

A Strategic Training Framework for Women Micro-retail Pop-up Owners to
Manage their Temporary Retail Pop-ups for the long-term

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In those cases, in which the work presented in this thesis was the product of collaborative efforts, I declare that my contribution was substantial and prominent, involving the development of original ideas as well as the definition and implementation of subsequent work.

Dedication

First of all, I dedicate this study to Almighty God in the name of the Saviour Jesus Christ who gives strength, wisdom and knowledge, and blesses me and others with kindness and love every day of my life.

To my loving mother Mrs P. Weligalla who inspired me and always encourages me to engage in education and to be strong despite the many obstacles in life. To my loving father, who passed away on 28th December 2018 during the latter years of my PhD. Thank you, father, for the help you gave me and continuing to watch over me from above, blessing me with the strength and courage to keep moving forward in life. To my aunty Miss Soma Weligalla, who always stands by my side. To Mr Bertil Karlsson and Mrs Ing-Britt Karlsson, my loving second parents in Sweden, who love me, bless me, and are always there for me.

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Nations that invest in women's employment, health, and education are just more likely to have better outcomes. Their children will be healthier and better educated.

So, this is not just the right thing to do for us to hold up these women, to support them, to encourage their involvement; this is a strategic imperative.

Hillary Clinton

Women in the World (2012)

"You cannot understand a system until you try to change it"
(Participatory Action Research, Lewin, 1946)



List of Selected Publications

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List of acronyms

5Ms	Money, Market, Management, Motherhood, Macro and Meso Environment
AFHE	Associate Fellow in Higher Education
AR	Action Research
C	Contributor
CREC	College Research Ethics Committee
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
ETTiHE	Essential Teaching Toolkit in Higher Education
EU	European Union
FSB	Federation for Small Business
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoSL	Government of Sri Lanka
GVA	Gross Value Added
IFS	International Finance Corporation
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MSc	Master of Science
MSMEs	Micro Small Medium Enterprises
NBWN	National Black Women's Network
NCGE	National Council of Graduate Enterprise
NTU	Nottingham Trent University
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PB	Participants in Birmingham
PESTEL	Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal
PM	Participants in Manchester
PN	Participants in Nottingham
RP	Resource Persons
RBS	Royal Bank of Scotland
RBV	Resource-Based View

RQ	Research Question
SCALE-UP	Student-Centred Active Learning Environment with Upside-down Pedagogies
SFWE	Strategic Framework for Women's Enterprise
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
TOWS	Threats, Opportunities, Weaknesses, Strengths
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UK	United Kingdom
VAT	Value-Added Tax

Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to explore the success factors and the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners, and to develop a strategic framework namely the Pop-up Pathway which will assist them to develop their temporary micro-retail pop-ups and survive in the UK retail market beyond five years. The study adopts a qualitative research design associated with interpretive philosophy. It achieves the aims and objectives by adopting a qualitative multiple method within a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach. The study develops through a self-reflective and interactive cyclic (spiral) nature by following deductive and inductive reasonings. By following a snowball sampling technique, participants were recruited and then sixty-nine semi-structured interviews were conducted with the women who had all operated temporary micro-retail pop-ups in three cities in the UK retail market namely Birmingham, Manchester and Nottingham. No previous research in women-owned micro-retail pop-ups has as yet been found. Apparently, this research is a first attempt to make explorations in this area and address the requirements of academia. The thematically analysed qualitative data were used to identify success factors and challenges of women micro-retail pop-up owners and gain more insight into their spoken words and real-life experiences.

Studies have developed strategic frameworks to support women entrepreneurs in general. However, there is a lack of a strategic framework specifically developed for women micro-retail pop-up owners. To address this lack, the study develops a strategic framework, namely the Pop-up Pathway, which includes action-based training. To test the Pop-up Pathway, three focus group discussions were conducted. Further short interviews were conducted to get impressions of experiences had with the action-based training of the Pop-up Pathway. The study has theoretical and practical implications as respects knowledge of women's entrepreneurship in a number of ways. The action learning activities of the Pathway assist women micro-retail pop-up owners to utilise identified strengths to overcome challenges. The women benefit from facilitation with peer-to-peer support and the collaboration and sense of community they derive from the Pathway which could be seen as a solution for the declining British High Street market. Strengthened business management knowledge and skills along with the achievement of work life balance come from the Pathway. Study findings assist stakeholders to gain a deeper understanding and more insight into the context of women micro-retail pop-up owners. The collaborative nature and sense of community developed throughout the study has implications for future research.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This research focuses on women-owned, temporary micro-retail pop-ups in the UK retail market. Chapter 1 consists of the contextualisation of the study to provide an overview and background to the current situation of women-owned temporary micro-retail pop-ups in the UK. The criteria that give rise to what is considered to be a pop-up are here examined and their economic importance highlighted. This chapter also presents the purpose of the study, the problem statement and the types of women-owned micro-retail pop-up businesses explored, along with the research questions. Chapter 2 provides a discussion on women and the differences between women entrepreneurs and women micro-retail pop-up owners, and strategic management. The remaining part of the thesis proceeds as follows: research methodology, findings, discussion, conclusions and recommendations. At this stage, the researcher switches between the use of the terms, “entrepreneur”, “small business owner” and the more general “women business owners” to reflect those used by the studies cited¹.

Temporary micro-retail pop-ups have emerged as a notable platform for a solution to the declining British High Street marketplace. This research aims to identify success factors and challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners. The objective of the study is to synthesise women micro-retail pop-up owners’ socio-economic factors: personality, knowledge, experience, and social capital within a systematic framework. The study develops a strategic framework called the “Pop-up Pathway” which offers a possible solution to the declining British High Street marketplace. The Pop-up Pathway assists and supports women micro-retail pop-up owners in the

¹ Women-owned enterprises are defined as “enterprises with either (a) ≥ 51.0 percent owned by a woman or women; or (b) ≥ 26.0 percent owned by a woman or women AND ≥ 1 woman as CEO/COO (President/Vice-President)” (IFS, 2014).

management of their temporary retail pop-ups and to successfully survive in the UK retail market beyond five years. Additionally, the study explicitly explores existing strategic frameworks; SWOT analysis which looks at strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats; and TOWS matrix which considers threats, opportunities, weaknesses and strengths (Lynch, 2018). These are often applied in larger organisations and adapted to fit the characteristics of women and their temporary micro-retail pop-ups in the UK context. The study aims to assist and support women micro-retail pop-up owners to identify a mix of different solutions for the challenges they encounter. The study employs the Systems Thinking Approach, (Gharajedaghi, 2011), in order to decouple the complexity and the exploits of the Participatory Action Research [PAR, (Mertler, 2017)]. The Pop-up Pathway has been devised to empower women micro-retail pop-up owners to take necessary actions to meet the challenges, weaknesses and threats they encounter by utilising their strengths, capabilities, resources and opportunities. The next section provides the foundation of the study.

1.1 Foundation of the study

This study was conducted in the UK retail market. Micro-retail pop-ups have emerged as a powerful platform for the development of women-owned micro-retail businesses. The temporary, micro-retail pop-up is a relatively new phenomenon and can be identified as one of the main retail formats (Warnaby & Shi, 2018) which have emerged as a way to revitalise the declining British High Street market. Online² and offline established retailers³ operate pop-ups to test and introduce their new products to the market. However, this study focuses mainly on offline temporary micro-retail pop-ups. Even though male and female micro-retail business owners start and conduct their businesses in pop-ups, in this study the researcher focuses only on those owned by women.

² “A process that allows the customers to search, select and purchase the products, services and information remotely over the internet” (Celik, 2016).

³ “retailing within the store” (Hameli, 2018).

