Motivational factors in a push-pull theory of entrepreneurship
Jodyanne Kirkwood,

Article information:
To cite this document:
Permanent link to this document: https://doi.org/10.1108/17542410910968805

Downloaded on: 27 September 2017, At: 09:51 (PT)
References: this document contains references to 87 other documents.
To copy this document: permissions@emeraldinsight.com
The fulltext of this document has been downloaded 14974 times since 2009*

Users who downloaded this article also downloaded:

Access to this document was granted through an Emerald subscription provided by emerald-srm:616458 []

For Authors
If you would like to write for this, or any other Emerald publication, then please use our Emerald for Authors service information about how to choose which publication to write for and submission guidelines are available for all. Please visit www.emeraldinsight.com/authors for more information.

About Emerald www.emeraldinsight.com
Emerald is a global publisher linking research and practice to the benefit of society. The company manages a portfolio of more than 290 journals and over 2,350 books and book series volumes, as well as providing an extensive range of online products and additional customer resources and services.
Emerald is both COUNTER 4 and TRANSFER compliant. The organization is a partner of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) and also works with Portico and the LOCKSS initiative for digital archive preservation.

*Related content and download information correct at time of download.
Motivational factors in a push-pull theory of entrepreneurship

Jodyanne Kirkwood

Department of Management, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand

Abstract

Purpose – Entrepreneurial motivations are often defined as fitting into “push” or “pull” categories. To date, research has focused on the factors motivating men and women separately. What is missing from this research is an analysis of the comparative differences in these motivators of men and women, and an exploration of what this means in terms of push-pull theory. This paper aims to contribute by applying the existing theory on push and pull factors; and using a gender comparative approach to explore the nature of potential gender differences within entrepreneurial motivations.

Design/methodology/approach – This exploratory study uses a gender comparative approach in semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with 75 entrepreneurs (28 women and 47 men).

Findings – Findings suggest that both women and men appeared similarly motivated by a combination of push and pull factors. Three gender differences were found in the incidence of motivations: women were more influenced by a desire for independence; women considered their children as motivators more so than did men; men were influenced more by job dissatisfaction than were women. The discussion focuses on analysing the nature of gender differences rather than merely their incidence.

Research limitations/implications – A number of further research directions and questions are posed as a way of extending the knowledge in this area. Implications for managers and entrepreneurs are also presented.

Originality/value – Contributes to push-pull theory by offering a gender comparative approach to advance theory.

Keywords Entrepreneurialism, Gender, Motivation (psychology), Job satisfaction, New Zealand

1. Introduction

People have various motivations for becoming an entrepreneur. The primary theory development around entrepreneurial motivations has been to classify motivations into categories of push and pull factors (Hakim, 1989; McClelland et al., 2005; Schjoedt and Shaver, 2007; Segal et al., 2005). Push factors are characterised by personal or external factors (including a marriage break-up, or being passed over for promotion), and often have negative connotations. Alternatively, pull factors are those that draw people to start businesses – such as seeing an opportunity (Hakim, 1989). In general, pull factors have been found to be more prevalent than push factors (Segal et al., 2005; Shinnar and Young, 2008). This is significant because businesses started by entrepreneurs who experienced push motivations are less successful (financially) than those built upon pull factors (Amit and Muller, 1995).

While these studies sort entrepreneurs’ motivations in terms of push and pull categories, little explanatory research has been undertaken to review push-pull theory since the terms’ inception in the late 1980s. It is important that these categorisations are revisited as some important events since the time of these studies may have impacted on the theory. Indeed, some would argue that push and pull theories may have changed
over recent years with the advent of the internet – by reducing barriers to entry into business (Schjoedt and Shaver, 2007). Another factor which has changed since many of these studies have been conducted is the changing world of work. As Arthur and Rousseau (1996) suggest, the 1980s was dominated by the organisational career, but this has overwhelmingly changed worldwide.

To date, researchers have focused relatively little attention on exploring whether there are gender differences in the push and pull motivations for becoming an entrepreneur. This omission is not an isolated case, as while there has been a strong research focus on women entrepreneurs as a group, gender comparative research is still lacking in the entrepreneurship field (Menzies et al., 2004). Ten years ago, Brush and Hisrich (1998, p. 156) suggested that “the extent to which women create different organisations, or manage differently from men is not well understood”. Another advent which may affect the applicability of existing research on gender differences in push-pull theory is the increasing numbers of women now choosing entrepreneurship as a career option. Women are starting businesses at increasing rates globally (Devine, 1994; Minniti et al., 2004). While there is strong growth in the numbers of women entrepreneurs, there remains a large gender gap in participation in most countries. In the latest Global Entrepreneurship Monitor study, women entrepreneurs are noted as collectively making an important contribution to the global economy (Allen et al., 2008). While there is variation amongst different countries, women’s contribution to entrepreneurship is particularly evident in low and middle income countries (Allen et al., 2008). In all but two countries (Japan and Peru), participation rates of women in entrepreneurship are still substantially lower than men’s (in some countries this is half as much as men’s participation) (Allen et al., 2008). One explanation for these lower participation rates of women compared to men in entrepreneurship is that women have a lower propensity for entrepreneurship (Koellinger et al., 2008). This may be related to the observation that women are less likely than men to perceive themselves as entrepreneurs (Verheul et al., 2002), and some women don’t consider themselves entrepreneurs in the male sense of the word (Stevenson, 1990). Thus, entrepreneurship is described as male gendered (Ahl, 2003; Hyrsky, 1999; Verheul et al., 2002) and often defined in a “masculine” way (Ahl, 2003; Holmquist and Sundin, 1998; Ljunggren and Alsos, 2001; Simpson, 1991; Verheul et al., 2002). It is important to note that recent studies have shown that women may be lured into entrepreneurship by their continuing lack of progress within the workplace. This glass ceiling may be pushing women into entrepreneurship (Devine, 1994; Winn, 2004). This is highlighted by research which found women enter entrepreneurship having less managerial experience than men (Terjersen, 2005).

