LEABHARLANN CHOLÁISTE NA TRÍONÓIDE, BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH | TRINITY COLLEGE LIBRARY DUBLIN
Ollscoil Átha Cliath | The University of Dublin

Terms and Conditions of Use of Digitised Theses from Trinity College Library Dublin

Copyright statement

All material supplied by Trinity College Library is protected by copyright (under the Copyright and Related Rights Act, 2000 as amended) and other relevant Intellectual Property Rights. By accessing and using a Digitised Thesis from Trinity College Library you acknowledge that all Intellectual Property Rights in any Works supplied are the sole and exclusive property of the copyright and/or other IPR holder. Specific copyright holders may not be explicitly identified. Use of materials from other sources within a thesis should not be construed as a claim over them.

A non-exclusive, non-transferable licence is hereby granted to those using or reproducing, in whole or in part, the material for valid purposes, providing the copyright owners are acknowledged using the normal conventions. Where specific permission to use material is required, this is identified and such permission must be sought from the copyright holder or agency cited.

Liability statement

By using a Digitised Thesis, I accept that Trinity College Dublin bears no legal responsibility for the accuracy, legality or comprehensiveness of materials contained within the thesis, and that Trinity College Dublin accepts no liability for indirect, consequential, or incidental, damages or losses arising from use of the thesis for whatever reason. Information located in a thesis may be subject to specific use constraints, details of which may not be explicitly described. It is the responsibility of potential and actual users to be aware of such constraints and to abide by them. By making use of material from a digitised thesis, you accept these copyright and disclaimer provisions. Where it is brought to the attention of Trinity College Library that there may be a breach of copyright or other restraint, it is the policy to withdraw or take down access to a thesis while the issue is being resolved.

Access Agreement

By using a Digitised Thesis from Trinity College Library you are bound by the following Terms & Conditions. Please read them carefully.

I have read and I understand the following statement: All material supplied via a Digitised Thesis from Trinity College Library is protected by copyright and other intellectual property rights, and duplication or sale of all or part of any of a thesis is not permitted, except that material may be duplicated by you for your research use or for educational purposes in electronic or print form providing the copyright owners are acknowledged using the normal conventions. You must obtain permission for any other use. Electronic or print copies may not be offered, whether for sale or otherwise to anyone. This copy has been supplied on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

Female Entrepreneurship: An Exploratory Study of Women Entrepreneurs in Ireland

by

Anne Laure Humbert

A thesis submitted to
the University of Dublin
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Statistics,
Trinity College, University of Dublin



November 2007

TRINITY COLLEGE
27 MAY 2008
LIBRARY DUBLIN
THESIS
8393

Declaration

This thesis has not been submitted as an exercise for a degree at this or any other University. Except where otherwise stated, the work described herein has been carried out by the author alone. This thesis may be borrowed or copied upon request with the permission of the Librarian, University of Dublin, Trinity College. The copyright belongs jointly to the University of Dublin and Anne Laure Humbert.

Signature of Author.....Anne Laure Humbert.....

Anne Laure Humbert

12th November 2007

Abstract

This thesis consists of an exploratory study of female entrepreneurship in Ireland, focusing on the motivations, obstacles and work/life balance experiences of entrepreneurs. The research relies on a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to answer the research questions. A postal questionnaire was sent to entrepreneurs nationally and offered a comparative perspective between men and women entrepreneurs on entrepreneurial motivations, obstacles encountered, levels of risks adopted and attitudes to work/life balance. Due to the nature of the research question, the quantitative data was complemented by a series of ten interviews with women entrepreneurs. The interviews further explored the issues raised by the questionnaires. Particular interest was given to the motivational factors of women entrepreneurs, to the obstacles they encountered, and to their attitudes to risk. Women entrepreneurs' attitudes to work/life balance practices and the relationship between this and the level of conflict between their work and family life were also explored.

The thesis showed that men and women entrepreneurs are motivated by different factors, that they encounter different obstacles and that women entrepreneurs experience of entrepreneurship largely differs from that of men. The survey and the interviews showed that these differences were not only linked to gender, but were exacerbated by marital and family status: motivations, obstacles and level of risks differed most for women who had dependent children. The thesis argues that this is due to the disproportionate responsibility women in general have for caring responsibilities in Ireland and internationally. However, the thesis argues that women entrepreneurs are not a homogenous group, and that this needs to be recognised in research in the field of female entrepreneurship in order to avoid creating stereotypes. The thesis builds upon the model first presented by Goffee and Scase (1985) and proposes a typology of women entrepreneurs.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my thanks to my supervisor, Professor Eileen Drew, for her help, advice and support throughout this project. I would like to extend my thanks to Dr. Frank Bannister and Dr. Myra O'Regan for their invaluable feedback.

A special thanks to all who helped me through these years. Joe for his endless encouragement even at the darkest hours, Katarina for countless coffee breaks, Emma for proof-reading and constructive criticism, Breda for her help with sending out the survey, Deirdre for her technical expertise, and baby Liam simply for being here. I would also like to thank my family, for their emotional and financial support throughout the entire process.

Finally, I would like to thank the City and County Enterprise Boards for their help in administering the survey. But most importantly, I would like to thank the entrepreneurs who participated in this study, for giving me a little bit of their precious time.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 Introduction 1

1.1 Background 1

1.2 Defining Entrepreneurship 3

1.3 Research Questions 5

1.4 Terms of Reference 6

1.5 Research Methodology 7

1.6 Outline of Chapters 7

Chapter 2 Statistical Review 9

2.1 Employment in Ireland 9

2.1.1 Participation Rates of Men and Women 9

2.1.2 Determinants of Labour Force Participation 10

2.1.3 Gender and Employment 14

2.2 Demographic Change in Ireland 19

2.2.1 Marriage and Maternity 19

2.2.2 Changes in Family Forms 20

2.3 Entrepreneurship in Ireland 22

2.3.1 Number of Irish Men and Women Entrepreneurs 22

2.3.2 Levels of Entrepreneurship in Ireland 24

2.3.3 Profile of Irish Entrepreneurs 25

2.4 Conclusions 27

Chapter 3 Literature Review: Female Entrepreneurship 29

3.1 Personal and Business Attributes 30

3.1.1 Profile and Background 31

3.1.2 Characteristics of Women's Businesses 35

3.2 Motivations for becoming an Entrepreneur 38

3.2.1 Entrepreneurial Awakening 38

3.2.2 Motivational Factors 39

3.3 Factors Inhibiting Female Entrepreneurship 43

3.3.1 Access to Capital and Funding 43
3.3.2 Lack of Experience and Training 44
3.3.3 Lack of Credibility 45
3.3.4 Family Responsibilities 46
3.3.5 Lack of Confidence 47
3.3.6 Breaking into the Male Business World 48
3.3.7 Lack of Access to Business Network Opportunities 49
3.3.8 Barriers and Obstacles for Irish Women Entrepreneurs 50
3.4 Performance and Growth Factors in Entrepreneurship 50
3.5 Management Styles and Female Entrepreneurship 53
3.5.1 Leadership and Management Styles 54
3.5.2 Management Styles in Entrepreneurship 55
3.6 Feminist Analysis of Entrepreneurship 57
3.6.1 Feminist Theories and Female Entrepreneurship Research 57
3.6.2 Women Entrepreneurs as the 'Other' 58
3.6.3 Women Entrepreneurs and the Family 60
3.7 Key Findings 61
3.8 Conceptual Framework for the Thesis 64

Chapter 4 Research Methodology 67

4.1 Philosophical Assumptions 68
4.1.1 The Research Paradigm Spectrum 68
4.1.2 Pragmatism 71
4.1.3 Feminist Research 73
4.1.4 Paradigm Choice and Research Strategies 75
4.1.5 Methodological Implications of the Conceptual Framework 77
4.2 Data Collection 78
4.2.1 Survey Methods 78
4.2.2 Quantitative Data 79
4.2.3 Qualitative Data 86
4.3 Conclusion 87

Chapter 5 Survey: Profile of Respondents and their Businesses 89

5.1 Personal Profile of Survey Respondents 89
5.1.1 Demographic Profile 89
5.1.2 Family Status 94
5.1.3 Employment History 96

5.2 Profile of Businesses 98
5.2.1 Organisation of Businesses 99
5.2.2 Employment Practices 102

5.3 Structures and Management Choices 107
5.3.1 Organisational Structures 107
5.3.2 Management Styles in Business 109

5.4 Summary of Findings 115
5.5 Conclusions 116

Chapter 6 Survey: Motivations of Men and Women Entrepreneurs 119

6.1 Motivations for Becoming Entrepreneurs 119
6.1.1 Pull Factors 120
6.1.2 Push Factors 121

6.2 Models of Motivations 124
6.2.1 Ordinal Logistic Models Methodology 125
6.2.2 Results 126

6.3 Motivational Clusters 130
6.4 Key Findings 134
6.5 Conclusions 136

Chapter 7 Survey: Obstacles to Female Entrepreneurship 137

7.1 Women's Under-representation in Business 137
7.1.1 Reasons for Women's Under-representation in Business 138
7.1.2 Impact of Society on Women in Business 140

7.2 Obstacles Encountered by Women Entrepreneurs 145
7.3 Main Findings 155
7.4 Conclusions 157

Chapter 8 Survey: Work/Life Balance 159

8.1 Work/life Balance in Personal Life 159
8.1.1 Leisure and Social Time 159
8.1.2 Impact of Partners on Entrepreneurship 162
8.1.3 Impact of Children on Entrepreneurship 164
8.1.4 Organisation of Household Tasks 168
8.1.5 Impact of Other Family Commitments 171

8.2 Work/life Balance in Business 173
8.2.1 Availability and Uptake of Work Arrangements 173
8.2.2 Importance of Flexible Working Arrangements 174

8.3 Work/life balance Models 179
8.3.1 Work/life balance and Personal Life 179
8.3.2 Work/life balance and the Business 187

8.4 Key Findings 192
8.4.1 Organisation of Home/Family Life 192
8.4.2 Work/Life Balance: Strategies Adopted and Beliefs Held by Entrepreneurs 195

8.5 Conclusions 195

Chapter 9 Voices of Women Entrepreneurs: A Profile 197

9.1 Background 197
9.1.1 Methodology 197
9.1.2 Profile of Interviewees 198
9.1.3 Summary Profile of Interviewees 199

9.2 Entrepreneurial Awakening 201
9.2.1 Motivational Factors 201
9.2.2 Serendipity 203
9.2.3 Family Influence 204
9.2.4 Push versus Pull Factors 205
9.2.5 Impact of Gender on Motivations 206

9.3 Obstacles to Women Entrepreneurs 209
9.3.1 Specific Obstacles Faced by Interviewees 209
9.3.2 The Impact of Gender on the Obstacles Encountered 213

9.4 Attitudes towards Risk 217

9.5 Management Styles 221
9.6 Key Findings 224
9.7 Conclusions 226

Chapter 10 Voices of Women Entrepreneurs: Home versus Work 229

10.1 The Importance of Work/Life Balance 229
10.1.1 Importance of Work/Life Balance Practices for Themselves 229
10.1.2 Importance of Work/Life Balance Practices for Staff 231
10.1.3 Role of Partners/Husbands 234
10.2 Conflict between Work and Home Life 235
10.3 Women's View of Themselves as Entrepreneurs 239
10.3.1 Powerful Role Models 239
10.3.2 Impact on Women's Work Environment 241
10.3.3 Impact on Women's Family/Personal Environment 243
10.4 Key Findings 245
10.5 Conclusions 248

Chapter 11 Conclusion 251

11.1 Results of the Study 251
11.1.1 Growth of Female Entrepreneurship in Ireland 252
11.1.2 Reasons behind Increase in Female Entrepreneurship in Ireland 253
11.1.3 Women's Motivations for Entering Entrepreneurship in Ireland 254
11.1.4 Gender and Entrepreneurship: Being a Woman Entrepreneur in Ireland 254
11.1.5 Gendered Tracks of Entrepreneurship 256
11.1.6 The Plurality of Female Entrepreneurship 257
11.2 Implications of the Study 258
11.2.1 Implications for Academic Theory 258
11.2.2 Implications for Research Methodology 261
11.2.3 Policy Implications 262
11.3 Conclusion and Future Work 263

APPENDIX A _____ *265*

APPENDIX B _____ *279*

APPENDIX C _____ *283*

APPENDIX D _____ *289*

APPENDIX E _____ *295*

REFERENCES _____ *299*

List of Figures

Figure 2.1 Percentage of Women aged 15-64 Years in the Labour Force (1995-2006) ____ *10*
Figure 2.2 Percentage involved in the Labour Force by Age and Gender (2006) _____ *11*
Figure 2.3 Employment rates of persons aged 20-44 by family status (2006) _____ *12*
Figure 2.4 Labour Force Participation According to Education in Ireland (2005) _____ *13*
Figure 2.5 Employment by Gender and Occupation (2006) _____ *15*
Figure 2.6 Examples of Vertical Segregation _____ *16*
Figure 2.7 Usual Hours of Work of Men and Women (2007) _____ *18*
Figure 2.8 Employment Status of Women by Marital Status (2002) _____ *19*
Figure 2.9 Total Fertility Rate (1960-2004) _____ *20*
Figure 2.10 Marriage Rates (1960-2003) _____ *20*
Figure 2.11 Proportion of Private Households by Composition in thousands (1986-2006) _ *21*
Figure 2.12 Lone Parent Households in thousands (1981-2006) _____ *22*
Figure 2.13 Persons Aged 15 and Over in Employment by Employment Status (2006) ____ *23*
Figure 2.14 Entrepreneurial Activity in Selected Countries by Gender (2006) _____ *24*
Figure 2.15 Educational Level of Entrepreneurs by Gender (2006) _____ *25*
Figure 2.16 Weekly Hours of Work for Self-Employed Persons (2006) _____ *27*
Figure 3.1 Entrepreneurial Personality Theory _____ *31*
Figure 3.2 Summary Model – Key Features of Entrepreneurship Initiation _____ *39*
Figure 3.3 Push and Pull Model –Motivations in New Business Ventures _____ *40*
Figure 3.4 An Indicative 'Stages of Growth'/Life-Cycle Model. _____ *52*
Figure 3.5 Key Themes in the Literature Review _____ *62*
Figure 3.6 Conceptual Framework underpinning the Thesis _____ *64*
Figure 4.1 Summary Model: Design Process of Research _____ *67*
Figure 5.1 Age by Gender (n=808) _____ *90*
Figure 5.2 Marital Status by Gender (n=801) _____ *91*
Figure 5.3 Educational Level by Gender (n=798) _____ *92*
Figure 5.4 Number of Children by Gender (n=802) _____ *93*
Figure 5.5 Childcare Responsibilities by Gender (n=618) _____ *94*
Figure 5.6 Family Members in Business by Gender (n=548) _____ *95*
Figure 5.7 Other Family Member in Business by Gender (n=97) _____ *95*
Figure 5.8 Number of Persons Working Part-Time by Reason (n=169) _____ *97*

Figure 5.9 Number of Persons with a Work Interruption by Reason (n=250) 98
Figure 5.10 Sector by Gender (multiple responses, n=808) 99
Figure 5.11 Year of Company Creation by Gender (n=783) 100
Figure 5.12 Hours Worked Weekly by Gender (n=774) 101
Figure 5.13 Reasons for Working Longer than Standard Hours by Gender (n=618) 102
Figure 5.14 Number of Full-time and Part-time Employees by Gender (n=789) 103
Figure 5.15 Full-time Employees in Women's Businesses (n=425) 104
Figure 5.16 Full-time Employees in Men's Businesses (n=380) 104
Figure 5.17 Proportion of Employees by Gender among Staff (n=605) 105
Figure 5.18 Proportion of Employees under Supervision by Gender among Staff (n=587) 106
Figure 5.19 Proportion of Employees in Management by Gender among Staff (n=605) 106
Figure 5.20 Traditional Structure 107
Figure 5.21 Participatory Structure 108
Figure 5.22 Ad-Hoc Structure 108
Figure 5.23 Agreement/Strong Agreement with Managerial Traits 110
Figure 5.24 Percentage of Respondents with Employees who found Selected Activities Pleasant/Very Pleasant 112
Figure 5.25 Percentage of Respondents who found Selected Duties Pleasant/Very Pleasant 113
Figure 5.26 Values by Gender 114
Figure 6.1 Respondents' Motivations by Gender 120
Figure 6.2 Probability of Agreeing with Dream of Being an Entrepreneur 128
Figure 6.3 Probability of Agreeing/Strongly Agreeing with Achieving Better Work Life Balance 130
Figure 6.4 Summary Model: Motivations of Men and Women Entrepreneurs 135
Figure 7.1 Opinions on Women's Under-representation in Business 138
Figure 7.2 'Reflection of Women's Choices' (n=739) 138
Figure 7.3 'Way Women are Reared' (n=746) 139
Figure 7.4 'Society Discourages Women' (n=753) 140
Figure 7.5 Opinions on Obstacles Encountered by Women 145
Figure 7.6 'Women Lack Training' (n=750) 146
Figure 7.7 'Women Lack Confidence' (n=752) 148
Figure 7.8 Women Lack Contacts (n=748) 149
Figure 7.9 'Women Lack the Financial Resources' (n=750) 151
Figure 7.10 'Women Lack Credibility' (n=749) 154

Figure 7.11 Summary Table: Percentage of Respondents who Agreed/Strongly Agreed with Reasons for Women's Under-representation in Business 156
Figure 8.1 Social and Free Time Sacrifices by Gender (n=718, n=737) 160
Figure 8.2 Partner Attitude to Business by Gender (n=632) 163
Figure 8.3 Interference from Partner's Career by Gender (n=573) 163
Figure 8.4 Delaying Having Children by Gender (n=601) 165
Figure 8.5 Interference of Childcare/Other Relative by Gender (n=543) 166
Figure 8.6 Interference of After School Activities by Gender (n=547) 166
Figure 8.7 Number of Hours Spend Doing Housework by Gender (n=772) 169
Figure 8.8 Housework Performed by Respondents by Gender (n=754) 170
Figure 8.9 Housework Performed by Partners by Gender (n=625) 170
Figure 8.10 Interference from Housework Tasks by Gender (n=700) 171
Figure 8.11 Interference from Other Family Commitments by Gender (n=696) 172
Figure 8.12 Conflict Between Work/Personal Life by Gender (n=784) 172
Figure 8.13 Availability of Flexible Work Arrangements in Irish Companies 174
Figure 8.14 Probability of Agreeing or Strongly Agreeing with Having Sacrificed Time with Partner 181
Figure 8.15 Probability of Agreeing with Interference from After-school Activities 184
Figure 8.16 Probability of Agreeing/Strongly Agreeing With Interference from Childcare/Care of Other Relative 185
Figure 8.17 Probability of Agreeing/Strongly Agreeing with Interference from Housework 187
Figure 8.18 Probability of Prioritising Income Level over Improvement in Family/Personal Life 188
Figure 8.19 Probability of Prioritising Business Expansion over Family/Personal Life 190
Figure 8.20 Probability of Finding Work/life balance Practices Important for Employees 191
Figure 8.21 Probability of Finding Work/life balance Practices Important 192
Figure 8.22 Summary Model: Factors Affecting Work/Life Balance Experiences for Men and Women Entrepreneurs 194
Figure 11.1 Key Factors Affecting Selected Concepts in Entrepreneurship 260

List of Tables

Table 1.1 Research Questions 6
Table 1.2 Summary Model of a Three-Layer Approach 7
Table 2.1 Weekly Earnings (1985-2006) 16
Table 2.2 Hourly Earnings (1985-2006) 17
Table 2.3 Self-employment by Economic Activity- Ireland/EU-15 (2006) 26
Table 3.1 Key Motivations for Women Entrepreneurs 41
Table 3.2: Summary of Leadership Styles 54
Table 3.3: Characteristics of Management Style by Gender 57
Table 3.4 Research Questions 65
Table 4.1 Methodological Implications 77
Table 4.2 Summary Table of Sample Size from each Source 82
Table 4.3 Summary Table of Response Rates 86
Table 6.1 Pull Motivational Factors among Respondents (Agreed/Strongly Agreed) 121
Table 6.2 Push Motivational Factors among Respondents 124
Table 6.3 Link Functions 125
Table 6.4 Model Selection Statistics: Gap in the Market 127
Table 6.5 Ordinal Model with Complementary Log-log Link: Gap in the Market 127
Table 6.6 Model Selection Statistics: Dream of Being an Entrepreneur 128
Table 6.7 Ordinal Model with Logit Link: Dream of Being an Entrepreneur 128
Table 6.8 Ordinal Model with Logit Link: Achieving Work-Life Balance 129
Table 6.9 Ordinal Model with Logit Link with Interaction Parameter: Achieving Work/Life Balance 130
Table 6.10 Final Cluster Centres 131
Table 6.11 Typology of Entrepreneurs by Motivations 133
Table 8.1 Model Selection Statistics: Free Time Sacrifices 179
Table 8.2 Ordinal Model with Logit Link: Free Time Sacrifices 180
Table 8.3 Model Selection Statistics: Time Spent with Partner 180
Table 8.4 Ordinal Model with Logit Link: Spouse Time Sacrifices 181
Table 8.5 Model Selection Statistics: Interference from Spouse's Career 182
Table 8.6 Ordinal Model with Logit Link: Interference from Spouse's Career 182
Table 8.7 Model Selection Statistics: After School Activities versus Work 183

Table 8.8 Ordinal Model with Negative Log-log Link: After School Activities versus Work 183
Table 8.9 Model Selection Statistics: Interference from Childcare 184
Table 8.10 Ordinal Model with Logit Link: Interference from Childcare 184
Table 8.11 Model Selection Statistics: Interference from Housework 186
Table 8.12 Ordinal Model with Logit Link: Interference from Housework 186
Table 8.13 Model Selection Statistics: Income Level versus Personal/Family Life 187
Table 8.14 Ordinal Model with Logit Link: Income Level versus Personal/Family Life 188
Table 8.15 Model Selection Statistics: Business Expansion over Family/Personal Life 189
Table 8.16 Ordinal Model with Logit Link: Business Expansion over Family/Personal Life 189
Table 8.17 Model Selection Statistics: Importance of Work/Life Balance Practices for Employees 190
Table 8.18 Ordinal Model with Logit Link: Work/Life Balance Practices for Employees 191
Table 8.19 Model Selection Statistics Work/Life Balance Practices for Respondents 191
Table 8.20 Ordinal Model with Logit Link: Work/Life Balance Practices for Respondents 192
Table 9.1: Summary Profile of Interviewees (n=10) 200
Table 10.1 Typology of Women Entrepreneurs 246
Table 11.1 Research Questions 252

Chapter 1 Introduction

The origins of this thesis lie in my own experience as an entrepreneur. My personal reasons for wanting to become an entrepreneur were to shape my own work environment. I sought, through entrepreneurship, what was not available to me through participation in the labour force. I needed flexibility and I wanted to generate more income than would be available to me from employment in the labour market. I also sought to operate at a much more senior level that I would have been able to in any other form of employment. This experience led me to study female entrepreneurship and, through my readings, I started to question whether my own experience was unique, or the norm, among women entrepreneurs. With the possibility of returning to entrepreneurship in mind, I began to question the role entrepreneurship could play for other women in their personal/family life. The thesis examines these issues among women entrepreneurs based in Ireland.

Section 1.1 sets out the strands of previous research undertaken on women entrepreneurs, followed by a definition of entrepreneurship in Section 1.2. Section 1.3 presents the research questions, while Section 1.4 sets out the terms of reference underlying the research. The methodology adopted for this thesis is outlined in Section 1.5. Finally, an outline of chapters in presented in Section 1.6.

1.1 Background

Research into female entrepreneurship is a relatively new phenomenon. Internationally, gender as a factor in entrepreneurship was largely ignored. Until the 1970s, early studies provided a detailed profile of women entrepreneurs, based mainly in the US and the UK. These early works were followed by more in-depth and structured research. The 1980s saw a shift towards more large-scale surveys to establish the personal and business characteristics of women entrepreneurs. The focus of research shifted to the links between female entrepreneurship and more specialised areas such as management, networks or performance. This was in line with work previously undertaken on entrepreneurship in general. More recently, the field of research into entrepreneurship has sought to theorise female entrepreneurship, by adopting an analytical approach, compared with the more descriptive

approach used in earlier research. The descriptive emphasis of early studies depicted the areas where gender made a difference, while the analytical emphasis attempts to demonstrate how gender makes a difference, particularly through social constructs (Carter and Shaw, 2006).

The main findings of previous research are that men and women entrepreneurs do show different personal and behavioural traits from men. Women entrepreneurs seem to be more orientated towards holistic values than men; operate in different work environments; work in different sectors; have a high number of family members in business; and have different attitudes towards risk than men. Furthermore, while motivational factors are common to men and women in business, some are more specific to women. These include: dissatisfaction in the labour market (e.g. glass ceiling); the need for greater flexibility; difficulties associated with re/entering the labour market; or as a last resort due to personal circumstances. One key debate among existing researchers of female entrepreneurial motivations concerns whether or not there is a predominance of push factors (elements that force someone to enter entrepreneurship) among women entrepreneurs. Other research sought to investigate performance and management structures in women-owned businesses and whether these were similar to those of men. It was found that women's businesses usually traded on a smaller scale and that women used different management styles than men, focusing on the needs of individuals, be they clients or employees. The obstacles facing women entrepreneurs consisted of a lack of: access to capital and funding; experience and training; credibility; access to networking opportunities; and confidence. Women entrepreneurs were also affected by their disproportionate family responsibilities and breaking into a male business world.

More recent research into gender differences in entrepreneurship provides a critique of the prevailing views of women entrepreneurs as the 'other', hence comparing them with the 'successful male white middle-class' entrepreneur. Through stereotyping, women entrepreneurs and men entrepreneurs have been attributed with holding particular traits and characteristics, thus recreating an androcentric view of entrepreneurship. This view of entrepreneurship usually poses challenges to women entrepreneurs, as the view of a successful male entrepreneur is incompatible with childcare and household responsibilities. Because women remain the predominant carer, their role in the private is in direct conflict with that of an entrepreneur. Few studies have been conducted in Ireland on female entrepreneurship. Moreover, research undertaken in Ireland on women entrepreneurs has relied on small samples. The findings of previous research show similarities between the Irish

and the international literature. The motivational factors affecting women are similar, however, it has been claimed that Irish women choose to manage their businesses in different ways from those described in the international literature, attaching more importance to holistic values, as opposed to primarily material ones. Finally, if the obstacles facing Irish women entrepreneurs were similar to those facing women in business internationally, there was some evidence that barriers linked to women's predominant responsibility for domestic life prevailed in Ireland. The field of research into female entrepreneurship in Ireland is greatly under-researched. Apart from a few exploratory studies with small samples, the field has failed to develop more robust studies, using larger samples and more sophisticated methodologies.

1.2 Defining Entrepreneurship

There is no consensus among researchers as to the precise definition of an entrepreneur. The word 'entrepreneur' can be used both to refer to the person that creates a new business venture and to the person that runs a business venture. But the word 'entrepreneur' can also be closely linked to concepts of wealth, growth, technology and/or innovation, or may take none of these into consideration. This section provides a brief overview of how the concept of an entrepreneur evolved, followed by examples of some famous men and women entrepreneurs. It concludes with a range of definitions and the rationale for the one chosen for use in this thesis.

Historically, the term 'entrepreneur' originated in France towards the end of the 16th century, used in the context of those who built roads, bridges or fortifications for the King's administration. By the 18th century, the term referred to a subsection of the population, divided into three categories: land owners, farmers and entrepreneurs. The term 'entrepreneur' then regrouped numerous occupations including lawyers, retailers, and beggars. Only later would the term apply primarily to those engaged in commercial activities. The main purpose of the entrepreneur was to generate income, and an entrepreneur was often associated with a risk-taking philosophy. By the 19th century, with the advent of the industrial revolution, the entrepreneur became the person who invented and/or developed new technologies and set-up factories (e.g. in textiles, metallurgy). The major contribution of the industrial revolution to the concept of entrepreneur was that it permitted the emergence of large-scale business ventures, as opposed to small-scale businesses centred around the

entrepreneur him/herself. The focus of entrepreneurship therefore shifted from small-scale businesses to large-scale ventures and therefore changed the concept of an entrepreneur altogether (Tournès, 2003).

Today, the popular definition of the entrepreneur is similar. An entrepreneur is seen as a person who has taken great personal and financial risks, created a business, and has usually shown some innovation in their way of doing so. Examples of such entrepreneurs include personalities such as Anita Roddick (The Body Shop), Bill Gates (Microsoft Corporation), Richard Branson (Virgin), or Oprah Winfrey (Harpo Studios). All four have created business empires worth millions, if not billions of dollars/pounds. They have all achieved this by taking personal and financial risks. Anita Roddick started her beauty shop using her personal assets as collateral, with a selection of only 15 products manufactured from stock in her garage. Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft, famously reported *"big wins require big risks"* (Gates, 2000).

However, an entrepreneur can also be viewed as a person who runs a business venture. There are many such persons, particularly in Irish society. They include local shop-owners, hairdressers, mechanics, financial consultants, and Bed & Breakfast owners among many others. These entrepreneurs, despite being less high profile, form the mass of entrepreneurship in any country, and therefore should not be excluded. Hence, historically and currently, the concept of an entrepreneur is not immutable and given the general lack of consensus it should be defined with care.

Moore and Buttner (1997) define an entrepreneur as being a person who *"has initiated a business, is actively involved in managing it, owns at least 50 per cent of the firm, and has been in operation one year or longer"* (1997:13). Carton et al. (1998) argue that *"the entrepreneur is the individual (or team) that identifies the opportunity, gathers the necessary resources, creates and is ultimately responsible for the performance of the organization. Therefore entrepreneurship is the means by which new organizations are formed with their resultant job and wealth creation"* (1998:8).

A narrower and more traditional definition is that of Carland et al. (1984) which differentiates between an entrepreneur and a small business owner, arguing that an entrepreneur *"is an individual who establishes and manages a business for the principal purpose of profit and*

growth (and) is characterized principally by innovative behaviour and employs strategic management practices" (1984:358). However, a small business owner is defined as *"an individual who establishes and manages a business for the principal purpose of furthering personal goals"* (Carland et al. 1984:358). The five basic differences between the two definitions, Johnson et al. (2003) argue, are based on:

- establishment status (founder or non-founder);
- profit importance;
- growth orientation;
- innovative behaviour;
- strategic management practices.

However, Johnson et al. (2003) argue that being a founder or non-founder provides a poor explanation for differences between the two categories.

The three definitions presented above show that there is no consistency in what defines entrepreneurship. Some definitions emphasize the importance of factors such as growth and innovation, while others argue *"that the term 'entrepreneur' is also used as a kind of generic shorthand for any individual who starts up, runs (and possibly, but not inevitably, grows) a new business venture"* (Taylor and Walley, 2004:60). This definition can be extended in the light of conclusions drawn by Johnson et al. (2003:6), who argue that *"the founder/non-founder dichotomy may not be the most appropriate single dimension to use as a means of distinguishing entrepreneurs from non-entrepreneurs"*. The definition used throughout this thesis therefore uses Taylor and Walley's (2004) definition, but expand it to include respondents who had not created their business from scratch, but might have bought or inherited it.

1.3 Research Questions

International literature and official statistical sources demonstrate that the number of women entrepreneurs internationally, and in Ireland, has increased dramatically over the past three decades and is set to increase in the future (Chapter 2). This trend suggests that the balance of power within entrepreneurship itself is being reshuffled as the proportion of men and women within entrepreneurship is changing.

The literature review (Chapter 3) demonstrates the lack of research publications on entrepreneurs in Ireland, with even fewer focusing on gender or gender differences. Most of these studies rely on small samples of entrepreneurs. In summary, while there is a reasonable understanding of the issues behind female entrepreneurship internationally, there is a major knowledge gap on the topic in Ireland. More critically, there has been little effort internationally to examine the relationships between women entrepreneurs and the private sphere. This study addresses this deficit by first, positioning women entrepreneurs in Ireland into the international entrepreneurial context, and second, by investigating the experiences of male and female entrepreneurs in terms of their business and caring/domestic responsibilities. The research questions examined by this research are presented in Table 1.1 below:

Table 1.1 Research Questions

	Research Questions
1	Do men take more financial and/or personal risks than women?
2	Do men and women have different motivational factors for entering entrepreneurship?
3	Do push factors predominate among women entrepreneurs?
4	Do men and women face different obstacles in entrepreneurship?
5	Do women and men adopt different management styles?
6	Do men prioritise the growth of their business over their family/personal life?
7	Do men prioritise income levels over their family/personal life?
8	Do women use entrepreneurship to change their work environment?
9	Do women use entrepreneurship to change their family environment?

1.4 Terms of Reference

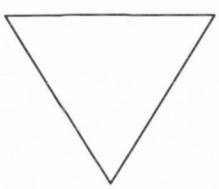
The terms of reference used in this thesis are to:

- Undertake a literature review of entrepreneurship with specific reference to female entrepreneurship;
- Examine comparative statistics on demographic characteristics and the labour market for Ireland and the EU;
- Conduct a survey of Irish entrepreneurs (men and women);
- Undertake a series of interviews with women entrepreneurs;
- Analyse the quantitative and qualitative data collected;
- Produce a thesis based on the research findings.

1.5 Research Methodology

In order to address the research objectives, it was clear that the study needed to use a national overview of Irish entrepreneurs. No previous studies have examined the links between male and female entrepreneurs and their domestic life. This study seeks to fill that gap. The thesis adopts a similar approach to that of Küskü et al. (2007) in that it adopts a three-layer structure. The first layer consists of exploring the 'macro-social and structural' elements through the analysis of official statistics on Ireland and Europe. The second layer consists of examining the 'meso-institutional' elements through the use of a postal questionnaire. The third and final layer consists of examining the 'micro-individual' influences through the use of in-depth interviews. The model presented below (Table 1.2), devised for this thesis summarises the approach adopted.

Table 1.2 Summary Model of a Three-Layer Approach

Layer	Context		Methods
1	Macro-social and cultural		Analysis of Official Statistics
2	Meso-institutional		Postal Questionnaire
3	Micro-individual		Interviews

The methodology is composed of two elements. First, the postal questionnaire survey provided a comparative perspective between men and women entrepreneurs. This was followed by in-depth interviews with women entrepreneurs only. This combined the benefits of a rigorous study in the shape of a national survey, and a less structured but richer data from face-to-face in-depth interviews. More information on methodological issues is found in Chapter 4.

1.6 Outline of Chapters

Chapter 2 examines secondary statistical data sources to provide the background context for this research. Chapter 3 reviews the international and national literature on entrepreneurship and women entrepreneurs and assesses the current state of research. Chapter 4 outlines the methodology used to collect the data on entrepreneurs.

Chapters 5 to 8 present the results of the quantitative postal questionnaire. In Chapter 5, the personal profiles and business characteristics of respondents are presented. Chapter 6 examines the quantitative and qualitative data on entrepreneurial motivations, and analyses the findings in terms of gender. Chapter 7 examines the specific obstacles faced by men and women entrepreneurs while in Chapter 8 the respondents' domestic life is examined alongside their attitudes towards work/life balance practices.

Chapters 9 and 10 set out the qualitative results of interviews with women entrepreneurs. Chapter 9 examines the interview data on women entrepreneurs' motivations, obstacles and management styles. In Chapter 10, the choices made by women entrepreneurs in the organisation of their work and home life are analysed. Chapter 11 integrates the overall findings of the research and outlines the implications on the study.

Chapter 2 Statistical Review

This chapter provides an analysis of existing information on men and women entrepreneurs, drawing upon official sources and research. To set the scene, national statistics on gender, employment and the family are examined, followed by statistical data on male and female entrepreneurs in Ireland.

Section 2.1 examines the work patterns of men and women in Ireland. Section 2.2 presents the demographic changes that have happened in Ireland over the past three decades, while Section 2.3 provides a detailed picture of entrepreneurs in Ireland. Finally, Section 2.4 sets out the key findings from official statistical data.

2.1 Employment in Ireland

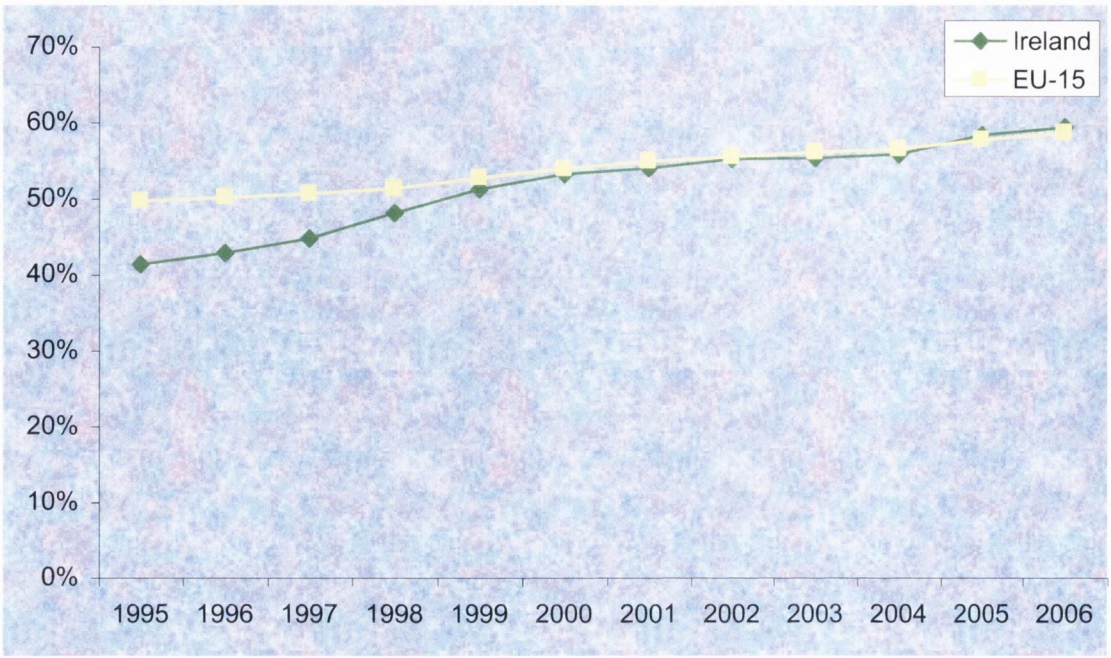
This section examines statistics on male and female labour force participation, the profile of men and women workers and their respective employment patterns.

2.1.1 Participation Rates of Men and Women

In the past three decades, there has been a feminisation of the labour force in Ireland. In 2006, women represented 42 per cent of the Irish labour force, compared with 26 per cent in 1971. Women's participation in the labour force is similar in the EU-15 where women represent 44 percent of the labour force (Eurostat, 2007).

In 2006, 59 per cent of all women aged between 15 and 64 were labour force participants, compared to 33 per cent of all women in 1983. Corresponding figures for men show that in 2006, a total of 78 per cent of men between 15 and 64 were involved in the labour force, compared to 72 per cent in 1983. The rates for men and women in Ireland are slightly higher than those in the EU-15 (Figure 2.1): fifty-eight per cent of women aged between 15 and 64 in the EU-15 are labour force participants (59% in Ireland) as are 74 per cent of men (78% in Ireland) (Eurostat, 2007).

Figure 2.1 Percentage of Women aged 15-64 Years in the Labour Force (1995-2006)



Source: Eurostat (2007)

Over the past three decades, Irish women have shown a growing attachment to the labour market. There are many reasons behind this trend. First, in 1971 women were still affected by the marriage bar that forced them to leave the labour force upon marriage (Henry and Kennedy, 2003). The marriage bar was not removed until 1973, marking the entry of Ireland to the (then) European Community. Second, because it is women who are primarily responsible for the household and caring for the children (Coveney et al., 1998), it is women, rather than men, who have to tailor their labour market behaviour to family/household demands. While diminishing, this pattern can be observed throughout the EU.

2.1.2 Determinants of Labour Force Participation

Employment levels vary according to age, marital status and education. This section examines the relationship between these factors and gender.

Age

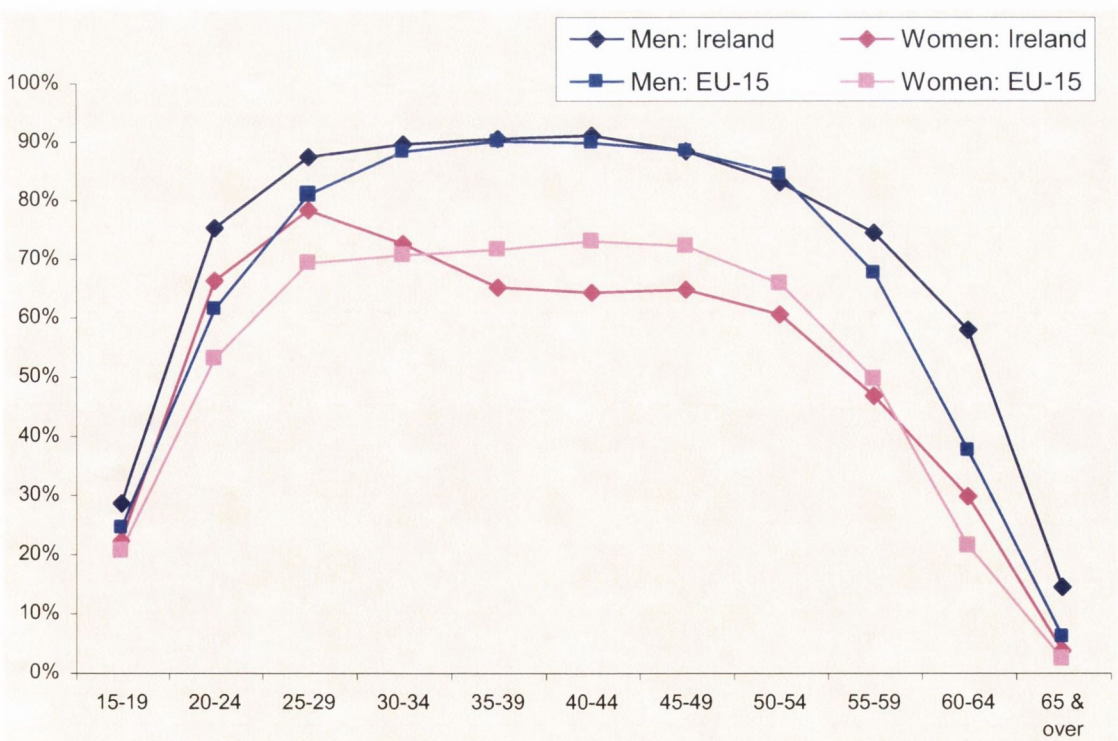
Men are more likely than women to be active in the labour force and participation varies according to age (Figure 2.2). Nearly nine out of ten (89%) men aged 25 to 49 are in the Irish labour force compared with nearly seven out of ten (69%) women. Men's participation in the

labour force remains consistently high throughout their working lives. Seventy-three per cent of men aged 50 to 64 are still in the labour force compared to 47 per cent of women the same age (Eurostat, 2007).

In the EU-15, the participation rate for men and women aged 25 to 49 is very similar (88% and 71% respectively). However, the EU-15 average for men aged 50 to 64 years in the labour force (65%) is lower than in Ireland while women's participation rate (47%) is slightly higher than in Ireland (Eurostat, 2007).

In Ireland, women's labour force participation rate (78%) is highest for those aged 25 to 29 years which coincides with women entering child-bearing age. In other words, up to the age of 30 years, women's participation in the Irish labour market is close to that of men (87%) and higher than women's participation in the EU-15 labour market (69%). Women's participation in the Irish labour force falls in the child-bearing age group and diminishes as they come closer to retirement. This tendency is also present in the EU-15 but is less acute (Eurostat, 2007).

Figure 2.2 Percentage involved in the Labour Force by Age and Gender (2006)



Source: Eurostat (2007)

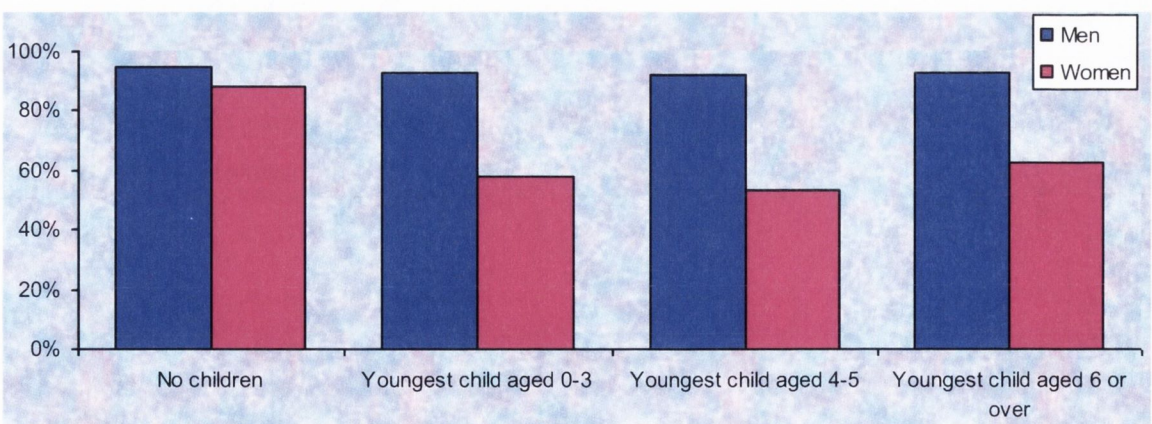
Marital Status

The combined impact of gender and marital status is important. Historically and globally, married women were less likely than any other group to be involved in the labour force. The labour force participation rates of married and single women are lower than for married and single men. Labour force participation of men is higher for married men, while for women the opposite is true (Gender Equality Unit, 2004). In 1983, 20 per cent of married women in Ireland were in the labour force compared with 50 per cent in 2005. This proportion of married women involved in the labour force in slightly higher than in the EU-15 where 48 per cent of married women are involved in the labour force (Eurostat, 2007). These figures show that marital status is becoming a weaker predictor of women's participation in Ireland and the EU-15.

Family Status

Participation in the labour market appears to be linked to the presence and ages of dependent children for women, while men appear to be largely unaffected by family status. The participation rate of men and women aged 20 to 44 in the labour force is high when they do not have dependent children (95% for men and 88% for women). However, the participation rate of women aged 20 to 44 years drops, particularly when they have under school age children: labour force participation drops to 58 per cent for women with their youngest child aged below three, 54 per cent for women with their youngest child aged 4 and 5 and 63 per cent for women with their youngest child aged 6 or over.

Figure 2.3 Employment rates of persons aged 20-44 by family status (2006)

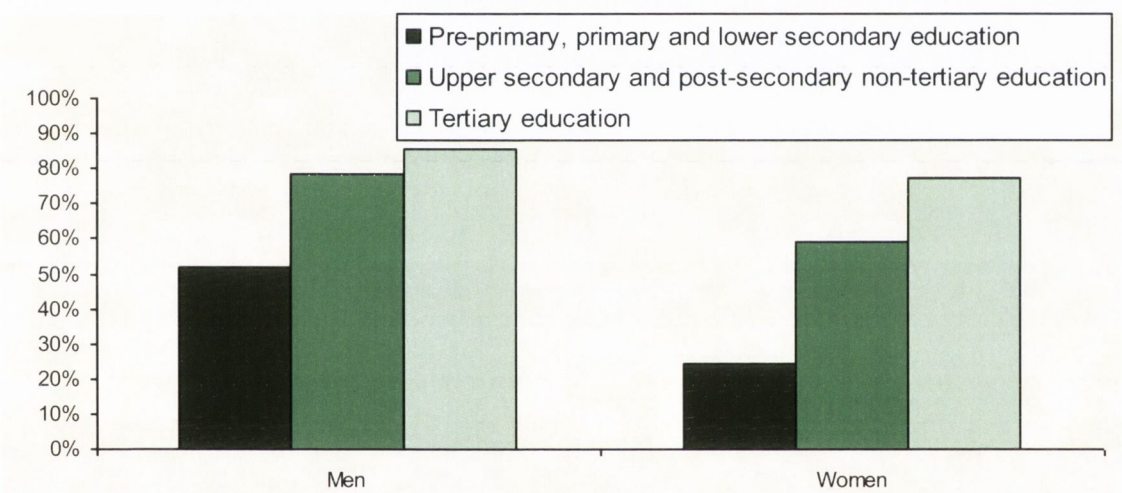


Source: Central Statistics Office (2007)

Education

The level of labour force participation is directly proportional to educational attainment for both men and women (Figure 2.4). In Ireland, only 24 per cent of women who completed their education at primary level are employed compared with 77 per cent of those with a tertiary education level (Eurostat, 2006). Irish men's participation rate is much higher than women's for those who completed their education at primary level (52% for men compared with 24% for women). However, the difference in participation rates for those with a tertiary education level is smaller (86% for men compared with 77% for women) (Eurostat, 2006). These figures show that educational level has a positive effect on women's participation in the labour force and that women's educational level has more of an influence on their participation rates than men's.

Figure 2.4 Labour Force Participation According to Education in Ireland (2005)



Source: Eurostat (2006)

The Irish situation is slightly different to the EU-15. In the EU-15, men at the primary level in the labour force are slightly less likely to be involved in the labour force (47% in the EU-15 compared with 52% in Ireland) as are men with a tertiary education level (78% compared with 86%). Women in the EU-15 are slightly more likely to participate in the labour force at primary level (26% compared with 24%) but slightly less likely to participate at third-level education level (74% compared with 77%) (Eurostat, 2006).

2.1.3 Gender and Employment

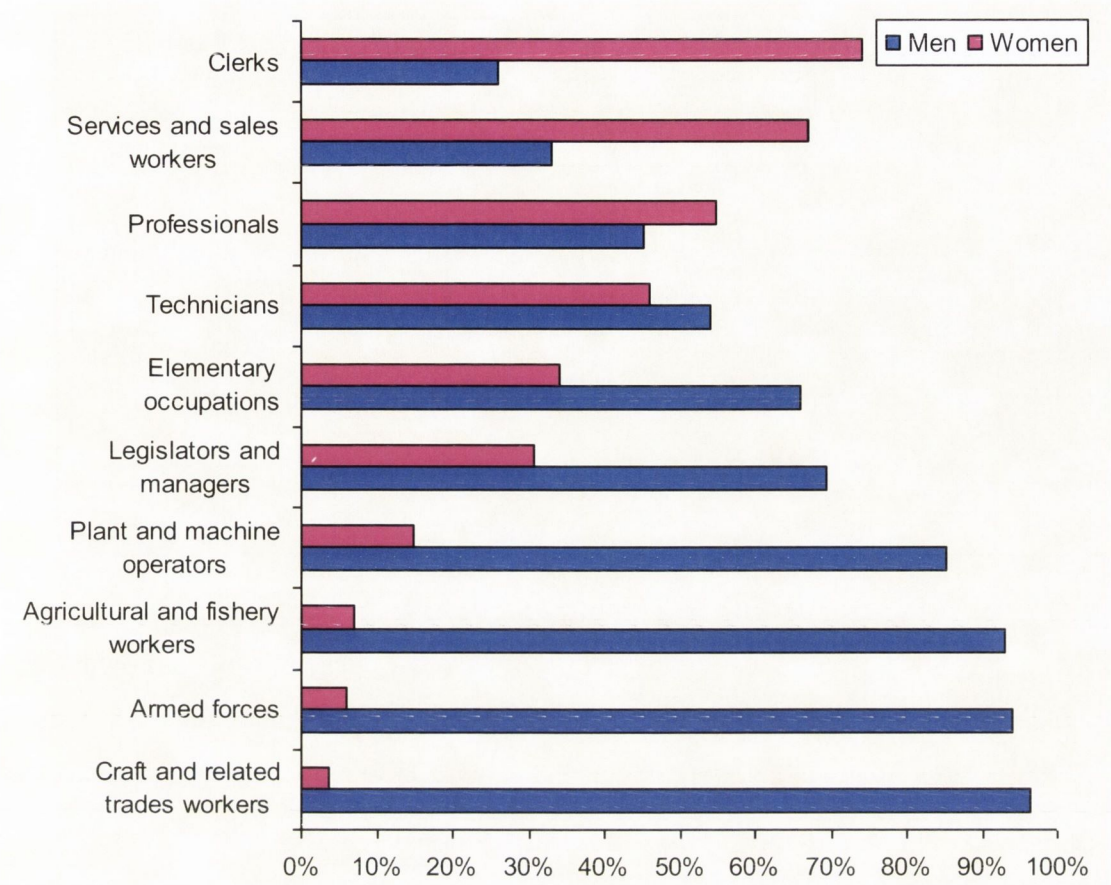
In addition to demographic factors that differentiate between male and female labour force participation, there are other factors that distinguish men and women's employment: horizontal and vertical segregation within the labour market; the gender pay gap; and the hours worked by men and women.

Segregation

There is some evidence from the Irish Central Statistics Office and Eurostat sources that horizontal segregation is prevalent in Ireland (Central Statistics Office, 2003c; Eurostat, 2007). Horizontal segregation implies that men and women are clustered into different sectors or profession. Horizontal segregation is defined as a situation where *"men and women are most commonly working in different types of occupation – for example women are dressmakers and men are tailors, women are cooks and men are carpenters"* (Hakim, 1996:149).

The percentage of employed men and women in different occupations varies widely both in Ireland and in the EU-15 (Figure 2.5). In Ireland, women predominate as clerks (74% of whom are women) and services and sales workers (67% of whom are women). However, women are under-represented as craft/related trades workers (4%), plant and machine operators (15%), legislators and managers (31%) and elementary operators (34%). These are areas where men predominate (Eurostat, 2007). In the EU-15, women also represent the majority of clerks (69%) and services and sales workers (69%). Similarly, areas where they are in a minority are very similar to the pattern in Ireland. A minority of women in the EU-15 are craft/related workers (9%), plant and machines operators (16%), or legislators and managers (32%).

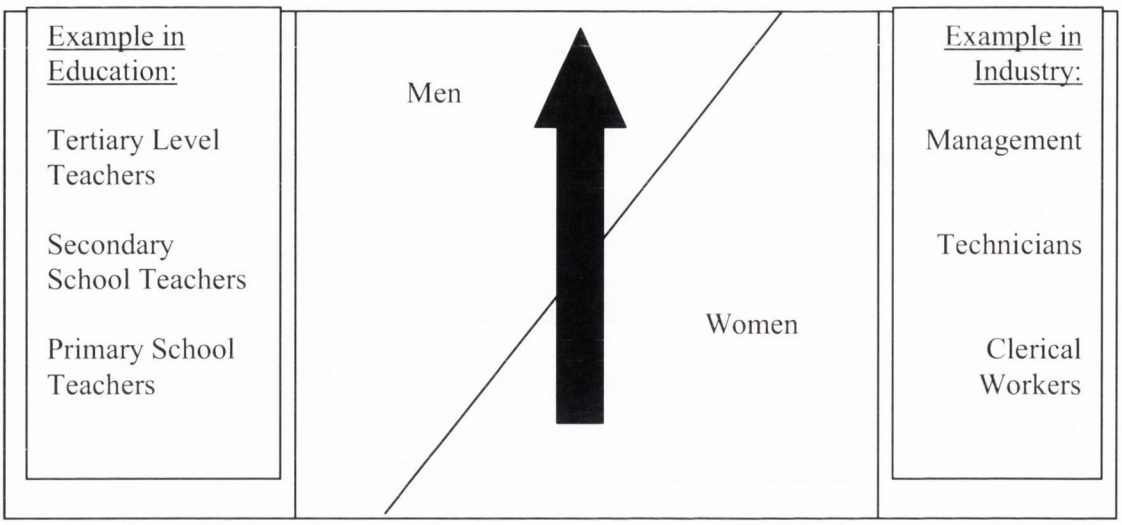
Figure 2.5 Employment by Gender and Occupation (2006)



Source: Eurostat (2007)

There is also some evidence that vertical segregation prevails. Vertical segregation exists where a high number of women are concentrated in lower professions, coupled with a small number of women at management level. It is defined as a situation where *"men dominate the higher grade and higher paid occupations and jobs, or when men are promoted further up career ladders within occupations – for example men are heads of schools while women are teachers"* (Hakim, 1996:149). Vertical segregation is typically labelled as the 'glass ceiling'. In Ireland, men predominate in management and administration, while women predominate in clerical and secretarial work, personal and protective services and sales (Gender Equality Unit, 2004). The case of Ireland is not unique, and vertical segregation is prevalent across Europe (Hakim, 1996). This pattern can be better understood by examining the model, devised for this thesis, in Figure 2.6.

Figure 2.6 Examples of Vertical Segregation



Gender Pay Gap

In parallel with vertical and horizontal segregation, the gender pay gap, while narrowing since 1985, is still prevalent. Gross weekly earnings (Table 2.1) of male/female industrial workers show a wider gap compared with hourly earnings (Table 2.2). Women's hourly earnings were 76 per cent of men's in 2005 while their weekly earnings were 67 per cent of men's in 2005 (Central Statistics Office, 2006).

Table 2.1 Weekly Earnings (1985-2006)

	Female (€)	*Male (€)*	*Percentage of Men's Earnings*
1985	145.49	249.90	58%
1990	194.70	324.08	60%
1995	247.27	389.05	64%
1996	261.79	413.20	63%
1997	273.56	425.83	64%
1998	285.32	443.38	64%
1999	298.17	467.29	64%
2000	324.86	492.48	66%
2001	347.39	529.03	66%
2002	365.24	561.06	65%
2003	393.87	593.81	66%
2004	407.16	620.48	66%
2005	430.75	637.59	68%
2006	451.79	655.68	69%

Source: Central Statistics Office (2007)

Table 2.2 Hourly Earnings (1985-2006)

	Female (€)	*Male (€)*	*Percentage of Men's Earnings*
1985	3.91	5.90	66%
1990	5.18	7.55	69%
1995	6.55	9.23	71%
1996	6.98	9.73	72%
1997	7.22	10.01	72%
1998	7.60	10.51	72%
1999	8.00	11.02	73%
2000	8.55	11.64	73%
2001	9.44	12.76	74%
2002	10.07	13.74	73%
2003	10.75	14.36	75%
2004	11.14	15.03	74%
2005	11.64	15.38	76%
2006	12.30	15.90	77%

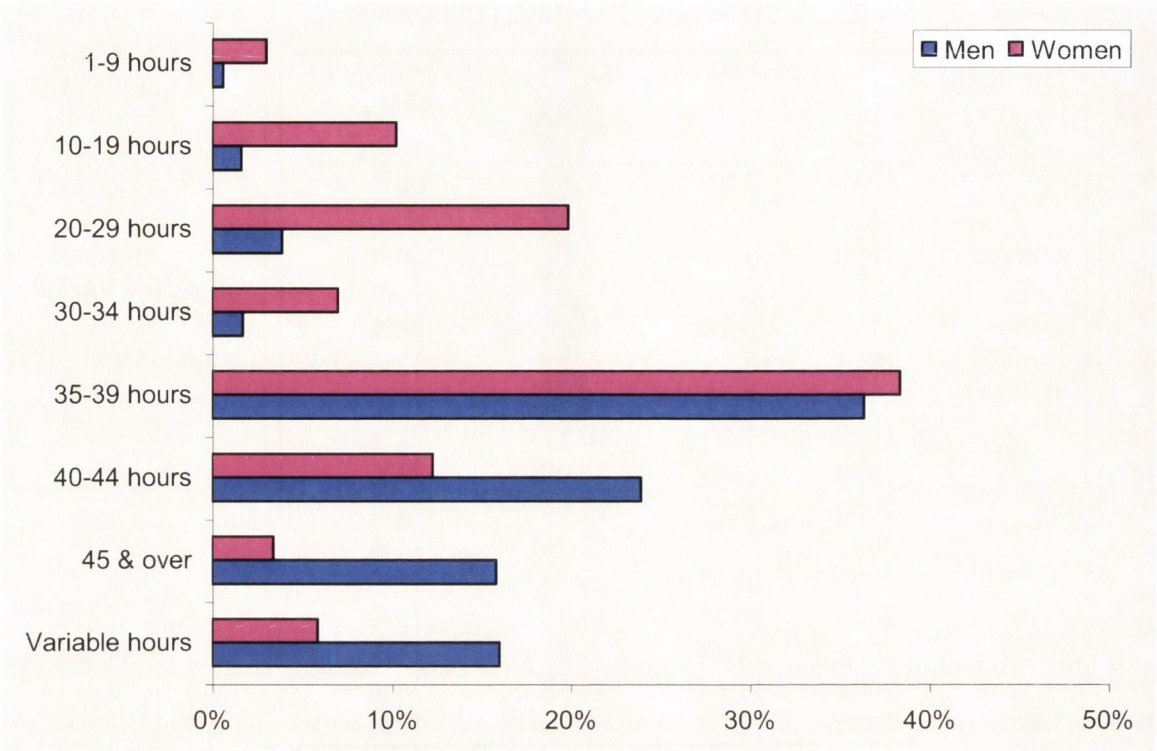
Source: Central Statistics Office (2007)

According to the structure of earnings survey (Eurostat, 2003), in 2002, the mean monthly earnings of women in Ireland were €2299, compared with €3027 for men, or 76 per cent of men's earnings. In the EU-15, women earned on average €2090 monthly, compared with €2695 for men or 78 per cent of men's earnings. Therefore the gender pay gap in Ireland is slightly higher in amplitude to that observed throughout the EU-15 (Eurostat, 2003).

Gendered Working Time

Men and women exhibit different employment patterns in relation to working time, as seen in Figure 2.7. Ninety-four per cent of men work full-time compared to 68 per cent of women, in 2005. This means that just over one in twenty men (6%) work on a part-time basis (defined as less than 35 hours weekly), compared with just over one in five women (22%). EU-15 figures show a similar pattern, as 92 per cent of men and 63 per cent of women work full-time (Eurostat, 2007). In 2005, 13 per cent of Irish women worked less than 20 hours weekly compared to two per cent of Irish men (Central Statistics Office, 2007).

Figure 2.7 Usual Hours of Work of Men and Women (2007)

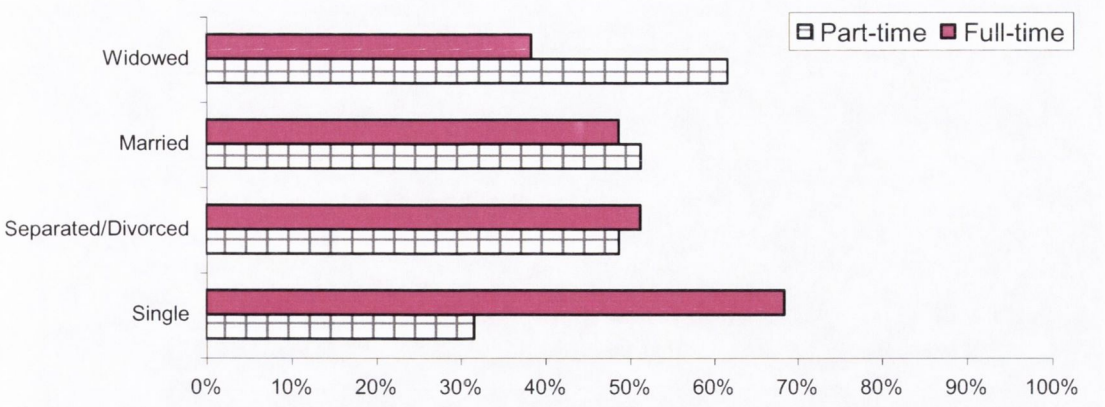


Source: Central Statistics Office (2007)

In 2006, Irish men worked an average of 40.5 hours weekly, compared to 31.7 hours for women (Eurostat, 2007). This compares with 40.9 hours for men in the EU-15 and 32.6 hours for women in 2006 (Eurostat, 2007). This shows that Ireland is not unique in terms of the number of hours worked by men and women. Men in full-time employment worked an average of 42.4 hours weekly (compared with 42.9 hours in the EU-15) while women in full-time employment worked fewer hours at 37.7 hours weekly compared with 39.8 hours in the EU-15 in 2005. However, Irish men and women in part-time employment worked a similar number of hours weekly. Men in part-time employment in 2005 worked an average of 18.6 hours every week compared with 18.7 hours in the EU-15, and women an average of 18.6 hours compared with 19.9 hours in the EU-15 (Eurostat, 2007).

The working time patterns of Irish women are highly dependent on marital status (Figure 2.8). Married women are more likely to work on a part-time basis (51%), i.e. less than 35 hours per week, than single women in the labour force (32%) (Central Statistics Office, 2003b).

Figure 2.8 Employment Status of Women by Marital Status (2002)



Source: Central Statistics Office (2003b)

2.2 Demographic Change in Ireland

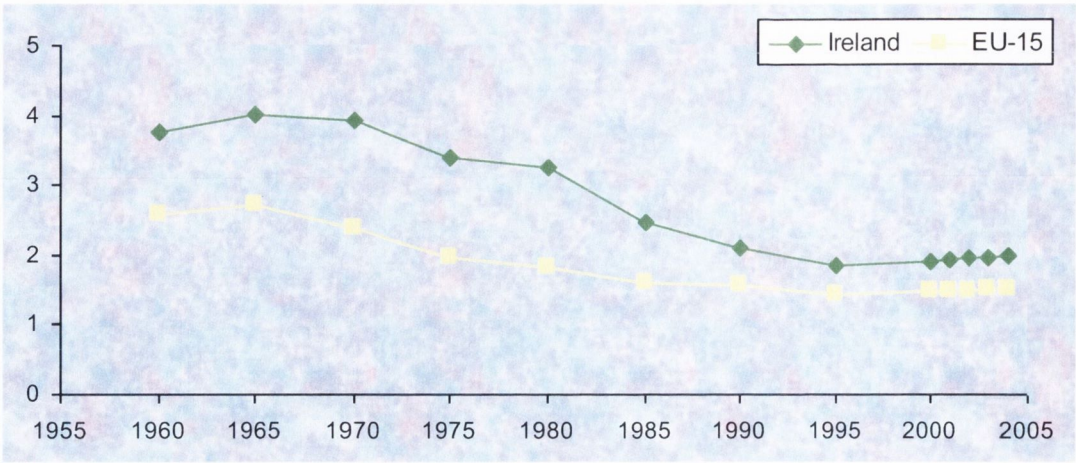
Irish society has undergone a major social transformation over the last two decades. The dynamics behind these important changes, particularly in the form of marriage and maternity trends, are essential elements in understanding the processes whereby men and women become entrepreneurs. This section first examines issues related to marriage, maternity, family composition and finally changes in family forms in Ireland.

2.2.1 Marriage and Maternity

The total fertility rate in Ireland has been steadily decreasing from 3.76 children per woman in 1960 to 1.99 in 2004 (Eurostat, 2007). However, Ireland's birth rate has displayed a slight increase since 1995 (Figure 2.9). This may be due to high levels of immigration of people in 20-40 year age range (Employment Equality Agency, 1999). The EU-15's total fertility rate decreased from 2.59 in 1960 to 1.52 in 2004, and has been consistently lower than in Ireland despite the gap narrowing between 1960 and 1990 (Eurostat, 2007).

In 1975, the mean age of mothers at first birth in Ireland was 25.5 years. This rose steadily to 28.0 years in 2001. In the EU-15, the age of mothers at first birth is also on the increase from 24.6 years in 1975 to 28.5 years in 2001 (Eurostat, 2004a).

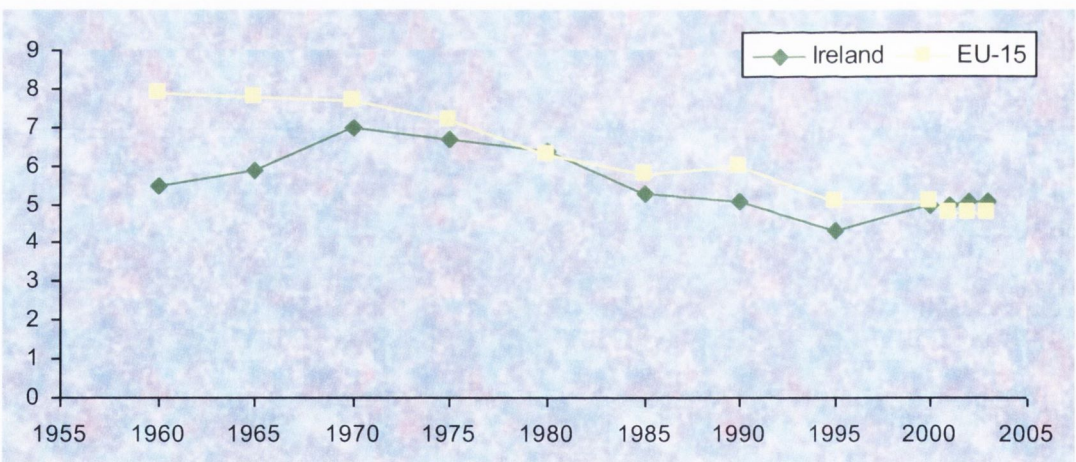
Figure 2.9 Total Fertility Rate (1960-2004)



Source: Eurostat (2007)

The marriage rate in Ireland dropped from 7.0 per 1000 in 1970 to 4.3 in 1995 and rose again to 5.1 in 2003 (Figure 2.10). In the EU-15, the marriage rate was much higher than in Ireland until 1980: 7.9 in the EU-15 compared with 5.5 in Ireland in 1960. After a period of decrease in both trends, the Irish and the EU-15's marriage rates converged to reach 4.8 in the EU-15 in 2003 and 5.1 in Ireland (Eurostat, 2006).

Figure 2.10 Marriage Rates (1960-2003)



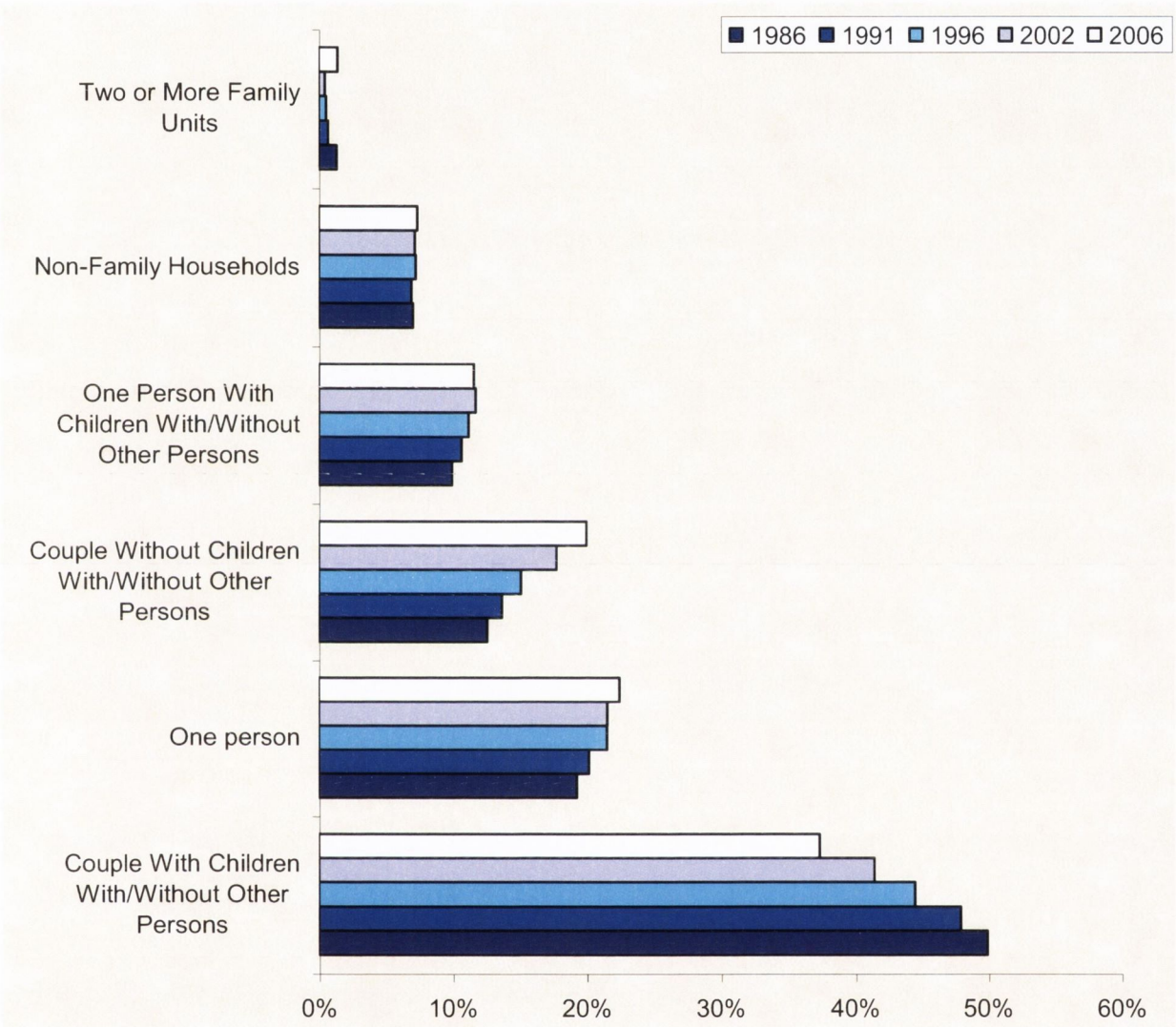
Source: Eurostat (2007)

2.2.2 Changes in Family Forms

The composition of Irish households has changed over the last two decades as can be seen in Figure 2.11. There has been a steady decline in the average number of persons per household from 3.6 in 1986 to 2.81 in 2006. Moreover, there has also been an increase in the number of single parent households and non-family households (a non-family household is a household

where two or more unrelated persons live). There has been a decline in the proportion of households consisting of a couple with children, as increasingly women and some men face sole parenting (Central Statistics Office, 2007).

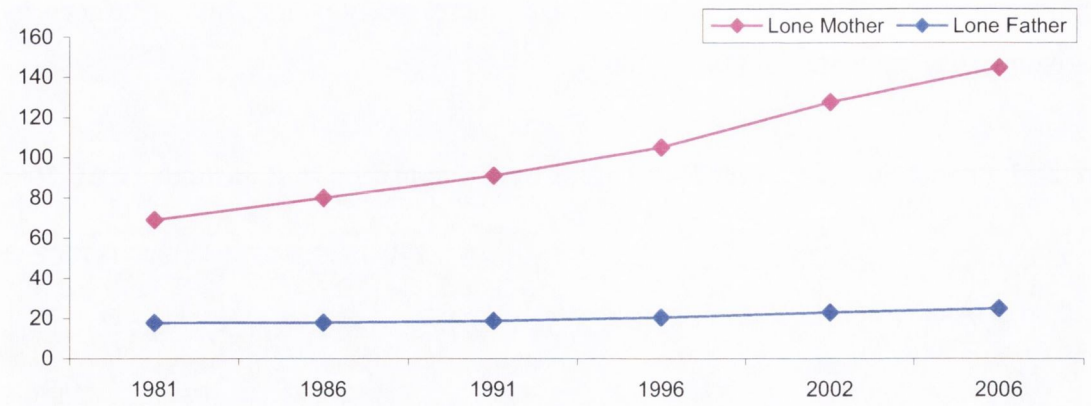
Figure 2.11 Proportion of Private Households by Composition in thousands (1986-2006)



Source: Central Statistics Office (2007)

The number of couples who have separated or divorced in Ireland has increased since 1986. However, the divorce rate in Ireland (0.7 per 1000) remains the lowest one in Europe at 2.1 per 1000 in the EU-15 (Eurostat, 2007). The percentage of households composed of lone fathers is 2 per cent, while households composed of lone mothers increased from 8 per cent in 1981 to 10 per cent of all household units in 2006 (Figure 2.12).

Figure 2.12 Lone Parent Households in thousands (1981-2006)



Source: Central Statistics Office (2007)

In Ireland, as well as in the EU-15, there has been an overall decline in marriage and maternity, coupled with an increase in the number of divorces/separations. The shift in family forms, from a dual breadwinner/carer model to a 'de-gendered' one-person model, has important implications for the choices men and women make in relation to employment.

2.3 Entrepreneurship in Ireland

This section examines the scale of entrepreneurship in Ireland, followed by an analysis of how Ireland fits into a European context. Finally, the characteristics of Irish entrepreneurs are presented.

2.3.1 Number of Irish Men and Women Entrepreneurs

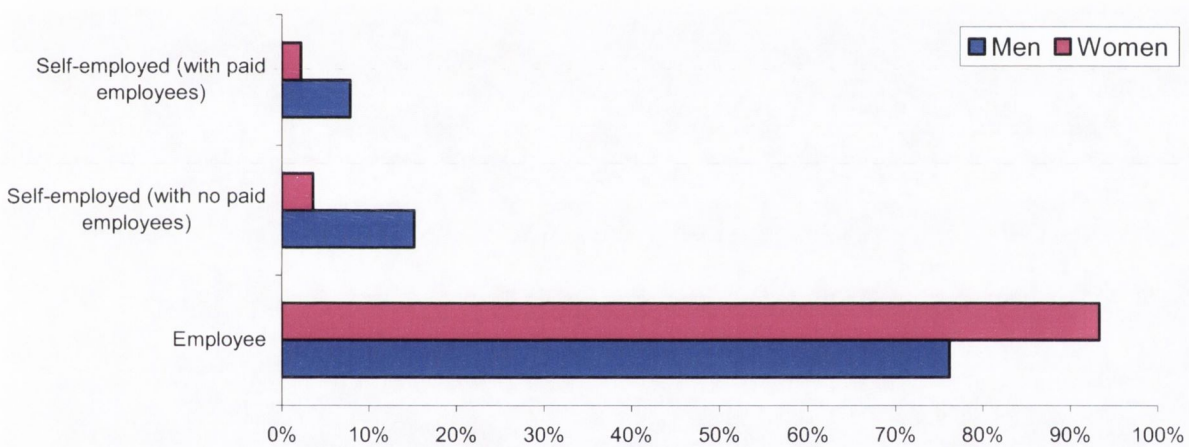
Most international data on entrepreneurs are not disaggregated by gender. In the case of Ireland, the actual number of entrepreneurs is subject to disagreement (Henry and Kennedy, 2003; Valiulis et al., 2004) depending on the data collection method and definitions used.

According to the Central Statistics Office (2007) and Eurostat (2007) there are approximately 320,000 entrepreneurs in Ireland. However, the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (Fitzsimons and O'Gorman, 2006) suggests a much lower level of entrepreneurship of approximately 250,000 'established' entrepreneurs (owners/managers of businesses in existence for more than 42 months. This figure does not include recently set-up businesses. Nineteen per cent of

all persons involved in the labour force are self-employed compared with 16 per cent in the EU-15 (Eurostat, 2007).

Women are less likely than men to be self-employed: seven per cent of all women involved in the labour force are self-employed, compared to 27 per cent of men (Figure 2.13). The corresponding figures for self-employment in the EU-15 show a lower proportion of men (21%) but a higher proportion of women (11%) than in Ireland (Eurostat, 2007). Women entrepreneurs in Ireland account for 16 per cent of the total number of entrepreneurs, while the corresponding figure for the EU-15 is much higher at 29 per cent (Eurostat, 2007). This indicates that Ireland has much lower levels of female entrepreneurship than the rest of Europe.