Qualitative research tends to be more exploratory in nature and is adopted in this study to gain insight into the experiences of women micro-retail pop-up owners. The use of the qualitative method in women entrepreneurship has undergone a remarkable transformation in recent years (Yadav & Unni, 2016). This study has adopted a qualitative multiple method for its reliability and validity. The researcher has employed a multiple-method to explore the women-owned micro-retail pop-up phenomena by conducting sixty-nine semi-structured interviews, three focus groups and fifteen follow up short interviews. A qualitative multiple research method allows the capturing of a deeper understanding of the (a) challenges encountered by women in the study and (b) strategies used by successful women micro-retail pop-up owners to survive in the UK retail market beyond five years.

It is generally considered that “anything less than three years ends up being too tactical and people don’t focus on generating big ideas” (Figliuolo, 2020, p.7). On the other hand, analysis and prediction beyond the five-year period is hardly reliable. The rapidly changing retail market makes predictions beyond five years rather problematic (e.g., COVID-19 pandemic, Brexit). Defining what women micro-retail pop-up owners want to achieve three to five years from now can provide a very clear achievable target. More importantly, supporting them to develop their business management knowledge and skills can help them to successfully survive in the UK retail market beyond five years. Additionally, a qualitative, multiple method assists in gaining insightful empirical data of the women-owned pop-up phenomenon by appropriately answering ‘why’⁴ and ‘what’⁵ questions (Yin 2018). The study employs a PAR approach and adapts strategic management tools (Lynch 2018; David & David, 2015; Mintzberg 2008) to develop the Pop-up

⁴ Why women micro-retail pop-up owners operate their businesses in temporary retail pop-ups?

⁵ What are the success factors and the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners?

Pathway to assist women pop-up owners to successfully survive in the UK retail market. The following section provides the background to the study.

1.2 Background of the study

Management literature confirms that researchers have given a great deal of attention to the hidden barriers encountered by talented women employees and professionals when climbing the corporate ladder. There is detailed information available of the barriers that hinder their senior management advancement (Sauer, 2016). “The under-representation of women at the executive level in large corporations is thought to be one of the main obstacles to female economic empowerment” (Sauer, 2016, p.1). Scholars have identified these challenges as the ‘glass ceiling’ phenomenon (Morrison *et al.*, 1992) which exists in the corporate world jobs (Women and Entrepreneurship, 2016). Previous researchers have highlighted that many frustrated and discouraged female employees often choose to leave “corporate world” jobs to avoid women related issues (Women in Leadership, 2015, p.5). In the absence of available alternatives to earn a household income, many women have found that entrepreneurship is the only other option for their career path (World Development Report, 2012; Women as Entrepreneurs in Sweden and the UK, 2001).

Frustrated women employees tend to leave corporate world jobs due to the challenges they encounter. To avoid the ‘glass ceiling’ phenomenon they shift to entrepreneurship by forming their own micro small businesses (Women Entrepreneurship, 2016). In a study conducted by the National Foundation for Women Business Owners, 16% of the female owners stated that one of the major motivations for them to start a business was to become an entrepreneur and to escape the ‘glass ceiling’. Previous studies in women’s entrepreneurship show that the common motivation for women to start a micro small business is that it provides them with greater control

over their career progression (Bosse & Taylor III, 2012). But the latter point has been thoroughly critiqued by other researchers (Orhan & Scott, 2001; Roomi *et al.*, 2008).

Scholars have identified, the desire to be independent, family commitments, individual characteristics, psychological motivations and intent to achieve goals as additional reasons for women to start a business (Koech & Namusonge, 2015). Orhan and Scott (2001) have introduced a model with pull and push factors to explain why women start micro, small businesses. Their explanations take into account, within the retail context, ‘pull’ factors such as, working independently and focusing on self-achievement, the like of which have been influential to women business owners. One of the ‘push’ factors they have discussed is: flexible working schedules which allow them to perform their mothering role and achieve a work-life balance and hence overcome the negative factors alluded to in the Literature Review Chapters.

To date, several scholars have investigated women-owned micro, small and medium businesses in the UK (Roomi *et al.*, 2008; The Alison Rose Review of Female Entrepreneurship, 2019). They have identified that activities associated with micro and small businesses are an important element of advanced economies and that self-employment in the UK is at the highest level in 40 years with much of the recently growing number of entrepreneurs being female (Wilson, 2016). In 2017, 19% of SME employers were majority-led by women with an estimated contribution of about £85 billion Gross Value Added (GVA)⁶ to the UK economy (Business Statistics, 2018). According to a UK Labour Force Survey (2016), during the last decade the number of women engaged in business activities has risen sharply⁷. As a result, small businesses now account for 48% of all private-sector employment as shown by a number of studies (Prowess, 2016). It is noteworthy that

⁶ Gross value added “(GVA) is a measure of the increase in the value of the economy due to the production of goods and services” (Office for National Statistics, 2010, p.3).

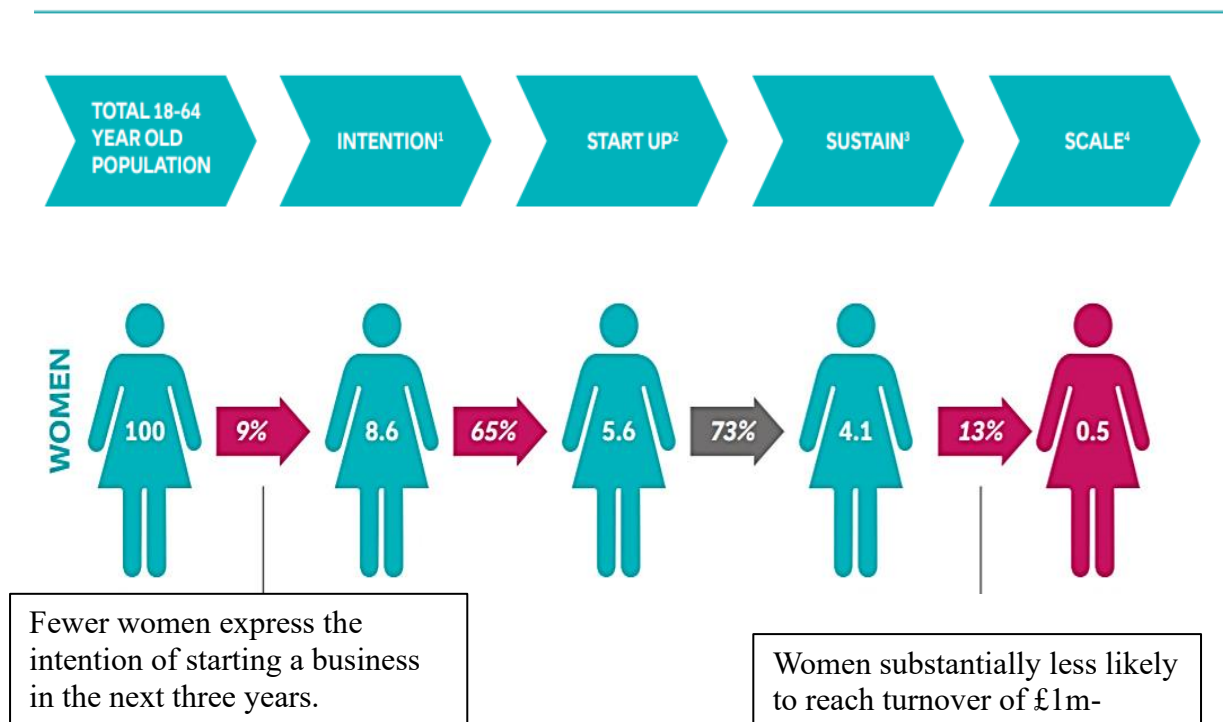
⁷ (e.g., during the period 2009-2014, the proportion of men in self-employment increased by 6%. Over the same period, the proportion of self-employed women jumped by a remarkable 22%).

nearly half (49.5%) of the micro and small retail businesses established in the UK are owned primarily by women (FSB, 2014).