The decision to use existing theories in this paper is significant. Recently, researchers have argued that it may not be necessary to develop new theories to explain women’s entrepreneurship (de Bruin et al., 2007a; de Bruin et al., 2007b; Langowitz and Minniti, 2007). They argue that it is not altogether productive to compare women entrepreneurs to a male norm, but that research should focus on the process of entrepreneurship (de Bruin et al., 2007b). Before proceeding it must also be noted that “objective and reliable measurement of goals and motivations are difficult to achieve” (Amit and Muller, 1995, p. 67). In fact, this positivist approach may not be desirable and researchers in the field have suggested that gender comparative studies should focus on patterns of variation instead of the traditionally measured average differences (de Bruin et al., 2007a). This fits well with the objective of focusing on processes of entrepreneurship.
rather than statistical differences between the genders. In taking this approach, I am also conscious of not placing women as “other” or somehow secondary to men as is the case for much of the entrepreneurship research (Ahl, 2006).

The overall purpose of this paper is therefore to contribute to and extend existing theory on push and pull factors by using an exploratory gender comparative qualitative study. Three research objectives underlie this paper:

1. What motivates people to start a business?
2. How do motivations fit in relation to push or pull factors?
3. Explore whether there are gender differences in entrepreneurial motivation (and explain the nature of any differences that emerge).

2. Literature review

The focus of this paper is on gender comparative studies of motivations for entrepreneurship and theoretical contributions of push-pull theory. Some of this research has suggested that women and men have relatively similar motivations for entrepreneurship (Rosa and Dawson, 2006). On the whole though, the results of these studies on the influence of gender on entrepreneurship are mixed and gender comparative research is still an emerging area (Moore, 2004).

A review of the literature leads the author to conclude there are four key drivers of entrepreneurial motivation. First, a desire for independence (and related factors such as autonomy and greater control) is often cited as the number one motivating factor for many people in becoming an entrepreneur (Alstete, 2003; Borooah et al., 1997; Cassar, 2007; Fox, 1998; Wilson et al., 2004). A desire for independence is primarily classed as a pull factor. Few gender differences have been found in relation to independence (Marlow, 1997; Pinfold, 2001; Scott, 1986; Still and Soutar, 2001; Sundin and Holmquist, 1991). Independence appears to be a similar motivator for both women and men in becoming an entrepreneur, at least in countries where independence is part of a national culture that strongly emphasises the responsibility that an individual (not a collective) has in managing his or her own life (e.g. the USA (Frederick and Chittock, 2006)).

Monetary motivations are also usually classed as a pull factor. People are not always motivated by money to start a business (DeMartino and Barbato, 2003; Fischer et al., 1993; Rosa and Dawson, 2006) but this has been found to be important in a study of prospective entrepreneurs (Alstete, 2003). Some gender differences exist with regard to money as a motivating factor (Borooah et al., 1997; DeMartino and Barbato, 2003; Fischer et al., 1993; Marlow, 1997; Scott, 1986; Wilson et al., 2004). Economics research also offers some insights into motivations for entrepreneurship (referred to as self-employment). For example, Clain (2000) finds women place less emphasis on money and more on non-wage components of self-employment. She also concludes that women, who are historically low-wage earners, are pushed into entrepreneurship whereas men (high-wage workers) are pulled into it (Clain, 2000). Later work from a German study confirms these non-monetary aspects (e.g. time flexibility) of self-employment to be significant (Georgellis and Wall, 2005). Alongside this apparent lesser concern that women have for money when making entrepreneurial decisions, recent work has shown that women are also less likely than men to seek external finance for their businesses at start-up and also perceive there to be stronger financial barriers than men (Sena et al., 2008).
Motivations to become an entrepreneur that relate to work are usually considered to be push factors and are often a key factor that can influence the preparation for an entrepreneurial career (Dobrev and Barnett, 2005; Winn, 2004). This category includes issues such as unemployment, redundancy, and a lack of job or career prospects. Some gender differences are found with respect to work (Borooah et al., 1997; Cromie, 1987a; DeMartino and Barbato, 2003; Hakim, 1989) but generally prior studies have shown few gender differences in work-related motivators. This observation may be surprising given the often gendered nature of the workplace. Indeed, while women's participation in the workforce has risen over the past 50 years or so, distinctions remain between the work that women and men do, and the levels at which they operate in the workplace (Powell and Butterfield, 2003; van de Lippe and van Dijk, 2002). As noted earlier, the glass ceiling may impact women entering entrepreneurship, and women typically have less managerial experience than men. Other research has concluded that women have personal characteristics that are less highly valued in the workplace (Clain, 2000) and this have the effect of pushing women into business ownership. This is significant as women have been long found to lack networks (Aldrich, 1989), or have different networks from men's (Martin, 2001). Indeed, Terjersen (2005) found social capital (“knowing whom”) was useful in becoming an entrepreneur. The women in her study who had reached senior management positions within organisations were able to leverage this relatively successfully.

