sharing information with groups such as Indo-Fijians and Europeans who did not appear to be bound by cultural sensitivities. However, overall Fijian female entrepreneurs were cognisant that they would be unable to access sufficient social capital, and would tend to enter small business arrangements so as to develop their networking capability as they developed their small businesses.

In comparison, Australian female small business entrepreneurs actively promoted relationship building as a tool to increase productivity in high-risk ventures and thus support their own professional development. Only marginal differences were reported between urban and regionally-based entrepreneurs, with the main difference relating to the inability of rural female
entrepreneurs to access national women’s groups (e.g. Zonta International etc). However, the importance of both formal and informal networks in promoting venture performance was not understated, with all cohorts understanding the value in accessing usable and relevant social capital. The next section (Section 7.3.8) presents concluding arguments regarding the impact of finance availability and a female entrepreneur’s small business choice.

7.3.8 Conclusions about Availability of Finance (Proposition 8)

In relation to proposition 8, the relationship between availability of finance and female small business ownership was explored. The results show that there was a strong relationship between availability of finance and females’ business choice to be independent business owners. The confirmation of this proposition is consistent with previous research in the context of venture capital available to women entrepreneurs (Hisrich and Brush, 1984). Usually, in a patriarchal society such as Fiji, female small business entrepreneurs need to utilise personal assets in order to secure loans from financial institutions. However, within the context of entrepreneurship, community goods cannot be used as collateral security in obtaining business loans. Regional and urban female small business operators experienced problems in acquiring loans from commercial banks due to a variety of issues including oppressive amounts of paper-based applications, excessive loan processing times and male-dominated lending policies. As a point of comparison, more individualistic cohorts such as the Chinese, Indo-Fijian and European female entrepreneurs would often find it easier to enter small business arrangements due to the financial assistance they received from family members or the ability to generate personal savings (which is often prohibited in indigenous family groups). Indigenous female small business owners would typically source financial help from the Microfinance Unit, a government scheme set up for start-up and growth of small business venture. However, this was not often easy to get and would not always provide sufficient working capital to ensure the ongoing success of the venture. Thus, cultural influences did appear to influence a female’s entry into small business and would often restrict the choice of associated business model (most would choose to limit the size of the organisation, often favouring micro enterprises due to funding restrictions).

In comparison, Australian female small business operators would generally finance their new venture from a variety of sources including commercial banks, approved financial institutions, family members and savings. In this sense, financial availability did not preclude female entrepreneurs’ choice of business model, with many interviewees revealing that they were capable of financing small or medium-sized enterprises from the start. While high levels of
interest on secured loans was cited as a drawback, it nevertheless appeared that finance was more accessible to women in developed, rather than developing nations. Next, conclusions about technological capability and the female entrepreneur’s self-employment decision will be presented.

7.3.9 Conclusions about Technological Capability (Proposition 9)

Proposition 9 proposed that technology accessibility and use would impact a female entrepreneur’s decision to enter self-employment. The results showed that there was a relationship between female small business choice and technological capability. Overall, Fijian female small business owners tend to use traditional technology to assist them in the operation of their businesses. This normally involved less sophisticated technology, which in many ways curtailed the growth of enterprises in comparison to areas in which high-level technology was utilised. Generally, the cost of such technology or the guidance needed to effectively use this technology was prohibitive, especially within the context of micro enterprise arrangements. Moreover, female entrepreneurs would often find difficulty in educating themselves in using this technology (e.g. website design and administration) due to constraints associated with fulfilling their traditional roles in the family and community. In particular, the matavuvalo (nuclear family) and mataqali (extended family) obligations together with the lack of finance to acquire modern technologies impinge on their ability to source and utilise new technology. Instead, many relied heavily on less sophisticated marketing methods such as word of mouth marketing, rather than emergent methods of communication (e.g. viral, guerrilla marketing).