Figure 2.13 Persons Aged 15 and Over in Employment by Employment Status (2006)



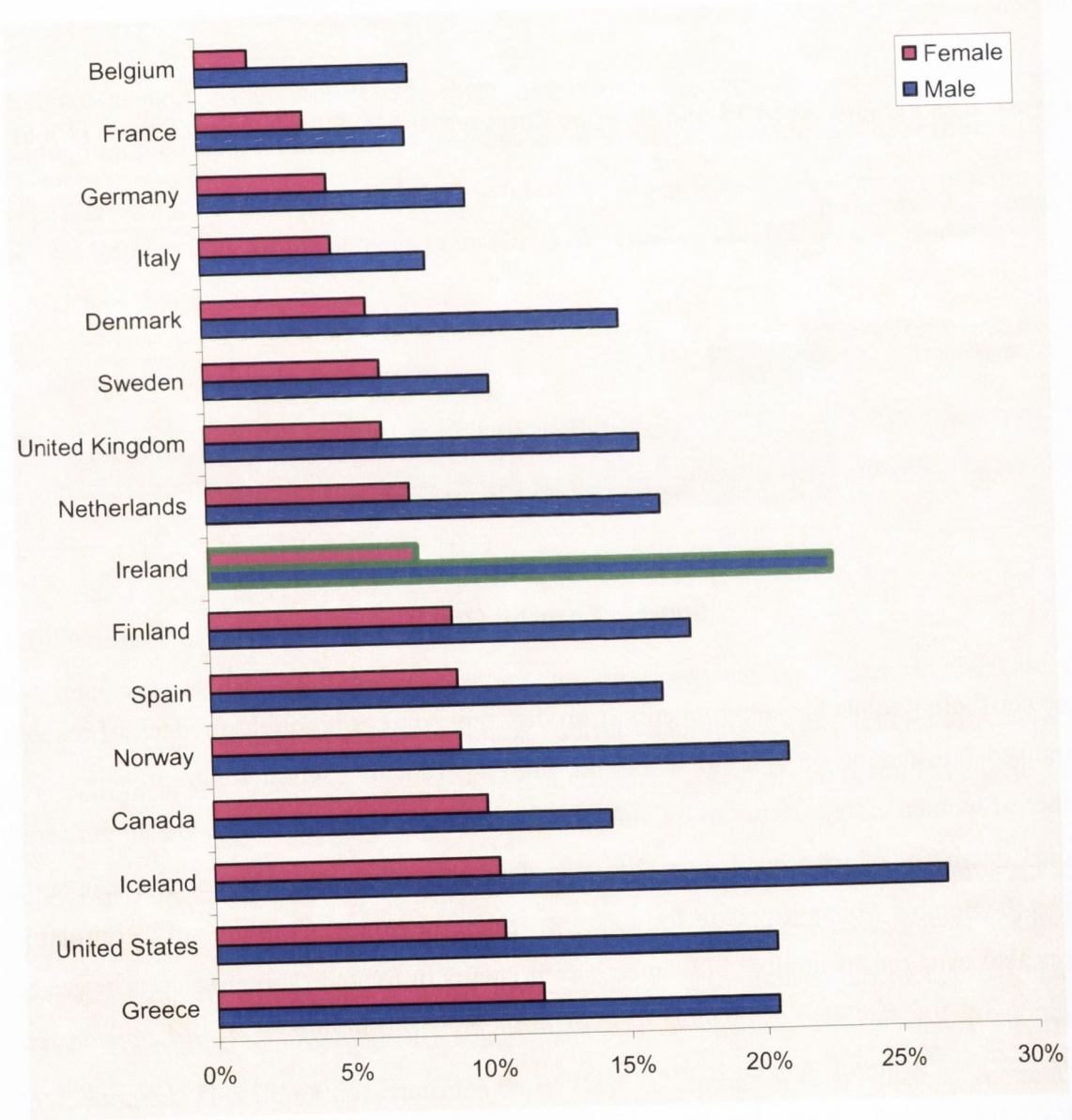
Source: Eurostat (2007)

These conflicting totals for entrepreneurs from different sources highlight the lack of reliable centralised information on entrepreneurs and, more specifically, women entrepreneurs. The number of women entrepreneurs in Ireland can only be estimated since there are no gendered national databases of Irish businesses. Existing data only takes into account characteristics such as the number of employees or the sector in which they trade. Consequently, conflicting figures also exist for the number of women entrepreneurs in Ireland. These differences can be explained by the fact that *"common lack of data notwithstanding, it would appear that differences in defining female entrepreneurs, as well as variations in the types of methodologies used, have led to such confusion over Ireland's stock of women entrepreneurs"* (Henry and Kennedy, 2003:208).

2.3.2 Levels of Entrepreneurship in Ireland

The main source of measuring entrepreneurial activities in a global context is the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor consortium. Acs et al. (2005) as part of the GEM consortium report that Ireland has higher levels of entrepreneurial activity than the rest of Europe: Ireland ranks third in terms of entrepreneurial activity, behind the Iceland (1st) and the US (2nd) (Acs et al., 2005). However, despite very high levels of male entrepreneurship, Ireland's level of female entrepreneurship is quite low as seen in Figure 2.14 (Allen et al., 2007).

Figure 2.14 Entrepreneurial Activity in Selected Countries by Gender (2006)



Source: Allen et al. (2007)

2.3.3 Profile of Irish Entrepreneurs

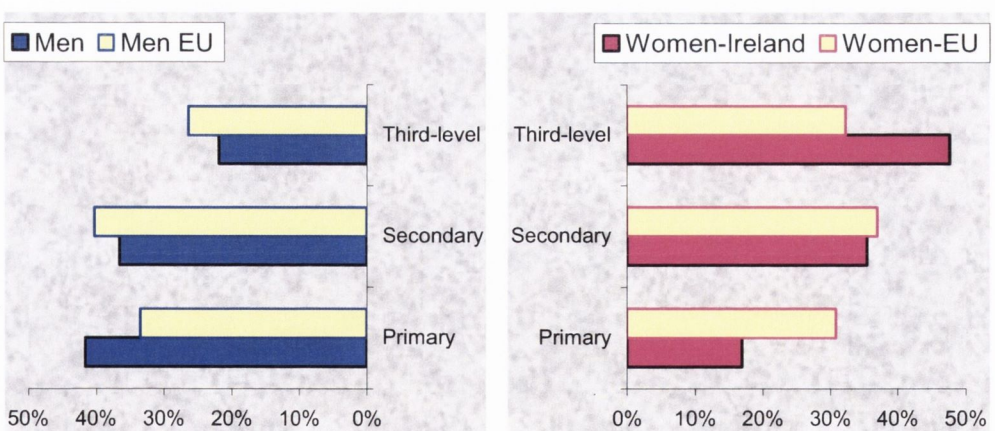
Age

Irish women entrepreneurs, like their EU-15 counterparts, tend to be younger than men entrepreneurs: one-third (34%) were aged 25 to 39, compared with just over one out of three (31%) of men. In the EU-15, 31 per cent of men entrepreneurs and 33 per cent of women entrepreneurs were aged 25 to 39 (Eurostat, 2007).

Educational Level

There are major differences between the educational level of men and women entrepreneurs in Ireland (Figure 2.15). Nearly three out of five (59%) male entrepreneurs have an upper secondary level or third level education compared with more than four out of five women entrepreneurs (83%). In an EU-15 context, there is a slight difference between men and women entrepreneurs in that 32 per cent of women had a third level education compared to 26 per cent of men entrepreneurs. While men entrepreneurs have lower levels of educational attainment than their counterparts in the EU-15, the converse is true of Irish women entrepreneurs: Irish women entrepreneurs have a much higher educational level than women entrepreneurs in the EU-15 (Eurostat, 2007).

Figure 2.15 Educational Level of Entrepreneurs by Gender (2006)



Source: Eurostat (2007)

Activity Sector

The sectors in which Irish entrepreneurs are involved replicate the horizontal gender segregation patterns observed in the Irish and EU-15 labour markets (Table 2.3). Horizontally, the number of Irish women entrepreneurs who are involved in finance, transport and communication, and construction is too small to be estimated. Women are also under-represented in agriculture where they represent six per cent of the total. However, women dominate in sectors such as health/social work where they account for 55 per cent of the total (Eurostat, 2007). In the EU-15, women also predominate in health/social work (55%), other services (55%) and education (54%) but men predominate in every other sector (Eurostat, 2007).

Table 2.3 Self-employment by Economic Activity- Ireland/EU-15 (2006)

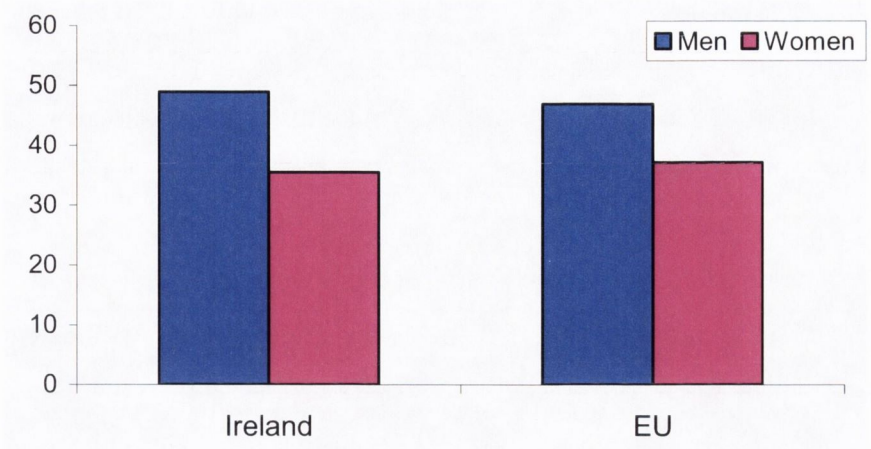
	Men (000s)	Women (000s)	Percentage Women in Ireland	Percentage Women in EU-15
Health and Social Work	5	6	55%	55%
Other Services	17	19	53%	55%
Hotels and Restaurants	8	5	38%	38%
Wholesale and Retail Trade	28	8	22%	32%
Real Estate	26	7	21%	30%
Manufacturing	19	3	14%	21%
Agriculture	83	4	5%	28%
Education	-	3	-	54%
Construction	65		-	3%
Transport/Communication	23		-	12%
Financial intermediation	3		-	25%

Source: Eurostat (2007)

Hours Worked

The average weekly hours worked by self-employed men in Ireland were 48.9 compared with 35.5 hours weekly by women (Figure 2.16). Overall, Irish male entrepreneurs work more hours than the EU-15 average for their counterparts which is 46.9 hours per week. Irish female entrepreneurs worked less than their counterparts in the EU-15 who worked an average of 37.2 hours weekly (Eurostat, 2007).

Figure 2.16 Weekly Hours of Work for Self-Employed Persons (2006)



Source: Eurostat (2007)

2.4 Conclusions

Statistics on employment in Ireland over the past three decades indicate that there has been an increase in the number of women participating in the labour force. But there are still many differences between men and women's employment patterns, particularly in relation to marital/family status and educational level. Married women are less likely than any other category to be involved in the labour force. Labour force participation for women decreases with the number of children they have. Finally, as women's educational levels rise, so does their likelihood of being in the labour market, particularly at graduate level.

It can be argued that the organisation of Irish society is evolving with the changing demographic situation. First, fertility in Ireland has been steadily declining since 1960. Women have fewer children and they are also having them at a later age. This has facilitated women in achieving higher educational levels and labour force participation. The traditional family forms in Ireland are changing due to a rise in non-marriage/cohabitation, separation and divorce. There has been a sharp rise in single parents – particularly of single mothers – since 1981 which reflects the established EU-15 pattern of increasing births outside marriage.

Information on Irish entrepreneurs is very limited. Even the actual number in Ireland is subject to controversy. Eurostat (2007) claims that Ireland has a total of 317,000 entrepreneurs of whom 50,000 (16% of the total) are women. In contrast, the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (Fitzsimons and O'Gorman, 2006) claims that there are

approximately 250,000 Irish entrepreneurs, 70,000 of whom are women (28% of the total). Women entrepreneurs are concentrated unevenly in personal/professional services (e.g. education, health and social work). Very few are involved in finance, transport and communications, construction, manufacturing and agriculture in which men predominate. Men and women entrepreneurs work longer hours than employees in regular employment. Men entrepreneurs work an average of 48.9 hours per week compared with 40.5 hours for men in the labour force. Similarly, women entrepreneurs work an average of 35.5 hours per week compared with 31.7 hours for women in the labour force. Overall, women entrepreneurs work 73 per cent of the hours worked by their male counterparts.

In conclusion, Ireland appears to replicate EU-15's employment and demographic patterns. Historically, Irish women had very low labour market participation rates, but their participation now matches the rest of the EU-15. However, this is not the case in relation to women entrepreneurs: Ireland still has a low level of female entrepreneurship compared to the EU-15.

This chapter has provided the background statistical information. It places Irish labour force patterns and trends, demographic changes and the prevailing entrepreneurial environment in an EU-15 context. The chapter also identified a number of information gaps. There are no studies that have examined the impact of setting-up and/or running a business on home life and there is a lack of statistical sources with gender disaggregated data on entrepreneurs, as well as according to their marital and family status. The literature on entrepreneurship and female entrepreneurship is outlined in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3 Literature Review: Female Entrepreneurship

The aims of this literature review are to examine existing research to date undertaken in the field of entrepreneurship; summarise the findings of studies on female entrepreneurship; to provide a contextual framework for the research undertaken; and to highlight areas that need to be extended by identifying gaps in current knowledge. Research findings on female entrepreneurship in the literature provide a frame of reference against which the findings of the research can be compared (Creswell, 2003).

This review identified the main issues in the literature on women entrepreneurs in a broad chronological order over four main decades. Until the 1970s, gender as factor was largely ignored. From the 1980s onwards, research consisted of exploratory and descriptive studies of women and their businesses, and started to focus on more specialised issues, while employing increased methodological sophistication from the 1990s. Finally, since 2000, there has been an increased tendency for research to critically reflect and criticise the work done on female entrepreneurship

Research into the field of female entrepreneurship is a relatively recent phenomenon. Until the late 1970s, the impact of gender was largely ignored. The 1980s saw the first exploratory studies of female entrepreneurship although these either concentrated on the personal characteristics (i.e. demographic traits, motivation), or on developing typologies, of women entrepreneurs. The 1990s saw a shift of interest towards more specialised gender-specific needs such as management styles, access to finance, or the impact of networks and support agencies on female-owned companies. Finally, since 2000, studies have critically reflected and criticised female entrepreneurship theories. If research on female entrepreneurship started off by trying to add women into existing (largely male-based) research on entrepreneurship, it failed until very recently to revise existing entrepreneurship theories and/or to develop new 'gender-inclusive' theories. Thus, there has been a shift from attempting to include gender into existing theories to developing new theories which acknowledge the presence of women in entrepreneurship (Chell and Baines, 1998). There has been a change of focus from the 21st century, from research on female entrepreneurship which was largely based on an exploratory and descriptive perspective to one that sought to apply a more analytical and theoretical approach, in which the social construct of an entrepreneur is explored in terms of how gender

fits into it. As Carter and Shaw (2006) note *"the focus of research has shifted from early studies that questioned if gender made a difference, to the current focus on how gender processes impact on the experience of business ownership"* (2006:5).

In general, female entrepreneurship remains critically under-researched worldwide, most particularly in Ireland. The bulk of available information on female entrepreneurship originates in the US while only a small segment of it focuses on Europe, the UK and Ireland. It could be argued that the US holds values quite different from those of Europe in general, and Ireland in particular, and that the US economy is much more entrepreneurial than in Europe. However, as Audretsch et al. (2002) argue, *"while Europe may not be there quite yet, there are definite signs that an entrepreneurial economy is emerging on the old continent"* (2002:6). For this reason, it is necessary to be aware of cultural differences whilst examining research findings from the US. Despite these differences, Stevenson (2003) argues that *"international comparisons and country studies reveal that the situation of women entrepreneurs in each country is similar"* (2003:13). This is also supported by Greene et al. (2003) who found similarities between women entrepreneurs across countries.

This chapter follows the chronological order reflecting the key developments in the field of female entrepreneurship. Section 3.1 discusses the personal and business attributes identified in the literature, while sections 3.2 and 3.3 examine the motivations for women entering entrepreneurship and the obstacles and barriers encountered by women entrepreneurs respectively. Section 3.4 examines the performance of women owned businesses. Finally, section 3.5 discusses the management styles adopted by women entrepreneurs, while section 3.6 discusses the gendered aspect of entrepreneurship.

3.1 Personal and Business Attributes

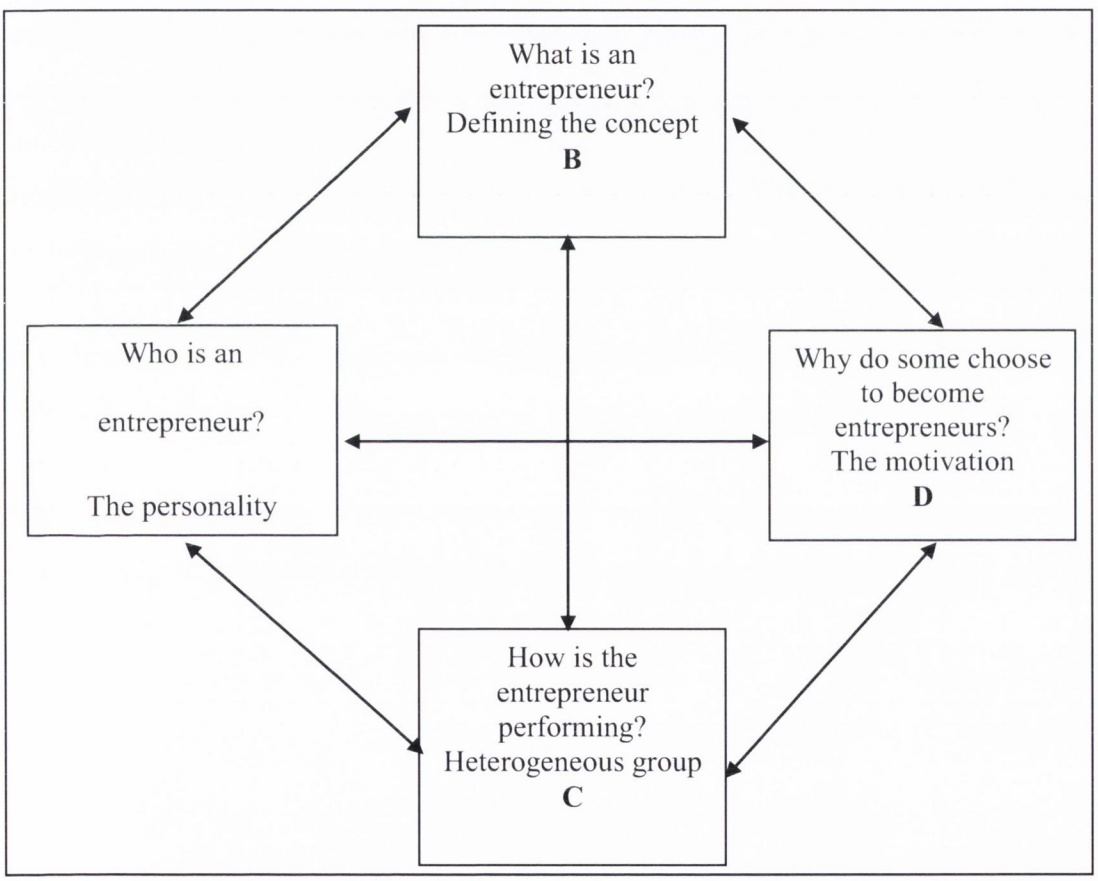
This section examines the personal and business attributes of women entrepreneurs. Research into entrepreneurship focused on developing trait theory. It summarises the findings on the personal characteristics of entrepreneurs in general, before moving on to women entrepreneurs. This is followed by a discussion of the characteristics of women entrepreneurs' businesses.

3.1.1 Profile and Background

Profiling Entrepreneurs

Research into entrepreneurial personality (Figure 3.1), originated from an attempt to profile entrepreneurs (A) before focusing on the definition of an entrepreneur as a concept (B). This led to the assumption that entrepreneurs did not belong to a homogenous group and therefore research started to focus on the relationship between different personality traits and performance (C). Since trait theory did not satisfactorily explain entrepreneurial behaviour, research has shifted to developing cognitive motivation models (D) (Delmar, 2000).

Figure 3.1 Entrepreneurial Personality Theory



Source: Delmar (2000:134)

It is commonly believed that successful entrepreneurs are the product of a series of particular characteristics and aptitudes rather than simply 'having been at the right place at the right time'. As a result of this belief, a major portion of the literature on entrepreneurship focuses

on the typical personality traits of entrepreneurs. According to Delmar (2000), five characteristics have been identified to describe entrepreneurs as:

- risk-takers;
- having a great need for achievement;
- holding a belief in internal control (his/her behaviour leading to his/her achievement);
- overly optimistic;
- possessing a strong desire for autonomy.

However, these characteristics/attributes have been criticized since they do not take individual differences into account (Delmar, 2000).

Studies investigating the personality traits of entrepreneurs proved inadequate in explaining why certain people enter entrepreneurship. To address this problem, cognitive theories were developed (Taylor, 1998). The strong point of cognitive theories is that they make it possible to establish a link between the personal traits of entrepreneurs and their individual situation. Such theories are essentially based on the fact that each individual will select and interpret his/her own set of information among all possible knowledge which, in turn, can lead to entrepreneurial behaviour. Therefore, as Delmar (2000:139) argues, *"the individual characteristics leading to an entrepreneurial career are only activated when exposed to a favourable socialisation process, where an entrepreneurial career is seen as a viable possibility among others"*. Socialisation patterns consist of specific abilities and sensitivities, environmental possibilities and social support. Cognitive theories suggest that an individual will choose to become an entrepreneur when this is seen as the best option available. This theory is examined in this study, by investigating the factors that would be linked to entrepreneurship, namely, support from partner, previous business experience, or the presence of family members involved in business.

Personal Characteristics of Women Entrepreneurs

Trait theory was extended to include women. Exploratory studies into female entrepreneurship in the 1980s focused on profiling the characteristics of women entrepreneurs. These usually discovered more similarities with, rather than differences from men, and most research treated women entrepreneurs as a homogenous group (Marlow, 1997; Moore and Buttner, 1997; Carter, 2000; Carter et al., 2001). For example, Hisrich and Brush's (1986) study of women entrepreneurs described the typical woman entrepreneur as

"the first born child of middle class parents", who *"after obtaining a liberal arts degree,... marries, has children, and works as a teacher, administrator, or secretary"* and that *"her first business venture in a service area begins after she is thirty-five"* (Hisrich and Brush, 1986:14). This work, despite its exploratory nature, paved the way for later studies in the field of female. Similar differences in the profile of men and women entrepreneurs are apparent in more recent research where women entrepreneurs were usually portrayed as being older than their male counterparts, more highly educated, and for the most part married or living with a partner (Sarri and Trihopoulou, 2004). However, this type of research largely failed to recognise that, more likely than not, women entrepreneurs were a heterogeneous group, with a multiple number of experiences, aspirations and backgrounds (Marlow and Carter, 2004; Smith-Hunter and Boyd, 2004).

Risk and Women Entrepreneurs

There is no general consensus in the literature on the attitude of women entrepreneurs towards risk (Brindley, 2005). Authors such as Cheskin Research (2000) or Still and Timms (2000) report that women entrepreneurs are more risk averse than their male counterparts, while others such as Masters and Meier (1988) or Hytti (2005) reject this claim. Other studies examined the psychological traits associated with women entrepreneurs (Masters and Meier, 1988; Chung, 1998; Slovic, 2000; Brindley, 2005), usually finding that women entrepreneurs were similar to men entrepreneurs, rather than different. For example, Masters and Meier (1988) found in a study involving the use of the Choice Dilemma Questionnaire (CDQ) instrument that there were no differences in the risk-taking propensity of men and women in entrepreneurship. The psychological measures used were designed and tested on men, and as a result some authors have raised questions about the reliability of the interpretation of these studies (Greene et al., 2003).

Research undertaken by Cheskin Research (2000) found that men tend to take more financial risks than women, while women take more personal risks. It claimed that women tend to think that things have to be done perfectly rather than quickly, while men tend to want things done quickly. Delmar (2000) argues that one of the main characteristics of an entrepreneur is to be risk-taking in a financial sense rather than a personal one, thus suggesting that the concept of an entrepreneur presents some male characteristics. Hytti (2005) presents a different viewpoint by arguing that because of the increasing feeling of insecurity experienced

by individuals in employment, entrepreneurship can be seen as posing less of a risk (be it financial or emotional) than employment. For example, she explains that becoming an entrepreneur might be the only solution to obtaining a stable position and work identity as permanent jobs get scarcer.

Psychological Characteristics of Women Entrepreneurs

Recent research provides evidence that the behavioural traits associated with entrepreneurs differ according to gender. The social characteristics associated with women consist of, for example, being more 'nurturing', 'compassionate', 'sensitive', 'polite', 'informal' (Cheskin Research, 2000), with a high commitment to people, using participative decisions and sharing control (Bird and Brush, 2002). However, according to Cheskin Research (2000), neither men nor women felt these traits were essential in the development of their business skills. Both women and men entrepreneurs consider 'persistence', 'a positive attitude', 'creativity' and 'vision' as key predictors of a successful entrepreneur although women assigned higher ranking to values such as 'courage', 'independence', 'strength' and 'fearlessness' than men. Cheskin's study argues that *"these value differences are likely a reflection of the attitudes women have had to maximize in order to succeed in the business world"* (Cheskin Research, 2000:3).

Such studies have been criticized for their investigative nature (Curran, 1986; Carter, 1993; Rosa and Hamilton, 1994; Carter, 2000, Carter et al., 2001). In contrast, more recent studies have focused on business characteristics rather than the personal characteristics of women entrepreneurs. They have also been criticised for over-representing differences between men and women entrepreneurs, arguing that women entrepreneurs are more similar than different to men entrepreneurs (Olson and Currie, 1992; Ahl, 2004; Ahl, 2006).

Typologies of Women Entrepreneurs

Instead of treating women entrepreneurs as a homogeneous group, other research sought to develop typologies of women entrepreneurs (Goffee and Scase, 1985; Carter and Cannon, 1988; Cromie and Hayes, 1988; Moore, 2004). Goffee and Scase (1985) categorized women according to two factors: their adherence to (a) conventional gender roles and (b) entrepreneurial ideals. This approach was criticized on two separate counts. First, it was

argued that women lead different lives from one another – particularly in terms of their social and economic reality – and that this would dictate the type of attachments they held to both gender roles and entrepreneurial ideals (Allen and Truman, 1988, Carter, 2000). Second, Goffee and Scase's (1985) typology assumed that women's interpretation of their social and economic realities was constant, while the reality is that both the business and the entrepreneur are likely to change over time (Carter and Cannon, 1992, Carter, 2000). Other authors, such as Still and Timms (2000) using a sample of Australian women entrepreneurs, developed typologies based on the reasons for women entrepreneurs' entry (i.e. necessity, opportunities not available in employment, joining, as opposed to initiating, a business venture), types of business (self-employment, micro-business and small enterprises) and business development phases (necessity, interest, organic growth orientation, 'fire in the belly', rapid growth). To date, very little research has concentrated on the heterogeneity of women entrepreneurs, in developing typologies. The use of new typologies in future research could provide valuable insights into the experiences and dynamics inherent to female entrepreneurship.

The mainly quantitative questionnaire survey of men and women entrepreneurs used in this thesis develops and tests personal and social measures for similarities and differences. It examines how entrepreneurs view themselves in terms of their perceived capabilities and attitudes, in order to explore whether there are gender differences among entrepreneurs in an Irish context. The survey utilised a typology of entrepreneurs, to examine not only men's and women's differences but also whether women constitute a homogeneous group. In addition to studies on personal characteristics of men and women entrepreneurs, research has been conducted into the characteristics associated with women entrepreneurs' businesses, and these are discussed in the following section.

3.1.2 Characteristics of Women's Businesses

Sectors

The sectors in which women trade have been shown to be demonstrably different from those of men. In a study of Danish entrepreneurship, Nielsen (2002) found that women entrepreneurs tend to be over-represented in the 'distributive trades' and 'business services' while men are more involved in the 'construction' and 'transport' sectors. Furthermore, the authors observed that *"women entrepreneurs show a preference for starting up in retail trade*

[and] one-third of female start-ups in business services are in the low-knowledge activity of industrial cleaning" (Nielsen, 2002:9). Kjeldsen and Nielsen (2000) also stated that women are primarily concentrated in the areas of retail, hotel and restaurant, and business services. They note, for example, that among retail and operational services, women work in areas like cleaning and translating while men cluster in the auto trade, service stations, and repair work. In the service industries, Kjeldsen and Nielsen (2000) showed that men dominate in the knowledge industry (IT) while women are to be found in auditing and accounting. These findings were also common in the US where *"most women worked in personal services occupations, [while] self-employed men were more concentrated in craft occupations"* (Mistick, 1998:8).

Overall, women entrepreneurs still predominate in traditionally female areas, which are often extensions of their perceived roles in the private sphere (Moore and Buttner, 1997), for example in childcare. Sectoral segregation remains widespread across Europe (Eurostat, 2007) and impacts adversely on female entrepreneurship. Men and women are portrayed in academic, mediatic and popular discourse as suitable to particular sectors. Tillmar (2006:89) reports that *"many women did not want to be regarded as business people, since the strong male connotations of the word threatened the identity and self-esteem of their husbands"*. Not only is entrepreneurship itself strongly labelled as a masculine activity (Ahl, 2004; Ahl, 2006; Tillmar, 2006) but within it sectors are also gender-labelled. As a consequence of this gender-labelling, some activities are seen as being better than others and many sectors occupied by women entrepreneurs do not qualify as 'real' business (e.g. Bed & Breakfast, hairdressing, retail, personal services).

Women entrepreneurs in Ireland, like their counterparts internationally, tend to be concentrated in certain sectors like services; health; education and art and design. There are few women headed businesses in transport; construction or engineering and science (The SIA Group, 2001; Goodbody Economic Consultants, 2002; Gender Equality Unit, 2003; Henry and Kennedy, 2003; McClelland, 2003; Fitzsimons and O'Gorman, 2006). This supports official statistical on the sectors in which men and women entrepreneurs trade (Eurostat, 2007).

Hours of Work

The literature shows that the hours work by men and women entrepreneurs are different. Women entrepreneurs work fewer hours, in smaller businesses, than men. Furthermore, they are more likely to be home based and have fewer, if any, members of staff (Marlow and Carter, 2004; Eurostat, 2007; Verheul et al., 2007). Overall, the business characteristics of Irish women entrepreneurs in Ireland accord with the body of international literature (Goodbody Economic Consultants, 2002; Valiulis et al., 2004).

Evidence from the limited literature on Irish entrepreneurs shows that businesses tend to be quite small, but very few studies offer a gender breakdown. For example, two Irish studies pointed out that at start-up, the average number of employees was below five (Goodbody Economic Consultants, 2002; Fitzsimons and O'Gorman, 2006). The only study providing a gender breakdown suggested that Irish businesses headed by women tend to be smaller than those headed by men (Gender Equality Unit, 2003).

Involvement by Family Members in Business

Research into the social and business profiles of women entrepreneurs indicate that a higher proportion of women than men have family members in business. It is argued that this could be due to the nurturing of an entrepreneurial culture within their environment and/or to the provision of successful role models close to them (Orhan and Scott, 2001; The SIA Group, 2001; Goodbody Economic Consultants, 2002).

Having a family member in business has been particularly important in an Irish context. Three Irish studies highlighted the importance of having a family member in business to act as a role model for women entrepreneurs (The SIA Group, 2001; Goodbody Economic Consultants, 2002; Valiulis et al., 2004). Finally, it is also worth noting that, in Ireland more so than in other European countries, women are more likely than their male counterparts to be involved in a business venture on a part-time basis or to have formed a partnership with a family member or another woman entrepreneur (The SIA Group, 2001; Polson, 2002).

These findings on women entrepreneurs were used to inform the design of the questionnaire of Irish entrepreneurs used in this study. It included questions on the characteristics of entrepreneurs and their businesses to allow a comparison to be made with women

entrepreneurs internationally. This section has presented the findings of studies examining the personal and business attributes of women entrepreneurs. Section 3.2 examines the motivations behind entering entrepreneurship for men and women.

3.2 Motivations for becoming an Entrepreneur

There is a large body of work on entrepreneurial motivations, driven partly by the fact that policy makers and government agencies seek this information in order to encourage more entrepreneurship. This section reviews the main current theories behind entrepreneurial awakening and motivational factors.

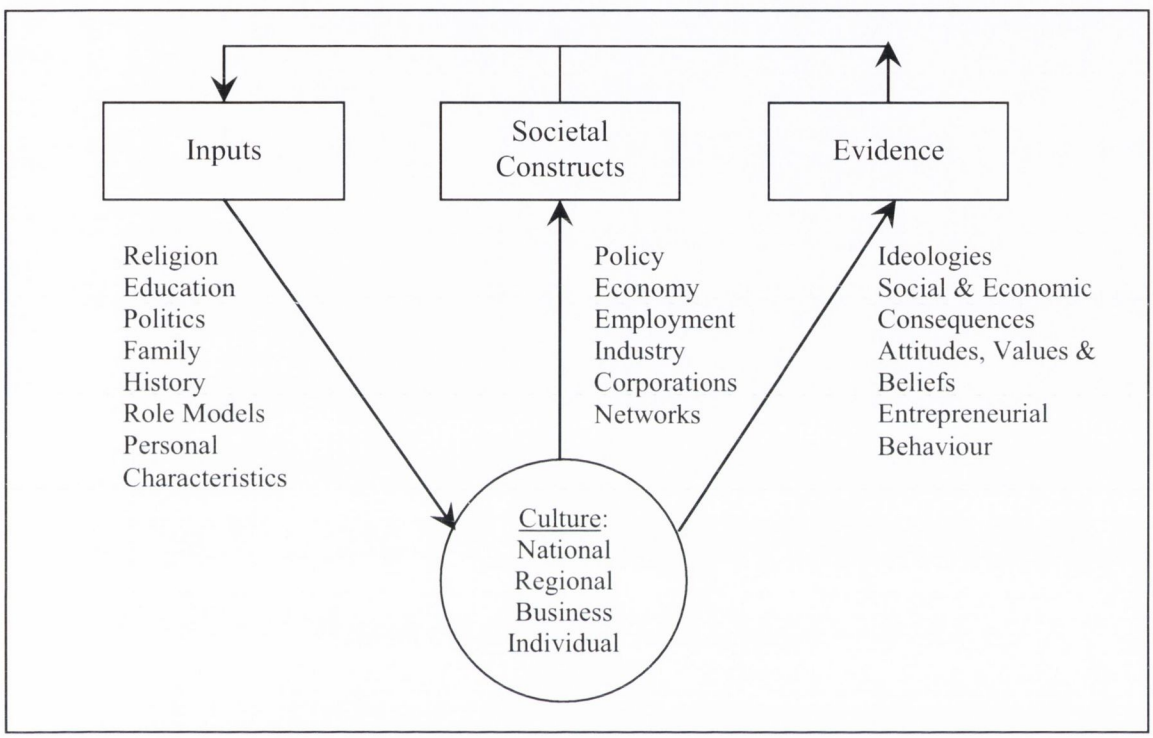
3.2.1 Entrepreneurial Awakening

Becoming an entrepreneur can involve the creation of a new business venture, the purchase, or inheritance, of an existing firm. The decision to proceed, however, is the end point of a long journey. This journey is conceptualised as the 'entrepreneurial awakening' by Duchéneaut and Orhan (2000) and is the product of social, cultural and educational influences. According to Duchéneaut and Orhan, entrepreneurial awakening refers to an 'enterprise spirit' that eventually leads to the creation of a new business venture, or the buying out of a business. However, there are two different schools of thought on the topic: economic versus social (Berger, 1991; Duchéneaut and Orhan, 2000). The economic school of thought assumes that entrepreneurship is triggered by economic factors such as a redundancy, and that cultural and social environments have little significance. The social school views entrepreneurship as intrinsically linked to cultural and social factors such as gender or ethnicity.

Morrison (2000), for example, supports the social school of thoughts. She argues that *"the process of entrepreneurship initiation has its foundations in person and intuition, and society and culture. As a result, this process is much more holistic than simply an economic function"* (Morrison, 2000:98). She proposes a model of entrepreneurial instigation in which potential entrepreneurs are subjected to a range of basic 'inputs' (Figure 3.2). These inputs consist of religion, education, politics, family, history, role models and personal characteristics. From there, individuals consider 'societal constructs' before deciding whether to enter entrepreneurship as an option or not. These constructs consist of policy, economy, employment, industry, corporations and networks. Finally, the combination of 'inputs' and

'societal constructs' forms the 'evidence'. This 'evidence' consists mainly of ideologies, social and economic consequences, attitudes, values and beliefs. Overall, Morrison argues that the evidence either encourages or discourages potential entrepreneurs. In countries where positive stimuli exist, entrepreneurship is nurtured while, in countries where they are absent, entrepreneurship will not flourish (Morrison, 2000: 106).

Figure 3.2 Summary Model – Key Features of Entrepreneurship Initiation



Source: Morrison (2000:106)

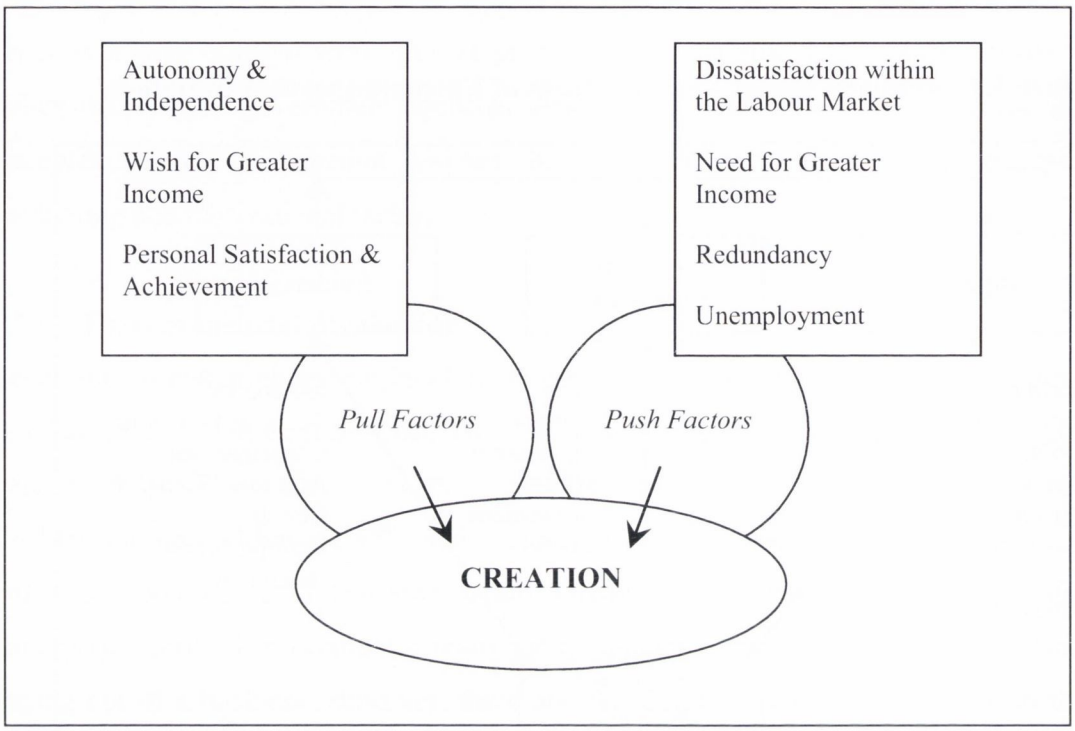
3.2.2 Motivational Factors

Push/Pull Factors Theory

A key theory on entrepreneurial motivation is that of 'push/pull' factors (Moore and Buttner, 1997; Duchéneaut and Orhan, 2000; Orhan and Scott, 2001). 'Push' factors are essentially elements that are likely to drive people into entrepreneurship, such as the need for greater income or dissatisfaction within the labour market. 'Pull' factors are elements that induce people to become entrepreneurs such as the desire for autonomy and independence, the wish, rather than the need, for a greater income, the desire for personal satisfaction and achievement, or simply because they saw an opportunity in the form of a gap in the market (Figure 3.3). It is usually agreed that motivations for people to enter entrepreneurship are a

combination of 'push' and 'pull' factors rather than for a single reason and that *"a pull/push model reflects most entrepreneurial motivations"* (Duchéneaut and Orhan, 2000:90; Deakins and Whittam, 2000; Orhan and Scott, 2001).

Figure 3.3 Push and Pull Model –Motivations in New Business Ventures



Source: Duchéneaut and Orhan (2000:90)

Push/Pull Factors and Gender

Early studies into entrepreneurship in the small business literature focused primarily on the motivations of the owner starting a business. Similar studies of female entrepreneurship also followed this pattern, influenced by the parallel work being conducted in the area of small businesses. Most of the studies dealing with the motivations of women entrepreneurs placed the desire for autonomy and independence, as well as the desire for personal satisfaction and achievement, as key motivating factors (Goffee and Scase, 1985; Marlow, 1997; Moore and Buttner, 1997; Carter, 2000; Duchéneaut and Orhan, 2000). Based on international research, the key motivational factors for women entrepreneurs devised for this thesis are presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Key Motivations for Women Entrepreneurs

Pull Factors	Push Factors
Autonomy and Independence	Dissatisfaction in the Labour Market
Personal Satisfaction and Achievement	Need for Greater Income
Dream of Being an Entrepreneur	Redundancy
Gap in the Market	Unemployment
Looking for a Challenge	Last Resort
Rejecting Male Imposed Identities	

Most commonly a combination of 'push' and 'pull' factors have influenced both men and women entrepreneurs, although some factors have proved to be highly gendered. Dissatisfaction in the labour market is more prevalent among women, arguably due to circumstances specific to women such as reaching the 'glass ceiling' (Moore and Buttner, 1997; Mattis, 2004), the predominance of 'old boys' networks' (The SIA Group, 2001; McClelland, 2003) and the widespread use in employment of transactional leadership styles (Orhan and Scott, 2001). Second, women have a need for increased flexibility arising from the fact that society assigns to them the role of primary caregiver for the young, the elderly and the sick. Consequently, more women than men seek a more effective balance between their personal and professional lives (Marlow, 1997; Orhan and Scott, 2001; Belle and La Valle, 2003; Greer and Greene, 2003). To a lesser extent, women's motivational factors were also found to differ from men's for two further 'push' factors. More women than men opt out of the labour force after having a child/children, some of whom choose not to re-enter it. It is argued that the difficulties associated with re-entering the labour market act as a motivational factor for women to take up entrepreneurship (Sarri and Trihopoulou, 2004). Since a greater proportion of women are financially dependent on their spouse/partner, entrepreneurship could also be a last resort solution following the death of a spouse/partner or divorce/separation (Campbell, 1994).

Research on men's and women's motivational factors tried to ascertain whether the prevalence of 'push' or 'pull' factors varied by gender. The results suggest that *"women's motives to a higher degree than men's seem to be dominated by push factors"* (Kjeldsen and Nielsen, 2000:12). However, there is no consensus on this. For example, some authors found no evidence that push factors prevailed over pull factors (Orhan and Scott, 2001; Sarri and Trihopoulou, 2004).

This key theory was criticised by Hytti (2005) who explains that *"this dichotomy [between push and pull factors] if taken as an either/or question is reductionist and stereotypical resulting in understandings that do not account for the relationship between pull and push, or more generally the complexity of factors at work"* (Hytti, 2005:595). In particular, the literature fails to recognise the gendered influence of the background of the entrepreneurs. For example two women with the same set of motivational factors, but different backgrounds (i.e. small children), might make two different decisions as to whether or not to enter entrepreneurship. For example, becoming entrepreneurs might not be feasible for a mother of small children operating within a traditional family model.

Irish studies sought to replicate international findings on 'push/pull' factors. Goodbody Economic Consultants (2002) identified three pull factors (freedom, wanting to be one's own boss and generating more income) and one push factor (job dissatisfaction) as the main motivating factors to Irish men and women entrepreneurs. These results were reinforced in a number of other Irish studies indicating that three pull factors (looking for a challenge, to follow the example of someone they admired or to obtain more respect through working for oneself) and three push factors (lack of good employment opportunities, wanting more control of work time and conditions or due to dissatisfaction in previous employment) were the main motivational factors for Irish women entrepreneurs (Campbell, 1994; Goodbody Economic Consultants, 2002; Henry and Kennedy, 2003; Valiulis et al., 2004). One study, using a small sample, showed that push factors (e.g. achieving better work/life balance) predominated among women, particularly those with children (Valiulis et al., 2004). This issue did not arise in other Irish studies.

The motivational factors identified in the literature are used in this thesis to compare the experience of men and women entrepreneurs in Ireland. More specifically, this thesis examines whether there is evidence that push factors predominate among women entrepreneurs in Ireland. This section has presented the main theories behind entrepreneurial motivations. Section 3.3 examines the literature on the barriers and obstacles encountered by women entrepreneurs.

3.3 Factors Inhibiting Female Entrepreneurship

A major strand of literature on the obstacles faced by women entrepreneurs, focusing on what may impede women when they start-up/run a business compared with men. Attention has been given to identifying these barriers with a view to removing them and hence promoting an increase in female entrepreneurship. The obstacles facing women entrepreneurs are well known in an international context, and it is the aim of the research for this thesis to establish whether women entrepreneurs in Ireland replicate the experience identified in the international context.

The international literature refers to seven main categories that form obstacles for women entrepreneurs:

- obtaining access to capital and funding;
- lack of experience and training;
- family responsibility;
- lack of confidence;
- feminine identity;
- the penetration of male-designed/dominated business world;
- and lack of access to business network opportunities.

3.3.1 Access to Capital and Funding

Early literature, from the 1980s onward, on female entrepreneurship portrayed women as experiencing more difficulties than their male counterparts in obtaining start-up funding. In some cases this drove women entrepreneurs into working with a male business partner, having their husband/partner co-sign a loan application, or using their own personal assets – particularly their home as collateral (Goffee and Scase, 1985; Hisrich and Brush, 1986; Marlow, 1997; Carter, 2000). As the SIA Group (2001) states, *"the possible negative impact might be a woman entrepreneur seeking funding from a source which perceived women as suited to supporter rather than a leadership role"* (2001:15). As a consequence, women tend to seek small personal loans, in turn leading to the creation of smaller ventures: *"This trend has caused the banking world to show relatively little interest in women owned start-ups due to its disinterest in small loans or micro-credits, given the high handling costs"* (The SIA Group, 2001:17).

Overall, securing finance remains a strongly problematic issue for many women entrepreneurs (Carter et al., 2002; Greene et al., 2003; McClelland, 2003; Stevenson, 2003; Brindley, 2005). Carter et al. (2002) argue that, very often, growth orientated women entrepreneurs resort to 'bootstrapping techniques' in the early years of the business, while they consolidate the company and gain more experience. 'Bootstrapping techniques' rely on raising financial resources from their own personal assets (i.e. (re)mortgage, private loan, loan from family or friends) and/or relying solely on the internal revenues of the business. As Carter et al. (2002) argue, *"Bootstrapping can free the venture from excessive debt loads in its early years and hamper its growth and prepare the venture for outside investments at a later time"* (2002:5). These practices mean that women's businesses remain smaller for longer.

Lack of access to finance has been linked to women's position in society. For example, women's entrepreneurial difficulties in obtaining finance are reported to be, according to Marlow and Patton (2005:729), related to their *"subordination [which] limits the accrual of social, cultural, human, and financial capital and so places limitations upon women's abilities to amass personal savings, generate credit histories attractive to formal lenders, or engage the interest of venture capitalists"*.

3.3.2 Lack of Experience and Training

Other research points to lack of business knowledge and training as a factor inhibiting business ventures by women. The literature suggests that women tend to have less work experience relating to their business, while the opposite is observed for men (Schwartz, 1976; Watkins and Watkins, 1986; Hisrich and Brush, 1986; Carter, 2000) and that this can have a negative impact on the start-up their businesses (Watkins and Watkins, 1986; Cliff, 1998; Carter, 2000). For example, Brindley (2005) argues that this limited experience leads women entrepreneurs to trade in sectors with low barriers of entry (Brindley, 2005) and that their lack of technical skills prevents them from entering/sustaining businesses in certain sectors (i.e. manufacturing, high-tech sectors) (Brush, 1992; Bruni et al., 2004). Lack of experience and training for women entrepreneurs also implies that women have a greater need for support (Carter, 2000) and more difficulties in developing their businesses (McClelland, 2003).

For Stevenson (2003), lack of management skills and opportunities to learn practical issues of starting, surviving and growing their own enterprises were significant for women

entrepreneurs. This is echoed by the SIA Group who argue that a serious obstacle for women in business is *"the need for training, be it skill-based, technical, technological or management technique"* and that such training *"is an essential contributor to producing an able body of entrepreneurs, who not only survive but thrive and can contribute to both the local and global economies"* (The SIA Group, 2001:17).

3.3.3 Lack of Credibility

Establishing credibility is reported as a major gender related obstacle for women entrepreneurs. As Goffee and Scase (1985) state:

> *"clearly many of the difficulties faced by female proprietors stem from the fact that they are seen to lack the credibility that men have as business owners. [...]. Bank managers, customers, employees and husbands do not always grant business women the same esteem and competence they accord to men"* (Goffee and Scase, 1985:49).

The authors argue that women are seen as being 'unusual' and that this feeling was most often found in women dealing with male partners or male employees. Goffee and Scase, for instance, describe a *"general 'biased' opinion of women's ability to own and control businesses"* (Goffee and Scase, 1985:45). Even though credibility appears to be a problem encountered by both men and women entrepreneurs, women identified it as a gender related problem (Marlow, 1997). Other authors report that women entrepreneurs' feelings of authority were undermined when they were assumed to be the 'secretary' or 'wife' (Marlow, 1997; Tillmar, 2006).

A study by the NFWBO (National Foundation for Women Business Owners) found that the greatest challenge faced by women in business was that they were not being taken seriously. Furthermore, they stated that being taken seriously could be broken down into: 'proving their capability and credibility'; 'competing and succeeding in a male-dominated environment'; and finally 'overcoming sexism, discrimination and stereotypes' (NFWBO, 1994).

This view is reiterated by Mistick (1998) who argued that women entrepreneurs often have to tackle a credibility issue since their business venture is not taken seriously. She states that two perspectives are continuously being broadcast. On the one hand, government policy experts offer a view of women in business heading small companies with little prospects for growth, frequently on a part-time basis. Mistick argues that, as a consequence, women in business are

viewed as contributing little towards job creation and revenue generation. The second claims the *"popular media sources continue to suggest that one of the primary routes women travel to assume control of large corporations continues to be the death of a spouse or a father, when no male siblings are present"* (Mistick, 1998:10).

Lack of credibility is strongly linked with the way women entrepreneurs are portrayed. The feelings of feeling 'unusual' (Goffee and Scase, 1985), or being stereotyped (NWFBO, 1994; Marlow, 1997) reiterates the body of work where women as seen as being portrayed as the 'deviant other' (Ogbor, 2000; Ahl, 2004; Bruni et al., 2004; Hytti, 2005; Ahl, 2006).

3.3.4 Family Responsibilities

Literature on labour force activity shows that childcare and family responsibilities are problematic for entrepreneurs. For example, Rouse and Boles (2005) note that the majority of parents in their study of UK entrepreneurs would experience at least occasional inability to work because of childcare responsibilities. Furthermore, the authors also note that nearly half the parents in their sample brought their children out on business with them or on business premises at least occasionally. However, because the authors do not offer a gender breakdown, it is impossible to assess the extent to which childcare responsibilities affect men and women entrepreneurs differently.

Most of the literature would state that family responsibilities are particularly problematic for women entrepreneurs (Still and Timms, 2000; Rouse and Boles, 2005). Women are traditionally perceived as being responsible for duties in the private sphere (Drew, 1999) and women entrepreneurs appear to be no exception. For example, Rouse and Boles (2005) state that among the entrepreneurs in their UK study, nearly three-quarters of women entrepreneurs were the main carers for children, while this is only true of a quarter of men.

Carter and Allen (1997) assert that the performance of a business is linked to the manner in which its owner chooses to balance home and work. Indeed, if the emphasis is put on their family life, businesses are likely to remain small (Marlow, 1997). It is therefore claimed that most women's businesses remain small because *"women continue to take full responsibility for the reconciliation of paid work and household labour, including housework, childcare and care of adult dependants"* (Drew, 1999:87).

The SIA Group (2001) argued that *"the way work is designed by businesses traditionally relies on hierarchy, task orientation and freedom from domesticity. It is fortunate then for men that women generally have a disproportionate responsibility for domestic work, including care of the young, old and ill"* (The SIA Group, 2001:11). This leads to considerable difficulties for women, particularly those who have children. Family/domestic demands are not generally compatible with those of employment in which part-time jobs with responsibilities are 'atypical'; where the hours worked can be very extensive; and where socialisation with other influential entrepreneurs or clients can conflict with personal/family life (Drew et al., 2003). More importantly, these demands contribute to a general overburdening for women who attempt to multi-task between family and work life. As a result, there has been an increase in the number of women who delay starting a family or remain childless (Bacik et al., 2003).

Literature on female entrepreneurship confirms that family responsibilities cause much concern and act as a massive barrier for women when setting-up or running a business. Chell and Baines (1998) examined the effect of household responsibilities on business performance by type of ownership. They found that performance was lowest for spouse-owned business, arguing that this is due to the fact that these had the highest incidence of traditional gender role distribution. More women than men experience a greater challenge in balancing their work with their personal life (Cheskin Research, 2000). Those difficulties are aggravated for women who have children. This is especially true of countries like Ireland where there is a lack of adequate child care facilities and structures (Coveney et al., 1998; McClelland, 2003; Stevenson, 2003). The combined influence of social factors (e.g. family status or marital status) with gender is examined in this thesis using ordinal logistics models.

3.3.5 Lack of Confidence

The literature on the obstacles to setting-up and running of a business highlight additional personal difficulties relating to gender. One such obstacle is that women in business tend to lack confidence (Carter, 1993; Still and Timms, 2000). *"Lack of assertiveness in collecting debts was perceived by some respondents as a gender related problem. Similarly, [...], for many respondents undercharging often reflected a lack of confidence in both their products and their business skills"* (Carter, 1993:155). The impact of this lack of credit and/or capital, late payments and undercharging, was claimed to have an important impact on the rate of growth of new businesses.

McGowan and McGeady (2002) also identified low levels of confidence among women in business. This meant that they usually relied more heavily on social networks such as their spouse/partner, family, friends or other women. Support from other women led to improved personal confidence, legitimised entrepreneurial aspirations and increased the potential for commercial success. The authors created a conceptual model linking length of time in business with confidence levels and reliance on female networks. Essentially, this conceptual model shows that the reliance on female networks is not affected by the length of time in business, but rather that it is dependent upon the confidence levels of women entrepreneurs.

Brindley (2005) argues that the level of confidence of women entrepreneurs is negatively linked to perceived levels of risk. As confidence levels decrease, there is an increase in the perception of how risky a situation is. This has important implications since it suggests that raising women entrepreneurs' level of confidence would raise their level of risk-taking.

3.3.6 Breaking into the Male Business World

An obstacle typically associated with female entrepreneurship is that women often have to confront hostile social attitudes and cultural biases when breaking into a male business world (The SIA Group, 2001).

Goffee and Scase (1985) argue that frequently women have to exploit their female identity when dealing with suppliers and customers. They can be forced to use, for example, 'feminine attraction' in order to negotiate sales and many women claimed that this was the most appropriate way of clinching business deals. Indeed, feelings about the use of such tactics vary from a positive instrumental acceptance to strong personal unease. However, this obstacle has not been validated by more recent studies.

There is clear evidence that the socialisation process of women in childhood, within families and at school, does not prepare them for the business world where female managers are in short supply (The SIA Group, 2001; McClelland, 2003; Stevenson, 2003). McClelland sums this up by stating that:

> *"In Irish society, even more so than in other societies such as the US or Canada, women are still perceived as having a supportive role rather than a leadership role. This perception is a barrier to female entrepreneurship as many women are not encouraged to look at entrepreneurship as a career, and even if they do*

consider it, they are not encouraged to believe that they can be successful" (McClelland, 2003:23).

This is reinforced by the SIA Group in particular who state that: *"there is a need to address the preconceived stereotypes of women as followers by developing women as leaders not just at business level but throughout childhood, in schools and society as well"* (The SIA Group, 2001:11).

3.3.7 Lack of Access to Business Network Opportunities

In addition to lack of experience and skills, women are disadvantaged in relation to accessing networks and business support agencies (Rees, 1992; Marlow, 1997). Women entrepreneurs are rarely targeted by these agencies (Marlow, 1997; Moore and Buttner, 1997). In extreme instances, some networking institutions are still closed to women: *"one prominent [business] club in central Cardiff, a meeting place of senior private and public sector figures in Wales, refuses to allow women to become members"* (Rees, 1999:55).

It is generally agreed in the literature that not only is business networking a key element for the growth of women-owned businesses, but that women as a group had different networking needs than their male counterparts (Brush, 1992; Rosa and Hamilton, 1994; Katz and Williams, 1997). McClelland (2003) claims that women entrepreneurs use networking as a mean of growing their business more than men.

Networking continues to be a barrier for women entrepreneurs since the prevailing strong male corporate culture relies heavily on 'old boys' networks' and informal networking. Since women are often excluded from these networks, there has been a rise in the number of women's networks and associations over the past decade, focusing more on social and support issues, as McClelland expresses it, *"social support come first, while business comes later"* (2003:6).

However, the issue of networking difficulties are steadily being eroded as more networks and organisations are created to cater specifically for women or are adapting to facilitate women's access (i.e. Network Ireland; Women in Business Networks). As the SIA Group observed, *"women organise associations to overcome isolation, achieve goals, gain support, educate, train, market products and services, promote one another's interests and expand their*

businesses" (2001:39). There has also been a surge of websites specifically dedicated to women entrepreneurs (i.e. www.irishbusinesswomen.com).

3.3.8 Barriers and Obstacles for Irish Women Entrepreneurs

Literature on Irish entrepreneurs reiterates the obstacles faced by entrepreneurs in the international literature. The Gender Equality Unit (2003) found that, regardless of gender, the main difficulty when setting-up a business was finance. This conforms to the international body of literature. Other factors for men and women were: 'getting established and building up a client base/reputation', 'premises', 'cash flow', 'banks and financial institutions', 'staff', 'bureaucracy', 'insurance', and 'no help available/given from state bodies' (Gender Equality Unit, 2003). However, some of the obstacles encountered were specific to women: 'risk factor', 'being female' and 'lack of experience', while some were specific to men entrepreneurs: 'competition', 'debt collection/getting paid', 'accountancy and fees', 'establishing credit', and 'planning permission' (The SIA Group, 2001; Henry and Kennedy, 2003; McClelland, 2003; Valiulis et al., 2004).

There appears to be some evidence that obstacles such as family responsibilities and childcare are more problematic in Ireland than elsewhere (Coveney et al., 1998). Additional gender-specific obstacles were: issues dealing with a negative attitude generally from male officials or sub-suppliers, lack of confidence and achieving a better work/life balance (Goodbody Economic Consultants, 2002, Valiulis et al., 2004).

This thesis examines whether the obstacles to entrepreneurship identified in the international and national literature apply to men and women in Ireland. It examines which obstacles are gendered and their impact on business life. Section 3.4 discusses the performance of women owned businesses.

3.4 Performance and Growth Factors in Entrepreneurship

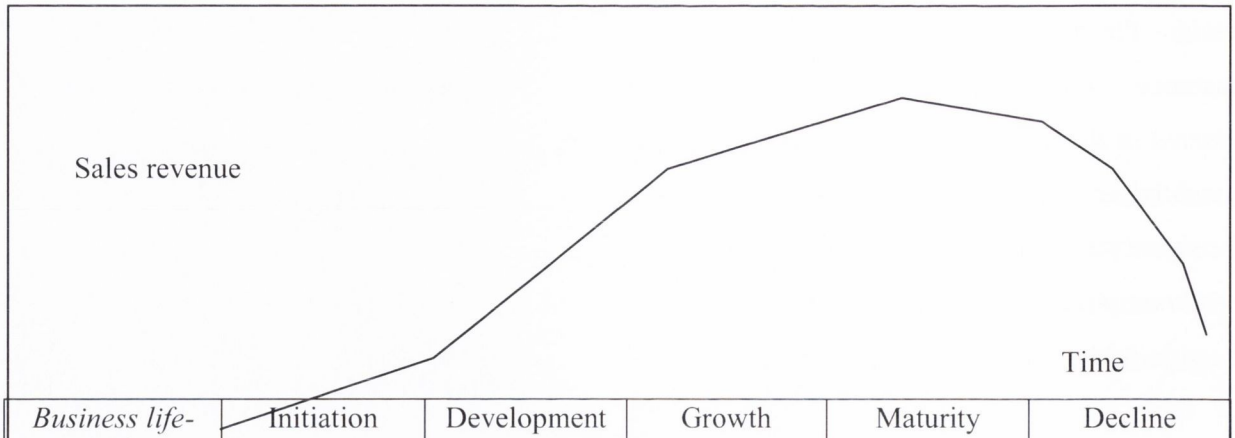
Research has been undertaken to explore the dynamics of entrepreneurship beyond the creation phase, concentrating on the growth and development of businesses. Different theories have been developed in this field of research in order to explain the growth and performance of firms.

The 'personality-dominated approach' (Gibb and Davies, 1991; Smallbone and Wyer, 2000) assigns the entrepreneur and his/her characteristics as the central factor to explain growth. For instance, *"the entrepreneur's personal goals are likely to influence why a business was started in the first place, as well as the strength of the firm's growth orientation once it was established"* (Smallbone and Wyer, 2000:411). This approach seeks to establish a link between the characteristics of entrepreneurs and the growth of their businesses. However, while empirically these characteristics seem to have an impact, their effect was not found to be significant (Smallbone and Wyer, 2000).

A similar theory is called the 'organisational' approach, which essentially *"emphasizes the development sequence of a firm as it passes through a series of stages at different points in its so-called life-cycle"* (Smallbone and Wyer, 2000:415). However it has been criticized for not taking into account the fact that there is no one unique model of growth that is valid for every company and it ignores the influence of the external environment.

In order to address these problems, the 'business management' approach was developed. The latter relies on *"the importance of business skills and the role of functional management, planning, control and formal strategic orientations"* (Smallbone and Wyer, 2000:417) which allow modifications to take place when necessary (Figure 3.4). However, a problem appears in this approach, in that it requires companies to be able to control their external environment, which is not easy for small companies.

Figure 3.4 An Indicative 'Stages of Growth'/Life-Cycle Model.



Business life-cycle	Initiation	Development	Growth	Maturity	Decline
Example Changing nature of impacting problems: The need to progressively develop management	Need to identify market Informal marketing ability	Need to consolidate and develop Formulation of marketing approach	Need to counter competition Competition analysis	Need to seek alternative markets Broadening of market analysis	Need to develop extension strategies Adjustment to existing products and market focus

Source: Smallbone and Wyer (2000:415)

There has been little work done on the performance of women led businesses, and even less that used robust methodologies. There is some agreement that businesses headed by women tend to be smaller and to grow at a slower pace than that of their male counterparts. Similarly, women are more likely to be trading on a part-time basis as a 'sideline' or to generate a second-income. This is seen as a direct consequence of the barriers encountered by women namely: credibility; access to finance and training; and family responsibilities (Minniti and Arenius, 2003).

Kjeldsen and Nielsen (2000) point out that women tend to be less growth-orientated than their male counterparts. They argue that this is to a large extent due to the fact that women are seeking more flexibility and freedom to juggle the many aspects of their life, such as work, leisure and family life. Furthermore, Kjeldsen and Nielsen (2000) report that some women do not want any growth from their business because they argue that this would conflict with their purpose of choosing the entrepreneurial route to obtain greater flexibility.

The international literature highlights the fact that performance and growth could be linked to the motivations of entrepreneurs. Since motivations differ according to gender, this explains the divergent patterns of growth between men and women. There is some consensus in the literature that women are more likely to be motivated by dissatisfaction in the labour market or to achieve better work/life balance (Orhan and Scott, 2001). Depending on the motivations underpinning women's decisions to become entrepreneurs, women can measure success using unequal reference to external (e.g. profitability) and internal (e.g. ability to reconcile the private and public spheres) factors (Moore and Buttner, 1997; Minniti and Arenius, 2003). For example, women entrepreneurs who have chosen to enter entrepreneurship to obtain more flexibility and to reconcile their home and work lives, are more likely to measure success by how well they achieve work/life balance. There is generally no consensus as to whether there are differences in men's and women's business performance in relation to external or internal measures of success.

Overall, there appears to be some support for the contention that women use different measures of success than their male counterparts. It is generally agreed that the success of their businesses stem from much more than finance. However, women use factors such as building relationships with clients and staff; having control over their own destiny; and doing something they consider worthwhile to measure their success, while their male counterparts focus more on gaining self-satisfaction for a job well done and achieving the goals they set themselves (NFWBO, 1994).

The findings of the international literature are used in this thesis to assess whether there are gender differences in the choices entrepreneurs make between their entrepreneurial and personal life. In particular, the thesis examines whether or not men prioritise the performance of their businesses and level of income over their family or personal life. This section has examined the performance of women's businesses and the different ways of measuring success. In Section 3.5, literature on the differences in management styles between men and women entrepreneurs are examined.

3.5 Management Styles and Female Entrepreneurship

This section examines whether entrepreneurs utilise different management styles and whether any gender differences are evident among Irish entrepreneurs. First, the main theories behind

leadership and management styles among managers are examined along with differences between men and women mangers. Then, these theories are examined in the context of female entrepreneurship to determine whether there are differences in management styles between men and women business owners.

3.5.1 Leadership and Management Styles

Early literature on management styles found a lack of support for the proposition that women and men use different management styles. However, studies since 1990 suggest that a difference exists among managers (Rosener, 1990; Bass et al, 1996; Burke and Collins, 2001). Research into leadership/management evolved from trying to profile successful managers and leaders, to examining the behaviour of managers towards their employees using particular management styles (Drew, 2000; Burke and Collins, 2001). Research identified two main management styles: transactional and transactional leadership. 'Transactional leadership' is a model based on authority and reward, while 'transformational leadership' is based on developing a positive relationship with employees (Rosener, 1990; Mortell, 1992; Drew, 2000; Burke and Collins, 2001). Burke and Collins (2001) took this concept further and subdivided 'transactional leadership' to include 'contingent reward leadership' and 'management by exception leadership' (Table 3.2).

Table 3.2: Summary of Leadership Styles

Transformational Leadership	**Transactional Leadership**	
	Contingent Reward Leadership	Management-by-exception Leadership
Transformational leaders develop positive relationships with subordinates in order to strengthen employee and organisational performance. Managers who display transformational leadership encourage employees to look beyond their own needs and focus instead in the interests of the group overall.	Managers who use the contingent reward leadership style to establish work standards, communicate these standards to their subordinates, and let them know the rewards they will receive if their performance is favourable.	Management-by-exception leaders are likely to take advantage of their power to reward/penalize subordinates based on the formal authority that goes with their position in the organisation. They focus on identifying errors and implementing disciplinary action.

Source: Burke and Collins (2001:245).

Burke and Collins (2001) emphasised that transformational leadership is positively correlated with productivity and financial results, while contingent reward leadership does not have the same level of effectiveness even though it is still positively correlated. Finally, management-by-exception is noted to have a negative impact on a company's productivity (2001). A study of Certified Public Accountants in the US found that female managers were more likely to report using a transformational leadership style or a contingent reward leadership style than their male counterparts and that they were less likely to report using a management-by-exception leadership style than male managers (Burke and Collins, 2001).

An Irish study seeking to replicate Rosener's study (1990) found that there was no evidence that men and women used different management styles (Mortell, 1992). This study consisted of a sample of managers rather than entrepreneurs. Mortell (1992) argued that the sample in Rosener's (1990) study consisted of a second generation of women in management, while women managers in Ireland were the first generation. She went on to argue that the second generation in Ireland is emerging, and that it will facilitate different management styles.

3.5.2 Management Styles in Entrepreneurship

Similar work was undertaken in the context of entrepreneurship. For example, in a study involving twenty businesses run by women, Vokins summarises different managerial approaches practised by women as being:

> *"Team based with a strong 'family' feel, co-operative in nature, enabling (i.e. developing potential in employees), dynamic and flexible in purpose, quickly reacting to variants internally and externally, rooted in desire for high standards and competitive products/services, medium risk taking, using intuitive decision making, innovative, one preferring win:win strategies which result in satisfaction for all parties as against win:lose where only one party gains"* (Vokins, 1993:53).

Another example from the NFWBO (National Foundation for Women Business Owners) found that women think differently, that they have a different style of management and finally that they hold different notions of success (NFWBO, 1994). Women tend to emphasise 'intuitive' or 'right-brain' thinking, while men emphasise 'logical' or 'left-brain' thinking. Also, they claim that women entrepreneurs are more 'whole-brained', which means that they tend to use both their left and right brain evenly and women entrepreneurs prioritise 'reflection on decisions' over 'moving to action' while men prioritise action over reflection (NFWBO, 1994). The NFWBO portrayed men and women entrepreneurs in very different

terms: *"women describe their business in family terms and see their business relationships as a network. Men entrepreneurs think in hierarchical terms and focus more on establishing clear rules and procedures"* (NFWBO, 1994). Minniti and Arenius (2003) replicated those findings and point out that there are differences in management styles in that *"women forge long-term relationships based on effective ties. Men, by contrast, tend to form short-term relationships based on mutual interest. Also, women form relatively egalitarian coalitions, while men forge relatively hierarchical coalitions"* (2003:20).

McGregor and Tweed's (2001) study of male and female owners/managers in New Zealand investigated the managerial competences of manufacturers according to gender. They observed that women ranked themselves higher in terms of 'scanning the environment', 'dealing with details' and 'managing budget'. When asked to rank the areas they believed they needed to develop further, women gave higher priority to competencies such as 'scanning', 'collecting information', 'providing rewards and recognition', 'linking rewards to performance', 'scheduling', 'setting budgets' and 'managing costs', which can all be regrouped under three categories: 'resources (including financial management)', 'strategic management (including information acquisitions skills)' and 'people management' (McGregor and Tweed, 2001:284). The authors argue that *"women are strongly aware of the business and commercial demands of technology uptake in their manufacturing enterprises and may be business or profit driven"*. However, overall they found that their study demonstrated more similarities than differences in the managerial competences of women and men.

A recent Irish study investigated differences in the management styles of men and women (The SIA Group, 2001) and found that women's management style tended to be centred around 'intuitive thinking' while men used more 'logical thinking'. Overall, this study confirmed that, within an Irish context, the values usually held by men and women differed. As observed in the international literature, women's management style appeared to rely more on holistic values, where interpersonal relationships predominated, while men tended to desire assets such as power and money (The SIA Group, 2001). Overall, the findings in the Irish context replicate the findings in the international literature (NFWBO, 1994). Differences in women's and men's management styles were summarized by the SIA Group (Table 3.3), who emphasized that *"these differences are not generalisations and individual characteristics and abilities play a not inconsiderable role in the development of any*

management style [...] while these characteristics are not typical of all men or women, they do suggest the benefits of combining both styles" (2001:30).

Table 3.3: Characteristics of Management Style by Gender

Women	Men
▪ Intuitive or right-brain thinking	▪ Logical or left-brained thinking
▪ Innovating	▪ Analysing
▪ Values-based decision-making	▪ Facts-based decision-making
▪ Reflecting on decisions	▪ Systems and procedure development
▪ Perceptiveness	
▪ Team playing	▪ Delegating
▪ Communicating	▪ Directing
▪ Influencing	▪ Dynamism
▪ Tolerating	▪ Aggressiveness

Source: The SIA Group, (2001:30)

Overall the international and Irish literature shows evidence that there are differences between the management styles of men and women entrepreneurs, who appear to hold different views and value different attributes. However, the weakness of this body of research is that it does not take into account the gendered definitions of success held by men and women entrepreneurs.

This study draws upon previous research in examining the organisational structures and management styles of Irish men and women entrepreneurs. In Section 3.6, the social construction of entrepreneurship and issues of gender in entrepreneurship are covered.

3.6 Feminist Analysis of Entrepreneurship

This section analyses entrepreneurship as a gendered concept, in order to understanding the issues that emerged from the empirical survey data collected. This section will present the feminist theories underpinning research on women entrepreneurs. It will then examine how women are marginalised in entrepreneurship and the relationship between women's position in entrepreneurship and in the private sphere.

3.6.1 Feminist Theories and Female Entrepreneurship Research

Research studies on women entrepreneurs can be categorised into the three main categories identified by Harding (1987) and used by Ahl (2006). First, some studies in female

entrepreneurship are based on the viewpoint that men and women are essentially different, with a focus on trait theories and attempting to develop typologies, based largely on social feminist, psychoanalytical feminist, or radical feminist theoretical approaches (Ahl, 2006). Second, other studies adopt an alternative theoretical base, linked to liberal feminism, in which women and men are seen as the same but face different structural barriers. This ideology has lead to a large number of studies on the obstacles facing women entrepreneurs and argues that men and women would be the same, were it not for the barriers they face. This research measures women entrepreneurs against their male counterparts (Ahl, 2006). Finally, a third strand of research, assumes that women and men are different, but it emphasises the need for a parallel theory of female entrepreneurship, to incorporate women's way of doing business. Research studies in this area often look at domestic work and childcare but fail to regard women entrepreneurs as a heterogeneous group. Furthermore, this type of research fails to acknowledge the changes over time between women entrepreneurs' work and family life and the power relations existing between family members (Mirchandani, 1999).

Recent research has moved beyond describing women entrepreneurs' personal and business characteristics (e.g. Goffee and Scase, 1985; Hisrich and Brush, 1986; Mistick, 1998), motivations (e.g. Orhan and Scott, 2001) and obstacles (e.g. Goffee and Scase, 1985; Marlow, 1997; Moore and Buttner, 1997) to applying an analytical focus. Recent studies demonstrate the inherent masculine qualities and characteristics of entrepreneurship, showing how women are 'ghettoised' on the periphery of entrepreneurship. This leads to an examination of how positioning women as the 'other' in entrepreneurship affects women's position in the private sphere.

3.6.2 Women Entrepreneurs as the 'Other'

Early work on entrepreneurship focused mainly on the personal and business characteristics of entrepreneurs and their psychological traits. Bias in research on women entrepreneurs is introduced because of the historical exclusion of women from research on entrepreneurship. The exclusion of women, usually for not being typical enough of the male norm of entrepreneurship was widespread in studies prior to the 1980s. Male bias was also introduced because of what Stevenson (1990) calls 'sexual imperialism'. When women were eventually considered as entrepreneurs, theories based on male entrepreneurs were used to study women entrepreneurs (Stevenson, 1990; Carter, 2000; Carter and Shaw, 2006). This is inadequate to

study women entrepreneurs because it leads to the creation of stereotypes, which influence subsequent research findings (e.g. research creates a male norm of entrepreneurship, against which women are measured) (Stevenson, 1990).

Recent research demonstrates the masculine characteristics associated with entrepreneurship, in which an entrepreneur is seen as a male norm, while women entrepreneurs are portrayed as being the 'other', thus stressing an androcentric view of entrepreneurship (Ogbor, 2000; Ahl, 2004; Bruni et al., 2004; Hytti, 2005; Ahl, 2006). For example, Ogbor (2000) denounces the entrepreneur as *"reflecting the archetype of white male hero"* (2000:607), presenting the male/female dichotomy in the following terms:

> *"Female participation in entrepreneurship is reasoned to be the antithesis of entrepreneurial norms as a result of gender qualities: male achievement versus female subjugation; male dominance versus female submissiveness; male control versus female appreciation; male autonomy versus female support; male aggression versus female cooperation; male independence versus female dependence; male idiosyncrasy versus female conformity" (2000:621).*

At the basis of these analyses is the fact that discourse is seen as a vehicle for meaning. It is therefore through discourse that understanding is constructed. The concept of entrepreneurship is therefore influenced by the discourse surrounding it (e.g. entrepreneurs themselves, the media and academia) (Ogbor, 2000; Ahl, 2004; Bruni et al., 2004; Ahl, 2006). By using deconstruction, this body of work (see for example Ogbor, 2000; Ahl, 2004; Ahl, 2006) challenges and questions the findings of research on female entrepreneurship to date. It seeks to *"raise questions about how taken-for-granted assumptions, and systems of values and commitments to particular social interests, penetrate research interests, approaches and results"* (Ogbor, 2000:609).

This vein of research not only highlights that there is an implicit assumption throughout the literature that men and women entrepreneurs are different (even though this does not imply that women and men themselves are necessarily assumed to be different), but it also shows that through this differentiation, women entrepreneurs are portrayed as being inferior to men entrepreneurs (Ahl, 2004; Bruni et al, 2004; Ahl, 2006). Academic discourse creates a sense of inferiority among women entrepreneurs by not regarding them as central. Rather, they are perceived as a sub-category, often at the periphery of entrepreneurship. Women entrepreneurs, because they are seen as the 'other', are measured against the male norm. This means that many studies focus on the differences between men and women entrepreneurs,

which in turn, has the effect of reinforcing gender differences in the field of entrepreneurship (Mirchandani, 1999; Ahl, 2004; Ahl, 2006). Academic discourse attributes women's oppression to societal factors (gender roles) or biological factors (reproductive role of women) rather than attributing it to gender stereotyping (Ogbor, 2000). For example, by portraying women as nurturing and caring, Ogbor (2000) argues that women entrepreneurs may experience unequal access to finance since they might be less able to obtain capital or are seen as a greater risk by financial institutions, because of stereotypical views emanating from the discourse on women entrepreneurs (e.g. smaller size or lower performance).

Stevenson (1990) raises another important critique of entrepreneurial research. She argues that research has lead to stereotypes of men and women entrepreneurs and that this stereotype of the (male) entrepreneur is not adequate to examine the experiences of women entrepreneurs. More importantly, the concept of the entrepreneur does not recognise the heterogeneity of entrepreneurs in general, and women entrepreneurs in particular. An important aspect of demasculinasing entrepreneurship would be to recognize, for example, that the concept of an entrepreneur should not be restricted to individuals who want to create long-term entrepreneurship and/or achieve significant growth for their companies (Hytti, 2005).

Research has tended to look at how gender affects entrepreneurship and attempted to establish causal relationships between gender and other factors. For example, Goffee and Scase (1985) used their typology to explain which women entrepreneurs are setting up different types of businesses (Goffee and Scase, 1985). Aside from the difficulties associated with establishing cause between gender and types of businesses, this approach fails to recognise that the relationship between gender and types of businesses is a reciprocal one. Indeed, there appears to be a causal relationship between gender and structural factors, but equally there appears to be a causal relationship between structural factors and gender (Mirchandani, 1999).

3.6.3 Women Entrepreneurs and the Family

Existing literature has shown that a process of 'othering' women entrepreneurs exists and has examined the links between 'othering' women in entrepreneurship and women's position in the private sphere. Bruni et al. (2004) describe 'othering' as a *"process by which a dominant group defines into existence an inferior group, mobilizing categories, ideas and behaviours about what marks people out as belonging to these categories"* (2004: 257-258). In addition

to this process, Ahl (2004) argues that not only is the concept of an entrepreneur a male gendered construct, but that:

> *"it also implies a gendered division of labor. Being an entrepreneur – strong-willed, determined, persistent, resolute, detached, and self-centred – requires some time, effort and devotion to a task [...], leaving little time for the caring of small children, cooking, cleaning and all the other chores necessary to survive. Performing entrepreneurship in the sense described above requires a particular gendered division of labor where it is assumed that a wife (of if unmarried, usually a women anyway) does the unpaid, reproductive work associated with the private sphere"* (2004:59).

Women entrepreneurs are also more likely to be in a position where there is a blurring between their public and private sphere (for example working from home) because they are expected to be mainly responsible for household duties. This raises difficulties for women working from home who, for example, may consequently lack credibility or have more difficulties getting access to finance. In Mirchandani's (1999:232) words, working from home gives entrepreneurs less *"economic power and social legitimacy"*.