A number of family-related factors have been found to be important, such as combining waged and domestic labour (Still and Soutar, 2001), family policies and family obligations (DeMartino and Barbato, 2003), fit with domestic commitments (Greenfield and Nayak, 1992), and a desire for work-family balance (Jennings and McDougald, 2007; Kirkwood and Tootell, 2008). Family-related motivations for becoming an entrepreneur are often labelled push factors and have been recently described as important to entrepreneurs of both genders around the world (Verheul et al., 2006). These household and family issues are recently being recognised as significant to explaining women’s entrepreneurship (de Bruin et al., 2007b). Unlike the three other main categories of motivators, most of the results in relation to family motivators showed statistically significant gender differences; whereby women were more motivated than men by these factors.

In summary, while it can be seen that gender differences may be observed in entrepreneurial motivations, relatively few studies actually offer gender comparative approaches within their studies (Amit and Muller, 1995). In fact, many of the studies are samples of women entrepreneurs and appear to be compared to some male norm based on earlier research. Previous research has suggested that women may be more motivated by push factors than by pull factors (Clain, 2000; Orhan and Scott, 2001). On the contrary, Amit and Muller (1995) found women were more often pulled into entrepreneurship than pushed into it. When comparing women’s motivations across countries, McClelland et al. (2005) similarly found few push factors. These findings contrast with other research which suggests that men are more often pulled into business ownership than are women (Shinnar and Young, 2008). The results therefore are mixed, and warrant further investigation.

3. Method
Entrepreneurship research has been primarily positivist in its paradigmatic stance to date (Ahl, 2003; Curran and Blackburn, 2001; Grant and Perren, 2002; Lewis et al., 2007).
Of late, more research is being conducted within an interpretive paradigm and qualitative approaches are becoming more widely accepted (Lewis et al., 2007; Perren and Ram, 2004; Senenberger et al., 1990). Qualitative approaches are particularly useful in areas that are not well advanced theoretically (Edmondson and McManus, 2007). This is particularly pertinent given the problems pointed out in the literature review regarding the measurement of motivations (Amit and Muller, 1995).

The majority of the prior research on entrepreneurial motivations has been from positivist paradigms (see, for a review Kirkwood and Campbell-Hunt, 2007) and observed from psychological perspectives (Segal et al., 2005). The resulting research methods are concerned with hypothesis and theory testing, focusing on quantitative methods, and taking a deductive approach to research (Shane et al., 1991). However, given the motives for becoming an entrepreneur are often seen as multi-faceted (Mallon and Cohen, 2001; Marlow and Strange, 1994), a “checklist” approach may be unable to “capture the complexity of the decision process” (Stevenson, 1990, p. 442). In relation to gender comparative studies specifically, researchers suggest we focus on patterns of variation instead of these traditionally measured average differences (de Bruin et al., 2007a). These concerns raise an interest in an interpretive paradigm, which may be better suited to understanding such a complex phenomenon. In light of these issues, semi-structured interviews were seen to be the most appropriate way of collecting data to meet the objectives of this paper, outlined in the introduction. An interview schedule was devised after a review of the literature and was sent to participants prior to the interviews. Although the purpose of this phase of the study was to explore the research problem from a different perspective, it is generally agreed that some focus on the current literature was necessary (Eisenhardt, 1989; Glaser, 1978). The main aim however was to allow respondents’ own constructions of terms and meanings to be accessible to analysis, permitting more precise comparisons of gender differences in motivations for becoming entrepreneurs.

The unit of analysis is the entrepreneur. Much research in entrepreneurship has been focused at the firm level, and recently authors in women’s entrepreneurship have suggested we focus more attention on the entrepreneur (de Bruin et al., 2007a). This seems particularly pertinent when researching entrepreneurial motivations. For the purpose of this paper, an entrepreneur is defined as a person (or a group of people) who creates a new business (for profit) and employs at least one other paid employee. Thus, the focus is on what motivates people to start businesses. In a similar way to the issues around research paradigms discussed above, entrepreneurship studies employ various definitions and this makes comparisons between studies to be somewhat difficult (Moore, 1990).

The sample emerged from a quantitative study that used the New Zealand Business Who’s Who – a listing of businesses and their owners in New Zealand. The selection process was based on entrepreneurs who met the definition of an entrepreneur, who had started their businesses no longer than ten years prior, and also on the practical need to minimize travel expenses. Interviews were held in five of New Zealand’s largest cities – Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin and Invercargill. This author interviewed all 75 participants in a face-to-face format. Interviews ranged in time from 45 minutes to over three hours, and one part of the interview focused on the participant’s spouse. Most interviews lasted approximately 90 minutes and all were tape-recorded and transcribed. Some demographics of the sample are presented in Table I, which shows that men and women participants were relatively
similar across demographics such as industry, sales and ethnic origin. Gender differences lie in the numbers of participants who had children at the time of starting their business. Just over half of the women had children at this time, while 87 per cent of men did so.