However, previous researchers have identified an unfortunate high failure rate for women leaving corporate world jobs to avoid women related issues such as the ‘glass ceiling’ phenomenon, and then starting and operating micro small businesses (Patterson & Mavin, 2009). The apparent inequalities encountered by women in the small business world are not much different to those found in corporate world jobs. In addition to the corporate world ‘glass ceiling’, researchers have observed a ‘second glass ceiling’ which exists in the business world (Bosse & Taylor III, 2012, p.55). Researchers have identified that women entrepreneurs encounter challenges in relation to ‘systematic disadvantage situations’ (Bosse & Taylor III, 2012), strategic thinking, business management and knowledge, and the fact that women entrepreneurs encounter discrimination by institutions which constrain their performance and hinder full entrepreneurial success potential (Bosse and Taylor III, 2012). Compared to their male counterparts, businesses in the UK which are owned by women have a higher level of business start-ups and closures due to the special challenges they encounter (Marlow *et al.*, 2013). In recent studies the complexities of the differences between men and women in business performance have become more apparent in comparison with earlier studies (Koech & Namusonge, 2015). The global study, ‘The Alison Rose Review of Female Entrepreneurship’ (2019) looked in depth at the four stages of an entrepreneurial journey: (i) intention to start a business, (ii) start-up, (iii) sustain and (iv) scale. Page 31 of the review showed that women business owners are less likely to survive in the marketplace⁸ (Figure 1.1).

⁸ 1 Intention of setting up a business in the next 3 years. 2 Running a business that is less than 3.5 years old. 3 Running a business that is older than 3.5 years. 4 Running a business with a turnover of £1m-£50m – regardless of age (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2016; YouGov Banking Survey, 2017).

Figure 1.1: Women business owners' entrepreneurial journey.



Source: The Alison Rose Review of Female Entrepreneurship (2019)

As shown in Figure 1.1, the study finds that at almost every stage UK women business owners are less likely to survive in the marketplace due to the additional challenges they face. Extensive research into women-owned businesses has shown that women business owners encounter: significant financial constraints (e.g., accessing finance, obtaining a bank loan, complications of value-added tax, contributing to National Insurance and also paying government tax (Vistaprint, 2016). Women business owners also experience social pressures and requirements from cultural expectations (e.g., mothering role and family caring responsibilities) and legal regulations (FSB, 2018). For women, appropriate education is also an important issue. Relevant business management education⁹ is necessary to supply the knowledge and skills to enable practical experience (Roomi *et al.*, 2008). Women may also need help with accessing supportive networks,

⁹ (Maximising women's contribution to future economic growth, 2018).

as well as help with any legal restrictions and the volume of bookkeeping and accounting required in the business world. Much of the aforementioned is also true for those women trying to reach higher managerial positions in the corporate world. Obvious it is then at the moment that women leaving the corporate world may not be relieved of the issues which caused them to move in the first place. This study identifies the above as themes which are important from a qualitative perspective and an emphasis on exploring women pop-up owners' experiences and social relationships within the pop-up phenomenon. The current dearth of literature in the retail pop-up sphere offers opportunities for an urgent redress (Sauer, 2016).

1.3 The retail sector in the UK

According to WYG Planning (2016), the retail business is a link between producer and consumer. The UK retail sector "includes any business or individual involved with selling products directly to consumers" (Retail Sector in the UK, 2018, p.4). It operates in each community by providing goods and services ranging from addressing consumers' daily needs to high-end luxury products (A Strategy for Future Retail, 2013). The retail business sector has been identified as one of the most important sectors in national and local economies, (Omar & Fraser, 2010), and is one of the fastest-growing segments of the UK economy. It fosters the creation of businesses and increases sales and services with innovation (WYG Planning, 2016). Retail business owners play an important role in society by offering job opportunities in "every corner of the country, from rural areas to major cities"; for men and women "at different stages of their lives and who seek work for differing reasons" (Retail 2020, 2016, p.4). In 2018 there were 299,415 retail outlets in the UK with a total value of retail sales of £381 billion. In 2019 the UK retail sector was employing 2.9 million people of which 52% were female (Retail Economics, 2019; Murray, 2017). In emphasis of the importance of the retail sector, "the economy and the retail sector of the UK has enjoyed uninterrupted growth since 2013" (Centre for Retail Research, 2016, p.2). The demands of modern

life have brought changes to the traditional stores relaxed retail environment. Products and service distribution channels and communication systems have changed. Pop-ups involve a different retail style with their customer engagement, more excitement and innovation.

Pop-ups as part of the temporary retail format are now identified as an important phenomenon in the modern retail marketplace (Surchi, 2011). According to him the phenomenon of temporary retail stores “had developed into one of the most significant innovations in marketing since it first came to the attention of commentators in 2003” (p. 257). Among other retail formats the pop-up has emerged as a potential platform in the UK retail marketplace for a solution to declining British High Street retailing. Generally, temporary retail stores are situated in high-traffic urban shopping areas and operating costs depend on the stores’ availability and the time of year. Surchi (2011) conducted a case study on temporary retail stores and stated that the English description ‘temporary store’ is a redefinition of “the phenomenon of Asso-temporary which was established earlier in Italy in 2008” (p.257). Asso-temporary stores are usually called pop-up in the UK and other English-speaking countries. Because of apparent advantages many women start and operate their businesses as temporary micro-retail pop-ups, so much so that they now form a large part of women-owned micro small medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the UK (Carter, 2006).

1.3.1 Criteria for defining a pop-up store

Townsend-Wheeler (2016) identifies a pop-up as a relatively new phenomenon. Picot-Coupey (2012) says that pop-up retail outlets are also known as pop-up stores but Marciniak and Budnarowska (2009) call them guerrilla stores and retail installations. 2004 was the year that pop-up stores attracted many brands, and the public began to view this new retail format with interest. In that same year, Japanese fashion labels ‘Comme des Garçons’ and ‘Avant-garde’ opened guerrilla stores in several cities around the world, including Barcelona, Berlin, Helsinki,

Singapore, Stockholm and Warsaw (Pop-up Stores, 2016). There is no universal definition of a pop-up but there appears to be some agreement that pop-up refers to a temporary store. New examples of such are arising almost daily. Because of the variety of pop-up definitions among researchers, it is important to clarify how the term applies in retail. The English expression ‘pop-up’ means to appear or emerge. Pop-ups are therefore defined as a “point of sale that appears, then disappears, in a matter of hours, days or months” (Pop-up Stores, 2016, p.8).

Pop-up retail can be defined from two different perspectives:

In terms of its characteristics a pop-up is a small temporary and short-term retail space which is situated in a high traffic shopping location and generates buzz and urgency within the market (Pico-Copey, 2014; Surchi, 2011). Pop-up retail can be identified “as a new experiential marketing format” (Kim *et al.*, 2010, p.10), “based on surprise and exclusivity and intended to engage consumers” (Picot-Coupey, 2012 p.9). It is “an individual physical manifestation” (Niehm, 2007 p.2), and a promotional retail setting which is “designed to offer an exclusive and highly experiential interaction” for consumers (Pop-up Stores, 2016 p.2). Pop-ups are used in various businesses and have emerged as a potential way to revitalise the declining British High Street and as a less-risky alternative to opening a permanent store.

From a functional perspective a pop-up can be identified as a creative business format and a new strategy of “marketing communication” within its target audience (Marciniak & Budnarowska, 2009, p.4). The pop-up is different from the traditional retail store and has gone beyond the traditional print and broadcasting marketing communication. Even though pop-ups do not operate with high-cost advertising campaigns, they often display the latest fashions and designs to customers. Di Sabato (2009) stated that “the temporary store represents a sort of synthesis of

communication and selling, perfecting the logic of entertainment, knowledge and experience” (Surchi 2011, p.260).