This is in direct contrast to the experiences of Australian female small business entrepreneurs who would routinely acquire modern and advanced technologies to assist them in customer recruitment, supply and procurement, performance management and sales and marketing. Often, they purchased and invested heavily on modern technologies to assist them in communicating supplier and customer groups on a global level. In this sense, technology was an important precursor to entering small business as it supported their choice of business model, which was often couched in a ‘born global’ mindset. In addition, these technologies created networking opportunities with other female entrepreneurs and the added flexibility afforded by such technology, assisted in better balancing (often competing) work and family demands. Given the ease in accessibility of such technology as the internet, Australian urban and regional female small business were able to promote their product/service to a variety of
constituents which was especially beneficial in reaching new markets in periods of economic uncertainty and downturn.

7.4 Discussion on Regional and Urban Comparisons

As detailed in Chapter 2, SMEs in regional areas may encounter locational disadvantages in comparison to SMEs in urban areas. Research Issue 2 posed the question *To what extent are there differences in the conceptual model across urban and regional areas in developing and developed economies?* In this research it was found that location did have an impact upon the availability of finance, technology, networks and education. However the size of the impact on these factors appears to vary between both developed and developing nations. In particular, both Australian and Fijian female-owned SMEs encountered difficulty in accessing finance in regional localities, although this was much more evident within Fiji (largely) due to cultural influences centring upon a predilection of financial institutions to lend to male entrepreneurs. This appeared to extend cultural values inherent within regional areas, which did not appear as prevalent in urban areas in Fiji. So too in Australia, many financial institutions preferred to lend in urban areas given their belief that new ventures in rural areas would have less of a potential to expand, and thus, were classified as more risky investments.

In addition, the availability of technology was somewhat restricted in rural areas (e.g. internet access, web-site designers, infrastructure etc), although, again this was much more of an issue in Fiji. This was also the case in relation to formal networks, however the distinction between Fiji and Australia in relation to this issue is less clear. Female entrepreneurs in both nations found difficulty in accessing formal women’s networks and this encouraged them to source out (or generate) informal networks which both Fijian and Australian SME owners appeared to do quite well. However, some Fijian women appear to find it difficult to access these networks before entering self-employment, which does appear to impact upon their choice of business model once they have made the decision to enter self-employment (i.e. they tend to favour micro enterprises with limited growth potential). As suggested above, the performance outcomes associated with SMEs in developed and developing nations appears to differ. So too, in relation to intra-country locality. The results of this research suggest that rural-based SMEs are generally smaller enterprises that have less scope to compete globally. However, there is some evidence that Australian-based rural SMEs do benefit from greater access to technology than is evident in Fiji. This technology appears to assist in improving operational efficiency, marketing proficiency and financial outcomes. In the next section, the practical and theoretical implications of this research are presented.
7.5 Research Implications

This research extends our current understanding of entrepreneurship and small business ownership (and performance) in developing and developed economies. Specifically, this research has added to our current understanding of ‘minority group’ SME ownership (i.e. women) in different cultural contexts. From the literature review, it is evident that female small business entrepreneurs in developed countries, such as Australia, have adopted an individualistic focus and approach which has assisted in facilitating SME performance. Collectivist societies such as Fiji, are characterised by different models and approaches to SME ownership and operation which, may be argued, to somewhat curtail efficiency at the firm level. Specifically, female entrepreneurs operating within a collectivist paradigm experience cultural obligations which impede both SME productivity and growth. This research confirms that non-indigenous women economically out performed indigenous female small business owners due to the precedence placed upon entrepreneurial endeavours over and above community obligations. These findings appear broadly consistent with the results suggesting that Australian female small business owners, (who operate within an individualistic culture) demonstrate proficiency in entrepreneurship due to a downplaying of socio-cultural responsibilities.