The QSR NUD*IST Vivo (Nvivo) software package was used for data management (Richards, 2000). Using Nvivo, transcripts were coded according to themes, and analysed using a constant comparison approach (Glaser, 1992). Phenomena were labelled and categories were discovered which were then analysed in terms of their properties and dimensions; and it is these concepts from which theory is able to be built (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). The data were coded by paragraph and sentence as proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1990), and the entire document was also viewed to see if (and how) it differed from the previous transcript. Code notes were written from the open coding procedure and these were our initial thoughts about important themes and possible relationships and issues that seemed important to the participants. In this paper, the issue of credibility and transferability was addressed in three main ways: using convergent interviews, selecting quotes and contrary cases, and in the use of tabulations. In addition, the issue of dependability cannot be ignored, and careful documentation of procedures is required (Kirk and Miller, 1986). Silverman (2000) offers two ways to increase reliability of qualitative research: by using field notes, and assessing inter-coder agreement. Reliability was addressed by these two ways, and also by tape recording the interviews.
4. Findings

Table II illustrates the key motivating factors which participants described as being important to their starting a business. This table is referred to in the following discussion of findings.

4.1 Pull factors

As illustrated in Table II, five pull factors were found to be important motivators for entrepreneurship. Two factors were discussed more frequently than others – independence and money. The most often mentioned factor for both men and women was a desire for independence. This finding mirrors prior studies in this respect; but when looking at gender, more women were motivated by independence than were men, in the current study. This contradicts prior studies where few gender differences have been found in relation to independence (Marlow, 1997; Pinfold, 2001; Scott, 1986; Still and Soutar, 2001; Sundin and Holmquist, 1991). While the incidence of independence as a motivating factor appeared different for women and men, Table III shows that the accounts of both women and men were similar however. Participants of both genders talked of the desire for control over their destiny and wanting to be their own boss. For example, “feeling of being in charge of your own destiny” (Ann) and “didn’t want to be controlled” (Jess) were common amongst both genders.

The second most prevalent pull factor was monetary motivations. Prior studies observed that people are not always motivated by money to start a business (DeMartino and Barbato, 2003; Fischer et al., 1993; Rosa and Dawson, 2006). The current paper also found money to be discussed by participants in around a quarter of cases. As with the discussion on independence above, analysis of the quotations in Table III show similarities between women and men’s views on monetary motivations. In many examples, participants had varying goals with respect to money, such as “wanted to be a millionaire” (Jean), to some of the men’s accounts which described wanting to provide financially for their children – “I wanted to provide them [kids] with the right lifestyle” (Steve).

The other three motivators appeared relatively less often in participants’ accounts of why they started a business. A desire for a challenge/need for achievement has

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pull factors</th>
<th>Men (n = 47)</th>
<th>(%)</th>
<th>Women (n = 28)</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge/achievement</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saw opportunity</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifestyle</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total pull incidences</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Push factors</th>
<th>Men (n = 47)</th>
<th>(%)</th>
<th>Women (n = 28)</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job dissatisfaction</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing world of work</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped by employer</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children (of those participants with children)</td>
<td>9/41</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10/15</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total push incidences</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table II. Push and pull motivators

Note: In most participants more than one motivating factor was apparent
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pull factors</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>I certainly didn’t see any future in working for anybody else so it was a conscious decision to move into business – Aaron</td>
<td>It is that feeling of being in charge of your own destiny it is that freedom – Ann</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I might as well do it for myself and I guess that gave me the confidence to be able to actually start my own business – Jim</td>
<td>There is a false sense of feeling sort of like in control – Beth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I thought I could do this myself, I’ll go and set up myself – Ted</td>
<td>I refuse to conform to jobs – Jess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control is always a good thing – Gordon</td>
<td>I wanted to work for myself and enjoy that flexibility – Lisa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You have the freedom to choose what you want to do – Steve</td>
<td>I just really wanted to strike out on my own and I did it with virtually no thought really – Beth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I always wanted to work for myself since the year dot – Craig</td>
<td>I like my independence – Emma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Well for me it is more independence – Don</td>
<td>I really really really didn’t want to be controlled so I wanted to be the one to be making choices and decisions and that sort of thing so it was quite a strong desire to be self-employed – Jess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You’re controlling your own destiny – Craig</td>
<td>Freedom I think yourself and independence – Ruth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I don’t like not having total control of everything, I like to do everything – John</td>
<td>That was something we always decided we were going to do – Sue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I was committed to was to be my own boss and doing interesting work with interesting people – Keith</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I had set myself at the age of 50 that I wanted to be running my own business – Keith</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I always knew I wanted to start my own company, I always knew that at some time I would know intuitively that the time was right – Steve</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td>One of the compelling reasons was that I had kids that in three or four years time were going to be teenagers, and they were going to be very expensive and demanding as teenagers are, and I wanted to be able to provide them with the right lifestyle [...] And that was a major driving force in starting my own company – Steve</td>
<td>Hugely – Cath</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
shown gender differences in prior research (to “achieve something and recognition for it”) (Shane et al., 1991). Mixed results have been found previously with respect to challenge, where studies have found women are more motivated than men by a desire for a challenge (Scott, 1986), but Still and Soutar’s (2001) later result which shows men are more motivated than women by meeting new challenges. Seeing an opportunity was not a motivator that emerged in many instances in this paper (five men and no women). Earlier studies have not found gender differences in this factor (Fox, 1998; Honig-Haftel and Marin, 1986). Alongside these two motivators, lifestyle was described by four men and four women as motivating them to start a business. This factor has not emerged in prior studies of entrepreneurs in general, but recently, studies of ecopreneurs and craft entrepreneurs have found lifestyle considerations to be motivators for entrepreneurship (Cato et al., 2008; Fillis, 2003). This could also be related to family motivators (children), discussed in the following section.