The literature shows that the process of gender stereotyping entrepreneurship leads to a particular set of expectations (Ahl, 2004; Bruni et al, 2004; Ahl, 2006). Not only are entrepreneurs, both male and female, expected to behave according to the established (male) norm in their entrepreneurial life, but this also implies that they will be expected to behave according to traditional gender roles in the home. Stereotyping entrepreneurs further excludes women by the very fact that they are traditionally responsible for the care of the home and the children.

The recent body of work reviewed in this section shows that entrepreneurship is a gendered concept. It examined the adherence of entrepreneurs to gender roles in entrepreneurship and the home. These concepts are explored in the interviews conducted for this thesis, by asking women if their experience of entrepreneurship in any way challenges assigned gender roles. The next section will present the key findings arising from this review of the literature.

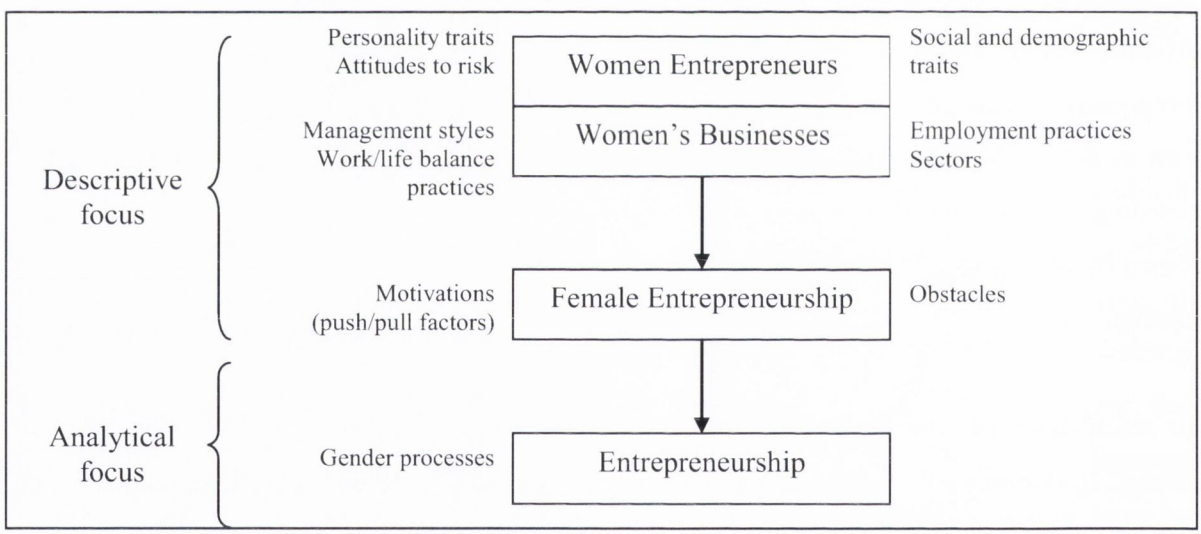
3.7 Key Findings

This chapter provides an account of the main themes in female entrepreneurship research and sets out the context against which the findings of the research can be compared. These key

themes are explored throughout this thesis, in order to place women entrepreneurs in Ireland against the body of international literature.

The literature review has presented the development of research into female entrepreneurship. The field started off from a very exploratory descriptive base in the late 1970s. Early studies aimed to provide a description of women entrepreneurs, and subsequently, the businesses they operated. Following interest by policy makers in increasing the number of women entrepreneurs, international literature examined the motivations and obstacles facing women entrepreneurs, dividing the motivations between push and pull factors. The literature then shifted from forming theories of female entrepreneurship to attempting to fuse female entrepreneurship into 'mainstream' entrepreneurship. This process had the tendency to portray women as being at the periphery of an essentially male concept of entrepreneurship. Figure 3.5, devised for this thesis, presents a visual summary of the literature reviewed in this chapter.

Figure 3.5 Key Themes in the Literature Review



Arising from the literature, there are grounds for believing that there are gender differences in entrepreneurial characteristics. However, the literature recognises that these provide weak explanations for gender differences after the start-up period. The literature also includes evidence that there are differences in the characteristics of men and women's businesses, according to sectors, with men concentrated in more technical or manual sectors, while women are predominant in the professional, personal and retail services. There is some evidence that women entrepreneurs are more likely to have a family history of being in

business, suggesting that women need role models before becoming entrepreneurs. Furthermore, the literature on women entrepreneurs suggests that they are relatively risk averse, especially in relation to capital, preferring 'bootstrapping' techniques to formal borrowing to finance their business.

Entrepreneurial motivations show some illuminating differences between men and women entrepreneurs, with evidence that women's motivations are more driven by push factors. The literature also demonstrated that women entrepreneurs tended to have smaller businesses, which expanded at a slower rate than that those of men. However, there was no evidence in the literature that women's businesses were more likely to fail than men's.

Research suggests that women entrepreneurs tend to adopt different management styles than men. It was argued in the literature that this was partly due to the fact that women's definition of success was different to men's: men are more orientated towards notions of power and money, while women were focused more on holistic goals. The obstacles that have the greatest impact on female entrepreneurship were identified as: lack of finance, skills, credibility and confidence.

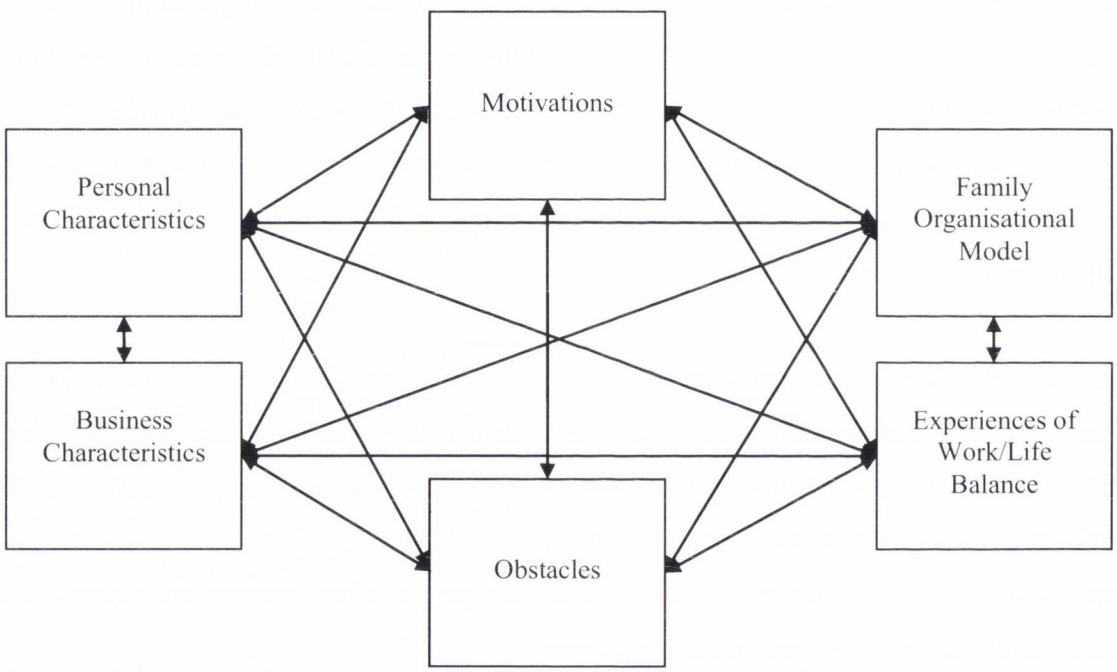
Most studies to date have failed to examine the reasons behind gender inequalities between men and women. More recently, there has been a shift from essentially descriptive research, to more analytical theory building, that sees women entrepreneurs being portrayed as the 'other', measured against the norm of the white, Western, often middle class, male entrepreneur. As a consequence, gender inequalities persist since women are portrayed as different, and inferior, from their male counterparts.

Due to the paucity of Irish studies, most of the body of knowledge on female entrepreneurship in this study is based on material coming from mainly the US and Europe. However, the findings from Irish sources tend to replicate those of international studies, though the proportion of women entrepreneurs in Ireland is quite low compared to the rest of Europe and the US.

3.8 Conceptual Framework for the Thesis

The literature reviewed in this chapter has covered the main themes in female entrepreneurship research. This study builds upon existing studies and positions the research findings on women entrepreneurs in Ireland in a wider context. Using the main themes emerging from the literature on women entrepreneurs, it seeks to understand female entrepreneurship by considering the inter-relationships of several concepts: personal characteristics, business characteristics, motivations, obstacles, family organisational choices, and experiences of work/life balance. The conceptual framework which underpins the thesis is informed by the literature review and is presented in Figure 3.6.

Figure 3.6 Conceptual Framework underpinning the Thesis



The international literature on female entrepreneurship has encapsulated research over the last three decades in portraying women entrepreneurs, their businesses, motivations and obstacles in detail. However, only limited work has been undertaken on Irish women entrepreneurs. The aim of this research is to fill this gap, by examining whether the international findings in the literature apply to women entrepreneurs in the Irish context. Some small-scale exploratory studies have examined Irish women entrepreneurs showing that there are many similarities between Irish women entrepreneurs and the findings of the international literature. However, these studies also highlight some differences linked to Ireland's unique historical and cultural

background. This thesis seeks to validate these results, using a larger and more methodologically robust sample of women's and men's businesses. To achieve this, it seeks answers to a number of research questions, derived from the review of the literature and presented in Table 3.4. The rationales behind the research questions are discussed below.

Table 3.4 Research Questions

	Research Questions
1	Do men take more financial and/or personal risks than women?
2	Do men and women have different motivational factors for entering entrepreneurship?
3	Do push factors predominate among women entrepreneurs?
4	Do men and women face different obstacles in entrepreneurship?
5	Do women and men adopt different management styles?
6	Do men prioritise the growth of their business over their family/personal life?
7	Do men prioritise income levels over their family/personal life?
8	Do women use entrepreneurship to change their work environment?
9	Do women use entrepreneurship to change their family environment?

This thesis examines, in detail, some characteristics of women entrepreneurs hitherto not examined in other Irish studies, such as entrepreneurs' attitudes towards risk and their preferred management styles. The literature suggests that risk affects men and women entrepreneurs differently and that women entrepreneurs are less likely to take financial and/or personal risks than their male counterparts. The first research question examines whether this is the case within an Irish context.

International research into female entrepreneurship suggests that men and women entrepreneurs are motivated by different factors. For example, women entrepreneurs are more likely to cite achieving a better work/life balance as a motivational factor. Furthermore, there has been some debate in the literature as to whether or not push factors predominate among women entrepreneurs. Even though there is no consensus, some studies suggest that women entrepreneurs are, to a greater extent than their male counterparts, influenced by push factors.

The second and third research questions in this thesis seek to establish if this is the case among Irish women entrepreneurs. The second research question investigates whether men and women in Ireland have different motivational factors for entering entrepreneurship, while the third research question examines whether push factors predominate among women entrepreneurs in Ireland.

Another aspect of research into female entrepreneurship has identified the obstacles and barriers faced by women. There is extensive literature on this topic internationally. Some research has argued that these differences account for the smaller number of women entrepreneurs or for women choosing to run smaller businesses. This thesis examines the extent to which women entrepreneurs in Ireland fit into the international model. It might be expected that many of the obstacles will be similar, but that the Irish context may present some distinct barriers. This area of the literature forms the basis of the fourth research question, which attempts to find out whether there are differences in the barriers and obstacles faced by men and women entrepreneurs in Ireland, in accordance with the international findings.

The fifth research question examines whether men and women entrepreneurs adopt different management styles in an Irish context as some authors have argued that women entrepreneurs tend to favour a transformational leadership style, over a more transactional one, and that the managerial values of men and women entrepreneurs differ.

International research has identified the tendency of entrepreneurial thinking to view the concept of entrepreneurship as highly androcentric. The sixth and seventh research questions examine whether women and men entrepreneurs in Ireland adopt the male entrepreneurial model. The sixth and seventh research questions, respectively, examine whether Irish men entrepreneurs prioritise business growth and income level, while their female counterparts prioritise their personal/family life.

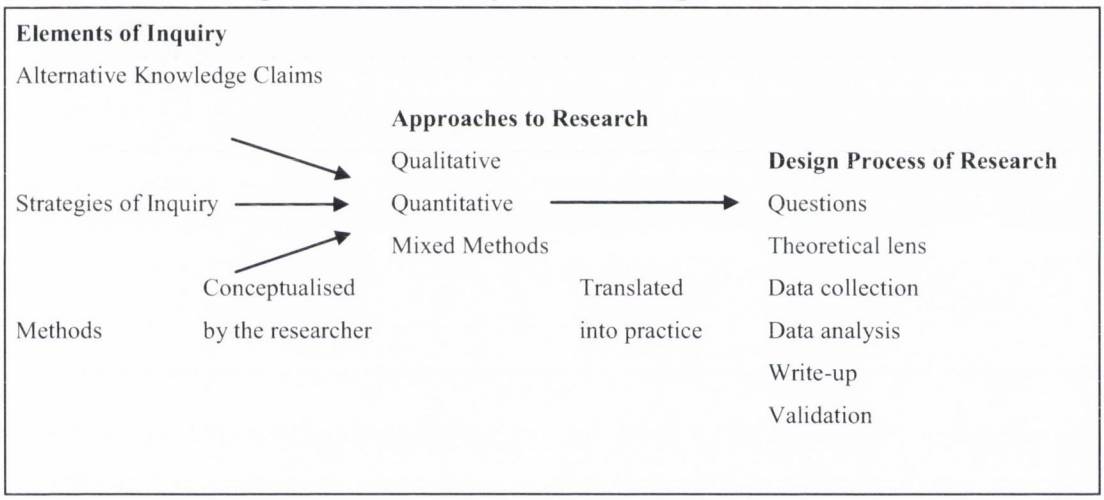
Finally, this thesis departs from the literature in that it attempts to reconstruct new concepts of entrepreneurship. The eighth and ninth research questions look at the environments created by women entrepreneurs. Following the deconstruction of the concept of entrepreneurship in recent studies, it tentatively and inductively attempts to rebuild new concepts of female entrepreneurship.

The following chapters of this thesis build upon the knowledge gained through the international literature, to ascertain whether there is evidence to test gender differences between men and women entrepreneurs. Chapter 4 presents the methodology adopted to address the research questions developed from this review of the literature.

Chapter 4 Research Methodology

Chapter 4 presents the methodological approach used in this thesis. The methodology underpinning the thesis provides a framework for answering the research questions derived from the literature, which addressed Crotty's (1998) framework, as adapted by Creswell (2003). In this model (Figure 4.1), Creswell (2003) emphasises a sequence of three main elements: (1) knowledge claims made by the researcher (ontological and epistemological claims), (2) strategies of inquiry and (3) design process of data collection methods. The choices made in these three elements guide the research undertaken and translate into the different approaches to research (i.e. quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods).

Figure 4.1 Summary Model: Design Process of Research



Source: Creswell (2003:5)

Using the model, this chapter provides a brief summary of the prevalent knowledge claims and philosophical stances adopted throughout social sciences. Section 4.1 also discusses the philosophical considerations underpinning the research, with particular emphasis on feminist methodologies. Section 4.2 describes the data collection process and the choices made for this research. It explains how the quantitative and qualitative data were collected.

4.1 Philosophical Assumptions

This section first sets out the spectrum of possible research paradigms, before discussing in detail the two extremes of that spectrum (positivism and interpretivism). The section then considers pragmatism as a philosophical assumption, and considers the implications of feminist methodologies on the research paradigm spectrum. It is argued that pragmatism is the most appropriate paradigm for the research undertaken in this thesis. The section concludes by linking the philosophical assumptions underpinning the conceptual framework with the research questions developed in Chapter 3.

4.1.1 The Research Paradigm Spectrum

The process of research is not homogenous across disciplines or projects. Each project can use a subset of research methods usually selected from strategies such as: experimental design, observation, surveys or case studies. It is particularly important for disciplines in the social sciences to spell out the methodology adopted because of the 'uncertainty' associated with the results. Unlike disciplines in natural sciences such as mathematics or physics, in which the results of research yield general laws which can usually be applied to the physical world, thus giving them more credibility, disciplines in social sciences need to show that the results are obtained from a valid form of knowledge gathering to give convincing results. To make a decision as to which research methods should be used, the researcher must be clear about the philosophical assumptions underpinning the research. The research paradigms adopted flow from the decisions made in terms of these philosophical assumptions. The two main philosophical assumptions consist of ontology and epistemology. Ontology is concerned with the nature of reality. On one end of the spectrum, reality is seen as objective and external to the researcher. At the other end, reality is seen as subjective and different for each actor/observer. The epistemological assumption measures the relationship between the researcher and the research itself. In particular, it focuses on the involvement of the researcher with the subjects.

There are several philosophical approaches to research, but little consensus as to what the definitive approaches are. Most researchers would accept that there are at least two fundamental paradigms[1] or world-views, namely positivism and interpretivism. A variety of

[1] A paradigm is defined as a set of assumptions, concepts, values and practices that constitutes a way of viewing reality for the community that shares them.

other paradigms have been proposed and applied by philosophers and scholars. These include critical and constructivist approaches. In undertaking any piece of research, the researcher has first to be clear on where he/she stands in this debate. To this purpose, this section provides an overview of positivism and interpretivism, before presenting the position used in this study.

Positivism

The use of positivism implies that the researcher is working with an objective reality and quantifiable observations. This means that the underlying philosophical stance for positivism is that reality exists independently of the researcher and that there is no relationship between the researcher and that which is being observed (Remenyi et al., 1998). Positivism relies on observable and quantifiable observations to which statistical tests can be applied to test hypotheses. For example, as Kolakowski (1993) argues *"we are entitled to record only that which is actually manifested in experience; opinions concerning occult entities of which experienced things are supposedly the manifestations are untrustworthy"* (1993:3). Since positivism relies on data that can be observed, this approach leads to problems when examining attitudes and belief systems.

Traditionally, a positivist paradigm has been adopted in the natural sciences because of the nature of the observations made. The objective of a positivistic paradigm is to obtain rigorous and unified scientific methods across all disciplines (Von Wright, 1993). Positivism aims to come up with law-like statements, akin to those obtained in pure mathematics, across all disciplines, thereby requiring repeated experiments to prove theories which exist over extensive periods of time (e.g. it was assumed for a long time that the earth was flat until a new 'experiment' overturned these findings). It is common, under this paradigm, to choose to collect extensive data quantitatively so as to be able to find trends among the data. This method of data collection is usually adopted in a positivistic paradigm because it yields objective data which are independent of the researcher. Positivists therefore argue that this gives more validity than data collected qualitatively. However, it can be argued that the reliance on extensive quantitative data does not necessarily guarantee unbiased findings. There is no more reliability and validity in quantitative data collection than there is in qualitative data collection, assuming the research is carried out properly.

In summary, positivism's reliance on the objectivity of reality is a practical philosophical stance in the natural sciences. In positivism, it seems reasonable to assume that a molecule exists independently of the researcher. However, in social sciences, this causes problems since it is common to need to interpret subjective and multiple realities. Furthermore, the epistemological stance of positivism tells us that there is no interaction between the researcher and the phenomenon under scrutiny. This may be feasible in the natural sciences, where there is no impact/interaction of the researcher on say an equilateral triangle. In the social sciences it is more problematic, since research often relies on human interaction (e.g. a respondent might be flattered by being asked to participate in the research which could distort his/her responses accordingly). Largely, in response to the problems arising from a positivistic approach, some researchers choose to adopt an interpretive approach, the main characteristics of which are discussed below.

Interpretivism

Ontologically, interpretivism adopts the opposite approach to positivism. Interpretivism views reality as multiple interpretations by individuals. As Williams and May (1996) explain: *"it does not follow that the world is considered "unreal", but simply that we do not have any kind of direct "one to one" relationship between us (subject) and the world (object). The world is interpreted through the mind"* (Williams and May, 1996:60).

Contrary to positivism which is well able to provide descriptive accounts of phenomenon, the strong point of interpretivism is that it successfully allows the investigation of the rationale behind actions to explain subjective phenomena (e.g. lack of job satisfaction). For this reason the interpretivist paradigm is more powerful in research that examines respondents' behaviours and systems of belief (Remenyi et al., 1998). Interpretivism also recognises that there is a need to recognise the subjects' interpretation of a causal relationship. For example, Williams and May (1996) argue that it is pointless to state that the assassination of Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo caused the First World War without an examination of the event through its interpretation by the population at the time.

Interpretivism rejects the idea that there should be one method to obtain knowledge across disciplines (Von Wright, 1993) and does not emphasise the need for law-like statements. On the contrary, interpretivism seeks to obtain theories that are meaningful in the context in

which they were generated and that successfully explain a given social phenomenon. Therefore, it usually relies on meaningful and extensive qualitative data focusing on explaining causal relationships in the social reality of respondents.

This section has examined the two ends of the research paradigm spectrum, namely positivism and interpretivism. Notwithstanding the existence of different research paradigms, it is not necessary to adhere strictly to any particular one in a specific research project. On the contrary, it is not unknown for researchers to make use of methodologies associated with different paradigms in undertaking their research. This approach is commonly referred to as pragmatism and is discussed in the next section.

4.1.2 Pragmatism

In terms of methodology, the literature shows that particular research methods (quantitative or qualitative) flow from the epistemological position adopted by the researcher, which itself flows from the starting ontological position. For example, an objectivist (as opposed to subjectivist) ontological position and positivist (as opposed to interpretivist) epistemological approach will lead to the use of quantitative (as opposed to qualitative) research methods. Hence, the two main research paradigms (positivism and interpretivism) are seen as separate and incompatible attributes, and mixing them could lead to severe disruptions in the clear flow of philosophical assumptions (Guba and Lincoln, 1988).

Another aspect of the divide between philosophical assumptions stems from the fact that there is a strong link between research approaches (inductive and deductive) and research methods (quantitative and qualitative). A deductive approach (where theory is used to develop propositions, which are tested to confirm or revise the initial theory) is strongly linked with quantitative methods. In contrast, an inductive approach (where theory is drawn from observations and findings) is strongly linked with qualitative methods (Bryman, 2001; Saunders et al., 2007).

The literature shows a clear opposition between partisans of quantitative methods versus partisans of qualitative methods. Some authors have gone as far as labelling this opposition as a 'war' between quantitativists and qualitativists (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). However, other authors advocate an alternative mixed methods approach to the traditional mono-method choice (Creswell, 2003; Saunders et al., 2007), in order to avoid the

shortcomings of using one method alone. Qualitative methods are criticised for generally lacking direction and having limited comparability, while also demanding huge resources (e.g. financial or time considerations) from researchers. Quantitative methods are criticised for placing too much emphasis on the relationship between two variables, while not answering the 'why' question. In other words, quantitative methods are performing well in terms of descriptive research, but less so in terms of analytical research in the social sciences. Quantitative methods are also criticised for using a narrow way of questioning, categorising, and explaining. For example, the scope of questions available to quantitative researchers is itself limited by the types of questions that they can ask, the types of answers that are codified, and the meaning that the person analysing the data will give to the answers (Remenyi et al., 1998).

The two main paradigms presented above (positivism and interpretivism) form a somewhat rigid structure. However, some authors emphasise the need to view these two paradigms as two ends of a spectrum which are not mutually exclusive (e.g. Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998). Creswell (2003) denotes this position, at the junction of positivism and interpretivism, as pragmatism, characterised by the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods. It is pragmatism that is used in this thesis.

One of the main features of pragmatism is that quantitative and qualitative methods are no longer seen as mutually exclusive, but compatible (Creswell, 2003), based on the fact that both paradigms have been present, funded and generated results for years. As such, pragmatism asserts that there is no need to commit to any one system. Pragmatists see the world as a set of disjointed realities, which can best be captured by several methods, each looking at different aspects. Pragmatists are also focused on results and their application, while giving less emphasis to the irreconcilable and conflicting philosophical considerations underpinning research. This lack of commitment to one of the two main research paradigms also means that there is no strict adherence to an inductive or deductive approach (Creswell, 2003). Pragmatism also complements the key ideas present in feminist methodologies, where there is a growing emphasis on the use of mixed methods. The main topics in the feminist research agenda are presented below.

4.1.3 Feminist Research

Given that this thesis investigates the experiences of women entrepreneurs, it is important to consider the impact of feminist thinkers on methodological issues when designing the research process and choosing a research paradigm. There are three main areas which are criticised by feminist researchers: the androcentricity of social research, the absence of gender as a factor or exclusion of women altogether, and finally, the nature of the relationship between researcher and subject (Williams and May, 1996; May, 2001).

Feminist research points out that research methods have been designed by men, for men, and that they are highly gender biased. Stevenson (1990) argues that research done by men on men ('normal' research) is just as biased as research done by women on women (feminist research), but that the former is seen as mainstream, while the latter is marginalised. As Maynard (1994) explains: *"the dominant modes of doing research [quantitative approaches] were regarded as inhibiting a sociological understanding of women's experiences"* (1994:11). Ogbor (2000) states for example that, *"in the case of research in entrepreneurship, the tendency to reify myths into measurable abstracts has given rise to a conviction that the characteristics and traits of entrepreneurs (e.g. motivations, backgrounds, values and other psychological constructs) can be abstracted, classified, codified, categorized and operationalized via mathematical models in order to aid quantification, measurement, validity and correlation, with the aim of determining causal relationships between heroes and non-heroes"* (2000:622-623).

In other words, there is a tendency among feminist researchers to be critical of what is a predominantly positivistic approach. This is because, more often than not, women have been completely ignored as subjects (for example in history where women are largely absent) and research has focused almost exclusively on male interpretations. Other fields of research specific to women have, up to recently, been ignored. This is the case for example of motherhood (Oakley, 1979), domestic work (Oakley, 1974) or violence towards women and childbirth (Maynard, 1994). Research methods in the field of female entrepreneurship are also highly gender biased. Due to the historical exclusion of women in studies of entrepreneurship, most existing theories are male-based. Some authors (e.g. Stevenson, 1990, Mirchandani, 1999; Ahl, 2004; Ahl, 2006) argue that these theories are inappropriate to examine the female experience of entrepreneurship.

Feminist research acknowledges the different power relations between both gender and hierarchic positions (Maynard, 1994; May, 2001). Some feminist researchers emphasize the importance of aiming for an equal relationship between researcher and respondents to produce more meaningful information (Oakley, 1981; Maynard, 1994). This aim is criticised because, as Millen (1997) explains, this type of relationship is unachievable because of the depth of knowledge of the researcher compared with the respondents and because there are no means of judging how meaningful the data really are (Maynard, 1994).

To address these problems, other feminist researchers have worked on developing alternative methodologies. Feminist researchers have tended to rely on qualitative data collection, viewing quantitative methods as associated with positivist masculine forms of knowledge (Maynard, 1994; May, 2001). In terms of female entrepreneurship, this is particularly problematic if questions are based on previous, largely male-based research. Stevenson (1990) argues that *"lists and scales are often developed out of a male experience and so consequently only serve to measure women against men, not measure women's entrepreneurial motivation and behaviour"* (1990:442). She points out that quantitative data collection methods are useful in research on women entrepreneurs to develop profiles. However, they often lack the insights provided by qualitative data collection methods. The danger of creating profiles lies in that it contributes to stereotypical views of women entrepreneurs and does not recognise the heterogeneity of the group. While Stevenson (1990) advocates an essentially qualitative methodology, other feminist researchers are calling for a reconciliation of quantitative and qualitative approaches, by flagging up the benefits of a mixed methods approach. Maynard (1994) for example emphasizes that there is a need to acknowledge that the *"polarization of quantitative versus qualitative impoverishes research, and there have been calls for the use of multiple methods to be used in a complementary rather than a competitive way"* (1994:14).

Feminist research tends to reject traditional forms of knowledge in the rigid shape of positivism and interpretivism. It places itself in the 'pacifists' group, who recognise and emphasise the importance and contribution that mixed methods can bring to research. This section has given a brief overview of the feminist research perspective on research paradigms and it shows that there is an advocacy of pragmatism and therefore the use of mixed methods. The implications of this philosophical choice are discussed in the next section.

4.1.4 Paradigm Choice and Research Strategies

Pragmatism is the paradigm adopted throughout this thesis, combining positivist and interpretivist philosophies at the ontological level due to the nature of the research problem. The way women regard their entrepreneurial life is subjective, and influenced by their social system of beliefs. As part of this research focuses on the experiences of these respondents, there are as many interpretations of reality as there are respondents. However, there also exist some elements from positivism, most notably through parameters that can be objectively observed. Among those are, for example, whether or not entrepreneurs offer flexible work arrangements to their employees, or which types of childcare arrangements they avail of.

At the epistemological level, this thesis adopts a combination of positivism and interpretivism. It looks for patterns in the organisation of work and home life of women and men entrepreneurs and common characteristics relating to the background and motivations for entering entrepreneurship by women and men. It also offers a comparative dimension between men and women entrepreneurs. However, the research seeks more subjective data on, for instance, the experiences of work/life balance of women and men entrepreneurs. The choice of research philosophy for this thesis is therefore a combination of positivist and interpretivist features, which is reflected in the methodology adopted, allowing a mixture of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods.

Arising from the philosophical assumptions and paradigms adopted, there are different ways of approaching the research. Since this research is not following a purely positivist or interpretivist paradigm, and therefore not committing to a deductive or inductive approach, it was possible to use both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods in this thesis. Some aspects of female entrepreneurship are well known internationally (e.g. motivations), however, little is known about women entrepreneurs in Ireland. The research can therefore use a deductive approach, by drawing upon relevant theories and findings from the literature, and examining them in an Irish context. Other aspects of the research adopt a predominantly inductive approach, mainly due to the exploratory nature of the work (e.g. experiences of work/life balance). This approach, which is an essentially inductive one, does not depart from any theoretical base, but instead aims to create forms of knowledge. The use of an inductive approach remedies the problems associated with using a deductive approach. A deductive approach attempts to validate findings in another context, without recognising that there might be inherent distinct because of these two different contexts. For example, the

motivations that appear in the international literature might not be the ones that motivate women entrepreneurs in Ireland.

Mixing quantitative and qualitative methods can facilitate the development, complementarity and triangulation of the data collected. In this thesis, the data were mainly gathered using a questionnaire for self-completion that was mainly quantitative in nature. However, this was complemented by gathering qualitative data, giving information on the insights and experiences of women entrepreneurs. These data were gathered using a mixture of open-ended questions in the postal survey and in-depth interviews with selected women entrepreneurs.

This thesis adopted a survey (postal questionnaire) and in-depth interviews as the main research methods of data collection. This choice was motivated by the following two reasons. The first was that in order to improve reliability and to be able to draw conclusions about female entrepreneurs in Ireland, a large number of respondents was necessary. A survey allowed the collection of a large volume of information in a short space of time and with minimal expenditure. Second, the survey provided a means of comparison between groups of interest (e.g. male/female; parents of dependent children or not). To complement the use of a mailed questionnaire, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with women entrepreneurs. This was motivated by the fact that a postal questionnaire was limited as to the depth and detail of the responses provided and because of the exploratory nature of the research.

There is considerable evidence from the literature that combining research strategies, referred to as data triangulation, is usually beneficial to a project (Collis and Hussey, 2003; Saunders et al., 2007). The use of both quantitative and qualitative data collection allows a deeper understanding of the issues under examination. Triangulation means that each method of data collection brings its own strength to the research: quantitative research brings highly detailed, largely descriptive, information which is complemented and explored in detail by the qualitative data analysis. The advantage of using data triangulation, through the use of quantitative data and qualitative data collection in this thesis, is that it increases the reliability and validity of the findings.

4.1.5 Methodological Implications of the Conceptual Framework

In order to conduct an essentially exploratory study of women entrepreneurs in Ireland, the main aspects that are considered and compared with the international literature were those identified in the conceptual framework presented in Chapter 3. The conceptual framework developed for this thesis dictated the methodology employed throughout. These methodological implications are summarised in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Methodological Implications

Quantitative Approach ←		→ Qualitative Approach
Personal Characteristics	Motivations	Experiences of Work/Life Balance
Business Characteristics	Obstacles	
	Characteristics of the Organisational Model	

The six main concepts identified in the literature call for a mixed methods approach. First a quantitative approach is used to examine five of the six key concepts. The postal survey is particularly appropriate for gathering extensive, and essentially descriptive, data on the personal and business characteristics of women entrepreneurs, their motivations, obstacles encountered, and the choices they have made in their family organisational model. In addition, adopting a quantitative approach allowed for comparisons to be made between men and women entrepreneurs.

Second, a qualitative approach is used on four of the six key concepts, three of which were also examined using the quantitative framework. This provides the research with some valuable triangulation of data. These concepts are analysed through the use of semi-structured interviews with women entrepreneurs, to determine the obstacles faced, motivations, choices in terms of their family organisational model and experiences of entrepreneurship and work/life balance.

The use of these methods results in the gathering of empirical data about the six main themes that form the conceptual framework. The analysis considers the impact of gender on the above concepts, through the research questions derived from the literature review.

4.2 Data Collection

This section describes the data collection processes used. The sampling strategies, design issues and implementation are discussed for the quantitative and qualitative methods respectively.

4.2.1 Survey Methods

Two methods of data collection, quantitative and qualitative, were used in this study. Saunders et al. (2007) define quantitative data as *"numerical data or [...] data that could easily be quantified"* (2007:327), however, they argue that a clear-cut definition of qualitative data is more difficult to achieve. The choice of quantitative data was motivated by the fact that the backbone of this thesis is a comparison between men and women, and as such, it was necessary to gather data to allow comparisons to be made and differences to be tested for statistical significance. In addition, some of the issues under investigation in this research are personal and require a qualitative approach. Hence a mailed questionnaire was selected to ensure a greater sense of privacy and to promote a higher response rate (Salant and Dillman, 1994). Self-completion questionnaires allow respondents to be more honest since they do not feel influenced by the interviewer (Hoinville and Jowell, 1978; Salant and Dillman, 1994). The choice of a quantitative data collection method was also influenced by the cost of surveying a large sample, and also by the limited time frame available.

The decision to proceed with a mailed questionnaire also posed some problems. The first was in identifying a sampling frame. The lack of a suitable database for Irish entrepreneurs has raised a number of concerns (Campbell, 1994; Henry and Kennedy, 2003). Second, not all members of the sample have the same probability of responding to the survey, which means that non-response error in the survey can be problematic (Hoinville and Jowell, 1978; Saland and Dillman, 1994). Saland and Dillman (1994) point out that some respondents are more likely than others to respond, depending on their level of interest in the topic.

However, the major drawback of using a questionnaire for this particular study was that the majority of the issues under investigation relate to experiences, views and behaviours of entrepreneurs, as distinct from hard facts, and from the fact that the work was exploratory. In other words, it is not possible to attribute a clear-cut value to the experience of

entrepreneurship held by the respondents (Hoinville and Jowell, 1978), since views and behaviour patterns are better investigated using qualitative methods. As May (2001) highlights, *"interviews yield rich insights into people's biographies, experiences, opinions, values, aspirations, attitudes and feelings"* (2001:120). Furthermore, because of the exploratory nature of the research, an inductive approach based on generating explanations rather than testing existing theories was used. This influenced the decision to use a combination of a survey (mainly quantitative) with qualitative data collection based on interviews using open-ended questions.

For the qualitative data collection, semi-structured interviews were used rather than structured interviews or unstructured interviews. Behind that decision was the need for comparable data. Semi-structured interviews allowed respondents to describe their experiences and value systems in their own words, as well as letting them explore issues of importance to them (Hoinville and Jowell, 1978; May, 2001). Comparability was achieved by ensuring that all interviewees were asked the same questions in the same order, to minimise external influences. This section has presented a brief overview of the survey methods used and their drawbacks. The next two sections discuss, respectively, the quantitative and qualitative data collection methods employed in the thesis.

4.2.2 Quantitative Data

This section outlines the sampling strategy, how the sample was selected and how the data were collected. First, the sampling strategy is presented, then the sampling frames are discussed, followed by an examination of how the questionnaire was designed. The methods for distributing the questionnaire are then outlined before looking at the response rates generated by the survey.

Sampling Strategy

The ideal sampling frame for this research would have been a database of all entrepreneurs in Ireland according to gender. However, the sampling frame was limited by the paucity of data on entrepreneurs in general and the fact that existing databases are often confidential. Data on women entrepreneurs are limited because business databases seldom contain a field identifying gender. This problem was identified in other Irish studies of women entrepreneurs (Campbell, 1994; Henry and Kennedy, 2003) and international research (Stevenson, 1990).

Many studies have therefore relied either on purposive sampling or random sampling with a limited sampling frame (for example by sector or location). There has been a tendency for research to move from the former to the latter over time (Ahl, 2004). Commercial databases (for mail marketing purposes) are available electronically but are prohibitively expensive. For this reason the sampling frame amalgamated all entrepreneurs from three different sources: the Kompass Directory, County and City Enterprise Boards (CEBs) and Business Networks (e.g. Women in Business Networks).

The aim of the research was to obtain data about the gender processes underpinning entrepreneurship in Ireland. In order to do this, a quasi-experimental design was adopted in the quantitative part of the study. Gender as a factor was controlled for by utilising a group of men entrepreneurs to offer a comparative perspective. The sample therefore needed to combine a large number of men and women entrepreneurs to ensure that relevant statistical tests could be used. However, the research was also constrained by the cost associated with the number of questionnaires being sent.

There were two stages in the creation of the sample. Initially, a sample was drawn from the Kompass database, supplemented by a sample using the client databases of City and County Enterprise Boards (CEBs). As a compromise between the financial and time constraints, and the need for a large number of men and women entrepreneurs, a decision was made to use a control group of men entrepreneurs which was approximately 30 per cent of the size of the sample of women entrepreneurs drawn from Kompass. Following the responses from the questionnaires of the Kompass based sampling frame, the number of men entrepreneurs included in the sampling frame did not need to be as high. The proportion of men was therefore slightly reduced in the City and County Enterprise Board, to achieve a 3:1 ratio. This ratio of men:women entrepreneurs was deemed to be appropriate for conducting statistical tests.

The use of a control group in the quantitative data collection allowed for gender to be controlled for, and for direct comparisons to be made between men entrepreneurs and women entrepreneurs. However, the methodology employed in this thesis did not use matched samples, which is an approach popular in the field of research on female entrepreneurship (Carter and Shaw, 2006). Adopting a matched sample approach would have allowed an examination of the effect of gender alone, while controlling for other factors. Despite the

usefulness of this procedure in many areas of research into female entrepreneurship, the factors that are controlled for are usually strongly associated with women entrepreneurs, as for example sector, size of business, profitability (Ahl, 2004). For example, Fabowale et al.'s (1995) study on gender and loan refusals eliminated gender as a factor of discrimination and concluded that loan refusals were instead based on other structural factors such as business size or performance. Adopting a matched-sample approach is highly questionable and has been criticised for failing to recognise that structural factors themselves are highly gendered (Ahl, 2004; Ahl, 2006; Carter and Shaw, 2006).

Since this research did not use matched samples, the findings not only reflect gender differences in entrepreneurship, but also structural differences. However, it should be recognised that, as Mirchandani (1999) argues, looking at women entrepreneurs and only taking gender into account would be reductionist. Mirchandani (1999) for example argues that *"gender, occupation and organizational structure mutually influence one another in women's experiences of small business ownership"* (1999:225). For this reason, the research chooses not to 'control' for factors other than gender, recognising that other factors (e.g. business sectors) are themselves highly gendered.

Sampling Frames

The Kompass Directory is an extensive database which consists of over 144,000 companies in Ireland in its electronic version and 13,000 in its hard-back edition. The sample drawn from the Kompass database consisted of a combination of the two sources (electronic and printed edition). Initially, all listed women (337) were extracted from a random sample of the electronic Kompass database, along with all women (805) listed in the Kompass Directory. Duplicates were deleted manually, and this procedure led to a sample of 873 women entrepreneurs.

Men entrepreneurs were selected from the printed edition of the Kompass Directory. The listings in the Kompass Directory are made in alphabetical order of the business name. Since there was no reason to believe that this would in any way compromise the randomness of the sample, nine men were selected from each index pages, leading to a total of 357 men. The total number of respondents in the Kompass sample therefore consisted of 1335 entrepreneurs, 978 of whom where female and 357 male. Out of a total of 1335 potential male

and female respondents in the Kompass database, 105 were unsuitable (e.g. non-profit organisations), leaving a total sample of 1230 entrepreneurs, including 873 women and 357 men.

County and City Enterprise Boards (CEBs) were contacted and asked if they would participate by distributing the questionnaire to entrepreneurs on their client lists, using the same proportions of women and men as the sample drawn from the Kompass database. Out of a total of 35 County and City Enterprise Boards, one (Cork West Enterprise Board) does not keep any listings of their clients, seven refused to participate or did not respond in time while 27 CEBs agreed to distribute the questionnaire.

The City and County Enterprise Boards (CEBs) were responsible for the selection of their samples and were provided with oral information on the procedure to be used as well as being supplied with a list of instructions when sending out the questionnaires. Each City or County Enterprise Board was asked to randomly select 63 women and 21 men from their client databases. This proportion was selected to replicate the proportion of men and women selected through the Kompass Directory. The total number of entrepreneurs targeted amounted to 2268, of whom 1701 were female and 567 male. Table 4.2 provides a summary of the sample sizes associated with each source.

Table 4.2 Summary Table of Sample Size from each Source

Source	Sample Size	Number of Men in Sample	Number of Women in Sample
Kompass	1230	357	873
CEB	2268	567	1701
Total	**3498**	**924**	**2574**

A limited number of entrepreneurs who attended networking meetings were also targeted. Questionnaires were issued along with a Freepost envelope to participants in different networking sessions. The venues included the Women in Business Network in Carlow and Kildare (April to June 2004) and a Business Network Seminar held in Waterford in June 2004.

Questionnaire Design

A questionnaire was designed to gather extensive information on a number of aspects of entrepreneurship in Ireland. The questionnaire sought information on both men and women entrepreneurs to offer a comparative perspective. The questionnaire was based on an extensive review of the international and Irish literature and on a series of pilot interviews with entrepreneurs known to the researcher.

The main objectives of the questionnaire were to collect data on the:

- personal characteristics of Irish entrepreneurs;
- structural and sectoral characteristics of the respondents' businesses;
- families and professional backgrounds of Irish entrepreneurs;
- their relationships between work/life balance and entrepreneurship;
- values held by Irish entrepreneurs.

The questionnaire was piloted in April-June 2003 using a group of thirteen women involved with the Springboard Initiative for Women in Business, as part of the Wicklow Chamber of Commerce, and a number of entrepreneurs known personally to the researcher. Each respondent completed the questionnaire with minimal interaction from the researcher. After a number of corrections and alterations were made, a revised questionnaire, consisting of 59 scaled, dichotomous and open-ended questions, was devised. Respondents were also encouraged to make qualitative comments at the end of the questionnaire. It was organised under the following five headings:

- Profile of Business Venture
- Career History
- Domestic and Caring Responsibilities
- Personal Views – Attitudes and Opinions
- Demographic Characteristics.

The questionnaire consisted of a mixture of questions seeking factual information and opinions (Appendix A). Forty questions sought factual information, while the remaining 19 questions were looking for respondents' views and opinions. There are several types of questions available to include in a questionnaire, and their use depends on the aim of the research (de Vaus, 1991; Sallant and Dillman, 1994). The four main categories a question

could belong to are: 'behaviour', 'belief', 'attitudes' and 'attributes'. The questionnaire used questions from several of these categories.

Attribute questions were included in the questionnaire in order to collect data about the characteristics of the respondents and their businesses (e.g. gender, number of dependent children, percentage of male employees). Behaviour questions were also included because they sought information about the actions of respondents (e.g. childcare arrangements). Finally, the questionnaire also included belief questions in order to collect information on what people think (e.g. explanations behind the low number of women in business).

The decision was made to place greater emphasis on belief rather than behavioural questions in the thesis, which can result in less accurate information. As de Vaus (1991) reports, *"the focus of belief questions is on establishing what people think is true rather than on the accuracy of their beliefs"* (1991:82). Since this research focuses primarily on the experiences of entrepreneurs, belief questions were particularly appropriate in examining the gender perceptions of entrepreneurship in Ireland.

The use of perceptual data, gathered through a postal questionnaire or interviews, is frequent in entrepreneurship research (e.g. Naman and Slevin, 1993; Lyon et al., 2000). The use of perceptual data has been widely used in entrepreneurship research because it offers a number of advantages. The dis/advantages of using perceptual data are briefly discussed below.

The main disadvantage of using perceptual data over experiential data is related to problems arising from the subjectivity of the responses, as opposed to objective data such as financial reports for example. Subjectivity is problematic in that the perceptions of their environment can vary from respondent to respondent (Starbuck and Mezias, 1995). For example, two respondents might perceive differences in their managerial competences differently: a small increase in management skills can be ranked as being the same by one respondents, while another can rank the same difference as an increase.

However, a very important advantage of using perceptual data is that it addresses the issues directly, rather than deriving answers from experiential data. For example, obtaining financial information about the respondents' businesses does not examine why there might be gender

differences in business performance. Lyon et al. (2000) argue that this leads to a higher level of validity *"because researchers can pose questions that address directly the underlying nature of a construct"* (2000:1058). The authors stress that the high level of validity can be further increased through the inclusion of several measures representing the matter of interest, for example in examining the societal and cultural obstacles to women entrepreneurs in the postal questionnaire. Another important advantage of using perceptual data is that it is closely related to the behaviour of respondents. For example, women's perception of their economic and social environment will play an important part in their decision to become entrepreneurs.

Distribution of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire (Appendix A) was mailed along with a Freepost envelope and covering letter (Appendix B) to the entrepreneurs from the Kompass database (873 women entrepreneurs, and a random stratified sample of 357 men entrepreneurs). The letter was typed on headed notepaper and individually signed by Dr. Eileen Drew in an attempt to boost the response rate.

Each of the 27 County and City Enterprise Boards (CEBs) was provided with 84 ready packed and stamped envelopes, containing a copy of the questionnaire and a Freepost return envelope. The CEBs were asked to insert a covering letter on their own letterhead, for which an optional template was provided, for forwarding to 84 entrepreneurs in their area (63 women entrepreneurs and 21 men entrepreneurs).

Additional respondents who attended meetings/events of the Women in Business Network in Carlow, Kildare and Waterford (April to June 2004) were asked informally at the beginning and end of meetings to fill out the questionnaire, and were given the option of using a Freepost envelope to mail the questionnaire at a later date or to complete it on the spot.

Response Rates

The total sample was obtained from the Kompass Directory and the City and County Enterprise Boards (CEBs). Among the 1230 entrepreneurs drawn from the Kompass Directory (including 873 women), 204 entrepreneurs (including 129 women) filled in the questionnaire, representing a 17 per cent response rate. The number of respondents to the

questionnaire issued by the County and City Enterprise Boards was 613 entrepreneurs (322 women entrepreneurs) out of a total sample of 2268 entrepreneurs, which represents a 27 per cent response rate. Overall, the survey produced a 23 per cent response rate, which is quite acceptable for a mailed questionnaire for self-completion (Remenyi et al., 1998; Saunders et al., 2007). The response rates associated with each source are summarised in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Summary Table of Response Rates

	Sample Size	Responses	Response Rate
Kompass	1230	204	17%
CEB	2268	610	27%
Networks	N/A	18	N/A
Total	**3498**	**832**	**23%***

* This figure does not take Networks into account.

4.2.3 Qualitative Data

The interview schedule (Appendices C and D) consisted of seven questions which sought to identify the:

- Motivations behind being an entrepreneur;
- Obstacles faced by women entrepreneurs;
- Attitudes towards risk;
- Choices of management style;
- Attitudes towards work/life balance;
- Experiences of conflict between work and family/personal life;
- Opinions on choices behind becoming entrepreneurs.

Selection of Interviewees

Interviewees were selected using two distinct methods. One method consisted of approaching women entrepreneurs attending networking events, and the other consisted of contacting women entrepreneurs by written invitation. During September and October 2005, a number of women entrepreneurs were approached during networking events. Three women were approached at a Network Ireland event, one of which was eventually interviewed. A further six women entrepreneurs were approached at Kildare and Meath County Enterprise Boards Women in Business Networks, which generated three interviews.

In May 2006, a list of 13 women entrepreneurs was compiled using a variety of sources (e.g. Chambers of Commerce, Enterprise Ireland) and personal contacts. Each woman received a letter, on Trinity College Dublin headed notepaper, explaining the aims of the study (Appendix E). Six women entrepreneurs responded positively to the request to be interviewed. The women entrepreneurs were selected so as to represent a range of different businesses. Particular attention was given to include women entrepreneurs who operated in a variety of business sectors, in different size businesses, with different methods of business creation (e.g. created vs. inherited) and with contrasting family background and personal viewpoints.

In accordance with the qualitative methodological approaches adopted in this thesis, the selection of interviewees was not random, and is therefore not representative of the population of Irish women entrepreneurs. Furthermore, as the study was concerned with examining the experiences of women entrepreneurs, the interviews were conducted with women entrepreneurs only.

Interview Process

Interviewees were contacted either by e-mail or by telephone to arrange a suitable meeting. Meetings were conducted at a time and a location which suited the interviewee. Six interviews were conducted at the interviewees' workplace, two in hotel lobbies and one each respectively in Trinity College Dublin and in an interviewee's home.

The interview schedule was distributed to the interviewee at the start of the interview to provide them with a visual reference. Each interview was taped to provide an accurate record. This approach is more comprehensive that note-taking because it is possible to go back to the interview at a later stage and explore issues that had appeared to be of little importance during the interview. Each interview was transcribed a short time after the meeting.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter outlines and discusses the philosophical considerations underlying this thesis. At the ontological and epistemological levels, the thesis adopts a combination of positivism and interpretivism, in order to combine the strengths of different data collection methods

(quantitative and qualitative). The quantitative data facilitated the study of a large number of respondents with minimal time and cost. It allowed for comparison between different subgroups in the population (e.g. men/women, parents/childless). Finally, the survey allowed respondents to provide more honest answers because of the confidentiality this method brings. Qualitative data were necessary in order to gather information on personal views, experiences and behaviours (e.g. motivations). The mixture of data collection methods provided a useful data triangulation and gave more reliability to the findings. Finally, the chapter describes how the data, both quantitative and qualitative were collected. The following chapters present the findings of the research. Chapters 5 to 8 present the findings of the postal survey, while the findings of the interviews are discussed in Chapters 9 and 10.

Chapter 5 Survey: Profile of Respondents and their Businesses

The objectives of this survey were to investigate women's experiences of entrepreneurship in Ireland, in comparison with those of men entrepreneurs in Ireland. Chapters 5 to 8 present the results on this comparative analysis, focusing on the profiles of entrepreneurs; their businesses; their organisational structures and management styles; their motivations; obstacles encountered; and, finally, their experiences of work/life balance and organisational choices.

This chapter concentrates on the profile of respondents and their businesses based on the mailed questionnaire survey. It offers a comparative perspective between men and women entrepreneurs, and examines differences in some of the main concepts identified in the literature. This chapter sets out the personal profile of respondents, followed by their employment history. Then, this chapter examines gender differences in management styles, organisational structure and employment practices among Irish entrepreneurs. The study used a mailed questionnaire for self-completion which was returned by at total of 832 entrepreneurs (468 women and 364 men), leading to a response rate of 23 per cent. Section 5.1 examines the personal profile of respondents, while section 5.2 explores the characteristics of the respondents' businesses. Finally, section 5.4 examines the organisational structure and management styles adopted by respondents.

5.1 Personal Profile of Survey Respondents

This section examines the personal characteristics of respondents. First, the demographic profile of the respondents is analysed, followed by their family background and work history.

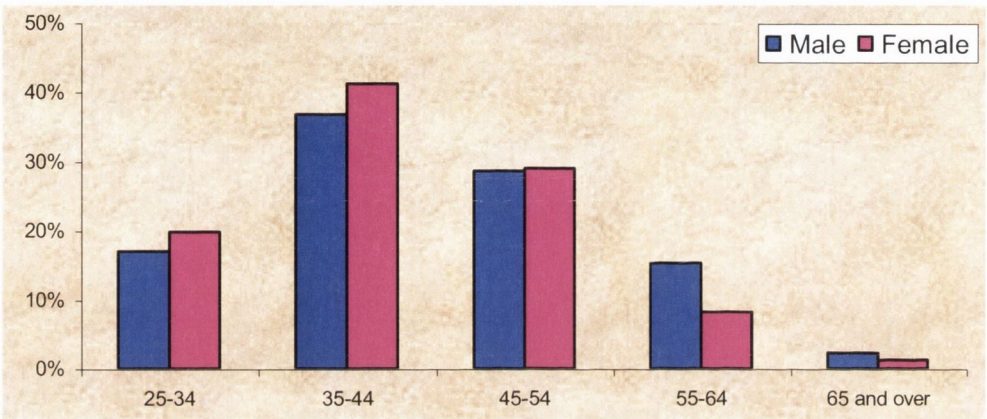
5.1.1 Demographic Profile

Age

Overall, women respondents tended to be younger than their male counterparts. Nearly two-thirds of women (61%) were aged less than 45 years compared with 54 per cent of men. Forty-one per cent of women were aged 35 to 44 years and 20 per cent were aged 25 to 34

years, compared with 37 per cent and 17 per cent of men respectively. The proportion of respondents aged 45 to 54 years was the same for men and women at 29 per cent. Finally, nearly one in five men (18%) were aged 55 years or older compared with nearly one in ten (9%) women (Figure 5.1). These age differences are statistically significant. The findings contradict those of other Irish studies suggesting that women entrepreneurs are older than their male counterparts (Goodbody Economic Consultants, 2002) or that there are no major age differences (Gender Equality Unit, 2003).

Figure 5.1 Age by Gender (n=808)



(Chi square[2], p<0.05)

Marital Status

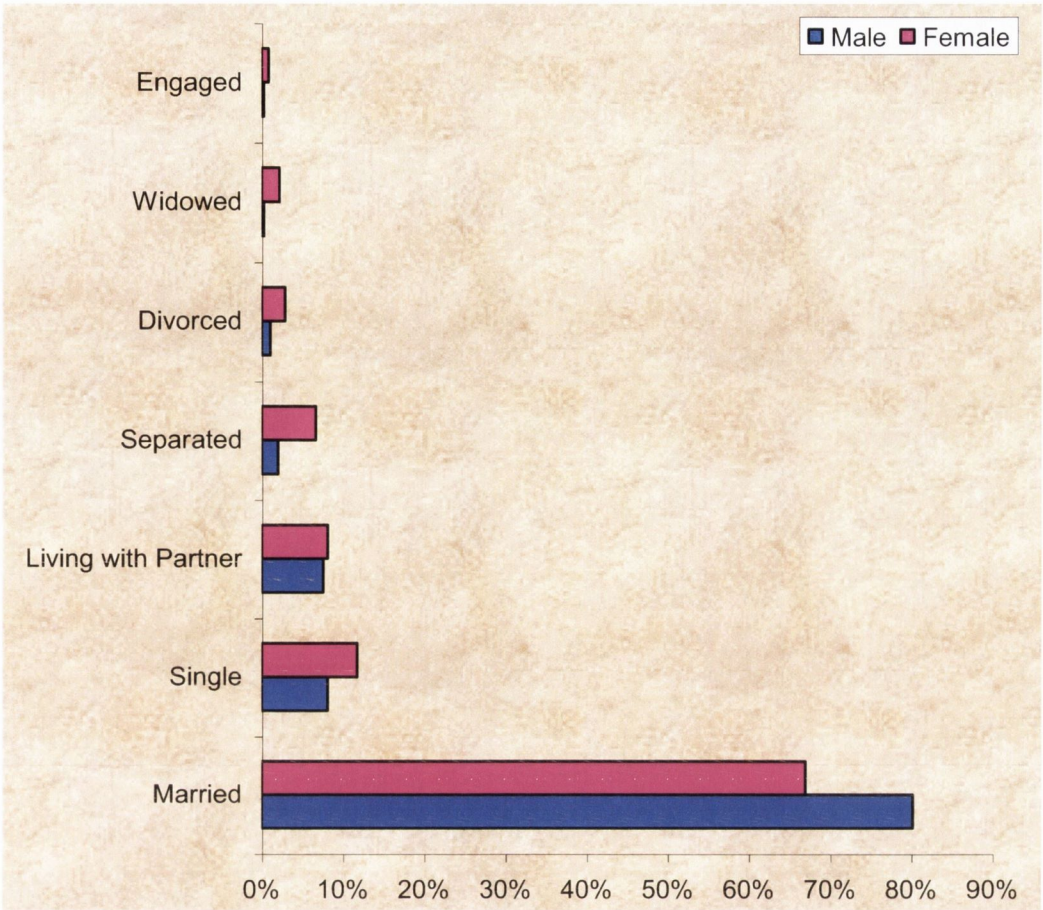
As well as being younger than their male counterparts, women entrepreneurs were also less likely to be married than men (Figure 5.2). Eight out of ten men surveyed (80%) were married compared to 67 per cent of all women. Women entrepreneurs were more likely to be single or without a partner (i.e. divorced, separated or widowed). Twelve per cent of all the women surveyed were single compared to eight per cent of all the men. In addition, 24 per cent of the women in the study did not have a partner, while this was true of only 12 per cent of men. These differences between men and women are highly statistically significant. This validates the findings of other Irish studies, which found that women entrepreneurs are less likely than men to be married (Goodbody Economic Consultants, 2002; Gender Equality Unit, 2003).

---

[2] Unless otherwise stated, all the statistical tests referred to in this study are based on Pearson's χ^2 test.

$$\chi^2 = \sum_n \frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$$

Figure 5.2 Marital Status by Gender (n=801)



(Chi square, $p<0.01$)

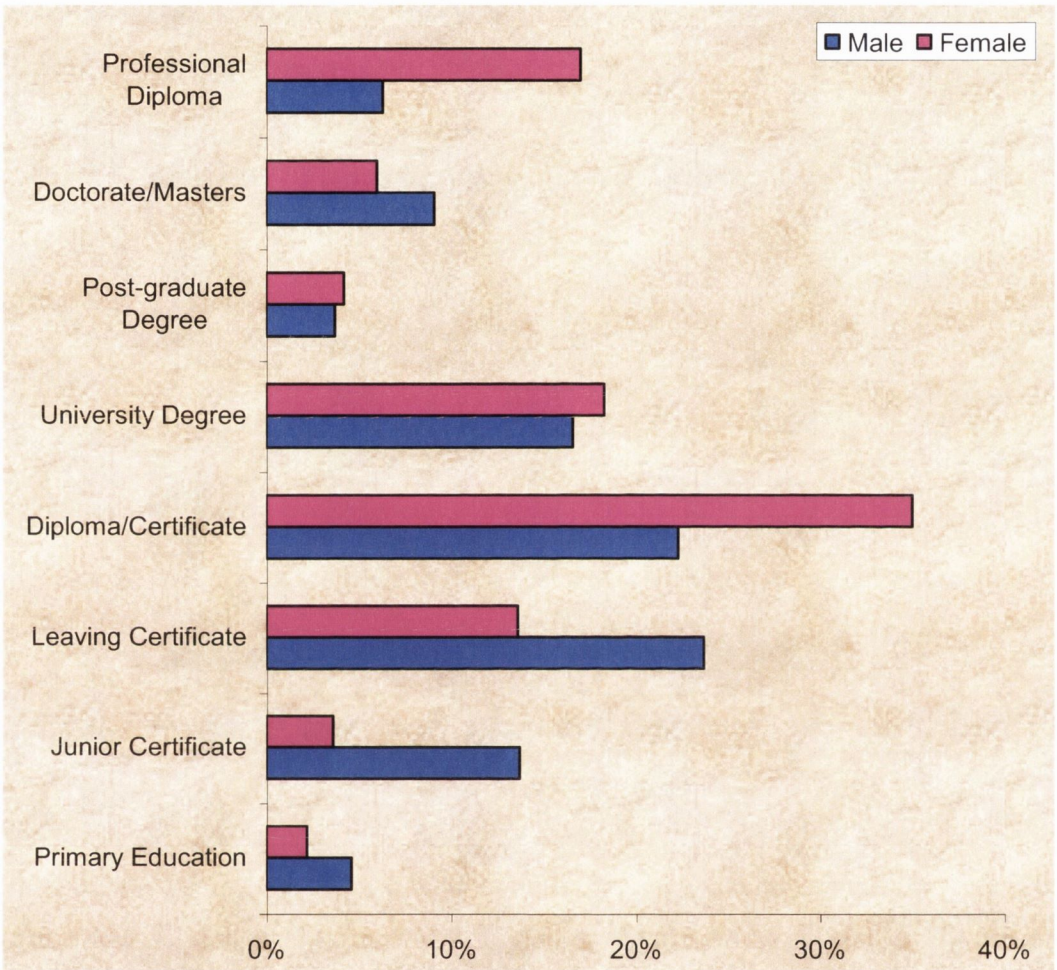
Educational Attainment

There is a statistically significant difference in the level of educational attainment of men and women entrepreneurs (Figure 5.3). While more men had achieved a Doctorate or Masters, overall the women tended to be more highly educated. The proportion of women holding a diploma/certificate or a university degree (53%) or a professional diploma (17%) was higher than for men (39% and 6% respectively). Conversely, more men had completed their education at Leaving Certificate level (24% of men compared to 14% of women) or at Junior Certificate level (14% of men compared to 4% of women). Proportionately more women surveyed held practical professional qualifications (i.e. diplomas, professional diplomas).

These findings contradict other sources on Irish entrepreneurs. Goodbody Economic Consultants (2002) for example found no major differences between men and women

entrepreneurs except at post-graduate level, while the Gender Equality Unit (2003) found that the educational level of women entrepreneurs was usually lower than that of their male counterparts.

Figure 5.3 Educational Level by Gender (n=798)

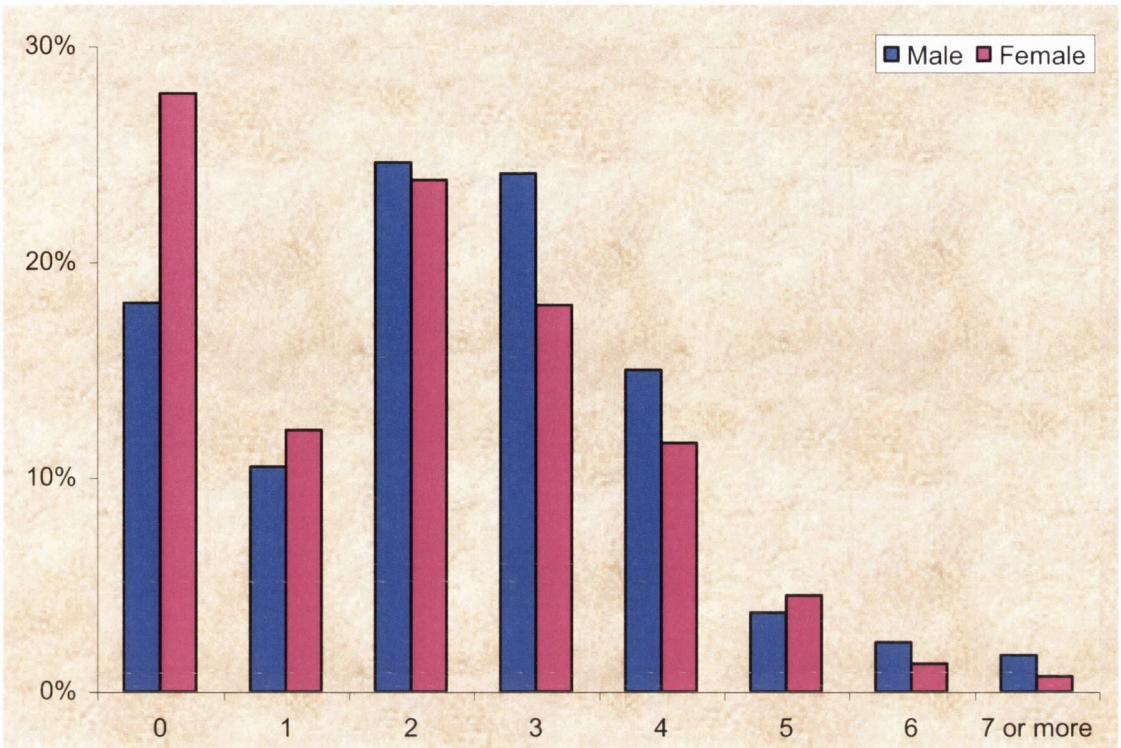


(Chi square, $p<0.01$)

Family Status

Women entrepreneurs were less likely than men to have dependent children (Figure 5.4). This result was highly statistically significant. More than one-quarter of women (28%) had no children compared to less than one-fifth of men (18%). Overall, the distribution of children for men and women entrepreneurs was quite similar. The majority of respondents who were parents had either two children (32%), three children (27%) or four children (17%). These findings are consistent with the findings of previous Irish studies (The SIA Group, 2001; Goodbody Economic Consultants, 2002; Gender Equality Unit, 2003)

Figure 5.4 Number of Children by Gender (n=802)

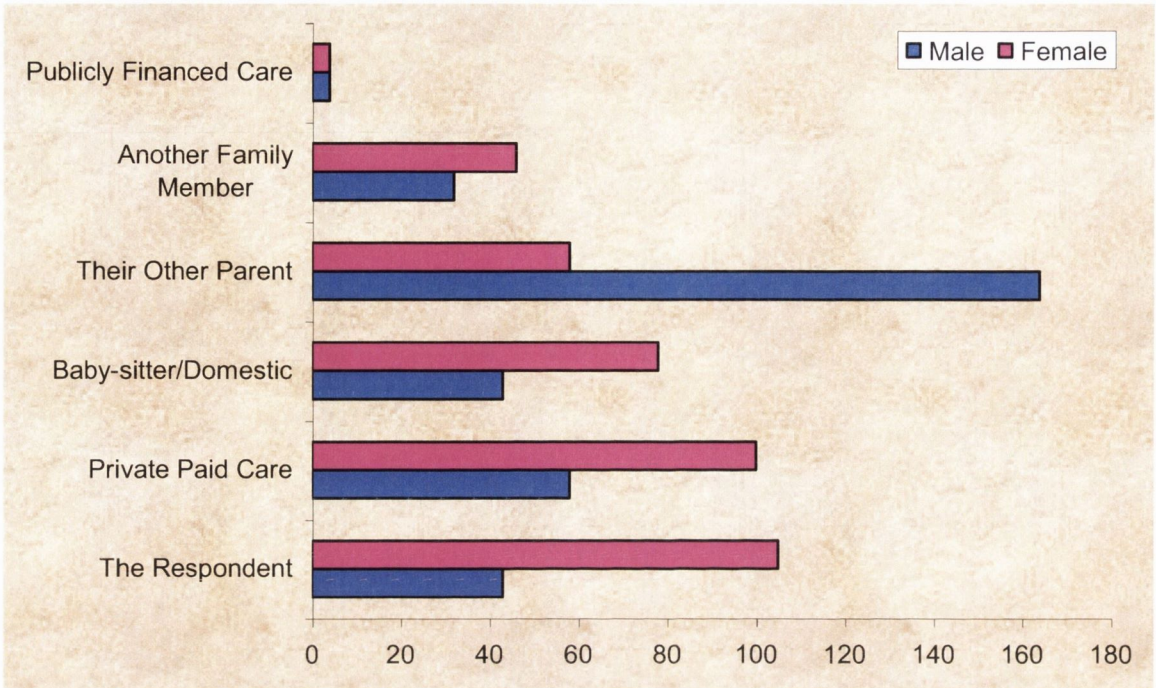


(Chi square, $p<0.05$)

Childcare Arrangements

Where relevant, respondents were asked who was responsible for caring for their children. The results show some major differences between men and women entrepreneurs. The main childcare arrangement used by the entrepreneurs in the study was having their child(ren) looked after by the other parent. However, while 165 fathers (66%) used this mean of childminding only 58 mothers (23%) did so. Women were more likely to use private paid care: 100 mothers (39%) compared with 57 fathers (23%). More women looked after their own child/ren (105 mothers (41%) compared with 42 fathers (17%)) or had their child(ren) minded by a baby-sitter/domestic help (78 mothers (30%) compared with 44 fathers (18%)). Figure 5.5 sets out respondents' childcare arrangements (more than one answer was possible). These differences were statistically highly significant (Chi-square, $p<0.01$). This finding has enormous implications for those who want to become entrepreneurs as it indicates that men can delegate family responsibilities to their wife/partner while very few women are in the same position.

Figure 5.5 Childcare Responsibilities by Gender (n=618)



(Chi square, $p<0.01$)

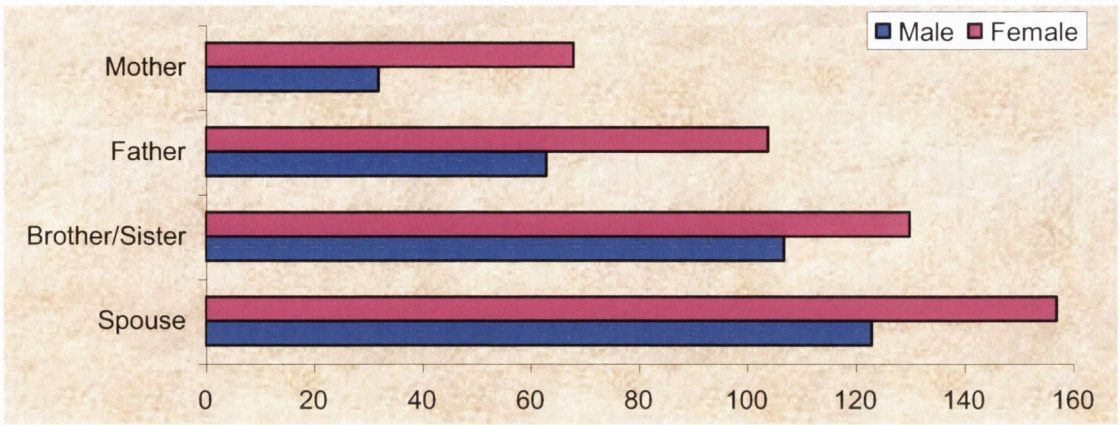
5.1.2 Family Status

Five hundred and forty-four entrepreneurs (68%) in the study had a family member who was involved in business at some stage of their lives (Figure 5.6). There were no statistically significant differences between male entrepreneurs and their female counterparts.

Among those with a relation involved in a business venture, 280 (52%) stated that it was their spouse. However, no statistically significant differences emerged between men and women. The proportion of respondents whose mother was involved in the business world showed some statistically significant differences between men and women respondents. Sixty-eight women entrepreneurs (23%) had a mother involved in a business venture, compared with 32 (13%) men entrepreneurs. Similarly, the proportion of entrepreneurs whose father was involved in a business venture proved to be statistically significant. A total of 104 (35%) women entrepreneurs had a father who was involved in a business venture, compared with 63 (26%) men entrepreneurs. There were no statistically significant differences between the number of men and women who had a sibling in business. These findings suggest that family background has a stronger influence on women. In other words, it appears that the parent in

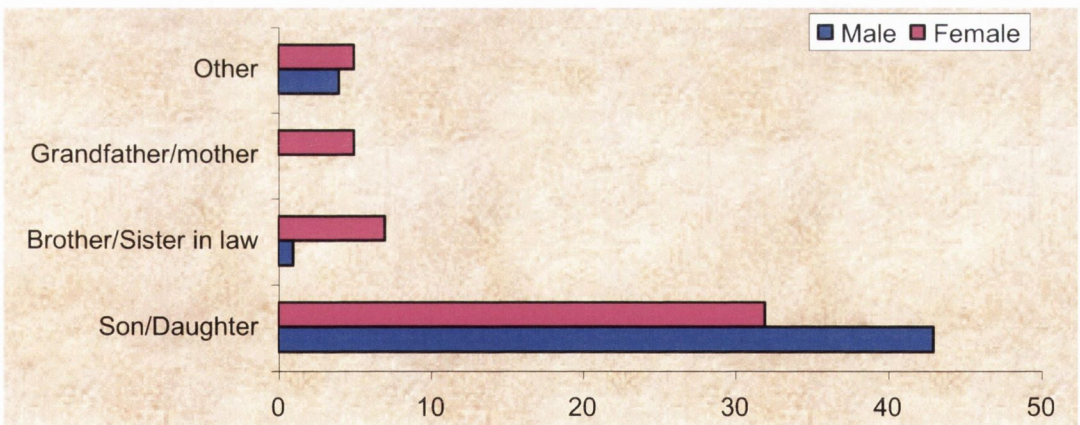
business can act as a positive role model, particularly for women, by encouraging them to start a business.

Figure 5.6 Family Members in Business by Gender (n=548)



Finally, among respondents who claimed to have another relative in business, the largest category consisted of an adult offspring. Thirty-two women who had a family member in business had a son/daughter in business compared to 43 men entrepreneurs (Figure 5.7).

Figure 5.7 Other Family Member in Business by Gender (n=97)



These findings echo those of the Goodbody Economic Consultants' (2002) study in Ireland and that of Kjeldsen and Nielsen (2000) in Denmark, who also found that family involvement in business was an important factor in determining whether entrepreneurs, particularly female entrepreneurs, would choose to create and/or run a business venture. However, the Gender Equality Unit (2003) found no differences in the background of men and women entrepreneurs in Ireland.

Overall, it appears that having a parent or another family member involved in running a business can be important for some women entering entrepreneurship. One of the female respondents argued that *"Both [her] father and spouse [are] 'stuck' in boring jobs. Both my children already show entrepreneurial flair"*, while another woman stated that *"it is very clear that having parents or siblings (older) that are open to taking risks that result in successful outcomes gives a child more confidence to try it themselves at some point during their life"*. A further two claimed that their father/stepfather had a great influence on them: *"Lived with stepfather at 14: vice-president of [a major corporation]"*; *"A strong influence on my decision to become self-employed was my father, who set-up his own business when I was fifteen"*.

5.1.3 Employment History

Previous Entrepreneurial Experience

There is a statistically significant difference in the numbers of men and women who had previously owned a business (Chi square, $p<0.01$). Eighty-seven (25%) men had a previous business compared with 75 (17%) female respondents. Respondents who had previously owned a business were asked for reasons why they had left that company. The results did not show any statistically significant difference between men and women entrepreneurs. The sale of the previous business was cited as the main reason by 30 (37%) men and 19 (27%) women. More men (15%) than women (6%) stated that they continued to be involved in their previous business venture.

This would indicate that, in parallel with gendered employment patterns, men tended to have longer histories of running businesses. It also suggests that men take more risks than women and are more inclined to start-up a new business venture. Overall, this finding suggests that previous ownership of a business is an important factor in encouraging some people to become an entrepreneur. Furthermore, this finding replicates the pattern found by Goodbody Economic Consultants (2002).

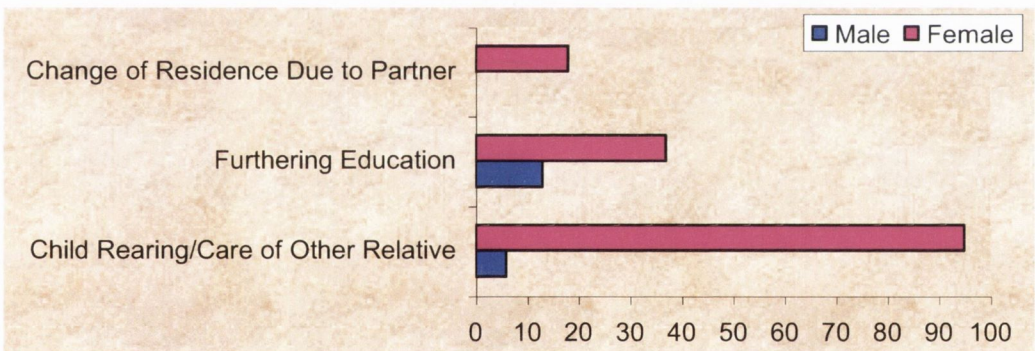
Career Histories

Some differences exist in the career histories of respondents in terms of working time patterns. One-hundred and sixty-four women (37%) had worked part-time for more than six

months compared to 53 (15%) men (Chi square, $p<0.01$). In examining the reasons for working part-time, some gender differences emerged (Figure 5.8). Women were much more likely than their male counterparts to have worked part-time due to child rearing or to care for another relative. Ninety-five women who had worked part-time for more than six months did so due to caring responsibilities, as opposed to 6 men who had worked part-time for more than six months (Chi-square, $p<0.01$). Another reason for working part-time was to pursue further education. Fifty of those who had a worked part-time identified this factor, but there were no differences between men and women entrepreneurs. Finally, 18 women who held a history of part-time work claimed it was due to their spouse changing residence, which applied to none of the men.

The fact that women were more likely than men to have a history of part-time work is symptomatic of what is happening in the labour market, where women are 'typically' associated with caring for family members and remain primarily responsible for looking after the domestic side of life (Drew, 1999; Delphy and Leonard, 2002).

Figure 5.8 Number of Persons Working Part-Time by Reason (n=169)



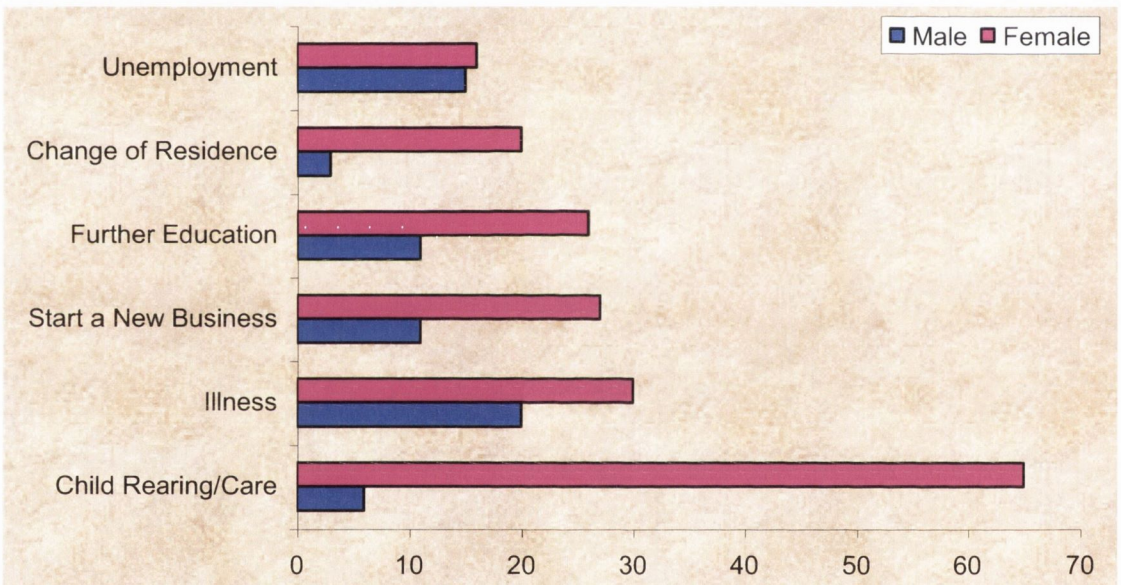
Work Interruptions

A total of 118 (26%) women had experienced a work interruption of over six months compared to 44 (13%) men (Figure 5.9). This result is highly statistically significant (Chi square, $p<0.01$). Women who had had a work interruption for over six months were more likely to have done so because of childcare responsibilities. Women were less likely to have interrupted their working life for over six months due to illness or unemployment. Sixty-five women who had interrupted their career identified doing so for child rearing purposes, compared to 6 men (Chi-square, $p<0.01$). Illness was identified as a reason for exiting for a

period of more than six months by 50 respondents. Thirty women had interrupted their working life due to illness, compared to 20 men (Chi-square, $p<0.05$). Unemployment also proved to be highly gendered: 16 women identified it as a cause of work interruption, compared to 15 men (Chi-square, $p<0.01$).

