Micro and small textile-related business enterprise in Botswana: motivations, challenges and success

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Micro and small textile-related business enterprise in Botswana:
Motivations, challenges and success

by

Marina Rinas Gobagoba

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE

Major: Textiles and Clothing

Program of Study Committee:
Mary A. Littrell (Major Professor)
  Nancy Miller
  Mary Winter

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Ames, Iowa.

2002

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Graduate College
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This is to certify that the master's thesis of

Marina Rinas Gobagoba

has met the thesis requirement of Iowa State University

Signatures have been redacted for privacy
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ABSTRACT

Small, medium, and micro enterprises are important in helping achieve economic diversity. Because of their importance Botswana Government has helped in their initiation. But little is known about the business owner’s experiences of being in operation. Women textile and apparel operated businesses were studied as they are on the increase in Botswana.

The purpose of the study was to describe and analyze micro and small textile and apparel businesses operated by women and explore the motivations for initiating the business, factors used for defining successful and less successful firms, and challenges faced as business is initiated and expands. The second purpose was to compare the more and less successful groups of women on their motivations for initiating the business, challenges faced at business start-up and business growth, and selected demographics. A final purpose was to address the lack of research on small businesses in Botswana.

Data were collected through structured interviews of 25 micro and small textile and apparel businesses selected systematically from a list of names given to the researcher. All had been in business for at least three years and received government assistance at start-up. Frequencies, t-test, and chi square were used to compare and examine the more and less successful businesses on their motivations for starting the businesses, challenges faced at business start-up and growth, and on selected variables.

The study showed a number of similarities on motivations for initiating business and on business challenges faced between U.S. and Botswana businesswomen. Motivations for starting the business were described as both extrinsic and intrinsic.
There were similarities and differences to existing research literature on small business success. Both more and less successful businesses faced challenges at both business start-up and growth. On motivation, the two groups differed on the desire to do business as a career, and for challenges at business growth, the groups differed on management. In both cases these characteristics were stronger for more successful businesses than the less successful businesses. For Botswana businesswomen success was measured in terms of measurable outcomes, such as profits.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Botswana is a landlocked country in Southern Africa; its surface area is 231,800 square miles (600,370 square kilometers), approximately the size of the U.S. state of Texas (see Figure 1). Botswana attained transitional government from Britain in 1965, and became the Republic of Botswana in September 1966. It shares boarders with Namibia to the west and north, Zambia and Zimbabwe to the north-east, and South Africa to the east and south. According to the 1991 Population Census, there are 1,576,470 million people resident in Botswana. Most people reside in the two main cities, Francistown in the north and Gaborone in the south, the latter being the country’s capital with a population of 183,487. Education is a priority for the Botswana government and is free for all primary school going children. The national literacy rate is 69%, 70% for females and 67% for males. Botswana has a per capita income of $3,600 (World Almanac 2000, p. 769)

Figure 1. Map of Botswana
Botswana government, like many other governments of the world, has come to recognize the vital role played by small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs) in helping achieve economic diversity. These enterprises create jobs, generate wealth, and provide careers for a growing number of entrepreneurs. In estimation there are about 56,000 SMMEs in the whole country of which 50,000 are micro enterprises (less than six workers including the owner and an annual turnover of less than P60,000), 6,000 are small enterprises (less than 25 employees and an annual turnover of between P60,000 and P1,500,000), and 300 are medium sized enterprises (less than 100 employees and an annual turnover of between P1, 500,000 and 5,000,000). Of the 50,000 micro enterprises 75% are owned by women; most lack formal registration and operate from residential premises. Seventy percent of the enterprises are located in rural areas. Sixty-five percent are involved in trading, 25% in manufacturing including maintenance and repair, and 10% in service and others areas (Ministry of Commerce and Industry, 1998).

Enterprises vary in their focus, ranging from brick molding, welding, bakery, and carpentry, to sewing and knitting. Out of all these enterprises there are 831 textile-related enterprises made up of 812 sewing and knitting, 10 leather works, 5 upholstery, 4 knitting, 1 doll making, and 1 embroidery (Ministry of Commerce and Industry, 1998).

In recognition of SMME’s importance, the government has a financial scheme ready for helping both citizens and noncitizens to start or expand such ventures that will help improve and diversify the economy of the country. One scheme that helps in financing businesses is the Financial Assistance Policy (FAP) grants program. This program was

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1 SMMEs: An abbreviation used in Botswana for small, medium, and micro-enterprises.
2 2001 conversion is 5.4318 Pula BWP to $1 U.S.
launched in May, 1982, and is operated through the National Development Bank, which is
the disbursing agent. Assistance is in the form of grants that need not be repaid. The grants
vary from project to project and for small-scale business the grant is up to 90% of the cost of
the project. Apart from the FAP scheme, other formal sources of finance are commercial
banks and the National Development Bank, which can give loans from P20,000 or more and
other financial development institutions such as Botswana Development Corporation. Other
sources of small business finance are the Women’s Finance House of Botswana, the Rural
Industries Innovation Center, and the Co-operation of Research.

This research is focused on businesspersons who have received an FAP grant. FAP is
an incentive program of grants available to new and expanding projects in the micro, small,
medium, and large scale manufacturing business. It is a policy started by the government to
assist productive business in Botswana in pursuance of the national planning goals of rapid
growth, economic independence, social justice, and sustained development. Through FAP,
Botswana hopes to create more employment and expand the economy in other than beef and
mining. The program’s criteria for participation include the following: the business must be
involved in production and the applicant must be an 18-year-old Motswana\(^3\) with a national
identity card (Omang). Production refers to: either businesses that produce or process goods,
which can replace products that are at present imported, or businesses that produce goods for
export. The range for grants starts at P60,000 to 5,000,000 (Ministry of Finance and
Development Planning).

\(^3\) Motswana is a noun for one person in Botswana.
Currently a void exists in studies of SMMEs as noted by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. This study will help address the lack of research on small businesses in Botswana.

**Purpose**

One purpose of this study was to describe and analyze micro or small businesses in Botswana that are operated by women and focused on the manufacturing of textiles and apparel. All businesses had received assistance from the FAP program, had less than 25 employees, had been in business at least three years, and were from the southern region, especially Gaborone. More especially I explored (a) motivations for initiating a business, (b) factors used in defining successful and less successful firms, and (c) challenges faced as business are initiated and expand. For a second purpose, the more and less successful businesses were compared on their 1) motivations for initiating the business, 2) challenges at business start-up and growth, and 3) selected demographics. A third purpose was to address the lack of research on small business in Botswana. The scholarly small business literature on these topics formed the basis for comparative analysis. At an applied level the research findings would form a basis of knowledge for teachers who, according to the Botswana Revised National Policy on Education, (Policy on Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises in Botswana, 1998, p.13), are supposed to equip students with necessary orientation for effective participation in SMMEs. Textile and apparel businesses were the focus as in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry Report there are a large number of textile and apparel businesses operated across Botswana. Women businesspersons were studied as it was my personal observation that most of these businesses are operated by women.
Operational Definitions

**Micro-enterprise:** A business enterprise with less than six workers including the owner and annual turnover of less than P60,000.

**Textile related business:** A business enterprise that carries out sewing or knitting as processes for production of textiles or apparel.

**Small enterprise:** A business with less than 25 employees and an annual turnover of between P60,000 and P1,500,000.

**Success:** Inductively defined by participants in the research.

Objectives

1. Describe textile-related businesses in Botswana, related to:
   a. Motivations for initiating the business
   b. Criteria for defining success
   c. Challenges at business start-up and during growth
   d. Selected business and demographic variables

2. Compare more and less successful businesses for:
   a. Motivations for initiating the business
   b. Challenges at business start-up and growth
   c. Selected business and demographic variables

3. Assess findings about motivations, definition for success, and challenges as compared to the research literature based on U.S. small businesses

4. Compare findings for more and less successful businesses with the Littrell, Stout, and Reilly research (1991) on craft businesses in the U.S.

5. Propose programming applications for use by Botswana Secondary Education teachers.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

To gain a better understanding of the topic of why women start businesses, their conceptualization of success, and challenges faced through a venture initiation, it was necessary to read research from previous scholars. Both scholarly and anecdotal literature was utilized. Three areas of scholarship apply to this research. A brief overview of research literature related to motivations, business success, and challenges follows. In addition a new Botswana Senior Secondary Fashion and Fabrics Assessment Syllabus is discussed. Very little literature was found in Botswana related to entrepreneurship, especially on motivations, definitions of success, and challenges. The only literature found addressed generally the characteristics of small businesses.

Motivation

Motivation is a concept used as an explanation or rationale for the way a person behaves or acts. According to Mwamwenda (1994), motivation can be defined as a desire, driving force, or an urge that causes an individual to engage in a certain behavior. It is a strong influence on behavior. Motivation can either be intrinsic or extrinsic.

Intrinsic motivation is associated with enhanced performance, improved conceptual and creative thinking, positive affect, high memory recall, subsequent willingness to engage in other tasks, and better psychological and physical health (Bumps, Olbeter, & Glover 1998). According to Bumps et al., motivation arises from the interaction of task features, individual characteristics, and situational aspects. Intrinsic qualities encompass addressing the desire to know, to accomplish, or experience sensory stimulation. A task that is intrinsically motivating will include clear goals for what needs to be done, offer challenge for engaging one's skills, and provide immediate feedback. Extrinsic motivation is associated
with external forces that make one decide to do something in return for a gain or reward and could include urgent need for income or change in family circumstances.

Researchers of business motivations have identified a range of motivations and have examined motivations specifically for women who start businesses. Researchers have identified controlling one’s future, and seeking financial and personal rewards, such as independence and freedom, as significant motivations (Kuratko, Hornsby & Naffziger, 1997). According to Kuratko et al. (1997), individuals started a new venture creation motivated by personally relevant goal sets, which they believed would be satisfied by self-employment. The achievement of these goals was fundamental to the entrepreneur’s motivation to sustain the business. These researchers established that entrepreneurs sought to satisfy goals of both an intrinsic and extrinsic nature. Extrinsic goals included the need to acquire more wealth and to increase personal income while intrinsic goals were the need for recognition, challenge, and personal growth. Other motivating factors identified were autonomy and family security. The desire for flexibility was also noted as a motivator (AdvancingWomen Network, 2002; Costello, 1999).

Hisrich and Brush (1985) studied women entrepreneurs and revealed that both “push and pull” factors contributed to women’s need for business start up. “Push” factors emerged from frustration and boredom, a hostile work environment (Business Media, 1998; Stokes, Riger, & Sullivan, 1995), and redundancy or firm closure (Birley & Westhead, 1994). Hisrich and Brush (1985) asserted that the “pull” factor, such as autonomy, was due to the push factors. In contrast, according to Buttner and Moore (1997), “pull” factors such as seeking challenge and the opportunity for self determination were the most significant motivations in women wanting to start up their own business.
Apart from pressures from work places, some entrepreneurs, especially mothers, said, necessity was a motivating factor for them (Cotlier, 2000). Other noted motivations for starting a business by women include an entrepreneurial idea and lack of challenge in the previous job (AdvancingWomen Network, 2002) and the need to use personal skills and abilities (Feldman & Bolino, 2000).

**Business Success**

Success has been defined using objective and subjective criteria. One approach has been to develop profiles of more successful and less successful entrepreneurs and compare their characteristics. In Littrell, Stout, and Reilly (1991), craft producers were categorized as more successful and less successful based on the businessperson’s own criteria of descriptions of success, self rating of success, and annual level of retail sales for selected craft products.