New examples of such transient ‘pop-ups’ are arising almost daily in the UK retail market. This study focuses only on women-owned micro-retail pop-ups which have been operating for up to 5 years in the UK retail market. There is little evidence to show that studies have already attempted to define women-owned micro-retail pop-ups. The variety of pop-ups means specific definitions are problematic, nevertheless, a definition of them is necessary for clarification.

1.3.2 Definition of a micro-retail pop-up

One of the contributions of this study is the development of a working definition of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups as follows: a women-owned micro-retail pop-up can be defined as a temporary micro-retail business, owned and operated by a woman in different shopping locations, including high traffic shopping areas. During different timeframes these provide for consumer daily needs and supply high-end luxury products and services with a higher level of consumer engagement, public interest and popularity (Gallellalage *et al.*, 2018).

1.3.3 Problem statement

In recent years more women have tended to start their businesses in temporary micro-retail pop-ups in the UK retail market, (Picot-Coupey, 2014), in order to embrace a new form of experiential marketing format in the hopes of overcoming the aforementioned issues. As a consequence, ownership of pop-up retail is mostly female dominated and reflects a wider trend in that 62% of the workforce in retailing are women (Office for National Statistics, 2019; British Retail Consortium, 2011). Taken together, studies presented thus far provide evidence to support the

view that women-owned micro-retail businesses, including pop-ups, play a vital role as a key player in the UK economy (RBS Group, 2013; Omar & Fraser, 2010).

However, recent statistics show that in spite of the increase in the number of women-owned businesses including micro-retail pop-ups, the rate of failure or closures among these businesses is purportedly higher than businesses owned by men, possibly due to the special challenges that women encounter (Prowess 2016; Friedrichs & Wincent 2012; Marlow & McAdam 2013; Wang 2013). This excessive closure rate is obviously a limiting factor for women business owners' long-term potential and success. Following the aforementioned, it is hardly surprising that women-owned businesses in the UK report a higher churn rate (Prowess, 2019). Yes, there are proportionately more start-ups and closures of women-owned businesses (RBS Group, 2013). It is also not surprising that revenues of women-owned micro-businesses tend to lag behind those of others (Women's Budget Group 2016). Research by the Women's Business Council has shown that the UK economy could be missing out on more than 1.2 million new enterprises due to the untapped business potential of women as they encounter many more challenges in surviving in the UK retail market.

To address this issue there have been different types of supportive programmes introduced by the UK government and other supportive organisations for the assistance of women entrepreneurs to develop their businesses in general (e.g., Strategic Framework for Women Entrepreneurs 2008; Women in Enterprise: The Untapped Potential 2016). However, these programmes have not treated in much detail or specifically addressed the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners. Very little is known about the impact of these initiatives on women businesses' survival and how the effectiveness of them is perceived. Most of the studies in the field of women entrepreneurship have not focused on retail pop-ups in the UK. Previous researchers have

highlighted the need for and the importance of conducting studies to explore the challenges encountered by women business owners (Brush *et al.* 2004; Minniti *et al.* 2005). The RBS Group has estimated that supporting existing women business owners and attracting more women into business could deliver approximately £60 billion extra to the UK economy (Prowess 2016).

In recent years researchers have focused on the development of women-owned business as a field, with a shift towards critical and reflective studies of how knowledge of women as entrepreneurs has been constructed (Brush *et al.*, 2009; Carter *et al.*, 2001; Marlow *et al.*, 2009). As an additional thought, researchers in women entrepreneurship have paid particular attention to stereotyping and to the process of “othering” (Humbert & Brindley, 2015, p.3; Ahl, 2006). Much of the research undertaken into women-owned business is, according to Humbert & Brindley (2015) “severely biased and androcentric, as well as largely theoretical”. This view is supported by Marlow *et al.* (2009) and Elan (2008). Research to date has not yet determined what factors influence women-owned micro-retail pop-up business success and the specific challenges they encounter, particularly in the UK retail context. Yes indeed, there is a lack of research exploring women micro-retail pop-up owners’ self-employment experiences (FSB 2016). There is an urgent need for research to identify the limitations on success for women micro-retail pop-up owners in the UK (Gonzalez, 2017). Through this study the researcher attempts to identify the reasons for women tending to open their businesses as micro-retail pop-ups. The researcher wants to identify their success factors and challenges in a currently difficult and insecure temporary retail business environment.

The study recognises that women micro-retail pop-up owners have contrasting characteristics to those of women entrepreneurs in general. This research explores, for the first time, women-owned micro-retail pop-ups within the UK context. The originality of this study is that it explores success

factors and challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners in comparison with women entrepreneurs in general.

Here the researcher considers that it is essential to recognise and reflect not only on women-specific challenges but also on women-specific characteristics which can give rise to success. The study attempts to identify women micro-retail pop-up owners' challenges as well as their success factors and hopes to have them synthesised into a systematic framework in support of the management of their micro-retail pop-up businesses for survival in the UK retail marketplace. Suggestions made by Gundry *et al.* (2002) and Brush *et al.* (2009) motivated the researcher to include business, family relationships, culture, values and goal orientation in support of women pop-up owners and to help them identify the available opportunities to survive in the UK retail market.

1.4 Research aims and objectives

This cross-sectional study was conducted from October 2015 to June 2020 for academic purposes and to assist women pop up owners to be successful in the UK retail market. The initial purpose behind this study was to unravel the complexities of the pop-up phenomenon and hence identify the challenges encountered by women in the context of their socio-economic and cultural environment when managing a temporary micro-retail pop-up in the UK retail marketplace. In this way it was hoped that hindrances to their entrepreneurial protentional as well as any factors enabling success would be revealed (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The study seeks to develop a strategic framework, namely the Pop-up Pathway within the application of Participatory Action Research (PAR) to assist women micro-retail pop-up owners to employ success factors and overcome challenges as they develop their temporary pop-ups to

survive in the UK retail market beyond five years (Lynch, 2018). Reflective thinking and action-based training (McKernan, 1998) are integral parts of the Pop-up Pathway within a support environment. To develop the Pop-up Pathway the researcher has used the strategic management tools of SWOT analysis and TOWS matrix. These were originally designed for larger organisations but have been adopted here to match the criteria experienced by women-owned temporary micro-retail pop-ups within the UK. The Pop-up Pathway is designed to help women pop-up owners to identify strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities with respect to their businesses and to access any available support they may require (Lynch, 2018). Focus groups conducted with women micro-retail pop-up owners were used to validate the newly developed Pop-up Pathway.

The resulting knowledge provides new insight into the internal and external environmental factors that can affect the development of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups. The Pop-up Pathway is designed to help the women to apply their new knowledge and to use strategic thinking to furnish the necessary support for the effective management of their pop-up retail businesses (Kotaman, 2013, p.1; Fals-Borda, 2001). The inclusion of the Pathway should be seen as an attempt to ensure survival in the UK retail market beyond five years. If such were to be the case, then women micro-retail pop-up owners would have success and be able to contribute to the local and national socio-economy by generating income and employee opportunities for themselves and others. Not only that, but this research might also contribute to uplifting many thousands of women and enable them and their families to build a financially secure, bright and prosperous future for their children in the UK and beyond. The research focuses on qualitative themes within the areas of finance, culture, mothering role, regulations, education level, experience, business management skills and support networks. With this statement in mind below presents the objectives of the study and the research questions to be addressed.

Aim of the study:

The aim of this study is to identify the success factors and the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners and to design a strategic framework which will assist them to develop their temporary micro-retail pop-ups to survive in the UK retail market beyond five years.

Objectives of the study:

1. To identify a women-owned micro-retail 'pop-up' through a phenomenological perspective and to identify the reasons for women entrepreneurs to open their businesses in temporary retail pop-ups.
2. To identify success factors of women micro-retail pop-up owners.
3. To identify the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners in surviving in the UK market.
4. To develop a framework incorporating strategic planning tools involving SWOT analysis and TOWS matrix to enable women to match the characteristics of a pop-up for survival in the UK retail market.
5. To apply the strategic framework by means of collaborative action-learning activities.