A break from work to start a new business was mentioned by 38 of those who had experienced a career interruption. Thirty-seven entrepreneurs had taken a career break to further their education and 23 had done so due to a change of residence by their spouse. There were no statistically significant gender differences in any of these three factors. Finally, other infrequently mentioned factors for a career break were, in decreasing order of importance: travel, volunteer work, sabbatical, marriage bar, and moved away.

Figure 5.9 Number of Persons with a Work Interruption by Reason (n=250)



5.2 Profile of Businesses

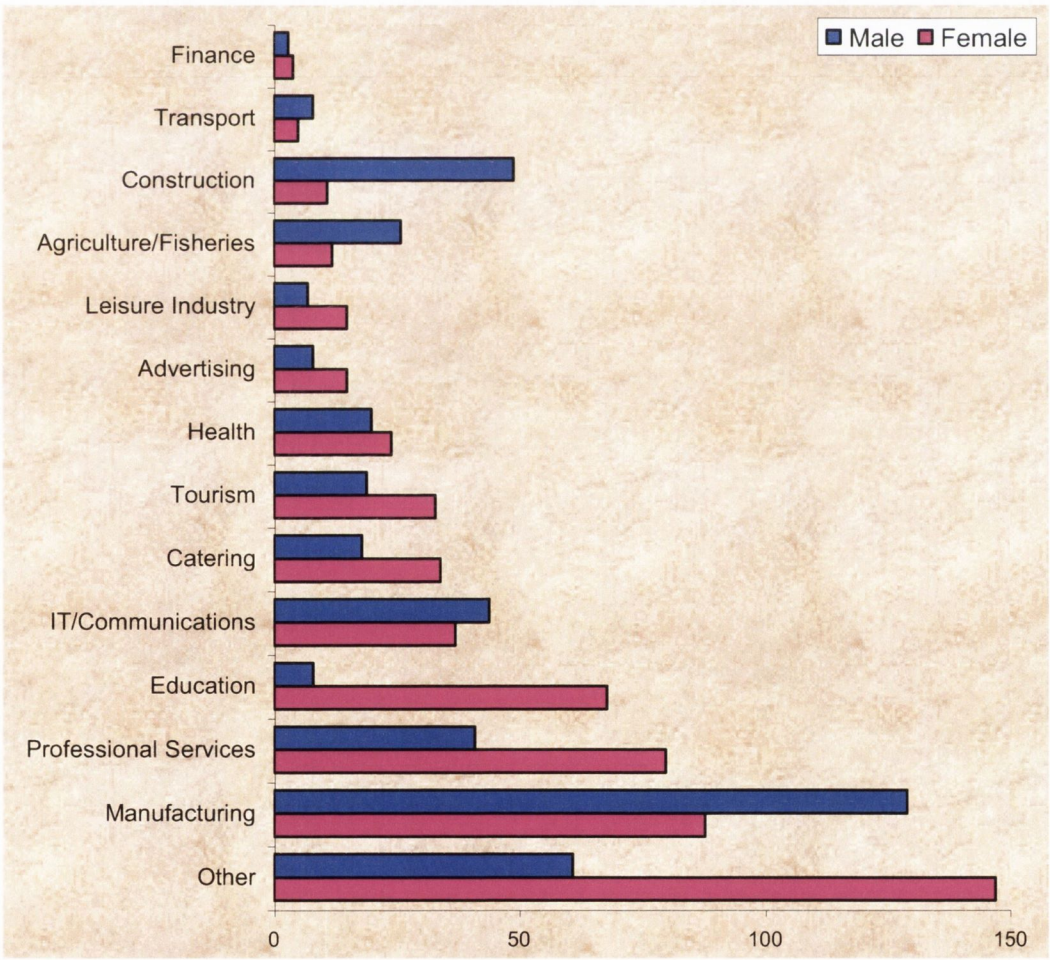
This section examines the characteristics of respondents' businesses, followed by the respondents' employment practices.

5.2.1 Organisation of Businesses

Sector

The main sectors in which men and women traded consist of: manufacturing; professional services; IT/communications; education; and construction (Figure 5.10). The predicted gender differences emerged. Men predominated in certain sectors: 129 men were involved in manufacturing, 49 in construction, 26 in agriculture and fisheries, and 8 in transport. However, women predominated in other sectors: 41 women were involved in professional services, 19 in tourism and 18 in catering. A further 8 women were respectively involved in advertising and education, while 7 were working in the leisure industry. These findings are consistent with self-employment patterns in Ireland and the EU, where women are clustered in services and professional activities, while men are concentrated in construction, transports and communications, industry, agriculture and manufacturing (Eurostat, 2007).

Figure 5.10 Sector by Gender (multiple responses, n=808)



(Chi square, p<0.01)

Some women referred to gender segregation in particular sectors. One stated that her sector was predominantly female:

> *"In the Montessori teaching environment there are very few men if any men working as teachers".*

For another two female respondents, being in a traditionally male bastion proved to be an obstacle:

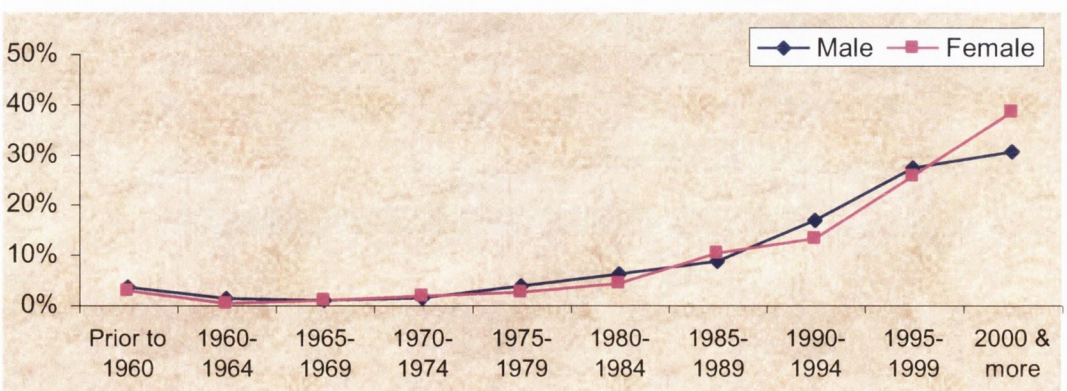
> *"As a woman involved in agriculture I am disgusted to see that it is the last bastion of male chauvinism!";*
>
> *"It is still very difficult for women in business. My business/industry is male orientated and even though it is accepted in Ireland that women own and run businesses, they are perceived as certain types of businesses. I feel being female either really helps or really hinders me!".*

Nature of Ownership

There were no gender differences in how respondents' had chosen to start their businesses. At total of 454 respondents (57%) were sole owners, while 197 (25%) were involved in a partnership. A further 117 (15%) were heading a limited company. Differences between male and female entrepreneurs were not statistically significant. Six-hundred and ninety (88%) entrepreneurs created their businesses, as distinct from buying or inheriting them.

Nearly a third (273) of businesses (34%) were started since 2000. A further 323 (41%) businesses were created between 1990 and 1999 (Figure 5.11). There are no statistical differences between men and women in relation to when their businesses commenced.

Figure 5.11 Year of Company Creation by Gender (n=783)

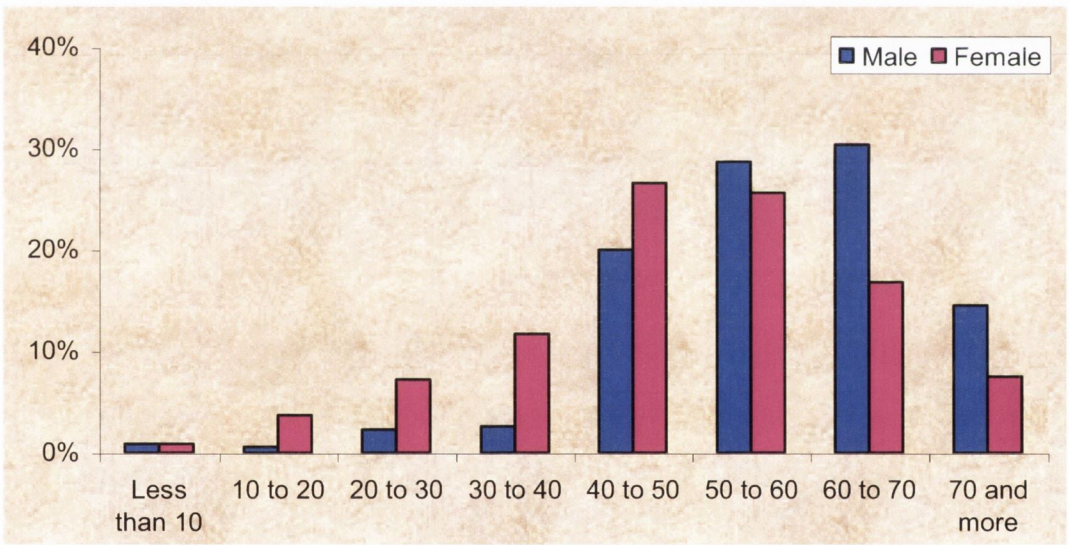


Working Hours

There were variations in the total number of hours worked by men and women entrepreneurs (Figure 5.12). Men tended to work longer hours than women, an average of 54 hours weekly, compared to 46 hours by women. These figures are much higher than those of Eurostat (2007) where men in self-employment worked an average of 48.9 hours weekly and women entrepreneurs 35.5 hours weekly.

A total of 334 (77%) women worked at least 40 hours weekly, compared to 327 (94%) men. This finding was mirrored by the fact that 137 women (31%) reported not working longer than 40 hours weekly, while the corresponding figure for men was 47 (13%). Both of these results were highly statistically significant (Chi-square, $p<0.01$). Working shorter hours than men in their own business may be a means for women to regain control of their working hours and hence balance home and work life more effectively.

Figure 5.12 Hours Worked Weekly by Gender (n=774)

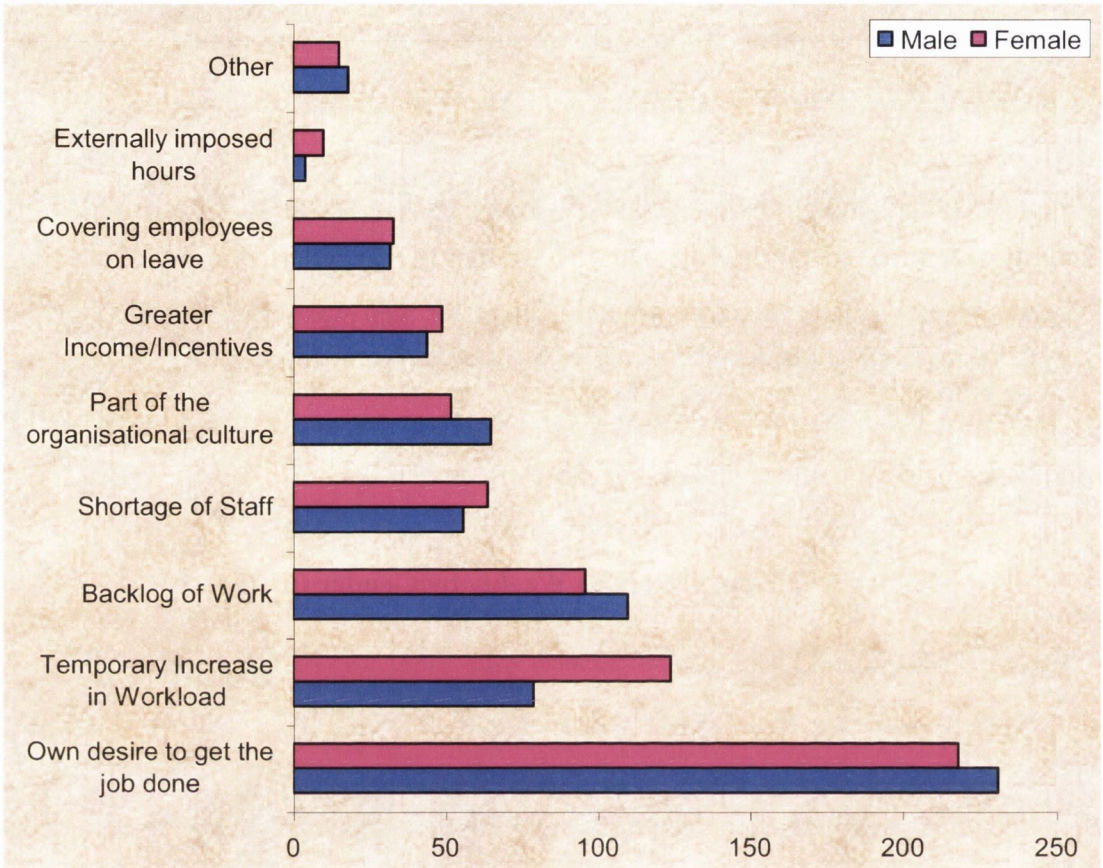


(Chi square, $p<0.01$)

Among respondents who worked longer than standard hours, 267 (88%) did not get overtime payments or time-off in lieu for the extra hours of work. When asked the reasons behind working longer hours, some differences emerged according to gender (Chi Square, $p<0.05$). The most notable difference was that women were much more likely than men to work longer hours due to temporary increases in workload. In contrast, men were more likely to claim that

they worked longer hours due to their own desire to get the job done, a backlog of work, or because it was part of the organisational culture (Figure 5.13).

Figure 5.13 Reasons for Working Longer than Standard Hours by Gender (n=618)



(Chi square, $p<0.05$)

5.2.2 Employment Practices

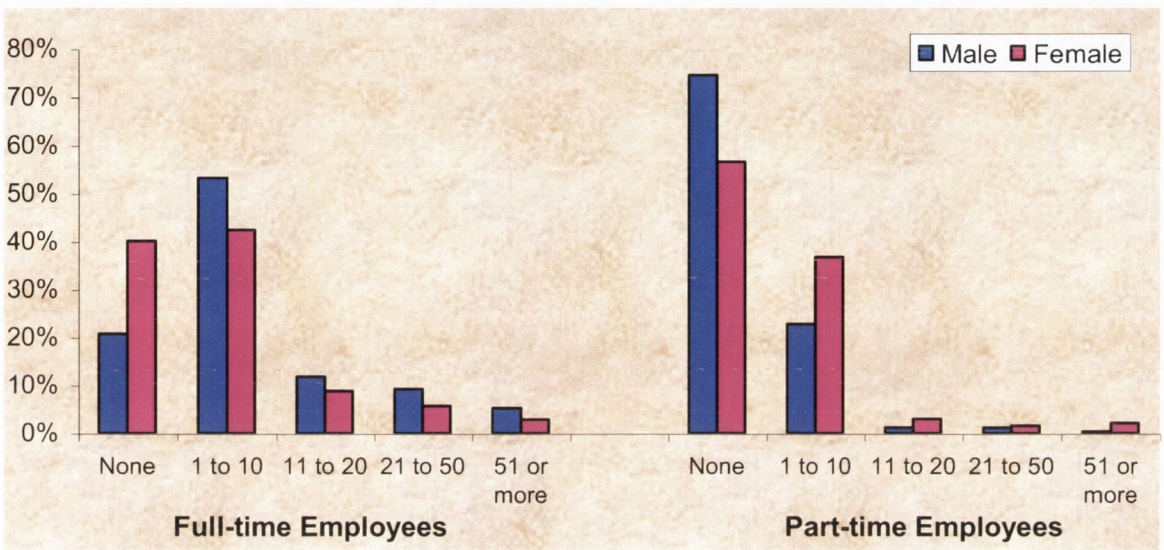
Women entrepreneurs were less likely than their male counterparts to have hired other employees. One-hundred and sixteen women (26%) did not employ any staff, compared to 62 men (18%). These results were highly statistically significant (Chi-square, $p<0.01$). Women entrepreneurs have fewer full-time employees than their male counterparts (Figure 5.14). This result was also highly statistically significant (Chi-square, $p<0.01$). A total of 177 (40%) women had no full-time employees, compared with 72 (21%) men entrepreneurs.

Similar results are found in the number of part-time employees working for the entrepreneurs (Figure 5.14). Women were more likely than men to employ staff on a part-time basis: a total of 162 (37%) women entrepreneurs employed between one and 10 staff on a part-time basis,

while this was only true of 81 (23%) men entrepreneurs. These results were highly statistically significant.

To summarise, men are more likely to employ staff than women. Furthermore, when they do employ staff, men are more likely to employ staff on a full-time basis and women on a part-time basis.

Figure 5.14 Number of Full-time and Part-time Employees by Gender (n=789)

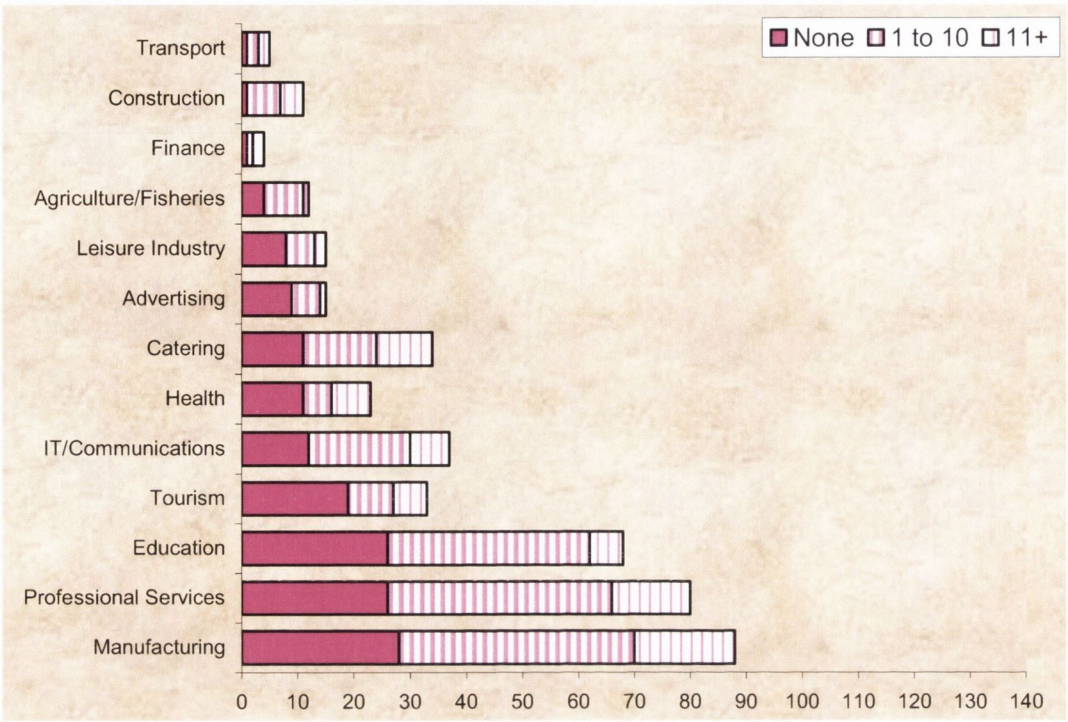


(Chi square, p<0.01)

This pattern is symptomatic of women's businesses which tend to be smaller and have less potential for growth than those of men. It is the product of a combination of factors: women take fewer financial risks than men (Cheskin Research, 2000), women face more obstacles than men (Minniti and Arenius, 2003), women seek more flexibility and better work/life balance (Kjeldsen and Nielsen, 2000) and women are segregated in areas with little prospects for growth (Kjeldsen and Nielsen, 2000; The SIA Group, 2001; Goodbody Economic Consultants, 2002; Nielsen, 2002; Gender Equality Unit, 2003; Henry and Kennedy, 2003; McClelland, 2003; Fitzsimons and O'Gorman, 2006).

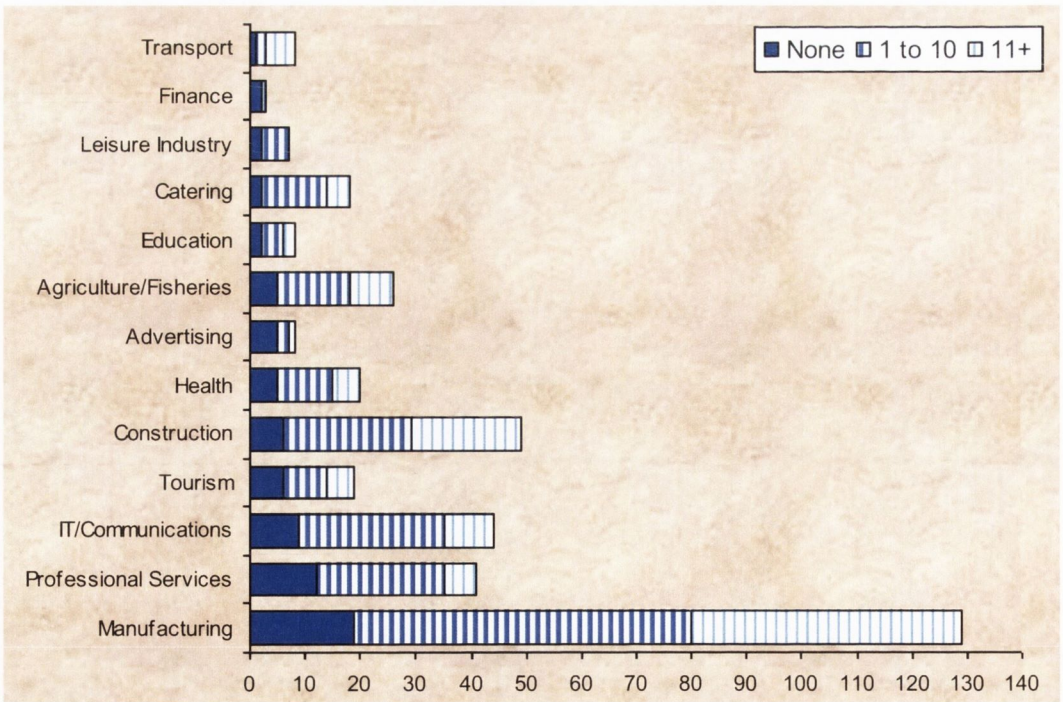
Figure 5.15 and Figure 5.16 show that the number of full-time employees is largely dependent on the sectors of trading. For example, the two sectors 'professional services' and 'education', which are predominantly female, are associated with employing fewer or no full-time employees. In contrast, sectors such as 'manufacturing' and 'construction', which are predominantly male, have higher numbers of full-time employees.

Figure 5.15 Full-time Employees in Women's Businesses (n=425)



(Chi-square, p<0.05)

Figure 5.16 Full-time Employees in Men's Businesses (n=380)

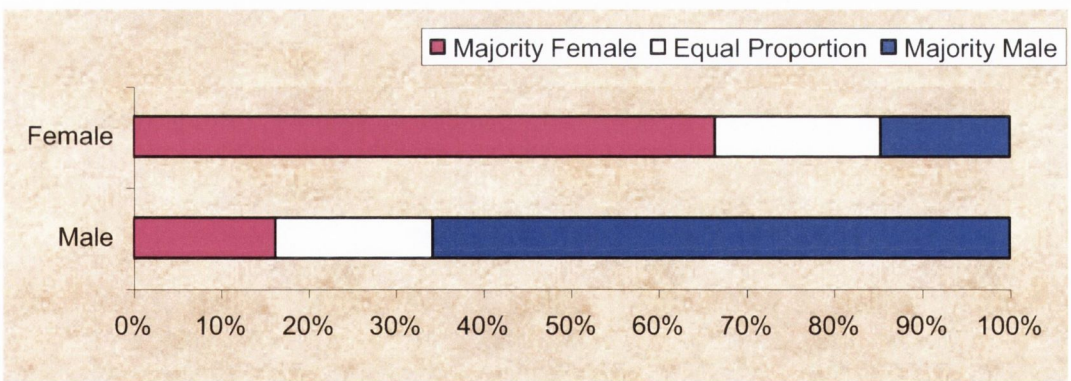


(Chi-square, p<0.05)

Female entrepreneurs are more likely than their male counterparts to employ women. Conversely, men entrepreneurs are more likely to employ male staff (Figure 5.17). These results are highly statistically significant (Chi-square, $p<0.01$). Among respondents with employees, 213 women (66%) had a majority of female staff, compared to 47 men (16%).

This situation may reflect two factors: first, women tend to be over-represented in predominantly female sectors where the workforce would also be traditionally female, for example in childcare, and under-represented in other sectors, for example in construction (Kjeldsen and Nielsen, 2000; The SIA Group, 2001; Goodbody Economic Consultants, 2002; Nielsen, 2002; Gender Equality Unit, 2003; Henry and Kennedy, 2003; McClelland, 2003; Fitzsimons and O'Gorman, 2006). As one female respondent put it: *"I believe that women are more nimble (generally) than men"*. For another male respondent, it was a case of having no female applicants: *"very few female applicants for software jobs"*. Second, the literature suggests that some women feel they lack credibility in the eyes of their employees, and that they may encounter greater problems with male staff (Goffee and Scase, 1985; Vokins, 1993). Thus, employing female staff might provide women entrepreneurs with a more comfortable working environment. These findings are consistent with the international literature (Kjeldsen and Nielsen, 2000).

Figure 5.17 Proportion of Employees by Gender among Staff (n=605)

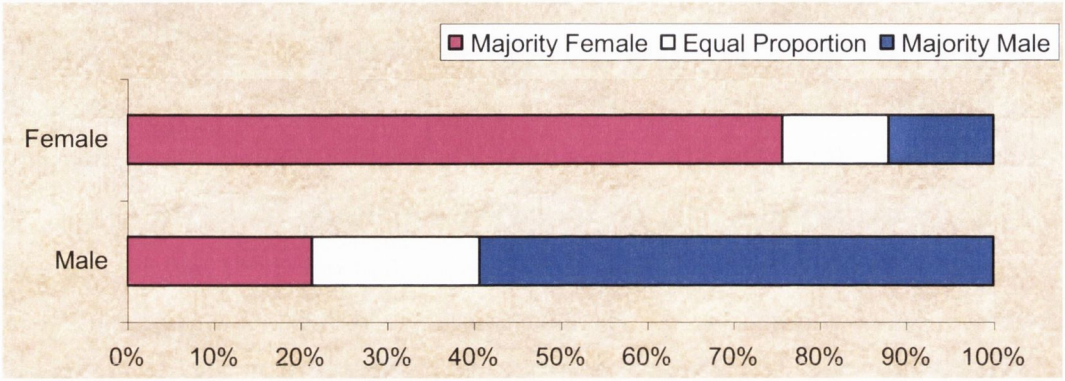


(Chi Square, $p<0.01$)

The proportion of employees directly under the entrepreneur's supervision tends to be gender specific (Figure 5.18). Two-hundred and thirty-six (76%) women entrepreneurs had a majority of female staff directly under their supervision, while this was true of only 59 (21%)

men. Accordingly, men entrepreneurs were much more likely than their female counterparts to have a majority of male employees under their supervision. One-hundred and sixty-four men (59%) had a majority of male employees under their supervision compared with 34 women (11%). These results were highly statistically significant (Chi-square, $p<0.01$).

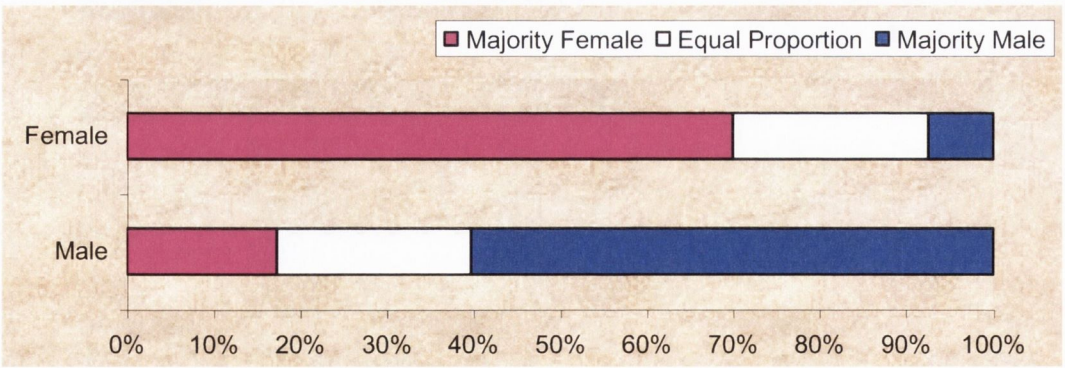
Figure 5.18 Proportion of Employees under Supervision by Gender among Staff (n=587)



(Chi Square, $p<0.01$)

The proportion of management that was male also differed widely by gender (Figure 5.19). At management level, businesses headed by women had a majority of women managers, while businesses headed by men had a majority of men managers. Two-hundred and twenty-nine businesses headed by women (71%) had a majority of female staff at management level but only 21 of those (6%) had a majority of male staff at management level. The reverse situation could be observed with men: 167 businesses headed by men (60%) had a majority of men at management level, while only 50 (18%) had a majority of women at management level.

Figure 5.19 Proportion of Employees in Management by Gender among Staff (n=605)



(Chi Square, $p<0.01$)

It appears that respondents prefer to surround themselves with same-sex employees and managers, and this appears to be true at all levels in their businesses. However, part of this phenomenon could be influenced by external factors such as the sectors in which men and women trade.

5.3 Structures and Management Choices

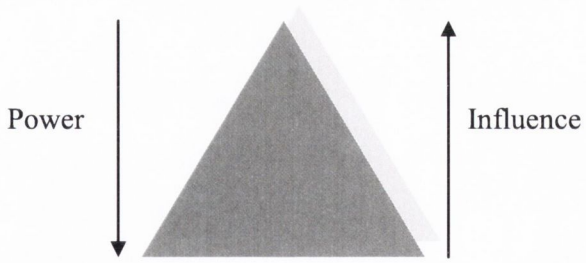
This section starts by setting out the organisational structure adopted by men and women entrepreneurs, followed by an examination of the management styles adopted by the respondents.

5.3.1 Organisational Structures

Respondents were asked to describe which organisational structure best described their business. Three different organisational structures were presented in the questionnaire: traditional, participatory and ad-hoc, based on Rosener's (1990) research in the US. These structures are characterised by two variables, namely power and influence. *Power* is defined as the *ability to change a situation* (e.g. the ability to vote on policies, allocate funds, etc.) and *influence* as the *ability to change the perception of a situation held by others*.

In a traditional structure (Figure 5.20), power is generally exercised from the top down, while influence flows upwards. Decision-making authority is retained at the top:

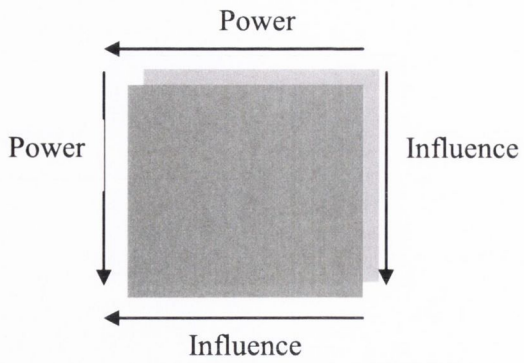
Figure 5.20 Traditional Structure



Source: Rosener (1990)

In a participatory structure (Figure 5.21), power and influence are shared and depend on the project and task. Decision-making authority is shared across functions:

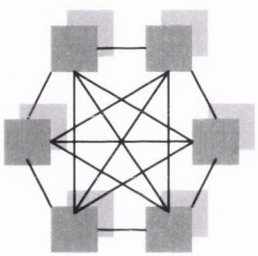
Figure 5.21 Participatory Structure



Source: Rosener (1990)

In an Ad-Hoc structure (Figure 5.22), power and influence are shared regardless of project and task. Decision-making is diffused throughout the organisation:

Figure 5.22 Ad-Hoc Structure



Source: Rosener (1990)

In contrast to Rosener's (1990) findings among US managers, there were no gender differences in the organisational structures of respondents' businesses. Two hundred and forty-six respondents (45%), 136 women and 110 men, claimed to use a participatory structure, while the corresponding figure for a traditional structure was 202 respondents (37%), 100 women and 102 men. The least common structure reported by the participants was the ad-hoc structure used by only 77 respondents (14%), 45 women and 32 men. These data provide no evidence of organisational differences in female or male-headed businesses. This finding is in accord with that observed more than a decade ago by Mortell (1992) in a survey of Irish managers.

5.3.2 Management Styles in Business

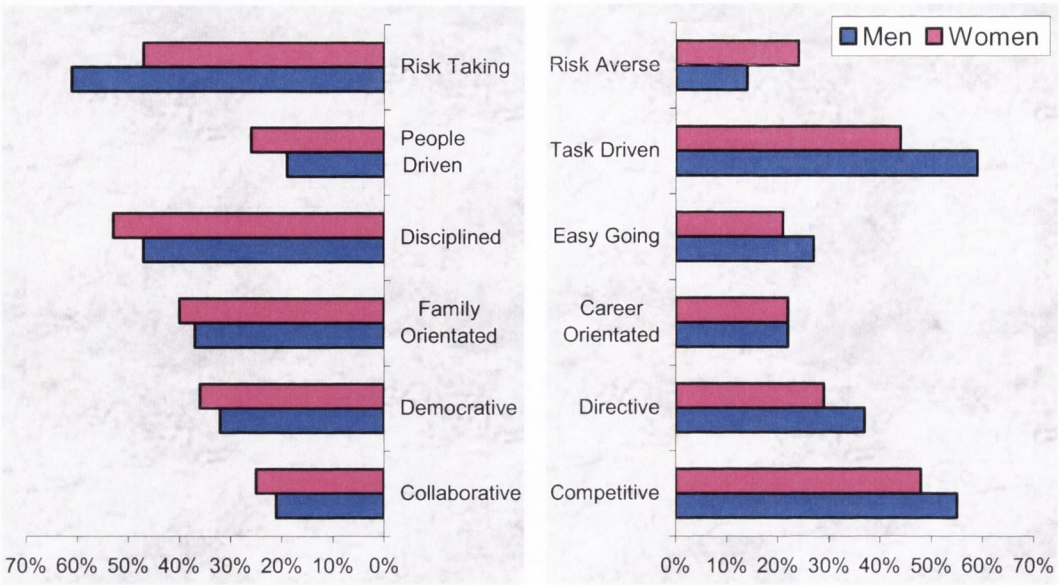
Differences in Management Styles

Survey respondents were asked about how they perceived their own management styles, in terms of the style they felt they adopted. Respondents were offered the two extremes of management behaviours and asked to rate themselves on a five-point scale. The two extremes of each management behaviour were:

- Collaborative versus Competitive;
- People Driven versus Task Driven;
- Democratic versus Directive;
- Family Orientated versus Career Orientated;
- Risk Taking versus Risk Averse;
- Disciplined versus Easy Going.

Two behaviours produced different scores for men and women: 181 men (59%) felt they were more task than people driven, compared to 159 (44%) women (Chi-square, $p<0.01$). The other attribute that revealed some major gender differences was that of risk taking/averse. One hundred and ninety-one men (61%) claimed to be risk-takers, compared to 170 (47%) women (Chi-square, $p<0.01$). There were no statistically significant differences between men and women entrepreneurs for the other attributes: collaborative/competitive; democrative/directive; family orientated/career orientated; disciplined/easy going (Figure 5.23). These findings agree with the international literature, which shows that the management styles of men and women entrepreneurs differ mainly in that women entrepreneurs are more risk averse than men entrepreneurs (Vokins, 1993, Valiulis et al., 2004) and are more sensitive to the people in their working environment (Vokins, 1993; NFWBO, 1994; The SIA Group Report, 2001; Minniti and Arenius, 2003; Valiulis et al., 2004).

Figure 5.23 Agreement/Strong Agreement with Managerial Traits



Changes in Management Styles over Time

Respondents with employees were asked to rate the degree to which they felt they had changed their behaviours after setting-up their first business, based on a list of characteristics:

- Competitive;
- Career-orientated;
- Disciplined;
- Risk-taking;
- Directive;
- Competent;
- Task-driven;
- Motivated;
- Organised;
- Responsible.

Overall, respondents felt that they had achieved great progress in their managerial abilities since over half the entrepreneurs claimed to have better skills than before starting out in their businesses. Men and women appeared to be similar in terms of their perceived managerial competence with only two exceptions. First, women were much more likely to claim they were more directive after starting their business than they were before. A total of 163 women (53%) claimed to be more directive compared with 127 men (47%) (Chi-square, $p<0.01$).

Second, men were more likely to perceive themselves as more risk-taking after starting their first business. One-hundred and forty-eight men (53%) felt more risk-taking compared with 160 (50%) women (Chi-square, $p<0.05$).

The issue of risk was mentioned by four men and one woman. Men emphasised the importance of taking risks when being involved in a business venture:

> *"I believe many people want to be entrepreneurs but few really understand the high level of risk involved, and sacrifices to be made, that's why only a certain few are successful";*
>
> *"The writer is of that generation who were born after the war years (emergency). The parental emphasis was on stability and pensionability regarding employment. Therefore the writer worked in those types of jobs for 18 years before deciding to go out 'on my own'. ... The enterprise Culture of today has totally transformed the country";*
>
> *"I took chances when everybody told me it wouldn't work. I persevered and kept going and now there is no stopping me. In the future I am going to be a millionaire because I'm nearly there already";*
>
> *"One area which requires greater attention to is creativity and risk-taking. I feel that there are vital components to running your own business".*

The only woman to comment on risk was of the opinion that women in business were at a disadvantage because *"Women in general are not risk takers".*

This section provides further evidence that women entrepreneurs are more risk-averse than their male counterparts. This reiterates findings in the literature (Vokins, 1993; Cheskin Research, 2000; Valiulis et al., 2004). Women entrepreneurs also felt they were more directive. However, the literature shows that men entrepreneurs are more directive in their management style (The SIA Group, 2001). Therefore, this finding seems to point out that women entrepreneurs (possibly through lack of managerial experience due to vertical segregation) have had to do some catching up with their male counterparts in terms of how directive is their behaviour.

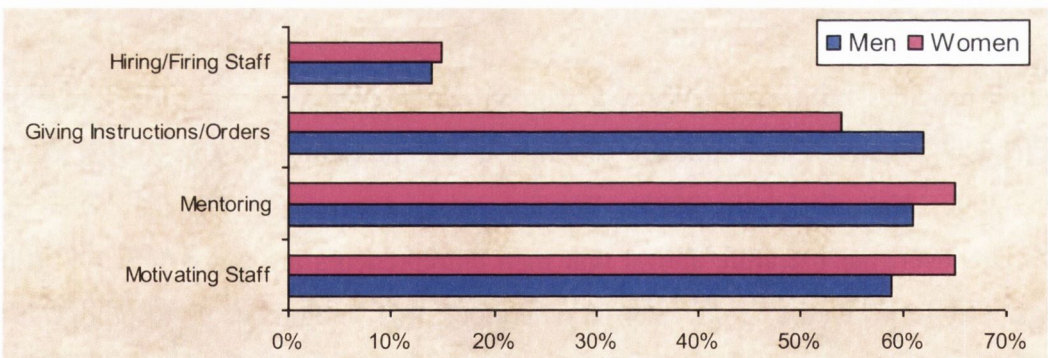
Managerial Activities

Respondents with employees were asked to rate how they felt about carrying out a range of duties relating to interactions with their staff. Respondents were asked to indicate on a five-point scale how unpleasant/pleasant they found the following four activities:

- Hiring/firing staff;
- Motivating staff;
- Mentoring;
- Giving instructions/orders.

There were no gender differences in any of the activities (Figure 5.24). A total of 370 respondents with employees (62%), 204 women and 166 men, claimed to find motivating staff a pleasant or very pleasant task. Three-hundred and sixty-six employers (63%), 198 women and 168 men, found mentoring a pleasant or very pleasant experience. Male and female employers seemed comfortable with giving instructions and orders, as a total of 349 (58%) of them, 174 women and 175 men, found giving instructions and orders a pleasant or very pleasant task. However, only 86 employers (15%), 38 men and 48 women, found the hiring and firing of staff to be pleasant or very pleasant.

Figure 5.24 Percentage of Respondents with Employees who found Selected Activities Pleasant/Very Pleasant

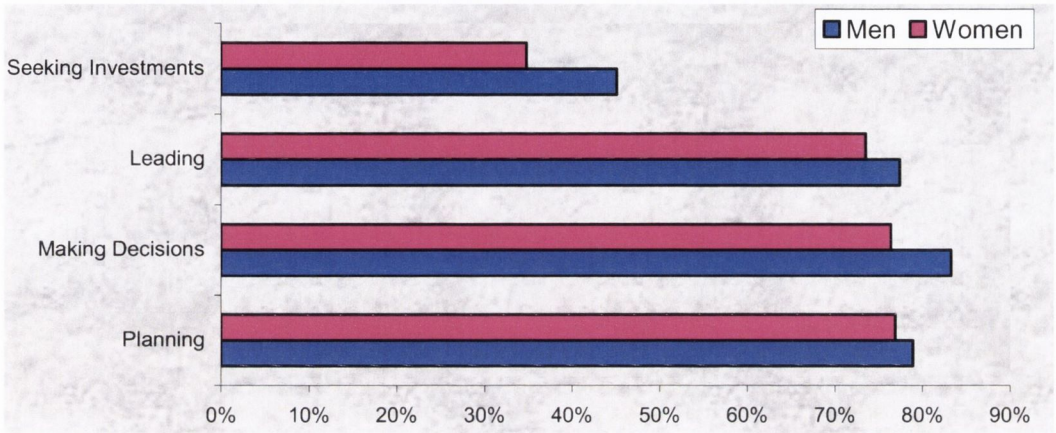


All respondents were asked to rate, on a five-point scale, how they felt about carrying out a range of duties relating to the management of their business. These consisted of:

- Making decisions;
- Planning;
- Leading;
- Seeking investments.

There were gender differences in only one duty. Women were much less likely to find seeking investments satisfying, as 146 women (35%) found it pleasant or very pleasant, compared to 152 (45%) men (Chi-square, $p<0.01$). However, no other gender differences emerged as for planning, making decisions or leading (Figure 5.25).

Figure 5.25 Percentage of Respondents who found Selected Duties Pleasant/Very Pleasant



These results show that women entrepreneurs find soliciting investments less pleasant than their male counterparts. This is consistent with the international literature, which emphasises the fact that women entrepreneurs are more likely to rely on bootstrapping to generate the funds necessary for business expansion (Carter et al., 2002; Valiulis et al., 2004).

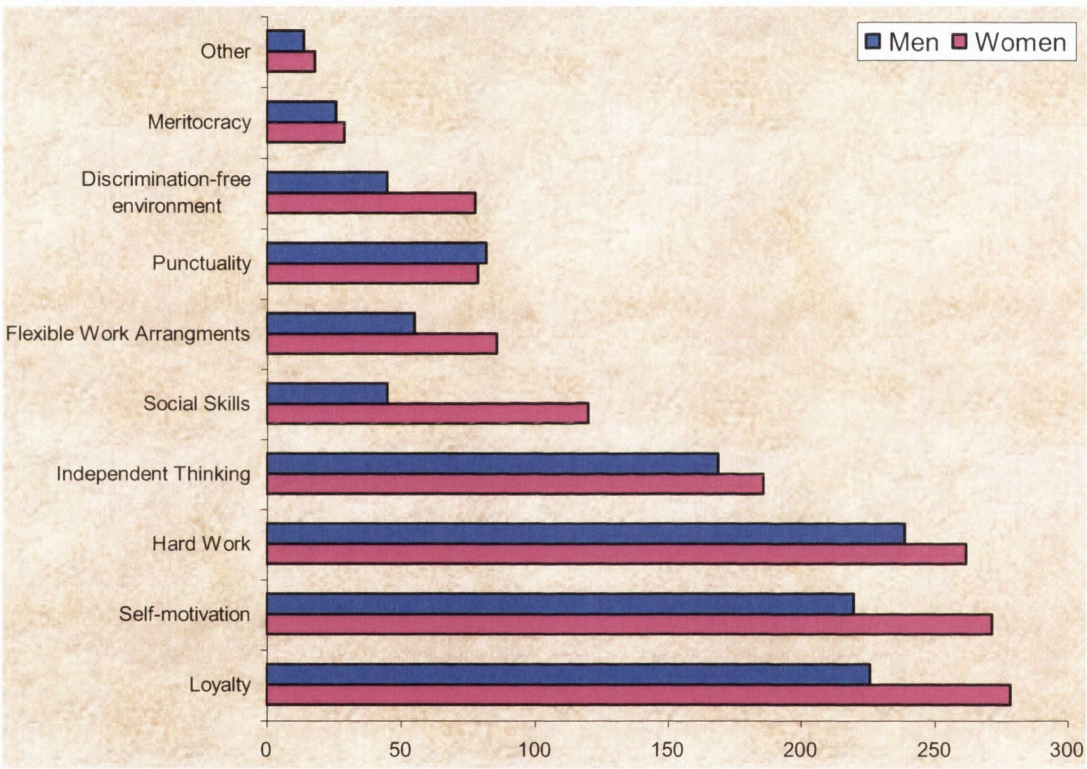
Values held by Women Entrepreneurs

Using a five-point scale, respondents were asked to select up to four values that they sought to implement in their companies, from the following list:

- Loyalty;
- Hard work;
- Independent thinking;
- Self-motivation;
- Social skills;
- Discrimination-free environment;
- Punctuality;
- Meritocracy;
- Flexible work arrangements.

The three values ranked highest by men and women entrepreneurs consisted of loyalty, self-motivation and hard work. The results of this exercise showed highly statistically significant differences between women and men entrepreneurs (Chi-square, $p<0.01$). Overall, women entrepreneurs were more likely to select holistic values than their male counterparts (Figure 5.26). Women represented 73 percent of those who selected social skills, 63 per cent of those who selected discrimination-free environment, and 60 per cent of those who selected flexible work arrangements. All other values were approximately selected by an equivalent number of men and women.

Figure 5.26 Values by Gender



To a large extent, the findings of this section replicate, those in the international literature. Men and women entrepreneurs were mostly driven by the same types of values, but women entrepreneurs were also more likely to be driven by holistic values: they were more people driven; put more emphasis on promoting values such as social skills, discrimination-free environment and flexible work arrangements than men. This reinforces international research findings (Vokins, 1993; NWFBO, 1994; The SIA Group, 2001; Minniti and Arenius, 2003).

5.4 Summary of Findings

Most of the entrepreneurs surveyed were 35 to 44 years of age, while women entrepreneurs tended to be younger than their male counterparts. Women were less likely to be married with dependent children than men entrepreneurs, and were generally educated to a higher level than their male counterparts. These findings may suggest that to become/remain successful entrepreneurs, women need to avoid being the sole care-giver.

The majority of entrepreneurs surveyed had a family member who was involved in a business venture. It appears that women are less confident than men in terms of starting a business without familial example/support. More women than men entrepreneurs enter entrepreneurship following the example of their mother and/or father. However, more men entrepreneurs than women entrepreneurs had had a previous business venture. This provides some evidence that women entrepreneurs have a greater need than their male counterparts to learn by example from a family role model(s) before entering entrepreneurship. There is also some evidence that men and women have different business backgrounds. Men entrepreneurs have a longer history of running businesses, as fewer women started more than one business compared with men, and seem more willing to take the risks necessary to start-up new ones.

The career histories of men and women entrepreneurs were different. Women were much more likely to have worked part-time, and/or to have had a career interruption for longer than six months. The reasons for choosing to work part-time or to take a career break also differed by gender. The main reason for women entrepreneurs working part-time or having a work interruption was for child rearing or the care of another relative. These findings suggest that a disparity exists in the balance of power between men and women entrepreneurs' background and characteristics.

The organisational characteristics of men and women entrepreneurs' businesses were different. Women entrepreneurs were less likely to employ staff, and when they did, it was more likely to be female staff and/or on a part-time basis. The organisational structures of men's and women's businesses were similar. There were also more similarities than differences in the management styles adopted by men and women entrepreneurs. Even though men and women entrepreneurs were quite similar on most aspects, they differed in that women entrepreneurs were more risk averse than their male counterparts and in that women entrepreneurs gave more importance to holistic values than their male counterparts.

5.5 Conclusions

The personal and business profile of respondents provides some answers to two of the research questions underpinning this thesis. This concluding section considers the implications of the findings relating to risk-taking and management styles.

One of the research questions relates to whether men entrepreneurs took more financial and/or personal risks than women entrepreneurs. The survey shows that, given their similar age profiles, men entrepreneurs have longer histories of running businesses than men entrepreneurs. This suggests that men entrepreneurs are more inclined to start-up new businesses than women entrepreneurs. In addition, the survey showed that women entrepreneurs perceived themselves to be more risk averse than their male counterparts. Men entrepreneurs also perceived that entrepreneurship had developed their risk-taking propensity. Women entrepreneurs were less likely than men entrepreneurs to feel comfortable with seeking investments. This points to the fact that women entrepreneurs are less inclined to take financial risks than men entrepreneurs. Overall, the findings of the survey suggest that there are differences in the level of risk taking by men and women entrepreneurs, with men more likely than women entrepreneurs to take financial risks, which supports the findings reported in the international literature.

The survey did not provide evidence that there were perceived differences in the organisational structures of men and women entrepreneurs, with most respondents citing the use of a participatory structure. There was also limited evidence of differences of management styles between men and women entrepreneurs. Overall, managerial traits showed more similarities than differences between men and women entrepreneurs. The only small difference in managerial attributes was that women entrepreneurs perceived themselves to be more sensitive to people in their environment than men entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurs' sensitivity to their environment is further reinforced by the values they hold. The survey shows that there are some important differences with men entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurs appear to attribute more importance than their male counterparts to values such as social skills, discrimination-free environment and flexible work arrangements.

There is also limited evidence of differences between men and women entrepreneurs in terms of the development of their managerial skills, with more similarities than differences. The sole difference was that women entrepreneurs felt they had become more directive. Finally, findings from the survey showed no differences between men and women entrepreneurs on a range of managerial tasks. Men and women entrepreneurs showed similar levels of comfort with managerial tasks such as mentoring, planning, or leading.

This section has provided some answers to two of the research questions. First, this section has shown that men entrepreneurs in Ireland are more likely than their female counterparts to take financial risks. Second, this section has shown that there are very few differences in the management styles adopted by men and women entrepreneurs in Ireland. In the next chapter, the respondents' motivations for becoming entrepreneurs are examined.

Chapter 6 Survey: Motivations of Men and Women Entrepreneurs

Chapter 5 presented a profile of the entrepreneurs surveyed, the characteristics of their businesses and their organisational choices. Chapter 6 examines the motivations of respondents for becoming entrepreneurs, based on the findings of the survey. Section 6.1 sets out the motivations of respondents, followed by Section 6.2 which examines those in relation to social and demographic factors. In section 6.3, a cluster analysis was conducted to produce a classification of the types of entrepreneurs and their motivations for being involved with a business venture.

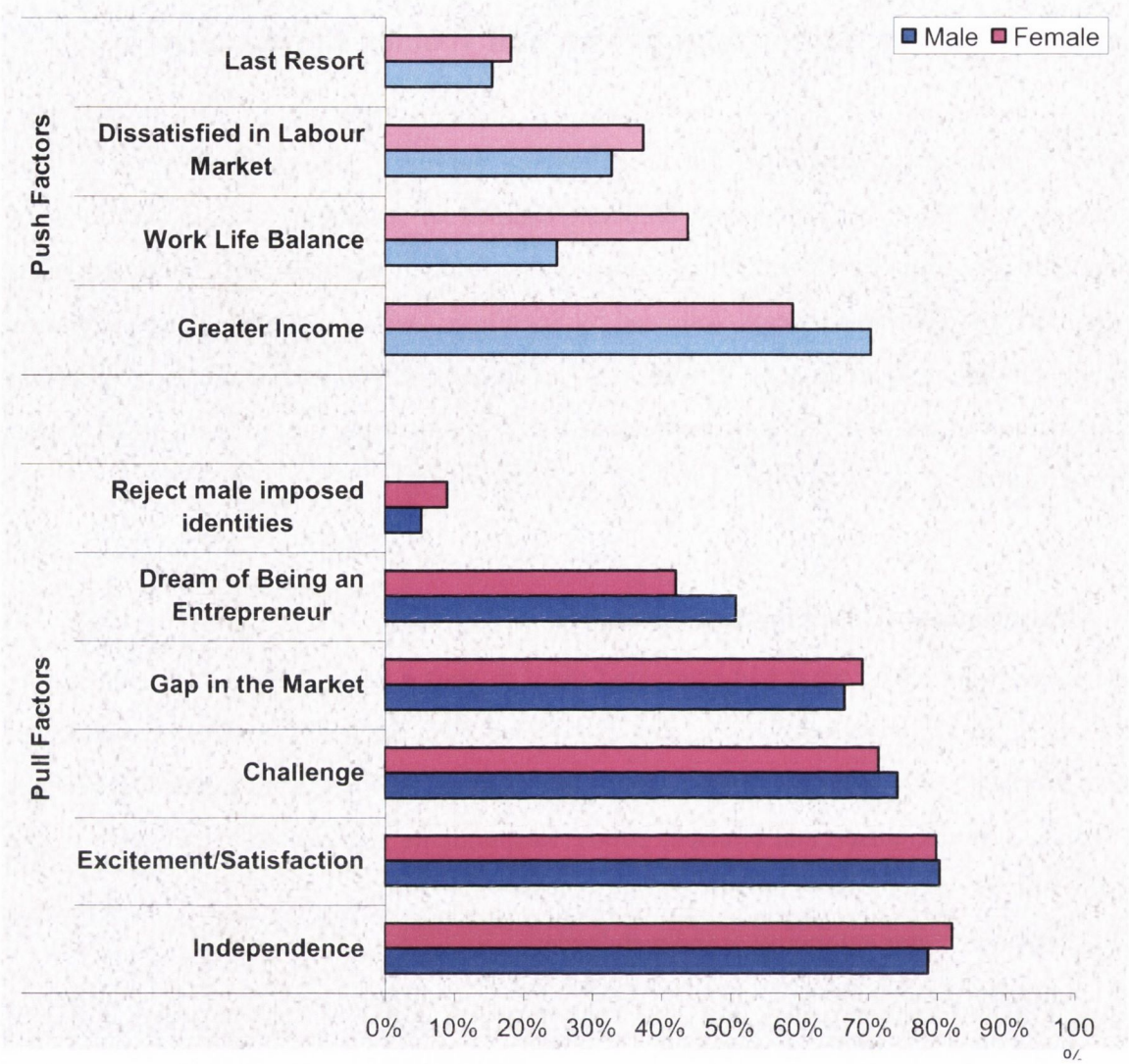
6.1 Motivations for Becoming Entrepreneurs

Respondents were asked what had motivated them to start a business from a list of factors consisting of the ten main motivational factors selected from the literature (Goffee and Scase, 1985; Campbell, 1994; Marlow, 1997; Moore and Buttner, 1997; Carter, 2000; Duchéneaut and Orhan, 2000; Kjeldsen and Nielsen, 2000). Respondents were asked to rate each of the following motivational factors on a five-point scale:

- Seeking greater autonomy or independence;
- Looking for a challenge;
- Rejecting male imposed identities;
- Regain excitement/satisfaction in one's work;
- Identifying a gap in the market;
- Having a life long dream of being an entrepreneur;
- Generating more income;
- Achieving better work life balance;
- Experiencing dissatisfaction in the labour market
- Last resort.

Of these ten motivational factors, the first six consist of 'pull factors', while the remaining four can be categorised as 'push factors' (Orhan and Scott, 2001). The results are summarised in the figure below, which presents the percentage of men and women entrepreneurs agreeing or strongly agreeing with each particular motivational factor (Figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1 Respondents' Motivations by Gender



6.1.1 Pull Factors

The key pull factors that had influenced the respondents' decision to start a business are: independence; excitement/satisfaction; challenge; gap in the market; dream of being an entrepreneur; rejection of male imposed identities.

Greater independence was the most important motivational factor among respondents, 81 per cent of whom agreed or strongly agreed. There was no statistically significant difference between men and women. The second most influential pull factor was excitement and satisfaction about work, rated as agree or strongly agree by 80 per cent of all entrepreneurs. Again, no gender differences emerged. A further 73 per cent of the entrepreneurs felt that the challenge element enticed them to start a business, while 68 per cent saw a gap in the market.

'Dreamed of being an entrepreneur' was a motivational factor for 46 per cent of the respondents (51% of men compared to 42% of women). There were no statistically significant gender differences. Two respondents, one male and one female, elaborated as follows: *"It was always my ambition to be self-employed"; "I have had a life-long wish to be self-employed".*

Finally, nine per cent of women identified/strongly identified with rejecting male imposed identities as a motivational factor. This shows that the majority of female respondents did not feel that this factor influenced them to start a business.

Table 6.1 Pull Motivational Factors among Respondents (Agreed/Strongly Agreed)

	Men	Women
Independence	79% (234)	82% (306)
Excitement/Satisfaction	80% (239)	80% (292)
Looking for a Challenge	74% (218)	72% (265)
Gap in the Market	67% (200)	69% (260)
Dream of Being an Entrepreneur	51% (148)	42% (148)
Rejecting Male Imposed Identities	5% (15)	9% (31)

These findings are consistent with the literature on entrepreneurial motivations, which generally ranks the need for independence and the desire for satisfaction highest (Duchéneaut and Orhan, 2000; Deakins and Whittam, 2000; Orhan and Scott, 2001). However, the impact of entering entrepreneurship as a mean of rejecting male imposed identities appeared to have very little relevance for the women or men surveyed contrary to the findings of Goffee and Scase (1985). Overall, there were no gender differences between men and women in relation to any of the pull factors, thereby validating findings in other studies (Marlow, 1997; Moore and Buttner, 1997; Carter, 2000; Duchéneaut and Orhan, 2000; Kjeldsen and Nielsen, 2000).

6.1.2 Push Factors

Four push motivational factors were listed in the questionnaire. These consist of: generating greater income; achieving a better work life balance; experiencing dissatisfaction in the labour market; and as a last resort. Overall, the majority of respondents felt that generating more income was a factor, but other push factors were not strong motivators.

The main factor identified/strongly identified with was generating more income. Men were more likely than women to claim that generating a greater income was an important motivational factor (Chi square, $p<0.01$). Overall, a total of 64 per cent of all entrepreneurs identified greater income as a motivational factor (70% of men compared to 59% of women). In accordance with the literature, entrepreneurs frequently pointed out that starting/running an enterprise was closely related to generating an income (Carter, 2000; Duchéneaut and Orhan, 2000; Orhan and Scott, 2001). Some men in the survey felt that they needed financial security:

> *"By setting-up the business this will give me financial security";*
>
> *"My mission at this stage is to organise my business so that I can work 9 to 5 and get a decent wage";*
>
> *"It is only after three and a half years in the business that it is starting to bring financial rewards";*
>
> *"Personally the goal for the above is to get financially secure ASAP".*

Three men who mentioned generating income faced, or were about to face, redundancy and they felt that this was the primary motivational factor behind them becoming entrepreneurs:

> *"I set up my small business earlier than I had planned due to loss of job";*
>
> *"It is strongly accepted that I will face redundancy within the next 2 years. By setting-up the business this will give me financial security";*
>
> *"In the last job I worked at before starting up my business, I had spent six years working there, and then made redundant. At this point I found I had no confidence in leaving my trust to another employer and decided I was going to be my own boss from then on".*

One woman claimed that making money was associated with supplementing a household income: *"Started my business to supplement spouse's income".*

Thirty-five per cent of entrepreneurs agreed/strongly agreed with achieving a better work life balance as a motivational factor. The proportion of women entrepreneurs who agreed/strongly agreed with better work/life balance as a motivational factor was 44 per cent, compared to a 25 per cent for men (Chi square, $p<0.01$). This motivational factor was evident in women's comments:

"Felt I was raising my family and being self-employed allowed me to work from home ... This suits me as I am also here to raise my family. I can work around the children's needs";

"I started my own business in order to improve my work-life balance. Also for health reasons, I needed to be in control of the environment I worked in; both ergonomic and stress related";

"Wanted something part-time whilst kids at school".

Furthermore, 35 per cent of the respondents agreed/strongly agreed that dissatisfaction with the labour market had led them to entrepreneurship. There were no statistically significant gender differences. One male respondent stated that *"[he] was involved in clerical work but found it rigid, claustrophobic, stuffy, boring, repetitive and constrictive"*. One female respondent felt that she had been discriminated against in employment: *"Discrimination in the workplace prevented me from going any further up the ladder. Only option was self-employment. Glad I took the step. Fulfilment at last!"*. A further woman claimed that: *"Had a very successful career in the corporate world. Left because I felt that as a woman my progress was limited"*.

Finally, only 17 per cent of all respondents stated that they strongly agreed/agreed with the fact that they had entered entrepreneurship as a 'last resort'. However, some female respondents illustrated how they had started their business in response to a personal crisis and/or a change of circumstances:

"I live in a very rural and isolated area of south Kerry and created a home based business due to the break-up of my marriage and having to look after two children and earn a living";

"The business was set-up by my husband and I joined him a year later, after personal crisis and change of situations";

"I became a Director of this company in 1972 with my first husband. After his death in 1976 I took over the reins and restructured the company";

"Financial independence was a long-term objective from the time I was 25 in order to leave my husband when the kids were reared";

"Two years ago my husband died. I ran the business. I depended on it for an income";

"Company started through necessity, or face dole".

Other female respondents claimed to have started their business because there were no suitable alternative jobs:

> *"As there were no design firms of good enough quality in my town, I set up on my own. Had a suitable company existed, I think I would have been happy to work for a company, rather than set up myself";*
>
> *"The main reason that I set up was simply because there was absolutely no jobs in my chosen area of study at college so I thought I'd make a job";*
>
> *"In order to spend my life doing what I wanted, it was necessary to work for myself...".*

There were no gender differences in relation to labour market dissatisfaction nor last resort as motivations.

Table 6.2 Push Motivational Factors among Respondents

	Men	Women
Generating Greater Income	71% (211)*	59% (216)*
Achieving Better Work Life Balance	25% (71)*	44% (156)*
Dissatisfaction in the Labour Market	33% (94)	38% (128)
Last Resort	16% (44)	18% (63)

* Statistically significant result

The findings offer little evidence that push factors predominate among women. This mirrors the findings of Orhan and Scott (2001) but contradicts those of Kjeldsen and Nielsen (2000). Only one push factor prevailed among the women in the survey: more women than men felt that they had become entrepreneurs to achieve a better work life balance. This can potentially be explained by the fact that disproportionally women are responsible for domestic duties (Drew, 1999) and have a greater need to reconcile their work and family environment. Finally, generating greater income predominated among men, reflecting the fact that men's role is typically seen as one of a breadwinner in Irish society (Drew, 1999).

6.2 Models of Motivations

The purpose of this section is to examine the impact that gender, age, parenthood, and marital status had on a range of motivational factors. Ordinal cumulative logit models were used for the purpose of the analysis run in SPSS. Ordinal regression models examine the relationship between an ordinal response with a set of explanatory variables. The strength of the method is

that, while controlling for a set of factors, it is possible to examine how a change in the explanatory variable will affect the response variable.

6.2.1 Ordinal Logistic Models Methodology

The purpose of this section is to describe the relationship between motivational factors and some explanatory variables (e.g. gender, family status, marital status and age). The response variables (motivations) are based on five-point scale answers (from strongly disagree to strongly agree). The response variable is therefore ordinal in nature and cumulative logistic models are appropriate for this type of analysis (McCullagh and Nelder, 1989; Agresti, 2002; Dobson, 2002).

The model is defined by:

$$g(\chi_k) = \theta_k - \lfloor \beta_1 x_{i1} + ... + \beta_p x_{ip} \rfloor, \text{ k=1, ..., K-1}$$

where K is the number of distinct categories, χ_k is the cumulative probability up to and including category k, θ_k is the constant associated with the k^{th} distinct response category, p is the number of regression coefficients, $\beta_1 ... \beta_p$ are regression coefficients and $x_{i1} ... x_{ip}$ are values of the predictors for the i^{th} case. The link function, $g(\chi_k)$, is selected from Table 6.3.

Table 6.3 Link Functions

Name	Link Function	Inverse Distribution
Logit	$\log\left(\frac{\chi}{1-\chi}\right)$	Logistic
Probit	$\Phi^{-1}(\chi)$	Normal
Complementary Log-log	$\log(-\log(1-\chi))$	Gompertz
Negative Log-log	$-\log(-\log(\chi))$	

The choice of link function used as part of the analysis is guided by the shape of the distribution of the response variable. Logit and probit links are used for symmetric distributions, the first for evenly distributed categories, and the second for normally distributed categories. The complementary log-log and negative log-log links are more appropriate for skewed distribution, the first towards higher categories and the second towards lower categories (Dobson, 2002).

Independently of the link function adopted, there are three characteristics which apply to ordinal models. First, in all models, the response variable corresponds to an unobserved latent variable grouped and ordered in categories. Second, the link function adopted allows assumptions of normality and constant variance not to apply. Finally, there exists independence between categories and the relationship between explanatory variables and response (McCullagh and Nelder, 1989; Agresti, 2002; Dobson, 2002; Chen and Hughes, 2004).

In all models, the response variable was examined against each predictor individually. This was followed by an examination of the complete model, and the reduced model where appropriate. Interaction parameters were factored in and are presented with the results when they produced statistically significant results.

6.2.2 Results

Using ordinal logistic models, three pull factors (rejecting male imposed identities, gap in the market and dream of being an entrepreneur) as well as two push factors (last resort and work life balance) provided some insightful results, set out below.

Pull Factors

The complete model using a complementary log-log link for explaining the ratings of gap in the market was rejected because the test of parallel lines for all link functions ($p=0.028$ for complementary log-log, $p=0.022$ for logit) showed that the assumption of same coefficients across all categories was violated. The best alternative models consisted of a model involving only one explanatory variable: gender.

Model fitting statistics (Table 6.4) for the complementary log-log model indicated that the explanatory variable (gender) accounted for little of the variation in the response, but they were higher than those associated with the logit model. The Pearson's Goodness of Fit statistics was not statistically significant for either links, which indicated that the model fitted the data well. Finally, the test of parallel line failed to reject the null hypothesis that the coefficients are the same across categories ($p=0.151$ for the complementary log-log link and $p=0.66$ for the logit link).

Table 6.4 Model Selection Statistics: Gap in the Market

	Logit Reduced Model	Complementary Log-log Reduced Model
Pearson's Goodness-of-fit	0.066	0.152
Cox and Snell	0.005	0.008
Nagelkerke	0.005	0.008
McFadden	0.002	0.003

Based on these statistics, the link chosen was the complementary log-log link applied to the reduced model. This model is presented below in Table 6.5. The model showed that women were more likely to have been motivated to become an entrepreneur by identifying a gap in the market.

Table 6.5 Ordinal Model with Complementary Log-log Link: Gap in the Market

	Regression Coefficient	P-value
Threshold (Strongly Disagree)	-2.705	<0.001
Threshold (Disagree)	-1.983	<0.001
Threshold (Undecided)	-1.072	<0.001
Threshold (Agree)	-0.379	<0.001
Gender (Male)	-0.243	0.022

The next model involving pull factors showed that both gender and family status had an impact on 'dream of being an entrepreneur' as a motivational factor. Because of the distribution of the responses, two possible links were examined with complete models: the logit link and the complementary log-log link. Both models showed that the test of parallel lines failed to reject the null hypothesis that the regression coefficients are the same across categories ($p=0.351$ for the logit link model and $p=0.136$ for the complementary log-log link model).

Model fitting statistics (Table 6.6) indicated that the logit link model accounted for a greater amount of variation in the response variable than the complementary log-log link model. The model fitting statistics however are quite small. In both models, Pearson's Goodness-of-Fit statistics indicated that the model fitted the data well. Because of the higher values in the model fitting statistics, the logit link was adopted instead of the complementary log-log link.

Table 6.6 Model Selection Statistics: Dream of Being an Entrepreneur

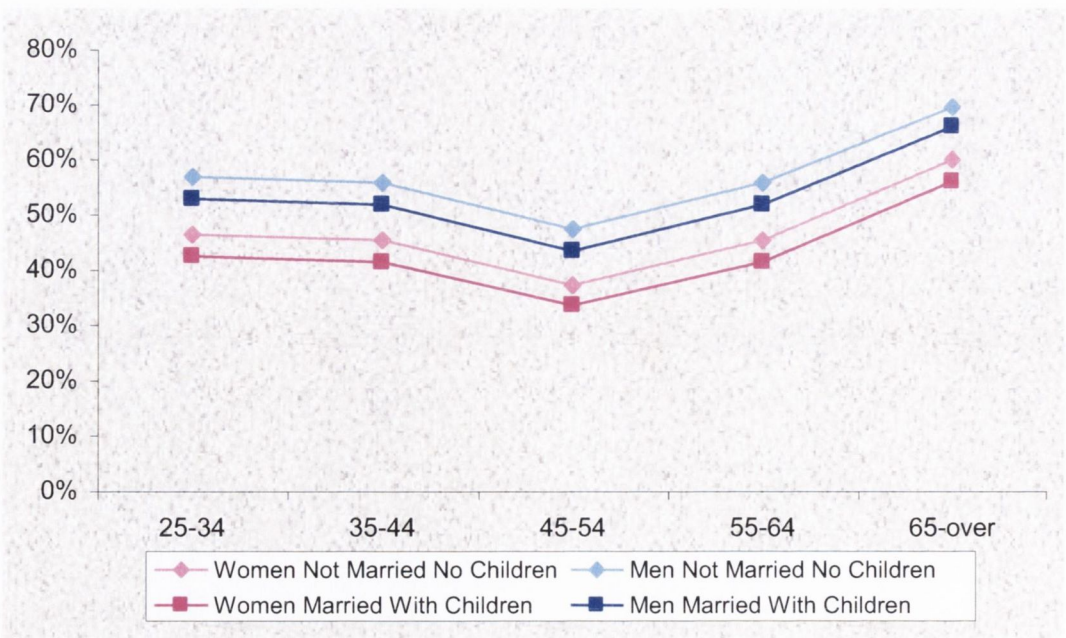
	Logit Complete Model	Complementary Log-log Complete Model
Pearson's Goodness-of-fit	0.949	0.897
Cox and Snell	0.033	0.025
Nagelkerke	0.034	0.027
McFadden	0.011	0.008

The model, presented in Table 6.7, shows that being a woman decreases the desire to be an entrepreneur as a motivational factor, as does having children (Figure 6.2). However, marital status is not significant in this particular model.

Table 6.7 Ordinal Model with Logit Link: Dream of Being an Entrepreneur

	Regression Coefficient	P-value
Threshold (Strongly Disagree)	-2.012	0.004
Threshold (Disagree)	-1.266	0.068
Threshold (Undecided)	-0.241	0.728
Threshold (Agree)	0.586	0.398
Marital Status (Not Married)	-.0265	0.198
Family Status (No Children)	0.426	0.033
Gender (Male)	0.420	0.004
Age (25-34)	-0.550	0.442
Age (35-44)	-0.592	0.396
Age (45-54)	-0.928	0.186
Age (55-64)	-0.591	0.414

Figure 6.2 Probability of Agreeing with Dream of Being an Entrepreneur



Push Factors

The models compared all involved the logit link because of the shape of the distribution of the response variable. The complete model failed to reject the null hypothesis in the parallel lines test (p=0.08). The variation accounted for by the model proved to be quite small (Cox and Snell=0.067; Nagelkerke=0.070; McFadden=0.022). However, there was no evidence that the model did not fit the data well from the Pearson statistic (p=0.21). Two explanatory variables proved to be statistically significant: gender and family status. The model, presented in Table 6.8, showed that being female increased the probability of becoming an entrepreneur in order to achieve better work-life balance, as did having children.

Table 6.8 Ordinal Model with Logit Link: Achieving Work-Life Balance

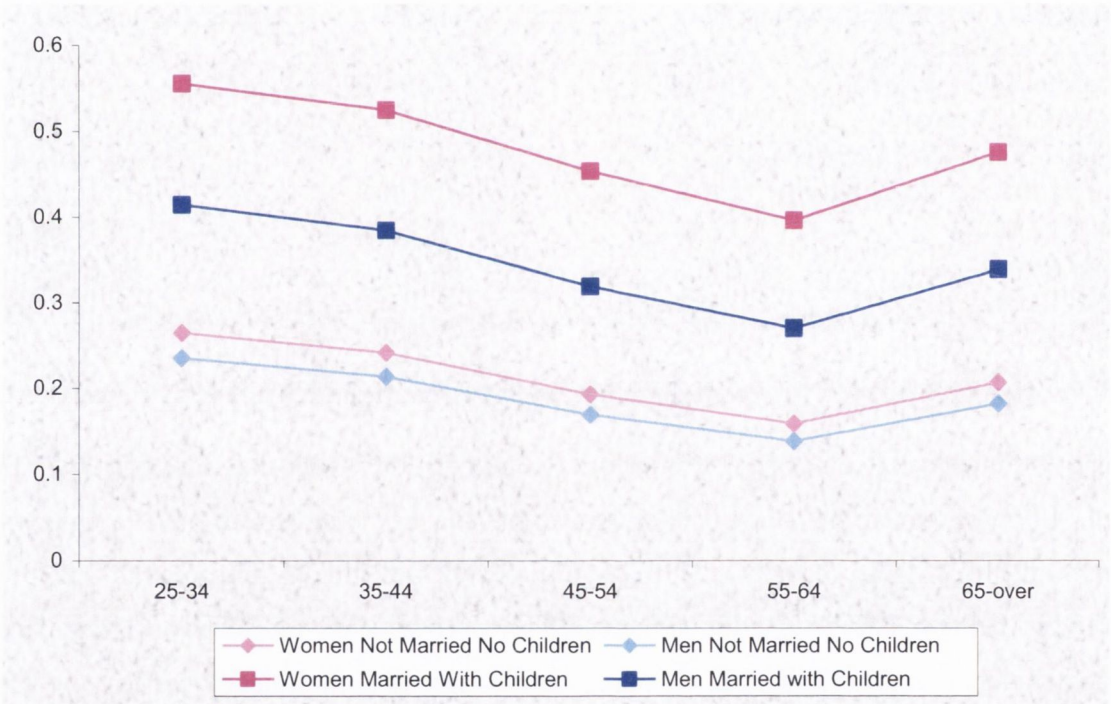
	Regression Coefficient	P-value
Threshold (Strongly Disagree)	-1.756	0.017
Threshold (Disagree)	-0.933	0.204
Threshold (Undecided)	0.194	0.792
Threshold (Agree)	0.867	0.238
Marital Status (Not Married)	-0.139	0.501
Family Status (No Children)	-0.838	<0.001
Gender (Male)	-0.686	<0.001
Age (25-34)	0.357	0.635
Age (35-44)	0.215	0.771
Age (45-54)	-0.076	0.918
Age (55-64)	-0.323	0.671

An interaction parameter between gender and having children was therefore added to the model. It appeared to be statistically significant and the model did not violate any assumptions while fitting the data well. In other words the new model, presented in Table 6.9, showed that being female with children increased the need to achieve better work life balance as a motivational factor (Figure 6.3). In other words, there is a multiplicative effect between gender and family status.

Table 6.9 Ordinal Model with Logit Link with Interaction Parameter: Achieving Work/Life Balance

	Regression Coefficient	P-value
Threshold (Strongly Disagree)	0.872	0.573
Threshold (Disagree)	1.697	0.273
Threshold (Undecided)	2.827	0.068
Threshold (Agree)	3.505	0.024
Gender x Children	0.682	0.050
Marital Status (Not Married)	-0.151	0.465
Family Status (No Children)	0.271	0.663
Gender (Male)	0.523	0.420
Age (25-34)	0.323	0.669
Age (35-44)	0.199	0.787
Age (45-54)	-0.088	0.905
Age (55-64)	-0.323	0.671

Figure 6.3 Probability of Agreeing/Strongly Agreeing with Achieving Better Work Life Balance



6.3 Motivational Clusters

It has been recognised in the literature that entrepreneurs should not be seen as a homogeneous group. This study therefore sought to provide a classification of Irish entrepreneurs initially based on their motivational factors. This classification was obtained using a k-means procedure. The advantages of using the procedure are that it is used

specifically for scale variables and can deal with large datasets. The k-means clustering algorithm is an iterative partitioning technique. After being given a number of clusters to divide cases into, it allocates cases iteratively so as to minimise the distance within each cluster. This procedure is repeated for different numbers of clusters and the best solution is then selected manually (Hastie, Tibshirani and Friedman, 2001). In this research, the procedure was implemented with a pair-wise deletion since many respondents did not rate all ten motivational factors. The best solution involved four clusters (Table 6.10).

The first cluster consisted of respondents who were highly motivated by strong internal pull factors such as 'independence', 'excitement/satisfaction' and 'gap in the market'. The second cluster grouped respondents who were strongly motivated by 'last resort' and 'rejecting male imposed identities'. The third cluster was the exact opposite of the second and grouped the respondents who felt highly motivated by all factors except those identified in cluster two, namely 'last resort' and 'rejecting male imposed identities'. Finally, the fourth cluster consisted of respondents highly motivated by all pull factors but one (rejecting male imposed identities), and who did not identify with any of the push factors except 'generating a greater income'. A total of 734 respondents were classified into four clusters: 205 (28%) in the first cluster, 41 (5%) in the second cluster, 240 (33%) in the third, and 248 (34%) in the fourth.

Table 6.10 Final Cluster Centres

	Cluster			
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**
Independence	4	2	5	4
Last Resort	2	4	2	1
Reject male imposed identities	1	4	2	1
Greater Income	3	2	4	4
Excitement/Satisfaction	4	2	5	5
Gap in the Market	4	2	4	4
Balance Work Family	3	3	4	3
Dream of being an Entrepreneur	2	3	4	4
Dissatisfied in Labour Market	2	3	5	2
Looking for challenge	3	2	5	4

The characteristics of the respondents in each of the four clusters were examined. Cluster 1 consisted of 'Family-orientated Entrepreneurs', Cluster 2 of 'Egalitarian Entrepreneurs', Cluster 3 of 'Committed Entrepreneurs' and Cluster 4 of 'Traditional Entrepreneurs'.

The first cluster of 'Family-orientated Entrepreneurs', consisted of those who appeared to be more driven by their family/personal commitments than their business. These respondents were that they were predominantly women who operated businesses with less formal management styles and who favoured a collaborative approach, generally disliked giving instructions or orders, did not prioritise planning and claimed to be quite risk averse. The background of respondents in Cluster 1 was characterised by a high uptake of both part-time work and work interruptions for over six months during these respondents' careers. In their personal life, these respondents were likely to report lower levels of sacrifice in terms of their social time and they were most likely to look or have looked after their children personally.

The second cluster of 'Egalitarian Entrepreneurs' consisted of respondents who showed a high level of commitment to their entrepreneurial life. These respondents felt that they had not sacrificed their free time, social time, nor their time with their children and/or spouse to get to where they are. This cluster was not predominantly composed of men nor women. In their personal life, they were least likely to look after their children themselves and most likely to use private paid care for their childcare needs. Finally, they claimed to utilise a collaborative management style and reported a very small uptake of reduced working time compared to other clusters.

The third cluster of 'Committed Entrepreneurs' consisted mainly of women. Respondents in this cluster felt that they had sacrificed a lot in terms of free time and time with their spouse/children to succeed in business. Despite reporting a low interference from childcare, respondents in this cluster were likely to have worked part-time, particularly for childrearing purposes, or to have taken a career break of more than six months, at some stage in their careers. These respondents were more likely to exhibit a competitive style, to enjoy leading and seeking investments, and believed that their business would expand over a five-year period. They were also likely to have a majority of female staff in their business and to find flexible work arrangements to be important. Finally, respondents in this cluster were most likely to identify obstacles for women in business, feel that women are a minority in the business world and that women lack confidence, contacts and financial resources.