*In the Littrell et al. (1991) study, successful producers could be summarized as people who had definite goals and had a commitment to fulfill them, including working more hours than less successful entrepreneurs. Good management practices included the preparation of business plans, which one respondent cited “as a document that keeps one on track of his perceptions” (p. 34). Employment of skilled labor indicated that the entrepreneur knew that he/she could not be everything for the business to succeed and that skilled labor was needed to produce good quality and salable work. The ability to produce original designs unique to the business was also an important factor for being classified as a successful entrepreneur. The ability to market the product in various ways such as in mail order catalogs, retail outlets, and wholesale was yet another significant sign of a successful entrepreneur. Successful entrepreneurs extended their marketing beyond their geographical region and they
employed advertising as a marketing tool. Successful entrepreneurs were able to separate business insurance and finances from that of the home.

The less successful craft businesspersons could be said to be those who started a venture without concrete goals nor much consideration about what business involves in terms of its management. They did not employ skilled labor but often turned to family and friends who might not have the requisite skills. Pricing strategies were not clear as to how one arrived at a given price of the item; marketing of their products was confined to their locality. The target market was not really defined as products were made for any interested consumer. These less successful entrepreneurs also showed lack of innovativeness in product development; their designs were primarily adaptive.

In a more recent study, Paige and Littrell (in press) asked craft retailers in the U.S. Southeast how they defined success. The criteria fell into three factors, satisfaction of goals, craft and cultural orientation, and personal expression. Satisfaction of goals covered intrinsic motivations such as achieving personal happiness and fulfillment and having independence, and extrinsic motivations such as achieving sales growth and exceeding customer expectation. Craft and cultural orientation was linked to motivations reinforcing the regions’ cultural identity, providing a different product or service, preserving and elevating the craft tradition, and gaining a positive reputation within the community. Under the personal expression factor, receiving personal gratification and expression of skills or talents were mentioned as motivations.

In contrast to success, other researchers have focused on business failure. Though the exact failure rate is not known, Dodge and Robbins (1992) estimated that 55% of small businesses fail within five years of inception. Failure as defined by Gaskill, VanAuken, and
Manning (1993) is “wanting or needing to sell or liquidate to avoid losses or to pay off creditors or general inability to make a profitable go of the study business” (p. 21). Using factor analysis of 90 businesses, management and planning, working capital, competitive environment, and growth and expansion were identified as four main reasons that contributed to business failures. These were consistent with the themes cited from previous studies of poor managerial skills, financial problems (Haswell & Holmes, 1989), and inability to compete.

Managerial and planning functions were found to be the most important in the failure of the business. Items in the managerial and planning function included pricing, business planning, advertising and promotion, managerial skills, personnel, product, and merchandise. Poor vendor relations, difficulty in receiving merchandise, and poor record keeping were items under working capital management, and were related to the daily operations of the firm. Competitive environment items were found to be inability to compete in the trading area, failure to offer salable merchandise, and competition from the environment. Gaskill et al. (1993) also asserted that these factors were interrelated in causing failure. For instance, inability to compete and offer salable merchandise were due to management decisions. Growth and over expansion led to financial distress of the company.

Whether studying success or failure, researchers identified effective managerial planning as an important aspect in the success or failure of the business. Producing and marketing a product, which has to be able to withstand the competitive environment, were critical. Having skilled employees was also relevant to business success (Duncombe & Heeks, 2001; Gaskill et al., 1993).
Challenges Faced by Entrepreneurs

The road for new small firms/entrepreneurs is full of various challenges or problems. These challenges can be faced throughout the life cycle of the business; others are unique at certain organizational life cycle stages. Dodge and Robbins (1992) proposed a life-cycle model that associates business challenges with life style cycle stages.

Stage 1. Formation. This is the most important stage for an entrepreneur, as it is when the idea is turned into a realistic thing, which is the formation of a business entity. Most important in this stage are to build financial support, identify a target market, and provide the target market with selected products. At this stage developing producer capacity to meet a competitive market is emphasized.

Stage 2. Early growth: In this stage, the business establishes itself through strong positive growth with a commercially feasible product. Problems faced at this stage relate to increasing sales and stabilizing production, maintaining a cash flow, and formalizing the organizational structure. Product reliability and being able to meet the demands of the market also pose problems.

Stage 3. Late growth: At this stage growth begins to slow down due to new competitors and narrowing the market. The other main problems are the decision to expand or not, and to maintain adequate selling capacity as well as enhance the current level of profit.

Stage 4. Stability: The business is established and stable and operates as a small bureaucracy. The problems faced are keeping the momentum, downsizing to maintain profit, and one-person management. The one-person management is a problem especially if the
manager is no longer as active and enthusiastic as before. He or she may have run out of ideas.

According to Dodge and Robbins (1992), marketing, management, and finance were identified as recurring problems throughout the life cycle, though not with the same degree of magnitude. Marketing problems were found to be the most intense as the business progressed through all the stages. Marketing problems were found to dominate at the start-up and late growth, while finance problems were larger at start-up. Management problems were also at their highest at start-up. Examples of marketing problems at start-up included customer contact, advertising, personal and public relations, location, market assessment, and defining target market. Market assessment and defining target market were also most important at start-up.

Some challenges are said to be more severe for women than men. According to Coleman (1994) and Lisenda (1997), acquiring capital and dealing with financial institutions was particularly difficult for all small businesses, but not unique to women entrepreneurs. Brown (1994), on the contrary, asserted, “for women entrepreneurs accessing capital is an obstacle that appears to be even more formidable”. Difficulty in accessing loans contributes to women being undercapitalized when they start up their businesses (Allen, 1995; Business/Banking Editors, 2001). Other financial challenges faced by women included that of higher interest rate and higher collateral requirements (Coleman, 2000). Hisrich and Brush (1984) found the following to be challenges: overcoming the society’s belief that women are not as serious as men, lack of business and financial training, and not being credit worthy. One other challenge that seemed unique to women was that of delegating duties, i.e. the right amount of responsibility (Ruggless, 1995).
Several researchers specifically have studied textile businesses in less developed countries. The researchers noted that the challenges were varied. According to Gaskill, et al. (in press), product promotion, marketing, time, and financial management were identified as challenges in small textile-related businesses in Malaysia. For small businesses in Ghana, Littrell, Wolff, and Blackburn (2000) noted challenges as design pirating, difficulty in procurement and storage of raw materials, lack of working space/workshops, production planning, and product diversification. A study conducted in Botswana, with 74% of participants being women though not focused specifically on textile-related businesses, noted competition and unreliable customers as their problems (Lisenda, 1997).

Challenges need not be regarded only as negative. Challenges could also arise due to opportunities such as expansion of the business due to product acceptance. This expansion brings challenges of need for hiring of new employees and training to match their business standards (Gaskill et al.).

**Botswana Senior Secondary Syllabus**

The recommendation of the Revised National Policy on Education is to offer an education necessary for effective participation in the world of work. The recommendation emphasizes practical subjects such as home economics and business, design and technology, and others be incorporated in the school curriculum to equip students with skills necessary for participation in business. In order to address the recommendation the new Botswana Senior Secondary Fashion and Fabrics Assessment Syllabus (2002) has a consumer education and textiles business module. The module has topics of textile business, finance management, and marketing a textile business. The module topics are set to help students 1) acquire and develop managerial and entrepreneurial skills in textile business, 2) acquire and
develop awareness of textiles policies at national and international levels, and 3) acquire and develop foundation skills to enable them cope with challenges of an ever changing environment (p. 5). These aims are geared at the development of entrepreneurial skills in students. Entrepreneurial skills will be taught to those students who are pursuing practical subjects such as fashion and fabrics, home management and others.

**Research Questions**

Based on the review of literature on U.S business, the following research questions were explored in this research. The research did not allow for direct comparison or hypothesis testing, as data were not collected from a matched U.S. sample. Rather the Botswana findings were discussed for similarities and differences with the U.S. based business literature.

Q 1. How are Botswana businesspersons similar to and different from U.S. businesspersons depicted in the research literature as related to:

   a. intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for starting a business,
   
   b. criteria for defining success, and
   
   c. challenges faced at start-up and growth.

Q 2. How are more successful and less successful Botswana businesses similar to and different from U.S. businesses depicted in the Littrell, Stout, and Reilly (1991) research as related to:

   a. hiring of skilled labor,
   
   b. producing original products,
   
   c. marketing their products (pricing, advertising, location, customer contact),
   
   d. sites for selling products,
e. the amount of time put in the business,
f. having a defined target market,
g. having insurance for their business, and
h. understanding the use and importance of a business plan.
CHAPTER 3: METHOD

The purpose of the study was to: 1) describe and analyze micro and small businesses, and 2) explore motivation for initiating a business, factors used in defining successful and less successful firms, and challenges faced as business are initiated and expand. Methods for the study, including instrument development, sampling, data collection, and data analysis, were designed to elicit responses that would help accomplish the stated objectives.

The Researcher

I am a teacher in a Senior Secondary School (High School) in Botswana. The two main languages used in my country are Setswana, the native language, and English. English is used as a medium of instruction in schools and as an official language. I am a native; I am therefore fluent in both languages. The topic currently researched is of interest because the school syllabus encourages entrepreneurial skills to be offered for students to enable them to make a living after school. On personal observation most Batswana are now in business, be it on large, small or even micro scale throughout the country.

The home economics curriculum, being a practical subject, has been reshaped to include topics such as consumer behavior and marketing, to mention but a few, in order to expose students to the subject's importance for economic development. It is therefore of relevance that students acquire understanding of the practicality and benefits of being in business from the experiences of businesswomen in the community. Hence, I was interested in the study as I would use the research findings for instruction in schools to make learning easier, interesting, and relevant to the Botswana situation. My interest in entrepreneurship

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4 Setswana is the language of Botswana.
also arose due to my parents’ involvement in businesses of all dimensions including farming, retailing, and running a bakery.

The Research Approach

Denzin and Lincoln (1994) explained qualitative research as “multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter.” Meaning that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (p 2). This definition is understood and reflected by other researchers. Berg (2001) stated that qualitative research seeks answers to questions by examining social settings and their inhabitants, while Strauss and Corbin (1998) asserted that “qualitative methods can be used to explore substantive areas about which little is known or about which much is known to gain noble understandings” (p. 11). The above statements can be identified as advantages of qualitative methods.

Researchers employing a qualitative approach want to understand and interpret the meaning of the study taking into consideration all things involved. A qualitative research approach was used for this study, especially since little or no research has been conducted on small business in Botswana. Exploratory research is undertaken when an issue is new or little is known about it in order to prepare for the future (Neuman, 2000). The qualitative approach was also considered appropriate as a research goal was to understand the meanings and range of topics that Botswana businesswomen associated with their businesses.

In qualitative research, a variety of methods include but are not limited to interviewing, focus groups, ethnographic research, sociometry, observation of experimental natural settings, and case studies. Although qualitative methods have been regarded as not
scientific, the process is as rigorous as in quantitative research involving the following steps: 1) stating a research problem, 2) deciding methods of data collection, 3) deciding the sample, 4) data analysis methods, and 5) making conclusions or interpretations (Martella & Martella, 1999).

Interviews are an important method of data collection used by many qualitative researchers. Patton (1990) stated that interviews are carried out to find out what is in someone else’s mind about a particular topic. In this oral exchange process of question and answer, people provide information to each other. Interviews are important because they allow the participants to express their views openly as regards the issue studied (Marshall & Rossman, 1995).