4.2 Push factors
Table II indicates that push factors were slightly more prevalent than pull factors for both women and men. Four key push factors were found to be important to the entrepreneurs in this paper; dissatisfaction with a job, being helped by an employer, the changing world of work and motivations regarding children. Table IV provides a range of example quotations for each of these factors and should be consulted alongside the following discussion.

Job dissatisfaction featured strongly for 23 men and nine women participants. There was a continuum of levels of dissatisfaction, ranging from particularly bad experiences, to dissatisfaction with the general organisational culture and office politics. For some participants in this paper, job dissatisfaction was so intense that they felt a sense of wanting to “show” their previous employer how a business should be operated, and set up in direct competition to them. In these instances there was often a rather long and drawn out process of the participant offering suggestions and advice about how to do the job better and in turn reduce their own dissatisfaction. Often this was rebuffed by the organisation and led to the employee wanting some form of “revenge” by doing it better in a new company. The literature review reported some gender differences with respect to work-related motivators (Borooah et al., 1997; Cromie, 1987a; DeMartino and Barbato, 2003; Hakim, 1989) and this paper is no exception. Being dissatisfied with a job (e.g. being unappreciated or suggestions for improvement being ignored) was often the trigger for many male participants to leave employment and start a business. While greater numbers of men reported being motivated by factors around job dissatisfaction, their experiences appeared relatively similar to those of women (Table IV). On a positive note, women in this paper did not appear to be affected by the glass ceiling, which other studies have shown to be a motivating factor for women in becoming an entrepreneur (de Bruin et al., 2007a).

Alongside job dissatisfaction, changes occurring within workplaces were mentioned by 13 men and five women (only four of the participants in this paper were actually made redundant from their job). For the women and men participants who were faced with the changing world of work, this was not a wholly negative experience and offered a “push” into business ownership. Research contests that push and pull theories may have changed over recent years with the changing world of work. Examples of such changes in the workplace were shown as push factors in this paper. Additionally, three-quarters
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Push factors</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Job dissatisfaction       | I was so, so unhappy with where I was [...] and I just thought, I would do anything to get out of this – Ross  
It was kind of like being in the war together – Pete  
I hated it, absolutely hated it – Marty  
Had a very controlling, domineering and emotionally difficult boss, and that sort of in the end, made life difficult for me, because I was a high achiever – Harry                                                                 | The first was, we [business partner] could do it better, and that company taught me so much of what not to do. And the second thing is that I really had it in for them – Cath  
So, I decided after one day when I had a very bad (laugh) day and wasn’t appreciated, then I would go and do it for myself – Jean |
| Changing world of work    | [...] tell you one thing that was a really major stimulation in terms of going into my own business was I saw a number of my friends being made redundant – Steve  
 [...] yeah, I was happy but [company name] have a saying that – “don’t bring your lunch, and then don’t bring any morning tea” (Laugh) – Craig                                                                 | [...] it meant that we had a contract that we had won literally the week before, and there wasn’t a company to do it, so I had to really pick it up because of its unusual nature – Diane  
I was made redundant but I didn’t get any redundancy pay [...] and I just thought “oh this is not working for me” – Jean |
| Family                    | The reason I am doing this I suppose, ultimately it is for the family, so no – everything I do here pretty much fits around the family – Gerry  
Child was] just born, I needed to change where I was, I just needed to change where I was, I suppose my commitment to family was higher than my commitment to the employer – Pete                                                                 | [...] because I wanted the flexibility. I was very happy being employed up to the point of having children but I wanted to be around for them at the right times [...] It’s meant the business has grown a lot slower than it might have and I found that once you know children were totally out of the way and my focus was totally on the business, it really started to grow more – Elly  
 [...] starting a business] I felt it would be good for my children. It means that I was home with the kids, it meant that I could add to the coffers – Jean  
I toyed with working for a corporate because working for yourself can be quite tough at times, I would have been out the door at five to seven, and not back to seven, I would never have seen my kids, so I have the best of the both worlds – Sarah  
For both of us family is the number one priority, we are not out to make millions of dollars – Lisa |
| Helped by employer        | I thank him to this day really for giving me that opportunity and year, it was the big move – Larry                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | I thank him to this day really for giving me that opportunity and year, it was the big move – Larry                                                                                                                                                                                    |
of the women participants who had children showed some evidence of kaleidoscope thinking – whereby they defined their careers in relation to their values and life choices (Sullivan et al., 2007).

