A research into the motivating factors of Irish entrepreneurs to start-up a micro/small enterprise and their perception of the support provided by the Irish Government.

Dissertation submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at Dublin Business School under the supervision of Eddie McConnon.

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Word Count: 22,819

Master of Business Administration 2016
Declaration

I, Thomas Molloy, declare that the material, which is submitted in this assignment, is entirely my own work and has not been submitted for any academic assessment other than as part fulfilment of the assessment procedures for the program. In addition, I have referenced correctly all literature and sources used in this work and this work is fully compliant with the Dublin Business School’s academic honesty policy.

Signature of student: Thomas Molloy

Date: 22/08/2016
Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor Eddie McConnon, who has provided support, guidance, knowledge and patience, which has given me great confidence to complete the dissertation.

I would like to extend my appreciation to all of the entrepreneurs and individuals who participated in this study for their time and contribution.

I would also like to thank my parents for their love, support and encouragement to never give up on pursuing my dreams and goals.

I dedicate this dissertation to my fiancée Rose, who inspires me everyday.
Abstract

The Research sets out to examine the main motivational factors that influence entrepreneurs to start-up micro/small enterprises and their perception of support from the Irish Government. The researcher employed a mixed method approach to the study by conducting 8 semi-structured interviews with 5 entrepreneurs and 3 participants from the Department of Enterprise, Innovation and Jobs (DJEI), the Economic Institute of Social Research (ESRI) and the Central Bank of Ireland. A survey was conducted using a sample of 63 micro/small business owners. Three follow-up interviews were then conducted with the entrepreneurs to discuss the findings.

The research findings suggest that the entrepreneurs former place of employment is inadvertently creating entrepreneurs. The findings also suggest that self-efficacy and risk taking is positively correlated to entrepreneurship, while simultaneously the fear of failure is a factor for many Irish entrepreneurs. The need for achievement and observing successful entrepreneurs were also prominent motivating factors for starting up a business. Having exposure to mentors was negatively correlated to entrepreneurship and the findings in relation to the economic environment being an influence on the entrepreneurs intention to start-up an enterprise were inconclusive. Access to finance was important in the decision to start-up a business for Irish entrepreneurs, however, the findings for Government support policies and entrepreneurial education were inconclusive.

The findings of the study did not apply to all regions of Ireland, as the sample population was primarily in the Dublin area. This research highlights the varying motivating factors that influence entrepreneurs to engage in entrepreneurial activity while simultaneously exploring the entrepreneurs’ perspective of Government support policies.

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Glossary of Terms

**CEO**: Chief Executive Officer

**COO**: Chief Operating Officer

**CSO**: Central Statistics Office

**DJEI**: Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation

**ESRI**: The Economic and Social Research Institute

**EU**: European Union

**ISME**: Irish Small and Medium Enterprise

**GDP**: Gross Domestic Product

**GEM**: Global Entrepreneur Monitor

**LSQ**: Learning Styles Questionnaire

**OECD**: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

**SFA**: Small Firms Association

**SME**: Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
Chapter 1- Introduction

1.0 Background

Yalcin and Kapu (2008, pp. 185-193) state that the motivations and challenges associated with entrepreneurial activity are two key components that need to be considered when investigating entrepreneurship. Motivation can be a permeating factor within an individual that assists in overcoming impediments towards entrepreneurship (Fayolle and Linan, 2014, pp. 684-685; Kim, 2012, p. 51). However, Kirkwood (210, pp. 207-208) infers that cognizing the motivating factors that lead to entrepreneurship is an intricate progression.

De Pillis (2007, pp. 392-394) posits that the personality traits of an individual alone is not a sufficient indicator to determining entrepreneurship motives which is contrary to Frese’s (2009, pp, 438-439) contention that examining psychological traits can assist in cognizing the entrepreneurial actions of individuals. These contentions propelled the researcher to focus on the first part of the research study, which is an investigation into the main motivational factors that influence individuals to start-up micro/small enterprises in Ireland.

A report by the Entrepreneurship Forum (2014) established by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (DJEI) highlights how the rate of entrepreneurs starting-up new enterprises has been declining in recent years. According to the Companies Registration Office (CRO, 2012), new company registrations in Ireland decreased by 4.2% from 2011 to 2012. The Central Statistics Office (CSO, 2012) published figures that stated start-up enterprises decreased from 16,700 in 2006 to 11,200 in 2010.

A report by the Global Entrepreneur Monitor (GEM, 2014) on entrepreneurship in Ireland stated that 24,400 individuals started a new business in 2014. The report also stated that 77% of nascent entrepreneurs are positively motivated to start-up a business as opposed to 23% of nascent entrepreneurs who are motivated by necessity. The report also highlights how Ireland has a supportive culture towards Entrepreneurship. These statistics and reports influenced the researcher to focus the study towards the second part of the research, which investigates to
what extent of an entrepreneur’s perception of Government support in Ireland influences their motivation to start-up an enterprise.

Research conducted by Estay (2013, pp. 246-247) extrapolated that the entrepreneur’s perception of the business environment significantly determines their level of motivation for wanting to start up a business. This contention influenced the researcher’s decision to amalgamate the first and second part of the research into an investigation of the motivating factors of Irish Entrepreneur’s to start-up a Business and their perceptions of Government support.

The topic of Motivation alone encompasses a wide range of research study, which ultimately persuaded the researcher to narrow down the research to the main motivating factors that influence entrepreneurs to start-up an enterprise and their perception of Government support. Through researching numerous articles, journals and papers on the topic, the researcher focused the first part of the study to the following motivating factors of entrepreneurial intention (Malebana, 2014, pp. 709-714; Fayolle and Linan, 2014, pp. 663-665), exposure to mentors (McKevitt, 2015, pp. 264-266), push and pull factors (Block, 2015, p. 38), need for achievement (Taormina, 2007, pp. 202-209), and self-efficacy (Drnovsek, 2010, pp. 329-31).

The second part of the study focused on government/education policies and access to finance (DJEI, 2014; Heinonen, 2010, p. 1166), and the entrepreneur's perception of that Government support (Taormina, 2007, pp. 204-216). Government support policies and entrepreneurial education policies encompass Government branches and agencies like the Department of Enterprise, Jobs and Innovation (DJEI), the Local Enterprise Office (LEO), the small firm’s association (SFA), the Irish small and medium sized enterprises (ISME) and Microfinance Ireland that offer training, support and funding to entrepreneurs who want to start-up a business. Access to finance was amalgamated with Government support policies as both topics of support and resources were interconnected when the researcher analysed the secondary research as agencies like Microfinance Ireland and banking institutions are monitored by the Irish Government to provide funding to entrepreneurs (The National Policy Statement on Entrepreneurship in Ireland, 2014).
The reasoning behind focusing on the aforementioned areas of inquiry was due to the frequency of these motivating factors materialising throughout the research. This ultimately emboldened and influenced the researcher to choose this course of study, which could assist in identifying the main motivational factors that propel individual towards entrepreneurship and to ascertain the extent to which an individual perception of Government support influences their motivation towards entrepreneurship.

1.1 Aim of the Research

According to Eriksson & Kovalainen (2008, p. 37-39) the purpose of the research question is to acquire and develop new information and knowledge from existing information on the topic of study with the objective of formulating your findings to enable you to complete your study of the topic. The purpose of this research is to identify the motivational factors that ultimately persuade entrepreneurs to start-up micro/small enterprises (Van Gelderen and Jansen, 2006, pp. 23-32). The aim of the research is to provide a better understanding of the psychological characteristics that influence the decision for starting up a small firm and the motivational drivers that facilitate that decision (Atherton, 2007, pp. 404-417).

The research objectives also investigated the perceptions of individuals to Government support in starting up a micro/small enterprise in Ireland. Taormina and Kin-Mei Loa (2007, p. 200-202) highlight that measuring the two different variables of personality traits and the economic environment is difficult due to the variances of micro and macro levels. The researcher adapted Taormina and Kin-Mei Loa’s (2007, pp. 200-221) proposal by evaluating the economic environment by cognizing the entrepreneur’s perception of the economic environment instead of the macro-economic factors. This allowed the researcher to narrow down the research to entrepreneur’s perception of Government support made available to them. This paper aims to identify and explore the motivations of Irish entrepreneurs for starting up an enterprise and their perceptions of support from the Irish Government.
1.2 Research questions and hypothesis

The researcher focused on the following research questions and hypothesis:

**Q1**: What are the main Motivational factors that influence an individual to start-up a micro/small firm in Ireland?

H1: The main motivating factors investigated are highly correlated with the decision to start-up an enterprise. **Hypothesis 1 adapted from** (Atherton, 2007; Heinonen, 2010; Taormina, Kin-Mei Lao, 2007; Hessels, 2008; Van Gelderen, 2006; Kirkwood, 2009; Drnovsek, Wincent and Cardon, 2010)

Hair (2007, pp. 91-92) promotes the notion that the researcher should cogitate the outcome of the investigation when considering the research objectives as an explicit and compelling objective can exhibit credibility to the research topic. The research objective for **Q1/H1** is to identify the motivating factors that influence the decision of an individual to become an entrepreneur.

**Q2**: To what extent do an entrepreneur's perceptions of Government support policies and access to finance influence his/her motivation to start-up a business?

H2: Government support policies and access to finance are positively correlated with the decision to start-up a business. **Hypothesis 2 adapted from** (Taormina, Kin-Mei Lao, 2007; Nabi & Linan, 2013)

The research objective for **Q2/H2** is to narrow down the research by exploring the perceptions of Irish Entrepreneurs to Government support policies and explore if these perceptions have any influence on their motivation to start-up an enterprise.
1.3 Rationale for the Research

Burton (2016, pp. 239-240) advances that premise that entrepreneurship can offer individuals an alternative career choice or act as a stopgap between career opportunities depending on where the individual’s profession has progressed to at a specific point in time. Sorensen and Sharkey (2014, pp. 328-349) posit that opportunity structures such as pay, mobility and career advancement within the individuals’ workplace can influence the transition from paid employment to entrepreneurship. The rationale for the research stemmed initially from the researcher’s tentative contemplation of leaving a secure job to start up a micro/small enterprise. The motive for doing so was consonant to Gomezelj’s (2013, p. 907) description of entrepreneurship which offers an individual a viable career option after resigning from one’s place of employment.

A study conducted by Sharma and Madan (2013, pp. 25-27) into student’s perceptions of barriers to entrepreneurship found that the type of personality trait strongly influenced the individual’s perceptions of barriers to entrepreneurship. From preliminary investigations into the topic, the reasoning for the research digressed into a genuine interest into the psychological traits that influence the decision of entrepreneurs to take the initial step from pre start-up to the actual start-up phase of starting a business and their perceptions of Government support.

The justification for conducting the research was to understand the motivations of entrepreneurs to start-up a business and to determine the challenges that entrepreneurs face in accessing support and funding to starting up an enterprise. By attempting to ascertain these motivating factors and perceptions of government support from a wider population sample of entrepreneurs could assist the researcher to understand his own motivations for wanting to start-up a business and further illuminate the topic of study for the benefit of other potential entrepreneurs and practitioners, students and academics.

1.4 Contribution of the Study

Global economic ambiguity and employment insecurity underlines the need for individuals to
create self-employment opportunities for the objective of sustaining growth and generating job opportunities (Samujh, 2011, p. 24). In Ireland, micro/small enterprises account for 98.4% of total businesses (CSO, 2012). A report by the GEM (2014) stated that one in ten individuals under the age of 35 in Ireland aspire to be an entrepreneur. Bird (2009, pp. 327-328) denotes the importance of ascertaining entrepreneurial activities, which ultimately lead to job creation, competition among existing firms and variety of choice for the end consumer. The impact of entrepreneurship to Ireland’s economic growth and job creation has influenced the researcher’s decision to investigate the motivational factors and perceptions that can either expedite or impede the decision of a potential entrepreneur to pursue a path towards entrepreneurial activity (Staniewski, 2015, p. 584).

The research will look to demonstrate or disprove the correlation of various motivational attributes towards entrepreneurs starting up an enterprise. The relevance of the research can be beneficial, as it will look to ascertain if Government support policies are supportive of entrepreneurship in Ireland. The Researcher is attempting to establish if there are conflicting views concerning Irish entrepreneur’s perceptions of Government support policies. The Research can give simultaneous insight into motivational factors that propelled micro/small firm owners/managers to take the step from pre start-up to actual start-up and their perceptions of Government support (Nabi & Linan, 2013, pp. 633-655).

### 1.5 Suitability of the Researcher

The researcher obtained a BA Honours degree in Business Management from Dublin Business School in 2013, which was intended to be the catalyst for establishing a new micro/small enterprise but it, was decided to study for an MBA with the objective of further enhancing my ability to achieve my initial objectives. The Researcher has worked for over 12 years with different micro/small enterprises in Dublin port and has witnessed at first-hand how these small firms had failed to continue to maintain viability due to financial constraints and a lack of support that could have enabled innovation and expansion of their businesses into sustainable entities. The researcher took a personal learning style test from Pearson Tutor Services (2012) which indicated a tactile learning style, which equates to a preference for interactive and activity based learning (See Appendix 1, p. 118 for Test results). The
researcher will apply an inductive and a deductive research approach in a sequential manner, as this will benefit the learning style of the researcher.

1.6 Organisation of the dissertation

This section presents an outline of the chapters that will be covered in the dissertation.

**Chapter 1:** This Chapter provides an overview of the research problem and an outline of the research objectives, rationale, contribution, suitability of the researcher to the research.

**Chapter 2:** This chapter critically examines the available information, literature and existing theories related to the research topic. The literature review assisted the researcher in the conceptualising of the research questions and hypotheses in addition to the formulation of the questions for both the qualitative interviews and quantitative questionnaires.

**Chapter 3:** The main purpose of this chapter was to justify and explain the methodology choices employed in gathering data for the research. It discusses the research philosophy, approach, strategy, data collection techniques employed, sample population and ethics in conducting this research.

**Chapter 4:** This chapter presents the findings of the research retrieved from the mixed methods research. It explains the answers to the research questions.

**Chapter 5:** This chapter presents a detailed and comprehensive discussion of the findings of the research question with an examination of the limitations, contribution and implications of the researcher’s work.

**Chapter 6:** This chapter contains the conclusions drawn on the analysis and findings from chapter 4. The chapter also provides recommendations that can be made from the research topic.

**Chapter 7:** This chapter presents a self-reflective learning section encompassing the researcher’s personal learning experiences and skills developed throughout the MBA module course and dissertation process.
Chapter 2- Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The Literature review comprises of secondary data sourced for the dissertation with the aim of ascertaining the main premises and theories under research. The main purpose of the literature review is to both substantiate the research subject and to clarify and ensure that the research question and hypothesis are corroborated in existing research and that there is consistency between the literature review and the rest of the dissertation (Saunders, 2009, pp. 61-66). Sanchez (2012, pp. 132-134) argues that the decision to start-up an enterprise is based on the individual’s internal motivations and their perspicacity to the environmental conditions. The researcher elected to disseminate the theory of motivating factors for entrepreneurial start-up under several headings in the literature review. The purpose of utilising this approach was due to contrasting and differing motivational tendencies of individuals towards entrepreneurship (Raposo, 2008, pp. 405-408).

Section 2.2 and 2.3 of the literature review characterises an entrepreneur and identifies the criteria of micro/small Businesses in Ireland. Section 2.4 is disseminated into five sections of intention, exposure to mentors, push and pull factors, need for achievement and self-efficacy, which examine the varying motivating factors of entrepreneurs to start-up a micro/small business. Section 2.5 discusses government support and access to finance for entrepreneurs and education policies towards entrepreneurship. Section 2.6 examines the perceptions of entrepreneurs to Government support. Section 2.7 concludes with a summary of the previous sections.
2.2 Identifying an entrepreneur

“the entrepreneur always searches for change, responds to it and exploits it as an opportunity” (Peter Drucker, 1985)

According to Kraus (2011, p. 65) an entrepreneur strives to identify and exploit opportunities in the market while implementing the vision, mission and strategic direction of the Business. Carsrud (2011, p. 10) posits that personality traits can be explored to cognize entrepreneurial behaviour within individuals. Various psychological attributes such as the need for autonomy (Decker, 2012, p. 312), need for achievement (Marrazrol, 2009, p. 322), push and pull factors, (Hessels, 2008, pp. 325-326), self-efficacy and a propensity for risk taking (Bryant, 2007, p. 735; Tanveer, 2013, p. 718), are linked to the motivation of potential entrepreneurs to start-up a business.

Research conducted by Block (2015, p. 198) found that entrepreneurial activity is contingent on the individual’s mind-set towards risk taking, which is analogous to Dalborg’s (2015, pp. 88-90) postulation that entrepreneurs differ in their attitude towards risk taking. Franco (2014, pp. 270-271) argues that the attitude of the entrepreneur is orientated towards innovation with a focus on long-term growth. Blackburn (2013, pp. 8-27) asserts that the understanding of the entrepreneur’s characteristics will help cognize the potential for business development and growth. Characteristics including age, gender and the attainment of a higher-level education can correlate to successfully developing an enterprise.
2.3 Identifying a micro/small enterprise

According to the European Commission (2003), Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are defined as “enterprises which employ fewer than 250 persons and have an annual turnover not exceeding EUR 50 million and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 43 million”. The Researcher will focus on Micro and Small Enterprises, which are defined by the following criteria seen below in Figure 1:

**Micro/Small enterprise criteria**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Company Category</th>
<th>Employees</th>
<th>Turnover</th>
<th>Balance Sheet</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Micro</td>
<td>&lt;10</td>
<td>Less than or equal to €2 Million</td>
<td>Less than or equal to €2 Million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>&lt;50</td>
<td>Less than or equal to €10 Million</td>
<td>Less than or equal to €10 Million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Micro and Small Enterprises account for 98.4% of the total enterprises in Ireland, which is 49% of the workforce and 29.3% of the annual turnover (The Central Statistics Office (CSO), 2012). See Micro/Small Enterprise Statistics in Ireland for 2012 below in Figure 2:

**Irish Micro/Small enterprise statistics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Enterprises</th>
<th>Workforce</th>
<th>Annual Turnover</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Irish Micro/Small Enterprise Statistics 2012 %</strong></td>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Graph" /></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: There is a delay on the 2015 Central Statistics Office data being released. The Researcher could only access the 2012 data.

Blackburn (2013, pp. 8-27) states that innovative small firms are at an advantage compared to larger firms in that they are more adaptable to finding new niches and opportunities in the marketplace. McKevitt (2015, p. 264) argues that newly created small start-up firms are susceptible to failure due to the difficulties in accessing funding and inadequate skills with regards to financial and strategic planning. Integrating micro/small enterprises into the
research topic was important due to their contribution to economic prosperity of nations throughout the globe (Gill, 2012, p. 657; Daskalakis, 2013, pp. 80-82).