In a patriarchal society such as Fiji, indigenous female small business entrepreneurs experience a myriad of obstacles that are culturally and environmentally bound. It is suggested that urban indigenous female small business ownership could be encouraged through enacting policies that have a more inherent ‘commercial perspective’. Moreover, this ‘cultural shift’ would have a positive effect on the economies of developing nations in the South Pacific, such as Fiji, as female-owned enterprises are recognised as sources of creativity and innovation the world over. Importantly, non-indigenous female small business dwellers that operate within urban and rural environments have shown a propensity to achieve high-level business performance which suggests that this type of approach to SME ownership is not inconsistent with the values and practices evident within Fiji.

This research confirms that there is much to learn from egalitarian societies such as Australia, where SMEs in both urban and regional environments operate within established business incubators and have access to necessary commercial infrastructure which is conducive efficient, effective and profitable business-level outcomes. Given that individualism fosters entrepreneurship, female business owners are better able to access sophisticated and advanced technology, start-up and working capital finance and advice from both formal and
informal women’s and business networks. Appropriate public investment in suitable business incubators has assisted female entrepreneurs in achieving high levels of sales revenue and increased levels of market share in both home and host (international) countries. In addition, relevant commercial education is freely available and the vocational nature of much of the educational instruction is viewed as relevant and important to current and ‘would-be’ business owners. Moreover, female entrepreneurs in Australia do not appear to be precluded from entering non-traditional sectors, and are often encouraged to assume business ownership at an earlier stage in life, thus fostering a thriving and non gender-biased entrepreneurial culture. Also, the availability of government assistance in terms of child care, after school care and the like, assist in helping women balance the competing demands of work and family obligations.

Consequently, it is recommended that potential Fijian female small business owners be educated as to the worth of business activity and the importance of adopting an individualistic approach to business management and economic activity. By no means should anyone advocate the dismissal of cultural values. However, it may prove prudent to educate the community in relation to the social benefits of entrepreneurship to the individual and society as a whole. Indeed entrepreneurial activity is associated with progress, wealth and innovation, all facets of a developing nation and economy. This may go some way to encouraging a re-positioning of village-based values where Vakaviti currently takes precedence.

It is also important to note that Australia is a close neighbour (and economic partner) of Fiji, and much can be learnt from their experiences in entrepreneurship. Female small business in Australia permeates all sectors such as manufacturing, tourism, hospitality to retail and financial services. In comparison, Fijian female small business are somewhat limited to fast food takeaways, transportation, handicrafts, market vendors, street hawkers, tourism, tailoring and canteens. Certainly, a change in policy and assistance provided to female entrepreneurs may assist in fostering additional economic activity throughout a range of industries. Currently, in Fiji, the Ministry for Social Welfare, Women and Poverty Alleviation assist women micro-enterprises rather than larger SME businesses owned by women. In particular, government initiatives for regional female small business entrepreneurs are encouraged to be financially independent by producing items that utilise local available resources that guarantee high income returns. However, it is suggested that these initiatives may be limited in scope, and may be further extended to capture a new breed of female entrepreneur. Moreover, this suggestion may be extended to regional areas of Australia that still appear to suffer some disadvantages in comparison to their urban counterparts.
To this end, economic planners and policy makers need to be aware of the important role of women in small business within urban and regional environments of Australia and Fiji. As is evident from this research, female entrepreneurs are making a significant economic contribution through; income generation, employment creation, local goods/service provision and regional service coverage. Specifically, in the context of Fiji, public policy initiatives should give consideration to increasing levels of vocational small business training for women, providing finance for small and medium (not just micro) enterprises, improving the availability of usable technology, creating professional business networks, and providing ongoing management assistance to female-owned SMEs in operation.

7.6 Limitations

Care was taken to ensure that data collected from in-depth interviews were accurate and reliable. Necessary procedures were followed in the research design and administration of the interviews with female small business entrepreneurs in urban and regional environments of Australia and Fiji. In adhering to this protocol, the potential for researcher bias was minimised. However, there are some limitations that require acknowledgement.