Some of the participants received assistance from their previous employer to start their business (eight men, five women). In most of these cases, this help proved to be a compelling motivation to start their own business. In Sarah’s case, restructuring led to her position being “outsourced”, so this offered her the impetus to start her own business. Sarah feels she “was nudged into doing my own thing”. In contrast to the women participants’ experiences with their employers, some of the men who were assisted by their employers were in management positions and were able to negotiate financially rewarding assistance. For example, when Todd indicated that he was going to leave, the company was desperate to keep him, so they agreed that he could set up his own business while still working for them. They allowed him time during work to establish his business and also gave him access to their customer base. In Craig’s case, he negotiated tangible financial benefits (“I got six months [free] rental on the office building”) from his employer because of his tenure and position with the organisation. What are different here are the levels of tangible “benefits” that were gained between women and men participants. In the case of the women participants, two actually worked on contract for their previous employers, while the other two were given the chance to start their own businesses but were not given any material assistance for their efforts. In contrast, three of the eight men were in management positions and had significantly greater assistance from their employer than did the women participants or the other two men. Unlike other push factors, these examples of an employer pushing (or nudging as noted by one participant) people into an entrepreneurial career does not necessarily have the negative connotation that other push factors tend to have. This factor may be a significant finding as it has not appeared in prior studies of entrepreneurial motivation.

Of those entrepreneurs who had children, greater numbers of women (75 per cent) were motivated by their children, compared to men (22 per cent). Beneath these percentages, this paper found that women and men were influenced differently by their children in their motivations to create a new venture. Women participants spoke of concern for their children’s well-being, in terms of wanting to be there emotionally for their children. They also talked about their decision to become an entrepreneur in relation to practical reasons as well as their children’s emotional needs. Two women comment on their motivations: “Because I wanted the flexibility” (Elly) and “It means that I was home with the kids” (Jean). These excerpts sum up the thoughts of most of the women who had children at the time of starting their venture. In comparison, almost all of the men had children when they started their business but were not involved in their actual day-to-day care. However, men spoke of their breadwinner role in the family (as discussed above in monetary motivations), and how they felt pressured to provide for their children in material ways. The following quotation sums this up: “Yes, I was very conscious of the need that the children had a stable platform” (Gerry); and other examples in Table IV support this mindset. Given these financial concerns towards their children, having children may have strengthened their motivations to become an entrepreneur because of their need to play the role of financial provider for the family. These household and family issues have been termed “motherhood”, and researchers argue that they are significant to explaining women’s entrepreneurship (de Bruin et al., 2007b).
5. Discussion and implications for managers and entrepreneurs

Table II illustrates that entrepreneurs were not motivated by a single factor, and the majority described multiple motivations for starting a new business. These findings therefore support previous research that suggests motivations for entrepreneurship are complex and intertwined (Kirkwood and Campbell-Hunt, 2007; Mallon and Cohen, 2001). However, few prior studies have focused on understanding whether gender differences exist in the push and pull motivations for becoming an entrepreneur. As outlined in the literature review, inconclusive results of extant research around gender differences in motivations for entrepreneurship exists. Some suggested that women may be more motivated by push factors than by pull factors (Orhan and Scott, 2001), while others found the reverse (Amit and Muller, 1995; Shinnar and Young, 2008). This paper generally agrees with others that women and men have relatively similar types of motivations for entrepreneurship (Rosa and Dawson, 2006). At a broad level, the incidence of pull and push factors are almost equally apparent for both women and men participants in the paper; but some more subtle gender differences emerged when analysing the rich qualitative data more fully. For instance, prior quantitative research indicated women seemed to place less emphasis on money as a motivation for entrepreneurship and more on other factors such as family flexibility (Clain, 2000; Georgellis and Wall, 2005). The current paper allows these findings to be supported by gender comparative empirical research, and also provides a greater understanding on exactly what non-monetary factors influenced women and men in their motivations for entrepreneurship.

As noted earlier, being pulled into business ownership means entrepreneurs are likely to have ongoing financial success (Amit and Muller, 1995). While push factors were slightly more visible in the current paper the author suggests both pull and push factors could be observed acting in combination. However, the entrepreneurs in this paper may be still likely to succeed because of this combination. While women were pulled into entrepreneurship in a remarkably similar way to men, the push factors they experienced were largely related to their families (flexibility with children). This finding is significant because women considered (in advance of starting the business) the potential difficulties of integrating their family and the business. This may bode well for the sustainability of women’s businesses in the longer term, given that they have already considered the potential effects of the business on their families. Additionally, two of the factors labelled as push motivators may have had more positive connotations than previous categories of push factors. These were, being helped by an employer, and the changing world of work. These factors acted like a trigger point, and appeared to work in combination with other push and pull factors. Some have termed these “critical incidents” (McClelland et al., 2005).

There is little doubt that job dissatisfaction would arise as an issue for these participants, as much prior research has indicated this to be an important driver for people to leave employment and become entrepreneurs (Brockhaus, 1980; Cromie, 1987b; Honig-Haftel and Marin, 1986; Mallon and Cohen, 2001; Stoner and Fry, 1982). More recently, the opposite conclusions have been reached, however this was in a sample of nascent entrepreneurs. These results showed that the decision to leave employment was not due to job dissatisfaction (Schjoedt and Shaver, 2007). The present paper finds many examples of job dissatisfaction, but it also identifies some differences from the findings of previous research. Prior research suggests that
people who are dissatisfied with their jobs tend to start businesses that are different to their workplace. On the other hand, those who are more driven by an opportunity/growth are more likely to go into a similar business (Stoner and Fry, 1982). For some participants in this paper, job dissatisfaction was so intense that they felt a sense of wanting to "show" their previous employer how a business should be operated and set up in direct competition to them. In these instances, there was often a rather long and drawn out process of the participant offering suggestions and advice about how to do the job better and in turn reduce their own dissatisfaction. Oftentimes this was rebuffed by the organisation and led to the employee wanting some form of revenge in the form of a new company doing it better. However, another point to note is that there is often a distinct time lag between when participants become dissatisfied with their jobs and finally taking the decision to leave an organisation. Therefore, there is a chance that if employers listen more closely to their employees' concerns and action their suggestions for improvement, the employees may not leave (and therefore may be less likely to set up a business as a direct competitor).