2.4 Motivating factors of entrepreneurs to start-up an enterprise

2.4.1 Intention

Ajzen’s (1991) theory of planned behaviour (TPB) advances the premise that an individual’s intention towards instigating a certain behaviour is an indication of the level of exertion that an individual is willing to apply in order to implement the action. The TPB model encompasses three components of attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control (PBC), which are mediated by the individual’s intention towards performing a specific behaviour (Ajzen’s, 1991, pp. 181-189). Findings from a study conducted by Karimi (2014, p. 713) into the effects of role models on students’ entrepreneurial intentions found that observing entrepreneurial role models can positively influence the TPB components of attitude, subjective norms and PBC which enhances the entrepreneurial intention of the student. However, Kautonen (2013, pp. 655-666) urges caution to this approach as he suggests that the process of starting up an enterprise has many complexities attached to it and merely intending to start-up a business may not be the actual initial reason for engaging in entrepreneurial activity.

Atherton (2007, pp. 406-408) introduces the premise that a change in the personal attitude of the potential entrepreneur progresses through a transitional phase of pre-start to a start-up phase in which the individual evolves from a mind-set of no interest towards interest in, engagement with and then actively committing to starting up an enterprise. A study conducted by Kautonen (2011, pp. 697-707) into predicting entrepreneurial behaviour, found a positive correlation between entrepreneurial intention and a favourable attitude towards entrepreneurship. These findings are corroborated by Debrarliev’s (2015, pp. 147-158) study on entrepreneurial intention, which found that the personal attitude of the potential entrepreneur is positively correlated to entrepreneurial intentions.

The subjective norm component of the TPB model denotes an individual’s perception of performing a certain behaviour and how this behaviour is perceived or approved by various actors in the social environment such as family members, friends, colleagues and mentors.
Atherton (2007, pp. 405-406) states that the personal experiences of an individual with regards to education, associations, relationships and observations prior to engagement in starting up an enterprise can influence the likelihood of that individual starting up a business. Various studies on entrepreneurial intentions among students found that subjective norms were a pertinent factor on the student’s intention to engage in entrepreneurial activity as support and encouragement from family, friend and contemporaries played a key role in augmenting the student’s intention towards entrepreneurship (Yang, 2013, pp. 371-373; Bagheri, 2015, pp. 23-25).

Higgins (2011, p. 358) argues that the potential entrepreneur needs to understand their own preconceptions of entrepreneurship and establish if these beliefs are compatible to starting up an enterprise. Ajzen (1991, pp. 183-189) describes PBC as the individual’s assessment of how difficult or easy the enactment is of a specific behaviour. Kwong (2012, p. 77) posits that PBC is a key attribute to determining the individual’s intention to start-up an enterprise. Contrary to Kwong’s (2012, p. 77) assertion, various authors surmise that perceived behavioural control is not always positively correlated with entrepreneurial intentions where there are cultural anxieties concerning future opportunities (Agolli, 2015), and when the behaviour is under complete volitional control (Armitage, 2001, p. 473; Kolvereid, 2005, p. 882).

Carsrud (2011, pp. 10-12) contends that a correlation exists between motivation, intentions and actions of an entrepreneur. Malebana (2014, p. 710) infers that an individual’s perception of the environment can influence their intention towards pursuing entrepreneurship. Krueger and Brazeal (1994, p. 97) suggest that potential entrepreneurs who are focused in their intention to start a business are inclined to have explored and examined all barriers associated with starting a new venture. This contention coincides with Brandstatter’s (2010, p. 228) concept that the intent to start-up an enterprise is contingent on the individual’s cognitive abilities towards the perceived desirability and feasibility of the venture.

2.4.2 Exposure to mentors
McDevitt (2015, pp. 264-266) describes mentoring as a process of transferring knowledge for the objective of identifying the nascent entrepreneur’s own skills and abilities and to focus on long-term goals. Summatavet (2015, p. 36) posits that the role of a mentor is to provide support and give advice to the nascent entrepreneur for the objective of being able to sustain the burgeoning enterprise through its initial stages. Tang (2008, p. 131) highlights that exposure to an environment of experienced and successful entrepreneurial mentors can entice the potential entrepreneur to start-up a business. Rigg (2012, p. 323) subscribes to this contention as she posits that mentors play a crucial role in the support and development of entrepreneurs. However, the mentoring process may not be compatible to every aspects of entrepreneurship counselling, as the mentor’s experience may not coincide to the nascent entrepreneurs needs (Thompson, 2007, pp. 553-554). St-Jean (2009, p. 150) advances the notion that regardless of the mentor’s skills and abilities, the potential entrepreneur must be amenable to the mentor and mentoring process in order for the scheme to be successful.

Research conducted by Smith and Paton (2011, pp. 107-109) focuses on how an individual acquires knowledge of experiential learning from observations of mentors which can expedite reflection and knowledge within the potential entrepreneur. A National Policy Statement on Entrepreneurship in Ireland (2014) commissioned by the DJEI states that the Irish Government is promoting entrepreneurial role models and mentors. The objective of this policy is to cultivate an environment to potential entrepreneurs that is receptive to positive attitudes towards risk taking with an emphasis on understanding business and financial management. Various authors have supported these recommendations put forward by the Irish Government, as they posit that having a close acquaintance with entrepreneurial mentors and experiencing their practises up close can help develop and engage the nascent entrepreneur into the start-up phase of entrepreneurship (Rigg (2012, pp. 324-325; St-Jean, 2011, pp. 38-45).

### 2.4.3 Push and Pull factors

Culkin and Smith (2000) argue that the motivation to start-up an enterprise has complexity attached to the decision, as there is an indissoluble link between the personal life of the entrepreneur and the business. Hessels (2008, pp. 325-326) postulates the pull factor of autonomy as a pertinent motive for staring up a new enterprise as it allows the potential
entrepreneur to determine their own ambitions, routines and lifestyles. Conversely, Van Gelderen (2006, pp. 23-31) argues that self-employment as a start-up motive has many aspects and can also be categorised as a push and pull factor which can constitute decisional freedoms, career enhancing opportunities, innovation and creativity in addition to freedom from a negative working environment (Gomezelj, 2013, pp. 907-908).

Wang (2007) substantiates this assertion as he states that non-profit purposes such as autonomy, attainment, flexible lifestyles and contribution to society are the motivational drivers for entrepreneurs to establishing a new business. However, Boluk (2014, pp. 53-68) posits that non-profit entrepreneurial objectives such as contributing to society are more characteristic of the social entrepreneur who differs from the traditional entrepreneur as they are more inclined to be motivated to contribute to society as opposed to making profits. Kirkwood (2010, p. 209) subscribes to this notion, as she refers to the concept of the ecopreneur, who’s primary objective is environmental sustainability as opposed to making a profit.

Holcombe (2003, pp. 25-43) asserts that the essence of entrepreneurship is in seizing opportunities in the marketplace. Hunter (2013, pp. 64-78) concurs with this contention as he states that spotting an opportunity in the market is a key attribute of opportunity entrepreneurs, as this aspiration may occur due to discontent with their occupation or their overall circumstances. A study conducted by Gatewood (1995, pp. 371-391) into factors that influence the decision of individuals to engage in entrepreneurship found that identifying a need in the market was the primary reason for starting up a business.

Walker and Brown (2004, pp. 577-594) promote the notion that small business success is evaluated by fiscal and non-fiscal standards. The conventional reasoning for calculating business success was based on profit maximisation to allow small firm owners to develop their businesses. Through an exploratory study using Qualitative and Quantitative methods, small firm owners/managers revealed that the flexibility of self-employment was a key driver in considering the success of their business. These findings are analogous to Dawson’s (2012, p. 700) contention which suggests that the allure of self-employment to pursue a chosen vocation is the prevailing factor regardless of financial incentives.
Kim (2012, p. 51) categorises the pull factor of motivation as a positive drive towards autonomy, where the individual strives for independence to achieve their goals whereas the push factor of motivation is associated with negative connotations of unemployment, redundancy, low pay and a negative working environment. Hessels (2008, p. 325) promotes the notion that individuals may be pushed into starting up a business due to unforeseen circumstances such as the aforementioned push factors. However, Benzing (2009, p. 62) asserts that low career prospects, in addition to an unfulfilling job (Imbaya, 2012, p. 108) are key push factors that influence individuals to start-up businesses. Verheul (2010) subscribes to this notion, as she posits that job dissatisfaction is a key reason for pushing individuals towards entrepreneurial activities.

Attempting to determine how a potential entrepreneur is motivated to start-up an enterprise is difficult due to the complexity of both push and pull factors, as they appear to be intertwined (Kirkwood, 2009, pp. 346-364; Verheul, 2010, p. 7; Piperopoulos, 2012, p. 195; Staniewski, 2012, p. 585; Eijenberg, 2013, pp. 37-38; Williams, 2011, pp. 13-14). Contrary to these assertions, the notion of interlinking both push and pull factors of entrepreneurial motivation is seldom researched by the GEM (2014) as there is emphasis towards comparing and contrasting push and pull factors as separate entities (Enterprise Research Centre (ERC), 2015, pp. 11-12).

### 2.4.4 Need for Achievement

McClelland (1961) theorises that the need for achievement is a key component associated with entrepreneurship. The notion of the need for achievement denotes an individual’s persistence at aspiring towards accomplishment. This contention is analogous to a longitudinal study conducted by Wu (2007, pp. 936-937), which found a positive correlation between the need for achievement and persistence within entrepreneurs. In contrast, Chell (2008, p. 89) posits that a combination of both push and pull factors are considered to be key motives behind an individual’s reason for starting-up a business irrespective of the need for achievement. However, a longitudinal study conducted by McClelland (1965) found that the need for achievement trait positively correlated to individuals who were engaged in entrepreneurial activity.
Various authors have advocated for an unequivocal clarification on how the need for achievements coalesces with entrepreneurial activity (Carraher, 2010, p. 380; Rapuso, 2008, p. 409). An example of this ambiguity is in the relationship between the need for achievement and risk-taking. Various authors have purported that a positive correlation exists between the need for achievement and an entrepreneur’s propensity towards risk-taking (Chen, 2012, p. 1316; Tang, 2007, pp. 459-464). Conversely, a Meta –Analysis study undertaken by Collins (2004, pp. 95-117) found a moderate relationship between risk taking and individuals predisposed to the need for achievement.

Brandstatter (2011, pp. 226-227) asserts that achievement striving is a prominent and imperative characteristic associated with entrepreneurial activity as achievement motivation correlates to conscientious individuals who exhibit self-discipline to effectively and efficiently achieve their goals. This contention is analogous to Di Zhang’s (2011, p. 86) notion that the need for achievement is a progressive trait that students attain through the course of studying for higher educational programmes.

A Quantitative Research Approach conducted by Taormina (2007, pp. 202-209) examined the need for achievement within individuals as a motivational factor to start-up a business, found that there was a positive correlation between achievement striving and the motivation to start-up a business. Estay (2013, p. 248) concurs with these findings as he states that the need for achievement is a key attribute in determining the motivational propensity of entrepreneurs.

2.4.5 Self-efficacy

Dnrovsek (2013, pp. 335-336) proposes the concept, that self –efficacy combines the dimensions of the individual’s beliefs on how to achieve their goals and the cognitive skills they acquire to control positive and negative thoughts in achieving those goals. Bandura (1994, pp. 2-5) denotes self–efficacy as a cognitive process whereby an individual comprehends their own self–belief and inherent ability to perform goals and tasks. The findings from a study conducted by Wennberg (2013, pp. 756-788), found that individuals
who possess high levels of self-efficacy are more motivated to engage in entrepreneurial activity but conversely the fear of failure negatively influences the decision of an individual towards engaging in entrepreneurial activity. However, Chell (2008, p. 102) implies that some risk of failure must accompany all business endeavours.

Drnovsek (2010, pp. 329-331) discusses self-efficacy as a prominent indicator to the motivations of potential entrepreneurs to start-up a business in which the entrepreneur exhibits confidence to deliver task orientated goals and acquires the ability to control cognitive and behavioural tendencies to function in the Business Environment. Conversely, a study conducted by Dalborg (2015, pp. 97-98) suggests that self-efficacy is more ubiquitous in the individual’s start-up intentions rather than the actual business start-up. Rachmawan (2015, p. 427) agrees with this finding, as he posits that self-efficacy is positively correlated to an individual’s intention to become an entrepreneur.

These contentions are corroborated by various authors (Debarliev, 2015, p. 148; Malebana, 2014, pp. 712-713), who allude to the congruent relationship between self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intentions and infer that self-efficacy is comparable to Ajzen’s (1991) PBC. However, other authors (Terry, 1993, p. 147; Kolvereid, 2005, p. 867) have indicated that self-efficacy and PBC are not identical as self-efficacy predicts intentions whereas PBC predicts behaviour (Armitage, 2001, pp. 476-477).

Tang (2008, p. 132) advances the premise that entrepreneurial self-efficacy goal attainment is dependent on the type of munificent environment in which the potential entrepreneur is exposed to. Bryant (2007, p. 735) explores the concept that entrepreneurs who are identified to have high Self-efficacy have a propensity for risk taking as they pursue opportunities under high uncertainty (Krueger and Brazeal, 1994, p. 94), while entrepreneurs identified as having low self-efficacy tend to be cautious in their approach to risk taking and have a focus on avoiding mistakes. Contrary to this assertion, the findings from a study conducted by Tyszka (2011, p. 130) found that while entrepreneurial activity involves risk taking there is no evidence that entrepreneurs are more disposed to risk taking than individuals in paid employment.
2.5 Government support towards micro/small enterprise owners in Ireland

2.5.1 Government support and access to finance for entrepreneurs

According to Burns (2007, pp. 251-252) intense competition and financial restraints are barriers to growth and development to SMEs. A report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2009) highlights how in times of economic uncertainty, financial institutions restrict lending to SME’s. Research conducted by Durkin (2013, pp. 420-433) concerning British banks suggests that there is a strained relationship between small firms and lending institutions in times of recession with banks displaying indifference to the needs and concerns of small business owners. The research concluded with that there was a need for banks and small businesses to try to comprehend each other’s circumstances with the objective of trying to find a mutual understanding of those circumstances.

The Small Firms Association (SFA, 2014) reports how small enterprises can access loans from the Local Enterprise office (2014) from an initiative set up in 2014 called the “LEO Microfinance loan” which enables small firms to apply for loans from €2,000 to € 25,000 at reduced interest rates without having to go through the banks. According to figures published on a report by the (Central Bank, 2014), lending to SMEs had continued to fall from 2011 to 2014. The Small Business Act for Europe (SBA, 2014) states that the start-up prerequisites in Ireland are helpful for entrepreneurs concerning start-up costs and time constraints compared to their EU counterparts. The report asserts that smaller enterprises are susceptible to economic pressures in times of austerity due to their dependence on domestic demand. Contrary, to this statement, the Small Firms Association (SFA, 2014) stated that a survey carried out by the Business Sentiment survey for the 4th quarter of 2013, highlights how start-up enterprises increased from 10% from 2012 to 2013, which equates to 15,617 new companies being created, which is the highest figure since 2007. These are encouraging signs

Wennekers (2002, pp. 42-43) states that Government policies on support and resources can influence the decision of an individual to aspire towards entrepreneurship, which corroborates McCarthy’s (2014, p. 176) intimation that the outcome of the entrepreneur succeeding “rests in the hands” of other agencies. McMahon (1998, pp. 20-35) argues that small firm owner/managers may not aspire to expand the firm due to the potential risks such as difficulties and obstacles to accessing financial and Government support, entry to new markets and myopic mind-sets to initiating strategic management to achieve long-term viability. This assertion is corroborated by a report published by the Joint Committee on Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (2014) on access to finance for SME’s, which highlights that obtaining access to finance is a major concern for SME business owners in Ireland.

The National Policy Statement on Entrepreneurship in Ireland (2014) states that the Government intends to monitor the supply and demand of bank credit to micro/small enterprises for the purpose of ensuring micro/small enterprises avail of a fair opportunity to access funds. However, a report by Enterprise Europe Network (2014) states that lending to SMEs had decreased since the financial crisis in 2008. The DJEI (2014) stated that Government legislation established the Strategic Banking Corporation Ireland (SBCI), which will see the banking sector make €800 million in funds available to SMEs. The report also states that there will be programmes made available through the Department of Education and Skills, which will provide training to acquire the necessary skills to help secure finance for small businesses.

2.5.2 Entrepreneurial education policies

Heinonen (2010, p. 1166) contends that there is a need to develop an inclusive and integrated entrepreneurial educational programme throughout the education system in Ireland comparable to the Guidelines for Entrepreneurship (2009) in Finland which was aimed at developing entrepreneurial skills with the objective of enticing students to pursue entrepreneurship. This assertion deviates from the notion that entrepreneurship is acquired
through first-hand experience and observations as opposed through an educational process (Birdthistle, 2006, p. 254; Rae, 2005, p. 324). Furthermore, Beynon (2014, p. 601) implies that entrepreneurial education may be utilised by individuals for obtaining a qualification and developing self-confidence as opposed to the actual process of starting up a business.

The Entrepreneurship Forum (2014) proposes integrating an entrepreneurial education programme throughout the education system in Ireland to enhance and develop entrepreneurial skills in students which is akin to Fenton’s (2014, p. 737) contention of augmenting student awareness of self-employment as a viable career option. Contrary to this assertion, a study conducted by Vukovic (2014, pp. 1013-1020) found that entrepreneurial intentions within an individual does not increase with exposure to entrepreneur education programmes. The study promotes the notion that entrepreneurial education is more beneficial to individuals who are highly motivated in their entrepreneurial pursuits and who have already formulated strategic ideas to start-up an enterprise (Kruger and Brazeal (1994, p. 97; Brandstatter’s, 2010, p. 228). Birdthistle (2007, p. 274) maintains that Ireland needs to develop an environment conducive to enterprise by integrating the necessary entrepreneurial skills needed like critical and creative skills, interpersonal skills and problem solving into the education system to encourage and cultivate potential entrepreneurs.

The National Policy Statement on Entrepreneurship in Ireland (2014) supports this initiative of implementing entrepreneur and business education policies in the education system in addition to developing business support networks where established entrepreneurs give their expertise to assist, mentor and guide new and potential entrepreneurs for the objective of enhancing a collaborative start-up community. A report by the EU Commissions (2012, p. 51) on entrepreneur education at school in Europe found that there is no definite national strategic policy in Ireland with regards to entrepreneurial education but acknowledges the Irish Governments support of various entrepreneur programmes and initiatives.

2.6 Entrepreneurs perception of Government policy

Fisher (2014, p. 479) states that determining entrepreneurial success can be achieved by identifying and measuring achievement indicators such as psychological, social, economic
and business from the entrepreneur’s perspective. Estay (2013, pp. 244-252) contends that the motivation to start-up an enterprise is dependent on the individuals own behavioural and personality traits and their perception of the Business environment. Taormina (2007, pp. 204-216) substantiates Estay’s latter statement as he asserts that a potential entrepreneur’s perception of the environment such as Government support policies and access to finance can have a positive or negative effect on their motivation to start-up a business as the current economic climate will determine if lending institutions will grant loans for business start-ups.

A mixed method research approach undertaking by Bouette (2015, pp. 337-351) with regards to business support to Entrepreneurs in the Irish craft sector found that from a survey from 106 respondents, satisfaction to business support was at 83.3%. However, 60 percent of respondents stated that they would not recommend business support as it was not relevant to their type of business. The National Policy Statement on Entrepreneurship in Ireland (2014) found that negative perceptions of start-up prospects, fear of failure and fewer successful role models are all attributes that diminished entrepreneurial activity.