The fourth and final cluster consisted of 'Traditional Entrepreneurs'. Respondents in this cluster had smaller businesses with no full-time employees, but saw themselves as

competitive, enjoyed motivating staff, leading and seeking investments. Furthermore, they also felt that their businesses would expand over the next five years. This cluster was not predominantly composed of men nor women. On a personal level, they were most likely to be married or living with a partner, to have their children minded by the other parent and least likely to resort to private paid care for their children. Finally, respondents in this cluster did the least amount of housework per week, the majority of which was performed by their partner.

The characteristics of the respondents in each cluster allow them to be classified according to two main types: their entrepreneurial attachment (importance attached to business) and how traditional the respondents were (importance attached to family/personal life). The results of this classification are presented in Table 6.11.

Table 6.11 Typology of Entrepreneurs by Motivations

	Traditional	**Democratic**
Low Entrepreneurial Attachment	Cluster 1: **Family Orientated Entrepreneurs**	Cluster 2: **Egalitarian Entrepreneurs**
High Entrepreneurial Attachment	Cluster 4: **Traditional Entrepreneurs**	Cluster 3: **Committed Entrepreneurs**

This typology bears some resemblance to that developed by Goffee and Scase (1985). Goffee and Scase (1985) divide up women entrepreneurs according to their attachment to entrepreneurial ideals and acceptance of traditional gender roles. Their typology can be criticised on a number of grounds. First, it fails to look at the factors behind women's attachment to gender roles and entrepreneurial ideals. Second, their typology is seen as a static process and does not recognise that women entrepreneurs could move from one category to another. Last, it fails to take into account important factors in women entrepreneurs' lives (social class, education for example) (Carter and Cannon, 1988; Chell and Baines, 1998; Carter, 2000; Carter and Shaw, 2006).

The typology devised is this thesis differs from Goffee and Scase's (1985) on a number of important points. It is not a typology based solely on women entrepreneurs, but rather encompasses both men and women entrepreneurs. Research into entrepreneurship tends to

only look at the organisation of the private sphere where women are involved, and very rarely considers the experiences of men entrepreneurs in this respect. The division adopted in this typology is thus not made on whether or not women entrepreneurs reject their 'traditional' feminine role, as is the case in Goffee and Scase's (1985) typology, but instead on whether women/men remain over/under-represented in the private sphere, or whether there is a more egalitarian division of labour in the private sphere. The two dichotomies are not based on a masculine/feminine division, but instead on a shift of responsibility and involvement in the public and private spheres. It therefore looks at the predominance in one 'typical' sphere against a shift towards a more egalitarian position in the organisational model. This typology looks at this possible shift in the private sphere, in terms of both men and women.

The typology assumes that it is possible to move from one category to another, recognising that many entrepreneurs will shift during the course of their entrepreneurial life (for example, an entrepreneur with small children might move into another category when their children have grown up; an entrepreneur might hold different attitudes once the business has become established and has reached a certain size). Because of its dynamic nature, the typology recognises that there will be less of an impact from socio-economical factors (Mirchandani, 1999).

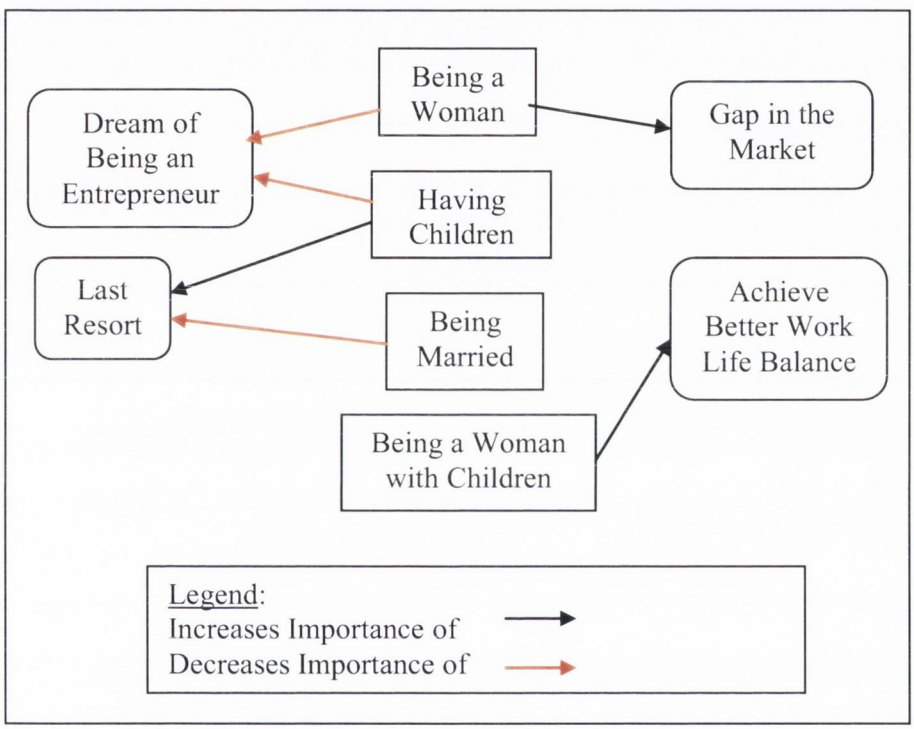
However, the typology adopted is limited in that it does not recognise fully the impact caused by factors such as class or ethnicity for example. A further limitation of the typology is that it cannot differentiate between the roles held by men and women. This is important, as these roles are arguably not equally powerful.

6.4 Key Findings

Male and female respondents were similarly motivated by pull factors and there were no statistically significant differences between men and women in terms of seeking greater independence, excitement/satisfaction, challenge, to fill a gap in the market or because they had always dreamed of being an entrepreneur. However, men were more likely to identify with becoming an entrepreneur in order to generate a greater income. Women were more likely than their male counterparts to agree that push factors had influenced them in reconciling the demands of work and family. There were no gender differences for entering business as a last resort or being dissatisfied in the labour market, as motivational factors.

The motivational factors were also examined in relation to gender and other demographic factors for men and women entrepreneurs, the results of which are summarised in Figure 6.4. Gender seemed to be a key factor associated with a gap in the market and dreaming of being an entrepreneur. Being a woman increased the probability of setting up a business as a result of identifying a gap in the market, but decreased the importance of setting-up a business because they had dreamed of being an entrepreneur.

Figure 6.4 Summary Model: Motivations of Men and Women Entrepreneurs



The motivations did not differ to any great extent from what can be observed in the literature. Women appeared to have been more motivated by seeking a better work life balance (Orhan and Scott, 2001), but contrary to the literature, there was no evidence that dissatisfaction with the labour market (Orhan and Scott, 2001) nor becoming an entrepreneur as a last resort (Campbell, 1994) that have dominated the literature on women's motivations. Overall, the results provided very little evidence push factors predominate among women entrepreneurs' motivational factors.

6.5 Conclusions

Two of the research questions dealt specifically with motivational factors. The first examined whether there are differences between men and women in Ireland in terms of factors that motivated them to become entrepreneurs. The second, in line with the international debate, examined the differences between men and women entrepreneurs in the importance of push factors.

The survey findings provide no evidence that men and women entrepreneurs in Ireland are motivated by different factors. More similarities than differences were observed between men and women. This agrees with the findings in the international literature. Small differences emerged, in that female respondents were more likely to be motivated by achieving a better work/life balance, while male respondents were more likely to be motivated by the need to generate a greater income. However, when controlling for other social factors (e.g. age, marital status, family status), it appeared that differences in motivational factors were predominantly linked to family status, rather than gender alone. However, family status itself is gendered, as traditionally, it is women, rather than men, who are primarily responsible for the care of their children.

Based on the survey findings, it appears that both men and women entrepreneurs are predominantly motivated by pull factors. Furthermore, only a minority of men and women entrepreneurs report having been motivated by push factors. It is clear that the survey provides evidence that push factors do not predominate among both men and women entrepreneurs, however, it shows that women entrepreneurs are more likely than men entrepreneurs to have been motivated by push factors.

This section has provided some answers to two of the research questions. First, it has shown that there are no major differences in motivational factors between men and women becoming entrepreneurs in Ireland. Second, it has shown that push factors do not predominate among women entrepreneurs in Ireland, but that women entrepreneurs in Ireland were more likely than their male counterparts to be motivated by push factors. In the next chapter, the obstacles faced by entrepreneurs in Ireland are examined in terms of gender.

Chapter 7 Survey: Obstacles to Female Entrepreneurship

Chapter 6 examined the motivations of respondents in relation to becoming entrepreneurs. Given women's under-representation as entrepreneurs, particularly in Ireland, this section sought to explain why there were fewer women in business than men and to identify the obstacles that women entrepreneurs face. Section 7.1 examines the rationale for women's under-representation in business while Section 7.2 analyses the obstacles specific to women entrepreneurs, based on the findings of the survey.

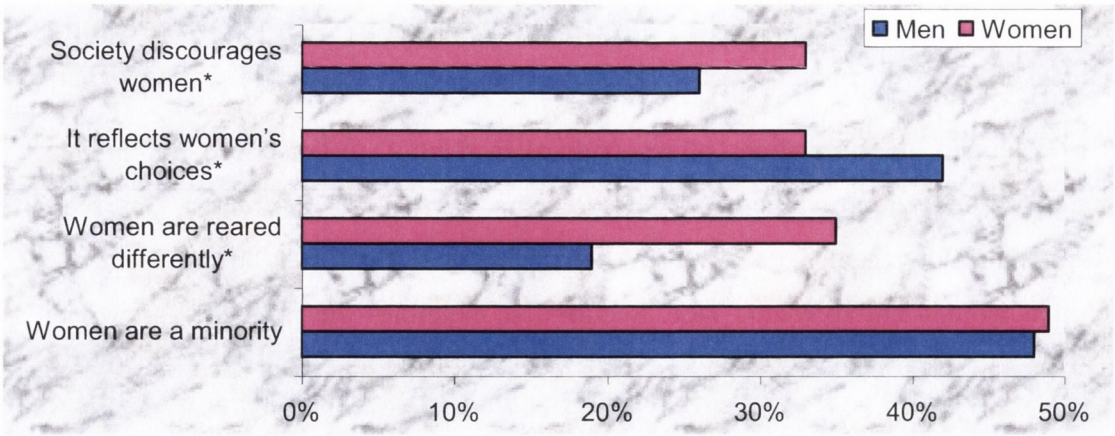
7.1 Women's Under-representation in Business

The literature on gender roles shows that men and women gravitate to different roles (Drew et al., 2003). Traditionally, men are seen as breadwinners, while women are seen as homemakers and carers. This traditional division of labour within the home may be a factor that discourages women from entering entrepreneurship. The purpose of this section is to examine the impact on entrepreneurs of society's gendered expectations. Respondents were asked to rate how much they agreed with a range of factors to explain why there were fewer women in business than men. The questionnaire listed potential obstacles, drawn from the literature, which might explain why there are fewer women in business:

- It is a reflection of women's choices;
- Women are a minority in the business world;
- Society discourages women;
- It is due to the way women are reared.

The responses to these statements showed some statistically significant differences between views held by men and women, with the exception of 'women are a minority' (Figure 7.1).

Figure 7.1 Opinions on Women's Under-representation in Business

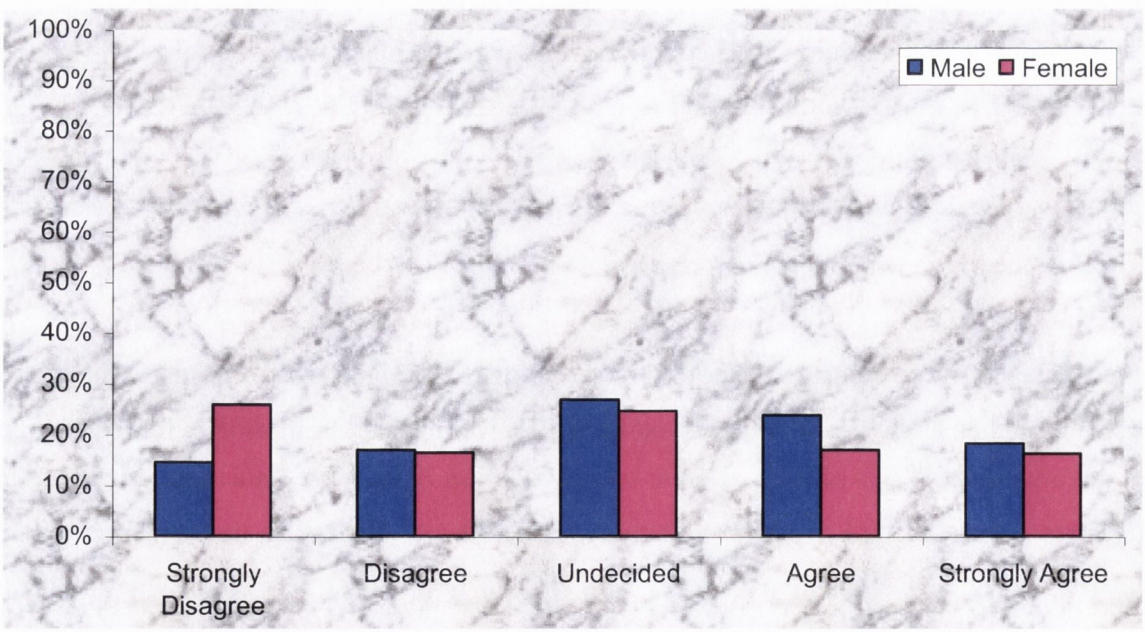


* statistically significant result

7.1.1 Reasons for Women's Under-representation in Business

Women were more likely than men to disagree/strongly disagree with the fact that the reason why there were fewer women entrepreneurs than men entrepreneurs was because it 'reflects women's choices' (Figure 7.2). A total of 107 (26%) women strongly disagreed compared with 47 (14%) men (Chi-square, $p<0.01$).

Figure 7.2 'Reflection of Women's Choices' (n=739)

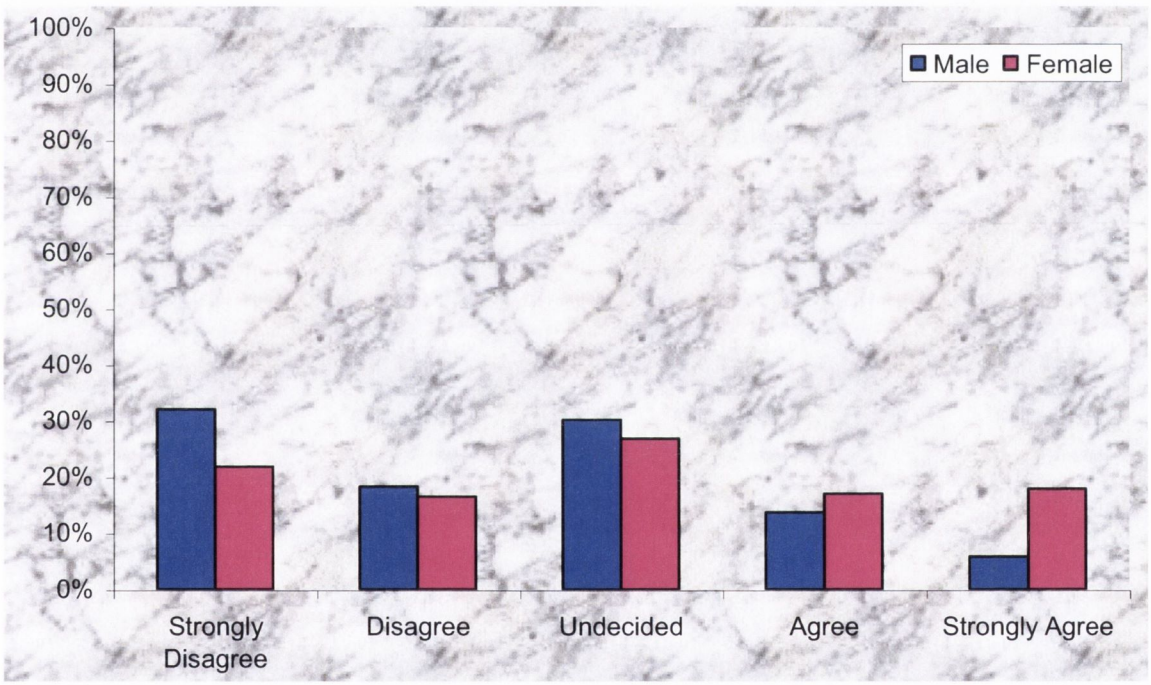


(Chi-square, $p<0.01$)

There were no gender differences between respondents who felt that there were fewer women in business than men because women are a minority. A total of 367 (49%) respondents agreed/strongly agreed with this reason.

However, more women than men believed that there were fewer women entrepreneurs because of the way women are reared (Figure 7.3): 146 (35%) agreed/strongly agreed compared with 64 (19%) men (Chi-square, $p<0.01$). Conversely, men were more likely to strongly disagree with this explanation: 105 men (32%) strongly disagreed with the fact that women's under-representation in business was due to the way women were reared compared with 91 women (22%).

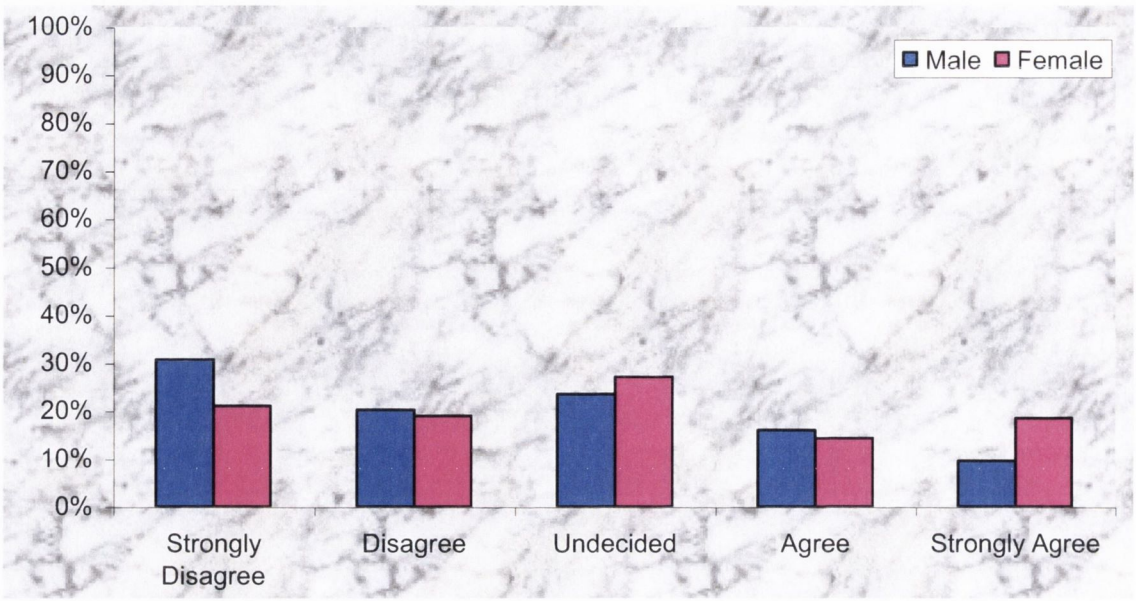
Figure 7.3 'Way Women are Reared' (n=746)



(Chi-square, $p<0.01$)

Women respondents were also more likely than men to feel that society discourages them from becoming entrepreneurs (Figure 7.4): 78 (19%) women strongly agreed with this fact compared with 32 (10%) men (Chi-square, $p<0.01$). Men respondents were more likely to strongly disagree with this explanation: 102 men (31%) strongly disagreed with the statement that society discourages women compared with 89 women respondents (21%).

Figure 7.4 'Society Discourages Women' (n=753)



(Chi-square, $p<0.01$)

7.1.2 Impact of Society on Women in Business

Respondents were asked to comment and expand upon their responses to these explanatory statements. While men and women agreed that women hold a different position in society from men, they attributed this to different reasons.

Past Experiences and Future Developments

Women talked about the expectations society had of them compared to men. Their opinions were fairly similar. One female respondent commented that she felt that there had been much progress in the way society viewed and treated women entrepreneurs:

> *"The male-dominant and male view of women in business ... has changed significantly for the better. In 1976 one was not treated as a serious player in 80% of cases but as a joke and easy prey".*

However, another woman entrepreneur felt that despite improved conditions for women entrepreneurs, society was still the root cause of problems for gender equality:

> *"Generally workers male or female have more flexible working conditions now compared to twenty years ago. However, equality in state bodies and management levels in companies are not equal. Some percentage of male still have big issues with a female manager".*

Other respondents were more optimistic about the future. In particular, two female respondents stressed that the next generation needed to be educated about gender equality. Likewise they stressed that women need to be told that they could achieve anything they set their hearts on, be it in business, or in their personal life:

> *"Females need to be encouraged not to be negative about men being better in business. Women are just as capable if they are willing and interested enough";*
>
> *"I believe things have to start in childhood. As parents we are responsible for how individuals see themselves, whether male or female. If both male and female children are brought up with confidence, self-esteem and a strong sense of self then both can know and recognise that they can do ANYTHING in life".*

Abilities

Some comments reinforced the idea that women were largely as capable, if not more capable, than men in certain spheres. One male respondent commented that there is a deeply rooted belief in Irish society that women are not as capable as men:

> *"Most men, despite what we say, continue to view women as 'less able' than men. We tend to be surprised when a woman does a job 'as good as a man'. Attitudes run very deep, start in childhood".*

Yet, two men entrepreneurs felt that *"females are more capable of running a business than most men"* and that *"Women are much better employers than men".*

Female respondents who remarked upon women's abilities believed that women often display a higher level of performance than their male counterparts:

> *"Being a woman in business, not coming from a business background, I feel that any woman who can show confidence in their own abilities and decision making, can achieve easier and higher than [her] male counterparts";*
>
> *"In relation to women in the working environment - women often feel themselves that they are discriminated against, whereas if they step outside 'the box' and challenge the mould they will excel";*
>
> *"Women can achieve anything if they are determined and fully committed to making a success of a business venture";*
>
> *"I do believe that women are quite capable of realising a good business venture but do have to try much harder to achieve their goals";*

"For the most part, women are far better at their jobs than men and have the definite capacity to create more jobs with new and old established businesses. Attitudes MUST change for better development".

Some of the women were quite optimistic with the way society was evolving. This culminated in a few respondents, mostly women, feeling that women entrepreneurs were very competent and could achieve very successful businesses. This is in contrast to the lack of confidence attributed to women entrepreneurs (Carter, 1993; McGowan and McGeady, 2002).

Different Businesses for Men and Women...

The main areas that attracted comments from women entrepreneurs were that the latter felt that there were major differences between typically men-owned and women-owned businesses, and that society was the cause of this divide. Three female respondents believed that men attach greater importance to factors such as success, expansion, and power:

"I feel running your own business actually suits a woman more than a man in regard to the flexibility you can give yourself re childcare and control over your own lifestyle. This flexibility is often lost if a business becomes too high powered. Men tend to run high powered businesses as they tend to see the success of their business as a reflection on how successful they are personally";

"I think society allows women to set up small businesses because often women are not expected to always earn enough to cover the full mortgage and bills whereas men are expected to earn good money all the time. ... In addition, society accepts women having small businesses without the need for those businesses to continuously expand. There is more pressure on men to have a successful business";

"Men like recognition and positions of power. Women like to get the job done and concentrate on personal/spiritual benefits rather than financial/status roles".

One male respondent felt that not only were there differences and inequalities, but that men and women should learn to accept it:

"I do not perceive that the ultimate goal that a woman should aspire to should be an entrepreneur, or should be doing whatever a man can do as her aim. Vive la différence!".

In stark contrast, another male respondent felt that *"women do not get a fair deal in a lot of business situations".*

One male respondent pointed out that alternative career paths should be created to stop penalising people who do not make their work life their sole priority:

> *"However the real issue, in my view, is the structure of career paths within organisations which tend to penalise anyone (male or female but typically female) who chooses to prioritise family or alternative life choices over career for a period".*

In general, respondents felt that the differences between men and women were rooted in how society viewed them. Some men and women agreed that alternative models of successful businesses should be mainstreamed and accepted. For instance, society should accept an individual's desire to redefine how they choose to lead their lives and how they define their success in business.

Family Responsibilities: A Major Obstacle for Women

The concentration on caring responsibilities among women was believed to be exacerbated by society. Women in Ireland, and internationally, are disproportionately responsible for looking after the home and their family (Mahon, 1998; Drew, 1999; Valiulis et al., 2004). This was notable in their comments, which accepted that caring was perceived as being the direct preserve of women, whereas men, the state and society, had no role in caring for children, and the elderly. Male respondents, in particular, claimed that there was no point in looking beyond the two simple facts (a) women were the ones who had babies and (b) they are responsible for (and largely drawn towards) family life:

> *"Trying to paint men as the reason women fail to set up or succeed in business is sexist and tiresome. Men have careers, women have babies";*
>
> *"The one and only reason there is an imbalance [in the number of women entrepreneurs] is the sole fact that women have babies, men don't. Simple really";*
>
> *"Women have babies, men don't and maternity leave is 26+ weeks";*
>
> *"Women end up looking after family";*
>
> *"I believe it is difficult to quantify the draw to motherhood for women. And its ability to focus women is a skill homed and can be used in business later. However, maybe motherhood helps women prioritise".*

Women respondents agreed with their male counterparts in recognising that they were largely responsible for caring for children, and that this proved an obstacle in their professional life:

"Business and family are seen as incompatible and society determines that women are ultimately responsible for family";

"The nurturing is still in the main left to the women";

"There is a culture out there that discourages women. I returned to Ireland in 1991 and aged 30 and could see that I was viewed as going to have children in next few years, not a good employment prospect";

"Feel strongly that our society does not help women with children develop their career. One thing in particular, the school system, should be like in France where you can leave your child at the school early in the morning and collect after 6. They are fed, homework done and you and the kids can just relax and enjoy each other's company".

The women in the survey recognised that caring responsibilities had been a major barrier to their business. This situation is frequently cited in the literature on obstacles to women entering entrepreneurship. International studies (Carter and Allen, 1997; Marlow, 1997; Cheskin Research, 2000; Stevenson, 2003) and Irish research (The SIA Group, 2001; Valiulis et al., 2004) found that caring responsibilities acted as a major impediment to women's businesses. In the survey, the situation was no different and caring was seen a massive obstacle. Three female respondents in particular reported that:

"Marriage and young children would have been my second obstacle which held me back for about ten years due to child-care arrangements";

"I have not yet had any children but I do feel that for most women family commitments would be a huge block to setting-up and running a business";

"I do think that once the business is up and running it is more difficult for them [women entrepreneurs] because of family and children".

Women referred to the problem that until they get a sufficient and regular income from their business, there is no one who can care for their children and/or another relative. This responsibility of care was exacerbated by a lack of suitable and affordable childcare facilities, a finding replicated in other Irish studies such as the SIA Group (2001) and Valiulis et al. (2004):

"I believe opportunities for women leading companies and in management are limited due to difficulties in obtaining suitable and funding for childcare throughout the child's/children's school career".

"Unless your income is very good, the possibility of having appropriate home/child support is relatively small. For women with caring responsibilities this is a deterrent";

"Finance is a large concern for women entrepreneurs who want families, especially in a small business there's no one to cover and no adequate compensation. It's a tricky situation";

"Lack of childcare (and cost) is the biggest drawback in women running own business. When my children were small I always went back to work after they were in bed. Never enough hours in a day!".

In conclusion, it appears that the findings of this survey largely agree with, and complement, Irish literature on the topic. The comments provide further evidence of the relationship between female entrepreneurship and family responsibilities, mirrored in the literature (Mahon, 1998; Drew, 1999; Valiulis et al., 2004).

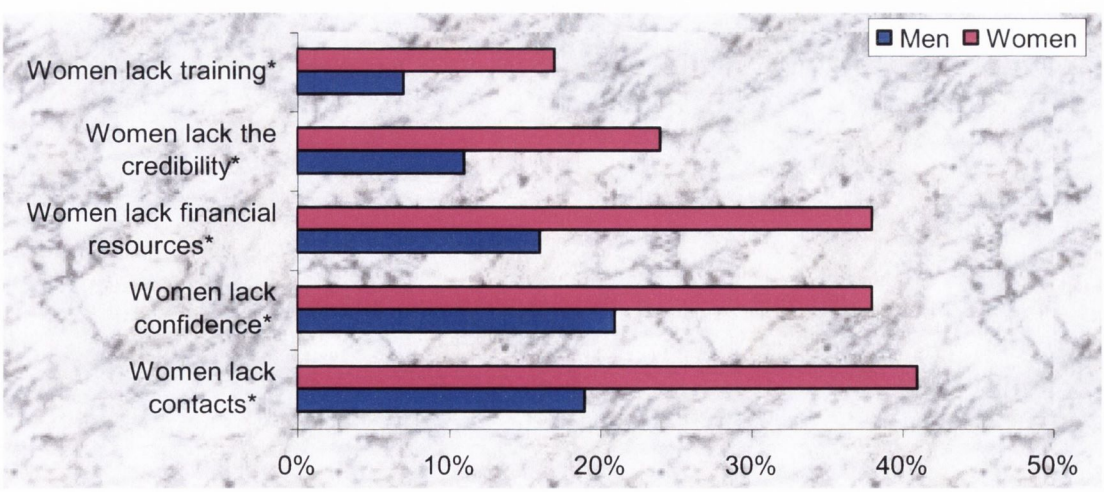
7.2 Obstacles Encountered by Women Entrepreneurs

Respondents were asked to rate how much they agreed with the statement that there are fewer women in business due to women's lack of:

- training;
- confidence;
- contacts;
- financial resources;
- credibility.

There were some statistically significant differences between the views held by men and women concerning all these obstacles (Figure 7.5).

Figure 7.5 Opinions on Obstacles Encountered by Women

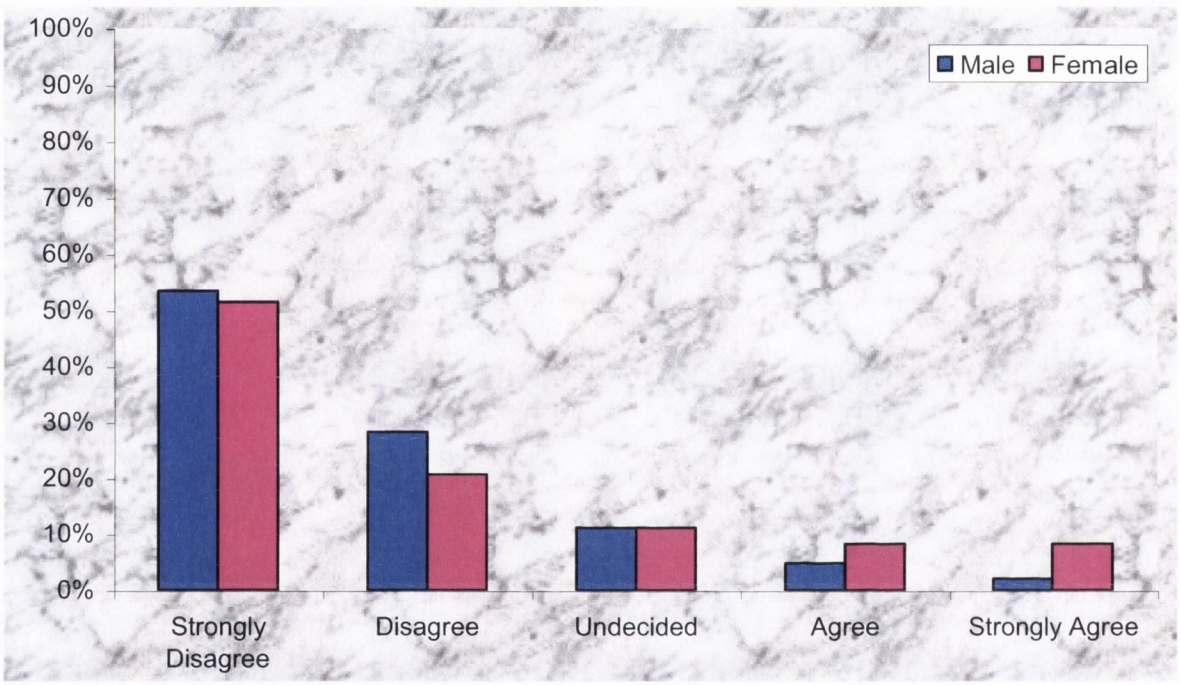


* statistically significant result

'Women Lack Training'

Women were more likely than men to feel that women were under-represented in business because they lack training (Figure 7.6): 70 women (17%) agreed/strongly agreed that women lack training compared with 23 men (7%) (Chi-square, $p<0.01$). Conversely, 269 men (82%) disagreed/strongly disagreed with this obstacle compared with 304 women (72%). However, the majority of men and women entrepreneurs disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Figure 7.6 'Women Lack Training' (n=750)



(Chi-square, $p<0.01$)

Men and women both agreed that sufficient experience was an essential part of running a successful business, as one man indicated:

> *"Crucial that you have had experience in the business you set up before starting out".*

But, one of the female respondents indicated that she felt it was an obstacle for entrepreneurs in general:

> *"Entrepreneurs in general lack knowledge on the business side of things".*

Other respondents focused on how they had gained sufficient experience; how to best obtain it; or compensate for not having it. Both men and women felt they lacked experience. Two men said:

> *"My management degree was a prime motivating factor in my becoming self-employed. Running your own business needs a broad range of skills";*
>
> *"These skills need to be identified and addressed either by gaining the skills or buying them in!".*

A further four women indicated:

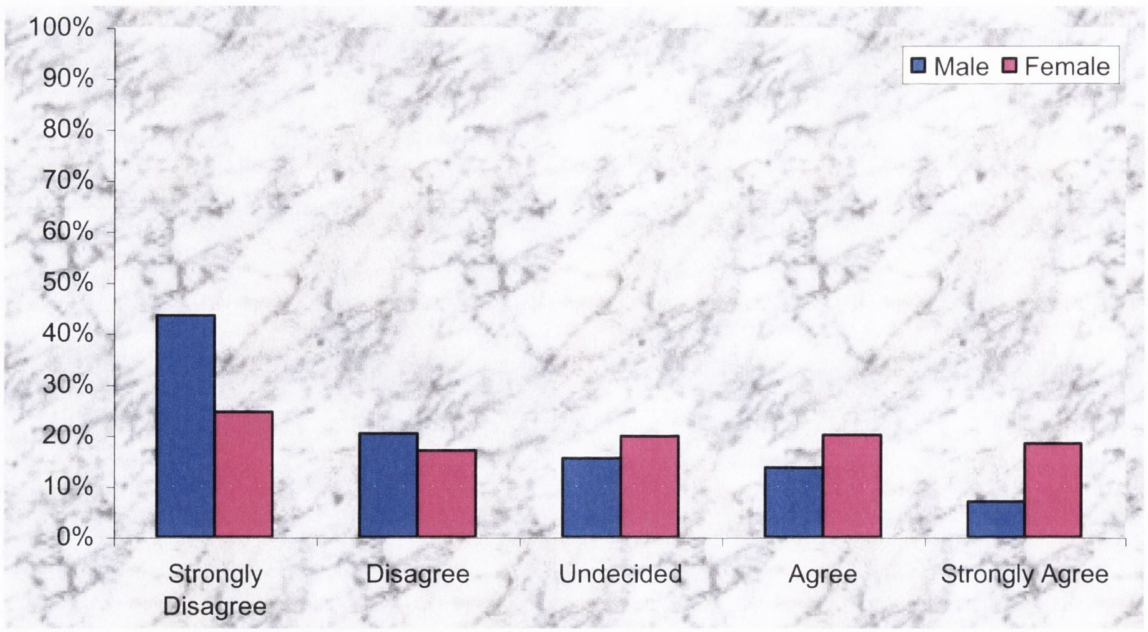
> *"I think it is important for every entrepreneur to have a mentor (experienced in his/her field) to discuss any queries or obstacles one may be facing at the various stages of the growth and development of the business";*
>
> *"I participated in a VPTP (Transition Year) at the age of 15/16 and we operated a mini-company which I found very exciting and interesting";*
>
> *"The qualities most beneficial to me have been strong management background experience";*
>
> *"I worked hard to get experience in our particular field of business".*

International literature points to women's lack of experience coupled with their lack of training as a barrier towards a successful business (Schwartz, 1976; Hisrich and Brush, 1986; Watkins and Watkins, 1986; Carter, 2000; The SIA Group, 2001; Stevenson, 2003). However, this survey provides little evidence that this is an obstacle specific to women. The survey indicates that lack of training and experience affects both men and women, with little evidence that women are more badly affected by it.

'Women Lack Confidence'

Women were more likely than men to identify lack of confidence as a reason for the lower number of women in business (Figure 7.7): 163 (38%) women agreed/strongly agreed compared with 68 (21%) men (Chi-square, $p<0.01$). Men were more likely to disagree that this is a barrier: 143 men (44%) disagreed/strongly disagreed with the fact that women lack confidence compared with 104 women (25%).

Figure 7.7 'Women Lack Confidence' (n=752)



(Chi-square, $p<0.01$)

One woman felt that her confidence in her own abilities was low while another stated her view that men in key professional 'supportive' roles disempowered women in business, thereby lowering their confidence levels:

> *"The biggest initial challenge was having enough confidence, that I had the necessary skills, and in approaching retailers. My own feelings of worth also affected the business... i.e. undercharging"*;
>
> *"I often feel intimidated by solicitors, accountants and other usually male professionals. This does not make it any easier to get a business started. There is the tendency for professionals to disempower their customers, not allowing them to actively participate. I find this very unacceptable and often intimidating"*.

However, another woman spoke in positive terms of the interaction between confidence and gender, noting improved confidence levels among women in business, over time:

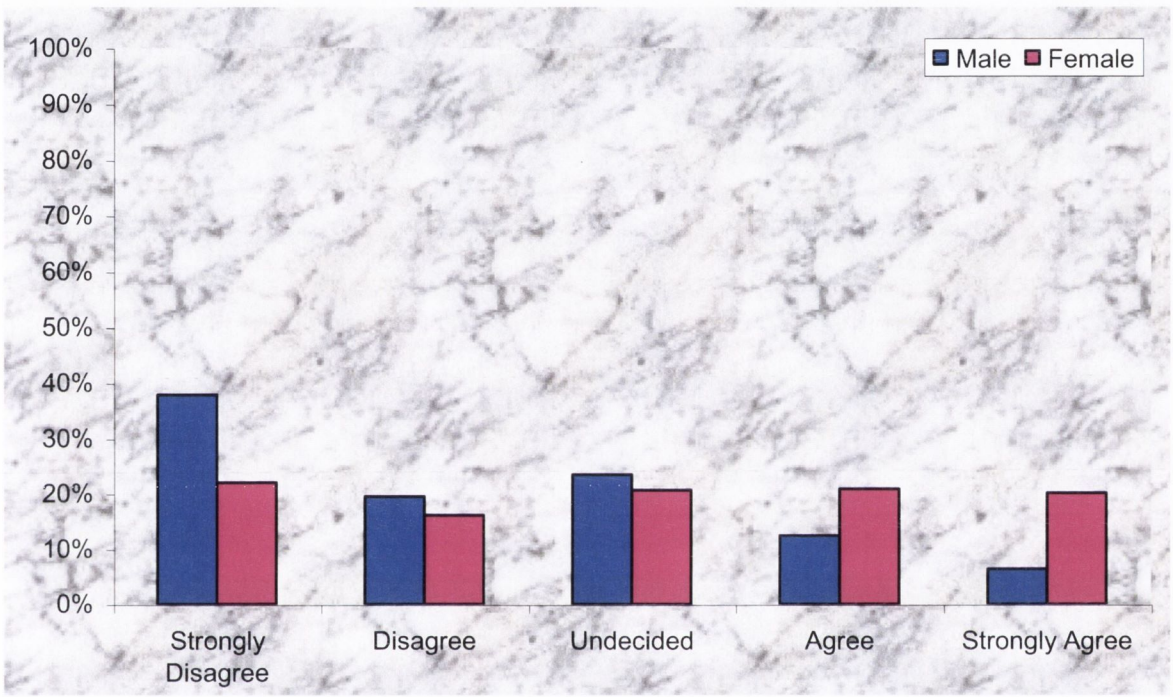
> *"The climate in Ireland has changed immeasurably in this area in the past 27 years, and women are far more confident in starting their own business venture point"*.

Lack of confidence as an obstacle is emphasised in the literature on female entrepreneurship (Carter, 1993; McGowan and McGeady, 2002). The findings of this survey support this to some degree, though fewer than half of women entrepreneurs believed lack of confidence was an obstacle for women.

'Women Lack Contacts'

Women were more likely than men to think that there are fewer women in business because women lack contacts (Figure 7.8): 173 (41%) women agreed/strongly agreed with this reason compared with 62 (19%) men (Chi-square, $p<0.01$). In contrast, men were more likely to strongly disagree with the fact that women lack contacts: 124 men (38%) strongly disagreed with this hurdle compared with 93 women (22%).

Figure 7.8 Women Lack Contacts (n=748)



(Chi-square, $p<0.01$)

Respondents commented on the importance of, and the specific problems associated with, networking. One male respondent claimed that *"Being in contact with like-minded people with expertise in complementary disciplines was VITAL in the successful start-up of my company"*. This was echoed by one of the female respondents who felt that *"Making new contacts is incredibly hard. [...] 'It's not what you know, it's who you know'"*.

Three women linked networking needs with gender. Two women felt disadvantaged in terms of networking opportunities:

> *"Networking is not easy for women, it comes easier to men. If you don't play golf where do you network? Most important of all, women see other women as competitors not associates and someone useful to know";*

"It is harder in general for women to be 'in the loop' in political/business/ financial circles".

Another woman praised women's networks:

"I find networks, particularly women's networks, great support".

These findings highlight the fact that the absence of networks can act as a real obstacle for women in business. This is in line with the findings of other studies on women and networking practices. In particular, the literature claims that (a) women's networking needs differ from those of men (Brush, 1992; Rosa and Hamilton, 1994; Katz and Williams, 1997) and (b) to address the need there has been an upsurge of networks catering specifically to women (The SIA Group, 2001; McClelland, 2003).

Survey respondents pointed out that there was very little informal support available to them. In the literature, this is identified as a typical obstacle for women, as a result of being excluded from 'old boys' networks' (The SIA Group, 2001; McClelland, 2003). For instance, one female respondent felt that a glass ceiling remained in the business world, which actively discourages them:

"As a woman the fight to succeed is harder, and even in success to maintain success is difficult, where the lads rally in and say 'go for it you're doing brilliant, keep it up'. Once I reached that level, it was more a case of 'that's lovely, you're grand now, you have gone far enough'. [This is what was] inferred, with the exception of two or three people. It's as if people in general don't want women to 'over' achieve".

Another female respondent supported this view that women entrepreneurs get very little informal support from men:

"Also that there is a sense of jealousy especially on the part of men's attitude to any women in business especially those at the top and successful. Most men are very unhelpful towards assisting women".

However, two female respondents reported the opposite, and felt that it was women who were particularly unhelpful towards women entrepreneurs:

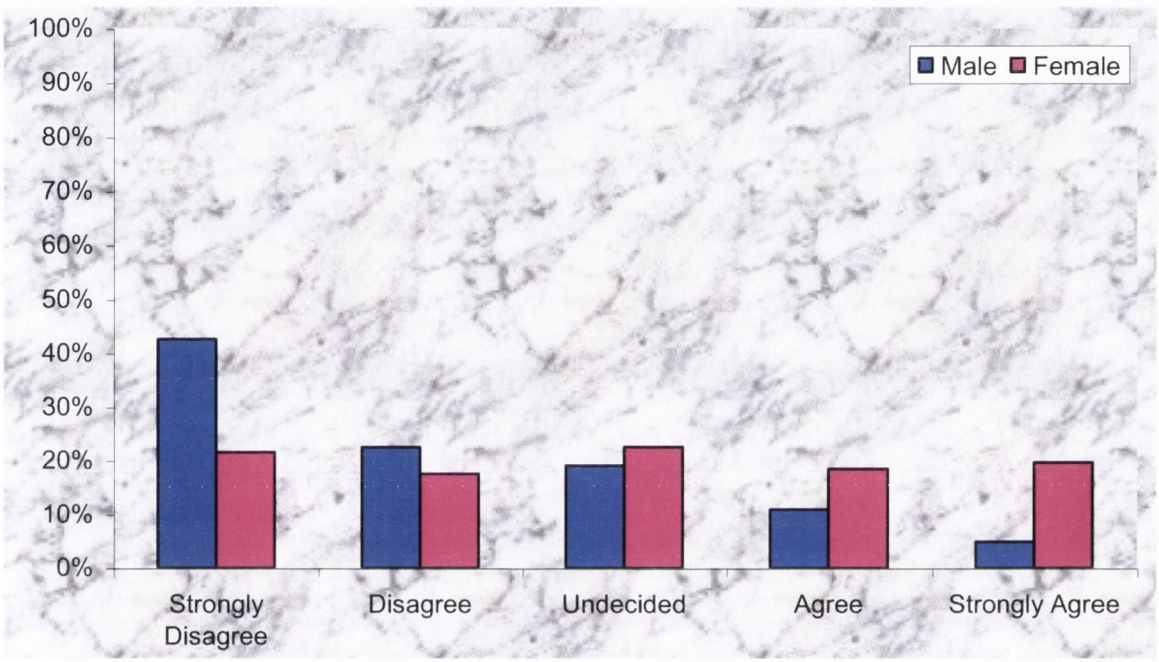
"Women can be worse than men at keeping you down";

"I wish other women were not so inquisitive. I'm probably very sensitive just now but really men are more supportive but even good friends are painful at times especially when the cookie is just cooking or is it mixing the ingredients stage!"

'Women Lack Financial Resources'

Women were more likely than their male counterparts to feel that women lacked the financial resources necessary to become entrepreneurs: 161 (38%) women agreed/strongly agreed with this reason compared with 52 (16%) men (Chi-square, $p<0.01$). Men were more likely to strongly disagree with this obstacle: 140 men (43%) strongly disagreed with the fact that women lack financial resources compared with 91 women (22%).

Figure 7.9 'Women Lack the Financial Resources' (n=750)



(Chi-square, $p<0.01$)

Finance proved to be a major obstacle for all entrepreneurs, not only in setting up their businesses, but also in the day-to-day running of them. One male respondent stated:

> *"Finance a major difficulty in getting started regardless of good idea and good work ethic!".*

For women respondents, finance was associated with obstacles to setting up and running the business:

> *"Finance would have been my first obstacle";*
>
> *"Hardest part of running your own company is finding motivation in hard financial times!";*
>
> *"Starting my own business has been a great experience and one I have enjoyed, but it has also been very tough financially".*

In this research, men and women surveyed felt that there was a major lack of funding and financial help from support services. However, it seemed that such funding was more of a problem for women because of the size and type of business they had established (e.g. childcare, personal services). One male respondent made reference to the fact that businesses lacked funding from support services such as Enterprise Boards and financial institutions among others:

> *"It is very difficult to get more financial assistance from banks etc. Like to be able to tap into risk financers".*

Women entrepreneurs felt this but even more acutely in the lack of funding from support services and financial institutions:

> *"I feel long-term my business is being eroded by ADM[3] who are funding and encouraging full day care as against sessional care, making it next to impossible to survive";*
>
> *"The problem I found with setting up a business there is no grant funding for private crèche providers unless you get a 10 year lease. This is virtually impossible as you can claim squatters rights";*
>
> *"I returned to work and was granted the 'back to work' allowance grant. The local enterprise board gave me an employment grant. Before I could start my business in my own garage, the local county council wanted more money than my employment grant to get planning permission! What a start!";*
>
> *"I wish to have more help, financial help to expand the business!";*
>
> *"As a consultant it is extremely difficult to gain financial backing. The best and most focused on 'me' were always female bank managers";*
>
> *"Also, more funding for small companies who are themselves paying a workforce".*

These recurrent problems encountered with finance are typical of those identified in the literature on entrepreneurship. However, if finance affects both men and women, some aspects of it are more problematic for women at start-up stage (Goffee and Scase, 1985; Hisrich and Brush, 1986; Marlow, 1997; Carter, 2000), as well as when expanding (The SIA Group, 2001; Carter et al, 2002; McClelland, 2003; Stevenson, 2003, Valiulis et al., 2004).

---

[3] ADM Ltd. (Area Development Management) is an intermediary company established by the Irish Government, in agreement with the European Commission, to promote social inclusion, reconciliation and equality and to counter disadvantage through local social and economic development, www.pobail.ie.

Some respondents felt that there was a need for more support services in Ireland. One man said:

> *"Local Enterprise Boards are a massive help to all start-ups and with additional funding could prove greater asset to new companies".*

A woman took the issue further and felt that there was a need for support services to be targeted at women entrepreneurs:

> *"So many start ups, yet support is needed to sustain small businesses, and especially women owned businesses".*

Another referred to the fact that there is a general lack of information on where women entrepreneurs can seek support when entering entrepreneurship:

> *"I feel that women are to a large extent unaware of opportunities e.g. grant aids other assistance that may be available to them".*

More importantly, two female respondents felt that women were not treated equally and fairly by banks/government agencies:

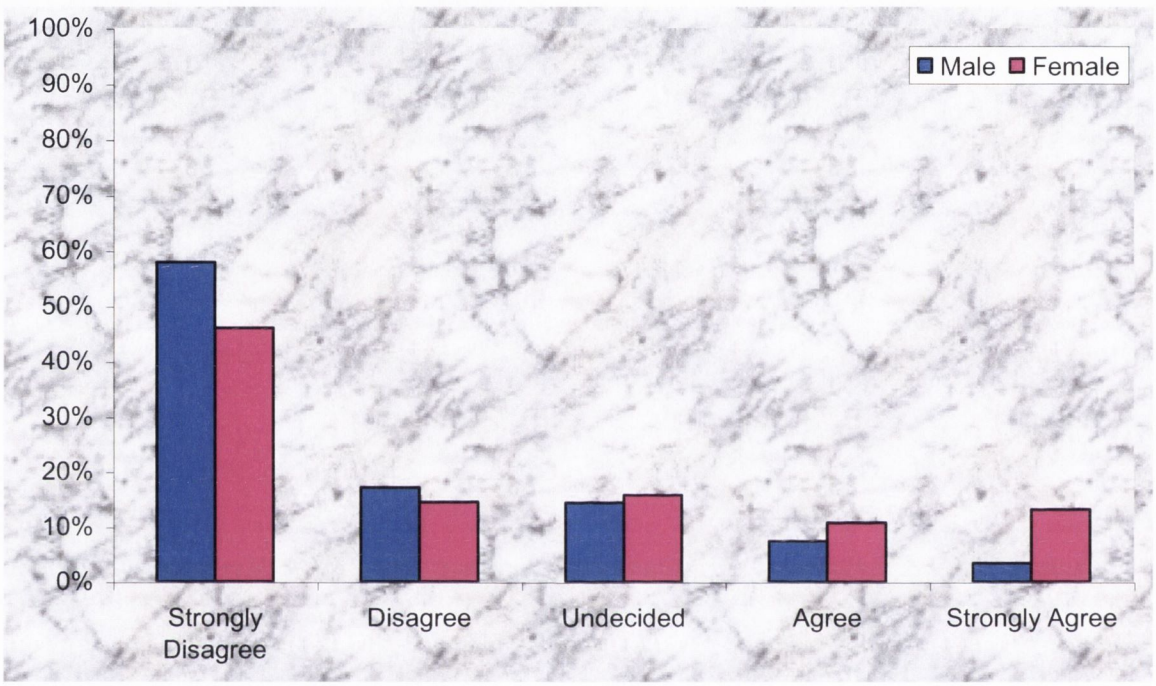
> *"Might I suggest a section on how financial institutions treat women applicants?";*
>
> *"Often, the biggest barriers are the most subtle, e.g. encountering male staff in government bodies that are supposed to support business development, but who are very uncomfortable with a strong woman".*

A minority of women felt that gender had played a major role in the amount of financial support received, reporting that financial support was limited for smaller businesses and in certain sectors (e.g. childcare), in which women predominate (The SIA Group, 2001; Goodbody Economic Consultants, 2002; Gender Equality Unit, 2003). Furthermore, some women respondents felt they had not been taken seriously by the staff in support services and/or financial institutions. This mirrors the findings of another Irish study of women entrepreneurs (Valiulis et al., 2004), which encountered similar results. This section provides evidence that, as suggested in the literature, the barriers to women's support networks are being eroded (The SIA Group, 2001), but that financial support in Ireland remains a major issue for all entrepreneurs.

'Women Lack Credibility'

Women were more likely than men to find that there were fewer women in business because of the fact that women lack credibility (Figure 7.10): 100 (24%) women agreed/strongly agreed compared with 35 (11%) men (Chi-square, $p<0.01$). In comparison, men were more likely to disagree with this obstacle: 190 men (58%) strongly disagreed with the fact that women lack credibility compared with 194 women (46%).

Figure 7.10 'Women Lack Credibility' (n=749)



(Chi-square, $p<0.01$)

Lack of credibility did not constitute a strong obstacle. One man felt that his credibility was lowered by the fact that he worked from home:

> *"I find it extremely difficult to work at home with all the distractions, my wife does not consider that I have a proper job because I work at home".*

A further two women felt that:

> *"Overall, it really is a man's world in Ireland. I have come across many an ignorant man that will not pass work onto our company unless Paul my husband deals with them".*

> *"From personal experience I have found that women are not taken seriously".*

This finding only provides limited evidence for the claim that women lack credibility, contrary to the literature suggesting that lack of credibility is a major obstacle for women entrepreneurs (Goffee and Scase, 1985; NFWBO, 1994; Marlow, 1997; Mistick, 1998; Minniti and Arenius, 2003).

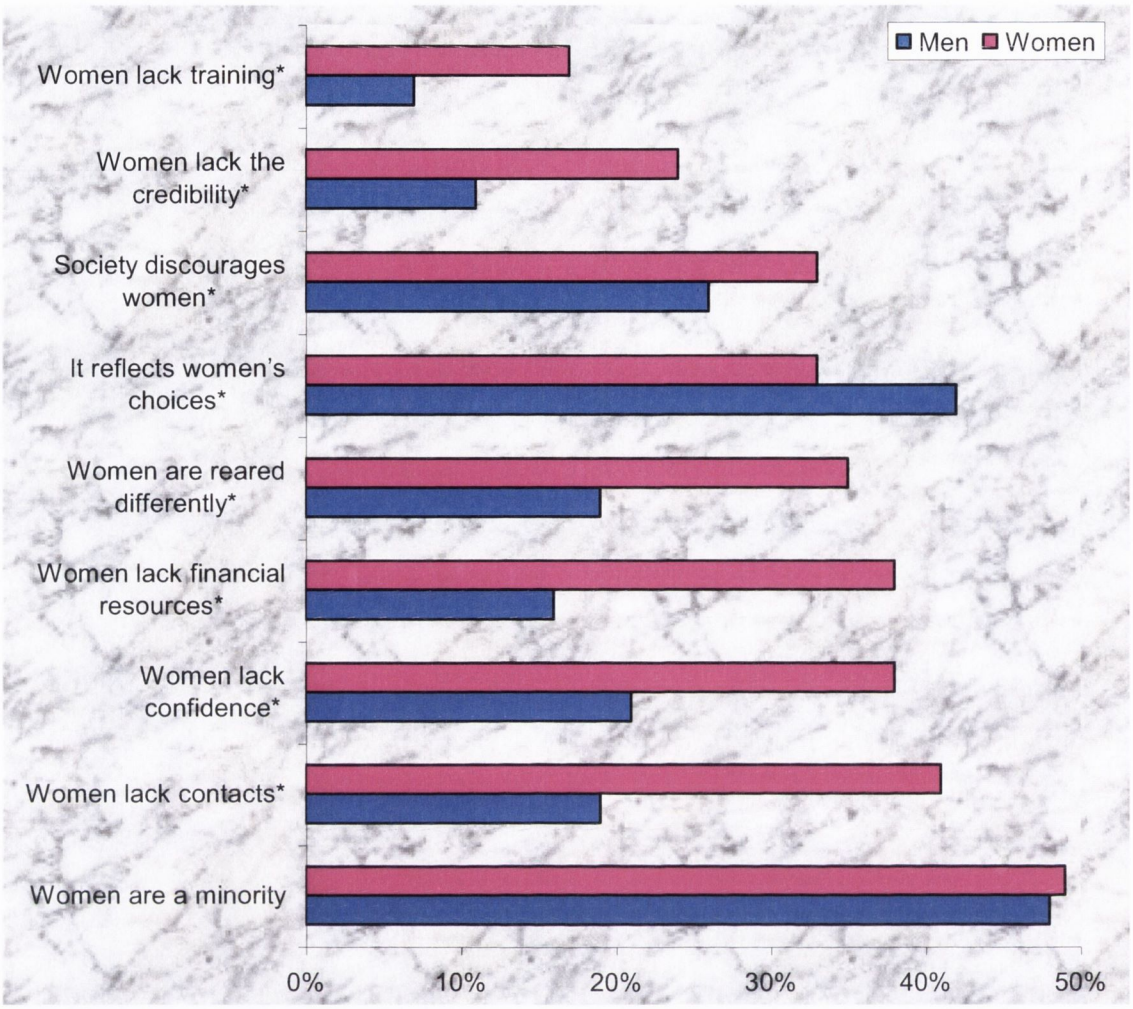
7.3 Main Findings

The findings of this chapter show that women entrepreneurs are much more aware of the obstacles that they face in business than their male counterparts. Over one-third of women surveyed felt that women lacked contacts, confidence and financial resources necessary for a healthy business venture.

The comments made by respondents supported these findings. The main obstacle facing women entrepreneurs were in getting over the difficulties associated with their role, assigned to them by society, as carers. This often meant that women were not able to set-up/run businesses on a large scale. Instead they remained in small-scale business ventures that facilitated their caring responsibilities.

The findings indicate that women's under-representation can be attributed, in part, to a number of factors: lack of confidence, training, credibility and powerful business contacts or access to networks. Women were seen as being under-represented in business because: they are reared differently from men; society discourages them; and since it reflects their 'choice' not to become entrepreneurs (Figure 7.11). In their comments, respondents emphasised that women faced an additional obstacle in that they did not fit the 'male way' of doing business. This echoes the findings of recent international literature, which has shown that the discourse surrounding women entrepreneurs tended to measure up women against a male norm (Ogbor, 2000; Ahl, 2004; Bruni et al., 2004; Hytti, 2005; Ahl, 2006). Measuring women in this way is problematic in that it ignores the fact that such a norm relies on freedom from care and household duties (Ahl, 2004; Ahl, 2006).

Figure 7.11 Summary Table: Percentage of Respondents who Agreed/Strongly Agreed with Reasons for Women's Under-representation in Business



* statistically significant result

Respondents also spoke of other obstacles commonly noted in the literature. For example, women felt that they were part of an 'invisible' category. Their needs and specificity were not always recognised by support agencies and/or financial institutions. This was particularly the case where women reported having to deal with predominantly male staff, who were not aware of the issues faced by women entrepreneurs. It was also clear that agencies and financial institutions are more geared towards supporting large-scale operations in sectors which are predominantly male. Given that women's businesses tend to be on a smaller scale, and often in sectors not covered by support agencies (i.e. retail, childcare, crafts), women felt excluded from the 'inner circle' altogether.

7.4 Conclusions

One of the research questions derived from the literature concerned whether there were differences in the obstacles faced by men and women entrepreneurs in Ireland. The survey provides evidence that the obstacles included in the questionnaire are highly gendered. The findings of the questionnaire show that men and women entrepreneurs encounter obstacles, both societal and environmental, to a different degree. It was clear that, even though the majority of respondents did not perceive that women entrepreneurs were disadvantaged because of gender specific obstacles, female respondents were much more likely than their male counterparts to agree about the obstacles. This suggests that female respondents have encountered these types of obstacles and/or witnessed them in their own business environments or operations. This chapter has presented the obstacles faced by women when entering entrepreneurship and/or running a business, and discussed how societal and environmental obstacles are gendered. In the next chapter, the respondents' attitudes and choices in terms of work/life balance are examined.

Chapter 8 Survey: Work/Life Balance

This chapter investigates the degree to which respondents choose to balance work and family life. It examines the impact of gender on entrepreneurship and work/life balance, based on the data obtained from the mailed survey. Section 8.1 outlines how the respondents organise their personal/family life, while Section 8.2 examines the attitudes of respondents towards work/life balance practices in their businesses. Section 8.3 uses logit models to analyse the impact of demography on work/life balance choices. Finally, Section 8.3 presents the key findings of the survey in terms of gender and work/life balance.

8.1 Work/life Balance in Personal Life

To examine the level of conflict experienced by respondents and the aspects of their lives they felt they had to sacrifice, the survey sought information from respondents on:

- leisure and social time;
- life with their partner;
- impact of their children;
- responsibility for domestic tasks;
- other family commitments.

8.1.1 Leisure and Social Time

Overall, 572 respondents (78%) felt that they had either made some or many sacrifices in their free time to get where they were. No gender differences emerged. Similarly, when asked if they had sacrificed their social time for their business, 435 (61%) male and female respondents stated that they had made some/a lot of sacrifices (Figure 8.1).

Figure 8.1 Social and Free Time Sacrifices by Gender (n=718, n=737)



Respondents were asked to estimate the number of hours they had for leisure, on a weekly basis. The average number of leisure hours for men was 8.87 hours per week, and the corresponding figure for women was 8.32 hours. A total of 643 entrepreneurs (83%) in the survey had less than 14 hours of leisure weekly. Furthermore, there were no statistically significant differences between men and women in terms of hours for leisure. This finding is consistent with the findings of a survey of time-use in Ireland, that found few differences between men's and women's leisure time during the week. However, it was noted that men had slightly more leisure time at the weekend than women (McGinnity, Russell, Williams and Blackwell, 2005).

Among respondents who were married or living with a partner, 237 (41%) felt that they had made some or many sacrifices with the time they spend with their partner (husband/wife or cohabitee). There were no statistically significant differences between men and women.

Two men claimed that they worked particularly long hours, but that this was part of what they viewed entrepreneurship to be:

"Formula: $\frac{(Work + Leisure + Childtime + Sleep)}{Entrepreneur} = Work$ *, I have no life other than work";*

"Busy times mean hard work, longer hours, slack times we use as 'fun, leisure' times";

Some men reported being affected by the demands of their business on their personal and family life:

"Both my wife and myself ... have worked very hard, and tried to balance our work, family, and religious practices".

Men seemed to value flexibility in their lives but more often than not choose to let it lag behind other priorities:

"Personally the goal ... is to get financially secure ASAP and get out of what is a reasonably stressful working situation. Then to put quality of life absolutely number one priority";

"Advice for new entrepreneurs: ... be prepared to sacrifice a lot of 'politically correct' qualities and attributes (i.e. family time, personal time, etc...). Be prepared to sacrifice financial security and a nine to five life. Be also prepared to reap the rewards of a unique insight into what makes people tick, eventual financial security and with luck more free and flexible time to enjoy your family and bask in the respect of your peers".

Another two men, however, explained that they had been surprised by the amount of time they had to work in their businesses, and stated that their priority was to reduce the amount of work they did:

"The present workload and involvement in the company was really never anticipated by myself and has been a great sacrifice for my family. If I knew then what I know now would I have started?";

"My mission at this stage is to organise my business so that I can work 9 to 5 and get a decent wage".

Some women agreed that working long hours was part of the entrepreneurial culture and expectations. For example: *"An entrepreneur [has to] be prepared to work long antisocial hours, a lot of the time without pay".* However, some women entrepreneurs recognized that this way of life was not sustainable. Three women recognized that they had worked long hours, only in order to be able to reduce their working hours at a later stage:

"Running your own business is very time consuming but obviously very rewarding. During start-up, it is all very consuming and interferes totally with leisure time. In my opinion, it is crucial over the next few years to get a work/life balance";

"I worked hard to get experience in our particular field of business. Now at 75 years I am working only 3 days per week and continuing to maintain the company's viability";

"I am also in a position where I will work any hours over the next 18 months and then start to have more personal time".

However, for other women, entrepreneurship proved to be an obstacle to balancing work and family life. Some women felt that lack of time was a critical element in this process:

"Hard for women to juggle running a business and maintaining a home and raising a family";

"I found it quite difficult to manage all aspects of the business and coming home to baby";

"There is a problem with trying to get the balance right in rearing a family and a busy career. I was surprised to see the number of hours I work per week".

Finally, women respondents also frequently spoke of the impact of entrepreneurship on their family or, more particularly, their children. Some also referred to the strains on their family. Two female respondents said that one of the main impacts of entrepreneurship on their families was that it drew a lot of emotional resources from all the members of the family:

"Starting a business is like being on a roller-coaster emotionally. The family all need preparation for this!";

"Being in business with your spouse puts tremendous pressure on home/family life and personal relationships. Even when working full-time in the business, housework meals and family still seem to remain a female obligation".

Another added that she lacked the time needed to spend with her family:

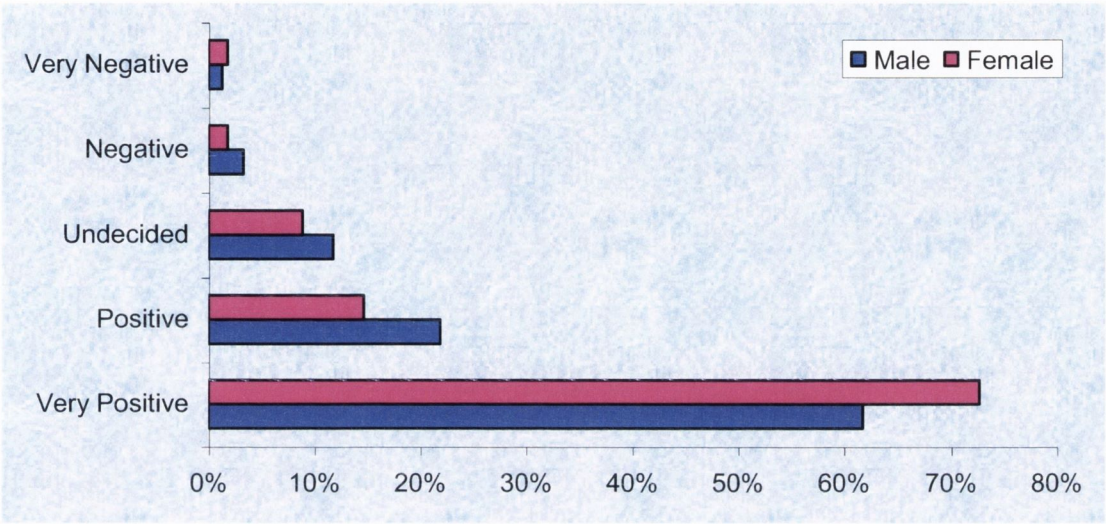
"Having had all 3 children since setting-up on my own, there are disadvantages, but the focus is to spend time with family, and eventually things get easier".

8.1.2 Impact of Partners on Entrepreneurship

A total of 541 respondents (86%) felt that their partner had either a positive or a very positive attitude towards their work (Figure 8.2). However, 237 women (73%) felt their partner had a very positive attitude, compared to 189 (62%) men. The opposite phenomenon could be observed for those who had a spouse with a positive attitude towards their work: 67 men (22%) claimed that their spouse had a positive attitude towards their work compared with 48 women (15%). One possible explanation behind this peculiar finding could be that men's spouses are, more frequently than women's spouses, out of a labour force. It is therefore to

possible to speculate that this means that men's spouses are therefore more resentful of an increasingly 'absent' partner. As for women's spouses, the fact that they are mostly in (self-) employment, combined with the fact that women entrepreneurs work less hours than their male counterparts, means that it leads to higher levels of support.

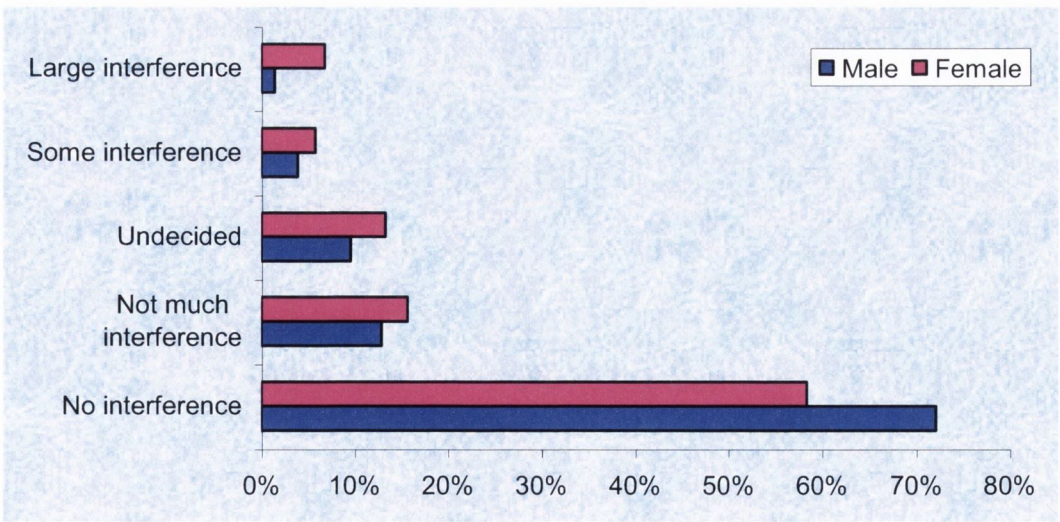
Figure 8.2 Partner Attitude to Business by Gender (n=632)



(Chi square, p<0.05)

The majority of married/cohabiting respondents (65%, n=373) reported that their partner's career had not interfered with their own. While 37 women (13%) felt that their partner's career had interfered to some extent or to a large extent, only 15 men (5%) believed this was the case.

Figure 8.3 Interference from Partner's Career by Gender (n=573)



(Chi square, p<0.01)

Finally, 342 respondents (59%) reported that they felt that their partner's attitude to their work had caused no interference with their career. There were no gender differences in these responses.

However, two female respondents felt entrepreneurship was quite strenuous on their personal relationships with their partners. For one, things improved over time, for the other, the relationship broke down:

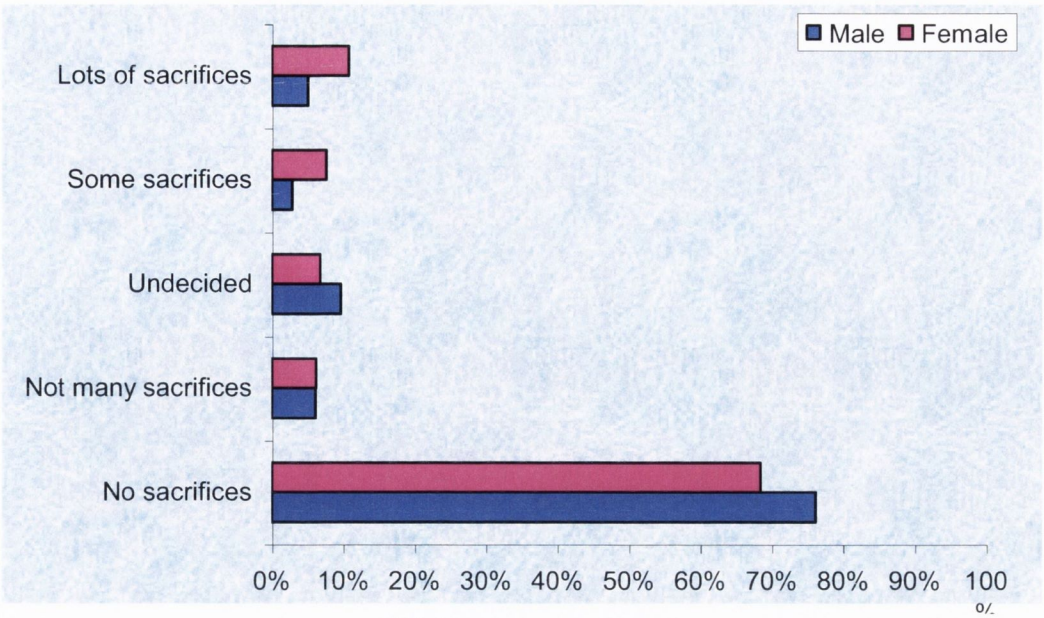
> *"When I first went back to work my husband was supportive as long as it didn't interfere with home life. Over the years, he has become more understanding. Even irons a shirt or two without comment!!";*
>
> *"New partner! Husband disapproved and marriage fell apart!".*

8.1.3 Impact of Children on Entrepreneurship

Among respondents with children, 214 respondents (39%) felt that they had made some or many sacrifices with the time they spend with their children to get where they were in business. There were no statistically significant differences between men and women.

The overwhelming majority of respondents (72%) felt that they had made no sacrifices through delaying or not having children (Figure 8.4). However, there were statistically significant results between men and women (Chi-square, $p<0.01$). Among all respondents, 60 women (19%) felt they had made some or many sacrifices in terms of delaying or not having children, compared with 22 men (8%). On the contrary, men were more likely to feel they had made no sacrifices in that respect: 211 men (76%) felt so compared with 222 women (69%). These findings were worsened for respondents who did not have children. A total of 47 women without children (52%) felt they had made some or many sacrifices in terms of not having children, compared with 13 men without children (30%).

Figure 8.4 Delaying Having Children by Gender (n=601)



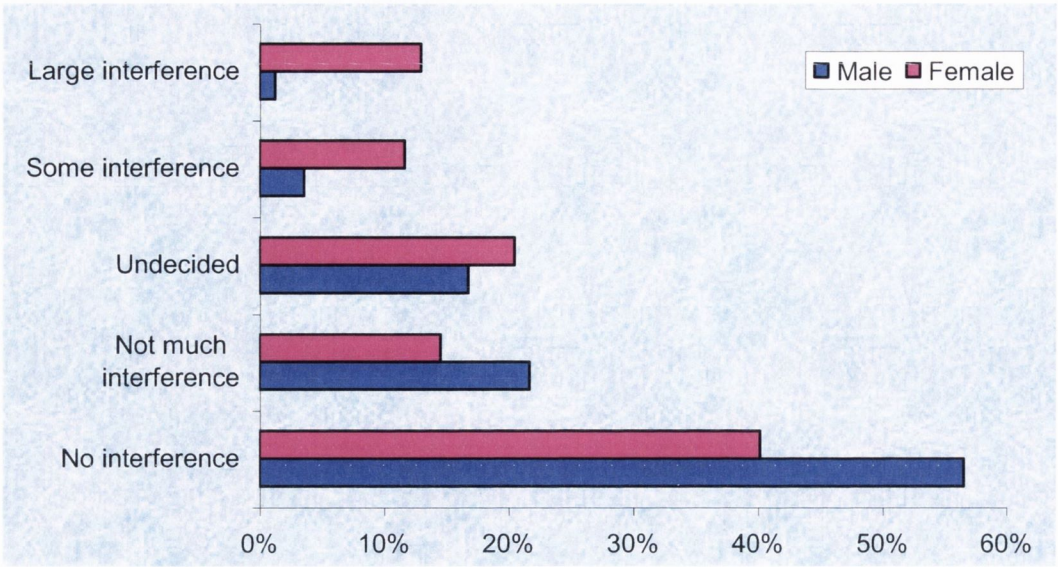
(Chi square, p<0.01)

This finding suggests that some women may have entered entrepreneurship before considering the option of motherhood and subsequently made the decision to either delay or not have children as a consequence of starting a business. One female respondent in particular, felt that:

> *"As a woman in business I feel the men still have one over us - especially when it comes to family. Heading towards my mid-thirties I'm beginning to feel the 'inner conflict' of whether to have a family or not - something men don't really have to think about. Firstly they will not have to contend with the debilitation of being pregnant... and having to run a business... being knocked out for a couple of weeks having the child... and running a business... being the predominant carer for the children... and having to run a business... and homemaker... while having to run a business...".*

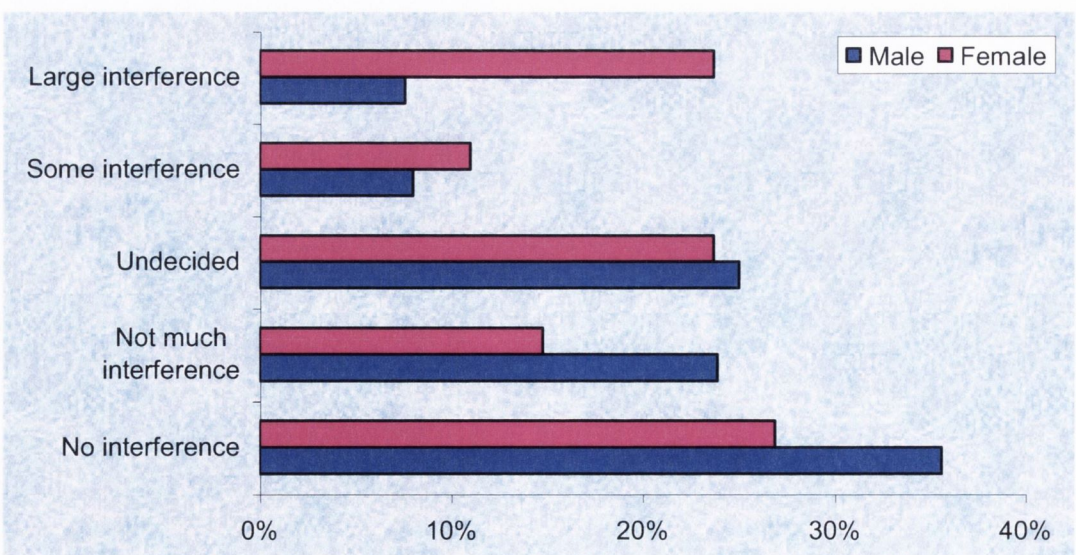
A total of 323 respondents (47%) felt that childcare or the care of another relative had not interfered with their business. This varied considerably according to gender (Chi square, p<0.01): 172 men felt that there was no interference with their business (57%), compared with 151 (40%) women. Furthermore, 93 women felt that caring responsibilities had interfered/largely interfered with their business (25%) compared with 15 men (5%).

Figure 8.5 Interference of Childcare/Other Relative by Gender (n=543)



Respondents with children were asked to what extent they felt that after-school care and/or activities of their children had interfered with their working or business life. The results differed widely by gender (Chi square, $p<0.01$). On the one hand, 157 male entrepreneurs reported that it posed no or little interference (59%) compared with 118 (42%) women. Sixty-seven women entrepreneurs (24% of all women with children) felt that their children's after-school care/activities interfered to a great extent with their work compared to 20 (8% of all men with children) men with children. This suggests that women entrepreneurs are much more affected by the demands of after-school care than their male counterparts.

Figure 8.6 Interference of After School Activities by Gender (n=547)



For some men, work/life balance took precedence over any other considerations, thereby showing that the issue of balancing personal and professional life is not only a women's issue:

> *"I look entirely on my business as a means to an end. ... My partner is not involved on her own account. We've also decided that at least one of us would be full-time in the home. Should my spouse wish for our roles to reverse in the future I would welcome it. Career shouldn't get in the way of family life ideally";*
>
> *"Quality of life is far more important than level of income at this point in life. Stress levels are high as kids are growing and the pressure of operating a business has greatly increased".*

There were many ways in which work/life balance issues affected women's professional lives. One woman believed that she could not combine having children with running a business and therefore she had to wait until she was relieved of those family commitments:

> *"It is only since my family grew up that I considered starting my own business".*

Another woman felt having children had hindered the growth of her business:

> *"At the moment we are able to do more work but don't want to expand the business too much as we are thinking of the future. ... we both feel now that we want a business that allows us to be flexible and have a good quality of life. This we feel is the biggest benefit of working for yourself".*

Two female respondents spoke of the time that was needed by women to look after other areas of their lives such as being able to take time off, or simply not doing so much overtime:

> *"I do think that once the business is up and running it is more difficult for them because of family and children. I see self-employed women taking time off for childcare, child sickness etc much more frequently than self-employed men";*
>
> *"In professional life overtime is seen as acceptable particularly in a male environment".*

One woman felt that: *"Most women I know have opted for the family option, and working part-time or job sharing becomes the priority. And I can see why - This country gives very little support to the working mother".* Two female respondents felt that entrepreneurship had had a negative impact on their children due mainly to the hours that had to be put into the business:

"Women's liberation wanted equal rights comparable to men in work force - fatal mistake! ... it has undermined the family structure and the importance of parental attention for children";

"I feel my children's education will have suffered due to me not doing homework with them. I'm too preoccupied with work all the time. Not because I enjoy it but because I feel so responsible for its success".