The data that was collected through in-depth interviews in Fiji was restricted to small business related questions as interviewees were still experiencing the military takeover in 2006. When probing questions (based on previous responses) were used, some of the interviewees were reluctant to discuss issues further especially in relation to the nature and/or administration of government policies. Some believed that the supply of such information would jeopardise their small business operation. Particularly, indigenous female urban and regional operators were fairly sceptical in responding to cultural and gender-related issues as these were perceived as possibly leading to ostracism and family segregation which is unbecoming Vakaviti (the Fijian way of life). Therefore, the resulting data could suffer from country-specific bias. However, every effort was made to re-assure respondents that their responses would not be identifiable to any particular individual. Given this strong re-assurance by the researcher, interviewees tended to appear more at ease with the questioning procedure.

In addition, data was drawn from two countries (namely, Australia and Fiji) that may not be fully representative of all developed and developing nations throughout the world. Thus the results may not be fully generalisable in all country contexts. In addition, qualitative insights into the factors influencing a female entrepreneur’s ownership of SMEs (and subsequent performance outcomes) may suffer from an individual’s previous work in salaried or self-
employment. In particular SMEs may have different comparison levels, and the provided responses some ‘organisational forgetfulness’ may impact on the validity of these results.

7.7 Future Research

Whilst most female small business research had been conducted in developed economies, it is recommended that additional studies be carried out in other regions and contexts. In the case of Fiji, further research is required to determine business performance of female small business entrepreneurs who concurrently integrate both communal entrepreneurship and modern business practices. In particular, consideration should be given as to whether factors from the current research that influenced their entry into small business ownership were shaped by collective or individual decisions. This should assist in determining the significance of cultural influences in promoting or impeding small business entrepreneurship. In addition, further research is needed to investigate female entrepreneurial approaches to managing multiple businesses in similar or across different industries.

Also, the effective implementation of marketing, financial management, networking and customer relationship strategies should be investigated to better inform the processes needed to encourage SME productivity and sustainability. Specifically, I recommend to future scholars to examine strategies that could be initiated to ensure that there is a sustained, coherent and targeted approach by the financial sector and government to partner with small businesses (Times, 2010). Moreover, in the past decade, potential female entrepreneurs had been attending high-level commercial studies and business training at educational institutions like: The University of the South Pacific, Training Productivity Authority of Fiji and The National University of Fiji. However, it is evident that following their graduation, very few are establishing their own small business. To shed further light on this issue, future research should be conducted to investigate the reasons for such apparent shortfalls. This is an area of concern, particularly considering that more than 80 percent of microfinance clients in Fiji are women.

7.8 Conclusion

Female owned small businesses are increasingly important to developed and developing countries in providing employment and economic growth. Female small business
entrepreneurs in developed countries, like Australia, operating in individualistic environment have proven to be successful with their business operation by achieving high profit, increase market share with high quality products/services. Since individualism is associated with entrepreneurship, urban and regional female small business owners display entrepreneurial culture like; risk-taking, perseverance, commitment, hard work, dedication and frugality. From the conceptual model of female participation and venture performance, Australian female small business owners in the study have indicated that antecedent influences, incubator organisations and environmental factors contributed to the success of their small business ventures.

Despite the high success rate of female small business in developed countries, research investigating under performance for urban and regional female small business in developing economies is lacking. Resulting from the few extant studies and the lack of empirical investigation, this research develops a preliminary conceptual model of female participation and venture performance in regional and urban areas of Australia and Fiji. The development of this model was the result of antecedent influences, incubator organisations and environmental factors influencing venture classifications impacting on business performance. Through exploratory research, the model was used to conduct in-depth interviews with female small business entrepreneurs in Australia and Fiji. Data collected from forty female small business owners in Australia and Fiji were analysed to ensure research objectives were met and all propositions were strongly supported.

The conceptual model has made a significant contribution to female small business ownership and venture performance in regional and urban areas of Australia and Fiji. Specifically, it has addressed the weaknesses of female small business in developing countries like Fiji where tradition and culture impede with entrepreneurship. In addition, relevant findings from this research suggested that antecedent influences, incubator organisations and environmental factors are important variables for small medium enterprises in achieving competitive advantage with high business performance.
Appendix A

Description of Fiji Respondents:

- **Respondent A** began as a nightclub owner and diversifies into owning a restaurant in the same locality. She was chosen due to the past five years she has successfully managed her businesses and plans to purchase another restaurant. She has been viewed as a role model for other female small business owners in the locality.