According to a report by the GEM (2014 half the population of Ireland consider starting a business as a good career option with just one third perceiving beneficial business opportunities in starting up a business, which ranks Ireland 13 out of 25 compared to other European countries. Stephens (2013, p. 233) states that it is imperative that the Irish Government provide support to entrepreneurs by offering assistance to business development and access to business support networks to encourage entrepreneurial innovation.

A study conducted by Williams (2013, p. 168) in the UK, asserts that there is a negative perception of Government support services to entrepreneur’s in disadvantaged areas due to bureaucracy and ambiguous objectives of the enterprise support agencies. There is a perception that Government support policies are designed to assist existing enterprises with the potential for growth and increases in employment. Yusuf (2010, pp. 296-306) substantiates this assertion as she contends that entrepreneurial policy has been embraced by Government as a means of increasing economic growth to reduce unemployment and enhance competitive markets. However, a GEM (2014) survey of experts and entrepreneurs believed that support programmes for start-up businesses was a high priority for the Irish
Government with 50% believing there are a sufficient number of support programmes provided by the Government for business development with 68% of that half deeming the programmes to be effective. In addition, two thirds of the survey recommended improving the access to and availability of financial lending.

Krueger and Brazeal (1994, p. 99) advocate a collective support network that caters for existing and potential entrepreneurs. A report by the Entrepreneurship Forum (2014) corroborates this approach as it emphasises the need for the Irish Government to assist and support existing entrepreneurs but concedes that more effort is needed to assist new and potential entrepreneurs. The report recommends implementing a cultural awareness campaign that celebrates successful entrepreneurial role models that can inspire under-represented entrepreneurs.

2.7 Conclusion

The conclusion of this chapter classifies the main themes of the research, which are intended to develop the basis of which the primary research is investigated and deliberated to pursue an answer to the research question and hypothesis. The literature review established that there is a wide array of motivating factors that influence the decision of an individual to start-up an enterprise. Farashah (2013, pp. 871-874) postulates that the mind-set of the individual will determine their intention and their perceived feasibility of becoming an entrepreneur as they evaluate the positive and negative permutations associated with entrepreneurship. Arenius and Minniti (2005, pp. 233-234) subscribe to this assertion as they argue that the individual’s subjective perception about their own competences, attentiveness to opportunities and fear of failure are key factors that are interrelated to the decision of the potential entrepreneurs in starting up a business.

Other key topics that were examined in the literature review was the need for achievement, self-efficacy and push and pull factors that influence the decision of entrepreneurs to engage in entrepreneurial activity. The complexity of these themes influenced the researcher to adapt a mixed method approach to allow for a comprehensive investigation that would establish and position each theme in terms of influence to the decision of starting up a business.
A report by the Entrepreneurship Forum (2014) established by the DJEI (2014) recommends that the Government’s role concerning entrepreneurship should be one of facilitator, which encourages and facilitates a conducive entrepreneurial environment. The report states that this will be achieved by introducing various measures such as a supportive tax system, providing information and assistance with access to finance, facilitating business support networks and introducing mentoring and education programmes for entrepreneurship at all levels of the education system.

The themes discussed above are the foundations for the development of the primary research, which will investigate the topics further through a mixed methods research. As the literature review covers a wide array of motivating factors that influence entrepreneurs to start-up enterprises and their perception of the support provided by the Government, the researcher will investigate the topic further through an exploratory sequential design approach. Qualitative research was utilised first by conducting semi-structured interviews to gain insight and build on theory on the topic of investigation. The findings of the qualitative research were utilised to formulate questions for the quantitative research for the objective of finding answers from a larger population sample to the initial research questions and hypothesis.
Chapter 3 – Research Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter sets out the background to the research questions, hypothesis and objectives and explains the methodology and techniques utilised to conduct the research. Cameron (2009, pp. 16-23) infers that the research process can allow for an evaluative examination of relevant academic research on the topic investigated for the objective of encouraging a thorough and conclusive approach to the research. Saunders (2016, p. 4) defines methodology as the “theory of how research should be undertaken” which involves the research philosophies, approach, strategy and data collection methods selected for this investigation.

3.1 Research questions/hypothesis/objectives

According to Brannick (1997, pp. 6-8) the research question progresses through a wide-ranging research area which allows the research problem to be devised for conducting an investigation. Ghuari (2005, pp. 43-47) contends that the researcher must be able to determine the research problem and formulate a strategy that can elucidate the research problem before commencing with the data collection process. Sekaran (2010, pp. 86-93) describes the process of developing a hypothesis for the aim of inferring a correlation between two or more variables in a testable statement. Ghuari (2005, p. 45) states that the relationship between the two variables is a hypothesis. Defining the research question assisted the researcher in formulating a set of questions to be used during the qualitative and quantitative research process. This paper intends to answer the following research questions and hypothesis:

Q1: What are the main motivational factors that influence an individual to start-up a micro/small firm in Ireland?

H1: The main motivating factors investigated are highly correlated with the decision to start-up an enterprise.

Q2: To what extent do an entrepreneur's perceptions of Government support policies and access to finance influence his/her motivation to start-up a business?
H2: Government support policies and access to finance are positively correlated with the decision to start-up a business

3.2 Research Philosophy – Interpretivism and Subjectivism

According to Saunders (2009, p. 108) the research philosophy adopted will encompass postulations from the researcher’s interpretation of the subject matter being investigated and will be applied to support the research strategy approach. Bryman and Bell (2015, p. 28) state that Interpretivism is the cognizing of individual activities. Saunders (2009, p. 116) asserts that there is an interactive process between the researcher and the subject with the objective of finding out information pertaining to the subject and understanding the environment in which they operate in. Collis (2014, p. 45) contends that Interpretivism scrutinizes social reality subjectively since it is formed by our observations.

Saunders (2009, p. 111) maintains that the subjectivist view is that social experiences are generated from the perceptions and resulting action of individuals. This advances the Interpretivism philosophy that there is a requirement to investigate the subjective connotations motivating the activities of individuals in order for the researcher to be competent to cognize these activities. Lee (2008, p. 112) infers that that a subjective assumption proposes that no experience can be independent of an individual’s perceptions. The purpose of selecting Interpretivism and subjectivism as a research philosophy is to get a better understanding of the motivating factors of entrepreneurs for starting up a micro/small enterprise and their perceptions of Government support.

3.3 Research Approach- Inductive and Deductive

Lee (2008, pp. 6-8) emphasises the importance of identifying the appropriate research approach but contends that there is a persuasive argument for selecting the inductive or deductive approach. Jogulu (2011, pp. 688-689) argues that adapting both the inductive and deductive approach can facilitate the researcher to achieve enhanced findings to the research. Saunders (2009, pp. 124-128) describes the deductive approach as the development of a hypothesis and the formulation of a research strategy to test the theory while the inductive approach is the accumulation of data and development of a hypothesis from an examination of the data. Burns (2008, pp. 22-23) elucidates the inductive process as a bottom-up approach
where interpretations and descriptions are examined to construct clarifications of the initial observations to progress a hypothesis whereas the deductive process is described as a top-down strategy commencing with a hypothesis/theory that is verified by empirical scrutiny. The researcher applied John Dewey’s (1910) concept of “the double movement of reflective thought” a combination of inductive and deductive methods where he identifies the double movement as travelling to and from between facts and meaning which signifies the dynamic of reflection. The process of induction accumulates data while the deduction process takes hypotheses and examines them against the data. Knox (2004) infers that the amalgamation of induction and deduction is not the traditional research approach but contends that the coalescing of both research approaches can be beneficial to the researcher. The researcher applied the inductive and deductive approach in a sequential manner by accruing data through inductive reasoning then testing the hypothesis through deductive reasoning (Gray, 2014, p. 18; Blumberg, 2014, pp. 22-23).

3.4 Research Strategy

Saunders (2009, p. 153-154) states that the mixed method research can allow the researcher to conduct interviews with the objective of obtaining empirical data to understand the crucial topics before using a questionnaire to accumulate explanatory data. A Journal by Cameron and Molina-Azorin, (2011) explores the concept of adopting and applying mixed methods to business research by analysing qualitative and quantitative data. Cameron (2009, pp. 140-152) contends that resources and time constraints can be problematic when conducting mixed method study as the researcher needs to be competent in both qualitative and quantitative methods. Creswell & Plano Clark (2007, p. 5) describe mixed methods research as the amalgamation of qualitative and quantitative information that gives the researcher an enhanced perspective of research.

The data collection method undertaken by the researcher is a mixed methods approach of interviews followed by questionnaires then concluded with follow up interviews to discuss the findings of the questionnaires with the initial interviewees. The questions asked throughout the mixed method research clustered around a number of central themes researched in the literature review such as intention, exposure to mentors, push and pull
factors, need for achievement, self-efficacy, Government support policies and access to finance.

After deliberating about the objective of the research approach, it was the opinion of the researcher that the Exploratory Sequential Design was the most appropriate strategy to apply when conducting mixed methods research. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011, pp. 69-90) describe the Exploratory Sequential Design as the sequential process of analysing and testing qualitative data on a selected qualitative sample population through interviews. The data formulates concepts and hypothesis for quantitative research questions to be administered to a selected quantitative sample population through questionnaires with the aim of reviewing and deducing the qualitative results. See diagram of the Exploratory Sequential Design model below in figure 3:

![Exploratory Sequential Design Model](image)

**Figure 3: Exploratory Sequential Design model. Source: Creswell and Plano Clark (2011, p. 69)**

The researcher adapted a constructivist approach to evaluate diverse perceptions from various participants during qualitative research. This was followed up by applying post positivist assumptions to analysis statistical trends from quantitative research (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2011, pp. 69-90). Jogulu (2011, pp. 690-691) elucidates the sequential approach of mixed methods as the quantitative phase inferring the findings of the qualitative phase for the purpose of developing the validity and reliability of the research.

Saunders (2009, p. 332) asserts that the questions asked throughout the research process need to pertain to the environment and experiences of the participants. For qualitative questions, the researcher asked open questions in the interview to encourage the respondent to provide widespread and enlightened answers, which allowed the interviewer to acquire pertinent data.
followed by probing questions to pursue clarifications on ambiguous answers and to allow for further exploration of topics discussed (Cameron, 2009, p. 377).

Hair (2007, p. 256) alludes to the importance of designing an accurate and unambiguous questionnaire due to the time constraints with the research and the feasibility in trying to get respondents to repeat the process. For quantitative questions, the researcher applied standardized questions to the questionnaire (Robson, 2002). The researcher employed duplicated questions to ensure reliability and validity and neutral questions to build rapport with the respondents. The types of questions were category with no more than five response categories to accumulate data about motivating factors. The researcher also applied rating questions using a four or five Likert style rating scale to accumulate opinions from the respondents (Saunders, 2009, pp. 360-382).

3.5 Time Horizon

Domegan & Fleming (2003, p. 64) state that Cross-Sectional study is a “snapshot” of the relationship of changing patterns at “one point in time”. Saunders (2009, p. 155) states that researching in college for academic purposes has time constraints. Due to the nature of research study and the time constraints of 12 weeks to complete the dissertation, the researcher elected to apply a cross-sectional study. The aim is to extract the information through the interview and questionnaire process, which will give the opinions and views of the subjects at a specific point in time.

3.6 Population and Sample

Sampling is the process of selecting an adequate number of elements from a population central to the research topic (Hair, 2007, pp. 170-171). Ghuari (2005, p. 155) posits that the objective of sampling in qualitative research is to discern and elucidate notions from the data. Sekaran (2010, pp. 266-267) contends that the population relevant to the research must be delineated into time, units, extent and time. The qualitative research sample selected for this study was five micro/small owner/managers based in Dublin and a further three participants form the central bank, the economic social research institute and the department of jobs,
enterprise and innovation (DJEI) to allow the researcher to link the initial research questions, objectives and hypothesis into the conclusions and findings. The aim of interviewing the five micro/small firm owners was to investigate the motivating factors for starting up a business. The objective of interviewing the remaining three participants was to approach the research question from different perspectives by ascertaining if there is contrasting views about the motivating factors to starting up a business and entrepreneur’s perception to Government support in addition to developing questions for the questionnaire. (See Appendix 2, pp. 119-122 for details on the eight participants in the qualitative research population sample).

Bryman and Bell (2011, pp. 176-177) describes the sampling frame as the complete list of all the units in the target population from which the sample will be extracted. The Sampling Frame is micro/small business owner/managers listed in Plato Dublin, Halo Business Angel Network funded by the Local Enterprise office (LEO), Guinness Enterprise Centre (GEC), the Small Firm’s Association (SFA), the Mill Drogheda enterprise hub and micro/small business owners in Dublin port and on social media. The quantitaive research sample selected for this study involved a total of 131 respondents by email and several organisations mentioned above who have numerous members that are entrepreneurs. The Following Elements/Units/Extent and Time can be seen below in Figure 4:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Extent</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Micro/small business owners</td>
<td>LEO/SFA/GEC/the MILL/HBAN/Dublin Port/ Social Media</td>
<td>Leinster</td>
<td>August, 2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4: Elements/Units/Extent and Time. Source: www.localenterprise.ie/ www.sfa.ie/http://gec.ie/ themilldrogheda.ie/ www.hban.org

The sampling technique used for the quantitative research was probability sampling which is a technique that is used when data derived from the research questions and hypothesis have to be conclusively tested where the psychographic descriptions of respondents are been examined (Saunders, 2009, p. 213). Bryman and Bell (2011, pp. 176-179) argue that opting
for probability sampling can allow the researcher to minimise error due to the sampling technique employed which gives each individual in the population an equal chance of being selected.

Stratified sampling was next utilised which enabled the researcher to separate the stratified sample into two or more strata groups with different attributes to ensure a proportionate representation of the sample (Saunders, 2016, pp. 290-291). According to Blumberg (2014, pp. 186-187) stratified sampling can augment statistical efficiency as elements in the sample may differ by age, gender and company size.

3.7 Data Collection, Editing, Coding and Analysis

3.7.1 Data Collection- Primary and secondary data collection

Mixed Methods Research: The mixed method research can allow the researcher to conduct interviews with the objective of obtaining empirical data to understand the crucial topics before using a questionnaire to accumulate explanatory data (Saunders, 2009, p. 153-154). In contrast, Bryman and Bell (2011, pp. 629-630) refer to the arguments against using mixed methods research such as incompatibility and differing epistemological implications when applying both methods. After much deliberation, the researcher determined that the mixed method approach of sequential exploratory research could provide for a more comprehensive approach to the research as the quantitative data collection can be utilised to develop and explicate on the findings from the qualitative data (Cameron, 2009, pp. 256-260; Saunders, 2016, pp. 169-171).

3.7.2 Qualitative Data Collection

Semi-Structured Interview: According to Gillham (2005, p. 70-79) the semi-structured interview allows for a balance between structure and a degree of flexibility and openness. The purpose of the semi-structured interview allows for pre-prepared questions with the possibility of the interview diverging into other topics (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008, p. 82-83). The purpose of conducting eight interviews with entrepreneurs and various participants
with knowledge on the subject was to find relevant information to answer the research questions and hypothesis and develop relevant questions for the questionnaire (See appendix 3, pp. 123-125 for questions from the qualitative interviews).

The researcher then conducted follow-up interviews with the participants for ascertaining their opinions from the findings of the questionnaire. The aim of the interview process was to extract information from micro/small firm owners/managers on the motivating factors for starting up a business and their perceptions of Government support they encountered on endeavouring to start-up the business. This allowed the researcher to understand the connection between the two variables form a descriptive study perspective (Saunders, 2009, p. 320-322).

Cameron (2009, pp. 362-363) refers to the initial stages of the interview process where the interviewer identifies the participant and cognizes relevant information about the organisation. The researcher looked to gain support and trust from the interviewee early on in the interview process by exhibiting detailed knowledge on the research topic, which can display credibility to the interviewee (Sekaran, 2010, pp. 190-191). The researcher acquired full knowledge of the participants and their organisations through journals, articles and the internet prior to the interview. The objective of this careful preparation allowed the researcher to extract the information throughout the interview process, which assisted in displaying the interviewer’s integrity (Saunders, 2009, p. 328; Ghurai, 2005, p. 131).

An audio recording device was utilised in seven of the eight interviews, which allowed the interviewer to focus primarily on the interview process (Saunders, 2009, p. 339-341; Bryman and Bell, 2011, p. 482), and to avoid the arduous task of note taking throughout the interview process (Saunders, 2016, p. 412). Sekaran (2010, p. 192) urges caution when utilising a recording device as this may bias the interviewee’s answers to the questions due to interview being recorded. The researcher obtained each participants permission prior to the interview in order to alleviate any bias from the participants (See appendix 4, pp. 126-134 for interview consent forms). When the DJEI did not permit a recording device, the researcher still conducted the interview to extract useful and pertinent information relevant to the research topic (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p. 482).
Questionnaires: The aim of the questionnaire is to assemble a sizeable amount of data from a large sample of which respondents have to answer the same questions (Saunders, 2016, pp. 436-439). The researcher was conscious that the construction of the questionnaire and arrangement and development of the questions would determine the response rate from the respondents (Hair, 2007, p. 262; Ghuari, 2005, p. 127). The design of the questionnaire was cautiously devised to allow for an effectual response rate that would be consistent and cogent. Bell (2005) recommends caution before deciding to formulate a questionnaire. He contends that the questionnaire must accumulate the exact information that will allow the research question to be answered as the researcher and respondent may not have the time and resources available to repeat the process. The researcher devised the following processes and procedures:

- Preliminary testing of questionnaire
- Meticulous planning of individual questions
- Clarifying the intention of the questionnaire
- Precise, clear and structured questions
- Well-ordered layout

(Saunders, 2009, p. 362)

Hair (2007, pp. 278-279) advocates a preliminary testing of the questionnaire with experiment participants to assess the reliability and validity of the questions. Saunders (2016, p. 473) maintains that pilot testing the questionnaire can enhance and elucidate the questions to enable the respondents to answer the questions accurately. The following experiment participants were sent questionnaires below in Figure 5:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DM Mechanical</td>
<td>Lee Maloney</td>
<td>Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J &amp; N Shipping</td>
<td>Joe Grimes</td>
<td>Owner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.7.3 Quantitative Data Collection
Robson (2002) states that the questionnaire is suited for standardised questions that will reassure the researcher that the questions forwarded to the respondents will be inferred the same way (See appendix 5, pp. 135-137 for the Questionnaire administered for this study). The researcher established the importance of striving to attain a sufficient response rate. This was attained by contacting the units in the sampling frame by telephone and email before sending the questionnaire via email, Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook to the participants with an enclosed letter explaining the purpose of the questionnaire to achieve a higher response rate (Walker and Brown 2004, pp. 582-583). The aim of administering the self-administered questionnaires was to extract descriptive and exploratory information from the respondents to help answer the research questions and hypothesis (Saunders (2009, p. 362-363). See the questionnaire design the researcher employed below on Figure 6:

**Figure 5: Research Questionnaire experiment participants.**

**Questionnaire Design**
For the purpose of this research, the secondary data consisted of published reports (GEM, 2014; CSO, 2012; DJEI, 2014), and various journal/articles published on the central themes of the study (Taormina, 2007, pp. 202-209; Fayolle and Linan, 2014, pp. 684-685; Malebana, 2014, pp. 709-714; Drnovsek, 2010, pp. 329-31) that are pertinent to the topic of research to formulate concepts to develop the research questions and hypothesis. Saunders (2009, p. 272) states that the researcher needs to examine and scrutinise the secondary data thoroughly to ensure it pertains to the research objectives.