One female respondent saw it as:

"I believe opportunities for women leading companies and in management is limited due to difficulties in obtaining suitable and funding for childcare throughout the child's/children's school career. Most often women reduce their working hours or give up work for a number of years. This in turn thus creates of hole in their CV".

Some of the female respondents claimed that being an entrepreneur had a positive impact upon reconciling their personal and professional lives:

"Being self-employed offers me a flexible lifestyle which is very necessary when one has small children. It is an advantage that my husband is in the business with me and we can juggle work and children";

"I feel running your own business actually suits a woman more than a man in regard to the flexibility you can give yourself re childcare and control over your own lifestyle";

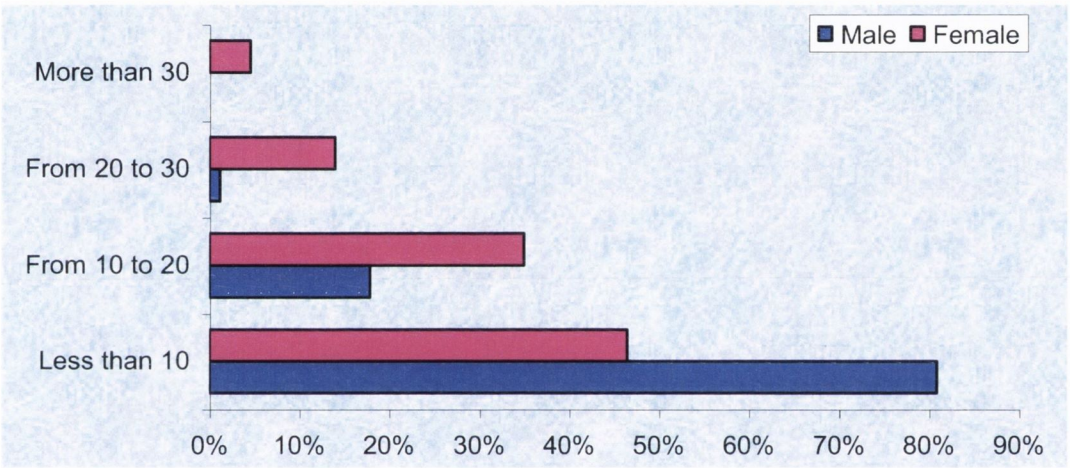
"As the business has established itself, I find that it is now possible to allocate more time for family occasions when necessary. This flexibility would not be there if I was still a part of the labour force".

8.1.4 Organisation of Household Tasks

Survey respondents were asked to estimate the number of hours they spent doing housework tasks on a weekly basis. This lead to some highly statistically significant differences between men and women (Figure 8.7). Men estimated that they spent a weekly total of 4.64 hours doing housework, compared to 11.30 hours for women. Four hundred and seventy-four respondents (61%) claimed to do less than 10 hours of housework a week. However, 203 (46%) women estimated doing less than 10 hours weekly compared with 271 (81%) men. Furthermore, 81 (19%) women estimated they spent over 20 hours a week doing housework compared to 4 (1%) men (Chi-square, $p<0.01$). These numbers are not the product of a time diary study and consist of estimates only. They should therefore be interpreted with caution.

The main finding arising from these results is that women perceive that they do more housework than their male counterparts. This finding echoes those of the time-use survey for the Irish population which found that women performed three times the amount of unpaid and care work performed by men (McGinnity et al., 2005). In ten selected countries in Europe (Belgium, Germany, Estonia, France, Hungary, Slovenia, Finland, Sweden, United Kingdom and Norway) women performed between 60 and 66 per cent of housework. Women were largely responsible for food preparation, dishwashing, cleaning, laundry, and ironing, while men were mostly responsible for construction and repair work throughout the home (Eurostat, 2004b).

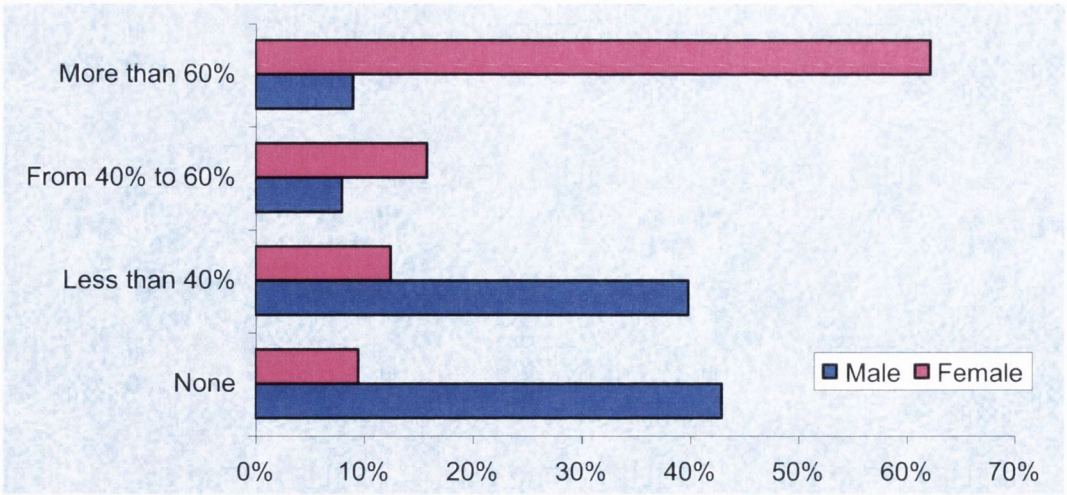
Figure 8.7 Number of Hours Spend Doing Housework by Gender (n=772)



(Chi square, $p<0.01$)

When asked whether they thought that they had modified the amount of housework done since becoming involved in their business venture, the results varied by gender (Chi square, $p<0.01$). Two hundred and forty-three (55%) women claimed that they were doing less housework compared with 128 (38%) men. Responsibility for housework showed wide variations by gender (Figure 8.8). First, female respondents were more likely than their male counterparts to be responsible for most housework, that is at least 60 per cent of the housework, with 268 (62%) women were responsible for the majority of housework tasks compared to 29 (9%) men (Chi square, $p<0.01$). At the other end of the spectrum, 41 (9%) women did no housework compared to 139 (43%) men.

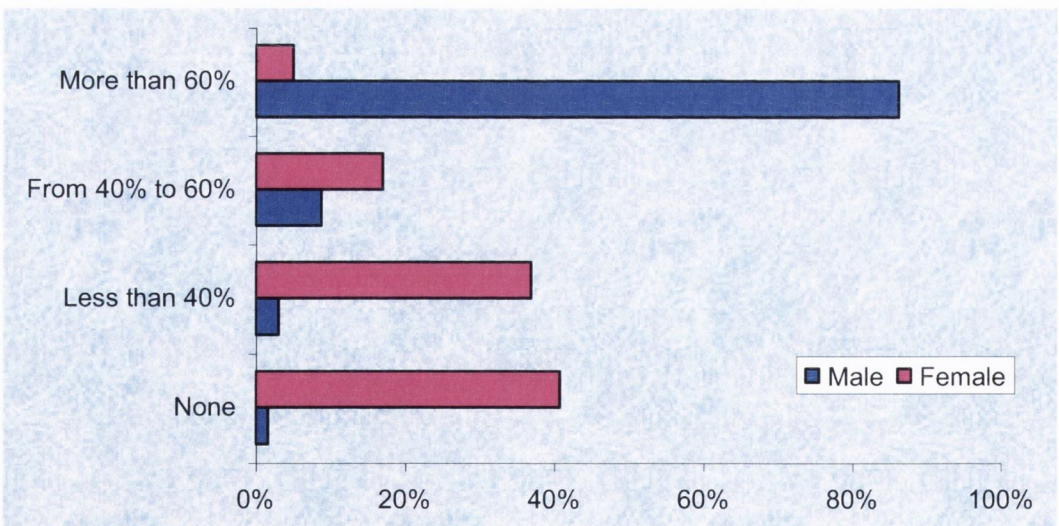
Figure 8.8 Housework Performed by Respondents by Gender (n=754)



(Chi square, $p<0.01$)

These gender differences were replicated by the proportion of housework done by the respondents' partner (Chi square, $p<0.01$). A total of 252 (86%) men who were married or living with a partner stated that their partner was mainly responsible for housework, compared to 17 (5%) women in the survey (Figure 8.8). Not surprisingly, 136 (41%) women stated that their partners did none of the housework compared with 5 (2%) men.

Figure 8.9 Housework Performed by Partners by Gender (n=625)

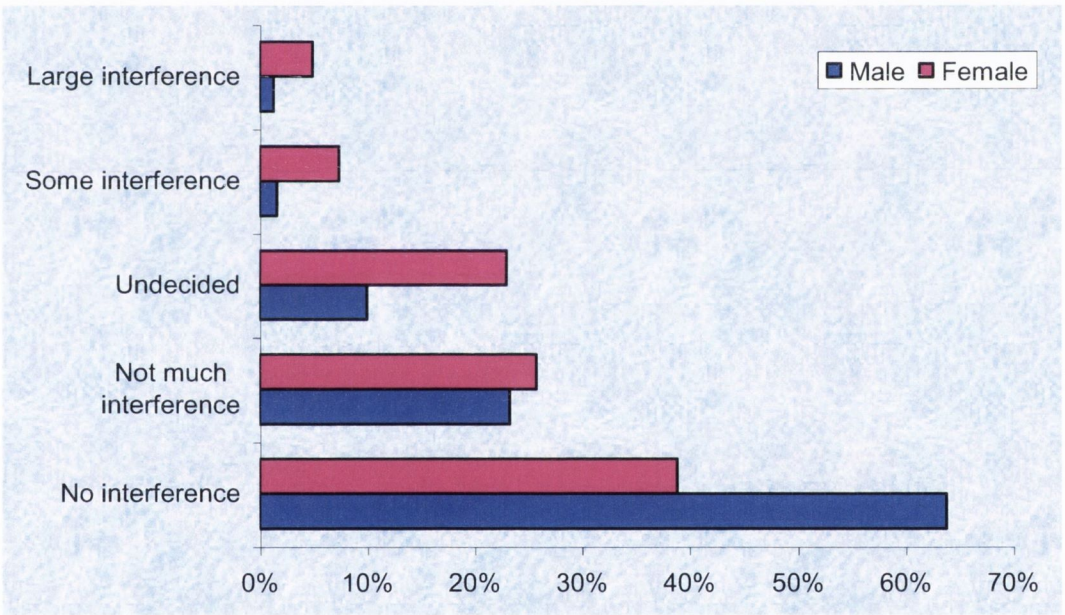


(Chi square, $p<0.01$)

There were no gender differences in relation to housework performed by other family members. Most respondents (n=644, 86%) did not rely on another family member for housework. Considerable variations exist between men and women entrepreneurs in the proportion of them using domestic help for the majority of their housework tasks (Chi square, $p<0.01$). A total of 128 (30%) women employed domestic help, compared to 37 (11%) men. In other words, women were more likely than men to 'buy-in' help with domestic tasks.

Despite the fact that 349 entrepreneurs (50%) felt that housework tasks had not interfered with their business, this was true of 197 (64%) men, compared to 152 (39%) women (Figure 8.10). Furthermore, 48 women (12%) felt that housework tasks had interfered/largely interfered with their business compared to nine (3%) men (Chi-square, $p<0.01$).

Figure 8.10 Interference from Housework Tasks by Gender (n=700)

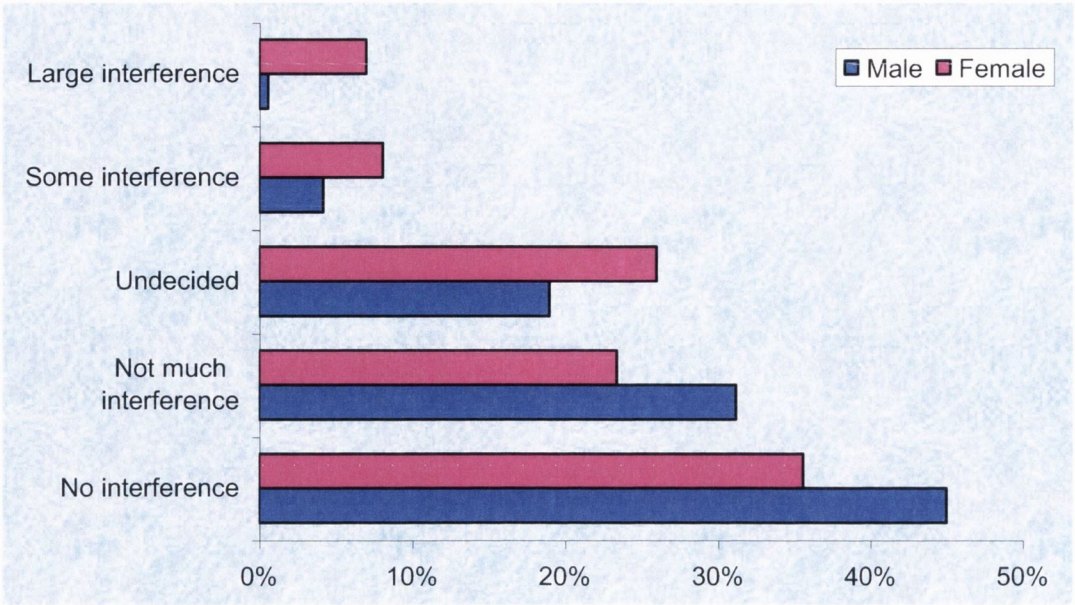


(Chi square, $p<0.01$)

8.1.5 Impact of Other Family Commitments

Women were more likely than their male counterparts to claim that other family commitments had interfered with their business (Chi-square, $p<0.01$). Fifty-eight (15%) women felt that other family commitments had interfered or largely interfered with their business compared to 15 (5%) men (Figure 8.11).

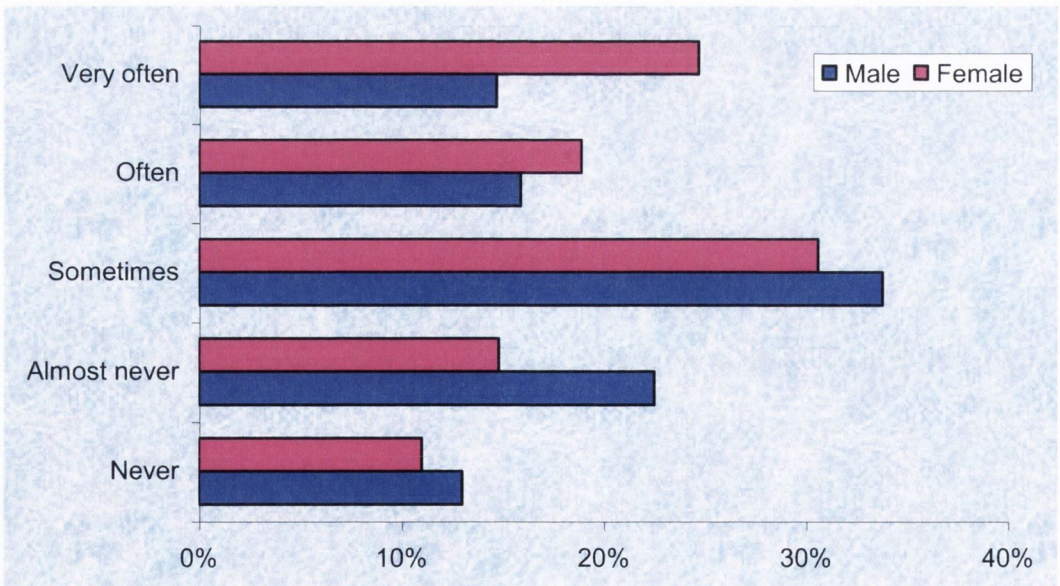
Figure 8.11 Interference from Other Family Commitments by Gender (n=696)



(Chi square, p<0.01)

More generally, respondents were asked whether or not they felt that there was a conflict between their work and their personal life (Figure 8.12). There were highly statistically significant differences by gender. A total of 191 women (44%) had experienced a conflict often/very often compared to 106 (31%) men (Chi-square, p<0.01).

Figure 8.12 Conflict Between Work/Personal Life by Gender (n=784)



(Chi square, p=0.01)

8.2 Work/life Balance in Business

Section 8.1 examined the impact of demographic factors on the personal/family life of respondents. This section examines work/life balance practices that had been implemented by respondents in their businesses and how respondents felt about flexible working arrangements.

8.2.1 Availability and Uptake of Work Arrangements

Respondents with employees were asked whether some flexible work arrangements (flexitime[4] and reduced working time[5]) were available in their companies. There were gender differences in the availability of these work arrangements (Figure 8.13). Women entrepreneurs were more likely to offer flexitime than their male counterparts. One hundred and sixty-eight (52%) business headed by women made flexitime available to some of their employees compared with 127 (45%) businesses headed by men (Chi-square, $p<0.05$). Overall, nearly half (49%) the companies in the survey offered flexitime to their employees. Women entrepreneurs were also more likely than men entrepreneurs to offer reduced working time in their companies (Chi square, $p<0.01$). Of the 202 (33%) businesses in the survey that offered reduced working time to some of their employees, there were more women headed businesses (40%, n=131) than men headed ones (25%, n=71).

Respondents with employees were also asked about leave-taking arrangements in their companies. More specifically they were asked about the uptake of parental leave[6] and, two non-statutory leave arrangements, paternity leave and study leave. Few employees availed of these leave arrangements. Some employees had taken parental leave in only 95 businesses (16%), paternity leave in 50 businesses (8%) and study leave in 149 (25%) businesses. There were no statistically significant differences between men and women entrepreneurs.

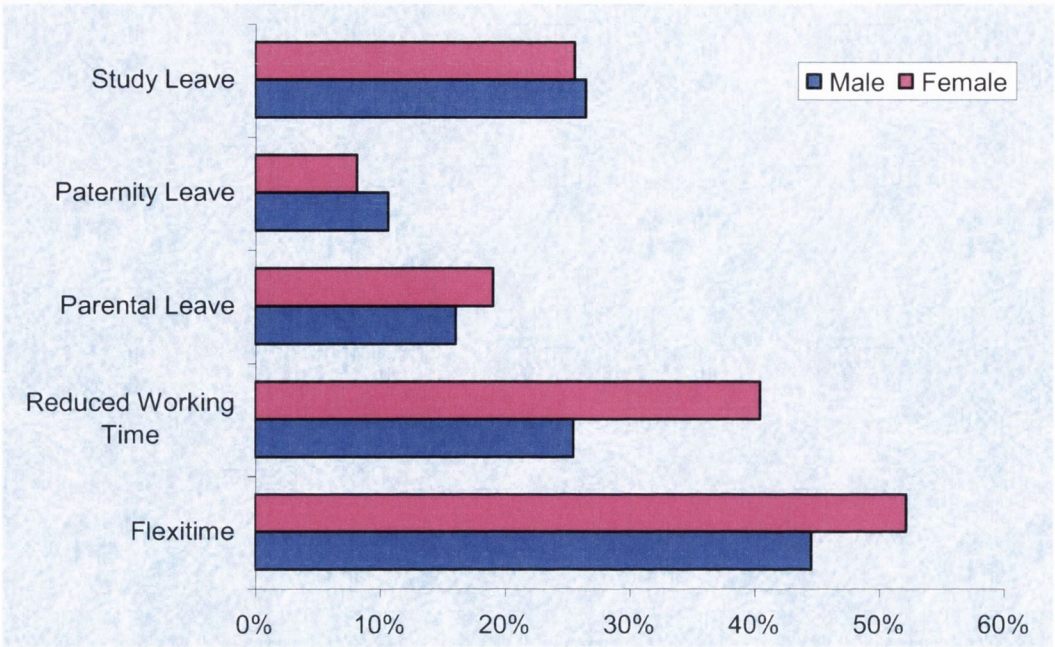
---

[4] Flexitime: "This is an arrangement whereby employers and employees negotiate hours of work that are of advantage to both. It usually involves defining 'peak' hours when all employees must be in work. Starting and finishing times, on the other hand, are normally flexible and there is usually provision for taking leave in lieu of additional hours worked" (www.familyfriendly.ie).

[5] Reduced Working Time: This category regroups work arrangements such as job sharing, job splitting, work sharing and part-time work (www.familyfriendly.ie).

[6] Parental Leave: An employee who is the natural or adoptive parent of a child is entitled to leave from his or her employment for a period of 14 working weeks to enable him or her to take care of the child (Parental Leave Act, 1998).

Figure 8.13 Availability of Flexible Work Arrangements in Irish Companies



8.2.2 Importance of Flexible Working Arrangements

'Income Level versus Personal/Family Life'

Respondents were asked about their attitudes to balancing their home and work life, and whether they prioritised their income level or improvements to their personal/family life. There were no gender differences in their responses. A total of 254 entrepreneurs (31%) prioritised their personal/family life over the income level. For instance, one man stated:

> *"Quality of life is far more important than level of income at this point in life".*

One female respondent felt that most women were not in business to generate income:

> *"Many women I know have small businesses that earn small amounts of money, often run on a part-time basis, but rely on their husband/partner to pay major expenses".*

However, one man saw personal and family life as closely linked to financial considerations and projections of success:

> *"I would say work does affect having a personal/family life but without a good sound source of income it is difficult to do what you want in your personal/family life".*

'Expansion of Business versus Personal/Family Life'

A total of 119 (34%) men stated that they felt the expansion of their business was more important than improvements to their personal and family life, compared to 112 (25%) women (Chi square, $p<0.01$). Men were much more likely than women to rate the expansion of their business more highly than improvements to their personal and family life. Some respondents mentioned that they thought that women tended to put more emphasis on their family/personal life than on their professional life. Three women voiced this opinion as:

> *"If women have children you can't or it is difficult to run a business as there is more important business at home!";*
>
> *"Women put their children and spouse before their careers. The home is important to the females";*
>
> *"I also know my own personal/family time is very important".*

Two male respondents commented:

> *"I do believe that women make choices which result in their, in many cases, 'opting out' of the rat race";*
>
> *"Commitment by women to developing a career is less than for most men - most women do not want to work until 65, so opportunity/desire for reaching the top is less, and time span in which to do it is less".*

Some female respondents commented on the fact that they themselves, or women in general, had entered entrepreneurship to be able to work on a part-time basis. As distinct from being forced into entrepreneurship by work/life balance problems, some women felt that they had chosen to give priority to their personal/family life, and hence had entered entrepreneurship to enhance this:

> *"I run my business on a part-time basis to facilitate children, spouse, lifestyle change";*
>
> *"Wanted something part-time whilst kids at school";*
>
> *"At the moment we are able to do more work but don't want to expand the business too much as we are thinking of the future";*
>
> *"I run my business on a part-time basis to facilitate children, spouse, lifestyle change, but hours very flexible due to changing workload";*
>
> *"As I am in a more mature phase of my career, I am spending more time with my very young children and working three days a week which I love. This is a backward step in my career".*

This latter comment highlights the fact that for some of the female respondents, letting family become their priority can lead to some regrets over the loss in terms of career.

Others felt they have been reared to prioritise, rather than choose, their home and family, and are trying to break away from that pattern:

> *"I personally feel women are reared to have way too much duty and over responsibility towards family";*
>
> *"I also feel that nowadays young couples negotiate more regarding parenting tasks and domestic duties, as both work there is an understanding that both share the domestic side of life also. However, as there is evidence to suggest that women still earn less than men while doing the same job, it implies that there is still the age-old undervaluing of women's work, either domestic or outside the home. Or rather, domestic work is still invisible when it's done without remuneration in one's own home";*
>
> *"Being in business with your spouse puts tremendous pressure on home/family life and personal relationships. Even when working full-time in the business, housework meals and family still seem to remain a female obligation";*
>
> *"Hard for women to juggle running a business and maintaining a home and raising a family. Much easier for men, they don't take responsibility for home or kids";*
>
> *"Women should keep away from the kitchen sink, stand up to their men and go out to make a life (career) for themselves. We are now in 2004!! No need to be under the male thumb!!!".*

Generally, women's comments contributed to the same idea: women lack the flexibility which men take for granted, and since the professional/business demands of men are so much higher, women are still expected to perform their caring duties despite the fact that they were running a business, and in most cases carrying out very successful careers:

> *"It is becoming increasingly difficult for women to mix work and family life because of the demands made by companies especially in today's market. demands made on spouses also mean that the nurturing is still in the main left to the women. in professional life overtime is seen as acceptable particularly in a male environment";*
>
> *"Women are restricted due to lack of flexibility";*
>
> *"I do think that once the business is up and running it is more difficult for them because of family and children. I see self-employed women taking time off for childcare, child sickness etc much more frequently than self-employed men".*

Therefore, some female respondents commented that they felt that interventions should be introduced to help women juggle both their roles at home and at work:

> *"... A lack of dealing with the 'real issues' of women in their own business has discouraged women starting up (e.g. maternity leave, time management: house-work balance etc...)";*
>
> *"Allowances that could/should be made for working/self-employed women (and men who rear their children solely). There is a lot to be said for US and France, two very different societies (democrative and socialist) where women can work and make a difference!!";*
>
> *"Better childcare facilities will increase the number of women in business".*

Importance of Flexible Work Arrangements for Employees

Among respondents who had employees, the majority (61%, n=374) felt that flexible work arrangements were important or very important for their employees. However, there were some highly statistically significant differences between men and women (Chi square, $p<0.01$). Altogether, 226 women (70%) felt that flexible work arrangements were important or very important for their employees, compared with 148 men (52%). Three women felt that flexible working arrangements were absolutely vital for reconciling the different aspects of their lives. One commented that there were a growing number of persons availing of flexible working arrangements:

> *"Generally workers male or female have more flexible working conditions now compared to twenty years ago".*

Two women would, or had, made flexible working arrangements available in their own companies:

> *"If I employed people it would be on a flexible arrangement allowing time for all to live their lives and study and have family";*
>
> *"I have always, even when I had 5 female full time employees, offered flexitime and family friendly policies which paid huge benefits for us all and was very unusual in the eighties".*

Importance of Flexible Work Arrangements for Themselves

Similarly, these results were reiterated by the importance that respondents attached to flexible work arrangements for themselves (Chi square, $p<0.01$). A total of 527 (66%) respondents felt that flexible work arrangements were either important or very important for themselves.

However, women attached a greater importance to flexible work arrangements: 330 (74%) women felt that flexible work arrangements were important or very important for them, compared with 197 (56%) men. Two women highlighted the fact that they had worked long hours previously but that they were not in the position to do so anymore because of their caring responsibilities:

> *"Did (work longer than standard hours) till I became a mother, not now, before I became a Mam over 2 years ago";*
>
> *"Not any more, I did in the first two years. [...] I am the primary carer for my father (83) who has Alzheimer's disease".*

Female respondents felt that in some cases they had entered entrepreneurship because they had been forced, or wanted, to work on a part-time basis or seek alternative forms of employment:

> *"Left engineering as it does not have the opportunity to job share or work reduced hours. Wonder what I will do in 10 years time when children are more independent";*
>
> *"I created a home based business due to the break-up of my marriage and having to look after two children and earn a living";*
>
> *"I do not consider myself an 'entrepreneur' as such: rather someone who has structured my work life to suit my family life!";*
>
> *"I started my own business in order to improve my work-life balance. ... Nearly four years on, the difficulty for me now is keeping a work-life balance";*
>
> *"Ireland has a great number of small businesses, women can find a niche in the market, set-up a small business, may be from home, with flexi hours. This in turn can ease the childcare burden".*

This section shows that the majority of respondents involved in this survey found that there was a negative interaction between women and the family. The men and women recognised that women were usually responsible for the majority of housework tasks and felt that this explained that lower levels of entrepreneurship among women and the fact that their business remained smaller.

8.3 Work/life balance Models

This section analyses the findings relating to work/life balance according to a range of demographic factors. These factors include: gender, marriage/living with a partner, family status and age. The methodology adopted was presented in Section 6.2.1.

8.3.1 Work/life balance and Personal Life

Time Sacrifices

Models were fitted to establish how much of an impact entrepreneurship had made on respondents' free time sacrifices. The complete models with logit link and complementary log-log link did not violate the assumption of parallel lines (p=0.479 for the complete logit link model and p=0.263 for the complementary log-log link model). Furthermore, both models fitted the data well as indicated by Pearson's goodness-of-fit statistic. However, the model fitting statistics were higher for the complete logit link model (Table 8.1).

Table 8.1 Model Selection Statistics: Free Time Sacrifices

	Logit Complete Model	Complementary Log-log Complete Model
Pearson's Goodness-of-fit	0.977	0.965
Cox and Snell	0.022	0.020
Nagelkerke	0.024	0.022
McFadden	0.009	0.008

The only parameter found to be statistically significant was family status. Fitting reduced models using only that parameter did not improve on the complete models based on the pseudo R-square statistics and therefore the complete model with a logit link was selected. The output generated in presented in Table 8.2.

Table 8.2 Ordinal Model with Logit Link: Free Time Sacrifices

	Regression Coefficient	P-value
Threshold (No Sacrifices)	-1.804	0.003
Threshold (Not Many Sacrifices)	-1.244	0.041
Threshold (Undecided)	-0.003	0.996
Threshold (Many Sacrifices)	1.167	0.054
Marital Status (Not Married)	0.050	0.804
Family Status (No Children)	0.544	0.008
Gender (Male)	-0.028	0.843
Age (25-34)	1.189	-0.042
Age (35-44)	1.213	0.024
Age (45-54)	1.061	-0.135
Age (55-64)	1.134	-0.103

There were no gender differences in the free time sacrifices made by respondents. However, fitting an ordinal logistic model with a logit link showed that the only parameter to change the sacrifices made in terms of free time was family status. Respondents who did not have children were 72 per cent more likely to feel they had made many sacrifices of their free time to become entrepreneurs.

Family status and gender dictated the extent to which respondents felt they had sacrificed their time spent with their partner. Because of the shape of the distribution of the response variable, a complete ordinal logistic model with a logit link was fitted. In this model, the assumption of parallel lines was not violated (p=0.356) and the goodness-of-fit statistic indicated that the model fitted the data well. Two parameters appeared to be statistically significant (gender and family status), however adding an interaction parameter did not give any statistically significant results. Similarly, a reduced model using only gender and family status as explanatory variables was fitted but provided weaker pseudo R-square statistics (Table 8.3).

Table 8.3 Model Selection Statistics: Time Spent with Partner

	Logit Complete Model	**Logit Reduced Model**
Pearson's Goodness-of-fit	0.109	0.107
Cox and Snell	0.023	0.016
Nagelkerke	0.024	0.017
McFadden	0.008	0.005

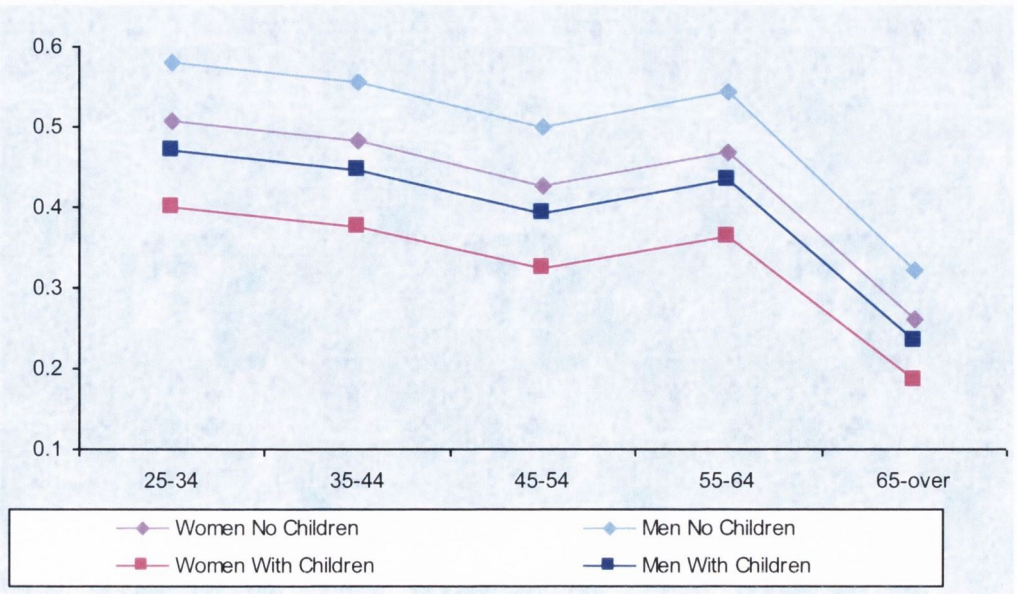
These models were compared with other models using a probit link, however, the best link consisted of the logit link. The complete logit link model was thus selected and the output of this model is presented in Table 8.4.

Table 8.4 Ordinal Model with Logit Link: Spouse Time Sacrifices

	Regression Coefficient	P-value
Threshold (No Sacrifices)	-1.031	0.091
Threshold (Not Many Sacrifices)	0.037	0.952
Threshold (Undecided)	1.479	0.015
Threshold (Many Sacrifices)	2.580	<0.001
Family Status (No Children)	0.438	0.050
Gender (Male)	0.295	0.048
Age (25-34)	1.069	0.092
Age (35-44)	0.973	0.110
Age (45-54)	0.744	0.225
Age (55-64)	0.918	0.149

The model indicated that among married/cohabiting respondents, women were 34 per cent less likely to feel they have sacrificed their time with their partners. Having children also meant that the probability of reporting a sacrifice in time spent with their partners was 55 per cent lower. In other words, men without children were most likely to feel they had sacrificed a lot of time with their partners, while women with children were the least likely to feel they had sacrificed their time with their partners. This is illustrated in Figure 8.14.

Figure 8.14 Probability of Agreeing or Strongly Agreeing with Having Sacrificed Time with Partner



Impact of Partners

When controlling for other demographic factors, gender was the only parameter that had an impact on the level of interference from respondents' partner's career. Two complete models, one with a logit link, the other with a negative log-log link were fitted but were rejected because both violated the assumption of parallel lines ($p<0.001$ for both). The reduced model using the same links did not violate this assumption ($p=0.212$ for the logit link and $p=0.118$ for the negative log-log link). Similarly, the goodness-of-fit statistics showed both models fitted the data well. The logit link reduced model was selected over the negative log-log model because it had higher values of pseudo R-square statistics (Table 8.5).

Table 8.5 Model Selection Statistics: Interference from Spouse's Career

	Logit Reduced Model	**Negative Log-log Reduced Model**
Pearson's Goodness-of-fit	0.252	0.147
Cox and Snell	0.023	0.021
Nagelkerke	0.026	0.024
McFadden	0.011	0.010

The output for the model is presented in Table 8.6. This model showed that women were 47 per cent more likely to feel that their partner's career had interfered with their business venture.

Table 8.6 Ordinal Model with Logit Link: Interference from Spouse's Career

	Regression Coefficient	P-value
Threshold (No Interference)	0.338	0.003
Threshold (Little Interference)	1.075	<0.001
Threshold (Undecided)	2.036	<0.001
Threshold (Some Interference)	2.908	<0.001
Gender (Male)	-0.635	<0.001

Impact of Children

Models were fitted to investigate the impact of demographic factors on how much after school activities interfered with the respondents' work environment. All models fitted violated the parallel line assumption, however the goodness-of-fit statistics for the complete models with a negative log-log link and logit link did not pose any problems. Two parameters

appeared to be statistically significant (marital status and gender), but adding an interaction parameter between these two variables did not improve the models. Because the negative log-log complete model provided higher values of pseudo R-square statistics it was selected instead of the logit link complete model (Table 8.7).

Table 8.7 Model Selection Statistics: After School Activities versus Work

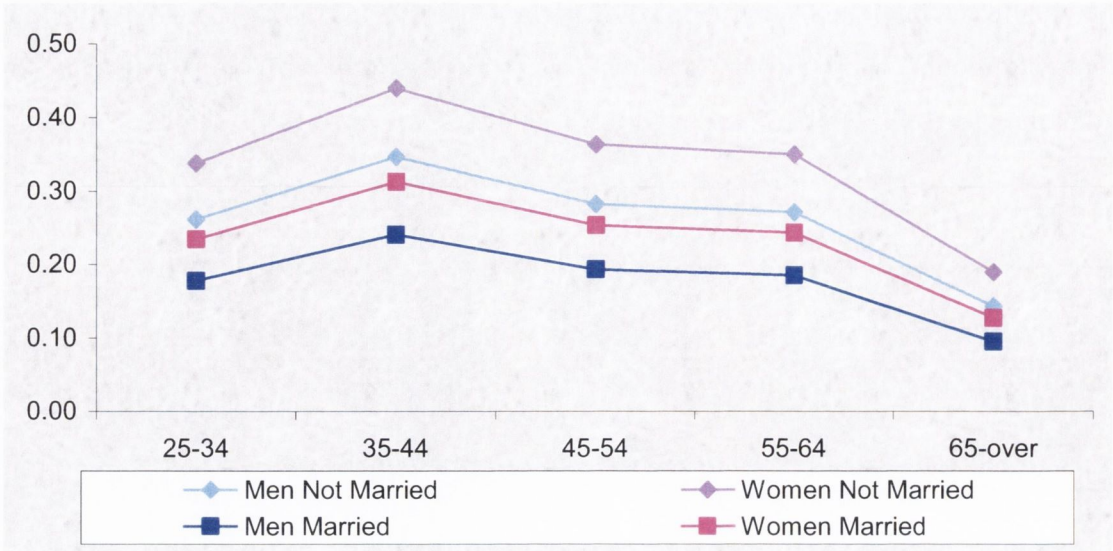
	Logit Complete Model	**Negative Log-log Complete Model**
Pearson's Goodness-of-fit	0.216	0.614
Cox and Snell	0.053	0.074
Nagelkerke	0.056	0.078
McFadden	0.018	0.025

The output for this model is provided in Table 8.8. An ordinal logistic model with negative log-log link showed that women were 27 per cent more likely than men to report interference from after-school activities regardless of marital status and age. Similarly, being single also increased the likelihood of reporting a higher interference from after-school activities by 54 per cent, regardless of gender and age (Figure 8.15).

Table 8.8 Ordinal Model with Negative Log-log Link: After School Activities versus Work

	Regression Coefficient	P-value
Threshold (No Interference)	0.550	0.265
Threshold (Little Interference)	1.095	0.027
Threshold (Undecided)	1.993	<0.001
Threshold (Some Interference)	2.521	<0.001
Marital Status (Not Married)	0.434	0.008
Gender (Male)	-0.308	0.003
Age (25-34)	0.674	0.201
Age (35-44)	1.013	0.041
Age (45-54)	0.765	0.125
Age (55-64)	0.716	0.160

Figure 8.15 Probability of Agreeing with Interference from After-school Activities



Interference from providing childcare or care of other relative was examined in relation to demographic factors. All models except the reduced logit link model violated the parallel lines assumption, therefore only the latter was selected. The associated statistics are presented in Table 8.9 and the regression output in Table 8.10.

Table 8.9 Model Selection Statistics: Interference from Childcare

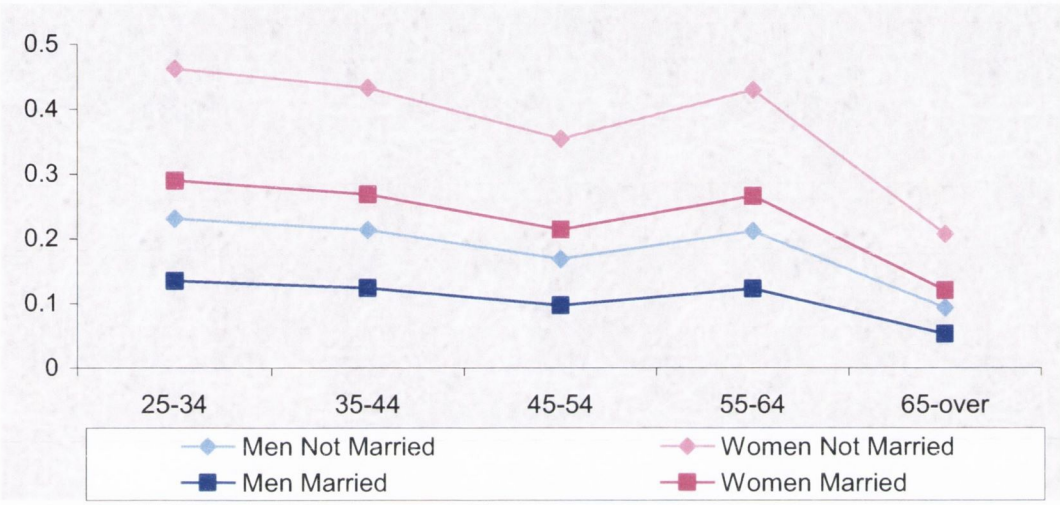
	Logit Reduced Model
Pearson's Goodness-of-fit	0.266
Cox and Snell	0.156
Nagelkerke	0.164
McFadden	0.057

Table 8.10 Ordinal Model with Logit Link: Interference from Childcare

	Regression Coefficient	P-value
Threshold (No Interference)	0.550	0.265
Threshold (Little Interference)	1.095	0.027
Threshold (Undecided)	1.993	<0.001
Threshold (Some Interference)	2.521	<0.001
Marital Status (Not Married)	0.434	0.008
Gender (Male)	-0.308	0.003
Age (25-34)	0.674	0.201
Age (35-44)	1.013	0.041
Age (45-54)	0.765	0.125
Age (55-64)	0.716	0.160

Among respondents with children, an ordinal logistic model with a logit link showed that women were more 75 per cent more likely to have experienced interference from childcare or the care of another relative, regardless of marital status and age. Furthermore, respondents with no partner were nearly two and a half times as likely to feel some interference from childcare or the care of another relative regardless of gender and age (Figure 8.16).

Figure 8.16 Probability of Agreeing/Strongly Agreeing With Interference from Childcare/Care of Other Relative



Housework

To measure the impact of the demographic factors on interference from housework tasks, an ordinal logistic model was constructed. The two complete models were examined, one with a logit link, the other with a negative log-log link. The two models showed two statistically significant parameters: gender and family status. The inclusion of an interaction parameter between these two variables proved to be statistically significant with both models. Neither models failed the parallel lines test. The selection statistics associated with both models are presented in Table 8.11. Because of the higher values of pseudo R-square statistics in the logit link model, it is the latter which was selected. The output generated by the model is presented in Table 8.12.

Table 8.11 Model Selection Statistics: Interference from Housework

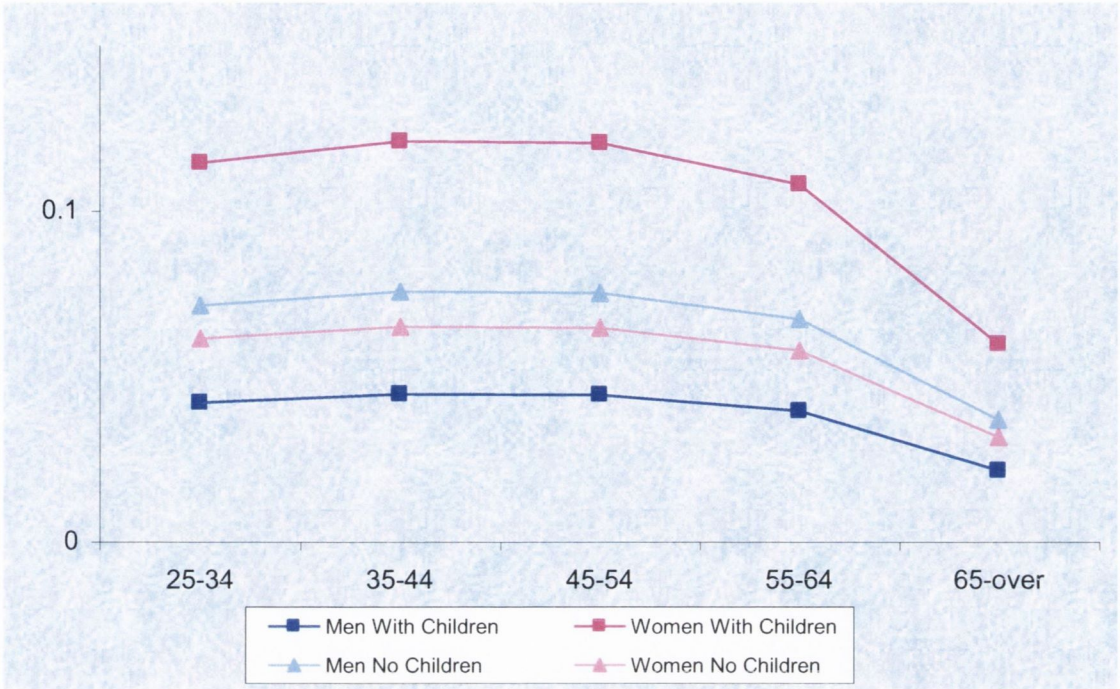
	Logit Complete Model	Negative Log-log Complete Model
Pearson's Goodness-of-fit	0.139	0.058
Cox and Snell	0.111	0.100
Nagelkerke	0.121	0.109
McFadden	0.047	0.042

Table 8.12 Ordinal Model with Logit Link: Interference from Housework

	Regression Coefficient	P-value
Threshold (No Interference)	6.661	<0.001
Threshold (Little Interference)	7.830	<0.001
Threshold (Undecided)	9.278	<0.001
Threshold (Some Interference)	10.260	<0.001
Children x Gender	1.639	<0.001
Marital Status (Not Married)	0.048	0.815
Family Status (No Children)	2.253	0.001
Gender (Male)	1.826	0.006
Age (25-34)	0.855	0.246
Age (35-44)	0.852	0.236
Age (45-54)	0.827	0.252
Age (55-64)	0.744	0.317

The model showed some surprising results. Respondents with children were over nine and a half times as likely to report interference from housework as those who did not have children. Similarly, women were six times as likely as men to feel housework had interfered with their business. But the model indicated that women with children were over five times as likely as men without children to find that housework had interfered with the business. Being a man with children had the reverse effect, that is men with children found the least interference between housework and their business, even below that of men and women without children.

Figure 8.17 Probability of Agreeing/Strongly Agreeing with Interference from Housework



8.3.2 Work/life balance and the Business

There were no gender differences in whether respondents chose to prioritise their income level or improving their personal/family life. Two complete models were fitted, one with a logit link, the other with a probit link, and neither rejected the assumption of parallel lines. Two parameters turned out to be statistically significant: gender and age. The selection statistics associated with both models are presented in Table 8.13. Based on this information, the complete model with logit link was selected and its output is presented in Table 8.14.

Table 8.13 Model Selection Statistics: Income Level versus Personal/Family Life

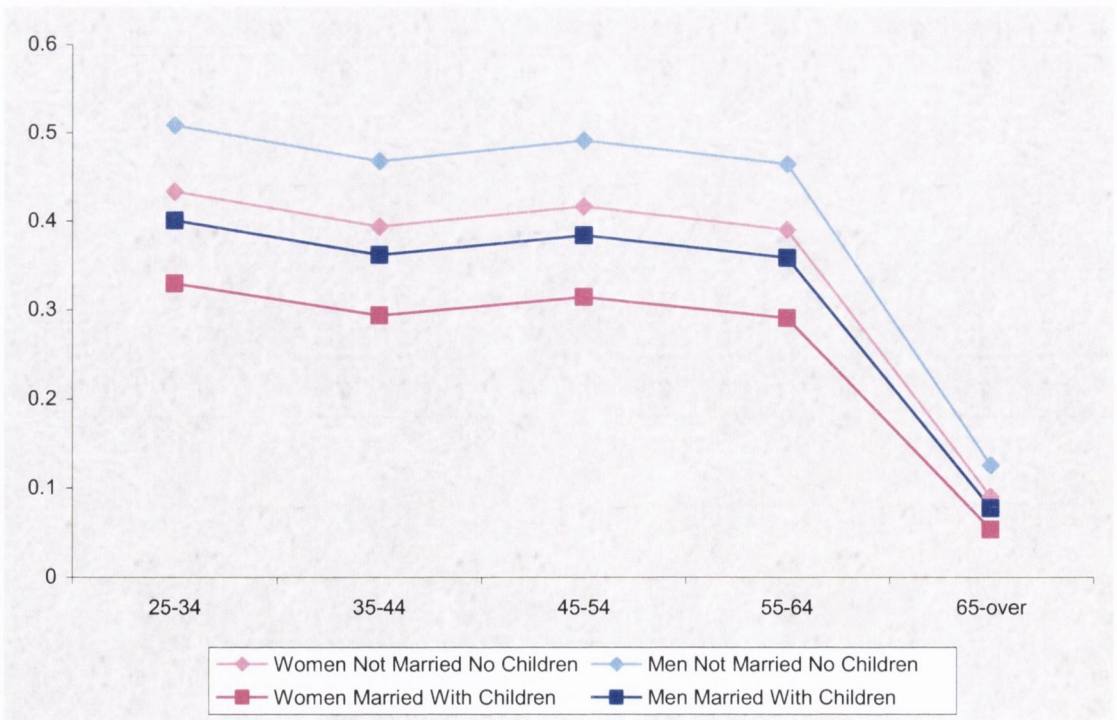
	Logit Complete Model	Probit Complete Model
Pearson's Goodness-of-fit	0.657	0.664
Cox and Snell	0.031	0.031
Nagelkerke	0.032	0.032
McFadden	0.010	0.010

Table 8.14 Ordinal Model with Logit Link: Income Level versus Personal/Family Life

	Regression Coefficient	P-value
Threshold (Very Important)	0.174	0.751
Threshold (Important)	1.194	0.029
Threshold (Undecided)	2.586	<0.001
Threshold (Not Very Important)	3.644	<0.001
Marital Status (Not Married)	0.274	0.131
Family Status (No Children)	0.178	0.324
Gender (Male)	0.333	0.010
Age (25-34)	1.909	0.001
Age (35-44)	1.698	0.002
Age (45-54)	1.831	0.001
Age (55-64)	1.659	0.004

Overall the model showed that, when controlling for marital status, family status, gender, age and the interaction of family and marital status, men were nearly 40 per cent more likely to prioritise their level of income over their family/personal life, but that with increasing age this tended to decrease. For example, those in the 25 to 34 age category were over six and a half times more likely than those in the over 65 category to prioritise their level of income over their family/personal life.

Figure 8.18 Probability of Prioritising Income Level over Improvement in Family/Personal Life



These findings were echoed by the findings of another model. Two complete models (logit and probit links) were fitted. Neither models failed the test of parallel lines. The statistics on which the model selection was based are provided in Table 8.15 and show that both links are equivalent. The logit link was selected for parsimonious reasons. The output of this model is provided in Table 8.16.

Table 8.15 Model Selection Statistics: Business Expansion over Family/Personal Life

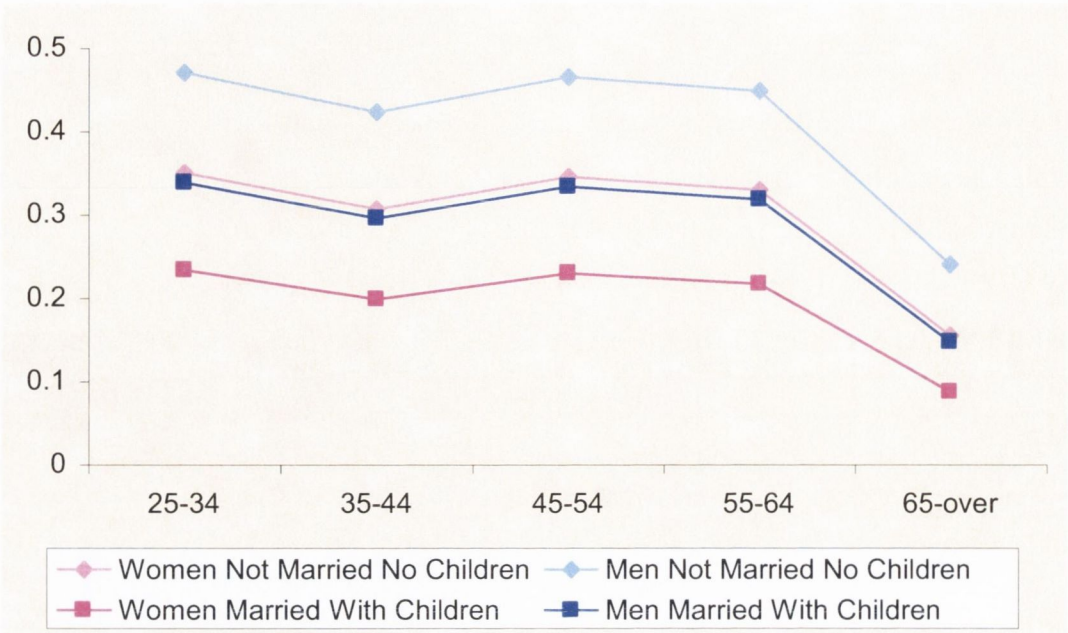
	Logit Complete Model	Probit Complete Model
Pearson's Goodness-of-fit	0.286	0.277
Cox and Snell	0.036	0.037
Nagelkerke	0.038	0.038
McFadden	0.012	0.012

Table 8.16 Ordinal Model with Logit Link: Business Expansion over Family/Personal Life

	Regression Coefficient	P-value
Threshold (Very Important)	-0.193	0.715
Threshold (Important)	0.734	0.167
Threshold (Undecided)	2.161	<0.001
Threshold (Not Very Important)	3.271	<0.001
Marital Status (Not Married)	0.325	0.074
Family Status (No Children)	0.281	0.120
Gender (Male)	0.516	<0.001
Age (25-34)	1.004	0.070
Age (35-44)	0.780	0.145
Age (45-54)	0.943	0.080
Age (55-64)	0.871	0.117

Gender was the only explanatory variable to be statistically significant. The major finding arising from the model was that, when controlling for other demographic factors, men were 67 per cent more likely than women to prioritise business expansion over improvement in their personal/family life.

Figure 8.19 Probability of Prioritising Business Expansion over Family/Personal Life



A statistical analysis was performed to establish a potential link between the importance of work/life balance practices for their employees by employers with marital status, family status, gender and age. The two complete models with logit and complementary log-log link were examined. Both models had a statistically significant Pearson's goodness-of-fit statistic which indicated that the models did not fit the data well. In these models gender was statistically significant. The reduced models with gender as the only explanatory variable were thus examined. Neither models failed the test of parallel lines and the model selection statistics are presented in Table 8.17.

Table 8.17 Model Selection Statistics: Importance of Work/Life Balance Practices for Employees

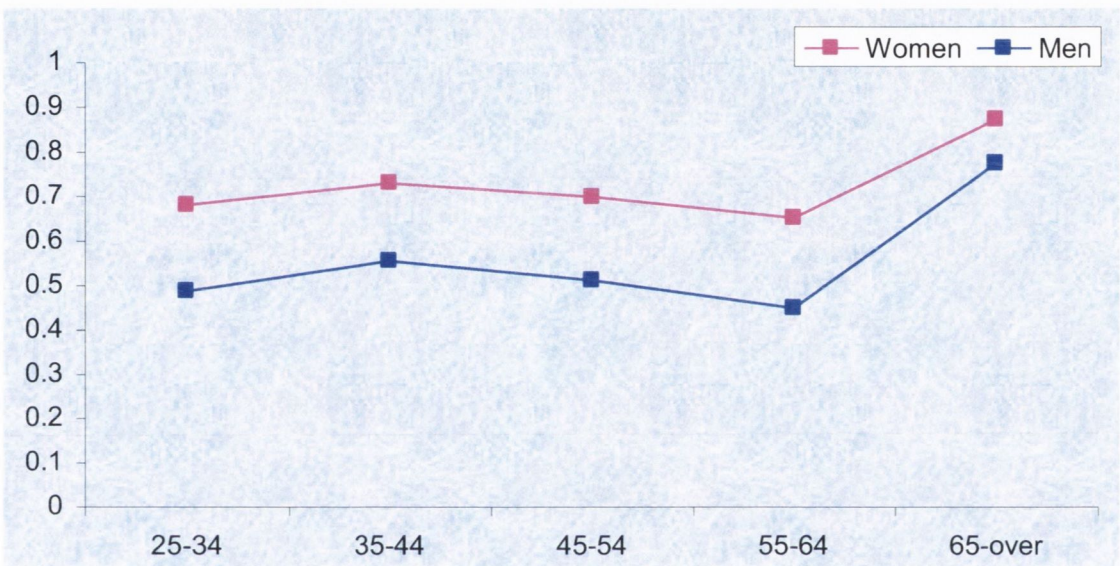
	Logit Reduced Model	Probit Complete Model
Pearson's Goodness-of-fit	0.229	0.748
Cox and Snell	0.055	0.060
Nagelkerke	0.059	0.063
McFadden	0.020	0.022

The model selected consisted of the reduced model with the complementary log-log link, which output is presented in Table 8.18. The model showed that women were 47 per cent more likely than men to find work/life balance practices important for their employees.

Table 8.18 Ordinal Model with Logit Link: Work/Life Balance Practices for Employees

	Regression Coefficient	P-value
Threshold (Very Important)	-2.960	<0.001
Threshold (Important)	-2.225	<0.001
Threshold (Undecided)	-1.051	<0.001
Threshold (Not Very Important)	-0.306	<0.001
Gender (Male)	-0.635	<0.001

Figure 8.20 Probability of Finding Work/life balance Practices Important for Employees



Finally, all respondents were asked how important flexible work arrangements were for themselves. The two complete models (logit and complementary log-log link) failed the test of parallel lines. Gender proved to be statistically significant in both models. The two corresponding reduced models with gender as a parameter were therefore examined. The complementary log-log reduced model failed the parallel line test leaving the reduced logit model as the best model. The model selection output for this model is provided in Table 8.19 and the output is presented in Table 8.20.

Table 8.19 Model Selection Statistics Work/Life Balance Practices for Respondents

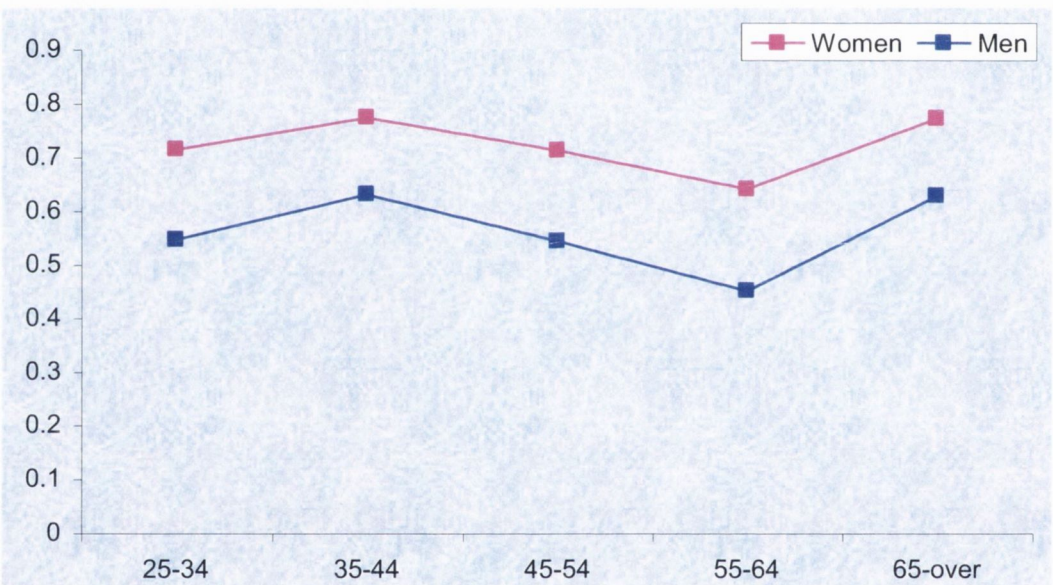
	Logit Reduced Model
Pearson's Goodness-of-fit	0.151
Cox and Snell	0.052
Nagelkerke	0.056
McFadden	0.019

Table 8.20 Ordinal Model with Logit Link: Work/Life Balance Practices for Respondents

	Regression Coefficient	P-value
Threshold (Very Important)	-2.328	<0.001
Threshold (Important)	-1.848	<0.001
Threshold (Undecided)	-1.069	<0.001
Threshold (Not Very Important)	-0.185	0.042
Gender (Male)	-0.865	<0.001

The model showed that women were 58 per cent more likely than men to find work/life balances practices important for their own personal/family life (Figure 8.21).

Figure 8.21 Probability of Finding Work/life balance Practices Important



8.4 Key Findings

8.4.1 Organisation of Home/Family Life

It is clear from the results of the survey that there are some major differences between men and women entrepreneurs in the organisation of their home/family life. There were no gender differences in the time sacrifices of entrepreneurs, namely: social time, free time or time spent with children. However, women were less likely than men to feel they had sacrificed their time with their partners. This finding was intensified among women who had children. Women were also more likely than men to feel that their partner's career; children's after

school activities; childcare commitments; housework and family commitments had interfered with their business.

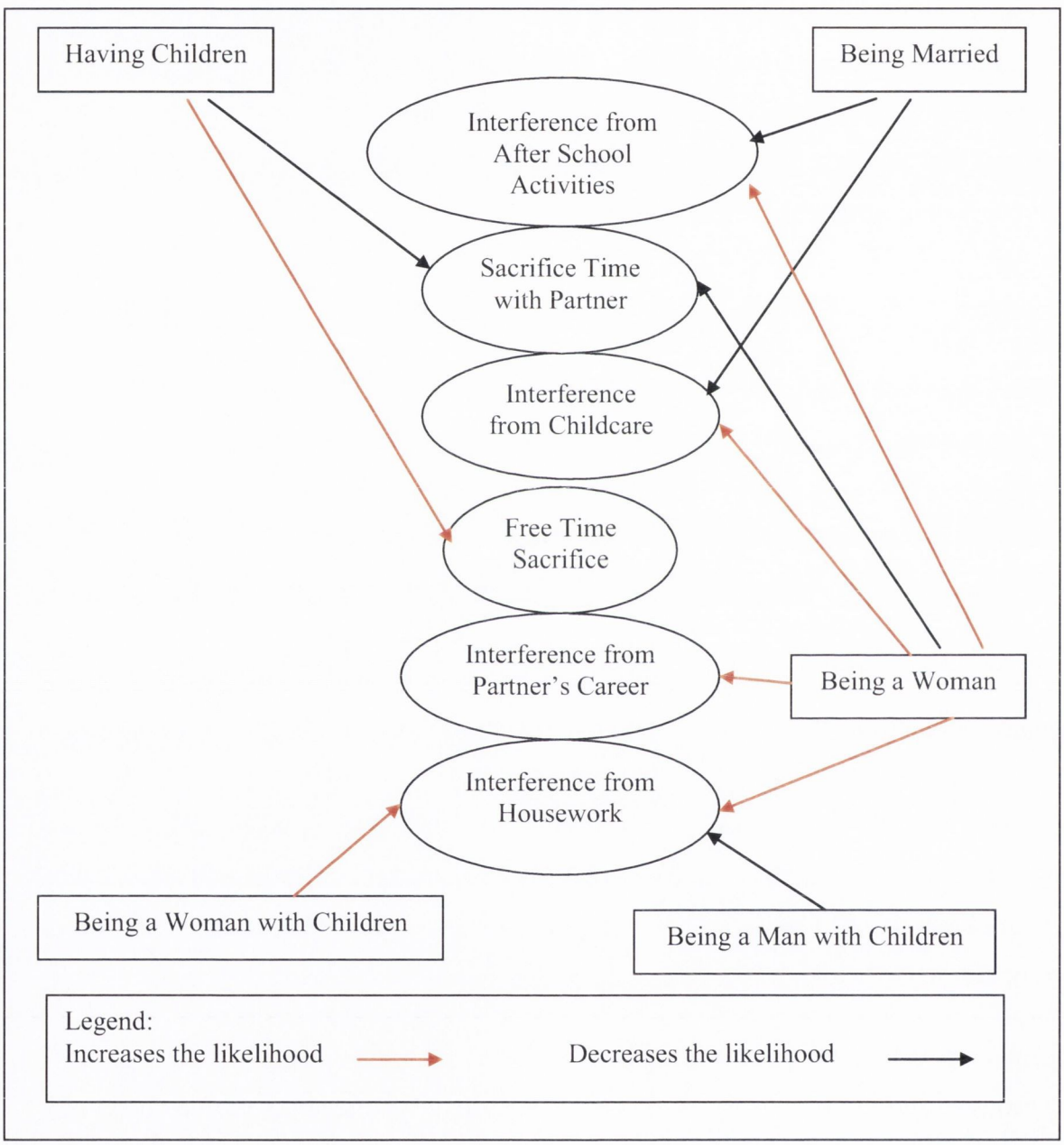
Furthermore, the survey found that women were largely responsible, more so than their male counterparts, for looking after their children and housework generally. The survey indicated that the two predominant forms of childcare utilised by women were minding the children themselves and/or relying on private paid care. Some women respondents noted that the cost of childcare in Ireland was prohibitive when offset against the income generated by the business. In the labour market in Ireland, this problem has been documented (Mahon, 1998; Drew, 1999; Valiulis et al., 2004). The cost of childcare was not, until 2006, supplemented by the Irish state and acts as a deterrent to women remaining or entering employment (Mahon, 1998). It can be argued that the same principle applies to at least a proportion of women in business.

In addition, women were performing nearly two and a half times the number of hours of housework compared to men, the responsibility for which remains predominantly with them. Though the number were small, women were more likely to 'buy in' help. The gendered division of labour in the home is well documented (Mahon, 1998; Drew, 1999; Valiulis et al., 2004), though rarely for entrepreneurs. The literature shows that women are largely responsible for caring and housework in Ireland (Coveney et al., 1998; Mahon, 1998; Drew, 1999; Valiulis et al., 2004) as well as in the rest of Europe (Eurostat, 2004b). This implies that the arrival of children requires that women become less involved in the labour market. For instance, in the Netherlands, *"the women consider it self-evident that they start working less when children arrive"* (Veenis, 1998:187). Therefore it can be argued that if women generally give less priority to their employment than to their children and family, some women might also give less priority to their businesses than to their children and family. As a result, women were more likely to claim that they experience a conflict between their work and family life.

This chapter not only examined the impact of gender on the organisation of the home, but also investigated the impact of other demographic factors. The main relationships between those elements for men and women entrepreneurs, based on the results from ordinal logistic models, are summarised in Figure 8.22. The chapter showed that there were some gender differences in the organisation of respondents' personal/family life. Previous sections showed that being a woman brought more responsibilities and obstacles. However, this section

showed that these responsibilities and obstacles were accentuated for women with children. The relevance of this finding is that it suggests that, as highlighted in other studies (Coveney et al., 1998; Mahon, 1998; Drew, 1999; Valiulis et al., 2004), women are particularly 'handicapped' as businesswomen once they become mothers.

Figure 8.22 Summary Model: Factors Affecting Work/Life Balance Experiences for Men and Women Entrepreneurs



8.4.2 Work/Life Balance: Strategies Adopted and Beliefs Held by Entrepreneurs

It is clear that men and women entrepreneurs in the survey held very different systems of beliefs of how important they regard work/life balance practices. Men tended to put more emphasis on the expansion of their business than on their family/personal lives. Men also placed less emphasis on work/life balance practices for themselves and their employees than women. This was reflected in the fact that women were more likely to offer flexitime and reduced working time to their employees than men.

The majority of respondents felt that they had sacrificed much personal and social time for their businesses. The comments added a layer of understanding to those issues. Many respondents felt that working long hours was an integral part of being an entrepreneur. Due to the link between business and working long hours, some women respondents indicated that their hours working were in conflict with their personal/family life. Some women pointed out that they wanted to reduce their working hours in the future while some had done it already. Another few identified working fewer hours as a means to achieving better work/life balance. However, men did not feel that there was a link between working long hours and a conflict with their personal/family life. These comments suggest that women choose to go into business to reshape their work environment to achieve better work/life balance.

Finally, if some men spoke of work/life balance and reconciling their home and work life, the issue remains a predominantly a female one. Overall, most women felt that being in business placed increased pressure on home life. However, for a portion it allowed them to control their work and home environment. This provides further evidence that some women in business use entrepreneurship to change their home and work environment, and that some women use entrepreneurship as a means of achieving a better work/life balance.

8.5 Conclusions

This chapter provides evidence some answers to two of the research questions examined in this thesis. First, one of the research questions examines whether or not men entrepreneurs prioritise the growth of their business over improvement in their personal/family life. Second, one of the research questions examines whether or not men entrepreneurs prioritise their income level over improvement in their personal/family life.

Evidence from the survey shows that only a minority of respondents feel that they prioritise their business' expansion over improvement in their personal/family life. However, men entrepreneurs were much more likely than women entrepreneurs to give more importance to their business' expansion than to their personal/family life. In their comments, respondents referred to stereotypical ways of seeing women entrepreneurs, stating that women were different because they were 'drawn' to looking after their children and their homes. Other respondents felt that women entrepreneurs gave more importance to their personal/family life and used entrepreneurship to fit this purpose, mostly by working on a part-time basis and/or from home for instance.

The other research question examined whether or not men entrepreneurs prioritise their level of income over improvement in their personal/family life. Overall, respondents tended to prioritise level of income over improvement in their personal/family life, but men entrepreneurs were not more likely than their female counterparts to adopt this particular position. Interestingly, income level was not associated with any other demographic factors. This chapter has examined the issues revolving around work/life balance and the organisation of the respondent's home life in the survey. The next chapter analyses the data obtained through semi-structured in-depth interviews with women entrepreneurs.

Chapter 9 Voices of Women Entrepreneurs: A Profile

In addition to the quantitative data collection methods used in the study and covered in Chapters 5 to 8, a number of interviews were carried out, to triangulate the data obtained through the survey. The extensive, highly detailed and largely descriptive information gathered through the survey was complemented by the detailed accounts and experiences of women entrepreneurs. The data collected from the interviews provided an in-depth understanding of the issues touched upon by the survey. They explored aspects of the interviewees' experiences which could not be understood using quantitative methods. This chapter presents the findings obtained through the qualitative data collection. Section 9.1 outlines the methodology adopted and a summary profile of interviewees and their businesses. Sections 9.2 and 9.3 analyse the interviewees' motivations for becoming entrepreneurs and the obstacles they faced. The levels of risk taken by the interviewees were assessed and analysed in Section 9.4 followed by an examination of interviewees' management styles in Section 9.5.

9.1 Background

9.1.1 Methodology

A total of 10 semi-structured in-depths interviews were conducted with women entrepreneurs to explore some of the issues identified in the survey (Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8). The women selected were entrepreneurs who had attended networking events or were known to enterprise agencies. The women entrepreneurs interviewed were not selected to be representative of the population, but to demonstrate different businesses and approaches to entrepreneurship. Particular care was given to selecting women entrepreneurs with a variety of personal circumstances, sectors and sizes. In order to avoid misinterpretation of the results, a short biography of each interviewee is presented in Section 9.1.2. Due to ethical concerns and to ensure confidentiality, all names of interviewees have been changed.

9.1.2 Profile of Interviewees

Mary

Mary is single, aged between 55 to 64 years, and has no children. She created her company in 2001 and has no employees. She works in Human Resources.

Orla

Orla is married and aged 35 to 44. She has two dependent children who are both aged 13. She inherited the company (created in 1974) from her parents and currently runs it in conjunction with her siblings. The company employs more than 50 full-time employees as well as more than 50 part-time employees. The company, which she joined in 1989, trades in Design, Retail and Catering.

Lisa

Lisa is married, aged 35 to 44 years, and has two dependent children who are aged 4 and 10 years. She created the company in 1989 on her own. However, her husband joined her a few years later. She employs more than 50 full-time and more than 50 part-time staff. She works in Human Resources.

Catherine

Catherine is cohabiting. She lives with her partner and his children from a previous marriage, approximately fifty per cent of the time. She has no children of her own. She is aged between 45 to 54 years. She created her company in 1989 and now employs less than 10 full-time and less than 10 part-time staff. She is involved in Real Estate.

Emily

Emily is married, aged 45 to 54 years, and has two teenagers. She created her company in 1986 with her husband. She now employs between 21 and 50 staff full-time and more than 50 employees on a part-time basis. Her company trades in the Media Industry.

Teresa

Teresa is married, aged 35 to 44, and has one school-age child. She created her company in 2001. She employs no full-time staff and less than 10 part-time employees. She is involved in Training.

Alice

Alice is single, aged 35 to 44, and has no children. Her company was created in 2001. She has no full-time staff and fewer than 10 part-time employees. She operates a company in Interior Design.

Maura

Maura is single, aged 35 to 44, and has one pre-school child. She runs the family business in association with her father and brother. They employ less than 10 part-time employees and under 10 full-time employees. Their trading sector is in manufacturing of agricultural and garden products.

Sarah

Sarah is separated, aged 45 to 54, and has four children, three of whom are teenagers and one is in college. Her business was created in 1983, and she is now the head of the corporation which merged with her business in 2001. She employs more than 50 full-time employees and less than 10 part-time employees. Her sector of trading is Financial Services.

Gemma

Gemma is married, aged 45 to 54, and has three children, two of whom are of school age, and one of whom is a teenager. She created her first company in 1989 as a partnership. She has since created another business. She employs less than ten full-time employees and between 10 and 20 part-time employees. Her business sector is Media and Consultancy.

9.1.3 Summary Profile of Interviewees

The profile of interviewees is presented in Table 9.1. The majority of women interviewed were 45 to 54 years of age. They were, on average, older than the profile of women entrepreneurs in Ireland and the women entrepreneurs surveyed. This is due to the fact that women entrepreneurs, with a long track record in business, were targeted to participate in the interviews. As in the survey and other Irish studies (Goodbody Economic Consultants, 2002; Valiulis et al., 2004), most women entrepreneurs were married or cohabiting. The vast majority had children, with an average number of two children. The women interviewed had been in business for an average of fourteen years, ranging from one year to 25 years. Most of

their businesses were established by the interviewees. The sectors of trading were varied. The key sectors were those in which women traditionally predominate, e.g. Design, Human Resources, Media or Training. These findings reflect the profile of women entrepreneurs in the survey and official statistics.

Table 9.1: Summary Profile of Interviewees (n=10)

	Frequency
Number of Dependent Children	
0	2
1	2
2	4
3	1
4	1
Marital Status	
Single/Separated/Divorced	4
Married/Cohabiting	6
Age Group	
35-44	4
45-54	5
55-64	1
Number of Years in Business	
1-5	2
6-10	1
11-15	1
16-20	5
21-25	1
Origin of First Company	
Bought	0
Inherited	2
Created	8
Type of Organisation	
One Main Director	7
Partnership	3
Sector of Trading	
Media	2
Design	2
Human Resources	2
Real Estate	1
Training/Personal Development	1
Manufacturing	1
Financial Services	1

9.2 Entrepreneurial Awakening

The purpose of this section was to examine the reasons why the interviewees had become entrepreneurs. First, the motivations mentioned by the interviewees are analysed, followed by an examination of how these women entrepreneurs were influenced by their environment. The section then investigates whether push factors predominate over pull factors, followed by an examination of the impact of gender on their individual motivations.

9.2.1 Motivational Factors

At the beginning of the taped interviewees, women were asked about the motivating factors behind their decisions to become entrepreneurs. The results strongly replicate the findings in the literature and the mailed survey (Chapter 6). The main motivations mentioned during the course of the interviews, in decreasing order of importance, were:

- Desire for Independence;
- Wanting to be an entrepreneur;
- Seeking personal fulfilment/satisfaction;
- Dissatisfaction with the labour market;
- Need for work/life balance;
- Generating greater income.

Seeking Independence

Seeking independence was the motivational factor cited most often. This fact reflects the literature on women entrepreneurs, that systematically identified 'independence' as the single most important motivational factor internationally (Goffee and Scase, 1985; Marlow, 1997; Moore and Buttner, 1997; Carter, 2000; Duchéneaut and Orhan, 2000) and in the Irish literature on women entrepreneurs (Campbell, 1994; Goodbody Economic Consultants, 2002; Henry and Kennedy, 2003; Valiulis et al., 2004):

> *"I decided to set up my own [...] company and do things the way I wanted to do." (Lisa)*

> *"I had much more capabilities and wanted more responsibility and wanted more autonomy [...]. I was always [...] climbing up the ladder in the jobs I was in, but [...] what I really wanted was to be at the top, organising things, being in control myself." (Alice)*

Wanting to Be an Entrepreneur

Wanting to be an entrepreneur also emerged as a key motivator, as observed internationally (Goffee and Scase, 1985; Marlow, 1997; Moore and Buttner, 1997; Carter, 2000; Duchéneaut and Orhan, 2000) and in the Irish literature on women entrepreneurs (Campbell, 1994; Goodbody Economic Consultants, 2002; Henry and Kennedy, 2003; Valiulis et al., 2004). Two women entrepreneurs referred to this:

> *"I wanted to be my own boss rather than work for someone else." (Alice)*

> *"From a very young age, I had always had the ambition to work for myself." (Lisa)*

Seeking Personal Satisfaction

In parallel with the literature on women entrepreneurs internationally (Goffee and Scase, 1985; Marlow, 1997; Moore and Buttner, 1997; Carter, 2000; Duchéneaut and Orhan, 2000), Irish studies (Campbell, 1994; Goodbody Economic Consultants, 2002; Henry and Kennedy, 2003; Valiulis et al., 2004), showed that seeking personal fulfilment/satisfaction was an important factor. It was mentioned by two women:

> *"It's not the money that's the driving force, it's the being employed and being able to do a good job. And bringing in my experience from before into something else that I know matters." (Mary)*

> *"Personal fulfilment, doing something with my life, and there are a lot of people working here, who have got solid jobs and in a company where they are well looked after." (Orla)*

Dissatisfaction with Previous Employment

Three women cited dissatisfaction with their previous employment. This was deemed to be a particularly important motivational factor for women entrepreneurs both in the international literature (Goffee and Scase, 1985; Marlow, 1997; Moore and Buttner, 1997; Carter, 2000; Duchéneaut and Orhan, 2000) and in the Irish literature (Campbell, 1994; Goodbody Economic Consultants, 2002; Henry and Kennedy, 2003; Valiulis et al., 2004):

> *"I am independent, [...], when I was given [my] job [before I set-up in business], I was offered a 5 year contract. I felt I was choking at the prospect of a 5 year contract, it was far too long." (Emily)*

> *"After moving jobs a couple of times I found dissatisfaction working for someone else." (Alice)*

"When I became deputy editor at the age of 27, the owners and the managing director [said to me] 'I'd like to make you deputy editor of this magazine, but it doesn't mean to say I can ever see a female editor in my lifetime'. Two years later, when the editor moved on, I got the job, because he turned around and looked at everybody else, and somebody said 'actually she's doing the work, why don't you give her the job?'. So reluctantly, I got the job, by default. I had a very very difficult two years because I tried to make a lot of changes, and that wasn't happening. It descended into a quite difficult scenario between myself and that publisher. [...] I just decided to leave because I was very unhappy with my lot." (Gemma)

Other Motivational Factors

While generating more income was identified as a prime motivation, particularly among Irish women entrepreneurs (Campbell, 1994; Goodbody Economic Consultants, 2002; Henry and Kennedy, 2003; Valiulis et al., 2004), it was only mentioned by one woman:

"Because it was the most profitable thing to do, basically it was based on the financial returns." (Catherine)

Two women mentioned wanting a lifestyle with work/life balance, which was noted in the international (Goffee and Scase, 1985; Marlow, 1997; Moore and Buttner, 1997; Carter, 2000; Duchéneaut and Orhan, 2000) and Irish literature (Campbell, 1994; Goodbody Economic Consultants, 2002; Henry and Kennedy, 2003; Valiulis et al., 2004):

"My main motivation was probably because I am a mother and I very much wanted to be a mother. When my daughter was born, I stayed at home and didn't work. Now as she's getting older, I have more free time but I still want to be available in the hours that she is home. So the major motivation was being able to find something that I was going to be able to make suit my hours." (Teresa)

The findings of the interviews validated the survey findings on motivational factors (Chapter 6) and the findings of the international and Irish literature.