Research questions:

1. What are the characteristics of a retail pop-up store?
2. Why do women open their businesses in temporary retail pop-ups?
3. What are the success factors of women micro-retail pop-up owners?
4. What are the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners?
5. How SWOT analysis and TOWS matrix can be adapted and utilised to support women to successfully implement their micro-retail pop-ups.

1.5 Research context

As previously stated, this study is conducted within the context of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups which have operated for up to five years in different locations in the UK retail market. The micro-retail pop-ups of this study can be defined as “enterprises that employ fewer than 10 persons and whose annual turnover or annual balance sheet total does not exceed EUR 2 million” (European Commission, 2015, p.11). These pop-ups encompass a broad range of temporary retail businesses, complementing previous studies (Gonzalez, 2017). They include general food, beverage, designer fashion and clothes in general, market stalls selling local produce, street food vendors, art and design (Britain’s Pop-up Retail Economy, 2014), all of which might be conducted and located in event stunts, (Warnaby, 2015), anniversary celebrations, shopping centres, city centres, transition hubs, abandoned areas (Thompson,2012), vacant spaces (Business Support, 2013), and cultural and sports events, (Pop-up Stores, 2016), within the UK retail marketplace. The typology of the women-owned micro-retail pop-ups in this study is summarised below in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2: Typology of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups

Category	Pop-up event	Location	Example
A	One-site campaigns.	Street marketing, stunt events, anniversary celebrations.	Spinningfields Square, Manchester.
B	Temporary retail markets.	Shopping centres, city centres, railway stations, transition hubs.	Victoria Shopping Centre, Nottingham.
C	One-off events.	Abandoned areas, vacant spaces.	Market stalls, Nottingham. Sneinton Pop-up stores.
D	Limited-time brand expositions.	High street, cultural venues, sports events, fairs and festivals.	Christmas Market, Victoria Square Birmingham.

1.6 Nature and methodology of the Study

The adoption of a qualitative multiple method was seen to be a most appropriate way to realise the research aim and objectives by means of PAR. Its validation relies on a cyclic procedure to enable the collection of qualitative data with a view to answering the research questions.

Cycle 1: Literature review: a thematic literature review to identify success factors and challenges encountered by women entrepreneurs in general, followed by an attempt to clarify any differences in experiences of women pop-up owners in particular. Such clarification was considered necessary despite the scant relevant data available to date.

Cycle 2: Primary data collection: The target population of this study consists of women who have owned and operated a micro-retail pop-up for up to 5 years in the UK retail market. In selecting the sample for this study, the snowball sampling technique was adopted. This method allows the addition of more participants until data saturation is achieved. Qualitative data were gathered by conducting semi-structured, open-ended, face-to-face interviews with sixty-nine (69) women micro-retail pop-up owners in three UK cities, namely, Nottingham, Birmingham and Manchester, to represent wider pop-up schemes in general. The three cities were selected for having recorded lower survival rates for micro small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) during a three consecutive year period as regards enterprises initiated in 2008 (Business Support: Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, 2013).

The first city, Manchester, was involved because it recorded the lowest survival rate of 49.9% during the three years considered.

Nottingham, the second city involved, recorded the second-lowest survival rate of 53.6% during the three-year time under consideration.

The third city Birmingham, recorded the third-lowest survival rate of 54.4% during the considered three-year period. The above Table 1.2 shows the typology of the women micro-retail pop-up owners of this study.

The qualitative data have been gathered and analysed thematically, both manually and using NVivo software. The interview findings help to identify women micro-retail pop-up owners' strengths, capabilities, resources and the opportunities available to them, their weaknesses and the challenges they encounter which can have a limiting effect on their full entrepreneurial potential.

Cycle 3: Development and validation of the Pop-up Pathway: The qualitative data findings have been synthesised into a systematic framework to develop the Pop-up Pathway. In developing the Pop-up Pathway, the existing strategic management tools of SWOT analysis and TOWS matrix have been adapted. These were originally intended for larger organisations but they have been adapted here to be more useful in revealing the characteristics of the temporary nature and micro-size of the pop-up businesses. Three focus groups, each consisting of five women micro-retail pop-up owners, were used for semi-structured interviews in order to introduce, test and validate the Pop-up Pathway.

Cycle 4: Reflection on the Pop-up Pathway: The women pop-up owners in the focus groups were able to reveal their experiences and reflections on the Pop-up Pathway, giving more insight into the effectiveness of the Pathway. All the collected qualitative data were transcribed and analysed thematically both manually and using NVivo software.

1.7 Significance of the study - contribution to the women-owned micro-retail pop-up practice

The findings of this study contribute to the academic, practical knowledge and policy requirement for developing strategies to support women micro-retail pop-up owners. The results of this study

should encourage women micro-retail pop-up owners to develop their business management knowledge and skills within a collaborative environment and master any new business strategies required to successfully operate and strengthen their micro-retail pop-ups for survival in the UK retail marketplace beyond five years.

1.8 Structure of the thesis

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter one offers a brief explanation of the background to women-owned micro-retail pop-ups and provides the rationale for the selection of the research area of the study. The first chapter contains an explanation of the research aim, objectives and research questions, and presents the structure of the thesis.

Chapter 2: Literature Review Part I

Chapter two presents a review of the literature in women entrepreneurship and identifies the differences between women entrepreneurs and women micro-retail pop-up owners. The literature review findings establish a strong foundation for the investigation of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups so as to understand their success factors as well as the challenges they encounter in surviving in the UK retail market beyond five years. Finally, the conceptual framework and research gap are demonstrated within the research context.

Chapter 3: Literature Review Part II

Chapter three presents a theoretical insight into the strategic management of micro and small businesses. It also shows how strategic management tools have needed adaption so

that they are more readily applicable to the temporary nature and micro-size of these women owned businesses.

Chapter 4: Research methodology

Chapter four presents the research methodology of the study. Firstly, the qualitative research paradigm, which includes multi-method, involves interpretivism by following a naturalistic approach in an attempt to make sense of, or interpret, the women micro-retail pop-up phenomenon in terms of the meaning that participants bring to it. The qualitative research design is then presented as a guideline for undertaking the study. Study participants, sample size and research sampling, are also described with regard to the UK research areas of Birmingham, Nottingham and Manchester. The chapter also presents the methodology adopted in this study, the research instruments used to conduct the pilot study, the semi-structured interviews, the focus groups and the follow-up short interviews for data collection and the following data analysis procedures. Research ethics along with the validity and reliability of the research data are discussed. Finally, research philosophy issues are addressed through a consideration of the PAR with its solutions in cycles.

Chapter 5: Findings from semi-structured interviews

This chapter presents the findings from the initial 69 semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interviews reveal the success factors and the challenges encountered by women pop-up owners in a number of categories.

Chapter 6: Findings from the focus groups and follow up short interviews

Chapter six presents the findings from three focus group discussions and the follow-up short interviews. The findings from the focus groups validate the effectiveness of the

collaborative and supportive learning environment of the Pop-up Pathway framework. The findings of the follow up short interviews confirm that the action-based training within PAR has supported the women pop-up owners to develop their business management knowledge and skills in order to survive in the UK retail market beyond five years.

Chapter 7: Discussion

This chapter provides a discussion of the study findings. Having provided answers to the research questions, the findings can also be considered against the background of the literature review of chapter two.

The Chapter demonstrates an overall conclusion of the study findings. The original contribution to new knowledge is highlighted after a review of the support given to women micro-retail pop-up owners to survive in the UK. Implications for further study are offered in the light of the limitations of this research. The chapter gives a summary of the level of achievement as regards the study aim and objectives. It includes acknowledgement of the limitations, and highlights the scope for future studies in the same research area.