### 3.7.5 Editing

Figure 6: Questionnaire Design. Source- (Saunders, 2009, p.360-395)
Cooper and Schindler (2003, p. 455) state that editing is the first phase of data analysis where the researcher ensures that the data collected is precise, reliable and pertains to the objective of the questions asked in the data collection instruments. Zikmund (2003, pp. 453-457) contends that editing is utilised to verify and modify data to preclude errors and omissions and progress clarity and consistency to enable the data to be transferred to data storage for the purpose of data coding and analysis.

Saunders (2009, pp. 485-487) proposes transcribing qualitative data from audio-recording equipment and saving the data separately after the interview to distinguish the participants but advises caution as this process can be time consuming and arduous due to non-verbal communication not being recorded. To offset this, the researcher took additional notes and looked for non-verbal communication and change in tone by the interviewee that may have been pertinent to the subject matter being discussed. The process of transcribing the interviews allowed for a more thorough review and examination of the participant’s answers (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p. 481).

Bajpai (2011, pp. 194-195) asserts that attentive editing of the questionnaire can allow the researcher to identify and adjust obscured, inconsistent and incomplete answers from the respondents. The researcher checked for coherent, consistent and complete responses to simplify and expedite the coding and analysis process (Zikmund, 2003, pp. 453-457).

### 3.7.6 Coding and Analysis

**Qualitative:** Collis (2014, p. 155) recommends amalgamating topics and concepts from the research with the objective of formulating new assimilated patterns of opinions in the data which can be linked to develop hypothesis. Saunders (2009, p. 490-497) recommends summarising key points of the interview transcript into condensed text to develop familiarity with eminent premises that have materialised from the interview which can allow for further analysis throughout the data collection method process. Collis (2014, p. 162) proposes assigning codes to various words, headings and paragraphs for the purpose of grouping the data into categories to allow the researcher to align patterns, themes and correlations between the data to support the research analysis and further data collection.
Saldana (2013, pp. 1-8), depicts coding as the preliminary phase to a more detailed analysis of the data. It categorises and connects the prominent characteristics of the qualitative data to cognize meaning to the findings with the objective of further development and enhancement of hypothesis. Saunders (2009, pp. 492-493) argues that the categories formulated need to have a logical structure as codes will be generated to interpret and denote emergent investigative connections between data. The researcher applied descriptive coding to record and catalogue variations of opinions and values coding to encapsulate and categorise subjective perceptions of the participants (Saldena, 2013, pp. 1-8).

The researcher analysed the data by applying template analysis (King, 2004) which is a catalogue of the codes that denote the themes collected form the data (Saunders, 2009, pp. 505-508). Saunders (2009, pp. 506-507) describes the process of template analysis as developing groups and assigning them to units of data which are then displayed hierarchically to support in the analytical process of categorising themes, patterns and correlations between the data. Cassell and Symon (2004, pp.257-264) argue that template analysis is an adaptable method of analysis with less detailed processes which can allow the researcher to modify, revise and amend data throughout the analytical process. They contend that it can be effective when there is contrasting perspectives from individuals within a particular environment.

**Quantitative:** Cooper and Schindler (2003, pp. 456-457) describe coding as the process for quantitative data as designating numbers and symbols to group together responses from participants of the questionnaire. The research classified data into numerical codes. Saunders (2009, pp. 422-424) asserts that coding numerically can enable the researcher to enter data quickly which also allows for the process of re-coding of data to generate new variables that may emerge. Cooper and Schindler (2003, pp. 457-459) contend that a coding scheme can be useful tool employed by the researcher to input, control and locate the position of each variable during data analysis. Saunders (2009, pp. 424-425) states that the researcher needs to adhere to the following process when developing a coding scheme:

- Assess data
- Determine categories
- Sub-divide categories depending on the proposed analysis
- Assign codes to all categories
Record the responses assigned to each category

The researcher utilised the Survey Monkey (2016) online tool that creates surveys, which can be distributed to participants via email and social media. The online tool also gives statistical trends and analysis of the collected data. The purpose of selecting the survey monkey online tool was to manage time constraints by disseminating the survey to a wider audience via an online platform that is more user friendly than other analytical tools like excel and SPSS.

3.8 Ethical Issues and Procedures

To guarantee compliance, the researcher checked the DBS ethical guidelines for conducting interviews and administering surveys. When selecting a research population, the researcher presented a transparent explanation of the requirements to the respondents via email. The aim of this exercise was to establish credibility with the potential participants (Saunders, 2009, p. 179). The researcher ensured that the confidentiality and integrity of the participants who wished to remain anonymous remained intact at all times. The data will be securely stored at all times and will be only accessible to my supervisor and myself. The researcher ensured that all participants have given their full consent prior to conducting the interviews and questionnaires. The researcher was attentive to any bias and was mindful of leading questions and generalisations (Bryman and Bell, 2011, pp. 122-144). The researcher also displayed appropriate behaviour and respect at all times and was sensitive to any concerns that the participants had throughout the data collection process (Zikmund, 2003, pp. 78-86).

Chapter 4 - Data Analysis/ Findings

4.1 Introduction

According to Sekaran (2010, p. 26) data collected through mixed methods can be examined and evaluated to determine whether the hypothesis developed through the research questions are substantiated. The aim of this chapter is to analysis and present the data collected using a
mixed methods sequential exploratory research approach (Creswell and Plano Clark (2011, pp. 69-90). The first step is to present the findings from qualitative data obtained through semi-structured interviews of five entrepreneurs to investigate the motivating factors and perception of government support in Ireland.

The researcher also conducted an additional three semi-structured interviews with participants in organisations relevant to the research for exploring a different insight and perspective on the research topic that would assist in developing questions for the questionnaire. Template analysis was employed to examine the collected qualitative data. The data was assimilated into themes based on the research questions and hypothesis and the findings from the interviews. The objective of applying template analysis was to investigate and interconnect correlations between the interviews (Saunders, 2016, pp. 587-589).

The next step is to present the findings from the quantitative data attained through questionnaires administered via SurveyMonkey (2016) which is an online tool that enabled the researcher to develop a survey using standardised questions. The findings from both the qualitative and quantitative research is presented under themes researched throughout the literature review in order to address the research question and objectives of the study undertaken.

Finally, the researcher will present the findings from three follow up interviews conducted, which will explore the interviewee’s opinions to the findings.

### 4.2 The Respondents (Qualitative)

The qualitative research method employed for this research was eight semi-structured interviews. The researcher conducted interviews with five entrepreneurs and three participants from the economic social research institute (ESRI), The Central Bank of Ireland and the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (DJEI). The entrepreneurs that participated in the qualitative research are catalogued as Interviewees A, B, C, D and E. The remaining participants are categorised as Interviewees F, G and H.
4.3 The Findings (Qualitative)

In this section, the findings of the qualitative research are presented under themes researched in the literature review.

Objective 1: To explore the main motivational factors that influence individuals to start-up a micro/small firm in Ireland.

4.3.1 Intention theme

Question: Does an individual’s perception of the business environment influence their intention towards pursuing entrepreneurship?

Interviewee C: “In general it would, a culture that encourages it, that says failure is ok, I found a lot of support out there”.

Interviewee D: “No, I think people aren’t afraid, if they have an itch, they have to scratch it, if they don’t give it a go, they know they are going to kick themselves forever”.

Interviewee E: “Not really, regardless of the risk, you’re going to be good at what you do if you’re interested”.

Summary of the findings

Participant D and E stated that the economic environment does not influence the entrepreneur’s intention to start-up whereas Participant C stated that the economic environment would have an impact on the entrepreneur’s intention to start-up a business.

Question: Can the personal experience of an individual with regards to education, associations, relationships and observations prior to engagement in starting up an enterprise influence the likelihood of that individual starting up a business?

Interviewee D: “People come from poorly educated backgrounds and they make a tremendous success but they are few and far between, it comes from their friends, if their
parents were in business. Nobody was in my house; it was always there. When I was in school, I would make things and sell them in school”.

**Interviewee E:** “Everybody is influenced by what happens to them whether its relationships, education. Observations, absolutely a factor”.

**Summary of the findings**

The general theme taken from the participants’ responses is that the observations, associations, education and relationships experienced by entrepreneurs does influence their decision to start-up an enterprise.

### 4.3.2 Exposure to Mentors theme

**Question:** Do you think mentoring is crucial to entrepreneurs?

**Interviewee B:** “It’s not necessarily crucial but I’d say it definitely helps. Sometimes it’s hard to identify a mentor though, sometimes maybe mentors are there without you realising it as such and maybe they don’t do the exact same thing as you have done but they kind of influence you in terms of ideas”.

**Interviewee D:** “I’m sure it would help. People with a precise business plan, it could help. If you’re not self-motivated, mentors are pointless”.

**Question:** Is having exposure to mentors a motivating factor to starting up a business?

**Interviewee C:** “definitely, I think your parents can be mentors. I would have experienced mentoring formally through Dublin city enterprise and informally through networks. I would have colleagues there who I would consider mentors”.

**Summary of the findings**

The central theme generated from the above discussion revealed that the majority of entrepreneurs believe that mentors play a positive role in supporting and assisting entrepreneur’s to starting up a business.
4.3.3 Push and Pull factors theme

**Question:** Was it a push or pull factor that propelled you into starting up a business?

*Interviewee B:* “It was both, it was always both. I was always interested in starting my own business and I was not particularly enjoying where I was so that was the push that made my decision easy. I think both push and pull would be the case for most people because if it was just push that would be a bad reason to start a business in itself. You need to have a bit of pull as well, a bit of attraction, love for what you’re doing”.

*Interviewee D:* “Both, yes necessity might make you want to do it but also you have that wish”.

*Interviewee E:* “Not necessarily, it just happened, I fell into it”.

**Summary of the findings**

Participants B and D acknowledged both push and pull factors as influencing the decision to start-up a business. Participant E responded that neither push and pull factors were particularly influential in the decision to start-up an enterprise.

4.3.4 Need for Achievement theme

**Question:** Was the need for achievement a motivational factor for starting up a business?

*Interviewee B:* “that was a big motivational factor. You are working for yourself; you have to wear a lot of hats. That was a big factor definitely”.

*Interviewee C:* “I suppose to an extent”.

*Interviewee D:* “No, that’s not what drives me”.

**Summary of the findings**

There was a mixed response from the participants on the question regarding the need for achievement. While participant A was adamant about the need for achievement being a motivating factor, participant C was unsure and participant D steadfastly rejected the need for achievement as a motivating factor.
4.3.5 Self-Efficacy theme

**Question:** Do potential entrepreneurs need to possess self-efficacy in order to start-up a business?

**Interviewee B:** “Yes, but you can learn it to an extent. The more you do it, the easier it gets, whether speaking in public, meeting people, it becomes easier the more you do it. You hone your skills; you get better”.

**Interviewee C:** “No, I think you can learn a lot from people, learn from others. Idea is the main thing”.

**Summary of the findings**

From the noted responses, it was clear that the participants felt that a strong self-efficacy was not essential to the decision to start up a business but could be developed and nurtured through the process of interacting with other business people.

**Question:** Do entrepreneurs who possess high self-efficacy have a propensity for risk taking?

**Interviewee A:** “The decision to quit my job, it was definitely calculated, it wasn’t anything we did lightly”.

**Interviewee C:** “I don’t think the two are always together. No I wouldn’t”.

**Question:** Do entrepreneurs have to sometimes overlook the risk involved to start-up a business?

**Interviewee G:** “Yes, of course you have to, it’s how much you’re willing to sacrifice”.

**Summary of the findings**

The findings show that there was no unanimous position on whether entrepreneurs have a propensity for risk taking; rather it is personal to each participant’s own viewpoint.
Objective 2: To investigate the extent in which entrepreneur's perceptions of the economic environment influences his/her motivation to start-up a business.

4.3.6 Government support and access to finance theme

Question: Do Government support programmes and financial institutions look for specific criteria from entrepreneurs before offering support?

Interviewee A: “Yes, particularly like the Local Enterprise office. The amount of boxes you have to tick, form filing, it is painful. It deters people”.

Interviewee F: “The banks probably greatly increased their level of risk aversion in terms of their lending practices. That would mean that they are probably looking for more stringent conditions and criteria when they are giving out loans”.

Interviewee G: “It’s extremely difficult to access finance based on an idea. The banks have to have a reasonable amount of information on the company before they can make an assessment”.

Summary of the findings

The findings from the respondents indicated overwhelmingly that Government support programmes and financial institutions do seek specific criteria from entrepreneurs, which often includes a high level of bureaucracy.

Question: Do you believe the Government does enough to facilitate access to finance for entrepreneurs?

Interviewee A: “Yes, but it depends on how much you are willing to pay for that money, small businesses will go for it because they don’t have much options”.

Interviewee B: “Think they are in fairness it is tricky, it is capitalism, they are not supposed to interfere in the market”.

Interviewee D: “No, I know somebody who is involved in exports and he dreads the day somebody might come to him and say he wants half a million of stuff because he hasn’t got the funds to get it and he can’t get the funds”.

Interviewee H: “The Government’s role is to facilitate”.

Thomas Molloy
Summary of the findings

There was no clear consensus within the participants’ responses, which indicates both personal experience and industry standpoint.

**Question:** Are Government support policies designed to assist existing entrepreneurs whose businesses have the potential for growth and employment?

**Interviewee F:** “There does seem to be an issue in Government minds that any policies we offer, we need to think about that next growth phase and how business can expand”.

**Interviewee G:** “I would broadly think that’s a true statement but they would be burdened by the fact that they need to have a previous track record”.

Summary of the findings

Both participants broadly agreed with the sentiment of the outlined statement.

**Question:** Do you think the Irish Government should develop an inclusive and integrated entrepreneurial education programme throughout the educational system in Ireland to promote entrepreneurship?

**Interviewee F:** “I suppose there is always a case for improving and increasing the awareness of the entrepreneurial function amongst Irish people but equally there is an element of how much of this can you teach and how much of it is naturally learned”.

**Question:** If entrepreneurial practise is learned experientially rather than through education, Are Government support programmes ineffective?

**Interviewee A:** “I don’t think so. I think you learn a lot from mentoring and stuff, which is part of what agencies do. I think it depends on the person. I learn more from doing things but other people would learn from listening”.

Summary of the findings
The general theme derived from the above responses was that while entrepreneurial education can be beneficial, the respondents indicated entrepreneurship is an inherent trait within an individual regardless of entrepreneurial training and education.

**Question:** Does a favourable/unfavourable perception of the economy affect the motivation of entrepreneurs to start-up a business?

**Interviewee F:** “Very much so. If you have a banking sector in a particularly risk averse position, then you are going to see a lot of caution being exercised by the banking sector in terms of lending”.

**Summary of the findings**

Participant F clearly intimated that perception of the economy is highly influential in the decision of an entrepreneur to start-up an enterprise with a particular emphasis on the role of the banking sector towards that decision.

**Question:** Can you identify any factors that are responsible for entrepreneurs perceiving government support as positive or negative?

**Interviewee F:** “I think so; there is a bit of opportunity in the Irish economy at present. Our cost base has come down. A lot of potential out there as the economy is growing strongly but equally there is a long-term issue we have with the financial sector, which basically does not really match the requirement of a modern knowledge based services economy. It’s too conservative; it is set up more in the lines of a manufacturing type of economy”.

**Interviewee G:** “We have historically low interest rates, I think there is adequate money for entrepreneurs, depending on their sector to access finance at the moment”.

**Summary of the findings**

Participants F states that the economy is improving for entrepreneurs but added that more needs to be done in the banking sector to meet the needs of a modern day economy. Participant G asserts that there is sufficient financing available to entrepreneurs but this is contingent on the type of sector.

**4.4 The Respondents (Quantitative)**
131 micro/small business owners were targeted by email, in addition, to several organisations that have numerous micro/small business owners as members such as the small firm’s association (SFA), Plato Dublin, the Mill enterprise hub in Drogheda, Guinness Enterprise Centre (GEC), Halo Business Angel Network (HBAN) and other Local Enterprise Offices (LEO) and entrepreneurship forums targeted through social media tools like Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. The researcher received 67 responses. Of these 67 responses, four were invalid due to incomplete answers, which resulted in 63 valid responses.

**4.5 The Findings (Quantitative)**

In this section, the findings and objectives of the quantitative research commence with an outline of the respondent’s profile followed by the findings to the questions that were asked in the questionnaire which are presented under themes researched in the literature review.

**Objective 1:** To explore the main motivational factors that influence individuals to start-up a micro/small firm in Ireland.
**4.5.1 Respondents profile**

From questions 1 to 3, the researcher sought to ascertain the characteristics of the respondents by analysing demographics such as gender, age and company size.

![Figure 7: Gender Demographic](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>44.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>55.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1: Gender Demographic**

The results show that out of the sixty-three respondents, the number of males was thirty-five compared to twenty-eight for females, which equates to a variance of 11.12 percent. Figures published by the GEM (2014) state that in Ireland, nine percent of males aspire to start-up a new business as opposed to 5.5 percent of females, which reflects a 3.5 percent variance. The figures published in the GEM (2014) report represent a much higher population sample of male and female entrepreneurs in Ireland.
The results reveal that out of the 63 responses, the thirty-five to forty-four age group represents the highest percentage of entrepreneurs in this research, which accounts for 42.86 percent of the total responses. The twenty-five to thirty-four age group represented the second highest group at 26.98 percent followed by the forty-five to fifty-four age group, which equates to 23.81 percent out of the total responses. Only 3.17 percent represented the eighteen to twenty-four age group with the fifty-five to seventy-four age groupings accounting for only 3.18 percent of the responses.

**Table 2: Age Demographic**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 to 24</td>
<td>3.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 34</td>
<td>26.98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 to 44</td>
<td>42.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 to 54</td>
<td>23.81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 to 64</td>
<td>1.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 to 74</td>
<td>1.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 or older</td>
<td>6.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results reveal that out of the 63 responses, the thirty-five to forty-four age group represents the highest percentage of entrepreneurs in this research, which accounts for 42.86 percent of the total responses. The twenty-five to thirty-four age group represented the second highest group at 26.98 percent followed by the forty-five to fifty-four age group, which equates to 23.81 percent out of the total responses. Only 3.17 percent represented the eighteen to twenty-four age group with the fifty-five to seventy-four age groupings accounting for only 3.18 percent of the responses.
The findings overwhelmingly show that the majority of entrepreneurs are micro business owners, which account for 85.71 percent of the total responses compared to 14.29 percent for small business owners. These findings are akin to the CSO (2012) figures, which state that micro businesses account for 90.7 percent of businesses in the Irish economy compared to 7.7 percent for small businesses.
4.5.2 Intention Theme

The purpose of question 4 and 5 is to ascertain if there is a correlation between the intentions of an entrepreneur to start-up an enterprise and the economic environment and to identify any factors that may have influenced their intention to start-up a business.