One final implication of this paper is for managers and entrepreneurs. In a tight labour market, retaining good employees is an important focus for many organisations. The results of this paper show that New Zealand employers may not be in a position to stop people leaving to become entrepreneurs as the desire to be an entrepreneur is already strong. However, in countries where the level of entrepreneurship is not as high, this may not be the case. In these situations, it may be that there are fewer factors that pull a person into entrepreneurship. Therefore, in such situations, employers may have more confidence that their employees will stay in the job. However, this may be made more difficult as the worldwide trend is towards employees opting out of traditional linear careers in organisations (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006). The high level of entrepreneurship in New Zealand and other entrepreneurial countries may also affect entrepreneurs themselves. While participants in this paper wanted to start their own business after a career within an organisation, it is also likely that some of their own employees will want to leave to become entrepreneurs. This may be seen as a negative consequence of employing people (in terms of the investment of training and development), particularly if the employee is using the workplace as an incubator to start a similar business. An alternative view of such a situation is that some entrepreneurs could view this as an opportunity to collaborate with their departing employees on future additional business ventures.

6. Conclusion
Overall, while the types of motivators described by participants in this paper were similar between women and men, the interactions and manifestations of these push and pull factors appeared to differ. Thus, this paper contributes to the field by moving beyond being concerned only with the existence of gender differences, to exploring the nature of gender differences in the motivations for becoming an entrepreneur. Using qualitative methods to explore entrepreneurial motivations uncovers different “answers”; and the continuing focus on positivist approaches will not highlight the many differences that an interpretive approach can illuminate. One of the key purposes of this research is to review whether existing theory adequately explains entrepreneurial motivations – given the increasing numbers of women entering entrepreneurship and the lowering of some barriers to entrepreneurship. The author
agrees with recent propositions that new theories are not always necessary in order to explain women’s entrepreneurship (de Bruin et al., 2007a, b; Langowitz and Minniti, 2007). This paper finds relatively few gender differences in motivations but suggests existing push-pull theory should recognise importance of the role of children, referred to by others as the “motherhood” aspect of women’s entrepreneurship (de Bruin et al., 2007b). Women assessed the likely impact their decision to become an entrepreneur would have on their families. The women in this paper considered their relationships with others in their decision – should those relationships have been in jeopardy they may not have continued with the decision to become an entrepreneur. Therefore, women’s motivations to become an entrepreneur are strongly affected by relational thinking, as has been found in studies of women making entrepreneurship and other career decisions (Lirio et al., 2007; Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006). These relational approaches are also apparent in the ways women entrepreneurs manage their businesses where women employed relationship-based management strategies (Farr-Wharton and Brunetto, 2009).

While this paper contributes new findings to the field, there is still more work to be done by researchers. In further research, studies would therefore benefit from the conclusions in this paper and others by placing more emphasis on the family as a motivator for becoming an entrepreneur. It has been argued recently that the household context plays a significant role in women’s entrepreneurship and it may explain some gender differences (de Bruin et al., 2007b), and this is certainly a worthy avenue for further research. The rationale for individuals to transition from an organisational career to an entrepreneurial career is still under-researched and not fully understood in comparison to some other motivational factors like independence and family-related factors. These career related decisions have begun to receive some attention recently in the form of qualitative studies (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2006; Peel and Inkson, 2004; Terjersen, 2005) and this paper offers some insights into the nature of these career decisions. Further work on the factors around the decision to leave organisational employment would be insightful – extending work done on the impact of wage variations in paid employment and the impact of the glass ceiling on women managers’ decisions to leave and start their own businesses.

Additionally, while motivations for entrepreneurship appear to be intertwined, these findings do not allow the researcher to rank-order the motivations in terms of their importance. Others have noted the difficulty in assessing the magnitude of each motivation (Shane et al., 2003). In interpreting the findings, the researcher has taken advice from a recent study which suggested that gender comparative studies focus on patterns of variation rather than average differences (de Bruin et al., 2007a). Some other methodological points are also pertinent to consider in undertaking future research on entrepreneurial motivations. This paper has alluded to some weaknesses in much of the prior research on motivations for becoming an entrepreneur that relate to the dominance of quantitative methodologies. This may be merely extending the traditional yes/no measures of motivations to interval scales, where the relative importance of various motivations can be gauged (Taormina and Lao, 2007). Furthermore, because entrepreneurs are individuals and their motivations are diverse, it seems useful to suggest that more researchers consider using interpretive approaches.