1.9 Summary

This introductory chapter has provided the background of the study. Research problems are explained with regard to challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners in surviving in the UK retail market beyond five years. The study aims, objectives and research questions are presented as an initial direction for this research. The next chapter explains more about the success factors and the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners in comparison with women entrepreneurs in general.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW PART I

2.0 Introduction

Consideration of prior relevant literature is essential for all research projects. Therefore, the researcher has considered the literature review as an integral part of the Participatory Action Research (PAR) process of the study. The purpose of the literature review is to set the study within its wider context of women entrepreneurship with the focus on retail pop-ups. This chapter presents a critical literature review of previous research into women entrepreneurship within the context of pop-up in order to gain more insight into micro-retail pop-ups in the UK retail marketplace. The literature review then demonstrates how this study supplements the work that has already been done on women entrepreneurs with the focus on the context of micro-retail pop-ups in the UK.

Section 2.1. outlines how the researcher approaches the literature review in this qualitative study by adopting a thematic approach. Thematic reviews of literature are organised and discussed based on themes including theoretical concepts that are important to understand the research context of the study, namely in this case, that of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups in women entrepreneurship.

The findings of the thematic literature review are presented in the following manner:- section 2.2 provides a discussion on women entrepreneurship with the focus on the retail pop-up; section 2.3 presents the criteria for defining a pop-up store along with a definition of a pop-up retail outlet itself, the result of which is one of the contributions the study makes to current knowledge; section 2.4 defines the characteristics of a pop-up with the emphasis on the differences between women entrepreneurs in general and pop-up owners; section 2.5 provides a critical discussion of the

internal business environment factors of women micro-retail pop-up owners in comparison with women entrepreneurs in general; section 2.6 presents a discussion of the external business environment factors relevant to women-owned businesses. Examination of the external environment factors assists in detecting the available opportunities for women business owners as well as the potential threats which can hinder their business success. This lays a strong theoretical foundation for the study.

Subsequently, section 2.9 presents the adopted theoretical framework. The researcher concludes the literature review chapter by addressing overarching gaps in the current knowledge. The subsequent section then explores how the identified themes and sub-themes conceptualise in support of women micro-retail pop-up owners' businesses. This section also illustrates the provisional conceptual framework that guides the study with a view to realising the research aim and objectives by means of answering the research questions, and highlights possible steps to move forward.

A summary is provided at the end of the chapter. The following section provides a discussion of how the researcher has approached the literature review by the adoption of a thematic analysis.

2.1 Thematic literature review approach

Since it is often used in women entrepreneurship literature, (Poggies *et al.*, 2015; Yadav and Unni, 2016), this study adopts a thematic approach for the analysis of the selected papers and other resources as most relevant for the review of the literature. The strength of this approach lies in the fact that it assists the researcher in reviewing the literature relevant to the study context of retail pop-ups within women entrepreneurship. Thematic analysis is used to focus on examining themes within entrepreneurship with emphasis on retail pop-up by identifying, analysing and reporting themes and patterns within the study context.

The method allows for the identification of new ways to interpret prior research and offers ideas for conceptualising the current research (Fisher *et al.*, 2004). Following the literature review exposure of a gap that exists in current women entrepreneurship literature this study is necessarily placed within the context of women and retail pop-ups in the UK. In the thematic literature review the study adopts not only a business management perspective but also a socio-cultural perspective, thus responding to recent calls for a more interdisciplinary approach (Jennings and Brush, 2013). As suggested by Fisher *et al.* (2004), the literature review is structured thematically. Here, in conducting the literature review, an inclusion is made on the use of a thematic analysis and how it integrates the findings of the study.

2.1.1 Literature searching criteria and the gathering of relevant literature.

The following set of research criteria in reviewing the literature has been established based on a traditional thematic analysis approach. The researcher has searched widely in databases and different sources to identify literature within the study context. The study uses a complex combination of words and phrases and proceeds with persistence, flexibility and tenacity to bring a thoroughness to the search and detailed records. Searches of the various databases yielded 137 possible sources, of which 113 were peer-reviewed and published since 2010 (see Appendix I for a summary). The study adopts an inclusive search criterion to ensure the substantive relevance of the academic sources. Primary terms used in each search included “women” and “retail” and “pop-up” as the research topic is women-owned micro-retail pop-ups. The study required that articles selected in the previous phase also contain at least one of the following four additional search key words in their abstract: “challenges” or “success” or “internal” or “external” or “strategies”. These keywords were chosen as they were particularly suitable for identifying those materials which strictly look at the success factors and the challenges of women entrepreneurs and are suitable for gaining more insight into the context of the retail pop-up.

The above-mentioned search tools helped to make each search more precise with filters within an iterative process to identify the initial list of useful primary sources, also known as original sources¹⁰. At this stage, the researcher also utilised two useful tools, Boolean operator and filters¹¹. In each search the researcher used Boolean operator to connect particular single word search terms and phrases (series of terms). For example, terms such as “women” and “pop-up”, and phrases such as “women-owned pop-ups”. At this stage, both the inclusion and the exclusion criteria are defined. Regarding the exclusion criteria, the researcher decided not to focus on a “gender” perspective of women entrepreneurship, the main reason being that the real issue is not gender but a complete dearth of research in the micro-retail pop-up area of women entrepreneurship.

A summary of the steps in identifying relevant sources follows and is provided below in Table 2.1.

¹⁰ For example, primary peer reviewed academic and/or empirical journal articles¹⁰, theoretical journal articles¹⁰ and literature review journal articles¹⁰.

¹¹ (e.g., frequently used Boolean operators are and, or not).

Table 2.1 Identification of relevant sources of women entrepreneurship academic literature

Action taken	Reason	Example
Searched more widely in databases.	To identify the literature within the study context in order to provide information to support the research questions, method, and design of the study.	ProQuest, Emerald Management Journal, Google Advanced Scholar, government and non-government business support organisations' websites.
Consulted relevant online academic sources.	On account of inadequate research into women-owned micro-retail pop-ups in the UK.	News Reports and UK Government facts and figures.
Determined whether the identified internet sources are reliable sources of information.	Identification of relevant literature within the study context and to ensure the substantive relevance of the academic sources.	Identification of reliability of the academic journal 'Small store design and marketing effects: experiential developments in SME fashion pop-up store strategies.
Used more complex combinations of words and phrases and proceeded with persistence, flexibility and tenacity.	To adhere to a search thoroughness and to keep detailed records.	Searches of the various databases yielded 137 possible sources, of which 113 have been peer-reviewed and published since 2010 (see Appendix I for a summary).
Used primary terms in each search.	To ensure the substantive relevance of the academic sources.	The primary terms included were "women", "retail" and "pop-up" simply because the research topic is women-owned micro-retail pop-ups.
To check to see if articles selected in the previous phase contained at least one of four search key words in their abstract.	The chosen keywords were particularly suitable for identifying those materials which strictly looked at the success factors and the challenges of women entrepreneurs and were suitable to gain more insight into the context of the retail pop-up.	Examples of key words chosen: "challenges", "success", "internal", "external" and "strategies".
Utilisation of two search tools namely Boolean operator in addition to filters.	To connect particular search terms (single word) and phrases (series of terms).	For example, terms such as "women" and "pop-up", and phrases such as "women-owned pop-ups".
Consideration of the abstract of each article of literature as important in determining its relevant.	To ensure substantive context and to verify the article's relevance with this study.	Identified sources were selected after reading each abstract.
Read the full text of all the selected peer-reviewed journals after being chosen by following screening of the abstracts.	To select the final set of primary sources and ensure the materials' substantive relevance.	At this stage, the quality assessment criteria were reviewed along with the theoretical robustness and methodology robustness.
A successful review of existing peer reviewed literature.	To identify the most relevant texts and potential areas for study of women-owned pop-up as well as to increase understanding of the important concepts and theories within the context of this research.	Identification of 5Ms framework. SWOT analysis and TOWS matrix and the School Design Model.
Reviewed textbooks and other sources; brought together research from news updates and government reports.	To enable a comprehensive literature review of materials which provide information and facilitate an in-depth understanding of the existing relevant research into retail pop-up and to help understanding of what has been concluded and what still needs to be researched in the context of women-owned pop-ups. To address the relevant gaps and to provide more insights into the experience of women pop-up owners.	The researcher's personal library and interlibrary loans; textbooks, book chapters and other related publication and information sources.
To keep a track record of the reviewing of the indicated journal articles.	This procedure helped to make sure that all details of authors, titles, dates, volume number, page number, etc are correct.	Using Micro Soft Excel and categorising each piece of material as either very important or moderately important. The printing and storing of a physical copy, or an electronic copy by means of NVivo software, of all journal articles central to the study.