9.2.2 Serendipity

Many of the interviewees felt that they had stumbled across an opportunity and seized it, in the form of a set of favourable circumstances. They considered themselves 'lucky':

"This thing [...] grew and that then became..., [...] we sort of had to keep up with it effectively, so we had suddenly something which was [quite small] and then suddenly it grew into an international business, almost in the space of a year." (Emily)

"I suppose in a way it happened partly by accident. [...] I've been exceptionally lucky since, because I've got just the right amount of work, word of mouth. I got very good contacts in the beginning and they've given me work and it's gone along." (Mary)

Two other interviewees had similar experiences. Both were involved in a family business created by their parents, both had been away travelling/working abroad after finishing their education, and both took up a position within the family business upon returning to Ireland, before becoming directors of their companies:

"I was in London, and my parents needed somebody to run [one particular] side of the business, and really in a way, it was a safe job to come back from London to. It wasn't because I thought I could do great things. And for my brothers, I suspect slightly the same, that we didn't certainly realise that it would become what it did become for us." (Orla)

"I had been away travelling a lot, like I had been away abroad six years, and when I came back it was like 'what do I want to do now?'. So I ended up sort of falling into [the family business]." (Maura)

The interviewees agreed that entering entrepreneurship usually entailed not only personal motivations, but also the right set of environmental factors. This aspect is examined further in the next section which deals with the influence of immediate family members and, more particularly, parents.

9.2.3 Family Influence

In addition to the two interviewees who became involved in a family business, three interviewees indicated that they had close family members involved in business, particularly their parents:

"My parents own their own business so that would help I'd imagine. [...] It's interesting that one or two of my sisters also went into business, so they must have been an under-riding influence there, even though I can't directly trace it back. There are four children, so three out of four are in business." (Alice)

"My parents had a farm and a small shop and pub. My mother pretty much ran the business. [...] She certainly wouldn't have encouraged me to set up my business. In fact, she probably would have actively discouraged it. She always felt it was a much easier life if you were working for somebody else, if you had a good job in a bank or something like that. But maybe sometimes you follow what a person does, not what a person says. And she certainly loved business and loved working in business herself, and you could see that." (Lisa)

"I always had a passion for [my industry]. It was in my family. My father was [in the industry], my brothers are [in the industry], I love the [products], and as

a kid I never wanted to do anything else. So that was what motivated me." (Sarah)

Another interviewee felt that her mother's occupation was a great influence on her future working life and her decision to set-up in business:

"Going back historically, I had always been independent, very much against the crowd, always, even in school. Looking back on my own history, my thinking would have taken me outside of the box from a very early stage. Why I don't know, maybe the product of a very strong working mother who was a role model all my life. [...] My mother was a schoolteacher, believe it or not. She was working all my life. [...] She worked all her life, right through until retirement age, in her mid-sixties. She was a school principal and she worked very hard. And actually in many ways, work came first, always, because she put a huge amount into the field of education, to her students. It had, it was an absolute positive influence [on me setting up the business]." (Emily)

The interview data point to the fact that there is a strong family influence for women entrepreneurs to set up a business, by seeing other people, most of all their mothers, being involved in a business or in paid employment. This echoes other findings in the international and Irish literature (Orhan and Scott, 2001; The SIA Group, 2001; Goodbody Economic Consultants, 2002) on the environmental influence on entrepreneurial motivations for women.

9.2.4 Push versus Pull Factors

Given the debate in the international literature on whether or not push factors predominate among women entrepreneurs, interviewees were asked specifically whether they felt this that the case. The vast majority (7 out of 10) did not feel this was the case. On the contrary, they felt that they had been motivated predominantly by pull factors:

"I think there was a bit of push and pull factor. A bit of both. I was working for a company [...], and while I was doing very well there, salaries were quite low. Therefore, it wasn't such a big risk to give up that job, so that was maybe the push factor. And then the pull factor was that I had now learned the skill of [my industry] and really wanted to do it my way. And I had some strong ideas, about the service, and about the industry, and how I could operate." (Lisa)

"Drive coming from me definitely." (Alice)

"I had the opportunity of a full pension before I started so I was never really searching for work, [...]. I do some jobs on a very nominal basis because I like to help out with the school down near me and lots of things like that. [...] I think enticed. It just happened and I mean, and I really enjoy what I'm doing." (Mary)

"Attracted into it!" (Catherine)

"I would say it would have been more internal factors, I wanted to be with the child, I wanted to work rather than to do nothing. I wouldn't have to go into business, but I have particular skills I want to be able to use them. [...] I could have chosen to get a part-time job, you know, I didn't have to go into business, I could have chosen something else and still be able to maintain a family and all of it that I chose to do." (Teresa)

"I love all the new challenges, and seeing this company grow from three to four men in a Portakabin to these new luxurious offices where we have 200 people, and we're not only market leaders in Ireland, I'm a simple North Side [...] girl you know. The drive was from within me definitely." (Sarah)

"I certainly wasn't pushed [...]. What drove me was, from my own perspective, the chance to do something different, to put my own stamp on something [...]. There was also the concept of actually trying to create something new." (Gemma)

One woman had become involved in business largely because of push factors but recognised that push and pull factors had influenced her:

"Probably a combination of all two really [push and pull factors], [...], I mean... I would say, for example, what was available back then... you know what I'm saying... like where I was... I wasn't happy with it. I had made up my mind I wasn't going to do it. So what was I going to do? So in a sense at the time I was thinking do I really want to start all over again? I wouldn't have had the confidence to go to college back then." (Maura)

The predominance of push factors or pull factors was, however, highly dependent on marital and family status, as well as on the scale of their businesses. The women with a strong support network behind them (e.g. family support), or those who did not have children nor a partner felt that pull factors predominated. The only interviewee who was a single parent with no paid structure to help (e.g. nanny) reported the strongest influence of push factors, due to the constraints and additional responsibilities placed on single mothers. Overall, the interview data reject the findings of the international literature, and show that most women feel that pull factors predominated in their decision to become entrepreneurs.

9.2.5 Impact of Gender on Motivations

The women interviewed were divided as to whether or not gender had any impact on their motivations to run a business. Among the five women who perceived differences, two had been allowed some freedom and choices in developing their careers, and believed that, if they had been men, they would have been forced to become entrepreneurs a lot sooner:

"I think if I had been a man I would have done it a lot sooner. So yes, it would have been different. Absolutely. It would have been different in that I would have needed to [...] look after others, i.e. looking after a family house etc, I would have done it a lot sooner."(Alice)

"We were never pushed into [the business], ok, we were allowed do our own thing, because it is mainly all girls, so no one really pushed me to. I guess, probably if I was a guy, I would more than likely..., I would have been encouraged to go down and get college education. I'd do something that helps the company, I'd say more than likely, I would have been in the company a lot longer." (Maura)

In a similar vein, but at the other end of the spectrum, one woman talked of the status of women as mothers, as opposed to the two previous interviewees' comments about the status of men as breadwinners:

"I suppose my decision, it would have been [different for a man], because my decision is based on the fact that I am a mother and it had to suit my perception of being a mother, a mother at home. Whereas if I had been a man, there wouldn't have been concerns of having to be home at a certain time or wanting a job." (Teresa)

Finally, two other women felt their gender in male-dominated industries caused them serious problems. However, for one of them, the option of setting-up her business solved many of these issues:

"I never let the fact that I was a woman, it was definitely unique, I was the first woman to ever go into the industry but it didn't encourage me to go in. At the beginning it was difficult. It was so remote and unique, and there were no other women in it and so it was difficult. And you would have comments, you know, 'you would be better off at the kitchen sink'. As a female, and I have a female sales director as well, because it was to do with [a product] which is perceived as being a man's world, you nearly had to prove far more than a guy would that you knew what you were about, that you knew [the product], that you knew what you were talking about. It wasn't just a passing fad that you were going through, that you were professional, you knew your ground work, you knew your financials, and you knew what you had to know about the market and about [the product]. [...] Maybe in my industry, you had to be twice as much to be believed, it was definitely more difficult." (Sarah)

"[In my previous employment] I was going to meetings where they were all men. So I was actually, I was actually used to going around, I was used to, sometimes, not very pleasant comments being passed, but I kind of got on, you know, patronising people, but I just got on with my life. So when it came to the point of actually setting up the business, it wasn't really an issue. It wasn't really an issue. Because I had worked with those people, I think it was an issue in my previous life, in terms, I reckon that if I had been a male in the job, [...] I would

have gotten a better hearing. And I certainly think that it was an issue. In terms of the start-up, not really. (Gemma)

Two interviewees felt that their position as women did not have any impact whatsoever on the motivational factors behind their decision to become entrepreneurs:

"No it didn't come from the fact that I was a woman." (Catherine)

"I think it's independent of my gender, because I work with my two brothers and my sister, and I would see the same characteristics with my brothers." (Orla)

A further interviewee felt that her gender had not had any influence on starting her business. However, she argued that this was due solely to the fact that she had been single and childless at the time:

"I don't think so [my motivations would have been different had I been a man] because when I set up in business I was single. There was nothing to make me think any differently about why I set up a business. I very much did it because it was something I wanted to do, nothing really to do with whether I was male or female. It may have been easier to do by virtue of the fact that I was single, I think it would be more difficult for me now, with two young children, to start out. That's my own perception. It's just a busy time when you have young children." (Lisa)

What transpires from the interviews is that women entrepreneurs perceive gender as having an impact dependent on their marital and family status in that single men and women, who remain childless, seem to be on an equal footing. However, as soon as marriage, and more particularly children, arise major differences emerge between men and women in business life. These findings reiterate what has been observed in the literature (Campbell, 1994; Orhan and Scott, 2001). Both internationally and in Ireland, motivational factors are highly dependent on the family and marital status of women (e.g. seeking a better work/life balance, generating more income). This perception is intrinsically linked to deeply held social norms as to the role of men and women: men are breadwinners, women are carers. This is reflected in the choices that entrepreneurs make when they choose to run a business.

In conclusion, becoming an entrepreneur appears to be linked to more than a set of motivational factors. Motivational factors play an important role in the decision to become involved in a business venture. However, they need to be coupled with two other crucial factors: the right set of circumstances (e.g. strong business growth potential) and a positive environmental influence (e.g. good family support or family member in business).

9.3 Obstacles to Women Entrepreneurs

This section examines the obstacles faced by women entrepreneurs, followed by an analysis of the perceived impact of gender on these obstacles.

9.3.1 Specific Obstacles Faced by Interviewees

Interviewees were asked to talk about obstacles they might have encountered. The results are similar to those obtained from the postal questionnaire (Chapter 7) and to the international/Irish literature on the topic. The specific obstacles referred to were (in decreasing order of importance):

- Lack of experience/training;
- Finance;
- Finding information;
- Expertise;
- Staff;
- Work/life balance and time;
- Sourcing;
- Isolation.

Lack of Training/Experience

The obstacle that was most often referred to by interviewees consisted of a lack of experience and training for their business. The women felt that lack of training experience hit them at different stages of their business. Two women mentioned their start-up phase specifically:

> *"Well a big obstacle, really was where do you start, not really knowing what you're doing. You have this idea but how do you make it a reality and how do you make it feasible?" (Teresa)*

> *"It hasn't been that easy to be quite honest. Because for a start, it requires very different combinations of skills, some of those I have, some I don't. I'd need technical skills, marketing skills, [...], so the obstacles were around making that leap and actually communicating that." (Gemma)*

For two women entrepreneurs, lack of experience/training as an obstacle was referred to after the initial stage:

"The obstacles at the start, particularly when it turned into a big multimillion pounds global business, my own obstacle was lack of experience, because I had never dealt with that before. Probably I was 35 then, so I would have been quite youngish, and I was female, and it was a first time for me." (Emily)

"Later on, to know enough about business, to know the different areas about it, about employment, about insurance, learning how to juggle... Spending the time on things that you have absolutely no interest in, you just actually want to do the business that you love, and not have to sit down and do administration." (Alice)

These findings reflect the situation of women entrepreneurs both internationally (Schwartz, 1976; Watkins and Watkins, 1986; Hisrich and Brush, 1986; Carter, 2000) and in Ireland (The SIA Group, 2001; Henry and Kennedy, 2003; McClelland, 2003; Valiulis et al., 2004).

Lack of Expertise

Two further women felt that they encountered lack of the necessary expertise to do some aspects of the business as an obstacle:

"You wouldn't have the money, I wouldn't have had the money starting up, to bring in the experts to do the areas that basically I would be weak in. [...] The finance end, accounting. I'd need an accountant in there to do that side of things, because I have to keep so many records of my clients' budgets." (Alice)

"You see people in advertising and say, 'oh I could do that'. And that was our biggest mistake. Our biggest mistake was we didn't realise our own shortcomings. And we didn't build a team around us, we thought we could do it all, and we couldn't." (Gemma)

This latter comment is particularly important among Irish women entrepreneurs, who identified lack of expertise, particularly in IT and technical subjects, as a critical obstacle to women entrepreneurs (The SIA Group, 2001).

Finance

Experience was closely followed by the problems arising from raising finance for the companies:

"I suppose finance to start up the company. [...] I suppose the main thing would have been the revenue, the tax implications and all that sort of thing." (Catherine)

Two other women overcame financing, one by using bootstrapping techniques, the other by putting together a solid business plan:

> *"I suppose, finance is one, you've got to raise finance, so you need some finance to start up. [...] I just started with myself and a desk and a phone, so I didn't really need a significant amount of cash, I just needed enough to pay myself." (Lisa)*

> *"No different to any other companies, the obstacles are obviously getting funding. So it was a business that was a start-up so you had the same ritual, go to the bank, put your business plan together, work very hard at it to get believed, to become successful, to turn that company around, to make it profitable."(Sarah)*

Across the literature (Carter et al., 2002; McClelland, 2003; Stevenson, 2003), finance is identified as one of the main obstacles to women entrepreneurs, to the extent that some women resort to bootstrapping techniques (e.g. (re)mortgage, private loan, loan from family or friends and/or relying solely on the internal revenues of the business), particularly in the early stages of their businesses (Carter et al., 2002). The literature shows that finance for women entrepreneurs is particularly difficult in that they usually find the business plan in itself to be an obstacle (Valiulis et al., 2004), which in turn makes accessing finance an even greater obstacle.

Lack of Information

Obtaining information was a problem for two women entrepreneurs though it is not usually referred to in the international literature. However, the information deficit was identified in a previous Irish study (Valiulis et al., 2004). Two of the women interviewed stated that:

> *"Finding [...] information, how to deal with issues that came up." (Alice)*

> *"It's knowing exactly what's required and even the legal requirements and setting up a company, that sort of thing. They are the biggest obstacles." (Teresa)*

Employees

Employing and retaining staff also came up as an issue for the women interviewed. Labour costs appear to be particularly problematic in an Irish context as this factor only appears in the Irish entrepreneurship literature (Gender Equality Unit, 2003). It could be argued that this is due to the large increase in wages over the past decade, throughout the Celtic Tiger years:

> *"Obviously, labour costs, for anybody in Ireland. That's a genuine obstacle." (Orla)*

Retaining staff, in Ireland, in which unemployment levels are very low, means that staff mobility can be very high, which was problematic for one woman:

> *"Things like employing staff are a big issue. One sourcing them, two when you train them, they'd love and leave you because they could do less work for more money sometimes. [...], I work them hard, I work them very long hours, and because I have very tight deadlines." (Alice)*

Time Commitments

Another important obstacle to women interviews consisted of the time constraints imposed by the business, and the impact that these had on work/life balance. This obstacle is noted in the international literature (Cheskin Research, 2000; Stevenson, 2003) as well as in Ireland (McClelland, 2003; Valiulis et al., 2004), where there is a lack of adequate and affordable childcare (Coveney, Murphy-Lawless and Sheridan, 1998):

> *"Lifestyle would be the biggest reason why I don't [...] take some of the roads that have been offered to us. [...] We're already very consumed by the company, and we don't want to, the lifeblood to be sucked from us or from the company. So, balance. [...] There are a lot of time demands. I would probably do 9 or 10 hour days." (Orla)*

> *"And then I suppose, it's a full-time commitment, I was young, I was having a family, still when I was working. I had to be very organised, huge amount of energy which I do have. There were times when it wasn't easy juggling all the balls, you know." (Sarah)*

Isolation

To a lesser extent, some other obstacles surfaced. For one woman, these related to a feeling of isolation brought on by being an entrepreneur:

> *"I suppose loneliness, because you're doing so much on your own, and that was something that was hard initially, and finding like minded people was important, to be able to talk to other entrepreneurs." (Alice)*

Sourcing Materials

For another interviewee, a key obstacle encountered was sourcing materials, not mentioned in the international literature, but which arose in an Irish study (Valiulis et al., 2004):

> *"What I would find hard in business is sourcing things. For me, that was very hard in this country, [...], it's improving but still very hard." (Alice)*

To summarize, the obstacles encountered by the women interviewed were very similar to those identified in the international and Irish literature. Lack of experience/training, raising finance, lack of expertise were all obstacles that concerned entrepreneurs internationally and in Ireland. However, other obstacles were specific to, or exacerbated by the Irish context. For example, finding information, labour costs and retaining staff, work/life balance and sourcing materials were perceived as difficult for some Irish women entrepreneurs.

9.3.2 The Impact of Gender on the Obstacles Encountered

Of the ten women interviewed, five felt that they had encountered some gender specific obstacles in their entrepreneurial life. The main gender-specific obstacles mentioned by interviewees consisted of obstacles related to:

- Lack of credibility;
- Conflict with home and family responsibilities;
- Networking styles;
- Feminine Identity;
- Emotional involvement.

Lack of Credibility

The major obstacle to women was seen to be lack of credibility, identified in international studies (Goffee and Scase, 1985; NFWBO, 1994; Marlow, 1997; Mistick, 1998) and the Irish literature (The SIA Group, 2001; Henry and Kennedy, 2003; McClelland, 2003; Valiulis et al., 2004). Women encountered lack of credibility from both their employees and/or superiors:

> *"I got on alright with any of the girls, [...] and there was two guys there on the floor, one of them alright would have been difficult, and I would say that the fact that I was a girl and all, and even though he would have worked for years, but*

maybe the fact of being a daughter and all the rest of it you know, he would be more used to dealing with my father than me." (Maura)

"I think there's an awful lot of analysis around this, and I think quite rightly, I think there are issues. [...] I think on a day-to-day basis, most women who operate in a business environment just get on with their lives. And that is my kind of experience. Has anything, has being a woman stopped me? No is the answer. I'm a determined person, I kind of get on with things. Has it caused obstacles in my life? Absolutely. If I look at my time in [my previous occupation], I didn't get a, the recognition, and b, the mandate to do what I did, largely because I was a woman. I was dealing with a chauvinistic kind of old school attitude." (Gemma)

However, two women also mentioned credibility problems with clients or other business associates:

"Dealing with customers as well, some areas were a bit more difficult especially in the agricultural area, dealing with farmers, who didn't want to be dealing with a woman. No problem, I would be giving the exact same speech as my father would, but unless they heard it from my dad they wouldn't believe it." (Maura)

"So being a woman, has had no effect in one way on me. [...] At the very beginning it did, both being Irish and being female were both negatives and people would direct all questions at my brother assuming he was in a bigger position of power. I think now, [...], you walk into a room, and they very very quickly stop making the mistake of directing more things towards my brother. They very quickly discover from both my body language and his body language that we are utterly equal." (Orla)

Conflict with Home and Family Responsibilities

Another frequent obstacle, specific to women, consisted of the impact of home and family responsibilities for the women interviewed. This finding reiterates the findings of another Irish study (Valiulis et al., 2004). Two of the women felt torn between the business and their family, particularly when they became mothers:

"I think it's harder for women, because I think women take more responsibility for the running of the home. No matter how good their partner is, and no matter how supportive, I still think, it's so engrained in us, so much part of our nature, so much part of the draw [...]. I think we are by nature, organisers and planners. I think female are much better planners and organisers than men. I think females do it, I think they can keep a lot of balls in the air... I have a very supportive husband, who did, when I was very busy [with my work projects], who did do a lot of the home management, but I think, even now, I make all the decisions about schools and I make all the contacts with the schools and I follow a lot of that." (Emily)

"When I was younger and I had the children, it had a much bigger effect on me [gender]. I had a feeling of being pushed and pulled by my emotions, and whether or not I was doing the right thing with my children. These are things that I don't think that my brothers suffered." (Orla)

Networking Styles

One woman interviewee made reference to the differences in networking styles between men and women. In particular, she felt that women were often excluded from informal networking practices, as noted in the international (Brush, 1992; Rosa and Hamilton, 1994; Katz and Williams, 1997) and Irish literature (The SIA Group, 2001; McClelland, 2003). Furthermore, she believed that men rely heavily on those kind of networking strategies:

"I think the main thing I would say, is that in a business environment, a lot of the decisions still are made in things like golf clubs and bar stools and all the rest of it. Women tend not to do those kind of things. I don't do golf. A lot of business tends to be done like that. A former colleague, who schmooses his way around town and he's probably five times the size of my business. Largely because he does that. If he wants to get rich quick, good luck to him. I do a certain amount of it, I go to certain events, but I don't deliberately hang out at these kind of things, and men have to do that." (Gemma)

Feminine Identity

One of the interviewees felt that an obstacle she had encountered, specific to women entrepreneurs, was related to her identity as a woman. This has been noted, but only to a very small extent in the literature (Goffee and Scase, 1985; Valiulis et al., 2004):

"The other thing, obviously, you do get sort of flirting with you, in terms of business. And I don't know whether men get that, because you would be dealing with more men as a woman in business, you would be dealing with a lot more men than you would be with women. You certainly do get them, certainly trying sometimes, kind of use that, in other words, some kind of sexuality in terms of power. I certainly would be aware of that. [...] You get the feeling that people would be, that they could introduce some kind of a little power play because you're a woman and because they're a man. Again, I don't know if that's something a man would ever experience." (Orla)

Another obstacle consisted of feeling lost in a male business world. One interviewee felt very aware that she was the only woman in her environment. This has been observed in the literature (The SIA Group, 2001; McClelland, 2003; Stevenson, 2003):

"I would be at a meeting and they are mostly all men and I am aware that I am a woman. It doesn't have any effect on what the outcome is, but you are made

aware, more often than not, of being the only woman in the room. I would be very aware of that at times in my life. Being surrounded, the architects, the engineers, the lighting, everybody are men, and I'm very used to that now." (Orla)

Emotional Involvement

Finally, one of the women felt that one of the obstacles to women particularly, was that they tend to become more involved with their businesses, clients and employees, and take things more personally:

"I have another friend, that would have a huge number of clients and a huge number of guys working for him, but he probably doesn't let it get to him as much as women do. I think we take things of board too deeply. [...] What would I find specific to women? I think it would mostly [...] be spending too much time thinking about it and focusing on it instead of making a decision, and 'ok that didn't work let's move on to something else'." (Alice)

Overall, as two women concluded, the best strategy to overcome gender based obstacles for those who perceive that they exist, was to ignore it and 'get on with it':

"Again, going back to my background, because there was never any differentiation between boys and girls, between male and female, we all did the same things, we all hoovered under the bed, we all cooked the dinner, we all got an education, we were treated absolutely equally us five, and that was unusual in the 50s and 60s. I expected that, I expected nothing less than that in the workforce. And, I don't recall encountering any less, except for the odd moments, when I knew I was being patronised, or being undermined, but I didn't spend too much time thinking about it. I just put my head down and got on with my work, because I thought the most important thing you can do is deliver, and that shuts them all up." (Emily)

"[My industry] is a very tough environment, women have to stand and fall on their performance, and how they do, there really isn't time for that kind of analysis. You just get on and do it." (Gemma)

If half the women interviewed felt they had encountered gender based differences, some felt that there were none. For instance, two of the women affirmed that they were no differences or that it was even an advantage:

"No different, the same for everybody. No difference for men and women." (Catherine)

"I don't think [I encountered obstacles because I was a woman]. I think in certain areas it was an advantage." (Sarah)

For two women, the obstacles were seen as less related to gender than to an actual lack of training/experience:

> *"You know I don't think [being male or female] makes any difference, actually, to be honest with you. I think maybe either you are entrepreneurial and, I think my background has a bigger influence, rather than whether I'm male or female. That would be my own view. But I imagine men encounter the very same obstacles that women encounter in terms of setting up a business. Because, setting up a business, it's all about making sure you've got the right service, making sure you've got the right product, that you've the right people around you, that you get the right customers, and I don't think your sex makes any difference to that." (Lisa)*

> *"I'm not sure if it would have been because I am a woman or simply because I haven't been in business before. [...] A man in the same situation probably would have the same difficulties, but then again a man or a woman who had some experience of running a business, [...], they might not have met the same obstacles. So not sure if it was a gender thing, or just previous knowledge, lack of previous knowledge." (Teresa)*

In summary, half of the women perceived that they had experienced gender related obstacles in their entrepreneurial history. They ascribed these to: lack of credibility, home and family conflict, differences in networking styles and gender specific emotional involvement. A further two obstacles were lack of experience and/or training. However, it could be argued that because women are less likely to have business training or business experience, this remains, to some extent at least, a gender related obstacle. There is therefore strong evidence from these interviews that most women entrepreneurs in Ireland do experience a range of gender specific obstacles.

9.4 Attitudes towards Risk

This section investigates women's attitudes to risk, followed by an examination of how this has evolved over time. The vast majority of women interviewed described themselves as being risk takers. A total of seven of the women, out of 10, felt that they were risk-taking:

> *"My business is about risk. [...] If the market swings, as it has done in the UK and in various countries, we would take the risk, and we would lose money, not our clients. [...] We're borrowing huge quantities of capital, [...], so interest rates can go up and they can go down. [...] So my business is completely a risk business." (Sarah)*

> *"I think I would historically be a risk taker, I think probably a risk-taker. I mean I put my house on the line for [my business], I took a lot of debt, I think it took, from a career point of view, I would have been better paid." (Gemma)*

"[I'm more] risk-taking, definitely, which is very strange coming from a very conservative family, where they wouldn't even bet on a horse." (Emily)

"I'd take quite a lot of risk definitely, because it's cost of me quite a bit to start it up, I have quite a bit of stock [...]. It's a huge risk to, if I'm not working, I've no other income coming in on a regular basis, that's a huge risk financially." (Alice)

"Well being in business in itself is a risk" (Catherine)

"I have no problem taking risks" (Lisa)

"I'm more risk-taking." (Orla)

Among the seven women who felt they were risk takers, six of them felt they were now less risk-taking than when they started out:

"The bigger you are, the bigger risk you take. I'm older and wiser, and probably less going to take a risk with a bigger company." (Sarah)

"I'm getting older and I have three kids, and I've got to make sure that they're ok and that. I would be probably a little bit more cautious than I was back then. Before I had kids, I would have just said yes, let's go and do it. And my husband would be there to try and pick up the pieces." (Gemma)

"I'm taking less risk now, I think I have learned from mistakes definitely and cut back." (Alice)

"I'd say I was more risk taking then, principally because the economic climate was not as conducive to becoming an entrepreneur at the time, so therefore you were taking a bigger risk then." (Catherine)

"I think I'm more comfortable now with risk in the company. I was anxious, I still would tend to take the risk but as I said it was a very calculated risk. [...] I think experience helps you make things less and less risky." (Orla)

Only one woman out of seven felt that she was now more risk-taking:

"It has developed I think. I think you become more confident with the taking of risk as you gain momentum and as you have some success." (Emily)

Overall, these findings show that the majority of women entrepreneurs see themselves as risk-takers rather than risk averse. Without exception, the three interviewees who perceived themselves as risk averse run small businesses and do not seek to expand their businesses. There were various reasons for not seeking business expansion. One woman entrepreneur did not want to alter her self-perception as a mother and her lifestyle choices. The second woman

entrepreneur felt she was in business for reasons other than financial ones. Finally, the third woman entrepreneur felt that she only wanted to keep the family business and its staff afloat. One common thread seemed to link all the women interviewed. Whether they described themselves as risk takers or risk averse, most of them made reference to the fact that they needed the risks they took to be extremely calculated:

> *"I would always have a conservative approach. I go on figures, facts. I wouldn't take a guess." (Sarah)*

> *"I think risk is a really good thing but you've got to have done your homework and put the effort in, and make sure that you can minimise the risk, where absolutely possible, and then, there is that unknown quantity which is 15-20 percent, and you're at the edge of the cliff, and you've got to jump, and there isn't a parachute for that 20 percent." (Emily)*

> *"You can't really avoid [risks], you avoid them by using your head I suppose and not being stupid about things and being careful but it is a risky business being in your own business." (Catherine)*

> *"I very carefully look at the risk and reward. So if I'm taking a risk I want to be sure that the reward is strong enough. So I calculate it. I look quite analytically at risk, but I have no problem taking risks once I've looked at it thoroughly." (Lisa)*

> *"But [the risks I take] would be very, I would have thought them through very carefully, they wouldn't be huge risks, you know, I would consider them and I'd decided whether it would be worth taking the risk or not. [...] I mean I do have a family. I have to consider all that as well, I wouldn't risk my family and family's future just to take a bit of risk." (Teresa)*

> *"I'm prepared to take, I mean all the risks that I would take in business are very calculated risks. I think we're very sensible, we talk to each other, 'look what are the chances...', and when it comes to the conclusion, whether it's a big or small risk, we tend, I tend to feel very sure of most of the risks that I take in business." (Orla)*

> *"I would take a risk, but before taking a risk [...], I would take the risk of spending money on something as long as I'm sure beforehand that I was going to get the payback." (Maura)*

Subsequently, the women interviewed were asked to assess the level of risk they took compared to what they perceived a man would take. Half the women felt that gender had an impact on the level of risk they would have taken. In particular, two of them felt that women were much more aware of, and concerned with, the consequences of their business decisions on the personal lives of their staff:

"I don't think [women take as much risk as men]. I think they are getting better at it. But no, I think men take much more risk, and women like to think about it more [...]. I think men very quickly would contact and find out, if they needed a number of employees, they would go out and find those and get them on board. I have been weighing that thought up, for the past three or four weeks, I don't believe any man would do that, they'd go out and find them, [...], bring them in, have them working. Whereas I am usually concerned when training new people, am I going to have enough work for them? I don't think men think about that, you know, ok so they don't have enough work, then get rid of them. I am concerned that I have people working for me and that I don't have enough for them, that they are going to suffer too, that is definitely a concern." (Alice)

"I suppose they always say women are supposed to be [...] a little bit more risk averse than men would be [...]. I'd be thinking more of protecting the company and protecting the people you're employing as well. You know you want to keep the company going, like I mean they're depending on you for their job, so you want to, I wouldn't think it wouldn't be fair to run off and take a big risk or something unless it was really going to take off, you know. I'd be thinking about looking out for people's jobs and that in the company." (Maura)

Two other women felt that women took much more calculated risks than men in the same situation would:

"I think if somebody has an entrepreneurial streak and a lot of women do, they will take the risks, they would probably be more measured in how they take those risks, they probably weigh things up a little bit more." (Gemma)

"If I didn't think there was going to be a payback, I wouldn't do it, and would say my father he would take the risk and worry about the payback later." (Maura)

Finally, the opinion of two interviewees was that women were less risk-taking than their male counterparts because of environmental factors:

"I would think that probably the men are more risk-takers than the women. Maybe they had more opportunity to be." (Emily)

"On a general scale, men would take more risk, because I suppose, simply it's going back to tradition. Things are evolving. So if you go back 30 or 40 years women were still mostly at home having children. That has changed and is changing more and more, so that's probably going to be less of a factor as time move on. So women are going to take more and more risks." (Catherine)

This section demonstrates that overall women entrepreneurs see themselves as being risk-takers, albeit more so at business start-up. When creating their businesses, women took major risks, financial and/or personal, depending on their personal or family situation. At business creation, women are less likely to be married and have dependent children. Their level of

risk-taking is unaffected by societal factors. However, once they become mothers, women exercise more caution with the risk level they operate at. The level of risk adopted also appears to be related to the number of employees in the business. Some of the respondents felt they had to nurture their business and employees, and could not risk anything happening to them.

9.5 Management Styles

The women in the interviews were asked to describe how they perceived their management styles. One could not comment, as she did not have any employees. The findings from this section replicate the findings of the literature. Overall, women entrepreneurs in the interviews tended to use a transformational leadership style in their dealings with their employees. This particular management style is associated with women in the literature (Vokins, 1993; NFWBO, 1994; The SIA Group, 2001; Minniti and Arenius, 2003). For example three women said:

> *"There's no job that I won't do myself. [...] I get on very well with my team, I'm a very social person, so I would speak to everybody. Power? To me it's not the right word." (Sarah)*

> *"I like a positive environment to working, I don't like hierarchical environments." (Emily)*

> *"There is a flat hierarchy because I'm the developer of the programme which we run, so there would be a slight, but not very structured, and you know I would deal with them as equals. They are professional people and I deal with them very much on an equal footing." (Teresa)*

The literature emphasises the differences in management style between women and men entrepreneurs. Not only does the literature identify the management style of women to be less hierarchical than men, it also describes it as being more 'family' based (Vokins, 1993; NFWBO, 1994). This particular finding came up during the course of the interviews. For instance, two of the women said:

> *"Egalitarian definitely. That's not just me at the top, [...] they're part of my team and I want them to feel that and know that. So it's not you do this you do that. To a degree it is because of the short deadlines, but they're part of my family too." (Alice)*

> *"If you're working together you should have a good relationship. It should be an enjoyable experience. I don't think it should be very hierarchical, where you're giving out to people or you're on top of them. I think you bring out the best in*

people if you are working with them. You're part of the team, they're part of the team." (Catherine)

Furthermore, there is evidence in the literature that women entrepreneurs: attach considerable importance to human values around them; emphasise building relationships with staff; and seek to do something they consider worthwhile (Vokins, 1993; NFWBO, 1994). These issues arose in the interviews:

> *"I'd say I'm quite team-oriented, I develop people well and coach them and mentor them. I'd definitely be on the collaborative end of it, in fact I hate hierarchy. Because I just think it's pointless, I just don't think it works, certainly in an industry like ours, it doesn't work. [...] I'd be a great believer in playing to people's skills and strengths. And that's what I mean by collaborative and not hierarchical. You know, somebody can be a leader on a project today, but they may not be a leader on the same project tomorrow, because the skills set is different." (Lisa)*

> *"My whole attitude has always been to be tough but fair. I would have in my previous life, managed [...] a lot of people. And I was considered to be tough cookie, and I had to be a tough cookie in that kind of environment. [...] I always hoped that I would be fair, and I also believe passionately in coaching people. I would have coached lots of people who then went on to do very very well and who would still be in touch, and I'm kind of proud of that, because part of what I see as my value is passing it on." (Gemma)*

However, at the other end of the spectrum, two women reported using a very different management style. These women had inherited their businesses from their parents and used a more traditional and hierarchical model of management:

> *"It is completely obvious that I'm the boss. I'd say, we would be, certainly, as long as people are playing ball with me and are doing their best, I am probably very nice to them. If they start to disappoint me, I start moving away from them and giving them less and less, and talking to them less and less. [...] I would be dictating what's happening and what's happening at any one time." (Orla)*

> *"They would probably come to me [...] for a yes or no answer, they won't do anything without, there is probably a hierarchy, at the end of the day, I mean, they can't go off making decisions, but they'll come in and say 'oh such and such is happening, is that ok with you?'. [...] I more or less trust everyone to do their job, like there's nobody standing over them or anything like that, make sure they do their job or whatever, and we give them responsibility to do their job, at the end of the day there is certain things that come back to you, whatever queries, most of the things they do themselves, and the rest they'll get your ok on it you know." (Maura)*

Four of the women entrepreneurs interviewed felt that their position as women had influenced their management style. Three of these women noted that they felt that women's management styles reflected a considerate and thoughtful attitude:

> *"I probably think, we as women, are more emotional and therefore easier hurt. More sensitive, so I do think it is different. Different purely by being a woman. We probably got a bigger conscience, we're not as tough. [...] Certainly if something goes wrong here, I would take it home with me and I would worry about it." (Sarah)*

> *"Had I been a man, would I do it differently? Do I see men differently? Maybe because of the business we're in, the men in the creative business tend to have a lot of soul, they tend to be more sympathetic, because by nature they're creative individuals and they tend to be more sympathetic and their feminine side is much more acute. So they are the people I engage with, not the necessarily financiers, bankers or the hard-nose business people. That's why I see things as more balanced." (Emily)*

> *"Maybe slightly, because maybe I would be more aware of how people feel [because I'm a woman], than maybe a typical man. Well you can put yourself in the position of the person who is working for you easier I think, because, possibly. I would say women generally have more empathy towards their staff." (Catherine)*

One woman commented on the fact that her style of management had a strong 'family' feel to it, and she identified it as being a gender specific mechanism:

> *"With some of [my staff], we're quite good friends in a sense now, so maybe there's a blurring line there I don't know. And I would imagine that to be part of my womanly attribute if you like, and that would be the way I would want to work, where maybe a man would keep it very much, you know, business!" (Teresa)*

However, one of the women interviewed felt strongly that women's leadership skills were being underestimated:

> *"It seems to me that there is this view that you know that women are more team-oriented, they're more empathetic, they're more collaborative, men are individualistic, more hierarchical, and if you think what we're looking for in our traditional leaders, we're looking for the person who has strong leadership skills, who is highly individual. And I think we're subtly saying, giving a message out there that women don't have these skills and I'm not convinced that that's the case." (Lisa)*

Overall, the majority of interviewees used a transformational management style, linked to their type of business origins. Those who created their businesses were more likely to use a transformational management style, while those who had inherited their business used a

transactional management style. Interviewees believed that women had more empathy towards their surroundings, held a different relationship with their business and had different criteria to measure their success than men entrepreneurs. The findings of this section replicate, to a large extent, the findings derived from the postal questionnaire (Chapter 5) and of the international literature (Vokins, 1993; NWFBO, 1994; The SIA Group, 2001; Minniti and Arenius, 2003).

9.6 Key Findings

The findings from the in-depth interviews show that the motivations of women entrepreneurs do not differ greatly from the literature or from those identified in the postal questionnaire. The main reasons why the women interviewees chose to become entrepreneurs were pull factors (for greater independence, to become an entrepreneur, seek personal satisfaction or generate more income). Some push factors (being dissatisfied in the labour market, to obtain greater work/life balance) were also mentioned. Many women entrepreneurs recognised the importance of their own personal motivations to become entrepreneurs coupled with other environmental factors, such as seizing opportunities or having a family member in business. However, women entrepreneurs rejected the notion that they had entered entrepreneurship predominantly because of push factors. On the contrary, many felt highly driven by pull factors. Furthermore, they recognised that gender did have an impact of their motivational factors. The crucial element emerging from the interview data is that women cannot be regarded as a homogenous group. There are crucial differences, between those who are married/cohabiting and those who are not, as well as between those who are mothers and those who are childless. When taking those elements into consideration, the gender impact becomes clearer in terms of motivations. Single/childless women noted the least impact of gender on their motivations, while those who are married/cohabiting with children are more likely to feel that gender influenced their motivations. The main reason behind this lies with the disproportionate caring responsibilities typically associated with women.

Many of the obstacles encountered by the women entrepreneurs were similar to those identified in the literature and the postal questionnaire: lack of training and experience; raising finance; lack of expertise. However, as observed in the Irish literature, some obstacles were exacerbated by the Irish environment (labour costs, finding information, seeking work/life balance and sourcing materials). Moreover, many of the women entrepreneurs

interviewed felt that their position as women had created some additional barriers in terms of lacking credibility, juggling their work with their caring responsibilities at home, and different networking needs. Finally, women who had been interviewed felt that they had a personal rapport with their businesses. The findings reinforced the idea that women not only encounter the obstacles common to all entrepreneurs, but they face additional hurdles because of their gender.

The women interviewed largely saw themselves as risk-takers, but most felt that their level of risk-taking had fallen since first becoming an entrepreneur. There were two main themes behind this: first, women felt that with success, they had much better models for assessing risks, therefore making it safer; second, some women felt that because of their personal circumstances, usually because they had become mothers, they could not afford to take the same risks they had taken when starting out. However, this view was not true of all women. A small minority identified themselves as being risk averse. Attitudes to risk were usually determined by the level of attachment assigned to personal values such as family and career. The more attached women were to entrepreneurial values, the more risks they would take. The more attached they were to their family values (marriage and children), the less risk-taking they were prepared to be. Regardless of which values they held, all the women entrepreneurs interviewed felt that they had to be particularly cautious and calculate the risks they took before pressing on. Finally, the women entrepreneurs interviewed believed that women were less risk-taking than men. It could be argued, that this is due to the fact that men usually have a less holistic and personal attachment to their family life.

Those women entrepreneurs interviewed who created their businesses used a management style that was flat and collaborative. Most of them assigned importance to nurturing their staff and surroundings, fostering a 'family' orientation towards their staff in which teamwork and collaboration prevailed. They also attached great importance to holistic values in their environment to ensure the well being of their staff or to make a contribution to the world through their businesses. Those who inherited their businesses had different management styles. They were much more hierarchical in nature. Most women entrepreneurs recognised that gender had a role to play in their choice of management style. They felt that the women's values were more holistic than men's, which relied more on financial values to assess their success. In other words, women entrepreneurs believed that for men, business stopped at business, while for them as women, it encompassed many different areas of their lives.

9.7 Conclusions

This chapter provides answers to some of the research questions in this thesis. First, it addresses the differences in motivational factors between men and women entrepreneurs. The interview findings show that women entrepreneurs perceive differences between men and women entrepreneurs, but that those are closely related to marital and family status. The interviews show that women entrepreneurs perceive no differences between men and women until marriage, and particularly the arrival of children. This finding itself shows that there is a gendered track in entrepreneurship which differs from the 'mainstream' entrepreneurship in which women are marginalised.

Second, one of the research questions examines whether push factors predominate among women entrepreneurs. The majority of interviewees did not feel that push factors had predominated over pull factors in their decision to become entrepreneurs. The results showed that the proportion of push factors among entrepreneurial motivational factors was strongly linked to marital and family status. For example, women entrepreneurs with dependent children and no family support were likely to have a higher incidence of push factors. Conversely, not having children often meant that a majority of pull factors motivated the decision to become an entrepreneur.

The third research question addressed by respondents related to the differences between the obstacles encountered by men and women entrepreneurs. The women entrepreneurs interviewed felt that women entrepreneurs are more affected, than their male counterparts, by lack of credibility and networking styles, as well as the disproportionate responsibility for the home and their identity as women. These perceptions of differences can be linked to the stereotypical view of women entrepreneurs who, in the interviews, saw themselves as disadvantaged because of their role in the private sphere.

Levels of risk-taking were examined in the interviews. The results provide some answers as to whether men entrepreneurs take more risks than women entrepreneurs. The interviews found that women felt they were risk-taking, but sought calculated risks. The interview findings showed that levels of risk-taking are linked to factors other than gender. For example, levels of risk-taking were linked to family status, marital status and number of

employees. The interviews showed that women entrepreneurs felt that they were more careful with the implications of their business decisions over their own personal lives and that of their staff.

Finally, this chapter provides some answers as to whether or not men and women entrepreneurs adopt different management styles. The interview findings confirmed those of the international literature in that there were some differences between the management styles adopted by men and women entrepreneurs, contrary to the findings of the postal questionnaire. The interviews showed that women entrepreneurs perceived that they used management styles that rely on flatter structures rather than hierarchical ones. However, there was some clear evidence, in line with the findings of the postal questionnaire, that men and women entrepreneurs differed in that women entrepreneurs are more aware of their surroundings and how their decisions and actions will impact on their environment.

This chapter has examined the opinions of women entrepreneurs in relation to their motivations, obstacles, levels of risk-taking and management styles. Chapter 10 presents the remaining findings from the interviews conducted with women entrepreneurs. In particular, it examines the views of women entrepreneurs on work/life balance, the level of conflict between work and home life experience, and finally, whether the impact entrepreneurship has had on the interviewees' lives.

Chapter 10 Voices of Women Entrepreneurs: Home versus Work

This chapter presents the remainder of the findings obtained through the in-depth interviews with women entrepreneurs. Section 10.1 outlines the priority levels women entrepreneurs assign to their personal/family and professional lives. Section 10.2 examines the degree of conflict between the public and private sphere experienced by women entrepreneurs. Finally, Section 10.3 summarises the qualitative findings from the in-depths interviews and assesses the impact that entrepreneurship has had on the interviewees' lives, in terms of the organisation of their home and work life.

10.1 The Importance of Work/Life Balance

The purpose of this section is to examine the level of importance women interviewees attach to work/life balance practices. First, the level of importance of work/life balance practices for them as individuals are assessed, followed by the level of importance for their employees. This is followed by an analysis of their partners' roles in the organisation of their personal/family life.

10.1.1 Importance of Work/Life Balance Practices for Themselves

The women entrepreneurs interviewed were asked about how important they felt work life balance practices were. Most expressed the view that work/life balance was very important. However, despite this, most of the women held very traditional attitudes and beliefs about the way they worked, reflecting long hours worked over long time periods. However, they did seek flexibility, usually in a form other than reduced working hours:

> *"I tend to work flat out and long hours because I know something is coming up, and then I tend to work very hard Monday to Thursday, and then there is something coming up social or family or whatever, do it at the back end of Friday." (Sarah)*

> *"I do work from home a number of days in the week so I can collect my children from school and I don't come into the office all the time. And email, and all those modern technological devices are fantastic to do that, and I do and have done for the last 8 to 10 years, take a good chunk of the summer out to be with the children, but I would go to America, I would work in the morning because of the time frame, I would work until lunch time, because they're closed here then,*

and then I would take my afternoon and evening off and be with the kids, and that works for me." (Emily)

"I suppose we [my partner and I] work full-time, but I suppose we would take a week off here and there, and a long week-end off, and that sort of thing." (Catherine)

"I do think it's easier for me because I have control of my own day. So, the way it suits me to work is standard hours, I work from 9 until 6 and I don't tend to work late at night. Sometimes I work early in the morning. Certainly I like to be at home in the evening time when my kids are home." (Lisa)

"I do 45 or 46 hours a week, so I work full-time alright, but I mean if I need the day off, I'll just take it, you know no problem and I wouldn't have to work, I wouldn't try and make up those hours, you know, that's when I need when I need my flexitime, but at the same time, going a straight week Monday to Friday, it usually works out at 45 anyway." (Maura)

While some women entrepreneurs avail of flexibility, they seldom avail of leave arrangements. Two women entrepreneurs stated:

"Do you know how much maternity leave I took out on my children? Not that I would recommend it, I don't, the most that I took was a week." (Sarah)

"I thought when I was pregnant that I would bring my baby in a basket and take them in my office, because I have another office over there, and I thought 'that's what I'll do, I'll be fine'. Little did I realise what it would do to my life. [...] I worked until three days before I had the girls and I was working completely full-time. [...] But all I had ever known was work. I don't know why, but I thought it was completely normal to go straight back to work, you know, very very quickly." (Orla)

Other women entrepreneurs felt that work/life balance was important, and they were working fewer hours in order to suit their lifestyles:

"Certainly I think it's hugely important, I think the world of work has changed dramatically, the world of family has changed dramatically, I think there's a lot of people struggling [...] they're at work and they're worried about home, and they're at home and they're worried about work [...] so I think creating a balance that suits yourself and your family as well is important. [...] As far as getting work life balance here in our own situation, my work hours are between 9 and 3. And that's how I work, and at three o'clock it's family time." (Teresa)

"[Flexible work practices] are important. I mean I, at times, some months, I nearly have too much work on, and I play a lot of golf and I always seem to get work on a Tuesday, and it's a golf day so. I go and try make it kind separate, that I want to try to keep at least one or two days a week, I prefer not to work more than three days a week really, and it's been a bit busy lately so I do want to try and curtail a little bit." (Mary)

One woman entrepreneur felt that work/life balance practices were not relevant to her because she was single and had no children:

> *"For me, it's not as important as if I had a family. I have brothers and sisters and wonderful parents, and I have to make time to see all of them, but it would be very different if I had a husband and children, it would be so important, that I would, I'd have to have completely different ethos and balance for that which I just don't need now. I do make time for brothers and sisters and family, nephews, that, but I don't have the constant daily pressure of having to spend time there." (Alice)*

In summary, the women entrepreneurs interviewed regarded work/life balance practices as being important. However, most of them were not availing of any themselves, except for a certain degree of flexible, often compressed working time. Overall, these women worked to traditional patterns.

Three main broad categories could be identified in which interviewees fell. The first group consisted of women leading very large and powerful businesses. These women entrepreneurs did not have the opportunity to avail of any work/life balance practices and personally worked very long hours. A second group comprised women who headed more modest companies. These were much more likely to avail of work/life balance practices, including reduced working hours. Finally, a third category could be identified, consisting of those involved in family businesses. These women entrepreneurs worked long hours and availed of few work/life balance practices. The main reason offered for this is that a work culture already existed prior to their involvement in their business ventures. This classification shows women entrepreneurs exhibit a low uptake of work/life balance, suggesting that some of them had to adopt a male model of doing business.

10.1.2 Importance of Work/Life Balance Practices for Staff

Ironically, most women entrepreneurs said that they felt work/life balance practices were important for their employees. However, in reality the structure of their businesses was usually quite fixed and traditional in nature.

Two women entrepreneurs mentioned that they offered work/life balance practices, provided they suited the needs of the business:

> *"We would have flexi-hours, because we like to cover the office from 8 in the morning until 7 at night. [...] We're flexible in all of those if it suits the company." (Sarah)*

> *"The business obviously has got to come first, and if I can match somebody's personal scenario into that, fine, [...], but I'm only in business, and that has to come first." (Gemma)*

Similarly, two women entrepreneurs did not offer work/life balance practices to their staff because of the difficulties such practices would generate. One example was a pool of expertise and responsibility necessary to ensure smooth operations:

> *"I try to do this in principle, but in practice, with I need five full-time people. [...] I actually have a lot of women who do work for us, who have been operating on a senior level, and basically decided that for family reasons, they've had to leave their jobs, but they want to keep their hand in. So I tap into that." (Gemma)*

> *"Well, I find it personally that I don't like working with part-time people. Because they're not sufficiently with us as a team. So it works very well in areas, [...] where people can step into the same jobs, here [...], to me it's very very frustrating. We don't have any part-timers here anymore. There are other areas in the company that they can work in, but it's not for me in this area, because it leaves too much responsibility for other people." (Orla)*

Two women entrepreneurs felt that smaller businesses did not have the necessary financial resources to make work/life balance policies available or to introduce them:

> *"A lot of the practices, around gender, you know, work/life balance, balance issues, in the public sector, don't really apply to small businesses. In fact, a small business does not have the luxury to do that." (Gemma)*

> *"They would be important to a fair extent. But you have to watch it, because there is a level where it becomes disruptive." (Catherine)*

However, generally there was a degree of empathy among women entrepreneurs towards their staff. For instance:

> *"Compassionate leave, we do, on an individual leave, and that's at my discretion. For example one of my guys went over to China to collect a new baby. I think he's been gone 7 or 8 weeks. We're all delighted for him. Another girl is out on a long-term sickness. We gave her way beyond what's statutory." (Sarah)*

When identified as an issue, offering work/life balance practices tended to be seen as a solution to problems arising from caring responsibilities and sought by women:

> *"We do, flexitime is available here for those who want to take it, I would certainly always, as a mother myself, encourage that to be available to people because I know myself how hard it was for me when I was young, when the boys were young and I was working such long hours. It's very very very difficult, it's beyond difficult [...]. So inevitably, a woman is going to be juggling and it's going to be difficult, so I would encourage it." (Emily)*

> *"We did have somebody who was part-time but she left. There is one girl that has a child at school so our starting time would be half-eight but we let her come in at half-nine. [...] Well we did part-time for this girl, when she asked for it she got it, guys have no responsibilities, they are happy working their 39 hours." (Maura)*

For many interviewees, their comments showed that they believed that work/life balance was predominantly a female need. They mentioned female staff who had availed, or were availing of, work/life balance practices. However, one of the interviewees pointed out that these should not be restricted to women only:

> *"Work/life balance is a good idea. Nowadays, it certainly is my experience here [...], that it's a male and female issue. It's not exclusively a female issue. I get very irritated about the idea, and about the way it's portrayed in the media as being almost exclusively a female issue." (Lisa)*

Women entrepreneurs generally felt that work/life balance practices were important for their staff. However, there was a feeling that implementing work/life balance practices was quite problematic, in relation to: cost, practicality, reliance on a particular team and feasibility of work/life balance options. Given the opportunity (and the resources), interviewees exhibited a degree of altruism towards their staff. Many identified with their employees, and particularly with those who were mothers, with child care responsibilities.

Even though the majority of women entrepreneurs felt they could not, in practice, implement work/life balance practices, one woman entrepreneur concluded by saying that implementing work/life balance was the only way forward and was unavoidable:

> *"I think I have more no option [about implementing work/life balance practices], that's the way things are going, I just have to get up to speed on it, and I just have to make sure we've got the management skills in place to manage people who are opting for various forms of flexibility. I think that's the way it's going to be, so we just need to be there, doing it." (Lisa)*

This finding reiterates the findings of the survey which showed that women attached more importance to flexible working practices.

10.1.3 Role of Partners/Husbands

A striking feature among interviewees was their home environment. Of the six married/cohabiting women entrepreneurs, five had husbands/partners who were involved in the running of the home. Two husbands were themselves entrepreneurs and working part-time from home (though one is now full-time at home):

> *"I should say though that I am in an unusual scenario, in that my husband would be full-time at home, he's been full-time at home for three years [...]. But before he went full-time at home, he worked part-time at home. So he's always been the parent who's most on hand, and it works very well, he's the one who suggested he do this, and it made a lot of sense from a practical sense and it's given me great freedom to do what I do. That has brought its own issues to him, I think, in terms of how men relate to him, you know, some workers, 'And what do you do, P...?', 'Oh actually I look after the kids', and that's a sudden conversation stopper." (Gemma)*

> *"[My husband] is self-employed, so that's extremely easy again. He can actually work at night. We've always had nannies [...], I went back to work when they were three weeks old, which was very very stupid, I wouldn't do that if it happened again, if I had that time again." (Orla)*

The remaining three interviewees' partners were involved with their wives' business ventures, but sought work from home:

> *"Likewise he [my husband] too tries to take two or three days, if we're here in the country, and not travelling, working from home and we both have separate offices at home." (Emily)*

> *"[My husband] he's probably a little bit more flexible, he's a little bit more unstructured in terms of how he approaches work. So for example he will sometimes [be flexible], depending on what he's doing and what project he's on at a particular time." (Lisa)*

> *"I mean that's what we worked out, that wherever possible there was usually one of us at home. He was in a work situation where I couldn't rely on him to be home or anything, and we decided that it wasn't for us and it wasn't what we wanted." (Teresa)*

These findings show that the women entrepreneurs who were parents adopted an unusual form of organisation in their homes: among these five couples, the woman's partners worked either full-time or part-time in the home, sometimes in a shared business venture. Overall, this section shows that work/life balance practices are very important to women entrepreneurs. It

raised important issues about work and home life. The conflict between home and work life is examined in Section 10.2.

10.2 Conflict between Work and Home Life

Among women entrepreneurs without children, all three felt that there was no real conflict between their personal and family life. All three recognised that they were in control of their personal circumstances. Two of these women felt that not having caring responsibilities allowed them to balance their lives effectively, while the third one felt it allowed her to be *on a par* with men entrepreneurs:

> *"There would be very little interaction or connection [between my personal life and work life]. They're two completely separate issues and that's the way I handle them, that's the way I deal with them. [...] If I was to do something for the family, like go somewhere, family do, and if I could get out of it, if I had deadlines to do, I would end up doing what I have to do for my clients instead. [...] No, [if I had been a man it wouldn't have been different], no way. No I think his hobbies and his work would definitely come first." (Alice)*

> *"It helps I suppose, that I haven't a full-time family as such, I have more time to concentrate on the business. I don't feel there's a conflict between my home life and my business because my partner would be very business orientated, he's an entrepreneur as well, so he would understand it a 100 percent." (Catherine)*

> *"I'd say, it's simple enough, well I'm not simple but my situation is more simple because I've no children and I've no long term relationship living together, so I can basically have a good control of my own time. [...] For instance, one particular day that I was working last week, we should have been finished at seven, at the end it turned out to be nine o'clock, now that doesn't matter to me in my situation, but it would have mattered to somebody else." (Mary)*

Only one of the women entrepreneurs who had children experienced no conflict between her family life and her professional life. This particular interviewee, with a company listed among the top 50 Irish businesses, felt particularly passionate about her business and her entrepreneurial status. She saw the two aspects of her life as intrinsically linked:

> *"I would think family life is part of my work life, my work life is part of my family life, they blend quite a bit, my children are very aware of what I do, I get them involved in what I'm involved. [...] I grew up in a family business, and that was all around me, we didn't separate our family life from our work life. I think if you really enjoy what you do, it's easier to blend I suppose. They don't have to be completely isolated. So I don't really experience a conflict. [...] I don't do the sacrifice bit, not at all. In fact, if anything, I would really say that they complement each other. I find, having children is just marvellous, it's a great enjoyment, and I've just enjoyed them and just enjoy spending time with them. I*

think if anything, if I had sacrificed anything, I'd say I sacrificed a social life. [...] I'm sure if that was really important to me I wouldn't sacrifice it, but it's not as important to me as my children and work." (Lisa)

The other six interviewees had experienced a conflict between their family life and their work life. There were four main areas in which this conflict occurred: time with children; caring responsibilities; the need to multi-task; and, finally, society's expectations of them.

The five interviewees who were mothers experienced the greatest conflict around the time spent with their children, especially when those were young. These women entrepreneurs felt that they had sacrificed time with their offspring due to their business:

"I suppose you sacrifice when the children are smaller, not being around enough. That's the choice! Some people have to work, financially have to work, and they suffer for a different reason. But I think my children thought they would have suffered more if I was at home! I wouldn't have been very happy. But would I like a little bit more time? Yes." (Sarah)

"I don't know that there is such a thing as a perfect balance. I would regret, if I had any regrets, I would regret not having more time with my children when they were younger, these early pre-school years. [...] There was a conflict, [...] for a period. And I had a lot of travelling, [...], and I go down to collect D... who was then maybe five, and the teacher said 'oh I always know when you're away because he's always upset in the classroom', and you know you just hate that. I found that really difficult because I had so much travelling to do, and so many demands on my time. Would I do it again? I don't know. I felt I had no choice at the time." (Emily)

"I think every woman, every mother wonders, you know, am I doing enough and all the rest of it. And then, when I look at my kids, and they're kind of pretty well adjusted, [...] they're all very independent, independently minded, and that's a combination of both parents. And I really wonder, how many times do men ask that question? Never, I'd say." (Gemma)

"We've always had very very high quality nanny, that was the most important things as a woman, [...]. Definitely, I struggled with it an awful lot when I was younger, what effect it would have on my children, was I with them enough?" (Orla)

"There is conflict. Ideally, I would like to be working just three days a week and keep the other two days to myself, spending more time, especially now that [my son has] started school, me working 45 hours means that I don't get a chance to do his homework, I tend to rely on the crèche to do the homework and I know it's going to be an issue for me in a year of two. [...] Well you see it's hard, at the end of the day, there isn't a partner in my life, so I feel it's all on my shoulders to do it, I'm the only one that can do it." (Maura)

Spending time with children was closely followed by the issues associated with caring, and managing the home, as sources of conflict for women entrepreneurs specifically.

One interviewee believed that the psychological responsibility for the home and the children was the hard part she had to deal with. She also felt that women assume greater responsibility for the well being of their children and the smooth running of the home. She concluded that when women choose not to execute their traditional feminine roles, they have a large amount of guilt to deal with:

> *"[The conflict] is completely, solely, and exclusively female. I don't believe [my husband] would have it on the same emotional level that I would have. [...] I think it is the female, I think it is the mother role, the responsibility, and it is also about the fact that we take the responsibility more for what happens within the home. The ups and downs of a five years old's life, and his/her worries/concerns." (Emily)*

Three women entrepreneurs felt that this conflict was closely related to the level of support women receive from their husband or partner, or contracted in, in the form of private paid help (e.g. a cleaner or a nanny). For example, two interviewees felt that their level of conflict was not particularly high because they had excellent levels of support from both sources:

> *"I think everyone feels that [a conflict] to be honest. I don't feel it as bad, I think if my husband was working, I would feel it worse. I feel that we are lucky that I can do that. [...] We've found our way. I think I'm very lucky that I have a partner that is prepared to do the ironing if it's necessary, or cook the meals if necessary. We're a team, it's like here, we're a team, in commercial terms, I can earn more than he can. But we don't look at it like that, I just get more of a kick out of doing what I'm doing." (Gemma)*

> *"I never really had a conflict [between work and family life]. I think it depends on the childcare and the husband. If the woman is left with too much of the responsibility at home, I think it really tears her apart. Men generally don't have to worry about that, you know, if they have a wife who is doing, who looks after the childcare arrangements. I think it really affects a lot of women. Very much so. [I didn't experience a conflict] Because I had such good nannies and because my husband works from home and because I'm in a family company where I have control where I could leave if I needed to." (Orla)*

However, one woman entrepreneur indicated that this conflict had been one of the root causes of the breakdown of her marriage:

> *"I definitely think that if I was a man, I wouldn't have to double job, which I think I do, because I still run the home. Through my marriage, which is maybe one of the reasons why it was not a successful marriage, was that no matter what or where I worked, my job was also in the house and there was no*

allowances made for that. That would have been contributing to conflict and I would have felt, I could do with some support, which I didn't get. Whereas if I had been another man, then I would have just sat down, not worried about the cooking and the cleaning and the whatever. I have plenty of help and I pay for help, but my children would prefer if I cook the dinner, and I put myself under pressure to cook the dinner, and I'm very tired and very organised, you know, high standards, and I still do, even though I have help, I still do a lot myself. I have a full-time nanny and a housekeeper." (Sarah)

Overall, these findings reinforce the notion that women are expected to do well in all areas of their lives and to juggle many things within that:

"Yes because, as a woman, you're fulfilling two, three roles, so there was conflict. There's the job, there's the wife and there's the mother. So there is, trying to be everything to everybody is very difficult." (Sarah)

"I think women are good at keeping things, many things, on the go, men are less good at that." (Gemma)

"It's much easier for men I think. I'm not speaking from experience, but I know from some of my former colleagues, who have still haven't left work, they stretch themselves more." (Mary)

Women interviewees were highly aware of society's expectation of them. The majority felt that they experienced a great degree of conflict because they were taking on two different and divergent roles. First, by being successful businesswomen, they were to some extent adopting the traditional male breadwinner model. However, because of their status as women, and as such for many, mothers and wives, they also felt they were expected to fulfil their role as carers.

Furthermore, there was a tendency among women to 'punish' themselves for experiencing a conflict. There was a general sense of guilt, particularly surrounding the welfare of their children. One interviewee illustrated this dilemma very well by stating:

"I think that this is an area that is completely different to men [work/life balance]. Men have been brought up to believe, by society, to believe that they needed to work and they needed to support their family, and be the breadwinners. Women have a choice. And the thing in a way, makes me out to be much more of an 'uncaring bitch' of a mother because my choice was to work, and to work full-time. [...] Men don't, because it's expected of them." (Orla)

The interviews validated the findings of the survey, which showed that both men and women entrepreneurs make many sacrifices with respect to their social time and time with their partners and/or children. These interview findings support the ordinal logistic models in

Chapter 8. The models showed that the level of conflict experienced by women entrepreneurs was strongly linked to their marital and/or family status.

In summary, women entrepreneurs do experience a strong degree of conflict between their home and work life, unless they forgo marriage and/or motherhood. Even though they had adopted new roles through becoming entrepreneurs, they do not let go of their 'traditional' roles within the home, and find it hard to delegate them to private paid care. The main sources of conflict for many women entrepreneurs arise only when they have children. This coincides with the time when their role as carers should be at its highest. However, despite experiencing a high level of conflict, the women entrepreneurs concluded that they would not change their position as entrepreneurs. They overwhelmingly felt that they had made sacrifices, but that this had been a worthwhile trade-off.

10.3 Women's View of Themselves as Entrepreneurs

In the last phase of the interview, interviewees were asked to explain how they viewed themselves as entrepreneurs. First, they were asked whether they felt that they were role models to other women. Then, interviewees were asked to comment on the relationship between their status as entrepreneurs and the organisation of their work and home environment. The interview sought to examine whether women entrepreneurs created alternative models of organisation in their home and family life.

10.3.1 Powerful Role Models

A striking feature of the interviews was that the women who had the largest and most established businesses did not really see themselves as role models for other women. One woman for instance, did not feel confident enough to call herself a role model. There was a feeling that they needed to stay 'down to earth' and get on with their businesses:

> *"I wouldn't be so self-assured as to say I'm a role model. [...] I try to delegate, but still I know at the end of the day, the customer has access to me. I'm not too big for anybody. I mean, when we have a presentation, and there's going to be the managing director of the company, I feel I should be at that meeting out of courtesy. I always think when you lose sight of the customer and the value, your values, you're not a success. And I've always been a salesman at heart and that's really what I am." (Sarah)*

> *"There's lots of role models out there, [I don't really see myself as a role model]. I suppose I just do what I do. I don't know if you need a role model*

actually to be an entrepreneur. I think you're much more likely to need a role model if you're a woman working in a large corporation and trying to really progress through these hierarchical ranks that they have in most traditional companies." (Lisa)

Two other powerful women entrepreneurs did not feel comfortable about being perceived as role models for other women, regardless of the fact that others regarded them as such. These two women had been invited to events so that other women could emulate them, and recognised that their achievements could act as an inspiration for other women:

"I don't see myself as others do, I mean I do a couple of things. I've done a 'women in business network', giving speeches about my life sometimes, [...] I do believe, it's not just a gender thing, if you achieve something, that you should, that it's part of your responsibility to share that experience with others and try and mentor in a broad sense." (Gemma)

"I do find it's difficult to discuss myself, and my life [...], in terms of being in any way a role model. I was aware of that, that people were trying to make me into some kind of role model. I certainly don't see that, on the other hand, when people talk to me about it, I can see why they think it. But that doesn't come naturally to me, as a thought at all, I can't explain why." (Orla)

Another woman felt she could act as a role model in showing what other women could achieve, through entrepreneurship, in the form of a much more holistic way of approaching different aspects of their lives, but did not perceive herself as a role model:

"I feel that what I'm doing is doing some good, [...], I believe in what I'm doing, a role model for other women, and I'm sure I've made lots of mistakes and I'm still finding my way through, [...] I wouldn't see myself as a role model yet." (Teresa)

Only one woman out of the ten interviewed saw herself as role model to other women. She felt that she was a role model to other women by showing that as a woman, she could run a successful and profitable business:

"Absolutely, [I'm a role model for other women] because in order to get started, you have to have the drive and passion for something, you get an idea, and you want to go along with it, so even to get started for people to see that you've started and you're established and you're running a successful business, it's inspirational to anyone, and even more so to women." (Alice)

The common thread through all the interviews was that women entrepreneurs were extremely proud of what they had achieved. However, few, if any of them, saw themselves as roles models.

10.3.2 Impact on Women's Work Environment

The major question raised by this research was whether or not women entrepreneurs used entrepreneurship to change their business environment. Women's work environment is characterised by a number of factors (Chapters 2 and 3). For instance, women's employment is characterised by high levels of vertical and horizontal (sectoral) segregation, gendered career tracks (e.g. part-time work and career breaks) or the gender pay gap. The research sought to ascertain whether entrepreneurship was a means for women to challenge some of these characteristics. These differences in employment characteristics are reinforced for mothers, who for example, work similar hours to men until they have children, after which they tend to exit from the labour market or adjust their working time.

Some women saw entrepreneurship as a way to have a great job while still operating with fewer hours. For instance, three women entrepreneurs stated:

> *"I think one of the reasons I left was around work/life balance because, [...], I was working, I wasn't quite up to 60-70 hours, but certainly 50 to 60. I was working very long hours, Friday I was working, I was on call on Saturday, and all the rest of it. I wasn't happy with three small kids that I couldn't even go away at weekends, or if I did, something would blow up and I'd have to go into the office. I wanted to have a much more regular life [...]. So I have pretty well achieved that." (Gemma)*

> *"[The business] was created with a particular aim in mind, that I would have control, that I would be able to control the hours, control how much I was doing, so it was created to allow me to do that." (Teresa)*

> *"In entrepreneurship, [...] definitely it's something that suits women as well, when, say if I were younger and if I were married, being involved in this type of business, you could keep your hand in for a few years and you could go back to a full-time job quite easily." (Mary)*

The literature shows that there is a male management style and a male model of doing business (The SIA Group, 2001; McClelland, 2003; Stevenson, 2003). It appears from the findings of the interviews that some women entrepreneurs choose to become involved in a business venture because they wanted to work in a work environment with a different set of values. The two main values typically associated with women in the literature are team playing with a strong family 'feel' (Vokins, 1993; The SIA Group, 2001) and a collaborative and egalitarian approach, as opposed to the hierarchical and procedural approach adopted primarily by men (NFWBO, 1994; The SIA Group, 2001; Minniti and Arenius, 2003). These two values are illustrated by two women entrepreneurs, who, for instance, stated:

"We have a very collaborative sort of model, [...]. Trying to get people into the same space, on the same page, in terms of how they go forward, I think that it is an important aspect. [...] It wasn't that I woke one morning and kind of wanted to do this, but it was because I wanted to put a different shape onto the kind of work that I was doing." (Gemma)

"[The business] is very particular to the way I want to work. Perhaps it grew out, almost unconscious analysis of that. I wouldn't tolerate the existence that was on offer, so that I had to create something that could allow me to do the kind of work that I wanted to do, set up the kind of structure that I wanted to set up." (Emily)

For one woman, setting up a business had been to challenge sectoral segregation. She came from a family that traded in a predominantly male field and she wanted to become involved. However her status as a woman, within that field, required her to address her lack of credibility:

"I was one of eight children, and I was the second youngest, it was taboo for a girl to go into the industry and I just wanted to do it and prove myself that it could be done. [...] I think it was different, it was a different industry, it's not the norm. The background I came from, it was just me that was different." (Sarah)

Two women entrepreneurs pointed out that seeking flexibility was not the goal for all women entrepreneurs 'out there'. They highlighted that some businesses were designed to achieve flexibility, but that others were geared towards high growth and high profits:

"I could have had a lifestyle business, I had wanted a lifestyle business, we wouldn't have taken the company public in 1999. We wouldn't have grown it the way we've grown it. I could have easily kept the business fairly small and profitable if I didn't need to do it for my lifestyle. [...] I do see that lots of women set up businesses because they want some flexibility and they want some control over their own day and time. That's just a particular type of business. I don't think it's all businesses, and I think I'd be concerned if women were, if the reason they set up businesses was this." (Lisa)

"The main thing, the most important thing to me was setting up the business so that the business was successful, not to suit my lifestyle, but the business suits my personality so then I like the business, I'm good at the business, then everything else falls into place." (Catherine)

The interviews did not provide evidence that women choose entrepreneurship to create different work environments than those available in employment, even though one respondent felt that she had successfully addressed sectoral segregation in her own field.

10.3.3 Impact on Women's Family/Personal Environment

It is usually agreed that women are increasingly present in the public sphere, however, they also remain predominant in the private sphere. The differences in gender roles for men and women entrepreneurs in the private sphere are also intensified for mothers. The research sought to examine whether entrepreneurship was a means for women to change the gender balance in the private sphere.

Some interviewees felt that they had become entrepreneurs in order to ameliorate the way in which they cared for their home and family. They were not seeking to change society's expectation of themselves as carers. On the contrary, they were reinforcing it through their behaviours as mothers and daughters:

> *"In the early years, when I was travelling long days, and I would have worked from about 10 in the morning until about 12 at night. In some cases, I remember standing at the kitchen sink and getting the bottles ready, [...] and I was expressing my milk, and trying to breastfeed and during the day putting him into the crèche [...]. All those kind of things were very very tough because it's a whole other area. And then, the whole hormonal emotional thing after you have baby, and then there is the practical fact that they don't sleep at night. So you're not getting your sleep either. And you don't have a moment to yourself at weekends. So I think you have to train like a marathon runner to be a working mother of young children. Physically and emotionally. For me that was it, my entire life, positive control, over my own destiny, decisions over where I wanted to go, I could never do a 9 to 5 job working for somebody else." (Emily)*

> *"Something that has happened lately is that my mother who lives quite near me and she's on her own and she was very mobile up to six months ago so I need to call into her more, and you know, but I probably could have still done that if I was still working because by the nearness of where I worked to where I live and where my mother lives. But if I were living a long way away from her, being in a 9 to 5 job would probably be more difficult. And again because I'm single, there might be some different interaction with my family if I weren't single." (Mary)*

Two women entrepreneurs felt that because they had become entrepreneurs before having a family, they had not felt the need to change the way they organised their family life:

> *"Because I didn't have children when I set up the business, and I was five or six years in business before I had my first child. So, and I didn't change how the business was set up when I had my first child. Actually it was after that that my husband came to work, after I had my first child. So maybe I did change things, and now we both work in the same business, so that did give us a bit more flexibility." (Lisa)*

> *"I went into [the business] before I had a family and before I met my husband. It was just a career move for me, it wasn't anything to do with the family or anything like that." (Orla)*

Two women entrepreneurs saw themselves as atypical, one by rejecting the female model completely by stating she had not wanted to get married nor have children:

> *"I wouldn't see myself as a traditional type of woman anyhow, because for example, I never really wanted to get married and I never wanted to have children either. But I'm very fond of children and I get on very well with them, but I never felt that I wanted to, for me it was giving your whole life nearly to have children, and look after them full-time." (Catherine)*

The second woman felt she had reversed gender roles when, after getting married and having children, she had a husband who switched from working part-time from home to being full-time in the home:

> *"No I'm a complete maverick in that respect [in the way I organise my family life]". (Gemma)*

In summary, the women entrepreneurs interviewed overwhelmingly felt that they had not become entrepreneurs to change the way their personal/family life was organised. For example, one woman entrepreneur stated:

> *"No I don't think so [they go into business to change environments] but it will automatically happen because you go into business. It will impact on home, but I don't believe that somebody would start in order to change the environment at home." (Alice)*

The interviews provided some evidence that changing the organisation of the home is not one of the reasons women become entrepreneurs. For those employing private paid care, in the shape of domestic employees and nannies, women entrepreneurs maintained gender roles within the home rather than developing a model of shared domestic responsibilities with their partner, they shifted the responsibility onto another paid employee, most often a woman. However, some women entrepreneurs operated within a different family model. Their husband/partner was the one who took more responsibility for the running of the domestic sphere. Therefore, it appears that while changing their household division of labour is not a primary motivation for becoming an entrepreneur, such changes (e.g. role reversal) could appear in some circumstances.

10.4 Key Findings

The findings from this chapter show that there were two main patterns in how women entrepreneurs chose to work. Some women entrepreneurs worked in a way that was very traditional: long hours and availing of very few work/life balance practices. This working model was very much aligned with a male model of working. Other women entrepreneurs availed of work/life balance practices and incorporated them into their lives. This was often their reason for setting-up in business.

These findings were reflected in the choices women entrepreneurs made in terms of work/life balance practices options available to their staff. Few employees were offered flexible arrangements and the amount offered was highly correlated with women entrepreneurs' views. For instance, women who worked very long hours, with minimal or no flexible working arrangements, including reduced working time, rarely offered or facilitated work/life balance options to their staff. Conversely, women who themselves availed of reduced working time and/or flexible working arrangements usually offered these options to their staff.

In terms of household divisions of labour, women entrepreneurs fell into three categories: those who relied on private paid care (e.g. a nanny); those who reversed the roles and relied on their husbands or partners to perform caring duties; and those who chose to remain in the traditional feminine caring role. The majority of women entrepreneurs fell into the first two categories, which shows that female entrepreneurship can produce different family models.

The majority of women felt that work/life balance practices were important, but there was a major divide between the women interviewed. The attitude held by the women entrepreneurs in the interviews can be summarised and classified by looking at two main characteristics: their entrepreneurial attachment and their family values attachment. A summary model of this typology, based on a model devised by Goffee and Scase (1985) and first developed in Chapter 6, is presented in Table 10.1. The interviews conducted with women entrepreneurs show the same classification as that used in Chapter 6 can be used with attitudes to work/life balance.

This typology demonstrates the different types of women entrepreneurs. In Chapter 6, cluster analysis showed that entrepreneurs were motivated by different factors, and that their differences appeared to be linked to their entrepreneurial and family values attachments. 'Lifestyle Entrepreneurs' are women who regard their business as a job, with no desire for growth, and who are entrepreneurs to suit their own personal/family lifestyle. 'Egalitarian Entrepreneurs' are women who operated small businesses with minimum desire for growth, but who place much importance on the work/life balance needs of themselves and their staff. These women also tend to implement an alternative model of care in their home/family life. 'Committed Entrepreneurs' consisted of women who are very attached to their status as entrepreneurs, who want to achieve success (not only in terms of money, but also in terms of quality of life), but have a very pioneering attitude to how they approach their roles as carers. Furthermore, these women entrepreneurs are more prone to creating a family-friendly environment for their staff. 'Traditional Entrepreneurs' consist of high growth entrepreneurs, who are primarily motivated by financial success. These women entrepreneurs replicate a 'male' model. They organise their personal/family life in a traditional way, usually by delegating their caring responsibilities to another paid woman.

Table 10.1 Typology of Women Entrepreneurs

	Traditional	**Democratic**
Low Entrepreneurial Attachment	Cluster 1: **Lifestyle Entrepreneurs** Mary Maura Alice	Cluster 2: **Egalitarian Entrepreneurs** Teresa
High Entrepreneurial Attachment	Cluster 4: **Traditional Entrepreneurs** Lisa Catherine Sarah Orla	Cluster 3: **Committed Entrepreneurs** Emily Gemma

This typology resembles that first developed by Goffee and Scase (1985), but overcomes one of its main drawbacks by adding a dynamic layer to it, allowing women entrepreneurs to move from one category to another over time, in response to developments in their personal life. For example, Teresa is now classified as a 'Committed Entrepreneur' in the sense that she currently places more emphasis on her family's needs than on those of her business. It could however be envisaged that as her daughter grows up, she might chose to shift towards a different level of entrepreneurial attachment. This path is the one followed by Emily, who, as

her children have grown up and become more independent, has given more emphasis to her business.

The level of conflict between home and work life experienced by women entrepreneurs was closely linked to their family status. Those who did not have children did not experience conflict, while those who were parents felt that they had only experienced conflict since they had their children. The level of conflict was also influenced by the level of support received by the interviewees: those who had solid family support (e.g. husband/partner) and those who contracted in outside help (e.g. a housekeeper and/or a nanny) experienced less conflict than those with no such supports. These findings show that the level of conflict can be a direct consequence of women entrepreneurs' approach to their caring responsibilities.

The interviewees did not feel that they were role models for other women. This was mainly due to the fact that women entrepreneurs did not see entrepreneurship as a means of modifying their environment or achieving something different in their own lives. However, if the interviewees did not set out to change their environments, at work and in the home, the findings show that entrepreneurship did have an impact on that environment.