**Q4 - How strong an influence did you consider the economic environment to be on your intention to start-up a business?**

![Bar chart showing responses to Q4](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irrelevant</td>
<td>31.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>31.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most Important</td>
<td>7.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4: Intention Theme findings*

The findings in relation to question 4 show that 31.75 percent of respondents believe that the economic environment does not influence their intention to start-up a business with a further 31.75 percent reporting it to be moderate. However, 36.51 percent of the respondents did denote that the economic environment did influence their intention to start-up an enterprise.
53.97 percent of respondents regarded observing successful entrepreneurs as significant or higher, which denotes observing successful entrepreneurs as the most prominent factor in the decision for an entrepreneur to start-up an enterprise. Next was encouragement from family members as it represented 46.03 percent of answers in the significant to highly significant group. Observing unsuccessful entrepreneurs and encouragement from a friend both had results of 41.27 percent for irrelevant which were the least prominent factors.
The objective of question 6 was to determine if mentoring plays any role in the decision-making process of starting up a business.

**4.5.3 Exposure to mentors theme**

The results from question 6 show that the majority of respondents deem mentoring to be extraneous in the decision to start-up a business. 36.51 percent considered mentoring to be irrelevant followed by 34.92 percent believing it to be adequate. Only 28.57 percent of the respondents believed mentoring to be significant or higher. Interestingly, these quantitative results contradict the findings of the data from the qualitative results, which indicated that the participants unanimously believed mentoring to be important in the decision to start-up a business.
4.5.4 Push and Pull Factors theme

The purpose of question 7 and 8 was to identify the main push and pull factors that were influential in the entrepreneurs’ decision to start-up a business.

Q7 - Which of the following factors influenced your decision to start-up your business?

![Figure 13: Push factors theme findings](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Irrelevant</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Significant</th>
<th>Highly Significant</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Redundancy</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
<td>9.52%</td>
<td>6.35%</td>
<td>17.46%</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfulfilling Job</td>
<td>25.46%</td>
<td>19.05%</td>
<td>36.51%</td>
<td>19.05%</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Working Environment</td>
<td>34.92%</td>
<td>25.40%</td>
<td>17.46%</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Career Prospects</td>
<td>34.92%</td>
<td>20.63%</td>
<td>19.05%</td>
<td>25.40%</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7: Push factors theme findings

Focusing on the most telling factors separately, an unfulfilling job represented the highest percentage (36.51 percent) of a significant push factor that influenced individuals to start-up a business. Conversely, redundancy was ranked the least prominent push factor at 66.67 percent for the entrepreneurs. A negative working environment when combining significant
and highly significant answers resulted in 25 of the 60 respondents with low career prospects recording a slightly higher result of 28 out of 60 responses.

Q8 - Which the following factors influenced your decision to start-up your business?

The results show that 85.71 percent of entrepreneurs believe that spotting an opportunity in the market is the most prominent pull factor for starting up a business. The second most important pull factor was being self-employed which resulted in 82.54 percent of respondents. Increased monetary reward as a highly significant pull factor accounted for 36.51 percent of respondents. The least influential pull factor for entrepreneurs was contributing to the community as 23.81 percent of respondents believed this pull factor to be irrelevant.
4.5.5 Need for Achievement theme

The aim of question 9 is to explore if the need for achievement is an important motivating factor for individuals who pursue entrepreneurship.

**Q9 - How important was the need for achievement in your decision to start-up a business?**

![Bar chart showing the distribution of responses to question 9. The chart indicates that 53.07% found the need for achievement to be strong, 9.52% found it moderate, 31.33% found it most important, and 3.17% found it irrelevant.]

**Figure 15: Need for Achievement theme findings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irrelevant</td>
<td>3.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>9.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>53.07%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most Important</td>
<td>31.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>63</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 9: Need for Achievement theme findings**

Of the sixty-three responses, 55 respondents indicated that the need for achievement was an important factor in their decision to start-up an enterprise. Only 3.17 percent of the responses found the need for achievement to be irrelevant. These quantitative findings are in contrast to the qualitative findings, which found a mixed response from the interviewees with regards to the need for achievement as a motivating factor for aspiring to become an entrepreneur.
4.5.6 Self-Efficacy theme

The objective of questions 10 to 12 is to determine if self-efficacy is an essential component that entrepreneurs must possess in order to start-up an enterprise and to establish if a propensity for risk-taking and the fear of failure affect the entrepreneurs’ self-belief in their own ability.

Q10 - How important was having self-belief in your own ability when starting up your business?

Figure 16: Self-efficacy theme findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irrelevant</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>4.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>26.98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most important</td>
<td>68.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10: Self-efficacy theme findings

The results from question ten reveal that self-efficacy is a very important attribute for entrepreneurs’ in starting up a business. Forty-three respondents (68.25 percent) ranked self-efficacy as a most important factor when starting up a business while zero respondents ranked this factor as irrelevant.
The findings from question eleven show that 84.12 percent of respondents believe that having a propensity for risk taking is an essential component that individuals must possess in order to start-up a business compared to 15.87 percent of respondents who disagree with this statement.
Q12 - How significant was the fear of failure in your decision to start-up a business?

![Graph showing fear of failure responses]

**Figure 18: Self-efficacy (Fear of Failure) theme findings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irrelevant</td>
<td>17.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>35.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significant</td>
<td>26.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly Significant</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 12: Self-efficacy (Fear of Failure) theme findings**

A mixed response to question twelve with twenty-seven of the sixty-three respondents indicting the fear of failure as significant or higher compared to twenty-five of the sixty-three respondents stating somewhat and a further eleven declaring the fear of failure as irrelevant.
4.5.7 Government support and access to finance theme

The purpose of questions 13 and 14 is to ascertain the entrepreneurs’ perception towards government support programmes, entrepreneurial education policies and access to finance.

Q13 - How important are the following factors in the decision to start-up a business?

![Graph showing the importance of factors in starting a business]

**Figure 19: Government support and access to finance theme findings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Irrelevant</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Significant</th>
<th>Highly Significant</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government Support</td>
<td>36.51%</td>
<td>23.14%</td>
<td>17.46%</td>
<td>11.82%</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Finance</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
<td>36.51%</td>
<td>38.10%</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial teaching</td>
<td>22.22%</td>
<td>36.51%</td>
<td>31.75%</td>
<td>9.52%</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>throughout the educational</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>system</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 13: Government support and access to finance theme findings**

The findings from question 13 indicate that access to finance is the most important factor in the decision to start-up a business for entrepreneurs. 74.61 percent of respondents indicated access to finance as being significant or higher. Interestingly, Government support when ranked for highly significant came in second with 22.22 percent compared to 9.52 percent for entrepreneurial education but when combining highly significant with significant,
entrepreneurial education was ranked second most important factor with 41.27 percent compared to 39.68 percent for Government support.

Q14 - **In your own experience, how important is a favourable economic environment to the decision to start-up a business?**

![Figure 20: Government support and access to finance theme findings](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irrelevant</td>
<td>12.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>38.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>26.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most Important</td>
<td>22.23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>63</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14: Government support and access to finance theme findings

38.10 percent of respondents indicated as moderate that a favourable economy is important in the decision to start-up a business. When this moderate response is combined with the irrelevant response, it accounts for 50.8 percent of respondents who believe that a favourable economy is not that important to the decision to engage in entrepreneurial activity. Similarly, when combining the strong and most important response to the question, 49.2 percent of respondents believe that a favourable economy is an important factor in the decision to start-up a business.
4.6 Follow-up interviews (Qualitative)

The respondents that participated in the follow-up interviews where three entrepreneurs catalogued B, D and E.

4.6.1 The Findings (Qualitative)

In this section, the findings of the follow up interviews are presented under themes researched in the literature review.

**Objective 1:** To explore the opinions of respondents interviewed earlier on in the research to discuss the findings of the quantitative results.

4.6.2 Intention theme

**Response to the findings from question four in the questionnaire:**

**Interviewee D:** “I agree with that. I actually thought it might be even slightly higher. I described it as an itch that people have to scratch. To support that, I know somebody who is leaving a well-paid job and company vehicle and all of those things to take their own plunge because they wanted to do it for as long as I know them”.

**Interviewee E:** “It depends on what sort of business you are going in to. If you have a good idea, I don’t think the economic environment if it’s in the right industry is going to effect it too much”.

**Summary of the findings**

Both respondents agreed with the findings from the questionnaire as they both implied that the economic environment should not affect the intention of an individual to start-up a business.
Response to the findings from question five in the questionnaire:

Interviewee B: “That would be extremely influential, definitely”.

Interviewee D: “I’m not sure. I would have thought that it was something they wanted to do. Obviously, you have an interest in setting out; you pay attention to other people, who is doing what. I wonder how they managed to achieve it. I wouldn’t have thought it was huge”.

Summary of the findings

A mixed response to observing a successful entrepreneur as the most influential in the decision to start-up a business. Interviewee B clearly agreed with the findings whereas interviewee D was not convinced that observing successful entrepreneurs was influential in the decision to start-up a business.

4.6.3 Exposure to Mentors theme

Response to the findings from question six in the questionnaire:

Interviewee D: “I didn’t have a mentor, so I can’t really comment. I think mentoring might be more relevant now. It wasn’t when I started”.

Interviewee E: “I had a couple of mentors and I wouldn’t have had a great experience and I didn’t learn anything of them to be honest with you so I don’t think they are relevant”.

Summary of the findings

Interviewee E agreed with the findings as he intimated that mentors were not relevant in his own experience. Interviewee D alluded to how mentoring was not relevant when he started up a business but contended that mentoring might be more relevant in today’s business environment.

4.6.4 Push and Pull factor theme
Response to the findings from question seven and eight in the questionnaire:

**Interviewee B:** “I’d say that’s true for a lot of people. It would be the initial kind of spur”.

**Interviewee E:** “That’s definitely possible alright. I suppose yes when you think about it. It’s a very interesting finding”.

**Interviewee D:** “I’m thinking back to 1980, 81. I worked for a multinational. It was a very bad place to work because it did not encourage you to work. I wandered around all day with a piece of paper in my hand and no one would say tickety-boo to me and I just went I can’t do this anymore”.

**Question:** Do you think organisations, people’s places of employment need to do more to retain their employees?

**Interviewee D:** “Yes, because it’s like any business getting a customer. It costs a lot more to get a customer than to retain a customer”.

**Summary of the findings**

The three interviewees agreed with the researcher’s findings on both push and pull factors, which implied that the respondents place of employment was inadvertently creating entrepreneurs.

### 4.6.5 Need for Achievement theme

Response to the findings from question nine in the questionnaire:

**Interviewee E:** “I agree with that. It depends what your motives are, what your achievements are. Are you there to support a family, are you there for yourself, are you there because you like employing people. Every one of them leads to a sense of achievement, to be able to do it.

**Summary of the findings**

Interviewee E agreed with the finding from the questionnaire on the need for achievement being an important factor in the decision to start-up a business but highlighted how the need for achievement may differ for each entrepreneur depending on his or her circumstances.
4.6.6 Self-efficacy theme

Response to the findings from question ten to twelve in the questionnaire:

Interviewee B: “I think so; a fear of failure is what motivates you a lot of the time. That makes sense to me. I wouldn’t find that surprising”.

Interviewee E: “That’s an Irish trait more than anything else”.

Interviewee D: “I think that might be particularly an Irish thing. The Americans would not regard failure as a failure so to speak. They would regard that as part of a learning curve. Whereas here you are a failure”.

Question: In front of your peers, your colleagues, your friends?

Interviewee D: “Yes. If you’re in business and you have a failure and it’s an expensive failure, you may never get out of it”.

Summary of the findings

The respondents were presented with the findings, which inferred that the respondents had high self-belief and a propensity for risk-taking, but they also had a fear of failure. An interesting development from the follow-up interviews from the self-efficacy theme was that interviewee D and E believed that the results of the findings were related to the respondent’s culture as they stated that a fear of failure is a trait among Irish entrepreneurs.

4.6.7 Government support and access to finance theme

Response to the findings from question thirteen in the questionnaire:

Government support

Interviewee B: “Yes, that would definitely be the case for my business. It would be for export and for a larger number of employees”.

Interviewee B: “That would definitely be the case for my business. It would be for export and for a larger number of employees”.

Interviewee E: “That’s an Irish trait more than anything else”.

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The respondents were presented with the findings, which inferred that the respondents had high self-belief and a propensity for risk-taking, but they also had a fear of failure. An interesting development from the follow-up interviews from the self-efficacy theme was that interviewee D and E believed that the results of the findings were related to the respondent’s culture as they stated that a fear of failure is a trait among Irish entrepreneurs.

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Response to the findings from question thirteen in the questionnaire:

Government support

Interviewee B: “Yes, that would definitely be the case for my business. It would be for export and for a larger number of employees”.

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Question: In front of your peers, your colleagues, your friends?

Interviewee D: “Yes. If you’re in business and you have a failure and it’s an expensive failure, you may never get out of it”.

Summary of the findings

The respondents were presented with the findings, which inferred that the respondents had high self-belief and a propensity for risk-taking, but they also had a fear of failure. An interesting development from the follow-up interviews from the self-efficacy theme was that interviewee D and E believed that the results of the findings were related to the respondent’s culture as they stated that a fear of failure is a trait among Irish entrepreneurs.
Interviewee D: “Absolutely, Government support policies are generally export orientated and that comes with a lot of lip service because I know people in the export business. They got some help”.

Interviewee E: “Yes, we got minimal Government support in most of the projects we did but they were very helpful. I do know that if you are going for much bigger support from the Government, some of the conditions might be a little bit onerous on you. I have talked to a few people who would have gone to enterprise Ireland and places like that. They felt it was quite onerous after a year or so of working with them”.

Summary of the findings

All three interviewees agreed with the findings, which found that Government support was not an important factor in the decision to start-up a business. Interviewee B and D stated that Government support policies are more compatible with entrepreneurs who are in the export business.

Access to Finance

Interviewee E: “I didn’t have much access to finance when I started up so I can only give you my experience. We were much more of an organic company to grow because of that. I don’t think it’s essential but I’m sure there is lots of industries out there that do need financing up front just to get started”.

Interviewee D: “I think people are obsessed with having access to finance but if they have to easy access they will waist it. It’s not their money even if they owe it to the bank, it’s not their money”.

Summary of the findings

Both respondents believed that having access to finance was not the most important factor in the decision to start-up a business. However, these responses are based on the respondents own personal experiences.

Entrepreneurial Education Policies

Interviewee B: “I would say it’s to do with age, career depending on the business profile”.
**Interviewee D:** “It depends on the age profile of the people. When I was in junior school, I started making things and selling things and that was completely frowned upon but it would be viewed as slightly different now”

**Interviewee E:** “I don’t understand how you can teach someone to be an entrepreneur”.

**Summary of the findings**

Interviewee B and D highlighted that the age of the entrepreneur might be the reason as to why the findings of the study in relation to entrepreneurial education were inconclusive. Interviewee E believed that entrepreneurial education was irrelevant in the decision to start-up a business.

**Response to the findings from question fourteen in the questionnaire:**

**Interviewee B:** “If it’s a good robust business model, it should not be susceptible to it. I was told that maybe not all businesses deserve to survive, a lot of people get into it and are not really cut out for it or they don’t have the business models”.

**Summary of the findings**

Interviewee B contended that a favourable economic environment is irrelevant in the decision to start-up a business. He asserts that if a good business model is employed to assist in starting up a business, then the economic environment should not affect the decision to start-up a business.
Chapter 5- Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will review and interpret the results from the findings of chapter four and answer the research questions in this paper. The research questions asked “What are the main motivational factors that influence an individual to start-up a micro/small firm in Ireland” and “To what extent do an entrepreneur's perceptions of the economic environment influence his/her motivation to start-up a business”. The researcher will refer to the primary data and literature review to discuss each of the research questions and hypothesis.

The demographic details from the questionnaire was to ensure that entrepreneurs of different age groups, gender and company size gave answers to the research question for the purposes of capturing a wide array of opinions. The analysis from the themes presented in chapter four that will be discussed are intentions, exposure to mentors, push and pull factors, the need for achievement, self-efficacy, Government support policies and access to finance under sections 5.2 to 5.7 in addition to the limitations under section 5.8.

The first research question asked, what are the main motivational factors that influence an individual to start-up a micro/small firm in Ireland?

H1: The main motivating factors investigated are highly correlated with the decision to start-up an enterprise.

The first hypothesis examined the main motivating factors that influence entrepreneurs to start-up an enterprise, which will be discussed under the following sections:

5.2 Intention
The analysis from the quantitative findings showed that 31.75 percent of the respondents stated that the economic environment did not influence their intention to start-up a business with a further 31.75 percent of respondents stating that the economic environment had a moderate effect on their intention towards entrepreneurship. The findings diverge from Malebana’s (2014, p. 710) contention that an individuals’ perspicacity of the economic environment can influence their intention to start-up an enterprise. Therefore, the findings do not support hypothesis one as they were inconclusive.

Furthermore, 36.51 percent of respondents believed that the economic environment did have an influence on their intention to start-up a business. The findings of the questionnaire imply that the influence of the economic environment on the individual’s intention to start-up an enterprise is dependent on the variations in individuals’ perception of the significance of economic factors. The findings of the study are supported by Ajzen’s (1991, pp. 188-189) TPB model with particular reference to the components of an individual’s attitude and PBC, which infer that some potential entrepreneurs are discouraged by the thought that they would not be able to cope adequately with adverse economic conditions.

The premise that encouragement from a friend can influence an entrepreneur’s intention to start-up a business as highlighted by various authors (Yang, 2013, pp. 371-373; Bagheri, 2015, pp. 23-25) is not supported by the findings as 41.27 percent of the respondents indicated this factor as irrelevant. The results in relation to the encouragement from a family member were inconclusive as there was a 7.94 percent variance between respondents who indicated this factor as significant or higher and those who believed it to be marginally influential or irrelevant.

The results from observing successful entrepreneurs resulted in a total of 53.97 percent of respondents believing this factor to be the most influential in their intention to start-up a business, which is comparable to Karimi’s (2014, p. 713) study, which implies that observing successful entrepreneurial role models can augment entrepreneurial intentions within individuals. However, 41.27 percent of respondents indicated that observing unsuccessful entrepreneurs was irrelevant in their intention to start-up an enterprise. The implications of the findings from the questionnaire suggest that the subjective norm component of the TPB
model is relevant to observing successful entrepreneurs and marginally relevant to encouragement from family members but not relevant to observing unsuccessful entrepreneurs and encouragement from friends.