- **Respondent B** sells handicrafts, artefacts and locally made beads to tourists. Her reputation with small business in the village community shared similar advantages and disadvantages with operating in a communal setting.

- **Respondent C** is a handicraft operator had been ‘pushed’ into small business so as to supplement the family income and to pay for her son’s education.

- **Respondent D** owns a grocery outlet in the village serving mainly low to middle income neighbours. Over the past ten years she has experienced her small business to flourish due to the excellent rapport established between her and the community.

- **Respondent E** has a piggery and a canteen operating in the village. For the past six years she has used the micro-finance scheme to assist her with the small business. Whilst this respondent’s opinions may be influenced by prior negative experiences it was felt necessary to gather insights from both successful and unsuccessful systems that currently existed.

- **Respondent F** is a market vendor selling vegetables, fruits and roots crops obtained from the family farm located among the rugged terrain. She was chosen for her passion and providing excellent services to existing and potential customers.

- **Respondent G** is a commercial farmer selling her produce to exporters and agents for local markets. A firmer believer in operating as commercial entrepreneur and less interference from communal demands. She was chosen to reassess the importance of culture in female small business.

- **Respondent H** owns a restaurant and faces stiff competition from other outlets in the locality. With only primary education to assist her in managing the business she has received overwhelming support from families and friends. This is aligned to the study of trying to determine what factors influence female small business entrepreneurs’ choice.

- **Respondent I** together with her husband own an adventure cruise for the past six years and being motivated by the environment and culture of the nearby villagers that tourists always thrilled to learn and visit.
• Respondent J has a resort by serendipitous discovery, through seizing the opportunity to establish in the coastal village precinct where cultural obligations dictate the employees’ daily activities.

• Respondent K a street hawker since the last sixteen years, selling sweets and baked scones. With much passion and commitment she is a strong advocate in education and technology to minimise or lessen poverty within her nuclear and extended family.

• Respondent L operates a small canteen in the locality from 2003 and commenced her small business after retirement from the hospitality industry. The cultural and commercial pressures has confronted her in making decisions after indigenous customers take items with credit, and some do not pay for a long period of time.

• Respondent M owns a tailor with most of her clients is indigenous and has survived with all customers paying for their dresses and costumes before they initially possess them. She believes in 50 per cent deposit and balance paid before releasing the finished product.

• Respondent N operates a handicraft since the past seven years. She makes traditional artefacts with modern concept design and being creative with environmental awareness slogans. She inherited these skills from her mother.

• Respondent O is a market vendor selling kava (piper methysticum) also operating a canteen within the public service depot. She is in a copreneurial relationship and admits that advance and accessible technology is a way forward to advance in small business entrepreneurship.

• Respondent P has a law firm since the past six years. She valued her previous work experience and education as important factors in commencing her small business. She obtained her business acumen from her parents and has excellent network support system.

• Respondent Q owns a service station, a retail outlet, a driving school and rental vehicles. She started small from a grocery shop and diversified into other ventures as the opportunities arise.

• Respondent R has a pharmacy for the past three years. She reasoned independence and glass ceiling have motivated her to commence her small business.

• Respondent S owns a restaurant since the past eight years and relies on her education from a vocational institute as relevant and necessary during turbulent and uncertain economic periods.
• *Respondent T* operates a nightclub since 1987 and has extended her business into having a restaurant, a salon, a pawn shop and a hostel accommodation. She was chosen due to the financial support received from family members.
Appendix B

Description of Australian Respondents:

- **Respondent A** has a consultancy for the past fifteen years. She has been assisted by her husband and both have previous entrepreneurial experience inherited from their individual family small businesses. She was chosen as she started at an early age as an entrepreneur and financial assistance was readily available from commercial institutions but she did not take the opportunity as they used their own savings into the venture.