2.1.2 Literature analysis – Thematic analysis

The identified literature has been analysed thematically as proposed by Braun and Clark (2006) by following a six-phase guide to develop a detailed account of women-owned micro-retail pop-up¹².

- At phase one, the researcher skimmed and screened the identified sources and assessed each piece of literature to ascertain whether the content is relevant to the study of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups. In conducting the thematic literature review, the secondary data became much more familiar to the researcher.
- At phase two, the literature was closely examined through the generating of initial codes. This led to focusing on: (i) individual paper's key words, (ii) the paper's research questions, (iii) the identified codes for each paper. Following a coding frame, the researcher assigned preliminary codes in order to describe the content.
- At phase three, several readings of each text encouraged analysis and interpretation of the material and helped the researcher to search for patterns and to identify¹³ the common themes of topics, ideas and patterns of meaning, all of which came up repeatedly. This process encouraged analysis and interpretation of the material because it identified the themes in the context of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups in the UK retail marketplace.
- At phase four the identified themes were further reviewed. Then the researcher created and categorised the identified themes into five main themes, namely pop-up, internal business environment, external business environment, 5Ms Framework and strategic management. In order to complete a detailed analysis, sub themes were generated from the aforementioned five main themes. Additionally, specific links and differences manifested as apparent between women entrepreneurship and pop-ups, have been identified and commented on.

¹² The researcher has identified some semantic codes (which based on what the researchers say) that could be applied to these data. She has also identified some latent codes (based on what the researchers assume or imply) that could be applied to these data.

¹³ "semantic and latent themes" (Braun and Clark, 2006, p. 54).

- At phase five the identified themes were defined and named: women entrepreneurship, definitions of a pop-up, characteristics of a pop-up, internal business environment factors and external business environment factors, including success factors and challenges, and strategic management. The literature review findings are presented based only on the themes which are important to understand the context of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups in the UK.
- At phase six, a start was made to the writing of the literature review but it should be kept in mind that the literature review is considered as an ongoing process. The exploratory nature of the literature review allowed the researcher to understand more clearly the research context of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups.

The above procedure has facilitated the production of a coherent account of a body of literature and revealed that ‘women’s entrepreneurship literature does offer fundamental insight that challenges the dominant imagery within the mainstream research and theory’ (Jenning and Brush, 2013, p. 664). For the above reasons, women entrepreneurship and pop-up terminologies are used in this literature review chapter. However, when terms differ from the women-owned micro-retail pop-up terminology, this is highlighted.

This literature review differs from extant reviews in a fundamental way. Instead of adopting a general stand toward women’s entrepreneurship research, this study focuses specifically on women-owned micro-retail pop-ups with emphasis on identifying challenges and success factors vis-à-vis women entrepreneurship literature. More specifically, the researcher asks: has previous research in women entrepreneurship over the past three decades had an impact on women-owned micro-retail pop-ups theory, practice and research? Some may argue that the impact is likely to be quite limited, inadequate or completely lacking because such work has addressed not the women-owned temporary micro-retail pop-up phenomenon but merely women entrepreneurship in general. A critical discussion of the material from a qualitative methodological perspective in

comparison with women entrepreneurs in general could be the hallmark of a successful study and could help the understanding of the relationship between the literature review and the research questions. The thematically organised literature review assists the finding of answers to the research questions, enabling a contribution to be made to the advancement of women-owned retail pop-up research with the consequent effect on the UK economy.

A well-structured thematic analysis approach assists in identifying major themes associated with the pop-up phenomenon. It enables the identification and definition of the characteristics of a pop-up with emphasis on the differences between women entrepreneurs and pop-up owners. It also helps to identify the limitations of prior research in women entrepreneurship and exposes gaps in our understanding of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups. The thematic review of the literature is organised around women entrepreneurship within the context of the retail pop-up and its success factors as well as the challenges through time. That is not to say that time progression should be completely ignored in a thematic analysis (see appendix 3 for a summary of the identified themes and subthemes). The identified themes of the literature review are interrelated and form the basic structure to describe how literature in women entrepreneurship and retail pop-up give support to the study of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups. The following sections provide a detailed account of the identified themes and subthemes.

2.2 Women-owned businesses

As revealed in the thematic literature review, nearly 40 years have elapsed since the research of women entrepreneurs first appeared in entrepreneurship literature. Early examples of research into women entrepreneurship include DeCarlo and Lyons (1979); Sexton and Kent (1981). In recent years there has been an increasing amount of literature on women entrepreneurship.

Recent critical and reflective research focuses on how knowledge of women as business owners has been constructed (Humbert & Brindley, 2015; Marlow *et al.*, 2009). As this study is conducted within the context of micro-retail pop-ups in women entrepreneurship, it is necessary here to clarify exactly what is meant by entrepreneurship. There are multiple definitions of entrepreneurship and according to a definition provided by Chrisman *et al.* (2012), entrepreneurship is the creation of a new organisation, such as a small business. Ugoani and Ibeenwo (2015) define entrepreneurship as the process of creating value from assembling and applying resources to exploit opportunities. However, defining women entrepreneurship has always been and continues to be problematic for researchers and policy makers (Carter, 1993). As Marlow *et al.* (2008, p.338-339) highlight, these difficulties stem from two sources. Firstly, ‘in the UK, women’s involvement in business ownership is often marginalised to such an extent as to render their actions invisible’. Secondly, ‘as international comparisons of women’s enterprise activity are often based on different, nationally favoured, definitions and measures, the validity of cross-country comparisons of women’s involvement in business ownership is questionable’. According to Marlow *et al.*, 2008 (p.339) ‘in the UK, researchers have defined a women-owned business as one that is either wholly or majority owned by one or more women’.

The retail market theme is very important because the study is conducted within the UK retail market. Considering the last fifty years, the retail market has been changing slowly and silently, mostly due to the advancement of new technology and the growth of online retail business formats while increasing customers desire for novel experiences. With this in mind, women entrepreneurs ought to manage their businesses steadily and forcefully to improve their performance by achieving competitive advantage. They need to achieve viable financial targets whilst economic conditions, regulatory barriers, customer demography, customers’ choices and shopping patterns are all constantly shifting (Omalaja Eruola, 2011).

2.2.1 Women-owned micro-retail pop-ups

Women-owned micro businesses appear to be an increasing part of the UK economy (Vistaprint, 2016). Likewise, more women tend to sell their products in temporary retail pop-ups. However, the rationale behind the interest in this study relies on an awareness that research into women entrepreneurship has expanded exponentially, witnessing rapid growth over the past 30 years' (Yadav and Unni, 2016, p.1), coupled with the contrast that there has been very little research into women-owned micro-retail pop-ups in the UK. That is not to give the impression that a considerable amount of literature has not been published on the retail pop-up phenomenon with a consequent evaluation of its impact, (Surchi, 2011), but to give the impression that there are relatively inadequate studies in this area of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups.

Thus, as suggested by Poggesi *et al.* (2015), the time has come to explore new retail formats and future direction in order to gain deeper insight into women entrepreneurship within the context of a retail pop-up.