The researcher chose face-to-face interview for several reasons. First, interviews would allow some form of observation, especially nonverbal cues such as facial expressions, which probably indicate that the question is unclear. Therefore the interviewer can immediately explain the question to the respondent and promote clarifications (Frey, Botan, & Kreps, 2000). Second, interviews were also chosen because respondents who can neither read nor write could be included. Finally, as this was the first exploratory study on the topic of Botswana entrepreneurship, structured interviews with an open response format were used to allow for a broad range of responses to be offered by those interviewed.

To help the researcher be more consistent and efficient in obtaining needed information and to save on time, structured open-ended questions were employed in the interviews (Martella, Nelson, & Martella, 1999). The interviews were audiotaped because the responses could be reviewed whenever necessary to assure full understanding by the researcher. Also nonverbal cues, for instance prolonged pauses and emotional outbursts,
could be noted. Recording also helped in providing reliability assurance for the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

**Instrument Development**

The primary instrument used in collecting data was an interview schedule with structured open-ended questions (see Appendix A). Questions for the interview addressed demographic characteristics and business practices, motivations, definition of success, and challenges faced in initiating the business (see Table 1). The interview guide also included seven scaled questions for measuring *six forms* of motivation and for respondents to rate their success. A 7-point response format was used with the scaled items.

The interview guide was generated based upon the general themes identified in scholarly literature. Most of the questions were drawn from *previous* research. The interview questions were translated into Setswana to enable the researcher to maintain consistency in data collection. Translation was needed because not every Motswana understands and speaks English. A renowned translator who works with both national and international speakers invited by the State into the country translated all the questions. The translator holds a Master’s degree in statistics and is also a Member of Parliament. The interviews were back-translated into English by the researcher who is also fluent in both languages.
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<th>Topics</th>
<th>Questions</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>Why did you decide to focus on clothing or textiles rather than another type of business such as bakery or other? What were your financial arrangements for starting the business? What were your start-up costs and how did you fund these? When hiring your employees what are three most important skills that you look for? How do you make decisions for the types of products you will make? Design, color and product details? How do you get customers? How are your products different from what customers can find at other similar businesses? How do you make decisions for pricing your products? What goes into figuring the cost?</td>
<td>Littrell, Stout, &amp; Reilly(1991), Dodge &amp; Robbins (1992).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>What really motivated you to start your business? As you reflect on your motivations are your motivations for continuing with the business the same or different?</td>
<td>Gaskill, Van Auken, &amp; Manning (1993), Karakto, Hornsby, &amp; Naffziger (1997).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success</td>
<td>In your own words, how can you define success? How successful is your business at the present time? What factors or things would you say helped you to be successful?</td>
<td>Littrell, Stout, &amp; Reilly (1991), Paige, &amp; Littrell (in press).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges</td>
<td>What do you consider to have been your three biggest challenges when you started the business? What strategies did you use to overcome or minimize each of these challenges? In contrast to challenges, what part of business was the easiest when you began? What would you do differently in your business if you were to start your business all over again?</td>
<td>Gaskill, Van Auken, Littrell, Blackburn &amp; Wolf (in press)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Prior to the data collection process, the Iowa State University Human Subjects Committee reviewed the interview schedule and gave their approval for the project to be started (see Appendix B).

Sample Selection

Upon arrival in Botswana and prior to data collection, the researcher 1) reported to the Department of Industrial Affairs where she showed a letter of introduction from her major professor, and 2) prepared a sample of potential respondents from a list issued by Financial Assistance Policy (FAP) office.

The sample was selected as follows. The target population was businesswomen whose sewing businesses were in the Southern Region of Botswana comprising Gaborone, and the surrounding villages such as Ramotswa and Kanye. The participants were to have been a part of the FAP program, have less than 25 employees, and been in business for a minimum of three years. The computer printout received from the FAP was from the years 1997 to 2001. Upon inquiry about the computer printout for the previous years, the researcher was told that the other years had not been computerized and that it was hard to get the files. As a result the sample of the study was drawn from the 1997 to 2001 printout. The printout included 165 FAP program recipients; only 139 met the criterion of operating a sewing business. The other 26 were not included because there were no addresses provided against their names or they were involved in knitting and embroidery businesses.

Of the 139 remaining businesswomen, 24 names were selected using a probability sampling method. In this method every kth individual, objects, or event on the list was
chosen (Hinkle, Wiersma & Jurs, 1998, p.180-181; Martella et.al., 1999, p.120-121). The researcher established the \( k \)th number or interval of selection by following this formula:

\[
kth = \frac{\text{Population Size}}{\text{Sample Size}}
\]

In this study, the selection interval was 5.75, therefore every sixth name was chosen from the list of the 138 to arrive at the 24 names. Although probability sampling was used the researcher purposefully sampled one additional participant for a total of 25. The participant is a former home economics teacher; she was chosen because of her background in teaching. For the two participants who declined to participate, the same procedure was followed to select an addition of two to reach a total of 24 names.

**Procedure**

The initial plan for contacting informants was the use of telephone, however that did not work for a variety of reasons discussed in the next section. Only four people amongst the 25 participants were initially contacted through either a landline telephone or cell phone. All interviews were conducted at the respondent's home/workplace or rented workshop. The main reason was that some participants had expressed the need to be close by, as they would be working and keeping close supervision during the interview. Prior to conducting interviews, the researcher reviewed confidentiality and anonymity assurances to all respondents. All questions, including the seven scaled items were asked orally. During the interview, some time was devoted to orally explain to the respondents the scaled response format. The interviews were audio taped upon permission of the respondents. All Setswana version interviews took 30 minutes longer than was expected as compared to the English
interviews, which took 1 hour, 30 minutes on average. There were seven people whose interview was in English and eighteen participants were in Setswana. However amongst the seven, some would still need clarification to questions and asked if it could be said in Setswana. During the interview the researcher observed the types of equipment used and how the workshop was kept. The number of machines, type of machines, and other needed equipment varied considerably.

Data Collection Challenges

There were multiple challenges I faced during the period of data collection. The first challenge had to do with telephones and addresses. Very few people had provided their contact telephone numbers and for those who had, most of their telephone lines were no longer in use. This meant that I had to initially locate participants using their physical addresses. The use of the physical address worked well, although there were instances where participants had moved to different addresses and had failed to provide the FAP office with their new addresses. To locate them, new tenants provided me with addresses of the previous tenants if known. Others, when located, stated they had given the FAP office their new address, which then meant the office had not updated their database. Due to this challenge related to telephone and addresses, most appointments had to be made physically, hence I had to drive to almost all the places.

The second main challenge was failure to keep to the appointed time by a few of the participants. This happened with four of the participants and this resulted with two not participating in the end. The third and last challenge was questions I faced with regards to who I was. Despite the introduction made on the first day to set the appointment, during the
interview I was asked several questions, such as “Who told you I have a business and I used FAP program?”, “Where did you get my physical address?”, “Are you not spying for the Government by claiming to be a student?”, and “How will we benefit from this work?” The other comment that surfaced a lot was “people come and talk to us all the time and we never get anything from them, we believe some are stealing our ideas for themselves.” However, after clarification the interviews continued.

Data Analysis

Data analysis consisted of both quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Quantitative Analysis

To obtain an overview of characteristics of the sample, descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, and means were calculated (SPSS 10.0). Questions were analyzed using frequencies pertaining to business practices and demographics. Business questions concerned ownership, locations of the business, payment of employees, number of employees per business, types of bank account operated, ratings of motivations for when the business was started and now, preferences on whether they would employ a less skilled relative over a skilled non relative, and ratings of business success. Demographic questions included marital status, age, and numbers of children, family size, and levels of education.

In order to address the second research question for comparing more and less successful businesses, it was necessary to divide the participants into two groups and to compare and contrast the groups on a series of variables. Following the method employed by Littrell, Stout, and Reilly (1991), participants were categorized as more successful or less successful using their self-ratings of success or the level of sales. Participants who gave self-
ratings for success of $\geq 5$ (n=9) were defined as more successful. However, due to the Botswana cultural pattern of "not blowing your trumpet," the group with self ratings of $< 5$ was examined for their level of sales. Those with sales in the top third overall (> P24,000) were added to the more successful group, making a total of 14 more successful businesses. $T$-tests and $\chi^2$ were performed to compare the two groups of more and less successful businesses at a significance level of 0.05.

**Qualitative Analysis**

All audiotaped interviews were listened to before transcribing. The interviews were then transcribed verbatim. Following transcription, all responses to each question were sorted and collectively organized so that answers to like questions could be viewed together. For instance, all responses for question 1 for all the respondents were arranged together. All the data were then read to get a general view of the information. Glaser and Strauss's (1967) constant comparative method was employed in this study. Initial coding of the transcripts involved searching the data for themes. These were written on the margin. Constant comparison of these themes across all transcripts was done. The second reading of the data revealed a pattern of larger categories to which the themes could be assigned.

To ensure validity of the study, two triangulation methods were used. These included analyst triangulation and data source triangulation (Martella et al., 1999; Patton, 1990). For analyst triangulation, after the researcher finished theme and category development, the major professor who was familiar with the study reviewed the transcripts as the second coder. Continuous changes were made to the coding guide until inter-coder agreement was reached for a reliability score of 85% and above for each major interview question. The formula used was as follows:
\[
\frac{\text{No. of agreements}}{\text{No. of agreements} + \text{No. of disagreements}} = \% \text{ of agreement}
\]

Percentage of agreement between coders ranged from 86% to 95% for the various questions.

Data source triangulation refers to checking for the consistency of what people say about a thing over time (Patton, 1990). This approach was applied to the interview schedule for questions on motivation, challenges, and success. Structured interview questions and the rating scales were compared.
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

In this chapter, the findings of the study are presented. In the first section the sample and their business practices are described, including ownership, employment status before starting businesses, hours worked, payment mode, business plans, business insurance, and business bank accounts. Analysis of the qualitative data from interview questions is presented in the second section. The topics covered are business start-up, employees, product and production, marketing, pricing, motivation, business challenges, success and future goals. Comparisons of the more successful and less successful businesswomen are presented at the end of the chapter. The research questions posed at the end of Chapter 2, are addressed in Chapter 5.

Characteristics of Businesswomen and their Businesses

A total of 25 businesswomen participated in the study. In order to preserve confidentiality of the participants, each was given a code number. The numbers ranged from 101 to 125 and throughout the presentation are used whenever needed. The businesses produced a range of products. The types of products and their frequency of production by different businesses are shown in Table 2. The most common products were German prints, school uniforms, curtains, ladies casual dresses, wedding gowns, and school tracksuits. All businesses had industrial machines for sewing, sergers, and a cutting table. The number of the sewing machines varied from business to business, with as few as three machines, on up to seven machines. Those whose businesses did not have electricity used generators.
Table 2. Types of Products and Frequency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Product</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lady’s Wear and Accessories</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German Prints (Setswana full dress/skirt)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ladies casual dresses</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hair bands</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wedding gowns</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Uniforms</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School uniforms</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office uniforms</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church uniforms</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Men’s Wear</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Household Items</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curtains</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duvet sets</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comforters</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childrens wear</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tracksuits</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School tracksuits</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General public tracksuits</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants’ demographic characteristics are outlined in Table 3. Participants’ ages ranged between 27 and 64 years; the average age was 40.4 years. All participants were women and all had children. The average number of children per family was 3.6 children while the average number of people per household (family size) was 5.9 people per family. Single women represented 72% of the sample while married and divorced/separated represented 24% and 4%, respectively. Forty percent of the participants had a Primary
Certificate (40%), followed by Junior Certificate (32%), O'Level Certificate (20%)\(^5\), and those who have none (8%). Among the participants four had the following qualifications: Diploma in Home Economics, Diploma in Nursing, Diploma in Banking, and Certificate in professional typing. Most of the participants (76%) originally came from villages, while the other 24% came from Gaborone, Lobatse, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. The most frequently cited reasons for migrating to Gaborone were looking for employment, searching for better opportunities, and joining a spouse.