Finally, every study has limitations. Those in this paper focus on retrospective recall and the context for the paper. Researchers often only have retrospective accounts
to rely on, and there are potential issues with accuracy of recall in many methodologies (Mangione, 1995). Attempts were made to minimise elapsed time between events and data collection but there is still potential for inaccuracy because the businesses were up to ten years old at the time of the interview. In a related point, while this paper focused on the motivations for becoming an entrepreneur, others have noted that motivations may differ over different steps of the entrepreneurship process (Shane et al., 2003). This paper does not investigate such changes in motivations over time. The country context is also a factor that should be considered when interpreting the findings discussed here and their applicability to other countries. New Zealand has been found to have a high level of entrepreneurship (particularly entrepreneurs who are pulled into entrepreneurship). In countries where the level of entrepreneurship is not as high as in New Zealand, there are likely to be fewer factors that pull a person into entrepreneurship and findings may differ accordingly.

References


**About the author**

Jodyanne Kirkwood is a Lecturer in the Department of Management, University of Otago and a researcher in the Centre for Entrepreneurship. She teaches innovation management, entrepreneurship and operations management. She has a number of research interests in the entrepreneurship field. Her current work is on ecopreneurs and women entrepreneurs. She is also researching the role of the family in entrepreneurial decisions and is participating in an ongoing study on succession planning for business owners. Jodyanne Kirkwood can be contacted at: jkirkwood@business.otago.ac.nz

To purchase reprints of this article please e-mail: reprints@emeraldinsight.com

Or visit our web site for further details: www.emeraldinsight.com/reprints
This article has been cited by:

1. Monika Mühlböck, Julia-Rita Warmuth, Marian Holienka, Bernhard Kittel. 2017. Desperate entrepreneurs: no opportunities, no skills. *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal* 50. [Crossref]

2. Tommy Shih, Yen-Yu Huang. 2017. A case study on technology entrepreneurship education at a Taiwanese research university. *Asia Pacific Management Review*. [Crossref]


4. Bibliography 145-166. [Crossref]

5. Rita G. Klapper, Helle Neergaard. Teaching Entrepreneurship as Lived Experience Through ‘Wonderment Exercises’ 145-170. [Abstract] [Full Text] [PDF] [PDF]


12. Norita Ahmad, Fatima Al-Mazrouee, Mariela Ranova-Fredrick. Motivation, Voices, and Visions of Women Entrepreneurs in the UAE 589-597. [Crossref]


14. Zahra Arasti, Neda Bahmani. Women’s Entrepreneurship in Iran 109-137. [Crossref]

15. Hannu Tervo, Mika Haapanen. Opportunity- and Necessity-Driven Self-Employment Among Older People in Finland 255-276. [Crossref]


28. Neha Chatwani. Understanding the Gendered Identity Role of Skilled Female Entrepreneurs Amongst the Indian Diaspora in Europe 117-131. [Crossref]


32. Ute Pascher, Melanie Roski, Brigitte Halbfass. 2015. Entrepreneurial aspirations and start-up motives of women chemists in Germany. *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship* 7:3, 272-290. [Abstract] [Full Text] [PDF]
33. Nsubili Isaga, Enno Masurel, Kees Van Montfort. 2015. Owner-manager motives and the growth of SMEs in developing countries. *Journal of Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies* 7:3, 190-211. [Abstract] [Full Text] [PDF]


36. Magdalena Markowska, Charmine E. J. Härtel, Ethel Brundin, Amanda Roan. A Dynamic Model of Entrepreneurial Identification and Dis-Identification: An Emotions Perspective 215-239. [Abstract] [Full Text] [PDF] [PDF]

37. Pi-Shen Seet, Janice Jones, Tim Acker, Michelle Whittle. 2015. Shocks among managers of indigenous art centres in remote Australia. *Management Decision* 53:4, 763-785. [Abstract] [Full Text] [PDF]

38. Tamer Mohamed Atef, Masooma Al-Balushi. 2015. Entrepreneurship as a means for restructuring employment patterns. *Tourism and Hospitality Research* 15:2, 73-90. [Crossref]

39. Kate V. Lewis, Candice Harris, Rachel Morrison, Marcus Ho. 2015. The entrepreneurship–motherhood nexus. *Career Development International* 20:1, 21-37. [Abstract] [Full Text] [PDF]


41. Jiří Dostál. Badatelky orientovaná výuka. [Crossref]


45. Étienne St-Jean, Luc LeBel. 2014. The influence of start-up motivations on forest entrepreneurs' performance. *Journal of Small Business & Entrepreneurship* 27:4, 392-405. [Crossref]

46. Tim Vorley, Peter Rodgers. 2014. Home is where the business is: Incidents in everyday life and the formation of home-based businesses. *International Small Business Journal* 32:4, 428-448. [Crossref]

47. Jasmine E. Goliath, Shelley M. Farrington, Shelley B. Saunders. 2014. Establishing student perceptions of an entrepreneur using word associations. *Acta Commercii* 14:2. [Crossref]


50. Natalie Sappleton. 2013. When the “Manny” is the Boss. An Exploratory Study into Discrimination and Preferential Treatment Perceived by Men Childcare Business Owners. *Recherches sociologiques et anthropologiques* :44-2, 93-113. [Crossref]


56. MAGNUS HOLMÉN, THAW TAR MIN, EMILIA SAARELAINEN. 2011. FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN AFGHANISTAN. *Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship* **16**:03, 307–331. [Crossref]