### 5.3 Exposure to Mentors

The initial qualitative findings found mentoring to be an important factor towards engagement in entrepreneurial activity, which is supported by the majority of literature researched on the subject (Tang, 2008, p. 131; Rigg, 2012, p. 323; Smith, 2011, pp. 107-109; St-Jean, 2011, pp. 38-45). However, the quantitative findings did not support these qualitative findings as 36.51 percent of respondents considered mentoring to be irrelevant with a further 34.92 percent indicating it to be moderate compared to 28.57 percent deeming mentoring to be significant or higher in the decision to start-up a business. These overall results did not support hypothesis one, which denotes a low correlation between mentoring and the decision to start-up a business.

There appears to be scope for further research to determine if entrepreneurs are aware of or have ever utilised a mentor prior to engaging in entrepreneurial activity to ascertain if the respondents are aware of the role of the mentor. The implications of these findings are that Government support policies like the National Policy Statement on Entrepreneurship in Ireland (2014) which promotes mentoring, need to ascertain the function of the mentor concerning engaging and encouraging potential entrepreneurs for the purpose of cognizing how feasible and sustainable mentoring programmes are in promoting entrepreneurship throughout Ireland.

### 5.4 Push and Pull Factors

The results for determining the main push factors found that an unfulfilling job was positively correlated with the decision to start-up a business. These findings are analogous to various authors in the literature (Imbaya, 2012, p. 108; Van Gelderen, 2006, pp. 23-31; Benzing, 2009, p. 2), who alluded to unfulfilling job as a key push factors towards entrepreneurship. The implications of this finding are that job dissatisfaction and personal development within
paid employment is the main push factor for the respondents in the questionnaire, which lead
an individual to the decision to start-up a new business.

The findings in respect of a negative working environment and low career prospects were
inconclusive. However, when grouping the responses in the significant and highly significant
response categories, the findings show a reasonably high proportion of respondents, which
supports Kim’s (2012, p. 51) premise, who posits that a negative working environment can
push an individual into entrepreneurship. However, an unexpected finding was that 66.67
percent of respondents deemed redundancy as a push factor to be irrelevant which does not
correlate with the opinions of various authors (Kim, 2012, p. 51; Benzing, 2009, p. 62), in the
literature who categorised this push factor as influential in the decision to start-up a business.
Therefore, the results for redundancy do not support hypothesis one, as there was a low
correlation between this factor and the decision to start-up an enterprise.

When comparing these results to the pull factor findings, 85.71 percent of respondents
indicated spotting an opportunity in the market as a significant to highly significant pull
factor. This finding is supported by Gatewood (1995, pp. 371-391) who states that identifying
an opportunity in in the market is one of the main motivating factors for starting up a
business which positions this factor as the most prominent answer for the push and pull
category in relation to the first research question which supports the first hypothesis.
Furthermore, 82.54 percent of respondents deemed being self-employed as very influential in
the decision to start-up a business. Van Gelderen (2006, pp. 23-31) infers that the attraction
of being self-employment enables individuals to work for themselves free from an employer,
which entails making decisions, controlling one’s lifestyle and routine and determining the
strategic objectives of the business.

The results for increased monetary reward showed that 36.51 percent of respondents
indicated this factor as highly significant in the decision to start-up a business. This finding is
in line with the literature researched on the topic as various authors (Walker, 2004, pp. 577-
594; Dawson, 2012, p. 700) contend that fiscal incentives were not as important as being self-
employed. However, increased monetary reward was a more important factor than
contributing to society as 23.81 percent of respondents believed this factor to be irrelevant
with a further 30.16 percent intimating this factor to be slightly important in the decision to start-up a business. The findings of this study imply that the respondents in the questionnaire can be characterised as conventional entrepreneurs who are profit orientated as opposed to social entrepreneurs, where contributing to the society is the ultimate objective (Boluk, 2014, pp. 53-68).

The implications for the push and pull findings are that they appear to be interrelated as supported by the literature (Kirkwood, 2009, pp. 346-364; Verheul, 2010, p. 7; Piperopoulos, 2012, p. 195; Staniewski, 2012, p. 585; Eijenber, 2013, pp. 37-38; Williams, 2011, pp. 13-14). The majority of respondents in the questionnaire indicated that an unfulfilling job was the main push factor. These findings correlate to the pull factors identified in the questionnaire of spotting an opportunity in the market and being self-employed. Both pull factors can have various connotations attached to them as the individual may identify a need in the marketplace due to dissatisfaction in their employment (Hunter, 2013), or choose to become self-employed to enhance their career prospects (Van Gelderen, 2006, pp. 23-32), or to pursue a particular career vocation (Dawson, 2012, pp. 697-719). The results of the study extrapolate that the respondents’ former place of employment is inadvertently creating entrepreneurs. This highlights the needs for organisations to adopt a competency based approach to talent management to avoid losing entrepreneurial competencies by providing too little challenge to those staff members who possess them (Ross, 2013, pp. 167-168).

**5.5 Need for Achievement**

Results of the analysis for section 5.5 supports the first hypothesis, which shows that the need for achievement has a positive correlation with the decision to start-up an enterprise. The findings are consistent with the secondary research, which underlines the need for achievement as an extremely strong motivating factor for individuals who decide to start-up a business (Estay, 2013, p. 248; Taormina, 2007, pp. 202-209; Brandstatter, 2011, pp. 226-227). The results from the questionnaire infer that the need for achievement is an innate quality within the entrepreneurs surveyed, which corroborates McClelland’s (1965) study, which concluded that the need for achievement was a trait within individuals who are engaged in entrepreneurial activity. The results of the study emphasises the need for
government support policies and entrepreneurial education programmes to identify and encourage this trait within individuals to develop and encourage entrepreneurship throughout Ireland.

The findings of a study conducted by Chen (2012, p. 1316), which found a positive correlation between the need for achievement and risk-taking is analogous to the results of this research, as 87.3 percent of respondents purported that the need for achievement was an important factor in the decision to start-up a business. The results also showed that 84.12 percent of respondents believed that entrepreneurs must have a propensity for risk-taking. The findings of this study imply that the need for achievement is interrelated to the entrepreneurs’ propensity for risk taking but further study could be undertaken to investigate if entrepreneurs’ have differing views on what constitutes a risk. This could allow for more insight into the relationship between the need for achievement and risk-taking. The findings from a follow up interview inferred that the need for achievement could differ for each individual depending on his or her circumstances as individuals have varying motivating reasons for wanting to achieve their goals.

5.6 Self-Efficacy

Section 5.6 discusses the findings of self-efficacy in addition to risk-taking and the fear of failure as these themes featured throughout the research on the topic. The results of this study show that there is a very strong correlation between self –efficacy and entrepreneurship, which unequivocally supports the first hypothesis. The findings corroborate the secondary research as the concept of self–efficacy denotes an individual’s inherent belief in their own ability to control cognitive skills to be able to achieve their goals (Drnovsek, 2013, pp. 335-336; Bandura, 1994, pp. 2-5). With reference to Dalborg (2015, pp. 97-98) and Rachmawan’s (2015, p. 427) contention that self-efficacy is correlated to the intentions of the entrepreneur, the focus of the questionnaire was to determine if self-efficacy was important to the actual act of starting up a business as opposed to the entrepreneur’s intention of starting up a business. Further research could be conducted to establish if self-efficacy is more congruent to the individual’s start-up intentions rather than the actual process of business start-up.
The findings also suggest that having a propensity for risk-taking is closely associated with entrepreneurs with high self-efficacy, as the findings correlate with Bryant’s (2007, p. 735) notion that individuals with high self-efficacy are more risk prone in their entrepreneurial endeavours. However, the findings in relation to the significance of the fear of failure in starting up a business was inconclusive, as there was a 14.28 percent variance between those respondents who believed the fear of failure was significant or higher compared to those who considered the fear of failure to some extent or irrelevant.

The overall results showed that the respondents in the study possess self-belief and are willing to overlook risk on order to start-up a business, while simultaneously they are conscious of the fear of failure, which implies that there is a certain trepidation about starting up an enterprise regardless of one’s self-belief and propensity towards risk taking. This finding is analogous to Wennberg’s (2013, pp. 756-788) study, which advances the premise that the fear of failure can influence the decision to start-up an enterprise irrespective of high levels of self-efficacy. Two follow-up interviews in relation to the results of the questionnaire, suggested that the findings were connected to the respondent’s culture as both interviewees alluded to a fear of failure as an Irish characteristic.

A Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (2013) report on Ireland found that 45 percent of potential entrepreneurs indicated that a fear of failure was a prevailing factor in the decision to start-up a business. However, the GEM (2013) findings in relation to a fear of failure of individuals starting up a business in Ireland are similar to many EU countries. The output of the research implies that if the Irish Government promotes an entrepreneurial culture that alleviates fear of failure for entrepreneurs, it could embolden self-efficacy within potential entrepreneurs to take the step towards entrepreneurship. This inference is comparable to Tang’s (2008, p. 132) assertion, which denotes entrepreneurial self-efficacy achievement as contingent on the type of munificent environment.

The second research question asked, to what extent do an entrepreneur's perceptions of Government support policies and access to finance influence his/her motivation to start-up a business?

H2: Government support policies and access to finance are positively correlated with the decision to start-up a business.
The second hypothesis explored the entrepreneurs’ perception of government support to starting up an enterprise, which will be discussed under section 5.7.

5.7 Government support and access to finance

The results of the quantitative study concerning Government support towards entrepreneurs did not support hypothesis two, as 60.32 percent of respondents indicated that this factor was irrelevant or marginally important in the decision to start-up a business. The qualitative findings intimated that government support policies are designed to assist existing entrepreneurs whose businesses have potential for growth, which is akin to Williams (2013, p. 168) contention that the objective of Government support programmes are aimed to support businesses that have the capability for expansion and employment creation.

The overall findings of this study imply that a disproportionate amount of micro/small businesses are unable or choose not to avail of existing Government support policies as their type of business may not be compatible with Government support polices towards entrepreneurship (Bouette, 2015, p. 342), in addition to the perceived impediments with obtaining that support (McMahon, 1998, pp. 20-35; Williams, 2013, p. 168). The findings from the follow-up interviews implied that Government support policies are designed mainly to assist entrepreneurs in the export business. However, an Entrepreneurship Forum (2014) report established by the DJEI contends that the Governments role concerning entrepreneurship is that of facilitator, which promotes and facilitates a favourable environment for entrepreneurs.

Results of the quantitative analysis showed that access to finance was a highly significant factor for entrepreneurs in the decision to start-up a business. This finding supports hypothesis two as 74.61 percent of respondents indicated this factor to be imperative in the decision to start-up a business. These findings substantiate the secondary research as various authors denote how obtaining access to finance is imperative in the decision to start-up a business (Wennekers, pp. 42-43, 2002; McMahon, 1998, pp. 20-35; Taormina, 2007, pp. 204-216). One particular finding from the qualitative analysis, which discussed how the banking sector increased their levels of risk aversion in terms of lending to entrepreneurs, could have
implications for the results of the quantitative findings in relation to access to finance. The economic uncertainty due to the fallout from Brexit, could lead to a reduction in Ireland’s GDP (ESRI, 2015), which in turn could restrict lending from banks to small business owners (Holton, Lawless and McCann, 2012).

Heinonen (2010, p. 1166) contended that integrating entrepreneurial education programmes throughout the educational system in Ireland could encourage entrepreneurship. However, the findings in this study was inconclusive, as the results showed a 17.46 percent variance from respondents who believed this factor to be significant or higher as opposed to those who indicated it to be irrelevant or marginally important. The inference of this result could be related to the age demographic of the respondents as the findings from two of the follow up interviews intimated that entrepreneurial education might not be relevant to entrepreneurs of a certain age.

When the respondents were asked how important is a favourable economic environment to the decision to start-up a business, the findings lean towards this factor being relevant. This infers that the reasoning as to why individuals engage in entrepreneurial activity is contingent on their own behavioural and personality traits and their perception of the business environment (Estay, 2013, pp. 244-252; Taormina, 2007, pp. 204-216). The finding from a follow up interview in relation to the results from the study imply that if the entrepreneur employs and adheres to a practical business model before starting up a business, the economic environment should not be relevant in the decision to start-up a business.

5.8 Limitations

Gill (2012, pp. 657-658) asserts that regional differences in the country of the business can affect issues such as infrastructure, accessing finance, and demand for services. The researcher’s sampling area was predominately applied to Dublin. Future research throughout all of the regions of the country, where a wider audience could allow for a more comprehensive analysis of the study to determine if the motivating factors of Irish Entrepreneurs and their perceptions of the support provided by the Government varies across
regional boundaries. By focusing down the research to a smaller number of motivating factors on the topic of study could expand on the research findings.

Another drawback that inhibited the author’s research was the unfeasibility in trying to locate and analysis data from nascent entrepreneurs, which could have the potential to allow for up-to-date and current analysis and insight into the topic under investigation. The researcher attempted this research process by replicating Estay’s (2013, pp. 254-255) and Delanoe’s (2013, pp. 386-387) data collection method where questionnaires were left at the company’s registration office and the regional chamber of commerce office in France for entrepreneurs to complete. The researcher inquired about leaving questionnaires at the company registration office (CRO) in Dublin to new entrepreneurs registering their businesses but this was not permitted. This could have allowed for an investigation into the views and opinions of entrepreneurs about their motivations and perceptions in real time as opposed to entrepreneurs who have already stared up their businesses and whose views on the subject could have potentially changed due to the passage of time and their own personal experiences.
Chapter 6- Conclusions/Recommendations

6.1 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter is to summarise the issues and themes explored in the literature review and the findings deduced from the mixed method research in relation to the research question. The overall aim of the research was to investigate the motivating factors that influenced entrepreneurs in Ireland to start-up micro/small businesses and their perception of government support. The researcher will then make recommendations and suggestions for future research in this area of study. The first objective was to ascertain the main motivating factors that influence entrepreneurs to start-up micro/small businesses in Ireland.

The research commenced by investigating if a correlation exists between entrepreneurial intention and the motivations of entrepreneurs and if any factors researched in the literature review had an influence on the entrepreneur’s intention to start-up a business. The findings in relation to how the economic environment influences an entrepreneur’s intention to start-up a business did not support hypothesis one. The inference of the findings corroborates Ajzen’s (1991) theory of planned behaviour model, which surmises that an individual’s attitude (Kautonen, 2011, pp. 697-707), and their perceived behavioural control (Kwong, 2012, p. 77) in relation to how difficult or easy the process is of starting-up a business, is contingent on the variations in the individual’s perception of the significance of economic factors.
In relation to examining the varying factors that can have an influence on an entrepreneur’s intention to start-up a business, observing successful entrepreneurs supported hypothesis one as this factor is highly correlated with the entrepreneurs’ intention to start-up a business. The subjective norm component of Ajzen’s (1991) theory of planned behaviour model was pertinent to the findings as the entrepreneurs in the primary research did indicate that various actors in the social environment (Karimi, 2014, p. 713; Auzolt, 2015, p. 316) such as successful entrepreneurs can have an influence on their intention to start-up a business.

The majority of the literature researched on the topic of mentoring to engage and entice individuals towards entrepreneurship was generally supportive towards this process (Smith, 2011, pp. 107-109; Rigg, 2012, pp. 324-325; St-Jean, 2011, pp. 38-45). However, the overall findings of the primary research digressed from the notions indicated in the secondary research, as the result showed that having exposure to mentors is not correlated to the decision to engage in entrepreneurship. Perhaps the current research could have ascertained if the entrepreneurs surveyed, fully understood the mentoring process or had prior personal experience with mentors as this could have an impact on the findings due to the inconsistencies between the qualitative and quantitative findings.

A significant conclusion drawn in this research was derived from the findings of both push and pull factors. The study inferred that both push and pull factors appeared to be interconnected as supported by the literature (Kirkwood, 2009, pp. 346-364; Verheul, 2010, p. 7; Eijenberg, 2013, pp. 37-38), as spotting an opportunity in the market and being self-employed can be as a consequence of the following push factor of an unfulfilling Job (Hunter, 2013, pp. 66-78; Van Gelderen, 2006, pp. 23-31). The study concludes that the respondents’ previous place of employment is unintentionally initiating entrepreneurial activity. As these findings were obtained from a cross-sectional study, future research through a longitudinal study could allow for a more comprehensive insight into the correlations between push and pull factors, as a larger sample population could determine more categorically, if the entrepreneur’s former workplace is inadvertently creating entrepreneurs. An area of potential research could look to ascertain if organisations are utilising talent management (Ross, 2013, pp. 167-168), as a means to retain employees who
display entrepreneurial ambitions for the objective of harnessing and nurturing these entrepreneurial capabilities for the benefit of their own organisation through areas such as product development and senior management roles.

The findings in relation to the need for achievement is supported by various authors in the literature (Taormina, 2007, pp. 202-209; Estay, 2013, p. 248; Brandstatter, 2011, pp. 226-227), which substantiates McClelland’s (1965) concept, that the need for achievement is positively associated with entrepreneurial activity. Through exploring secondary data, the researcher referred to a link between the need for achievement and risk-taking (Chen, 2012, p. 1316). The findings of this study showed that both factors were positively correlated to the decision to start-up a business, which implied that both factors were interrelated. However, a more focused investigation into the relationship between risk-taking and the need for achievement could verify or disprove this assertion as the entrepreneur’s need for achievement and propensity for risk-taking may significantly differ depending on each individual’s outlook and circumstances.

With regard to self-efficacy, risk-taking and the fear of failure were topics that resurfaced throughout the secondary research on the subject. The findings, showed that the entrepreneurs surveyed have high self-belief in their own ability and are prone to risk-taking while simultaneously are cognisant of the fear of failure when starting up a business. An interesting development from research gathered through qualitative follow-up interviews suggested that these findings are connected to the culture of the respondents, as the participants stated that the fear of failure was a typical Irish attribute. However, the findings from a GEM (2013) report on entrepreneurship in Ireland did not substantiate this finding, as the report stated that the fear of failure associated with starting up a business was widespread across many EU countries.

The general conclusions from this study imply that potential entrepreneurs need to be able to manage their negative thoughts associated with the fear of failure and embolden their positive thoughts concerning self-belief in their own ability and their propensity to risk taking to be an entrepreneur. This inference is supported by Drnovsek (2013, pp. 335-336) concept, which elucidates self-efficacy as a key component that coalesces the potential entrepreneur’s self-
belief in his or her own capabilities and their developed reasoning skills to control positive and negative thoughts with the objective of assuming the role of an entrepreneur.

The second objective was to investigate to what extent do an entrepreneur’s perception of the economic environment can influence his/her motivation to start-up a business. The researcher sought to explore the entrepreneur’s perception of Government support, access to finance and entrepreneurial education for the purpose of ascertaining how significant these factors were in their decision to start-up a business. The inference of the overall findings in relation to Government support deduces that the majority of respondents believe that government support programmes set demanding criteria before offering their support to micro/small businesses. Therefore, this factor did not support hypothesis two as it was negatively correlated with the decision to start-up a business.

The literature suggest that Government support policies are not well-suited to every type of business that seeks support (Williams, 2013, p. 168; Bouette, 2015, pp. 337-351), as the findings from the qualitative follow-up interviews suggest that there is an emphasis on government support programmes to support export orientated businesses that have the potential to augment revenue and create jobs for the Irish economy. The Irish Government could look to expand their support network to conventional and feasible micro/small business ventures that are not export business orientated as a countermeasure to the negative perception that government support policies are not inclusive. However, a finding from a qualitative follow up interview alluded to the notion that not all businesses are deserving of support, as many potential entrepreneur’s business ideas are just not viable.