Table 3. Demographic Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age Range</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27-29</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marital Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single (never married)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level of Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Certificate</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O'Level Certificate</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( ^5 \)In Botswana, primary education starts at age 7, and continues for seven years. Junior certificate (3 years) is equivalent to middle school, and O'Level certificate is equivalent to high school.
Over half of the women (60%) learned their tailoring skills informally, either from their employers or relatives or they were self-taught. The remainder 40% learned the skills formally from Brigades (community based training schools), Home Craft Centers, and other training centers. Likewise, over half of the participants (52%) learned their business skills informally on the job, although 28% \((n = 7)\) attended a one-week course sponsored by Financial Assistance Policy (FAP) on how to run a business, and 12% self sponsored themselves for a course on business management and financial skills. Eight percent said that they had no business skills. Out of the seven participants who attended the FAP course, five stated it was beneficial but it came late, that is, after they had started their business.

Characteristics of business practices are summarized in Figure 2. It was observed that most of the businesses (84%) were self-owned and nearly all of the business owners (96%) were employed before they started their businesses. Sixty percent worked previously as machinists (sewing) or seamstresses; 36% worked in various other jobs; and 4% were not working. Twenty-four of these businesses did production, that is sewing to sell to the public, and only one business owner provided a service, that is offering sewing services to the customers. Seventy-six percent of businesses did not have business plans before starting their businesses. Insurance coverage for the business was reported by 44% of the participants. Most (92%) participants paid their employees monthly. Seventy-two percent of the businesswomen reported paying themselves monthly, 12% did not pay themselves at all, while the remaining 16% said they paid themselves sometimes. Sixty percent reported keeping separate bank accounts from that of the household.
Figure 2. Business Characteristics

Nearly three quarters of the businesses (72%) were located in the home (see Table 4). The most cited advantages to be at the home location were “not paying rent” and “being able to work until late.” Disadvantages were given too, such as “not getting many customers as compared if working outside home” and “lack of electricity as petrol cost for the generator are high.” One respondent emphasized, “it is not safe as thieves can pose as customers at night, only to come and rob you.”

Among the participants whose businesses were outside the home (n=7), three businesses were operating in rented residential homes and the remaining four were in the City Council’s business shells. The main advantages of outside locations were availability of adequate working space, electricity, low rentals, and convenience in that there was a flow of customers. Competition and the location were mentioned as the main disadvantages; too
little space was also mentioned. These latter participants believed the locations were out of reach of many customers and that they were in areas of mostly low-income people.

Twenty-four out of twenty-five participants held that their businesses improved the lives of Batswana, by giving employment which afforded their employees to support their families. Other reasons for improving lives of Batswana were the businesses helped reduce transport cost, saved time for customers, and provided good quality products at lower and competitive prices.

Table 4. Characteristics of Businesses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location of business</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payment plan of employees</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piece</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Benefits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve lives of Batswana</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Business Account</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separate</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hours worked per day and the number of days worked by both the employees and business owners are summarized in Figure 3. It can be noted that the average hours worked by employees is slightly more than that of their employers. This is because some business owners (n = 4) were still employed fulltime elsewhere. However employers on average
worked more days than their employees. Most of the employees were females (85%) and were employed full time (92%). The average number of employees was 3.32 per business. The range of employees was from 1-8 employees per business including owners. Twenty-three of the businesses had less than six employees. Using SMME criteria from Botswana, all but two of the businesses would be described as micro enterprises.

![Figure 3. Work Time Averages for Employees and Owners](image)

Participants also provided information on the financial start-up of the business, gross sales, and business income (see Figure 4). All participants received a grant from the Botswana Government. The minimum grant was P19, 926.86, the maximum P67, 500.00, and the average was P40, 306.81. To receive the grant, participants had to put in a contribution; the minimum contribution was P7, 000.00, maximum P35, 000.00, and average

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6 Batswana is a plural noun for persons living in Botswana.
P18, 414.01. The contribution (which can be referred to as start-up) was funded in different ways (see Figure 5). Half (52%) reported having borrowed the money mostly from relatives, 20% got donations from their relatives (spouse, parents and boyfriends), 16% used their savings, and 8% got a loan from the National Development Bank. One woman was unique in that the contribution used was from a group of women who joined hands pooling their resources together each month in order to start a business.

The profit from the business was reported by 60% of the participants as their primary household income while 40% stated it was supplementary. Gross sales ranged from nothing to P55,000.00, with the average of P17,779.68. Business profit also ranged from nothing to P25,000.00, with P8,286.83 as average.

Figure 4. Financial Characteristics
Narrative Findings

Narrative findings from the interviews are organized around the topics of initiating the business, employees, product and production, marketing, pricing, motivation, challenges, success, and future goals.

Initiating the Business

Participants varied in their reasons for initiating a clothing and textiles business, rather than another type of business such as a bakery. The responses fell into categories of interest/skill, previous business experience, and the business being easy. Most cited were interest and/skill (n=15), followed by business experience (n=7), and business being easy (n=3). Other reasons mentioned were family tradition (n=1), that is something carried on from generations, national pride (n=2), and pursuing a dream (n=1). Some respondents said,
I chose what I could do especially what I'd been doing and that I knew I was confident in doing. [Participant 107]

It has always been my dream to work with textiles in a more diverse way. A dream in fashion and designing on crafts. [Participant 122]

This was the only type of business I had the skill for, especially that of sewing and designing. [Participant 104]

I wanted to show people/nation that Batswana also have the people who can make good products.[Participant 118]

Participants expressed varied and interesting life situations for starting a business, which fell into the following categories: possessing interest or skill, experiencing economic hardships (low salary/pay, lack of jobs/unemployment, poverty), desiring self employment, experiencing poor working relationships, and as a means of old age preparation, national pride and fulfilling a dream. Thirteen participants mentioned economic hardship and nine participants described skills/interests as what led them to starting their businesses. With regards to economic hardships, participants commented,

Yes, lack of jobs- then I said to myself, if there are no jobs as is now, why couldn’t I start a business, as I am skilled. [Participant 111]

Yes, a lot, there was too much work yet little pay, even though I showed my employer my dissatisfaction concerning the pay. As employees we used to be told to get the garments and go to other villages to sell, so we could get paid and we used to go around with catalogs to market. At some point I had an operation and I was not paid the days I was not at work. [Participant 112]

One participant with preparation for old age described,

You cannot sit down to beg nor work in this field for someone until old age, since it would be demanding, you get tired, hence I decided to open mine where I can have people work for me. [Participant 107]
Employees

Participants were asked to identify the three most important skills they look for when hiring employees. Although respondents unanimously said when hiring an employee they looked for technical skills, some said there were exceptional cases. For technical skills businesswomen expressed the need for a good machinist, someone who is experienced and has knowledge of the job, one who is able to join pieces of a garment with less supervision, and a worker who has knowledge of pressing. Someone too who is skilled in designing and cutting was a valued employee. The other skills needed by employers were public relations, dedication to the job, and management skills. For public relations, which was explained as kindness to customers or giving customers first priority, participants expressed its importance by saying,

Someone who is able to accept customers with a smile—if someone is not welcoming this might scare away customers. [Participant 101]

Does she have a good heart for customers to win them to the business, such that during your absence customers could feel at home. [Participant 107]

Dedication was described as having a passion for the job, being self-motivated and a hard worker/active, working independently with less supervision, and being careful in what one is doing. For management skills, employers expected the employee to be economical with the materials, possess some marketing skills, and be conscious, accountable, and respectful of working hours. One participant mentioned bookkeeping knowledge as critical to business growth. Businesswomen had this to say,

The employee should know how much time she/he spends on each garment,

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7 Designer means someone who is able to look at the pattern from the catalog or description from the customer and be able to sketch, produce a pattern, and cut it or even sketch on the fabric and cut.
so that by the end of the day she/he would know how many garments or dresses to produce. S/he should know that it is through production that s/he pays her/himself. [Participant 124]

I have someone who has been to school and knows about bookkeeping since I am not learned so that he could do the books to enable me to know whether we are progressing.[Participant 112]

Sixty percent of the businesswomen (n=15) had relatives as their employees. However, to further emphasize the importance of technical skills in business, when participants were asked, “if you had a choice would you prefer hiring a relative who has limited skill or non relative who is highly skilled?”, all responded by saying a nonrelative. The reasons cited were businesses will flourish, there will be profits and growth, and skilled people are dedicated in their work because they know the business pays them. Participants said there would be good quality products and good production, as a skilled person needs less supervision and there would also be less correction done on garments. One respondent said, “one can learn from a skilled employee too.”

When speaking in favor of having their relatives work for them, respondents said relatives look after the business better, that is, take care of items and also watch for misuse by the employees. The other advantage advanced was in the event of death or illness a relative will be able to continue the business. The disadvantages cited were laziness, do not take work seriously, not easy to reprimand, and being wasteful as well.

Respondents used different methods to attract their employees. Methods included advertising and asking friends to help them find workers. Once the candidates came they were interviewed and given a practical test. The tests varied among the respondents; some expected the candidates to cut and join a garment to completion, while others removed some machine parts and expected the candidates to refit them.
Three respondents said,

I interviewed them and gave them the practical test similar to the one I was given before being given the grant. [Participant 101]

I got the idea from where I worked before, I was interviewed and then given a cut garment to join, so I applied the same method. [Participant104]

I got the techniques from my former employer what she looked for, and also from what the customers used to demand. She would advertise, interview and ask for experience and references. So I did the same. [Participant 119]

To other participants, candidates worked on the machine for a week as a kind of probation. Additional ways for deciding on employee skills included asking for certificates and references from previous employers.

The participants were asked whether they were knowledgeable about the skills they expected of their employees. Yes was the unanimous answer. Although some participants did not know how to perform certain skills like bookkeeping, they certainly knew of its importance in business. Others had this to say,

Good sewing produces good quality that will attract customers, and without sewing there is no production. [Participants 104, 106]

A designer if she/he is not there, there is no business. [Participant 106]

All these skills are important for business, and above all I cannot be in all of them, otherwise the areas suffer. For business to grow you need a designer, bookkeeper, a marketing person and good machinist. [Participant 116]

A designer/cutter must be economic so as to get profit from the materials or fabrics used. The designer must be motivated and have the objective and this objective should be profit and profit goes with production. [Participant122]

Being economic avoids losses. [Participant123]

Once employees were hired, generally there was not much training, with the exception of eight respondents. Even for these respondents training of employees was on the
job with no expenses incurred. The training was basically to enhance the skills the
employees already had, except for the two respondents who said some of their employees
had no skill. The training offered included using industrial machines, learning special
techniques of curtain decoration (shaping valence), and cutting and joining school uniforms.
One respondent said what she offered was not training but rather information that she felt her
employees should know on the prevention of HIV/AIDS. Training was described in these
ways.