- **Respondent B** owns a wholesale outlet and has diversified into other businesses such as; household item rentals and electrical entertainment products. Have utilised her business education obtained from Tafe and Griffith University.

- **Respondent C** operates a services agency specialising in credit service. With her children to look after she started her business as she had to balance work and family.

- **Respondent D** owns a fruit and veggie business as she started in 2005 have also opened a fast food takeaway within the precinct. Her long term goal is to expand and diversify the business.

- **Respondent E** produces and designs furniture for the past ten years. She had her aunty as mentor, and believed that people is the greatest asset and should be valued if her business is to be successful.

- **Respondent F** operates a paint and texture coatings. She relies on her mentors and networks for advice and regarded relationship marketing to be the main factor of her success.

- **Respondent G** owns a fruit and vegetable small business outlet with her son purchasing the produce from farmers in Queensland. She is innovative in adding value to the produce if not selling at the perceived time. Adjacent to her premises is a coffee bar which she acquired from the previous owner and employing three staff on part-time to manage it.

- **Respondent H** operates a small business that manufactures clothes. Began as a part-time hobby and has now turned into a full time profitable career. She has managed to balance family and work and is optimistic that her business will expand in the future.

- **Respondent I** began offering fully furnished quality accommodation. She believes in happy and satisfied customers and existing clients who will act as referrals. She rarely advertise but maintains that every job is completed to the highest standard and there is
no better feeling than knowing that the customer is completely happy with their product and service.

- **Respondent J** has a wide variety of themed gifts available online making the purchase easy and contents are selected from a variety of quality providers and designed to match customers’ needs. Whatever the occasion or need, the business will ensure the timely delivery and the contents to be safe.

- **Respondent K** owns a recreation small business during her teenage years and has survived with assistance provided by family members. The banks could not assist financially because she did not have the deposit or any security. She did not believe gender as obstacle for obtaining loan from financial institutions, but she claimed that one needs to have the necessary income.

- **Respondent L** operates a catering business and she used her previous work experience as major factor in managing her small business. She used to work in the hospitality industry and utilised her skills and knowledge in managing the business.

- **Respondent M** owns a children’s play centre and strongly believes that work experience supplemented with education are the main factors for motivating her into owning the business.

- **Respondent N** has a consultancy mainly focusing on financial and business issues. She was motivated with successful business personalities like; Bill Gates and Richard Branson and hopes to retain such mentors in times of difficult situations.

- **Respondent O** owns a consultancy and predominantly plays an advisory role in offering management solutions and assist in the restructuring of organisation. She relies on well established network for any dilemma that may arise.

- **Respondent P** acts as a recruiting agent for other organisations in finding the right and best staff to fill advertised vacancies. She believes that networking is the main factor to her success. She started as an entrepreneur at the age of twenty five.

- **Respondent Q** owns a marketing public relations and creative consultancies whose clients range from small-to-medium businesses. She faces competition mainly from male dominated marketing companies, but has executed integrated marketing communications for business to business markets.

- **Respondent R** owns two coffee cafés and a corporate catering as subsidiary. She inherited the business from the previous owner and received assistance from her partner. She attributes her success to an excellent relationship marketing obtained from customers, suppliers and stakeholders.

- **Respondent S** operates and specialises in the recruitment of temporary and permanent office workers. She obtained her human resource management degree
from the university and claimed she is a self-starter with a lot of confidence, ambition and strong work ethics.

- **Respondent T** owns a retail shop specialising in selling women’s and men’s shoes, suitcases and handbags. She uses her website to inform her target customers of
References


FNP. (2002). *50/50 By Year 2020; 20 Year Development Plan (2001-2020).* Suva: Ministry of Finance and National Planning (FNP)


Mallory, M. (1996). From the ground up: Women entrepreneurs build businesses and create jobs in a soft economy (Publication:)