'Lifestyle Entrepreneurs' felt that entrepreneurship had made very little impact in their professional and personal life. However, 'Traditional Entrepreneurs' and 'Committed Entrepreneurs' both changed their environments, but in very different ways. On the one hand, 'Traditional Entrepreneurs' reproduced a model of doing business similar to that observed in employment, which allowed them to bypass the 'glass ceiling' and to hold senior positions. In their personal/family life, because of a lack of time, these women entrepreneurs delegated their caring role to other women, which reinforced gender roles within the home. In contrast, 'Committed Entrepreneurs' created an alternative business structure around them. These women entrepreneurs trade in predominantly female areas, where they would have had successful careers, had they chosen to remain in employment. By virtue of the supportive environment created within their companies, it is clear that these women entrepreneurs are challenging the male mould of doing business. However, they also go further, in their own familial model of organisation. Most 'Committed Entrepreneurs' challenge gender roles within the home by sharing caring responsibilities with their spouse, who is on an equal footing in terms of caring, and is often seen to be responsible for the majority of the caring, often through being an entrepreneur working from home.

10.5 Conclusions

This chapter provides answers to four of the research questions underpinning this thesis. First, this chapter shows that there are no straightforward answers to whether or not women entrepreneurs prioritise their personal/family life over the growth of their business or their income level. The interviews, which rely on a non-representative sample, show that women entrepreneurs hold very diverse attitudes. Three types of women entrepreneurs were identified in terms of the level of importance they attached to the growth of their business, and their level of income, over their personal life. Women entrepreneurs with large and highly successful businesses were more focused on their business, while other women, with small to medium businesses, focused more on their personal life, using entrepreneurship to support this. Finally, women entrepreneurs in family businesses formed a separate category, where the observed pattern is close to the one observed for women managers.

Second, this chapter shows that entrepreneurship provided the women interviewed with the tools necessary in shaping their work environment to suit their needs. For example, it was possible for some women to work the number of hours they chose without encountering penalties for not conforming to the prevalent long hour culture in employment. Some women also felt that entrepreneurship had allowed them to work within an environment supportive of the people in it. Finally, the chapter provides contrasting findings on whether or not women use entrepreneurship to shape their personal lives. In the interviews most women felt that this was not the case. The predominant model among respondents was that women remained primarily responsible for children and the home. When the women themselves were not available, the problem was shifted onto another (paid) woman, usually in the form of a housekeeper and/or a nanny. However, some women interviewees showed that they used an atypical model of care in the home, where their partners took on a larger share of the responsibility. This suggests that a minority of women entrepreneurs seek a non-traditional personal life.

Chapter 10 examined the attitudes women entrepreneurs held towards work/life balance practices, both for themselves and for their employees. This was followed by an evaluation of the level of conflict between professional and personal life experienced by the women entrepreneurs. Finally, the chapter investigated whether entrepreneurship reshaped the work

and home environments of the interviewees. Chapter 11 integrates the findings of the survey and the interviews to answer the main research question and acknowledges the limitations of the research.

Chapter 11 Conclusion

This thesis provides an in-depth exploratory examination of women entrepreneurs in Ireland, drawing upon a national survey of entrepreneurship and interviews with a sample of women entrepreneurs. Chapters 5 to 8 present the results of the survey analysis based on a postal questionnaire, while Chapters 9 and 10 draw on the interview data collected. In Chapter 5 a profile of Irish entrepreneurs and their businesses, including their preferred management styles is presented. Chapters 6 and 7 explore the motivations and obstacles encountered by Irish entrepreneurs. The analysis examines the impact of not only gender but also other demographic and social factors, such as being a parent or being married. Chapter 8 examines the work/life balance attitudes and choices made by Irish entrepreneurs in the organisation of their personal or family life. Chapters 9 and 10 examine the relationship between gender and motivations, obstacles and experiences of work/life balance. Chapter 11 concludes by discussing the findings of the research and the implications of these findings for academic theory, research methodology and Irish economic and social policy.

11.1 Results of the Study

Women entrepreneurs are seriously under-researched in Ireland. The aim of this thesis was to provide the first large-scale exploratory study of women entrepreneurs in Ireland and to compare them with their international counterparts. The main findings indicate that Irish women entrepreneurs are similar to their counterparts abroad, but they also show that there are some differences, arguably due to Ireland's unique historical background and societal context. The research questions underpinning the research in this thesis were derived from the literature and were used to develop the conceptual framework presented in Chapter 3. Table 11.1 sets out the thesis chapters that address each of the research questions.

Table 11.1 Research Questions

Chapter Number	5	6	7	8	9	10
Do men take more financial and/or personal risks than women?	✓				✓	
Do men and women have different motivational factors for entering entrepreneurship?		✓			✓	
Do push factors predominate among women entrepreneurs?		✓			✓	
Do men and women face different obstacles in entrepreneurship?			✓		✓	
Do women and men adopt different management styles?	✓				✓	
Do men prioritise the growth of their business over their family/personal life?				✓		✓
Do men prioritise income levels over their family/personal life?				✓		✓
Do women use entrepreneurship to change their work environment?						✓
Do women use entrepreneurship to change their family environment?						✓

Section 11.1 describes the growth of female entrepreneurship in Ireland and sets out the reasons why women enter entrepreneurship and what lies behind their increased representation. This is followed by an examination of the impact of gender, where it is argued that gender and motherhood have the greatest impact on entrepreneurship. Finally, this section shows that gender and motherhood lead to gendered tracks of entrepreneurship, and that there is a need to recognise the plurality of female entrepreneurs.

11.1.1 Growth of Female Entrepreneurship in Ireland

The number of women entrepreneurs in Ireland is rapidly increasing, having doubled over the past 20 years to reach a total of 50,000 women entrepreneurs. The proportion of women among Irish entrepreneurs has also increased during this time period. Women now represent over 15 per cent of total entrepreneurs, compared with just over 10 per cent 20 years ago. Despite the fact that more and more Irish women enter entrepreneurship, they are under-represented compared to their European counterparts. Nearly one in three European entrepreneurs is a woman, compared with one in six Irish entrepreneurs. Notwithstanding Ireland's cultural and social differences, these figures suggest that the number of women entrepreneurs in Ireland will converge towards European proportions.

The Irish social and cultural context has changed dramatically over the past twenty years. The demographic characteristics of women, as well as their employment patterns, have seen some remarkable changes. Marriage and birth rates have fallen, while there have been changes in the composition of households, with a rise of one-person households and single parents. One of the major consequences of these changes is that it has led to the progressive erosion of the breadwinner culture in favour of dual income households.

Economic growth in Ireland over the last decade has resulted in a greater need for dual earners among families in order to cope with the increasing cost of living in Ireland (e.g. the spectacular rise in house prices since 1996). This economic climate makes it almost essential for two persons to contribute to the household finances. The same decade (since 1995) has also seen a rise in the number of Irish women entering and remaining in the labour market. This is very different to the situation in Ireland in the early 1970s, when women were expected to opt out Irish male and female participation rates now reflect the prevailing European model reflecting the Celtic Tiger economy and women's increased human capital (Chapter 2). Societal expectations of women's role have changed dramatically, and it is now acceptable for women to enter and remain in employment. Furthermore, Irish women have been breaking into virtually every sector of employment and continually moving up the ranks, despite the prevalence of both horizontal and vertical segregation in the labour market.

11.1.2 Reasons behind Increase in Female Entrepreneurship in Ireland

The increase in the number of women entrepreneurs in Ireland is closely related to demographic and economic changes. Entrepreneurship is an increasingly attractive option for women in the current buoyant Irish economy. Entrepreneurship has historically been associated with men. However, in parallel with the feminisation of employment, the feminisation of entrepreneurship is under way.

The Irish economy over the past decade has been characterised by low levels of unemployment and high growth rates in employment and GNP/GDP. This has created a positive environment in which female entrepreneurship can flourish. In addition, the Irish State is strongly encouraging entrepreneurship, through initiatives such as the City and County Enterprise Boards and the Area Development Partnership (ADM) Partnership. There are also a strong supports emerging/expanding that are specifically targeting women entrepreneurs, through networks such as the Women in Business Networks within City and

County Enterprise Boards, internet forums and online communities for business resources, such as the website attached to the Mayo County Enterprise Board (www.irishbusinesswomen.com).

11.1.3 Women's Motivations for Entering Entrepreneurship in Ireland

Entering entrepreneurship can be a particularly rewarding option to women for a number of reasons. First, entrepreneurship can allow women to break into virtually any business sector that they choose, thereby challenging horizontal segregation. Second, entrepreneurship permits women to challenge vertical segregation in that even if they cannot break it they can bypass the glass ceiling and hold top positions within a company. Third, women, by entering entrepreneurship, are able to adopt a level of flexibility in their working and home lives. Entrepreneurship can mean that juggling the public and private spheres would be easier by giving access to the labour market to women who could not otherwise become employed. This is the case for example of some women running businesses from home, while combining entrepreneurship with their domestic and caring responsibilities.

Aside from the motivations examined in this study, Irish women entrepreneurs are benefiting from entering entrepreneurship in the current economic climate. There are many opportunities for women, and an auspicious economic environment makes it easier for them to succeed. Irish women entrepreneurs are usually pulled into entrepreneurship, as their initial motivations are reinforced by the positive economic situation surrounding them and the widespread availability of opportunities.

11.1.4 Gender and Entrepreneurship: Being a Woman Entrepreneur in Ireland

This study shows that gender as a factor in entrepreneurship is largely ignored by women entrepreneurs who perceive that while there are barriers to women entrepreneurs generally, being a woman did not affect them personally. Irish women entrepreneurs, while recognising that barriers related to female entrepreneurship exist, deny that these barriers affect them. However, despite the discourse employed by women entrepreneurs, the results of the interviews showed that gender is extremely important as a factor that colours their entire entrepreneurial experiences.

The lives of Irish women have changed dramatically over the last forty from a situation where gender differences were unchallenged. The Women's Movement in the 1970s challenged

prevailing constraints, seeking equality between men and women. Feminism has won some victories, which have greatly improved women's lives (e.g. contraception, right to work; entitlement to equal pay). Today, gender differences still prevail but have become more covert. For example, while equality in the work place exists in theory, in practice the gender pay gap is not closing. Kelan (2007) explains this phenomenon by stating that *"while gender imbalances continue to exist, it seems that people are less willing to articulate those differences and tend to see gender as irrelevant to them. One explanation for this paradox is that gender relations have not changed but the ability to articulate the relevance of gender has been lost"* (2007:4). Gender equality is still on the agenda, but occupies a place which is more discreet and largely invisible.

Gender differences remain in entrepreneurship as well: women entrepreneurs are more likely than their male counterparts to recognise that women experience specific obstacles in entering entrepreneurship. Women entrepreneurs, because of their position as women, more frequently encounter difficulties in lack of experience/training, funding or access to networks than their male counterparts, or additional difficulties such as lack of credibility or conflict between the public and private spheres. The mailed survey results have shown that more Irish women entrepreneurs believe that women experience difficulties because of the way they are reared and because society discourages them, compared with their male counterparts.

This thesis shows that gender, in itself, is not the more important factor to take into account in examining the experiences of entrepreneurs. For women, parenthood impacts heavily on their entrepreneurial careers, some of whom delayed or forfeited motherhood in order to become entrepreneurs. This is not an issue for men entrepreneurs. For example, women entrepreneurs who were mothers were much more likely than any other group to have become entrepreneurs in order to obtain a better work/life balance. For those who are mothers, childcare is highly problematic along as are their children's after-school activities. There was an overwhelming feeling from the survey and interviews that women's disproportionate responsibility for caring has an adverse effect on their entrepreneurial life and potential success. Entrepreneurship gives women the opportunity to reconcile the public and private spheres, often to the detriment of their business life.

The research provides valuable information on the family organisational model adopted by respondents, showing a wide gap between men and women entrepreneurs. The survey showed

that women entrepreneurs performed most of the housework, at least twice as much as their male counterparts. The results portray a very traditional picture of women's role as primarily responsible for the care of relatives and other domestic tasks, including the delegation of these tasks to a third party, most often another woman, where necessary. However, the interviews showed that some women entrepreneurs adopted an alternative organisational model in the private sphere, in which their partner provided the main parenting role.

Because women entrepreneurs experience more difficulties than men in combining their responsibilities in the public and private spheres, women entrepreneurs are more likely to offer flexitime and/or reduced working time to their employees. However, other types of flexible working arrangements, namely study leave, paternity leave and parental leave had only been availed of in a small minority of businesses. These findings suggest that some women use their position as entrepreneurs to create alternative work environments, not only for themselves, but also for their employees, who are usually women.

Women's role as parents has an important impact on their experiences of entrepreneurship arguably because of women's traditional responsibilities in the private sphere. Being a mother was recognised by women entrepreneurs as a key influence on their motivations. Based on the interview data, women entrepreneurs felt that gender was only an influence on their motivations when they had children and/or a partner. In other words, being single and remaining childless allowed women entrepreneurs to behave like men. These gender/family differences in the experience of entrepreneurship have serious implications in that they can create a 'gendered' entrepreneurial track for women entrepreneurs, as mothers which is highly differentiated from the 'mainstream' form of entrepreneurship.

11.1.5 Gendered Tracks of Entrepreneurship

Despite similarities between men and women in terms of ownership and length of time since the creation of their business ventures, gendered career tracks persist in their business sectors. There is evidence of a high degree of sectoral segregation among Irish entrepreneurs, with women entrepreneurs in Ireland over-represented in professional and personal services but under-represented in construction and manufacturing. Employment practices are also highly gendered. For example, women entrepreneurs are less likely than men to employ staff, and when they do, it is often on a part-time basis and/or female members of staff, at all levels of the business.

One of the main reasons which might explain why women entrepreneurs choose to remain in these gender tracks is that they are conditioned to do so by their social and cultural environment. For example, Sheridan (2004) argues that, in employment, gendered tracks are primarily maintained by *"a lifelong system of social control which begins with gender socialization and is continually reinforced and recreated by other institutions - the organisation and family - and ideologies"* (2004: 222)

One of the major findings of this thesis is that women entrepreneurs who are mothers seem to be involved in a different entrepreneurship track than women who do not have dependent children or men entrepreneurs. It could be argued that women with dependent children are measured up against Ogbor's (2000) 'white male hero'. This study therefore opposes a view of mothers entrepreneurs versus childless women entrepreneurs and men entrepreneurs. The danger of this approach is that it can lead to stereotypical views of women entrepreneurs, by introducing biological and social reasons for women entrepreneurs' alleged failure to measure up to Ogbor's (2000) 'white male hero'.

11.1.6 The Plurality of Female Entrepreneurship

In order to overcome biological and social reductionism it is important to recognise the plurality of women entrepreneurs. First, not all women entrepreneurs have children, nor do all women aspire to. Second, the analysis of women entrepreneurs and work/life balance needs to be moved up a level, in order to promote true gender equality. Presenting women entrepreneurs as mothers can be the equivalent to presenting them as a 'problem'. Calás and Smircich's (1991:229) statement, *"gender = sex = women = problem"* could therefore be adapted as 'gender = women = mothers = problem' as shown in the results of this study.

Looking at the problem of parenthood and work/life balance as solely a woman's issue therefore reinforces the idea that women are a problem, while men are not. For example, the introduction of maternity leave in employment has a positive impact on women's lives, but can serve to reinforce the idea that women are a problem. An alternative perspective would be to concentrate on parenthood, rather than motherhood, and the impact of paternity leave on similar terms and conditions as current maternity leave provisions.

As this study shows, it is important to recognise the heterogeneity of entrepreneurs and to develop new theories of entrepreneurship based on both men and women entrepreneurs, going beyond social and biological gender stereotyping. Building upon the work of Goffee and Scase (1985), this proposes a possible classification, that could be tested in further studies on entrepreneurship to provide more sophisticated classifications based on entrepreneurs as a whole taking account of gender, family status, ethnicity to create new and more inclusive theories of entrepreneurship. This section has discussed the findings of the study. In the next section, the implications of these results for academic theory, research methodology and Irish economic and social policy are considered.

11.2 Implications of the Study

This section draws upon the findings of the study to set out the implications of the research for academic theory, research methodology and Irish economic and social policy.

11.2.1 Implications for Academic Theory

This thesis contributes to current theories of female entrepreneurship and proposes a model of the factors affecting female entrepreneurship, with a particular emphasis on the relationship between female entrepreneurship and the private sphere. The thesis examines this relationship through the choices made by women entrepreneurs and how these impact on their organisations and availability/take up of work/life balance practices.

The results show that the study of entrepreneurship should not be limited to gender alone. Being a mother appears to be an even stronger factor linked to motivations and levels of conflict experienced by women operating between the public and private spheres. One of the concerns arising from this strong link between parenthood and entrepreneurship is that parenthood is gendered. Biologically, women have babies, but socially children remain their mother's primary responsibility after birth, when there is no reason why they could not be cared for by a mother and father. In Irish society, even more so than in other Western societies, women, rather than men are expected to be the predominant carers. This caring role is problematic for women because it implies that motherhood is detrimental to them, and could marginalise women's experience of entrepreneurship. Overall, this thesis shows that being a parent further 'genders' entrepreneurship.

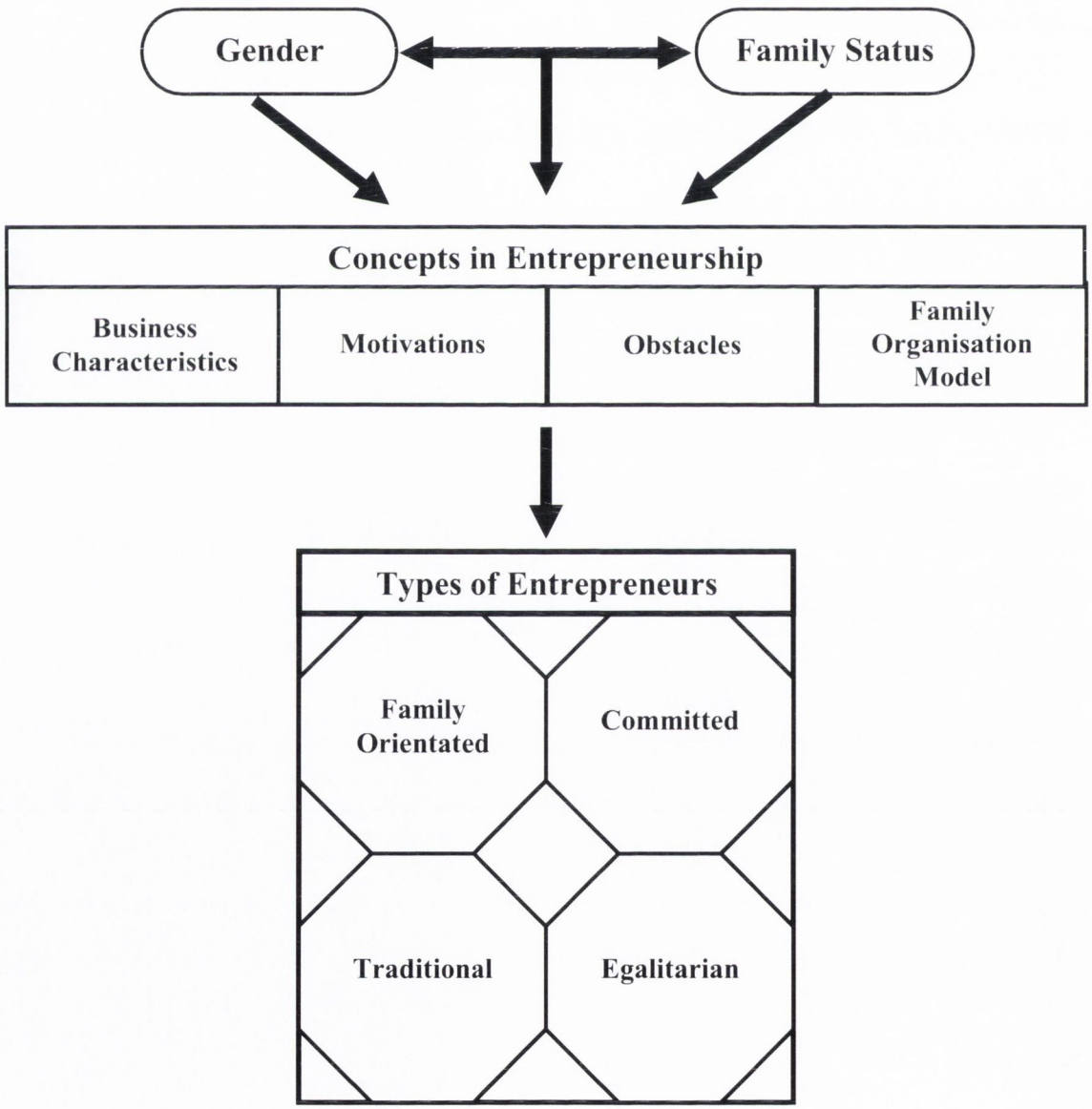
The recent body of work, which has profoundly transformed the field of research on female entrepreneurship (e.g. Ogbor, 2000; Ahl, 2004; Ahl, 2006), shows that the discourse surrounding women entrepreneurs presents them as different, and consequently inferior, to the 'real' men entrepreneurs. The opposition between women entrepreneurs and 'real' entrepreneurs is created through research examining entrepreneurs' characteristics, behaviours and attitudes relating *only* to the public sphere. For example, it is possible to contrast men and women's motivations, while ignoring the family environment of entrepreneurs. These analyses fail to recognise the impact that the private sphere can have on entrepreneurial motivations and ways of managing. For example, gender differences in the motivations of men and women may be minimal when compared with those between women who are childless and men regardless of their family status. There is a need for research to explicitly draw out the links between the public sphere and the private spheres in future research on entrepreneurship.

The findings of this research show that care needs to be exercised to ensure that gender and parenthood amongst entrepreneurs does not work towards creating a 'mommy' track in entrepreneurship versus the 'main' entrepreneurial track (i.e. 'mompreneurs' vs. 'entrepreneurs'). Presenting women entrepreneurs, as being so directly influenced by their status as mothers, is overly simplistic and reductionist, as it is far from true that all women are, or aspire to being, mothers.

Furthermore, analysing women as mothers needs to be undertaken in parallel with examining men as fathers, in order to avoid reinforcing stereotypical views of women entrepreneurs (Drew and Humbert, forthcoming). For example, women are often contextualised as mothers, while it is very infrequently the case for men to be portrayed as fathers. A major finding arising from this study is therefore that women entrepreneurs in Ireland are not a homogeneous group, and further research should recognise this reality. The research developed and discussed one possible classification of women entrepreneurs and showed that there is a great need to recognise the diverse nature of entrepreneurship. The classification proposed in this thesis was therefore developed with both men and women entrepreneurs to examine the choices made by them in their personal/family organisational model, and recognised that these choices could evolve along with the personal circumstances of entrepreneurs.

A major implication of this study for theory and research into female entrepreneurship is the relationship between gender and parenthood. These two factors, and their interaction, affect entrepreneurship, and contribute to the formation of subgroups within entrepreneurship. The proposed model does not purport to be exhaustive of all factors, but provides a new base which could be further improved in future research projects (Figure 11.1). The model shows that gender and family status both independently and combined affect the experiences of entrepreneurs. For instance, this study has shown that men entrepreneurs rely on very traditional family organisational models, even when they become fathers. The way in which gender and parenthood affect entrepreneurship will lead to different types of entrepreneurship, for which this study has provided a possible classification.

Figure 11.1 Key Factors Affecting Selected Concepts in Entrepreneurship



11.2.2 Implications for Research Methodology

The study clearly shows the methodological strength associated with using a mixed methods approach in the field of female entrepreneurship and a clear need for the replication of this study using more sophisticated databases as they become available.

The field of female entrepreneurship has been profoundly affected by recent research on the construction of gender. Feminist methodology researchers emphasise that positivist research, has been traditionally done by men, conducted on men, and applied to men. As a result, quantitative research, usually associated with the positivist paradigm, has led to world views that are based on men entrepreneurs. In entrepreneurial research, this created and reinforced a stereotypical view of entrepreneurship. The use of a structured survey questionnaire to measure information about women entrepreneurs used tools designed for research on men entrepreneurs, and may not have been appropriate in describing women's experiences. However, survey methods also present a number of strengths in allowing the collection of information on a large scale in a time and cost efficient manner. Thus survey methods can be one of a set of methods used in entrepreneurial research.

The strength of this study is that it used a mixed methods approach. The experiences of women and men entrepreneurs were codified and quantified using the postal survey, but this account is complemented by a detailed qualitative approach documenting the experiences of women entrepreneurs to provide data triangulation. This increased the validity of the findings, in that it involved two different perspectives. For example, examining women entrepreneurs' motivational factors in the questionnaire could have been problematic, as the list of motivations provided was not strictly based on research on women entrepreneurs. However, these motivational factors largely matched the ones that emerged in the in-depths interviews conducted with women entrepreneurs. The thesis indicates that the use of mixed methods in female entrepreneurship research is particularly appropriate in future work on female entrepreneurship.

In addition, the research shows the problems associated with the lack of a comprehensive database of women entrepreneurs in Ireland. The sample adopted was developed from two large and reputable sources (Kompass and the City and County Enterprise Boards). The samples drawn from these two sources, while representing a good coverage of

entrepreneurship in Ireland, do not provide a breakdown of entrepreneurs according to other factors (e.g. urban/rural; home-based businesses; husband/wife partnerships). Consequently, there is a need to incorporate these when replicating this study, in different contexts and locations.

11.2.3 Policy Implications

The results of this study have numerous implications for economic and social policy in Ireland. Despite the advances made by women in entrepreneurship, many barriers remain. Policy issues need to address the gender imbalance that Irish entrepreneurs experience in the private sphere and need to actively promote higher levels of female entrepreneurship nationally.

Promoting Irish Female Entrepreneurship

1. Financial support to women entrepreneurs should be improved, particularly in sectors where women are under-represented. The cost of premises is particularly high in Ireland and should be subsidised for start-up businesses in the initial phase. Formal subsidised access to professional services (e.g. tax accountants, market researchers) should be provided to new female business entrants.

2. The obstacles facing women entrepreneurs need to be actively addressed by provision of training and/or support agencies. This would both increase their confidence levels and diminish their fear of failure. Additional courses should be made available in areas such as computer training, business skills, and personal development.

3. Mentoring by successful entrepreneurs for women entrepreneurs should be established on a one-to-one format from the beginning of the entrepreneurial process. Professional support is needed, in the shape of specialist support services targeted at women entrepreneurs. Agencies could provide group meetings and practical workshops, in conjunction with one-to-one sessions, with other participants for the purpose of exchange of information and mutual support.

4. Childcare needs to be available to men and women entrepreneurs to participate on short courses and attend workshops and business meetings. In addition, the State and/or support agencies should provide funding against the cost of childcare.

5. There should be a provision for in-depth gender awareness workshops for government and support service personnel. It is essential that gender issues are not regarded as women's issues, as these tend to further gender segregation.

11.3 Conclusion and Future Work

This thesis has provided an exploratory study of Irish women entrepreneurs. It has offered a gendered comparison between entrepreneurs in Ireland and internationally and examined the experiences of Irish women entrepreneurs in the private sphere. The study has shown that motherhood and entrepreneurship is more problematic than female entrepreneurship itself, but, importantly, the results demonstrate that women entrepreneurs are not a heterogeneous group and need to be studied as such.

Future work should further examine parenthood and entrepreneurship. The study has shown the need to go beyond stereotypes of gender and entrepreneurship. As part of this process, there is a clear need for research to address the questions of fatherhood among men entrepreneurs.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

CONFIDENTIAL

SURVEY OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Section A: Profile of Business Venture

A.1 Which of the following best describes your company?

Sole owner	☐ 1
Partner	☐ 2
Other, please specify: _____	☐ 3

A.2 In which sector(s) do you trade? (Please tick a maximum of <u>two</u> if relevant)

Health	☐ 1	Agriculture/Fisheries	☐ 2
Catering	☐ 3	Leisure Industry	☐ 4
Finance	☐ 5	Professional Services	☐ 6
Education	☐ 7	Tourism	☐ 8
Construction	☐ 9	Transport	☐ 10
IT/ Communications	☐ 11	Advertising	☐ 12
Manufacturing	☐ 13	Other, please specify: _____	☐ 14

A.3 In what year was your company created?

☐

A.4 In what year did you become involved with that company, *(if different from above)***?**

☐

A.5 Did you:

Buy your own company	☐ 1
Inherit your own company	☐ 2
Create your own company	☐ 3
Other, please specify: _____	☐ 4

A.6 What is the formal title of your present position?

_____

A.7 In which functional area of the company do you work?

_____

A.8 Approximately how many hours per week do you work?

☐ hours per week

A.9 Do you regularly work longer hours than standard hours (40 hours a week)?

Yes ☐ 1 No ☐ 2

If **'No'**, *please skip to A.11*

If **'Yes'**, is this usually paid (e.g. overtime), or do you take time off in lieu, or neither?

Overtime	☐ 1	Both	☐ 3
Time off	☐ 2	Neither	☐ 4

A.10 What is/are the reason(s) for working more than standard hours? *(Please tick all that apply)*

Backlog of work	☐
Shortage of staff	☐
Temporary increase in workload	☐
Your own desire to get the job done	☐
Part of the organisational culture	☐
Covering employees on leave	☐
Greater income/incentives	☐
Other, please specify:_____	☐

A.11 How many employees do you have? *(If no employees please skip to B.1)*

	Full-time employees:	Part-time employees:
None	☐ 1	☐ 1
1 to 10	☐ 2	☐ 2
11 to 20	☐ 3	☐ 3
21 to 50	☐ 4	☐ 4
51 or more	☐ 5	☐ 5

A.12 What percentage of employees in your company are male?

☐ % male

A. 13 What percentage of employees directly under your supervision are male?

☐ % male

A. 14 What percentage of management are male?

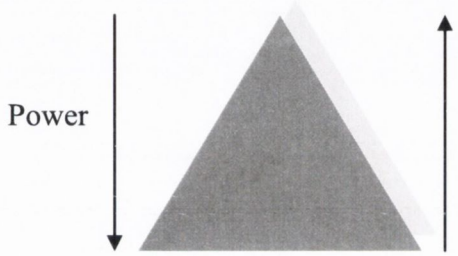
☐ % male

A.15 Your organisational structure.

Directions: For this section, two words must be defined. Review the definitions, and then please circle the diagram which best describes your organisation's structure.

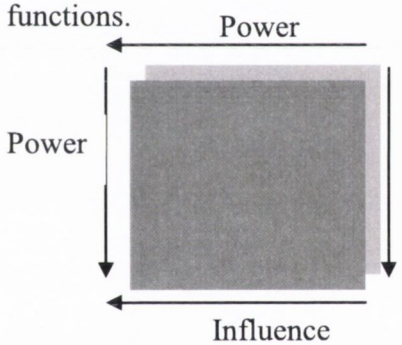
Power (P): The ability to change a situation (e.g. the ability to vote on policies, allocate funds, etc…)
Influence (I): The ability to change the perception of a situation held by others.

1. Traditional structure
Power is generally exercised from the top down, while influence flows upwards. Decision-making authority is retained at the top.



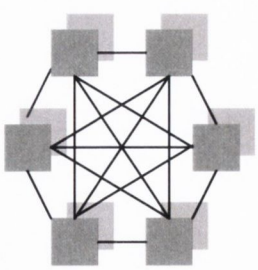
❑ 1

2. Participatory structure
Power and influence are shared and depend on project and task. Decision-making authority is shared across functions.



❑ 2

3. Ad-Hoc structure
Power and influence are shared regardless of project and task. Decision-making is diffused throughout the organisation.



❑ 3

If your organisation does not fit any of these structures adequately, please describe below, keeping in mind the foregoing definitions of power and influence, and the role of decision-making.

_____

_____

_____

A.16 Are the following working time arrangements available in your company? *(Please tick all that apply)*

None Available ❑ 0 Flexitime ❑ 1
Reduced working time ❑ 2

A.17 Have any of your employees availed of the following? *(Please refer to the footnotes if you are unsure of how these leave arrangements are defined)*

None Available ❑ 0 Parental leave* ❑ 1
Paternity leave** ❑ 2 Study leave ❑ 3

Section B: Career History

B.1 Have you owned a business previous to the one you are currently running?

Yes ❑ 1 No ❑ 2

If **'No'**, *please skip to B.3*

B.2 Why did you leave your previous business?

Bankruptcy ❑ 1 Loss of interest from your part ❑ 3
Sold ❑ 2 Other, please specify: _____ ❑ 4

B.3 How important were the following in motivating you to set-up a business?

	Strongly Disagree ❑❑❑❑❑ Strongly Agree
For greater autonomy and independence	❑❑❑❑❑
As a last resort after a personal crisis or a change of situation	❑❑❑❑❑
As a way of rejecting male imposed identities	❑❑❑❑❑
To generate more income	❑❑❑❑❑
To regain excitement/satisfaction in my work	❑❑❑❑❑
I realised there was a gap in the market	❑❑❑❑❑
I needed to balance my family/work life more effectively	❑❑❑❑❑
Being an entrepreneur was my life-long dream	❑❑❑❑❑
I was dissatisfied in the labour market	❑❑❑❑❑
I was looking for a challenge	❑❑❑❑❑

* Parental Leave : Employees with 1 year continuous service and who have a child born after 3rd June 1996 (natural or adopted) are entitled to 14 weeks unpaid leave to take care of their child up to the age of 5 (up to the age of 8 in some adoptive cases).

** Paternity Leave : This is paid leave that is given to fathers after the birth of a child. It is in addition to the time off provided for the birth of the child.

B.4 Have any of your immediate or extended family members been involved in business? Yes ❑ 1 No ❑ 2

If **'Yes'**, *which of the following were/are involved in business? (Please tick all that apply)*

Spouse ❑ Mother ❑
Father ❑ Brother/Sister ❑
Other, please specify: _____ ❑

B.5 What is the highest educational level you have attained?

Primary Education ❑ 1 University Degree ❑ 5
Junior Certificate ❑ 2 Post-graduate Degree ❑ 6
Leaving Certificate ❑ 3 Doctorate/Masters ❑ 7
Diploma/Certificate ❑ 4 Professional Diploma ❑ 8

B.6 To what extent did you make sacrifices in the following areas to get where you are today?

No sacrifices ❑❑❑❑❑ Huge sacrifices

Personal time/free time ❑❑❑❑❑
Social time/friendships ❑❑❑❑❑
Time with children ❑❑❑❑❑
Time with spouse/partner ❑❑❑❑❑
Not having children/delaying having children ❑❑❑❑❑

Section C: Domestic and Caring Responsibilities

C.1 Are you currently married or living with a partner?

Yes ❑ 1 No ❑ 2
If **'No'**, *please skip to C.3*

C.2 What is your spouse/partner's attitude towards your present business venture and its demands?

Very negative ❑❑❑❑❑ Very positive

C.3 Do you have children? Yes ❑ 1 No ❑ 2
If **'No'**, *please skip to C.8*

C.4 How many children do you have (including adopted and step-children)?

[ ] children

C.5 How many children in these age brackets currently live with you?

Under 6 years	☐	13 – 18 years	☐
6 – 12 years	☐	Over 18 years	☐

C.6 What arrangement do/did you have for the care of your under school age children? *(Please tick all that apply)*

- By you ☐
- By their other parent ☐
- By other family members ☐
- In private paid care ☐
- In publicly financed care ☐
- By baby-sitter/domestic help ☐

C.7 While your children were/are of school age, how often do/did their after-school hours care/activities interfere with your work?

Never ☐☐☐☐☐ Very often

C.8 How many hours a week do you estimate you spend doing housework?

☐ hours per week

C.9 Would you say that the amount of housework you do now is the same you did prior to running a business?

Less ☐ 1 Same ☐ 2 More ☐ 3

C.10 Who is usually in charge of domestic duties in your house? *(Please give an approximation in percentage)*

Yourself	☐
Your partner	☐
Another member of your family	☐
A domestic help	☐
Other, please specify: _____	☐
Total:	100 %

C.11 Approximately how many hours a week are specifically dedicated to your own leisure?

☐ hours per week

C.12 Please indicate the extent to which each of the following has interfered with your career?

No interference ❑❑❑❑❑ Large interference

Spouse/partner's career	❑❑❑❑❑
Spouse/partner's attitude towards your work	❑❑❑❑❑
Child care/care of other relatives	❑❑❑❑❑
Housework tasks	❑❑❑❑❑
Other family commitments	❑❑❑❑❑

C.13 How often do you experience a conflict between the demands of your work and the demands of your life outside work?

Never ❑❑❑❑❑ Very often

C.14 Have you had periods when you were working part-time since you began working?

Yes ❑ 1 No ❑ 2

If **'No'**, *please skip to C.16*

C.15 How many part-time jobs (for longer than a year) have you had since you began working?

❑❑ part-time jobs

Please give the reason(s) for working part-time. (Please tick all that apply)

Child rearing/care of relatives	❑ 1
Furthering your education	❑ 2
Change of residence due to partner	❑ 3
Other, please specify:_____	❑ 4

C.16 Since you began working full time, how many career interruptions longer than six months have you had for any of these reasons? *(Please tick all that apply)*

❑ No interruptions

Interruptions for:

Illness	❑
Child rearing/care of relatives	❑
Career break to start new business	❑
Further education	❑
Change of residence due to partner	❑
Unemployment	❑
Other, please specify _____	❑

Section D: Personal Views – Attitudes & Opinions

D.1 Listed below are adjectives useful for describing the way people view themselves. Please indicate the degree to which you feel it applies to you.

Collaborative	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	Competitive
People driven	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	Task driven
Democratic	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	Directive
Family-orientated	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	Career-orientated
Risk-taking	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	Risk averse
Disciplined	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	Easy going

D.2 Please indicate beside each adjective the degree to which you feel you've changed after setting-up your first business using the scale below.

	Less	Same	More
Competitive	❑	❑	❑
Career-orientated	❑	❑	❑
Disciplined	❑	❑	❑
Risk-taking	❑	❑	❑
Directive	❑	❑	❑
Competent	❑	❑	❑
Task driven	❑	❑	❑
Motivated	❑	❑	❑
Organised	❑	❑	❑
Responsible	❑	❑	❑

D.3 How do you feel about carrying on the following duties?

Very unpleasant	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	Very pleasant
Hiring/firing staff	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	
Motivating staff	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	
Mentoring	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	
Giving instructions/orders	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	
Making decisions	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	
Planning	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	
Leading	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	
Seeking investments	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	

D.4 If there are certain values you would like to promote through your company, what would they be?

Please select the four most important attributes to you in order of importance, 1 being the most important and 4 being the least important.

❑ Loyalty	❑ Hard work	❑ Independent thinking
❑ Self-motivation	❑ Social skills	❑ Discrimination-free environment
❑ Punctuality	❑ Meritocracy	❑ Flexible work arrangements

❑ Other, please specify: _____

D.5 Where do you see yourself in five years?

Still running this company	❑ 1
Running another company	❑ 2
Employed in another company	❑ 3
Out of the labour force	❑ 4
Retired	❑ 5
On extended leave	❑ 6
Other, please specify: _____	❑ 7

D.6 Where do you see your company in five years time in terms of employees and markets?

Will have expanded	❑ 1
Will remain the same	❑ 2
Will have decreased	❑ 3

D.7 There are more men than women heading businesses in our society. *Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following explanations.*

Strongly Disagree ❑❑❑❑❑ Strongly Agree

This reflects women's choices	❑❑❑❑❑
Women lack the specific training needed to run a business	❑❑❑❑❑
Women are a minority in a male dominated business world	❑❑❑❑❑
Society discourages women from starting a business	❑❑❑❑❑
It is due to how women are reared	❑❑❑❑❑
Women lack the confidence to start and/or run a business	❑❑❑❑❑
Women lack powerful informal contacts	❑❑❑❑❑
Women lack the necessary financial resources	❑❑❑❑❑
Women lack the credibility	❑❑❑❑❑

D.8 How important is income level against improvement in your personal/family life?

Unimportant ❑❑❑❑❑ Very important

D.9 How important is expansion of business activities against improvement in your personal/family life?

Unimportant ❑❑❑❑❑ Very important

D.10 How important do you think flexible work arrangements are for your employees?

Unimportant ❑❑❑❑❑ Very important

D.11 How important are flexible work arrangements for yourself?

Unimportant ❑❑❑❑❑ Very important

Section E: Demographic Characteristics

E.1 Are you:

Male ❑ 1 Female ❑ 2

E.2 Which of the following age groups do you belong to?

15-24	❑ 1	45-54	❑ 4
25-34	❑ 2	55-64	❑ 5
35-44	❑ 3	65 and over	❑ 6

E.3 Which of the following best describes your current status? *(Please tick one only)*

Single	❑ 1	Separated	❑ 4
Married	❑ 2	Widowed	❑ 5
Divorced	❑ 3	Living with partner	❑ 6
Other, please specify: _____			❑ 7

E.4 What is the highest educational level completed by your <u>spouse/partner</u>?

Primary Education	❑ 1	University Degree	❑ 5
Junior Certificate	❑ 2	Post-graduate Degree	❑ 6
Leaving Certificate	❑ 3	Doctorate/Masters	❑ 7
Diploma/Certificate	❑ 4	Professional Diploma	❑ 8

E.5 What were the highest educational qualifications obtained by your parents?

	Father	Mother
Primary Education	☐ 1	☐ 1
Junior Certificate	☐ 2	☐ 2
Leaving Certificate	☐ 3	☐ 3
Diploma/Certificate	☐ 4	☐ 4
University Degree	☐ 5	☐ 5
Post-graduate Degree	☐ 6	☐ 6
Doctorate/Masters	☐ 7	☐ 7
Professional Diploma	☐ 8	☐ 8

E.6 What occupation did your parents do when you were fourteen?

Father: _____

Mother: _____

E.7 Position held in family, ie second child of three.

☐ child of ☐

e.g. 2nd child of 3

Section F: Final Comments

If you have any other comments please use the space provided below. I would appreciate very much any comments you may have.

APPENDIX B

COVER LETTER: KOMPASS

<Business Name>
<Name>
<Title>
<Address 1>
<Address 2>
<Address 3>«ADDRESS_3»
«ADDRESS_4»

13 June 2003

Dear <Name>,

Re: National Survey of Entrepreneurship

I am writing to you to request your participation in a study of entrepreneurship in Ireland. The objectives of this study are to:

- identify the motivations and obstacles experienced by entrepreneurs;
- establish the availability of family friendly working arrangements;
- examine the management structures of Irish businesses.

This information is sought to help further potential entrepreneurs create new business ventures. The study is of vital importance to the understanding of these issues, and is the first large-scale study of its kind to be undertaken in Ireland.

The survey involves you completing a questionnaire that takes approximately 20 minutes. There may be some questions that seem irrelevant to you, however each question has been inserted with a particular research objective in view. I would therefore ask you to please complete it as fully as possible. Your answers will be strictly confidential and will not be reported in any way that would reveal your identity.

You have been chosen on the basis of your position in society as an entrepreneur, and only you can represent your viewpoint. Thus, your personal response is critical to the success of this effort.

If you have any queries concerning the survey, please contact the Survey Manager: Ms. Anne Laure Humbert by phone at 01 6106763 or 087 9173002 or by e-mail at humberta@tcd.ie.

Yours sincerely,

_____

Dr. Eileen Drew
Project Manager

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS - INTERVIEWER

SURVEY OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

- Do you have any dependent children (including adopted and step-children)?

  ☐ children

- Which of the following age groups do you belong to?

15-24	☐	45-54	☐
25-34	☐	55-64	☐
35-44	☐	65 and over	☐

- What is your current marital status?

- In what year was your company created? ☐

- In what year did you become involved with that company, *(if different from above)*?

  ☐

- Did you:

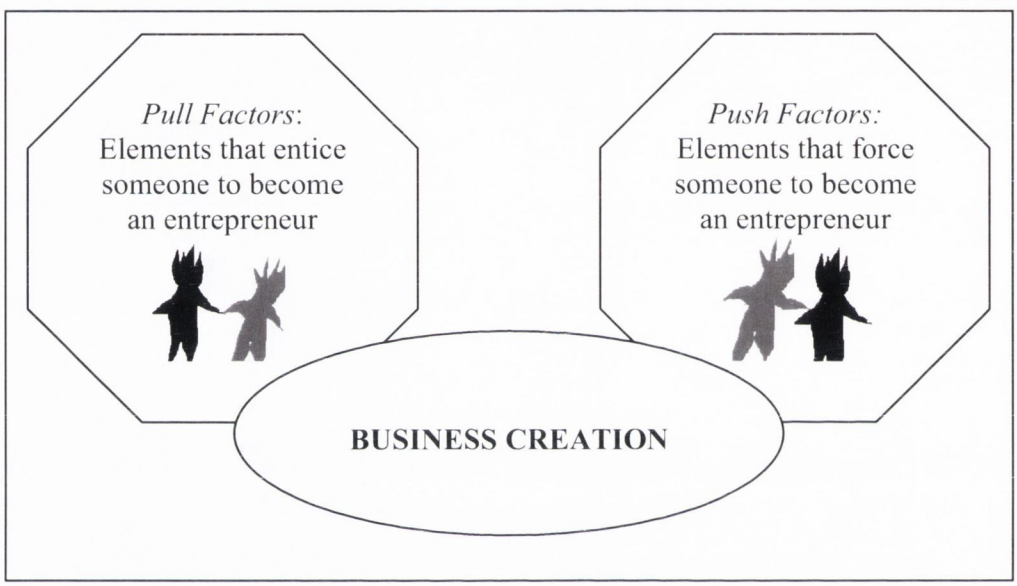
Buy your own company	☐
Inherit your own company	☐
Create your own company	☐
Other, please specify:	☐

  _____

- How many employees do you have? *(If no employees please skip to B.1)*

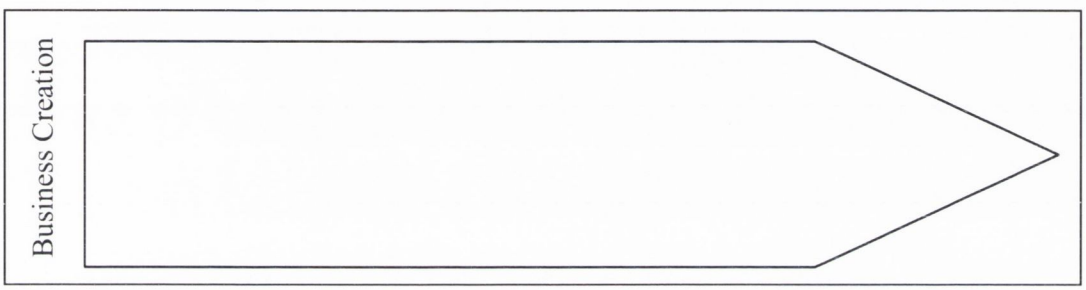
	Full-time employees:	Part-time employees:
None	☐	☐
1 to 10	☐	☐
11 to 20	☐	☐
21 to 50	☐	☐
51 or more	☐	☐

1. Why did you choose to become an entrepreneur? Would your motivations have been the same had you been a man? Did you feel that you were more enticed or forced to become an entrepreneur?

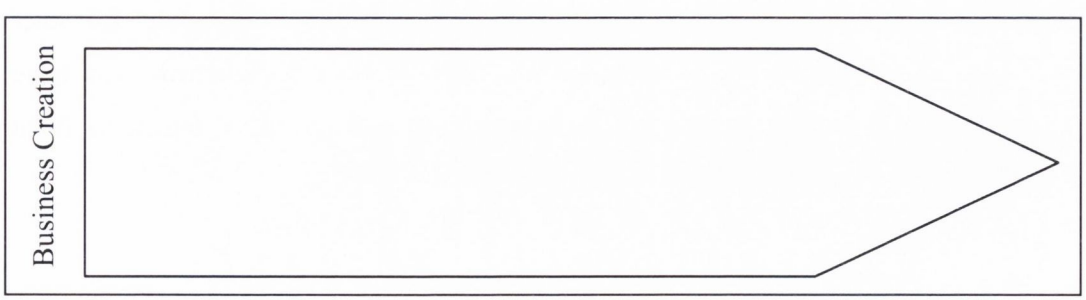


2. What were the obstacles you encountered in becoming an entrepreneur? In your opinion has it been more or less difficult overcoming these being a woman than if you were a man?

3. Do you feel you are more risk-taking or risk averse in your business operations? How has your attitude towards risk evolved? Do you feel it would have been different had you been a man?



4. How would you describe the way you manage in terms of power? Why did you choose this particular style? How has it evolved? Is it different from a typical male entrepreneur?



5. How important do you feel work life balance practices are? Do you and/or your partner avail of any? Are flexible working arrangements available in your company? Why/why not?

Flexible Hours Arrangements: ▪ Flexitime ▪ Annualised Hours	Reduced Working Time: ▪ Job Sharing ▪ Job Splitting ▪ Work Sharing ▪ Part-time Work
Flexible Leave Arrangements: ▪ Paternity Leave ▪ Compassionate Leave ▪ Term-time Working ▪ Employment or Career Breaks ▪ Sabbaticals ▪ Study Leave	Flexible Location: ▪ e-Working ▪ Virtual Teams

6. Could you describe the relationship between your family/personal life and your business? Do you experience any conflict? Have/do you sacrifice time in either sphere (business vs family/personal life)? If you were a man, would you expect to experience this conflict?

7. In your entrepreneurial role, would you see yourself as a role model for other women? Why? Could you describe how, as a woman entrepreneur, you have changed your work environment since becoming involved in the business? What about your family/personal environment?

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS - RESPONDENT

SURVEY OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

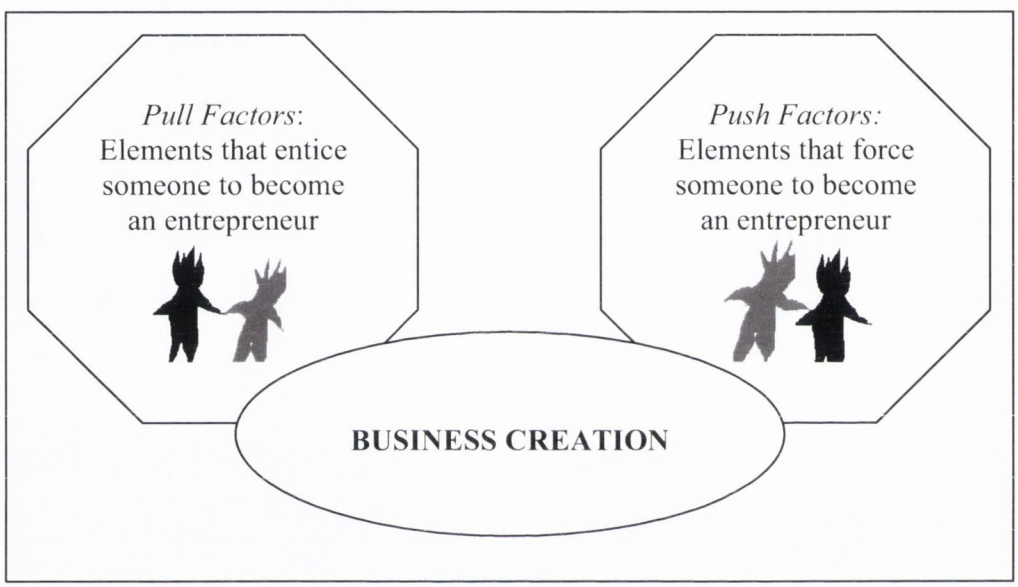


Dr. Eileen Drew

Ms. Anne Laure Humbert

School of Systems and Data Studies
Department of Statistics
Trinity College Dublin

1. Why did you choose to become an entrepreneur? Would your motivations have been the same had you been a man/woman? Did you feel that you were more enticed or forced to become an entrepreneur?



2. What were the obstacles you encountered in becoming an entrepreneur? In your opinion has it been more or less difficult overcoming these being a man/woman than if you were a woman/man?

3. Do you feel you are more risk-taking or risk averse in your business operations? How has your attitude towards risk evolved? Do you feel it would have been different had you been a man/woman?

4. How would you describe the way you manage in terms of power? Why did you choose this particular style? How has it evolved? Is it different from a typical male/female entrepreneur?

5. How important do you feel work life balance practices are? Do you and/or your partner avail of any? Are flexible working arrangements available in your company? Why/why not?

6. Could you describe the relationship between your family/personal life and your business? Do you experience any conflict? Have/do you sacrifice time in either sphere (business vs family/personal life)? If you were a woman/man, would you expect to experience this conflict?

7. In your entrepreneurial role, would you see yourself as a role model for other men/women? Why? Could you describe how, as a man/woman entrepreneur, you have changed your work environment since becoming involved in the business? What about your family/personal environment?

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW LETTER

«NAME»
«ADDRESS_1»
«ADDRESS_2»
«ADDRESS_3»
«ADDRESS_4»

16 May 2006

Dear «First_Name_Only»,

RE: NATIONAL SURVEY OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

I am writing to you to request your participation in a study of entrepreneurship in Ireland. The objectives of this study are to:

- identify the motivations and obstacles experienced by entrepreneurs;
- establish the availability of family friendly working arrangements;
- examine the management structures of Irish businesses.

This information is sought to help further potential entrepreneurs create new business ventures. The study is of vital importance to the understanding of these issues, and is the first large-scale study of its kind to be undertaken in Ireland.

The survey involves an interview that takes approximately 30 minutes. Your answers will be strictly confidential and will not be reported in any way that would reveal your identity. You have been chosen on the basis of your position in society as an entrepreneur, and only you can represent your viewpoint. Thus, your personal response is critical to the success of this effort.

If you have any queries concerning the survey, please contact me by phone at 016291947 or 085 7152471 or by e-mail at humberta@tcd.ie.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Laure Humbert

REFERENCES

Acs, Z. J., Arenius, P., Hay, M. and Minniti, M. (2005), *Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2004 Executive Report*, [online] (cited 9 January 2006) available from <http://www.gemconsortium.org/download/1136814935359/GEM_2004_Exec_Report.pdf>.

Agresti, A. (2002), *Categorical Data Analysis, second edition*, John Wiley and Sons, New Jersey.

Ahl, H. (2004), *The Scientific Reproduction of Gender Inequality: A Discourse Analysis of Research Texts on Women's Entrepreneurship*, Copenhagen: CBS Press.

Ahl, H (2006), 'Why research on women entrepreneurs needs new directions', in *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice,* Vol. 30, No. *5*, pp.595-621.

Allen, I. E., Langowitz, N. and Minniti, M. (2007), *Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2006, Report on Women and Entrepreneurship*, [online] (cited 8 August 2007) available from < http://www.gemconsortium.org/document.aspx?id=580>.

Allen, S. and Truman, C. (1988), Women's Work and Success in Women's Businesses, paper presented to the 11th UK National Small Firms Policy and Research conference, Cardiff Business School.

Allen, S. & Truman, C. (eds) (1993), *Women in Business, Perspectives on Women Entrepreneurs*, Routledge, London.

Audretsch, D. B., Thurik, A. R., Verheul, I. and Wennekers. A.R.M., (2002), 'Understanding Entrepreneurship across Countries and over Time', in Audretsch, D.B., Thurik A.R. and Wennekers A.R.M. (eds) *Entrepreneurship: Determinants and Policy in a European - US Comparison'* Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Bacik, I., Costello, C. and Drew, E. (2003), *Gender Injustice: Feminising the legal professions?*, Trinity College Dublin Law School.

Bass, B., Avolio, B. & Atwater, L. (1996), 'The transformational and transactional leadership of men and women', in *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, Vol. 45, No.1, pp. 5-34.

Belle, A. and La Valle, I. (2003), *Combining Self-employment and Family Life,* Cambridge: Policy Press and Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Berger, B. (1991), *The Culture of Entrepreneurship*, ICS Press, San Francisco.

Bird, B. and Brush, C. (2002) 'A Gendered perspective on organization creation', in *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice,* Vol. 26, No. 3, pp. 41–65.

Brindley, C. (2005), 'Barriers to women achieving their entrepreneurial potential: women at risk', in *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour & Research*, Vol. 11, No.2, pp.144-61.

Bruni. A., Gherardi, S., and Poggio, B. (2004), 'Entrepreneur-mentality, gender and the study of women entrepreneurs', in *Journal of Organizational Change*, Vol. 17, No. 3, pp. 256-268.

Brush, C. (1992), 'Research on women business owners: Past trends, a new perspective and future directions', in *Entrepreneurship, Theory and Practice*, Vol. 16, No. 4, pp. 5-30.

Bryman, A. (2001), *Social Research Methods*, Oxford University Press: Oxford.

Burke, S. and Collins, K.M. (2001), 'Gender differences in leadership styles and management skills' in *Women in Management Review,* Vol. 16, No. 5, pp. 244-256.

Butler, J. E. (ed) (2003), *New Perspectives on Women Entrepreneurs: A volume in research in entrepreneurship and management,* Information Age Publishing, Connecticut.

Calás, M. B. and Smircich, L. (1991), 'Re-writing gender into organizational theorizing: Directions from feminist perspectives", in Reed, M. and Hughes, M., *Rethinking Organization: New Directions in Organization Theory and Analysis,* Sage, London, pp. 227-253.

Campbell, V. (1994), 'Female entrepreneurship, is it a liberating experience?', Unpublished thesis, Trinity College Dublin.

Carland, J. W., F. Hoy, W. R. Boulton and J. C. Carland (1984), 'Differentiating entrepreneurs from small business owners: A conceptualization', in *Academy of Management Review,* Vol. 9, No. 3, pp. 354-359.

Carter, N. and Allen, K. (1997), 'Size determinants of women-owned businesses: Choice or barriers to resources?', in *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, Vol. 9, No. 3, pp. 211-220.

Carter, N., Brush, C., Gatewood, E., Greene, P. and Hart, M. (2002), Does enhancing women's financial sophistication promote entrepreneurial success?, paper presented at the Promoting Female Entrepreneurship Conference, Dundalk Institute of Technology.

Carter, S. (1993), 'Female Business Ownership: Current Research and Possibilities for the Future', in Allen, S. and Truman, C. (eds), *Women in Business: Perspectives on Women Entrepreneurs,* Routledge, London, pp. 148-160.

Carter, S. (2000), 'Gender and enterprise' in Carter, S. and Jones-Evans, D. (eds), *Enterprise and Small Business: Principles, Practice and Policy,* FT Prentice Hall, Harlow, pp. 166-181.

Carter, S., Anderson, S. and Shaw, E. (2001), *Women's Business Ownership: A Review of the Academic, Popular and Internet Literature*, Report to the Small Business Service, Glasgow.

Carter, S. and Cannon, T. (1988), *Female Entrepreneurs: A Study of Female Business Owners, their Motivations, Experiences and Strategies for Success*, Department of Employment Research Paper, No. 65, pp. 1-57.

Carter, S. and Cannon, T. (1992), *Women as Entrepreneurs*, Academic Press, London.

Carter, S. and Shaw, E. (2006), Women's Business Ownership: Recent Research and Policy Developments, report to the Small Business Service, London: DTI Small Business Service.

Carton, R. B., Hofer, C. W., and Meeks, M. D., (1998) The Entrepreneur and Entrepreneurship: Operational Definitions of Their Role in Society, Paper.

Central Statistics Office (2003b), *Census 2002, Volume 5 - Principal Economic Status and Industries,* Stationary Office, Dublin.

Central Statistics Office (2003c), *Census 2002, Volume 6 – Occupations,* Stationary Office, Dublin.

Central Statistics Office (2006), [online] (cited 18 April 2006) available from <http://eirestat.cso.ie/diska/QIBQ.csv>.

Central Statistics Office (2007), [online] (cited 8 August 2007) available from <http://www.cso.ie/px/pxeirestat/database/eirestat/eirestat.asp>.

Chell, E. and Baines, S. (1998), 'Does gender affect business 'performance'? A study of microbusinesses in business services in the UK', in *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, Vol. 10, No.2, pp.117-35.

Chen, C. and Hughes, J. Jr. (2004), *Using Ordinal Regression Model to Analyze Student Satisfaction Questionnaires*, [online] (cited 24 January 2006) Available from <http://airweb.org/page.asp?page=554>.

Cheskin Research & Santa Clara University Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship, The Center for New Futures (2000), *Women Entrepreneurs Study*, California.

Chung, J.T. (1998), 'Risk reduction in public accounting firms: are women more effective?', in *International Review of Women and Leadership*, Vol. 4, No.1, pp.39-45.

Cliff, J. E. (1998), 'Does one size fit all? Exploring the relationship between attitudes towards growth, gender and business size', in *Journal of Business Venturing*, Vol. 13, pp. 523–542.

Collis, J. and Hussey, R., (2003), *Business Research: A practical guide for undergraduate and postgraduate students, 2nd edition*, Palgrave MacMillan, London.

Coveney, E., Murphy-Lawless, J. and Sheridan, S.(1998), *Women, Work and Family Responsibilities*, Larkin Unemployed Centre: Dublin.

Creswell, J. W. (2003), *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (2nd ed.), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cromie, S. and Hayes, J. (1988), 'Towards a typology of female entrepreneurs', in *The Sociological Review*, Vol. 36, No. 1, pp. 87-113.

Crotty, M. (1998), *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process*, Sage Publications: London.

Curran, J. (1986), *Bolton Fifteen Years on: A Review and Analysis of Small Business Research in Britain 1971-1986*, Small Business Research Trust, London.

Deakins, D. and Whittam, G. (2000), 'Business start-up: theory, practice and policy', in Carter, S. and Jones-Evans, D. (eds), *Enterprise and Small Business: Principles, Practice and Policy,* FT Prentice Hall, Harlow, pp. 115-131.

Delmar, F. (2000), 'The psychology of the entrepreneur', in Carter, S. and Jones-Evans, D. (eds), *Enterprise and Small Business: Principles, Practice and Policy.* FT Prentice Hall, Harlow, pp. 132-154.

Delphy, C. and Leonard, D. (2002), 'The variety of work done by wives' in S. Jackson and S. Scott (eds.) *Gender: A Sociological Reader,* Routledge, London, pp 170-180.

de Vaus, D.A. (1991), *Surveys in Social Research*, 3rd Edition, Sydney, Allen & Unwin Australia and University of London Press.

Dobson, A.J. (2002), *An Introduction to Generalized Linear Models Second Edition,* Chapman & Hall/CRC, London.

Drew, E. (1999), Feminism and total quality: towards a new paradigm of leadership, paper presented at the Proceedings of Third International and Sixth National Research Conference on Quality Management at RMIT University, Melbourne.

Drew, E. (2000), 'Reconciling divisions of labour at home and work' in Duncan, S. and Pfau-Effinger, B. (eds), *Mapping Gender Inequality and the European Regions,* UCL Press, London.

Drew, E., Emerek, R. and Mahon, E. (eds) (1998), *Women, Work and the Family in Europe*, Routledge, London.

Drew, E. and Humbert, A. L. (forthcoming), 'Men have careers, women have babies: A realignment of gender roles among Irish entrepreneurs?', in *Community, Work and Family.*

Drew, E., Murphy, C. and Humphreys, P. (2003), *Off the Treadmill: Achieving work/life balance,* National Framework Committee, Dublin.

Duchéneaut, B. and Orhan, M. (2000), *Les Femmes Entrepreneurs en France, Percée des Femmes dans un Monde Construit au Masculin*, Seli Arslan, Paris.

Employment Equality Agency (EEA) (1999), *Women in the Labour Force*, Dublin.

Eurostat (2003), *European Social Statistics, Labour Force Survey Results 2002*, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg.

Eurostat (2004a), Population Statistics, [online] (cited 25 October 2005) Available from <http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-BP-04-001/EN/KS-BP-04-001-EN.PDF>.

Eurostat (2004b), *How Europeans spend their Time, Everyday Life of Women and Men,* Luxembourg: Eurostat.

Eurostat (2006), [online] (cited 18 April 2006) available from <http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int/

portal/page?_pageid=1996,45323734&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL&screen=welcomeref&open=/labour/earncost/gearning/gearnan&language=en&product=EU_MASTER_labour_market&root=EU_MASTER_labour_market&scrollto=461>.

Eurostat (2007), [online] (cited 8 August 2007) available from <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?_pageid=1090,30070682,1090_30298591&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL>.

Fitzsimons, P., O'Gorman, C. (2006), *The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2005, The Irish Report*, [online] (cited 8 August 2007) available from <http://www.gemconsortium.org/document.aspx?id=493>.

Fitzsimons, P., O'Gorman, C., Hart, M., O'Reilly, M. and McGloin, E. (2005), *Entrepreneurship on the Island of Ireland in 2004*, report to InterTradeIreland, [online] (cited 9 January 2006) available from <http://www.intertradeireland.com/module.cfm/opt/29/area/Publications/page/Publications/>.

Gates, B. (2000), *Business @ the Speed of Thought: Succeeding in the Digital Economy*, Warner Business Books.

Gender Equality Unit, Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, (2003), *Women and Men In Ireland as Entrepreneurs and as Business Managers,* Dublin.

Gender Equality Unit, Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, (2004), *Women and Men in Ireland: Facts and figures*, Dublin.

Gibb, A.A. and Davies, L.G. (1991), 'Methodological problems in the development and testing of a growth model of business enterprise development' in Gibb, A.A. and Davies, L. G. (eds), *Recent Research in Entrepreneurship,* Avebury, Aldershot, pp 286-323.

Goffee, R. and Scase, R. (1985), *Women in Charge, the Experiences of Female Entrepreneurs*, George Allen & Unwin, London.

Goodbody Economic Consultants (2002), *Entrepreneurship in Ireland*, report to Forfás, Dublin.

Greer, M.J. and Greene, P.G. (2003), 'Feminist Theory and the Study of Entrepreneurship', in J. E. Butler (ed.), *New Perspectives on Women Entrepreneurs*, Information Age Publishing, Greenwich (Connecticut), p. 1-24.

Greene, P. G., Hart, M. M., Gatewood, E. J., Brush, C. G. and Carter, N. M. (2003), *Women Entrepreneurs Moving fFront and Center: An Overview of Research and Theory*, report to the Coleman Foundation, [online] (cited 8 August 2007) available from <http://www.usasbe.org/knowledge/whitepapers/greene2003.pdf>

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1988), 'Do inquiry paradigms imply inquiry methodologies?', in Fetterman, D. M. (ed.), *Qualitative Approaches to Evaluation in Education: The Silent Scientific Revolution,* pp. 89-115). New York: Praeger.

Hakim, C., (1996) *Key Issues in Women's Work, Female Heterogeneity and the Polarisation of Women's Employment*, Athlone Press Ltd, London.

Harding, S. (1987), ' Is there a feminist method?', in Harding, S. (ed.), *Feminism and Methodology,* pp. 1-14. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Hastie, T., Tibshirani, R. and Friedman, J. (2001), *The Elements of Statistical Learning, Data Mining, Inference and Prediction*, Springer: New York.

Henry, C. and Kennedy, S. (2003), 'In search of a new Celtic Tiger: female entrepreneurship in Ireland' in Butler, J. E. (ed), *New Perspectives on Women Entrepreneurs: A volume in research in entrepreneurship and management,* Information Age Publishing, Connecticut, pp. 203-225.

Hisrich, R. and Brush, C. (1986), *The Woman Entrepreneur: Starting, financing, and managing a successful new business,* Lexington, Lexington MA.

Hoinville, G., Jowell, R. and Associates, (1978), *Survey Research Practice,* Heinemann Educational Books, London.

Hytti, U. (2005), 'New meanings for entrepreneurs: from risk-taking heroes to safe-seeking professionals', in *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, Vol. 18, No. 6, pp. 594–611.

Johnson, D., Newby, R., and Watson, J., (2003), Describing the entrepreneur: How appropriate is the founder/non-founder dichotomy? A paper for the Small Enterprise Association of Australia and New Zealand 16th Annual Conference, Ballarat.

Johnson, R.B. and Onwuegbuzie, A.J. (2004), 'Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come", in *Educational Researcher*, Vol.33, No.7, pp.14-26.

Katz, J. and Williams, P. (1997), 'Gender, self-employment and weak-tie networking through formal organizations', in *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, Vol. 9, No. 3, pp. 183-197.

Kelan, E. (2007), 'I Don't Know Why' – Accounting for the scarcity of women in ICT work, working paper 2007/3, London Business School.

Kjeldsen, J. and Nielsen, K. (2000), *The Circumstances of Women Entrepreneurs*, report to the Danish Agency for Trade and Industry, Denmark.

Kolakowski, L. (1993), 'An overall view of positivism', in Hammersley, M. (ed), *Social Research: Philosophy, Politics and Practice*, Open University, Sage Publications: London, pp. 1-8.

Kompass Ireland , (2001), *Kompass Ireland: Register of Irish industry and commerce,* Kompass Ireland Publishers, Dublin.

Küskü, F., Özbilgin, M. and Özkale, L. (2007) 'Against the Tide: Gendered Prejudice and Disadvantage in Engineering', *Gender, Work & Organization*, Vol. 14, No. 2, pp. 109-129.

Lyon, D. W., Lumpkin, G. T. and Dess, G. G. (2000), 'Enhancing entrepreneurial orientation research: Operationalizing and measuring a key strategic decision making process', in *Journal of Management*, Vol. 26, No. 5, pp. 1055-1085.

McClelland, E. (2003), A cross border exploratory study of internationalising female entrepreneurs in Ireland, paper presented at the Promoting Female Entrepreneurship Conference, Dundalk Institute of Technology.

McCullagh, P. and Nelder, J. A. (1989), *Generalized Linear Models, second edition,* Chapman & Hall/CRC, London.

McGinnity, F., Russell, H., Williams, J., and Blackwell, S. (2005), *Time-Use in Ireland 2005: Survey Report,* report to the NDP Gender Equality Unit of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

McGregor, J. and Tweed, D. (2001), 'Gender and managerial competence: Support for theories of androgny' in *Women in Management Review,* Vol. 16, No. 6, pp. 279-286.

McGowan, P. and McGeady, C. (2002), 'An investigation of networking practices of female entrepreneurs as an aid to their efforts to create and sustain new ventures', (Paper presented at the Promoting Female Entrepreneurship Conference), Dundalk Institute of Technology.

Mahon, E., (1998) 'Class, mothers and equal opportunities to work', in Drew, E, Emerek, R. and Mahon, E., *Women, Work and the Family in Europe,* Routledge, London, pp. 182-191.

Marlow, S. (1997), 'Self-employed women – New opportunities, old challenges?', in *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, Vol. 9, No. 3, pp. 199-210.

Marlow, S. and Carter, S. (2004), 'Accounting for change: professional status, gender disadvantage and self-employment', in *Women in Management Review*, Vol. 19, No.1, pp.5-16.

Marlow, S. and Patton, D. (2005), 'All credit to men? Entrepreneurship, finance and gender', *Entrepreneurship, Theory and Practice,* Vol. 29, No. 6, pp. 717-35.

Masters, R. and Meier, R. (1988), 'Sex-differences and risk-taking propensity of entrepreneurs', in *Journal of Small Business Management*, Vol. 26, No.1, pp. 31-5.

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

May, T. (2001), *Social Research: Issues, methods and process, Third edition,* Open University Press, Buckingham.

Maynard, M. (1994), 'Methods, practice and epistemology: The debate about feminism and research', in Maynard, M. and Purvis, J., *Researching Women's Lives from a Feminist Perspective*, Taylor and Francis: London, pp. 10-27.

Millen, D. (1997) 'Some Methodological and Epistemological Issues Raised by Doing Feminist Research on Non-Feminist Women', *Sociological Research Online,* Vol. 2, No.3.

Minniti, M. and Arenius, P. (2003), *Women in Entrepreneurship, The Entrepreneurial Advantage of Nations: First Annual Global Entrepreneurship Symposium,* report to the United Nations.

Mirchandani, K. (1999), 'Feminist insight on gendered work: New directions in research on women and entrepreneurship', *Gender, Work and Organisation,* Vol. 6, No. 4, pp. 224-236.

Mistick, B. K. (1998), The feminization of entrepreneurship: a case for a women's model in fostering economic development, paper presented at the United States Association for Small Business and Entrepreneurship Annual National Conference, 1998 Proceedings.

Moore, D.P. (2004), 'The entrepreneurial women's career model: current research and a typological framework', in *Equal Opportunities International*, Vol. 23, No.7/8, pp.78-98.

Moore, D. and Buttner, E. (1997) *Women Entrepreneurs: Moving beyond the Glass Ceiling,* Sage, London.

Morrison, A. (2000), 'Initiating Entrepreneurship', in Carter, S. and Jones-Evans, D. (eds), *Enterprise and Small Business: Principles, Practice and Policy,* FT Prentice Hall, Harlow, pp. 97-114.

Mortell, D. (1992), 'Is there a feminine management style?', Unpublished thesis, Trinity College Dublin.

Naman, J. L. and Slevin, D. P. (1993), 'Entrepreneurship and the concept of fit: A model and empirical tests' in *Strategic Management Journal*, Vol. 14, pp. 137-153.

National Foundation for Women Business Owners (NFWBO) (1994), *Credibility and Independence: Women Business Owners Voice Greatest Challenge and Biggest Rewards of Entrepreneurship*, [online] (cited 10 December 2004) Available from <http://www.womensbusinessresearch.org/pressreleases/9-30-1994/9-30-1994.htm>.

Nieslen, P. (2002), *Statistics on New Enterprises, Entrepreneurs and Survival of Startups: The Danish Experience*, OECD report, Denmark.

Oakley, A. (1974), *Housewife*, Allen Lane: London.

Oakley, A. (1979), *From Here to Maternity: Becoming a Mother*, Martin Robertson: Oxford.

Oakley, A. (1981), 'Interviewing women, a contradiction in terms', in Roberts, H. (ed), *Doing Feminist Research,* Heinemann, Oxford, pp. 30-61.

Ogbor, J.O. (2000), 'Mythicizing and reification in entrepreneurial discourse: Ideology critique of entrepreneurial studies', in *Journal of Management Studies,* Vol. 35, No. 7, pp. 605-635.

Orhan, M. and Scott, D. (2001), 'Why women enter into entrepreneurship: An explanatory model', in *Women in Management Review,* Vol. 16, No. 5, pp. 232-243.

Olson, S.F., Currie, H.M. (1992), 'Female entrepreneurs: personal value systems and business strategies in a male-dominated industry', in *Journal of Small Business Management*, Vol. 30, No. 1, pp. 49-57.

Polson, S. (2002), Investing in women: the policy context, report to Invest Northern Ireland, Paper presented at the Promoting Female Entrepreneurship Conference, Dundalk Institute of Technology.

Rees, T. (1992), *Women and the Labour Market,* Routledge, London.

Rees, T. (1999), *Women and Work, Twenty-five years of Gender Equality in Wales*, University of Wales Press, Cardiff.

Remenyi, D., Williams, B., Money, A. and Swartz, E. (1998), *Doing Research in Business and Management: An introduction to process and method*, Sage Publications, London.

Rosa, P and Hamilton, D. (1994), 'Gender and ownership in UK small firms', in *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, Vol. 18, No. 3, pp. 11-28.

Rosener, J. (1990), 'Ways women lead', in *Harvard Business Review*, Nov-Dec, Vol. 68.

Rouse, J. and Boles, K. (2005), *The Big NES Survey 2004: An Evaluation of the Experiences of New Entrepreneur Scholars,* Bedford: National Federation of Enterprise Agencies/Learning and Skills Council.

Salant, P. and Dillman, D.A. (1994), *How to Conduct your own Survey,* John Wiley and Sons, Inc., New York.

Sarri, K. and Trihopoulou, A. (2004), 'Female entrepreneurs' personal characteristics and motivation: a review of the Greek situation', in *Women in Management Review*, Vol. 20, No. 1, pp. 24-36.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2007), *Research Methods for Business Students, Fourth edition,* FT Prentice Hall, England.

Schwartz, E. (1976), 'Entrepreneurship: A new female frontier', in *Journal of Contemporary Business*, Winter, pp. 47-76.

Sheridan, A. (2004), 'Chronic presenteeism: The multiple dimensions to men's absence from part-time work', in *Gender, Work and Organization*, Vol. 11, No. 2, pp. 207-225.

The SIA Group (2001), *Policy and Planning on Developing Women in Enterprise*, report to Enterprise Ireland, Dublin.

Slovic, P. (2000), *The Perception of Risk*, Earthscan Publications Ltd, London.

Smallbone, D. and Wyer, P., 'Growth and development in the small firm' in Carter, S. and Jones-Evans, D. (eds), *Enterprise and Small Business: Principles, practice and policy,* Prentice Hall, Harlow, pp. 409-434.

Smith-Hunter, A. and Boyd, R.L. (2004), 'Applying theories of entrepreneurship to a comparative analysis of white and minority women business owners', in *Women in Management Review*, Vol. 19, No. 1, pp. 18-28.

Starbuck, W. H. and Mezias, J. M. (1995), 'Opening Pandora's box: studying the accuracy of managers' perceptions, in *Journal of Organizational Behaviour*, Vol. 17, pp. 99-117.

Stevenson, L. (1990), 'Some methodological problems associated with researching women entrepreneurs', in *Journal of Business Ethics* Vol.. 9, No. 4–5, pp. 439–46.

Stevenson, L. (2003), Facilitating women's entrepreneurship, OECD Workshop 'Entrepreneurship in a Global Economy: Strategic Issues and Policies'.

Still, L.V. and Timms, W. (2000), 'Women's business: the flexible alternative workstyle for women', in *Women in Management Review*, Vol. 15, No. 5/6, pp.272-82.

Tashakkori, A. and Teddlie, C. (1998), *Mixed Methodology: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, Applied Social Research Methods Series, vol.46, Sage Publications, London.

Taylor, S. (1998), 'The social being in social psychology', in Gilbert, D., Fiske, S. and Lindsey, G. (eds) *The Handbook of Social Psychology*, Vol. 1, pp. 58-94.

Taylor, D.W. and Walley, E.E. (2004) 'The green entrepreneur: opportunist, maverick or visionary?', *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business*, Vol. 1, Nos. 1/2, pp.56–69.

Tillmar, M. (2006), 'Gendered small-business assistance: lessons from a Swedish project', in *Journal of European industrial training*, Vol. 31, No. 2, pp. 84-99.

Tournès, A. (2003), L'Entrepreneur: l'Odyssée d'un Concept, [online] (cited 30 November 2005) available from http://www.entrepreneuriat.auf.org/HTML/WebPages/NotesdeRecherc he/IntroNotesdeRecherche.htm>.

Valiulis, M., Drew, E., Humbert, A. L., and Daverth, G. (2004), Springboard for women in business initiative: Women and entrepreneurship, Report to the Wicklow Chamber of Commerce.

Veenis, E., (1998) 'Working Parents: Experience from the Netherlands', in Drew, E, Emerek, R. and Mahon, E., *Women, Work and the Family in Europe,* Routledge, London, pp. 182-191.

Verheul, I. & Carree, M.A. & Thurik, A.R. (2007), 'Allocation and productivity of time in new ventures of female and male entrepreneurs', Research Paper ERS; ERS-2007-009-ORG, Erasmus Research Institute of Management (ERIM), RSM Erasmus University.

Vokins, N. (1993), 'The Minerva matrix women entrepreneurs: Their perception of their management style', in Allen, S. and Truman, C. (eds), *Women in Business, Perspectives on Women Entrepreneurs*, pp. 46-56, Routledge, London.

Von Wright, G. H. (1993), 'Two traditions', in Hammersley, M. (ed), *Social Research: Philosophy, Politics and Practice*, Open University, Sage Publications: London, pp. 9-12.

Watkins, J. and Watkins, D. (1986), 'The female entrepreneur: Her background and determinants of business choice – some British data', in Curran, J., Stanworth, J. and Watkins, D. (eds), *The Survival of the Small Firm*, Gower Publishing, Aldershot.

Williams, M. and May, T. (1996), *Introduction to the Philosophy of Social Research*, UCL Press: London.