I teach them how to use the industrial sewing machine, and how commercial
sewing is done as most of them come with knowledge of domestic sewing.
I also talk to them about the importance of good quality. [Participant 111]

I taught my workers how to cut and join school uniforms as where they worked they
did not specialize on them. [Participant 121]

Interestingly, all respondents reported giving incentives to their workers. The
incentives given were diverse. Incentives fell into two categories, that is tangible and
intangible incentives. Tangible incentives ranged from giving a bonus, giving left over
material to make the employees' own dresses, and offering a salary increment or payment for
overtime. Intangible incentives included giving employees a day off duty, free use of
machines, payment on time, Christmas parties, and verbal encouragement and compliments.
Nineteen respondents gave an intangible form of incentive of verbal encouragement and
compliments, while only nine respondents gave bonuses to their employees. Some
respondents said,

By talking to them-if we do not work, there is no money. No money
means no incentives that is bonus.[Participant 114]

Yes I do, I encourage them verbally. I give them a little more of bonus
anytime of the year lets say when we have completed a big order. I pay
them overtime too. [Participant 115]
Yes, there is money for the person who produces a lot of garments at the end of the month. [Participant 124]

Product and Production

All respondents were involved in production except for one respondent who said she mainly offers service, which involved sewing for customers who bring in their fabrics. The types of products varied considerably. These fell into categories of men's and lady's wear (wedding gowns, dresses of all types and occasions), household linen (curtains, duvet covers, comforters, and pillow cases), uniforms (school, church, and office), hair bands, and tracksuits. Among lady's wear, German prints (traditional wear) was very popular. On average each respondent made at least two categories of items except for the two participants making hair bands and tracksuits. School uniforms were popular among the participants (n=13). An unusual service provided by one respondent was shoe covering, which was only done upon request.

All the respondents had some factors on which they based their decisions for what types of products to make. Product decisions were based on market needs/research, participants' skills, fashion trend/popularity, customers' ability to pay, and potential profit. Half (n=12) of the businesswomen used market research, which was carried out in different ways. To get the population's likes and dislikes, some participants made and exhibited their products and listened to feedback and comments from customers; others visited exhibitors' stalls during international trade fairs\(^8\) to see what people bought, and others moved from house to house with their products. Fashion trends (n=3), and skill (n=4) were the next

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\(^8\) International trade fair is a yearly activity where business people around the globe come to Botswana to market their companies through a display of their products.
criteria used to decide on the type of products. Others considered the customers’ ability to pay and profitability of the product too. Respondents said,

I realized people like these types of dresses and that there was profit in them, as when I went to the trade fair each year most people flocked to the Sothos’ stalls to buy these type of dresses. [Participant 101]

I chose these because they are popularly worn, be it at funerals or wedding and that I had the skills. [Participant 107]

I decided on wedding gowns /suites, bridesmaids items because there were too many people sewing school uniforms. I wanted to be different. [Participant 111]

I decided on these items because I am skilled in/on them. It is a traditional dress and it does not have a particular time- it’s worn throughout. [Participant 118]

I would say this is what the people wanted, since I did market study- going from house to house asking them what they want to see sold by my business. [Participant 121]

One businesswoman said she followed the yearly season and considered the market.

I follow the yearly season e.g. January- I make/do school uniform, March–school tracksuits and jerseys, April–tenders and show items and November – Christmas items for traditional choir groups, then school uniforms-its like a yearly cycle. [Participant 116]

Respondents’ decisions on choice of design, color, and product detail were influenced by a range of factors. Most influential (n = 10) was customer preferences/choice. Customers came to the workshops and gave their description of what they wanted or chose from the catalogs the respondents had on display. For school uniforms, the design, color, and major product details were dictated by the school administration, unless it was a new school. To meet customer preferences, some respondents, especially those in curtain making, visited customers’ homes to help in decision-making. Catalogs such as pattern books and popular magazines as well as fashion trends were the next popular (n = 5) sources for
businesswomen. For some, they used a combination of methods, including copying the
design from the shops or making samples to sell to get the feel of the market. Descriptions of
sources of ideas for product details included,

I copied designs from the shop; I bought hair bands to learn the skills.  
Sewed some and went to sell at the bus rank where there are many people.  
Black and brown sold fast. From this initial selling this made me realize there was a potential market. [Participant 103]

Customers can tell me what they want, or describe the design they want.  
I also judge trends from how many items I have sold. Above all I sew things that I know I can like as I am a person who likes to dress well. When I sew things I did not want garments that will stay in this workshop so I do my level best.[Participant 112]

Designs can be from the customers if it is an order, but those I make for selling I make design choice on what is popular at that point in time.  
Customers choose their colors. I use popular colors. [Participant 118]

With regard to their sources of raw materials, all the respondents gave similar reasons why they bought their raw materials (fabrics) at certain stores. Price and quality of the fabric were the primary criteria for buying. They further said the price should suit the quality of the fabric. Other factors mentioned were variety, clients’ choices, whether material was in fashion, and courtesy of sales personnel.

I consider the price, though I buy in Botswana, most of my trimmings I buy in South Africa as I can get variety besides price. I like South Africa because of the Pula strength over the South African Rand. [Participant 101]

Normally in South Africa because there is variety and there are more shops. The materials in South Africa are cheaper because of the Pula currency is stronger than that of South Africa.[ Participant 115]

I look where I can buy at wholesale price and consider quality as well and also if there is variety of fabrics. The other thing is I shop where the salespeople are courteous and value customers. [Participant 121]
Marketing

Even though all the respondents mentioned the general public as their market, some (n = 9) were specific as to which part of the general public they were targeting. For instance, nine respondents identified their targets as nurses, church mates, bank and council employees, office workers (district administrators, statistics officers), retailer, vendors, and football teams. Only two of the respondents mentioned the income level of their target market. In addition, none mentioned age.

Generally the respondents were active in working to attract customers. Marketing, identified as the means for attracting customers, was carried out in many ways including personal marketing, promotional displays of garments (mini shows, selling at flea markets), telephoning, tendering for government contracts, advertising in papers and through sign boards, business cards, and through letter writing, especially to the government’s supply department. Other methods of attracting customers included customer referrals, asking friends or relatives to advertise, and by the wearing of self-made clothes.

Personal marketing (n = 17) and customer referrals (n = 9) were frequently mentioned, followed by advertising (n = 4). Personal marketing for the respondents was defined as moving around offices, schools, clinics, and salons showing their products. On customer referrals, respondents stated that their well-cut and stitched garments worn by their customers won them more clients, as these customers directed the new clients to them. Businesswomen described,

*My garments speak.* [Participant 111]

*My clothes market for me.* [Participant 112]

*People see my designs from my other customers, e.g. church mates.*
I market myself personally through office deliveries. [Participant 107]

I advertise myself through wearing the clothes I made for myself. [Participant 123]

The common themes among the respondents for why they believed customers liked their clothes were quality, design, and competitive prices. Quality was in two forms, that is quality of the fabric and that of a finished garment, with the latter being more important (n=16). Attributes of garment quality included overall neatness, well sewn, neat finishing, and good pressing. Uniqueness and the fit of the garment were themes mentioned as well. For garments such as tracksuits for schoolchildren, durability was an important attribute. Good quality of fabrics was important too for the overall quality of the garment. Respondents held that their prices were affordable to most people.

Quality of finished garment (n =9) and competitive prices (n=12) were the main factors that the informants believed set their products off amongst other businesses. Other factors cited were design and quality of the fabrics. While some respondents said that there were no differences in their products, they were also quick to say,

People are never the same in sewing [Participant 107]

Even though we might be making the same item there is always a difference in our finishes i.e. stitching and cutting of design.[Participant 116]

Other respondents said that good customer relations, uniqueness of their product designs, the way they trim, and the fit of garment contributed to attracting customers. Businesswomen said,

We have very few alterations on our garments. [Participant 106]

They tell me it’s the fit to the shape of the body. [Participant 112]

The type of product I make is very rare and the way I trim it is very
different from the others.[Participant 101]

Not every one gets hold of what I have as they are self-designed. [Participant 122]

**Pricing**

All the participants exhibited some knowledge as to what to include in a pricing formula, even though three were uncertain. But amongst these three, one participant emphasized that pricing was her real problem. Only one said profit was not her motto. The participants first considered the prices of all raw materials used in making of their product (e.g. for a dress they included shoulder pads, zips, etc). Prices of dresses and other garments would also vary depending on the size and pattern, and those involved in curtain making stated that the price depended on the width of the window and whether the curtain was to be lined. Participants included profit, labor, and overhead, which varied according to the type of power used, with some still using generators for power. Some participants also included transport costs. Two participants cited rent and sales tax inclusion. Profit ranges for all the types of items were fairly consistent among the participants. For instance, school uniform profit ranged from P5-P18.65 per uniform, skirts from P40-P115 (P115 is rather too high), dresses from P75-P100, curtains per meter P25-P50 (P25 seemed too little), outfits P60-P130, adult tracksuits P105, and school tracksuits P62.75.

**Motivation**

Motivations for initiating the business were measured in two ways, through interview questions and using a rating scale. In answer to the question “what really motivated you to start your business?”, respondents gave a variety of reasons. The reasons fell into nine categories; the most cited were possession of personal skills (n =12), and economic hardship
(n = 11), followed by making profit, a desire for family security and work for self, and national pride (all n= 3). The other reasons, though not mentioned by most people yet worthwhile to cite, were poor working relationships, little time from work for visiting with relatives, and too much work. Encouragement by a friend and following a dream were also mentioned among the reasons.

The themes common under economic hardship were low income yet too much work, high standard of living, lack of jobs, and lack of education. Some businesswomen said,

I hopped from factory to factory because they were being closed, then I said, why couldn’t I start my own business and see how I would go. [Participant 111]

I was unemployed and I asked myself this question—"How can I help myself," this made me to go to the FAP offices to ask for clarification on the scheme. [Participant 117]

Where I worked, I witnessed that there was money coming in, yet I was paid only P300 while I did a lot of work (in fact I was the one who used to work on items we submitted for tendering), and to get P450 meant working overtime for several days. I then decided to leave the job to start my own business since I realized that if you work hard you could have profits. [Participant 119]

For national pride the respondents explained,

I wanted to see myself being a designer one day, designing for the nation and myself. [Participant 109]

I wanted my country to be known that it had people who can produce better things as well. [Participant 118]

I wanted to promote my country since most firms are owned by foreigners. [Participant 121]

With regard to family security, two respondents said,

I did not want my children to come and lead the type of life I am living because of lack of education; therefore I wanted to have money to educate them. [Participant 101]

My standard of living was very poor therefore I thought starting my
own business would give me money to be able to feed my children.
[Participant 110]

It was noted that possession of skills, economic hardship, desiring self-employment, family security, experiencing poor working relationships, and national pride were recurring themes as they were earlier mentioned as situations that led to the starting of their businesses.

Motivations for starting the business were also measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale with 1 as “not important” and 7 as “very important” (see Table 4). From the six reasons put before the respondents, the desire to do the business as a career was the most influential, followed by both the desire to control their own future and the need to support the household. The opportunity to make money also had a mean indicating some importance as shown in Table 4. In contrast the desire to be independent was neither important nor unimportant, while the desire to manage one’s own time was slightly unimportant.

Table 5. Motivations for Starting a Business

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<tr>
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<td>A desire to control own future</td>
<td>6.20</td>
<td>3-7</td>
<td>1.0408</td>
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<tr>
<td>A need to support your household</td>
<td>6.20</td>
<td>4-7</td>
<td>1.0000</td>
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<tr>
<td>The opportunity to make a lot of money</td>
<td>5.76</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>1.5885</td>
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<tr>
<td>A desire to be independent</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>2.5658</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A desire to manage own time</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>1-7</td>
<td>2.2935</td>
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</table>

Triangulation of narrative and quantitative questions revealed a common pattern that women did not start their businesses solely for profit or to make a lot of money, but rather as a career that drew upon their skills and allowed them to control their future. Economic
hardship emerged too as important in both the narrative and qualitative answers by being rated consistently as an influential reason for starting the business. A need to support a household scored a high mean of 6.20, showing that the welfare of the family is central in women's motivations. A desire to manage one's time was consistent in not being important for the respondents. In contrast, national pride was mentioned only in the narratives.