An unsurprising finding to the research was that the majority of entrepreneurs considered access to finance to be influential in the decision to start-up a business, which is akin to Taormina’s (2007, pp. 204-216) contention, that the entrepreneur’s perception of accessing finance and Government support programmes can positively or negatively influence their decision to start-up a business. Therefore, this finding supports hypothesis two. The findings of the research in relation to entrepreneurial education as an important factor in the decision to start-up a business did not support hypothesis two, as the findings were inconclusive. The general conclusion derived from the qualitative findings supported the secondary research.
(Birdthistle, 2006, p. 254; Rae, 2005, p. 324), which contends that entrepreneurship is learned experientially rather than through education. However, the quantitative findings revealed that a significant proportion of respondents (41.27 percent) believed entrepreneurial education to be important in the decision to start-up a business. Future research could determine if the age demographic is correlated to the entrepreneur’s perspective of entrepreneurial education as the qualitative findings implied that entrepreneurial education might not be relevant to entrepreneurs of a certain age.

To conclude, the topic of study highlighted some interesting findings and inferences such as the respondent’s former place of employment potentially or inadvertently pushing individual’s towards entrepreneurship. This inference could have both a positive and negative connation attached to it as on the one hand it augments entrepreneurship within individuals, which can be beneficial to the economy. However, this elucidation could potentially reflect negatively upon the talent management practices within the individual’s former places of employment due to inefficient management of people resources.

The attitude, subjective norm PBC component of Ajzen’s theory of planned behaviour (1991) helped the researcher correlate the varying factors researched to entrepreneurial intention. Factors such as the economic environment and observations and encouragement from various actors in the social environment can influence entrepreneurial intentions of individuals as suggested by the various authors in the literature (Malebana, 2014, p. 713; Auzolt, 2015, p. 316) but these intentions are contingent on the entrepreneur’s perception of the significance of economic factors and their behaviours and circumstances.

The findings in relation to self-efficacy suggest that a possible link exists between risk-taking and the fear of failure. The majority of respondents in the study, who possessed high levels of self-belief and a propensity towards risk taking (Bryant, 2007, p. 735), were cognisant about the fear of failure associated with starting up a business (Wennberg, 2013, pp. 756-788). A more focused study into these possible links could determine why individuals who possess high levels of self-efficacy and are prone to risk taking have trepidations about the fear of failure associated with entrepreneurship.
Another possible link surmised from the study was the need for achievement and risk-taking. The literature researched on the topic was ambiguous to this notion, as various authors supported the correlation between the two variables (Chen, 2012, p. 1316; Tang, 2007, pp. 459-464), while other research found a moderating correlation between the two variables (Collins, 2004, pp. 95-117). Further research could determine if a strong correlation exists between the need for achievement and risk-taking. This research could also be used to amalgamate the findings with the results from the study on self-efficacy as both motivating factors appear to be positively correlated with risk taking.

The deviation of the initial qualitative findings, which considered mentoring to be an important factor in encouraging entrepreneurship to the quantitative findings, which did not support this finding, was unexpected as the majority of the literature researched supported mentoring as key to promoting and encouraging entrepreneurship (Rigg, 2012, pp. 324-325; St-Jean, 2011, pp. 38-45; DJEI, 2014). The utilisation of a mixed methods approach to the research was imperative in hindsight as the initial qualitative findings were not reflective of the overall findings in relation to mentors.

The entrepreneur’s perspective of Government support programmes implied that a more inclusive Government policy towards supporting businesses that are not export orientated could reassure potential entrepreneurs that there are support services available to all types of businesses in Ireland. The general conclusions drawn from the study are comparable to Estay (2013, pp. 244-252) and Taormina’s (2007, pp. 204-216) contention that the motivating factors and perception of Government support that can influence an individual to pursue entrepreneurial activity is contingent on the individual’s own behavioural and personality traits and their perspective towards the feasibility of engaging in entrepreneurship.

### 6.2 Recommendations

From the primary and secondary research, the researcher identified various suggestions that could warrant future research as a result of the findings from the study. A quantitative finding that diverged from the initial qualitative findings was the subject of mentoring. Future research could determine the feasibility of mentoring to entrepreneurs in Ireland by
conducting primary research with entrepreneurs who have actually experienced the mentoring process. This could assist practitioners in this field of study such as students, academics and potential entrepreneurs to better understand the role of the mentor in relation to mentoring both nascent and established entrepreneurs who may benefit from this assistance.

This inference from the push and pull factor finding that the respondent’s former place of employment is inadvertently creating entrepreneurs highlights the need for further investigation into the talent management practices of organisations with an emphasis on how these organisations retain and develop employees who exhibit entrepreneurial inclinations. This could allow organisations to hone and develop entrepreneurial skills within their employees in order to augment and promote high career prospects within the organisation. This could create a satisfying working environment, which could offset employee disengagement to the organisation.

Another path for future research to consider as a way to extend on the findings of the study is to explore the contradictory link between self-efficacy, risk taking and the fear of failure. The study inferred that entrepreneurs who possess high levels of self-efficacy and risk-taking are conversely cognisant about the fear of failure associated with starting up a business. Results from the qualitative follow up interviews revealed that the fear of failure was correlated to the respondent’s Irish ethnicity. However, a GEM (2013) report into entrepreneurship repudiates this contention as the report’s findings indicate that the fear of failure is common among many entrepreneurs across the EU. A comprehensive examination into this paradoxical finding could determine if the fear of failure is a unique attribute to Irish entrepreneurs in the EU. This could allow Irish Government support programmes and lending institutions to be more attentive to this phobia as it could potentially inhibit or deter future entrepreneurs.

Further research could also investigate if a link exists between self-efficacy, the need for achievement and risk-taking in Irish entrepreneurs. The findings of the study infer that risk-taking is prevalent among Irish entrepreneurs with high levels of self-efficacy and the need for achievement. The study recommends that Irish lending institutions and Government support programmes play a key role in creating a business environment that is conducive to supporting appropriate levels of risk-taking among Irish entrepreneurs. This could encourage
potential entrepreneurs who may have a fear of failure or consternations about obtaining access to finance and Government support programmes to engage in the entrepreneurial process, which ultimately has the potential to create employment and stimulate the economy.

Consistent with previous literature (Wennekers, 2002, pp. 42-43; McMahon, 1998, pp. 20-35; Taormina, 2007, pp. 204-216), the research shows that access to finance is an important factor in the decision to start-up a business. The study recommends that the Irish Government continue to oversee and enforce if necessary any legislation enacted such as the Strategic Banking Corporation Ireland (SBCI) that oversees lending to small businesses to ensure there is continual transparency and cooperation among Irish lending institutions and small businesses. In relation to Government support, the Irish Government could set-up a more flexible and amenable process that caters to a wider range of businesses so that the entrepreneur is not perturbed to avail of the services and support.

The researcher identified that primary research conducted throughout all of the regions of Ireland could allow for a more robust investigation into the motivating factors that influence entrepreneurs to start-up a business and their perception of Government support. Further research could be conducted to ascertain if the respondent’s age demographic can have any bearing on the opinions of respondents with regard to entrepreneurial education. Issues such as opportunity or necessity factors that influence entrepreneurship in terms of region could potentially alter the findings in relation to the research questions and hypothesis. A nationwide investigation of the study could illuminate the findings of this study.
Chapter 7- Reflection

7.1 Introduction

Cameron (2009, p. 22) contends that reflection should entail a continuing process of your development and experience form the dissertation. The purpose of this chapter is to delineate the approach to learning, which the researcher undertook during this research, to identify the skills the researcher acquired and to record a personal reflection of my progression during the course of the MBA programme. This section allowed for a critical self-assessment of my development throughout the masters programme and dissertation process. An important aspect of the reflection process was cognizing how my learning and personal development during the MBA programme could be transferred and applied to my plans and career in the future. This chapter will commence with an outline of my learning style, followed by an account of the skills identified and acquired during the learning process. The researcher will then present my future development plans from reflection on learning throughout the MBA process.

7.2 Self Reflection on learning style

According to Kolb (1984, p. 38) “Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience”. To establish my own learning style, the researcher completed Honey and Mumford’s learning styles questionnaire (LSQ) which was derived from Kolb’s (1984) learning theory (See appendix 6, pp. 138-142 for the learning style
questionnaire results). Honey and Mumford (1986b) identified four styles of learning methods that individuals prefer to utilise in order to maximise one’s learning experience. The four learning styles are Activists, Reflectors, Theorists and Pragmatists. See diagram below of the Learning style model.

**Honey & Mumford Learning Styles Model**

![Learning Styles Model Diagram]

**Figure 21: Honey and Mumford learning style model. Source: Honey, P. and Mumford, A. (1986b)**

On completion of the Honey and Mumford (1986b) questionnaire, it was apparent that the researcher’s learning style is predominately activist. The activist learning style describes individuals who are open-minded and enthusiastic in their approach towards activities and challenges. They tend to emmerse themselves into tasks and activities instantaneously before considering the consequences. On reflection of the learning the researcher did throughout the MBA programme, the activist learning style did equate to my particular type of learning. Felder (1996, p. 18) states that “Functioning effectively in any professional capacity, however, requires working well in all learning modes”. The other three learning styles of reflectors, theorists and pragmatists were intermitinely utilised as a learning method throughpout the MBA programme which reflected the moderate and low preference scoring on the Honey and Mumford (1986) questionnaire. Given the time constaints of full time employment and part time study, these factors accelerated the activist learning style of the researcher as there was an urgency to delve straight into the assignments and dissertation. The researcher posits that the other three learning styles of reflectors, theorists and pragmatists could be incorporated into one’s learning style preference when conducting longitudinal research.

### 7.3 Skills development

#### 7.3.1 Research skills

The researching skills developed throughout the MBA programme and dissertation process
improved greatly since completing a BA Honours degree in Business Management in Dublin School three years ago. From working on numerous assignments throughout the modules and the actual dissertation, the researcher had to develop and enhance analytical and critical research skills by continuously reviewing academic literature through organising and categorising all information. This process enabled the researcher to identify key information and discard irrelevant information pertaining to the subject at hand. Soucing numerous academic articles/journals on various subjects in order to construct a literature review, helped formulate the research question and hypothesis which formed the foundation of the thesis.

### 7.3.2 Problem Solving skills

A study conducted by Wismath (2014, p. 11) into students perceptions of problem solving skills found that “students perceived that learning the process of problem solving was more important than simply solving problems”. The findings of this study are comparable to the researcher's own self-reflection on problem solving skills in relation to the MBA programme and dissertation. Initially, the researcher found problem solving frustrating at times due to working simultaneously on an influx of assignments in college and in full time employment. During the course of the MBA programme, the researcher encountered various issues like interviewees pulling out of interviews at the last minute, fellow students not contributing 100% to group assignments, losing time to study due to unforeseen work commitments. These issues challenged the researcher's problem solving skills. It was some simple advice received from a lecturer during the first semester which helped the researcher to overcome these problems. The advice given was that not all problems are solvable and you have to accept some limitations. When the researcher took this advice on board, it helped simplify and demystify the perceived problems that occurred throughout the MBA programme.

### 7.3.3 Time Management skills

The biggest concern throughout the MBA programme was managing time. Prior to enrolling in the MBA programme the researcher has a tendency to procrastinate with all projects and tasks that needed attention in both a professional and personal capacity. With a continuous deadline of assignments and tests, there was an urgency to focus and manage time more efficiently. This urgency propelled the researcher to delve straight into the college work as a
strategy to offset the worry of continuous deadlines and time constraints with college assignments and work commitments. The time constraints necessitated a more focused approach to completing numerous assignments and projects by utilising any spare time more efficiently through greater planning and organising of my time and resources. Through developing my time management approach, it helped alleviate some stress naturally associated with completing a MBA programme.

7.3.4 Team working skills

Working as part of a team on various assignments taught the researcher when to lead and take ownership of the work that needed to be done and when to play a contributing role to the performance of the team. An important learning skill that I acquired and developed throughout the MBA programme was listening skills which was an important attribute when working on a team project. Learning to listen carefully to team members, lecturers, students and interviewees helped the researcher to evaluate and decode relevant information needed to achieve the objective of the tasks and goals and to become a better communicator. A by-product of developing good listening skills increased the researchers communication skills which teaches one to listen carefully to other members of the project which in-turn makes them feel their ideas and opinions matter which helps the overall objective of the teams goals.

7.4 Future application of learning and skills development

At the end of the MBA programme, the researcher reflected on the learning undertaken throughout the process. From starting with a blank canvas to developing an idea to then trying to figure out if the idea is a viable one and then seeing it through to the finished line helped the researcher reflect about his own capabilities. As the researcher has considered taking the step towards entrepreneurship, the dissertation process and MBA programme will be a building block that will give the researcher the tools and skills to deal with deadlines, business pressures, disappointments and setbacks, which go hand in hand with running a business.

Communicating with entrepreneurs through primary research assisted the researcher in understanding the trials and tribulations associated with entrepreneurship. From the limitations of the research, the researcher ascertained the practical difficulties of
communication and deadlines in the business environment. From a positive perspective, seeing first hand how entrepreneurs were motivated to start-up their businesses and their personal experiences with those endeavours, gave the researcher a great insight into entrepreneurial activities such as the day to day problems and rewards associated with being self-employed.

The learning from this whole experience has given the researcher great confidence to start-up a business or pursue a career in any environment. From working with students, lecturers, primary research participants from different cultures and professions has been a great learning curve that the researcher will incorporate and apply into his future career ambitions.
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## Appendix 1

### Learning Style of the Researcher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Often Applies</th>
<th>Sometimes Applies</th>
<th>Never or almost Never Applies</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. I remember information better if I write it down or drew a picture of</td>
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<tr>
<td>it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. I remember information better when I hear them instead of just reading</td>
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<tr>
<td>or see them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. When I receive something that has to be assembled, I just start doing</td>
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<tr>
<td>it. I don't read the directions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. If I am taking a test, I can visualize the page of text or lecture</td>
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<tr>
<td>notes where the answer located.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. I would rather the professor explain a graph, chart, or diagram to</td>
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<tr>
<td>me instead of just showing it to me.</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. When learning new things, I want to do rather than hear about it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. I would rather the instructor write the information on the board or</td>
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<td>overhead instead of just lecturing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. I would rather listen to a book on tape than read it.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. I enjoy making things, putting things together, and working with my</td>
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<tr>
<td>hands.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. I am able to conceptualize quickly and visualize information.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. I learn best by hearing words.</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. I have been called hyperactive by my parents, spouse, partner, or</td>
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<tr>
<td>professor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. I have no trouble reading maps, charts, or diagrams.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. I can usually pick up on small sounds like bells, crickets, or frogs,</td>
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<tr>
<td>or distant sounds like train whistles.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. I use my hands and I gesture a lot when I speak to others.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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**What is your personal learning style?**

Thank you for using the Learning Style inventory. We hope this information helps you! Please print this page for your own records. We hope that you share this information with the Tutor Center when you contact us so that we will better match your learning style.

Your dominant learning style is **tactile**.

**Tactile (also known as kinesthetic) learners** learn best by touching or doing. If this is your dominant learning style, you should use learning strategies that involve doing. Doing lots of practice problems will be important. Writing out your study sheets and doing your practice test repeatedly will be important strategies for you.

Note that the study system developed in this text is for all learners. Your learning style will help you decide what aspects and strategies in the study system to focus on, but being predominantly an auditory learner does not mean that you shouldn’t read the textbook, do lots of practice problems, or use the color-coding system in your notes. Auditory learners can benefit from seeing and doing and tactile can benefit from seeing and hearing. In the other words, do not use your dominant style as a reason for not doing things that are beneficial to the learning process.
Appendix 2

Details of qualitative interview participants

Interviewee A
Research Participant: Isolde Johnson
Company: The Cool Bean Company
Position: Co-Founder
Website: www.coolbeans.ie

About The Cool Bean Company: Provides healthy and convenient baked bean meals in a pot to supermarket chains Supervalu in Ireland and Waitrose in the UK.


Interviewee B
Research Participant: David Fitzgerald
Company: Scapegoat Design
Position: Owner
Website: www.scapegoatdesign.com

About Scapegoat Design: A graphic design company that specialises in branding, digital marketing, advertising and web design.

Research Participant sourced from: Business Participation List 2013 for Dublincity.ie
Interviewee C

Research Participant:  Eva Byrne  
Company:  Houseology  
Position:  Founder  
Website:  www.houseology.ie  

About Houseology: Provides consultancy to homeowners on improving the design, space and extensions to the property.

Research Participant sourced from: Business Participation List 2013 for Dublincity.ie

Interviewee D

Research Participant:  Brian Sinclair  
Company:  Liffey Maids  
Position:  Owner  
Website:  www.liffeymaids.ie  

About Liffey Maids: A family run cleaning service business specialising in upholstery cleaning in the domestic and commercial market.

Research Participant sourced from: Dublin Port
Interviewee E

**Research Participant:** Keith McDonnell  
**Company:** Irish Whiskey Museum  
**Position:** Managing Director  
**Website:** [www.irishwhiskeymuseum.ie](http://www.irishwhiskeymuseum.ie)

**About Irish Whiskey Museum:** The Irish Whiskey Museum is located at the entrance of Trinity College, which tells the story of Irish whiskey and provides customers a tasting experience of three types of Ireland’s finest whiskeys.

**Research Participant sourced from:** Business Participation List 2013 for Dublincity.ie

Interviewee F

**Research Participant:** Kieran McQuinn  
**Company:** Economic Social Research Institute (ESRI)  
**Position:** Associate research professor  
**Website:** [www.esri.ie](http://www.esri.ie)

**About ESRI:** Provides research and analysis across a number of areas related to economic policy.

**Research Participant sourced from:** [www.esri.ie](http://www.esri.ie)
Interviewee G

Research Participant:  Fergal McCann
Company: The Central Bank of Ireland
Position: Economist
Website: www.centralbank.ie

About the central bank of Ireland: Responsible for the supervision and regulation of Ireland’s financial sector.

Research Participant sourced: www.centralbank.ie

Interviewee H

Research Participant:  Maedhbh Cronin
Company: The Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (DJEI)
Position: Assistant principal
Website: www.djei.ie

About the DJEI: Responsible for promoting and developing growth in the employment sector.

Research Participant sourced from:  www.djei.ie
Appendix 3

Questions for interviews

Intention:
Q1. Prior to starting up your Business, what where you preconceptions of entrepreneurship and did you establish if these beliefs were compatible to starting up an enterprise?
Q2. Did you progress through a transitional phase of pre start-up to actual start-up?
Q3. Was there a change in attitude from awareness of starting up a business to personal interest in to intending to start up a business?
Q4. Does an individual’s perception of the environment influence their intention towards pursuing entrepreneurship?
Q5. Are potential entrepreneurs who are focused in their intention to start a business, inclined to have explored and examined all barriers associated with starting a new venture?
Q6. Can the personal experiences of an individual with regards to education, associations, relationships and observations prior to engagement in starting up an enterprise influence the likelihood of that individual starting up a Business?