Respondents were also asked whether their current motivations were similar to those when they started businesses. Over half of the respondents (n =15) explained that their current reasons for being in business were the same as their original motivations. However the other ten gave different reasons, which could be summarized that they were now motivated by the desire to make greater profits. One respondent said she is now motivated by competition to make better things. Examples of responses included,

I am now motivated by making money. I can pay myself and still have some for saving. [Participant 104]

My friend had warned me that when I start it might be low/ discouraging But 'you should not give up". Now I am motivated by money. [Participant 113]

I am now motivated by the fact that this business is the one we depend on for a living. [Participant 116]

Challenges

Responses varied among the businesswomen as to challenges they faced when starting the business. Eighty four percent (n=21) said their biggest challenges were finding a market (that is who will buy their products), while management skills (n =13), finances (n =11), and business skills (n =10) were also commonly mentioned. In management skills, common themes were finding good quality materials, finding employees, managing time and supervising employees. Business skills such as running a business and pricing were common
themes. To emphasize the importance of business skills one respondent, said “knowledge about bookkeeping was important because it shows whether the business is making a profit or not”. Mentioned too were technical skills, lack of a business place, transport, competition, and selling as other challenges faced by businesswomen.

I was afraid to approach people, I preferred to talk to one person at a time.[Participant 102]

I had doubts as there were many such businesses around-competition, especially that the owner of the business next to me had people from outside Botswana who made men's suits. [Participant 119]

Will I ever arrive at far away places (outside Gaborone) if I should get a project when I do not have transport. [Participant 118]

As compared to the question on challenges when initiating a business, respondents said finances (n=11) were now the biggest challenge, as customers took a long time to pay for their goods, which results in poor cash flow. Finding customers was still a challenge to five participants, as were management skills (n=6), transport, location, and competition.

Respondents used different strategies to minimize the challenges encountered. To address financial challenges they borrowed money from friends or the bank, used a salary from another job, and obtained support from family members such as husband. On the part of management challenges, some respondents went for a business course provided by the FAP office, while others said they self-sponsored themselves for management courses. Other respondents asked their clients to put down a deposit before any kind of service could be done for them, as they had lost money through making items that were never collected. Advertising in papers, use of business cards, and lowering of prices were used to attract customers. Businesswomen further said they summoned their courage and started either going around to offices or talked with those people they knew to attract clients. On the part
of improving skills, respondents explained that they hired skilled designers and machinists and taught some of their relatives the skills. The use of public transport was the only solution for businesswomen with transport challenges.

In contrast to challenges, participants were also asked what part of the business was easiest when they began. Eleven of the participants believed nothing was easy when starting their businesses. Some respondents had these comments,

Even looking for workers was not easy. [Participant 111]

There is nothing easy in business at all. [Participant 117]

Business is not an easy task. [Participant 107]

To emphasize the difficulty of starting and running a business, another participant expressed “even when you have workers nothing is really easy.” In contrast to the first response, that nothing was easy, 12 respondents said sewing was the easiest part of the business, while two respondents indicated that finding customers and selling to friends was easy. Other easy tasks included coming up with ideas, buying of fabrics, and finding employees.

When assessing what part of the business was easiest today, eight participants offered that nothing was easy. Five of these had indicated the same in the previous question on ease of starting the business. One respondent remarked “Batswana do not have the spirit of dedication”. However eight businesswomen said sewing was still the easiest, while the others said finding customers and marketing were easy.

Participants were asked to reflect on what they would do differently if starting the business again. Responses elicited by this question fell in categories of training, location, marketing, production, and management. Half (n =12) of the businesswomen said they would change management of the business. By this they meant employment of more skilled
persons for different positions, such as manager, marketing/sales person, bookkeeper, production manager, and quality controller. Other projected changes were production, location, and training. Some respondents said if starting the business again, they would go for training first before they started their businesses to get the skills for running a business and for designing. On production, some respondents said they would expand, while others stated they would give focus by choosing to produce only one type of item. While some were eager for change, three informants said they were comfortable with the status of their businesses to date.

Because I am not educated, if I were to start again I would employ someone who would come and help me with management of the business for me, as I have seen in other places like Pearl Creation, they have a person who looks after workers. This person will help with advertising my product, as I believe my product is very marketable, it is a commodity for all young and old. [Participant 103]

Management-I would manage it for myself. I would keep proper, proper (emphasis) books and be accountable for every penny taken out of the business and open a different account. Production would be improved. I have learnt from my mistakes. [Participant 109]

Management- I would like to have security in places so as to be able to tender for government contracts. I would also like to increase machines so as to improve production. You cannot win a tender with very few machines. [Participant121]

Success

Success was measured in two ways, through an interview question and using a rating scale. In response to the question, “in your own words, how will you define success for you and your business?” respondents gave general definitions that fell into three categories of business growth, meeting challenges, and recognition. Some could be said to be empirically measurable and others are more subjective. Three respondents did not have a definition for
success. Most respondents defined success in terms of measurable outcomes, such as when there are profits, when the business has grown (more production and more employees), when sales are improving, when the business finances itself, and when business attracts many customers. Success also was defined as being able to meet and withstand the challenge, a more subjective indicator. Two respondents had this to say,

One has to struggle all the time and get what they want, you persevere and never give up. [Participant 124]

I have managed to open the business and I am still in business even when sometimes we do not get as many customers as we would like. [Participant 115]

Further still one respondent said success was “when you are done and have accomplished your goals without any hindrances”. While for recognition, the theme was when one is well known and working hard.

Women were then asked to rate, “how successful their businesses were at the present time?” The respondents replied using a 7 point Likert-type scale with 1 = not successful and 7 = very successful. The mean score was 3.90 (range 1 to 7; Sd 1.570) indicating a moderate level of success. The range showed there were some who perceived that they had achieved a high level of success while others had a lower level of success. The researcher assessed that on observation of business activity, some respondents rated themselves low in success yet their sales were high. Statements that indicated low self rating for success were,

It’s not where I want it to be. I would say I am successful when I have a business plot, where I can open a boutique. [Participant 101]

I see it successful but not to the level I wanted. People are really buying from us especially the nurses. [Participant 107]
These statements may have been embedded in Botswana culture. Culturally one should not blow his/her own trumpet as it is considered boastful. This is due to the Botswana socialization process at an earlier stage of life such that even when one is grown up it is difficult to openly proclaim your own achievements.

Those who said they were more successful (n=9 with a rating ≥5) supported their rating by stating they had good sales and profits, large orders, and regular customers.

Businesswomen expanded,

I would say my business is successful because there are no days that pass without me sewing as my customers come regularly (the retailer and the two vendors/hawkers) plus every time I go out to sell especially during the weekend my bands get finished within a short period of time, plus now the business purchases its supplies from the profit I make. [Participant 103]

Looking back I nearly closed had it not been for the former FAP staff who encouraged me never to give up. Now I moved from a small room to a big one. I have customers coming. From where I began I would say I am successful. [Participant 111]

I rate it this way because I have customers, there are good sales, and there are compliments from the customer that our work is up to standard. [Participant 122]

Subsequently, those who said they were not as successful, mentioned reasons such as poor management, location not conducive for business and the small population of the country.

When asked what factors helped them to be successful, most respondents attributed their success to the quality of their products, that is, the workmanship, their designs, choice of colors, and materials. One participant had this to say, “my designs and the way I combine colors, I am creative.” Management skills and marketing were also cited as contributory to the success of the business. Respondents’ themes on management included good customer relations, meeting the target time for customized products, and good skills of both their
employees and themselves. While when discussing marketing, advertising and good pricing were mentioned as important for success. The other factor was dedication to one’s work, as some women remarked,

Working hard and being active in business, having a passion for your work. [Participant 101]

Hard work and perseverance are other elements as you (referring to the researcher) noticed that we worked until late. [Participant 116]

**Future Goals**

Certainly, this question about most achievements to date received a wide range of responses indicating that all respondents have had some kind of achievement. The most important achievements included keeping and maintaining a loyal clientele and being still in business, followed by having good sales/improved profits. Other achievements, though not shared by many respondents but worthy to report, included improved living standards, acquisition of additional equipment, electrification of the residential house, which is a workshop as well, and the ability for the business to finance itself. Some respondents said,

I have managed to keep my clients, the retailer has been my customer since 1999 and the two vendors since year 2000, and my business is now improving, I see it is picking in profits. [Participant 103]

I kept the reputation, a good number of customers and I have established a good relation with the District Administration offices in the country. We started with only skirts but now they have expanded their uniform wardrobe as they now order different types of skirts. [Participant 115]

I have through my profits managed to electrify my house, which is also my workshop, and we no longer use the generator. This is important achievement since we used to struggle taking out the generator, this was a relief to the men that we ask for as they passed by my place. [Participant 121]

Four respondents reported experiencing no achievements, but one of the four noted that she has been able to repay/recover her initial contribution.
Almost all the businesswomen had the same future goals for their businesses. The most important goals were business growth (n = 22), change in organization (n = 16), and level of sales (n = 20). Business growth for most respondents was associated with size, with the most common goals to expand into a firm/factory/big workshop, employ more people, increase machinery, and expand the products and level of sales growth. Expanding the workshop meant moving to a new location, that is a commercial plot, as most of these businesswomen were either in their homes or rented business shells or residential houses. Change in organization was also important and goals such as hiring a general manager/supervisor or marketing person were common. Several of the respondents (n=3) identified business expansion to include new horizons such as opening schools to teach the skills of tailoring and opening shops as extensions of their businesses. As they said,

I would like to see my business grow-I want to see big shops like Game discount stores buy my product, employ more people and own big workshop to work in. As I told you earlier I would like to have people who can help me in running this business and improve, I wish my children were grown ups and educated enough to help me, this is why they are engaged in helping me sew and sell. (The researcher witnessed the boys at work) [Participant 103]

Employ more people; help create more employment to reduce children roaming the streets. Organization, I would like to see it changed and have one of my employees being the manager. [Participant 111]

Size to grow in number of employees and expand in the type of products. I should have an accountant, sales person and manager. I would like to move from these premises to a better area that is big and spacious. I want to convert my residential area into a firm and factory. I also want to employ specialized employees to do specific tasks. [Participant 116]

Most respondents (n=18) stated finances as their main challenge in meeting their goals. To show the value of money the respondents said,

Money I can use it to acquire a lot of things such as buying a commercial
plot. [Participant 110]

With money I can do anything. [Participant 112]

Money you can use to achieve your goals. [Participant 114]

Location (n = 9) was the second main challenge and others were management and marketing. One respondent commented, “location is my main challenge since there is nowhere I could expand my business to.”

**Comparison of More Successful and Less Successful Businesses**

Once groups of more and less successful businesses were formed using the criteria identified in Chapter 3, they were *compared* and contrasted (see Table 5). Fourteen were in the more successful group and eleven businesses in the less successful group. There were only two significant differences between the more successful and less successful groups as summarized in Table 6. The t-test result showed no differences in the means of the more successful and less successful businesswomen on five items of motivation. However, there was a significant difference between the groups on “a desire to do this as a career.” The more successful women appeared to regard their business seriously as their career. The qualitative reasons for initiating the business which were exclusively mentioned by individuals in the more successful group included poor working relationships, encouragement from a friend, and the need to fulfill a dream.

Similarly, Chi-square tests showed no significant differences between the groups on challenges faced at business start-up. Yet, *during business* growth there was one significant difference. More successful businesswomen faced management (supervision, and buying of materials) challenges at growth more than their less successful counterparts.
There were no significant differences between the two groups on marketing of their products. All the business women employed paid skilled labor and had a pricing formula for their products. All businesses produced and sold their products in their workshops.

One other variable, producing original designs was removed as it ended up not being applicable. Almost all the respondents except for one, were only adapting what is already in the market. For instance, respondents said their decisions on designs were based on customer preferences and fashion trend.

Table 6. Comparison of More and Less Successful Businesswomen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>More successful (n=14)</th>
<th>Less successful (n=11)</th>
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<td>A desire to manage your own time</td>
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Table 6. Comparison of More and Less Successful Businesswomen Continued

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<td>Hiring skilled labor</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production/selling in workshop</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Marketing Products</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal marketing</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Customer referrals</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising in papers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.857</td>
<td>.209</td>
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<tr>
<td>Business insurance</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.465</td>
<td>.393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business plan</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.394</td>
<td>.141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pricing strategy</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
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*p ≤.05   **p ≤.01
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the present study was to explore and analyze micro or small textile and apparel businesses run by women in Botswana. Objectives were to examine a) motivations for initiating a business, b) factors used in defining more successful and less successful businesses, and c) challenges faced as businesses are initiated and expand. Literature regarding motivation, success, and challenges faced by businesspersons in the U.S was reviewed. The review was helpful in formulating questions and during analyses of data.

A probability sampling method was employed in systematically choosing a sample of 25 businesswomen for this study from the list provided by Department of Industrial Affairs Office in Botswana. All had participated in FAP sponsorship and had been in business for at least three years. All businesses focused on the sewing of textiles or apparel. Face-to-face interviews were used to collect data. The interview schedule was comprised of structured open-ended questions. All interviews were audiotaped for purposes of reliability.

This chapter focuses on discussion and implications of the findings from the study. The first section of this chapter will address the findings in relation to the two research questions for the study. Then, limitations, future research, and implications will be offered.

Discussion of Research Questions and Results

Question 1

The first research question asked: How are Botswana businesspersons similar to and different from the U.S. businesspersons depicted in the research literature as related to: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for starting a business, criteria for defining success, and
challenges at start-up and growth. To summarize, Botswana businesses showed many similarities to U.S businesses as discussed in the research literature.

Motivations. The findings from the qualitative responses showed motivations falling in both intrinsic and extrinsic categories. For instance, making profit and economic hardship are examples of extrinsic motivation, while fulfilling a dream, though not in the literature, is an intrinsic example of intrinsic motivation. From the data collected it can be concluded that businesswomen had varied motivations for starting their businesses. The motivations mentioned were possession of personal skills for starting the business, economic hardship, making profit, a desire for family security, working for self, national pride, poor working relationship, little time for visiting relatives, too much work, and encouragement from friends.

Most of the reasons mentioned for motivations are consistent with those found in U.S. research literature. Sixty percent of the women were working before starting their businesses as machinists and firm closure contributed to or pushed them into starting their ventures as found in prior research by Birley and Westhead (1994). Firm closure gave rise to economic hardship (unemployment, low pay) for most of the women. Poor working relationships, consistent with the findings from Stokes, Riger, and Sullivan (1994), was a cause for others to leave their jobs. Family security was included in their motivations as either as either building a business to pass on in the family or establishing a secure future for family members (Kuratko, et. al 1997). In the Botswana context, in addition to securing a future for the family, some respondents said they were preparing for their old age, as they would not be able to work the type of job when older. Therefore if they opened their businesses now, they would instead employ people who will work for them.
Seeking of autonomy (working for self) was also found among the respondents; this is consistent with previous research also (Kuratko et. al. 1997). Possession of personal skills by businesswomen was consistent with the findings of Feldman et al. (2000) about the use of skills and abilities. National pride, which was explained as making people aware that Botswana too has potential manpower capable of producing good quality products, was found to be consistent with the Paige and Littrell (in press) research on U.S. craft retailers. The definition of success by craft retailers as an effort towards reinforcing the region’s cultural identity seems similar to Botswana businesswomen taking pride in who they are.

Reasons that were not consistent with U.S. literature were encouragement from friends, following a dream, and too much work were found among the Botswana women.

Success. Qualitative analysis of the study showed that more of the women in Botswana defined success in terms of extrinsic rewards or empirically measurable outcomes and less with intrinsic rewards, except for a few. Growth in sales and profits and an increase in the number of employees were cited as measurable or extrinsic descriptions of success. This is consistent with the findings of Paige and Littrell (in press) on U.S. craft retailers’ definition of success. The retailers defined success as being able to satisfy one’s goals, of which achieving sales growth and exceeding customer expectations were mentioned as extrinsic ways for indicating success.

Challenges. Consistent with the literature review, it was observed that businesswomen in Botswana faced a variety of challenges at start-up such as finding a market (who will buy their products), management skills (finding employees, supervising, finding good quality materials), finances, and business skills. Other challenges mentioned at start-up were competition, lack of business place, and transport. At business growth, the
challenges prevalent were finances, management skills, and finding a target market. Marketing (defining a target market), management skills, and finance are consistent with the findings of Dodge and Robbins (1992) in the U.S. These problems were recurring in the business life cycle. Finance challenges at growth were mainly due to insufficient cash flow, which according to the businesswomen was due to unreliable customers (failing to pay for goods taken, taking too long to pay); these financial challenges were congruent with the findings of Lisenda (1997). Also consistent with the same study was competition at both start-up and growth. Management problems too, especially with regard to delegating or supervision, were among the challenges experienced by women in other research (Ruggles, 1995).

Although the businesswomen studied had a large percent of the start-up contribution form the Government, still they faced problems of money for start-up; 52% reported borrowing money from relatives, 20% received donations from relatives, 16% used savings and only 8% got a loan. This pattern supports the findings of Coleman (1994) and Lisenda (1997). One businesswoman said “when I applied for FAP, I did not have good knowledge of the scheme, therefore I applied for a small amount since I did not have money too”.

Challenges faced by businesswomen in Botswana that were different and not common to the U.S. included transport and business location. Businesswomen operated in rented homes, their homes, or rented business shells, which they said were not good for business. Though not consistent with U.S literature findings, the findings of Littrell et al. (2000) found lack of workshops as a challenge for small business owners in Ghana.
Question 2

The second research question asked: How are more successful and less successful Botswana businesses similar to and different from U.S businesses depicted in the Littrell, Stout, and Reilly research (1991) as related to hiring skilled labor, producing original products, marketing their products, sites for selling products, the amount of time put in the business, having a defined target market, having insurance for the business, and understanding the use and importance of a business plan.

Because there were few differences between more and less successful Botswana businesses, a comparison cannot be made. Rather, a profile of Botswana businesswomen and their businesses is offered. Possible reasons for few differences between the more and less successful may be because the sample was comprised of people who have been in business for at least three years and they all had financial support from the FAP program at start-up. Those who failed early on, which is highly common in small business (Dodge & Robbins, 1992), and those who started businesses without the significant start-up support (up to 90%) offered in the FAP government program were not included in the study.

From the study, the following could be said to profile the Botswana businesswomen in this study. The businesswomen:

- produce various products such as German prints, ladies casual dresses, wedding gowns, school uniforms, curtains, and school tracksuits.
- work an average of 7 hours per day and 5 to 5 1/2 days per week.
- employ skilled labor.
- engage in rigorous marketing.
• use a pricing strategy that includes initial price for the raw material, overhead, profit, and labor.

• face challenges related to management skills, business skills, and financial skills at both start-up and growth of the business.

• face challenges in defining target markets.

• start their business because of economic hardships (unemployment, low salary, improve standard of living), possession of personal skills, and wanting to make profit and achieve family security.

• define success in terms of both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards.

Limitations of the Study

There are two potential limitations to the study. The first limitation is that all participants were FAP assisted so findings cannot be generalized to non FAP participants or other types of businesses. Second all the members have been in business for three years and are more likely to be successful than businesses who have not been in business for three years and did not receive FAP assistance.

Future Research

As this was the first exploratory investigation for small businesses in Botswana, there are more avenues for future research. Several areas of interest for future research include:

• Replicate the same study to include a wider community of women and test the broader applicability of the profile developed in this study so as to be able to generalize the findings. Components of the study could look for differences and
similarities in motivation, definitions of success, and challenges between rural, semi-
rural, and urban women.

- Carry out similar studies on men in Botswana so as to be able to compare the findings
  with that of men and women.
- Compare FAP and non FAP-supported textiles-related businesses.
- Investigate whether people start businesses based on their previous work experience
  or a need in the market.

**Implications to Botswana**

This research project has really been an eye opener for me and this information will
be shared with practicing Home Economics (H.E) teachers, Principal Education Officers
for H.E, Curriculum Department officers, and the Department of Industrial Affairs. For
H.E teachers to be able to prepare students who can take part in competitive
entrepreneurial activities of the new Fashion and Fabrics Syllabus, the following
suggestions are made.

- In service teachers should be given training on business management and
  financial management because these were challenges faced by women in the
  study. Training could be run during school breaks. Training will help them
  address the components of the syllabus that deal with preparation of business
  plans and other financial aspects.

- The Home Economics Curriculum in *institutions of higher education* should
  incorporate a business component that assists students in viewing business
  start-up and management as a career. This recommendation is based on the
more successful businesswomen in this study viewing their business as a career.

- The Home Economics Curriculum in higher institutions of learning should have students do attachments (internships) with manufacturing companies or other business enterprises for practical, work-related experience.

- Practicing businesswomen/people should be invited to schools to share their experiences with students before the students embark on planning their mini projects. This is a practice that is currently not common in Botswana.

- Within the Department of Industrial Affairs, there is need for courses on management and record keeping for businesswomen and follow ups or monitoring of the FAP projects to stay in touch with the businesswomen’s changing needs.
A textile-related small business study in Botswana. Southern Africa.

**Women Entrepreneurs**

**Personal Interviews**

Good morning/afternoon. My name is Marina Gobagoba. I am doing a study on textile-related small business. The information that I collect will be used to write a thesis for my Master's degree at Iowa State University. It will also be used in formulating guidelines on how to help both teachers and students understand what information is important to know when planning and preparing to start a business. I would like to talk with you for about an hour and half regarding your work in your business. The questions will focus on how your business is organized, motivations for starting your business, definition of success, challenges faced in starting and running a business and lastly demographics. Please be assured that all of your information will be treated as confidential. Your participation is completely voluntary and should you desire, you may choose not to answer a question, or I can stop the interview at any time. No names will be associated with any comments; only a group summary will be offered. If you decide to participate, we will conduct an audiotaped interview. **The tapes will be erased in December 2001 after the interviewer has finished transcribing them.** Do you have any questions about the interview? Also feel free to ask questions as the interview proceeds.

May we begin?

Business Owner's Name: ________________________________

After learning the name of the business owner, this page will be removed.
Part A: Business

The first question will be about your business.

A-1. What is the name of your business?

A-2. Are you the sole owner of the business?

________ yes

________ no

If not, who else is involved in the ownership (record relationship only, such as sister, daughter, friend)

A-3. Why did you decide to focus on clothing and textiles rather than starting another type of business such as bakery or others?

A-4. How long have you been in this business?

________ years

When exactly was it started?

______ year

A-5. What were your financial arrangements for starting the business? What were your start-up costs and how did you fund these?

A-6. Was there any special situation in your life that led to your starting the business in _____?

A-7. Before starting the business were you formally employed?

________ yes

________ no

If the answer is yes, what was your job and why did you leave your job?
A-8. How many employees (female and males) do you have in total?

  ______ females
  ______ males

A-9. Are they full-time or part-time workers? Please provide numbers.

  ______ full-time
  ______ part-time

A-10. When hiring employees what are the **three most** important skills that you look for?