Exposure to mentors:
Q7. Is having exposure to mentors is a motivating factor to starting up a business?
Q8. Did having exposure to mentors entice you into starting up a business?
Q9. Do you think mentoring is crucial to entrepreneurs to starting up a business?
Q10. In your opinion, what do you think the role of the mentor is?
Q11. The Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation stated that the Irish Government is promoting entrepreneurial role models and mentors for the objective of promoting and assisting entrepreneurship. Do you think this is a good idea?
**Push and Pull Factors:**

Q12. Was it a push or pull factor that propelled you into starting-up a Business?

Q13. Can it be a combination of both push and pull factors?

Q14. In your opinion, are potential entrepreneurs more likely to succeed if they are motivated by pull factors rather than push factors?

Q15. Was it autonomy that motivated you to start-up a Business?

Q16. Did determining your own ambitions, routine and lifestyle influence your decision to start-up a business?

Q17. Was monetary reward a motivating factor for starting up a business?

**Need for Achievement:**

Q18. Was the need for achievement a motivational factor for you in starting up a business?

**Self-Efficacy:**

Q19. Do potential entrepreneurs need to possess self-efficacy in order to start-up a business?

Q20. Do you think that potential entrepreneurs who possess high self-efficacy have a propensity for risk taking?

Q21. Do entrepreneurs have to sometimes overlook the risk involved to start-up a business?

**Challenges/ Government and Education Policies:**

Q22. What were the main barriers you encountered at the start-up phase?

Q23. Is the current economic climate preferable for potential entrepreneurs to start-up a business?

Q24. Does Government policies on support and resources influence the decision of an individual to aspire towards entrepreneurship?
Q25. Do Government business support programmes and financial institutions look for specific criteria from potential entrepreneurs before offering support?

Q26. Are Government support programmes and policies designed to assist existing entrepreneurs whose businesses have the potential for growth and to increase employment?

Q27. Do you believe the Government does enough to facilitate access to finance for entrepreneurs?

Q28. Do you think the Government initiatives and policies towards promoting and developing entrepreneurship in Ireland to be effective?

Q29. Are you aware of all the Government business support agencies available to entrepreneurs in Ireland?

Q30. Do you think the Irish Government should develop an inclusive and integrated entrepreneurial education programme throughout the educational system in Ireland to promote entrepreneurship?

Q31. If entrepreneurial practise is learned experientially rather than through education, Are Government business support programmes ineffective?

Perception of Government Policy:

Q32. Are you aware of all the Government business support agencies available to entrepreneurs in Ireland?

Q33. Does a favourable or unfavourable perception of the economy affect the motivating factors of entrepreneurs to start-up a business?

Q34. When risk as opportunity increases, does this increase you motivation to start-up a business?

Q35. When risk as threat increases, does this increase you motivation to start-up a business?

Q36. Can you identify any factors that are responsible for entrepreneurs perceiving government support as positive or negative?
Appendix 4

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

PROJECT TITLE

A Research into the Motivating factors of Irish Entrepreneurs to start-up a micro/small enterprise and their perception of the support provided by the Irish Government.

You are being asked to take part in a research study on the motivating factors that influence entrepreneurs to start-up a micro/small enterprise in Ireland and their perception of Government support. The purpose of this research is to identify the motivational factors that ultimately persuade Entrepreneurs to start-up micro/small enterprises and their perceptions of Government support in starting up a micro/small enterprise in Ireland. My name is Thomas Molloy and my dissertation supervisor is Eddie McConnon- eddie.mcconnon@dbs.ie

WHAT WILL HAPPEN
In this study, you will be asked various questions on the motivating factors that influenced your decision to start-up an enterprise and your perceptions and views on Government support provided to entrepreneurs.

TIME COMMITMENT
The study typically takes 1 hour

PARTICIPANTS’ RIGHTS
You may decide to stop being a part of the research study at any time without explanation required from you. You have the right to ask that any data you have supplied to that point be withdrawn / destroyed.

You have the right to omit or refuse to answer or respond to any question that is asked of you.

You have the right to have your questions about the procedures answered (unless answering these questions would interfere with the study’s outcome. A full de-briefing will be given after the study). If you have any questions as a result of reading this information sheet, you should ask the researcher before the study begins.

CONFIDENTIALITY/ANONYMITY
The data I collect does not contain any personal information about you without your consent. I will ensure that the confidentiality and integrity of participants who wish to remain anonymous will remain intact at all times. The data will be securely stored at all times and will be only accessible to my supervisor and me.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
You can contact Dublin Business School at (01) 4177500 or (01) 4170671 or email www.dbs.ie or eddie.mcconnon@dbs.ie
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

PROJECT TITLE: A Research into the Motivations of Irish Entrepreneurs to start-up a micro/small enterprise and their perception of the support provided by the Irish Government

PROJECT SUMMARY: The purpose of the research is to acquire new information and knowledge on the topic of study. The purpose of the research is to identify the motivating factors that ultimately persuade entrepreneurs to start-up micro/small enterprises and to investigate the perceptions of micro/small owners/managers to Government support in starting up a micro/small enterprise.

By signing below, you are agreeing that: (1) you have read and understood the Participant Information sheet, (2) questions about your participation in this study have been answered satisfactorily, (3) you are aware of the potential risks (if any), and (4) you are taking part in this research study voluntarily (without coercion).

[Signature]
Participant's signature

[Name]
Participant's Name (Printed)

[Name]
Student Name (Printed)

[Signature]
Student Name signature

[Date]
10 / 3 / 2014

Thomas Molloy

Page 129
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

PROJECT TITLE: A Research into the Motivations of Irish Entrepreneurs to start-up a micro/small business and their perception of the support provided by the Irish Government

PROJECT SUMMARY: The purpose of the research is to acquire new information and knowledge on the topic of study. The purpose of the research is to identify the motivations factors that ultimately persuade entrepreneurs to start-up micro/small enterprises and to investigate the perceptions of micro/small owners/managers to Government support in starting up a micro/small enterprise.

By signing below, you are agreeing that: (1) you have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet; (2) questions about your participation in this study have been answered satisfactorily, (3) you are aware of the potential risks (if any), and (4) you are taking part in this research study voluntarily (without coercion).

Participant's signature: 

David Fitzgerald

Participant's Name (Printed):

Student Name (Printed):

Date: 21/03/16

Student Name signature:
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

PROJECT TITLE:
A Research into the Motivating factors of Irish Entrepreneurs to start-up a micro/small enterprise and their perception of the support provided by the Irish Government.

PROJECT SUMMARY: The purpose of the research is to acquire new information and knowledge on the topic of study. The purpose of the research is to identify the motivational factors that persuade entrepreneurs to start-up micro/small enterprises and to investigate the perceptions of micro/small business owners/managers to Government support.

By signing below, you are agreeing that: (1) you have read and understood the Participant information sheet, (2) questions about your participation in this study have been answered satisfactorily, (3) you are aware of the potential risks (if any), and (4) you are taking part in this research study voluntarily. 

[Signature]
Participant's signature

[Full Name]
Participant's Name (Printed)

[Signature]
Student Name (Printed)

[Date]
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

PROJECT TITLE:

A Research into the Motivating factors of Irish Entrepreneurs to start-up a micro/small enterprise and their perception of the support provided by the Irish Government.

PROJECT SUMMARY: The purpose of the research is to acquire new information and knowledge on the topic of study. The purpose of the research is to identify the motivational factors that persuade entrepreneurs to start-up micro/small enterprises and to investigate the perceptions of micro/small business owners/managers to Government support.

By signing below, you are agreeing that: (1) you have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet, (2) questions about your participation in this study have been answered satisfactorily, (3) you are aware of the potential risks (if any), and (4) you are taking part in this research study voluntarily (without coercion).

[Signature]
Participant's signature

[Signature]
Participant's Name (Printed)

[Signature]
Student Name (Printed)

[Signature]
Student Name signature

[Date]

Thomas Molloy
PROJECT TITLE:
A Research into the Motivating Factors of Irish Entrepreneurs to Start-up a micro/small enterprise and their perception of the support provided by the Irish Government.

PROJECT SUMMARY: The purpose of the research is to acquire new information and knowledge on the topic of SMEs. The purpose of the research is to identify the motivation factors that persuade entrepreneurs to start micro/small enterprises and to investigate the perceptions of micro/small business owners towards Government support.

By signing below, you are agreeing that: (1) you have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet, (2) questions about your participation or data collected have been answered satisfactorily, (3) you are aware of the potential risks (any), and (4) you are taking part in this research study voluntarily/honestly (without coercion).

[Signatures]
Participant's Signature
[Participant's Name (Printed)]
[Student Name (Printed)]
[Student Name Signature]
[Date]
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

PROJECT TITLE: A Research into the Motivations of Irish Entrepreneurs to start-up a micro/small enterprise and their perception of the support provided by the Irish Government

PROJECT SUMMARY: The purpose of the research is to acquire new information and knowledge on the topic of study. The purpose of the research is to identify the motivational factors that ultimately persuade entrepreneurs to start-up micro/small enterprises and to investigate the perceptions of micro/small owners/managers to Government support in starting up a micro/small enterprise.

By signing below, you are agreeing that: (1) you have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet, (2) questions about your participation in this study have been answered satisfactorily, (3) you are aware of the potential risks (if any), and (4) you are taking part in this research study voluntarily (without coercion).

[Signature]
Participant’s signature

[Signature]
Participant’s Name (Printed)

[Signature]
Participant’s Name (Printed)

[Signature]
Student Name (Printed)

[Signature]
Student Name (Printed)

[Signature]
Student Name (Printed)

7/4/16
Date
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

PROJECT TITLE: A Research into the Motivations of Irish Entrepreneurs to start-up a micro/small enterprise and their perception of the support provided by the Irish Government

PROJECT SUMMARY: The purpose of the research is to acquire new information and knowledge on the topic of study. The purpose of the research is to identify the motivational factors that ultimately persuade entrepreneurs to start-up micro/small enterprises and to investigate the perceptions of micro/small owners/managers to Government support in starting up a micro/small enterprise.

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[Signature]
Participant's Signature

[Signature]
Participant's Name (Printed)

[Signature]
Student Name (Printed)

[Signature]
Student Name signature

[Date]

Thomas Molloy
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

PROJECT TITLE: A Research into the Motivations of Irish Entrepreneurs to start-up a micro/small enterprise and their perception of the support provided by the Irish Government

PROJECT SUMMARY: The purpose of the research is to acquire new information and knowledge on the topic of study. The purpose of the research is to identify the motivational factors that ultimately persuade entrepreneurs to start-up micro/small enterprises and to investigate the perceptions of micro/small owners/managers to Government support in starting up a micro/small enterprise.

By signing below, you are agreeing that: (1) you have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet; (2) questions about your participation in this study have been answered satisfactorily; (3) you are aware of the potential risks (if any), and (4) you are taking part in this research study voluntarily (without coercion).

[Signature]
Participant's signature

[Name]
Participant's Name (Printed)

[Name]
Student Name (Printed)

[Signature]
Student Name signature

[Date]
11/4/16
Appendix 5

Introduction

Hi,

My name is Thomas Molloy and I’m studying for an MBA in Dublin Business School.

I would be very grateful if you could take part in my research by completing this questionnaire into the Motivating factors of Irish Entrepreneurs to start-up a micro/small enterprise and their perception of the support provided by the Irish Government.

You will be asked a total of 14 questions. Completion of this survey is expected to take no more than 3 to 5 minutes. Participation in this survey is totally voluntary. You may withdraw at any time. Your answers are confidential and anonymous.

This study has been approved by DBS Ethics Board. If you have any queries, please contact me at thomasdmolloy@hotmail.com or my dissertation supervisor eddie.mcconnon@dbs.ie

Kind Regards,

Thomas Molloy

1. What is your gender?
   - Female
   - Male

2. What is your age?
   - 18 to 24
   - 25 to 34
   - 35 to 44
   - 45 to 54
   - 55 to 64
   - 65 to 74
   - 75 or older

3. What is the size of your company?
   [ ]
4. How strong an influence did you consider the economic environment to be on your intention to start-up a business?

5. Did any of the following factors have an influence on your intention to start-up your business?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Irrelevant</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Significant</th>
<th>Highly Significant</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Encouragement from a Friend</td>
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<tr>
<td>Observing successful entrepreneurs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Observing unsuccessful entrepreneurs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encouragement from a family member</td>
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6. How important was having exposure to a mentor in your decision to start-up a business?

7. Which of the following factors influenced your decision to start-up your business?

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<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Irrelevant</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Significant</th>
<th>Highly Significant</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Redundancy</td>
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<td>Unfulfilling Job</td>
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<td>Negative Working Environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low Career Prospects</td>
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</table>

8. Which of the following factors influenced your decision to start-up your business?

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<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Irrelevant</th>
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<th>Significant</th>
<th>Highly Significant</th>
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<tr>
<td>Being Self-Employment</td>
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<td>Spotting an opportunity in the market</td>
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<td>Contributing to the community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increased Monetary reward</td>
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9. How important was the need for achievement in your decision to start-up a business?
10. How important was having self-belief in your own ability when starting up your business?

11. In your own experience, entrepreneurs must have a propensity for risk taking in order to start-up a business?

12. How significant was the fear of failure in your decision to start-up a business?

13. How important are the following factors in the decision to start-up a business?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Irrelevant</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>Significant</th>
<th>Highly Significant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government Support</td>
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<td>Access to Finance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurial teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>throughout the educational system</td>
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</table>

14. In your own experience, how important is a favourable economic environment to the decision to start-up a business?
Appendix 6

Learning Styles Questionnaire

Name: Thomas Molloy

This questionnaire is designed to find out your preferred learning style(s). Over the years you have probably developed learning “habits” that help you benefit more from some experiences than from others. Since you are probably unaware of this, this questionnaire will help you pinpoint your learning preferences so that you are in a better position to select learning experiences that suit your style and having a greater understanding of those that suit the style of others.

This is an internationally proven tool designed by Peter Honey and Alan Mumford.

There is no time limit to this questionnaire. It will probably take you 10-15 minutes. The accuracy of the results depends on how honest you can be. There are no right or wrong answers.

If you agree more than you disagree with a statement put a tick by it.
If you disagree more than you agree put a cross by it.

Be sure to mark each item with either a tick or cross.

1. I have strong beliefs about what is right and wrong, good and bad.
2. I often act without considering the possible consequences
3. I tend to solve problems using a step-by-step approach
4. I believe that formal procedures and policies restrict people
5. I have a reputation for saying what I think, simply and directly
6. I often find that actions based on feelings are as sound as those based on careful thought and analysis
7. I like the sort of work where I have time for thorough preparation and implementation
8. I regularly question people about their basic assumptions
9. What matters most is whether something works in practice
10. I actively seek out new experiences
11. When I hear about a new idea or approach I immediately start working out how to apply it in practice
12. I am keen on self discipline such as watching my diet, taking regular exercise, sticking to a fixed routine, etc.
13. I take pride in doing a thorough job
14. I get on best with logical, analytical people and less well with spontaneous, “irrational”
15. I take care over the interpretation of data available to me and avoid jumping to conclusions
16. I like to reach a decision carefully after weighing up many alternatives
17. I’m attracted more to novel, unusual ideas than to practical ones
18. I don’t like disorganised things and prefer to fit things into a coherent pattern

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10. I accept and stick to laid down procedures and policies so long as I regard them as an efficient way of getting the job done
11. I like to relate my actions to a general principle
12. In discussions I like to get straight to the point
13. I tend to have distant, rather formal relationships with people at work
14. I thrive on the challenge of tackling something new and different
15. I enjoy fun-loving, spontaneous people
16. I pay meticulous attention to detail before coming to a conclusion
17. I find it difficult to produce ideas on impulse
18. I believe in coming to the point immediately
19. I am careful not to jump to conclusions too quickly
20. I prefer to have as many resources of information as possible - the more data to think over the better
21. Flippant people who don't take things seriously enough usually irritate me
22. I listen to other people's points of view before putting my own forward
23. I tend to be open about how I'm feeling
24. In discussions I enjoy watching the manoeuvrings of the other participants
25. I prefer to respond to events on a spontaneous, flexible basis rather than plan things out in advance
26. I tend to be attracted to techniques such as network analysis, flow charts, branching programs, contingency planning, etc.
27. It worries me if I have to rush out a piece of work to meet a tight deadline
28. I tend to judge people's ideas on their practical merits
29. Quiet, thoughtful people tend to make me feel uneasy
30. I often get irritated by people who want to rush things
31. It is more important to enjoy the present moment than to think about the past or future
32. I think that decisions based on a thorough analysis of all the information are sounder than those based on intuition
33. I tend to be a perfectionist
34. In discussions I usually produce lots of spontaneous ideas
35. In meetings I put forward practical realistic ideas
36. More often than not, rules are there to be broken
37. I prefer to stand back from a situation
38. I can often see inconsistencies and weaknesses in other people's arguments
39. On balance I talk more than I listen
40. I can often see better, more practical ways to get things done
41. I think written reports should be short and to the point
42. I believe that rational, logical thinking should win the day
62. I tend to discuss specific things with people rather than engaging in social discussion
63. I like people who approach things realistically rather than theoretically
64. In discussions I get impatient with irrelevancies and digressions
65. If I have a report to write I tend to produce lots of drafts before settling on the final version
66. I am keen to try things out to see if they work in practice
67. I am keen to reach answers via a logical approach
68. I enjoy being the one that takes a lot
69. In discussions I often find I am the realist, keeping people to the point and avoiding wild speculations
70. I like to ponder many alternatives before making up my mind
71. In discussions with people I often find I am the most dispassionate and objective
72. In discussions I'm more likely to adopt a "low profile" than to take the lead and do most of the talking
73. I like to be able to relate current actions to a longer term bigger picture
74. When things go wrong I am happy to shrug it off and "put it down to experience"
75. I tend to reject wild, spontaneous ideas as being impractical
76. It's best to think carefully before taking action
77. On balance I do the listening rather than the talking
78. I tend to be tough on people who find it difficult to adopt a logical approach
79. Most times I believe the end justifies the means
80. I don't mind hurting people's feelings so long as the job gets done
81. I find the formality of having specific objectives and plans stifling
82. I'm usually one of the people who puts life into a party
83. I do whatever is expedient to get the job done
84. I quickly get bored with methodical, detailed work
85. I am keen on exploring the basic assumptions, principles and theories underpinning things and events
86. I'm always interested in finding out what people think
87. I like meetings to be run on methodical lines, sticking to laid down agenda, etc.
88. I steer clear of subjective or ambiguous topics
89. I enjoy the drama and excitement of a crisis situation
90. People often find me insensitive to their feelings

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Scoring And Interpreting The Learning Styles Questionnaire

The Questionnaire is scored by awarding one point for each ticked item. There are no points for crossed items. Simply indicate on the lists below which items were ticked by circling the appropriate question number:

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**TOTALS**: 117 114 110 11

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## Learning Styles Questionnaire Profile Based on General Norms for 1302 People

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Very strong preference

Strong preference

Moderate

Low preference

Very low preference

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