A-11. How did you decide on the skills your employees should have?

  Do you have any knowledge on the importance of each?

A-12. Amongst your employees, do you have any relatives either from your **side** or spouse (if any)?

  If you have relatives, are there any disadvantages of having them work for you?

  What about disadvantages?

  If you had a choice would you prefer hiring a relative who has limited skills or a non-relative who is highly skilled? Why?

  ________ relative
  ________ non-relative

A-13. Where is your **business** operated?

  ________ home

  ________ outside home: If outside home, describe the location:

  What are the advantages of this location?
What are the disadvantages of the location?

**Part B: Product and Production**

I now have questions to ask about your product.

B-1. What products do you currently make? (List)

B-2. How many garments/items do you make/produce a month?

________ garments/month

B-3. How do you make decisions for?

Types of products you will make?

Designs, color and product details?

Sources of materials?

B-4. How many hours do your employees devote a week?

________ hours per day

________ days per week

What about yourself?

________ hours per day

________ days per week

B-5. What training is provided for your employees?

B-6. Do you have any incentives or ways to encourage your workers to produce high quality work?

B-7. How are your full-time and part-time workers paid?

_______ hourly

_______ by piece (completion of an item)

_______ monthly
What about yourself?

B-8. What were your overall sales in 2000?

_____ gross sales

what was the income of the business after expenses?

_____ income after expenses

Part C: Marketing

C-1. Tell me about who buys your products?

C-2. How do you get your customers?

C-3. What do customers like about your products?

C-4. How are your products different from those customers can find at other similar businesses?

C-5. How do you make decisions for pricing your products? What goes into figuring the cost? (raw materials, labor, overhead, profit)

Probe: For specific examples.

Part D: Motivation

I am now going to ask questions concerning your motivations.

D-1. People start businesses for many reasons. What really motivated you to start your business?

D-2. I would like to know if any of the following reasons influenced you in starting your business. Use a scale to indicate the magnitude of the influence the following had on you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. The opportunity to make a lot of money
b. A desire to be independent, i.e. free from being ordered around

c. A desire to manage your own time

d. A desire to control own future

e. A desire to do this as a career

f. A need to support your household

D-3. As you reflect on your original motivations are your motivations for continuing the business, the same or different now.

_______ same

_______ different: What motivates you now?

Part E. Challenges

E-1. What do you consider to have been your three biggest challenges when you started your business?

E-2. What strategies did you use to overcome or minimize each of these challenges?

E-2. In contrast to challenges, what part of business was easiest when you began?

E-4. Today, what do you consider as your biggest challenges in running this business?

E-5. Today, what part of the business do you find to be the easiest?

E-6. What would you do differently in your business, if you were to start your business all over again?

Probe: tailoring, design, quality control, production planning, management

Part F: Success

F-1. Success is important for most people. In your own words, how do you define success for you and your business?
F-2. Using the criteria you have just mentioned, how successful is your business at the present time? (Use the scale)

Not successful                                         Very successful

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

Probe: What are the examples to support your rating?

F-3. What factors or things would you say helped to you to be successful?

F-4. Before starting the business did you have a business plan?

________ yes

________ no

If the answer is yes, what do you think the advantage of a business plan is?

If the answer is no, do you have one now?

F-5. Do you have any insurance for your business?

________ yes

________ no

Which of the following bank account do you operate?

________ separate bank account for the business

________ joint bank account (personal and business)

F-6. Would you say your business is helpful in improving the lives of Batwana?

________ yes

________ no

If yes in what ways?

Part G: Future Goals

G-1. What have been the most important achievement of the business to date?
G-2. What goal do you have for the future? How would you like to see your business change in the future?

Probe: size, level of sales, marketing, its organization, quality of product

G-3. What are your biggest challenges for meeting these goals?

Part H: Demographic

H-1. What is your age? ______

H-2. What is your marital status? ______

H-3. Do you have a family?

________ yes __________ no

If the answer is yes, how many children?

________ no. of children

What are their ages?

H-4. How many people live in the family?

H-5. Up through what standard did you attend school?

________

How did you learn the skill for the business?

Tailoring/sewing:

Business:

H-6. Where did you grow up?

If not the present location, what brought you here?
APPENDIX B: HUMAN SUBJECT APPROVAL
Title of Project: A Textile-related, small business study in Botswana, Southern Africa.

I agree to provide the proper surveillance of this project to insure that the rights and welfare of the human subjects are protected. I will report any adverse reactions to the committee. Additions to or changes in research procedures after the project has been approved will be submitted to the committee for review. I agree that all key personnel involved in conducting human subjects research will receive training in the protection of human subjects. I agree to request renewal of approval for any project continuing more than one year.

Marina Gobagoba 7/12/01
Typed name of principal investigator Signature of principal investigator

Textiles & Clothing Department
Phone number and email

2a. Principal investigator
☐ Faculty ☐ Staff ☐ Postdoctoral ☑ Graduate Student ☐ Undergraduate Student

3. Typed name of co-principal investigator(s) Date Signature of co-principal investigator(s)

3a. Co-Principal investigator(s) (check all that apply)
☐ Faculty ☐ Staff ☐ Postdoctoral ☐ Graduate Student ☐ Undergraduate Student

3b. Typed name of major professor or supervisor (if not a co-principal investigator) Date Signature of major professor or supervising faculty member

Dr. Mary Littrell 7/12/01

4. Typed names of other key personnel who will directly interact with human subjects.

5. Project (check all that apply)
☐ Research ☑ Thesis or dissertation ☐ Class project ☐ Independent Study (490, 590, Honors project)

6. Number of subjects (complete all that apply)
25 # adults, non-students ______# ISU students ______ # minors under 14 ______# other (explain) ______ # minors 14-17

7. Status of project submission through Office of Sponsored Programs Administration (check one)
☐ Has been submitted ☐ Will be submitted ☑ Will not be submitted

7a. Funding Source: None

8. Brief description of proposed research involving human subjects: (See instructions, item 8. Use an additional page if needed.) (Include one copy of the complete proposal if submitting to a Federal sponsor.)
The research will address the research question: What are the motivations, challenges and definition of success by women entrepreneurs in textile related business. A standard interview will be used as a method of data collection. The study findings will address the lack of studies on such issues as women entrepreneurs and will also form a basis of knowledge for teachers who are supposed to equip students with necessary orientation for their effective participation in business. The findings will be shared with Government and other scholars whose interest is in the economic development of the people of Botswana. Informants of the study will comprise 25 women who have received financial aid through a scheme called Financial Assistance Policy from the Botswana Government. The scheme is designed to help those Batswana whose interest is to produce goods that can replace imported ones and/or be exported. The interviews are scheduled to begin end of July, 2001.

9. Informed Consent: □ Signed informed consent will be obtained. (Attach a copy of your form.) 
   ● Modified informed consent will be obtained. (See instructions, item 9.)

10. Confidentiality of Data: Describe below the methods you will use to ensure the confidentiality of data obtained. (See instructions, item 10.)

   Some of the informants are illiterate; thus the modified informed consent is appropriate. An opening statement will be read at the beginning of each interview. After the interviewer learns the informant’s name, the top page of the interview schedule will be torn off and destroyed. From that point on, the informant number will be the only identifier associated with the data. Names will not be recorded with informant numbers in any of the project records.

11. Will subjects in the research be placed at risk or incur discomfort? Describe any risks to the subjects and precautions that will be taken to minimize them. (The concept of risk goes beyond physical risk and includes risks to subjects’ dignity and self-respect as well as psychological or emotional risk. See instructions, item 11.)

   No known risks

12. CHECK ALL of the following that apply to your research:

   □ A. Medical clearance necessary before subjects can participate
   □ B. Administration of substances (foods, drugs, etc.) to subjects
   □ C. Physical exercise or conditioning for subjects
   □ D. Samples (blood, tissue, etc.) from subjects
   □ E. Administration of infectious agents or recombinant DNA
   □ F. Application of external stimuli
   □ G. Application of noxious or potentially noxious stimuli
   □ H. Deception of subjects
   □ I. Subjects under 14 years of age and/or 14-17 years of age
   □ J. Subjects in institutions (nursing homes, mental health facilities, prisons, etc.)
   □ K. Pregnant women
   □ L. Research must be approved by another institution or agency (attach letters of approval)

   If you checked any of the items in 12, please complete the following in the space below (include any attachments):

   Items A-G  Describe the procedures and note the proposed safety precautions.

   Items D-E  The principal investigator should send a copy of this form to Environmental Health and Safety, 118 Agronomy Lab for review.

   Item H  Describe how subjects will be deceived; justify the deception; indicate the debriefing procedure, including the timing and information to be presented to subjects.
Iowa State University Human Subjects Review Form

PI Last Name Marina Gobagoba Title of Project Thesis A Textile-Related Small Business Study

Checklist for Attachments

The following are attached (please check):

13. ☑ Letter or written statement to subjects indicating clearly:
   a) the purpose of the research
   b) the use of any identifier codes (names, #’s), how they will be used, and when they will be removed (see item 18)
   c) an estimate of time needed for participation in the research
   d) if applicable, the location of the research activity
   e) how you will ensure confidentiality
   f) in a longitudinal study, when and how you will contact subjects later
   g) that participation is voluntary; nonparticipation will not affect evaluations of the subject

14. ☐ A copy of the consent form (if applicable)

15. ☐ Letter of approval for research from cooperating organizations or institutions (if applicable)

16. ☑ Data-gathering instruments

17. Anticipated dates for contact with subjects:
   First contact July 30, 2001
   Last contact December 31, 2001

18. If applicable: anticipated date that identifiers will be removed from completed survey instruments and/or audio or visual tapes will be erased:

   Month/Day/Year

19. Signature of Departmental Executive Officer Date Department or Administrative Unit
   Signature: 7/13/01 Textiles & Clothing

20. Initial action by the Institutional Review Board (IRB):
   ☐ Project approved ☐ Pending Further Review Date ☐ Project not approved Date
   ☐ No action required Date

21. Follow-up action by the IRB:
   Project approved Date Project not approved Date
   Project not resubmitted Date

   Rick Sharp
   Name of IRB Chairperson

   Signature of IRB Chairperson

   Approval Date 7/19/01

2/01
REFERENCES


I would like to use this platform to convey my deepest gratitude to the many individuals who have helped, encouraged, and seen me through the completion of this study. First and foremost many thanks go to my major professor Dr. Mary Littrell for working with me from the conception of the idea for this thesis through its completion. Her invaluable dedication, patience and expertise are highly appreciated and recognized. I hold her in high regard for her thoroughness, rigor and for guiding me through this process and hanging to the very end.

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Endless gratitude and love are extended to my spiritual mother Keromeng Johnson for being a true Christian and best friend. Your invaluable support, care and all you gave to my children during my absence is appreciated. God bless you.

Special recognition goes to my children Pearl, Tumelo, Kago, and Masego for allowing me the long leave of absence to pursue my dream. My deepest appreciation and loving thoughts are given to my son Kago for parenting his kid brother Masego on my behalf. I would also like to acknowledge my parents William and Gakeitire Babish for instilling good values in me, respect for God and other human beings and the importance of education.
Special thanks to the Botswana businesswomen who participated in the study, without you there would never have been a learning process, Member of Parliament Mr. M. Mooka for helping with the translation of research questions to Setswana, and the statistician, Jill Yoder of Family and Consumer Science College for her help and patience. I also pass thanks to the Government of Botswana for giving me the opportunity to further my studies.

Finally, my highest appreciation goes to God for being my principal guide and shephard and also for bringing these valuable and significant people into my life.