Hence, this literature review chapter seeks to enrich the understanding of micro-retail pop-ups within the context of women entrepreneurship. Here, originality makes a notable contribution to this research field as well as to women entrepreneurship in general, not only within the context of the UK but also within other relevant economies. The following section presents the existing definitions of a pop-up and defines the women-owned micro-retail pop-up, as considered throughout this study, as an original contribution to knowledge. It also clarifies the criteria for defining a pop-up store.

2.3 The Pop-up phenomenon and defining a pop-up store

This section assists in the identification and definition of a pop-up through a phenomenological perspective and meets the initial part of the first research objective. Townsend-Wheeler (2016) identifies a pop-up as a relatively new phenomenon. Picot-Coupey (2012) says that pop-up retail outlets are also known as pop-up stores but Marciniak and Budnarowska (2009) call them guerrilla stores and retail installations. 2004 was the year that pop-up stores attracted many brands and the public began to view this new retail format with interest. In that same year, Japanese fashion labels ‘Comme des Garcons’ and ‘Avant-garde’ opened so-called guerrilla stores in several cities around the world, including Barcelona, Berlin, Helsinki, Singapore, Stockholm and Warsaw. Hence, it appears that there is no universal definition of a pop-up but that there is some agreement that pop-up refers to a temporary store. New examples of such are arising almost daily. Because of the variety of pop-up definitions among researchers, it is important to clarify how the term applies in the retail context. The English expression ‘pop-up’ means to appear or emerge. Pop-ups are therefore defined as a ‘point of sale that appears then disappears, in a matter of hours, days or months’ (Pop-up Stores, 2016, p.8). In recent years a growing number of academic and practitioner-oriented definitions of the temporary retail pop-up have emerged (Warnaby and Shi, 2018). These definitions are summarised as below in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Definitions of a pop-up

Definition	Characteristics	Reference
“Pop-up is a new experiential marketing format intended to engage consumers. It is a promotional retail setting designed to offer an exclusive and highly experiential interaction for the consumer”.	Experiential & Promotional events.	Niehm <i>et al.</i> (2006, p. 2).
“Pop-up retail entails marketing environments that are highly experiential, focused on promoting a brand or a product line, available for a short time period and generally in small venues”.	Experiential, short term period, small retail space.	Kim <i>et al.</i> (2010, p. 134).
“Pop-ups are natural manifestations associated with chic shoppers who know where and when these retailers will appear and are able to take advantage before they disappear, creating an insider-only atmosphere”.	Temporary retail store.	Burgess (2012, p. 285).
“A temporary shop, stall or brand experience used to sell goods and services for a limited period of time. It includes everything from market stalls and street food vendors, to fashion shops, galleries, cafes and bars”.	Experiential, Temporary retail store.	CEBR (2014, p. 8).
Pop-up activities take place in a temporary retail space, they can appear in all shapes and sizes, typically inhabiting a space for anything from a day to 6 months.	Temporary retail space.	Appear Here (2015).
“Pop-up stores are points of sale that appear, then disappear, in a matter of hours, days or months pop-up stores are attractive to consumers who are seeking experience and entertainment”.	Temporary retail stores, Experience.	Klepierre with Qualiquanti (2016, p. 8).

As depicted above in Table 2.1, researchers define a pop-up in general in various ways. The variety of pop-ups means that a clear specific definition of them is problematic. However, a clear definition of them would be generally very helpful. There is little evidence to show that studies have already attempted to define clearly women-owned micro-retail pop-ups, (Gallellalage *et al.*, 2018), hence the need for a clear definition.

As an original contribution to knowledge, this study makes a clear definition of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups as follows:- ‘a women-owned micro-retail pop-up can be defined as a temporary micro-retail business, owned and operated by a woman in different shopping locations, including high traffic shopping areas’. The following section provides a discussion of the characteristics of a pop-up.

2.4 The characteristics of a pop-up

A particular prominent theme appears in the thematic literature review as characteristic of a pop-up. Even though pop-up stores are not a new phenomenon, (Taube and Warnaby, 2017), there is inadequate research to specifically identify the characteristics of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups. However, the characteristics of a pop-up as identified in the literature review findings are now discussed below.

2.4.1 The temporary nature of a pop-up

A variety of definitions of the term ‘pop-up’ have been suggested above and many of the definitions highlighted the temporary nature of a pop-up (Kim *et al.*, 2010). In terms of its characteristics a pop-up is a small temporary and short-term retail space. Established women entrepreneurs tend to sell their products in established retail stores but women micro-retail pop-up owners sell their products at pop-up events (e.g., seasonal events) over different time periods (Surchi, 2011). As highlighted by Kim *et al.* (2010), Pomodoro (2013), and Warnaby and Shi (2018) pop-up events can last from a few hours to a year with an average duration of one month. In keeping with this, women pop-up owners are able to sell their products from a few hours per day, to a few days per week and to a few months during the year.

It is evident that the temporary nature of their businesses assists women pop-up owners to sell their products as well as provide services to their customers in pop-up events occurring in different locations during different timeframes. As highlighted by Gallellalage *et al.* (2018), women retail pop-up owners provide/sell for daily needs (e.g., food and beverage) and also for high-end luxury products and services by achieving a higher level of customer engagement and public interest. This can be based on choice of location, target market and customer segmentation. By drawing attention to the concepts of ‘temporary nature’ and ‘location’, Surchi (2011) has been able to show that pop-up retail belongs to innovative and high-traffic shopping locations, for example, Summer and Christmas pop-up shops in Market Square, Nottingham. However, other researchers have identified that the ‘retail pop-up’ concept has received criticism, (Townsend, 2014), and women micro-retail pop-up owners may encounter challenges due to urban regeneration in the retail environment.

2.4.2 Experiential marketing format

A detailed examination of the retail pop-up by Kim *et al.* (2010, p. 10) shows that retail pop-ups are a ‘new experiential marketing format’. Pomodor (2013) and Picot-Coupey (2014) highlight that retail pop-ups are driving novelty by providing surprising, exciting retail experience. Neihim *et al.* (2007) state that retail pop-ups are gaining public interest by providing an experiential marketing format. Picot-Coupey (2012, p.9) point out that retail pop-ups are ‘based on surprise and exclusivity and intended to engage’ customers. Likewise, women-owned pop-ups can be identified as individual physical manifestations and promotional retail settings which are ‘designed to offer an exclusive and highly experiential interaction for customers’ (Pop-up Stores, 2016, p.2; Niehm, 2007; Gallellalage *et al.*, 2018).

As Picot-Coupey (2014), and Tube and Warnaby (2017) state, pop-ups are driving novelty by providing a surprising, exciting retail experience for their customers. Women who conduct their businesses in retail pop-ups have the opportunity to provide a higher level of consumer experience for their customers in comparison with established women entrepreneurs who conduct their businesses in permanent retail stores. As highlighted in The Portas Review (2011, p.12), an ‘increasing number of shops are falling by the wayside as they fail to meet the expectations of today’s increasingly sophisticated’, time-lacking, yet experienced consumer.

Women who sell their products in temporary retail pop-ups are able to create face-to-face connections with their customers (Nicasio, 2021). However, established women entrepreneurs who conduct their businesses in permanent retail stores will mostly miss out or have to limit valuable face time or interaction with customers. Established women entrepreneurs tend to use communication channels like email, live chat and social media. But nothing can replace the real-life interaction that women pop-up owners can build with their customers.

Women pop-up owners have the opportunity (i) to get valuable feedback directly from customers, (Vozza, 2018), and (ii) to build a relationship with customers (Alexander and Bain, 2016). Accordingly, the pop-up retail format assists women pop-up owners to drive demand rather than generate sales (Alexander and Bain, 2016). Dean (2014, p.2) notes: a women pop-up owner who designs and makes children’s clothes in Northumberland stated, “my pop-up shops offered me a wonderful insight into what my customers really want – both children and adults were buying my clothing through the pop-up”. This participant further elaborates: “..... as well as establishing my name and brand with new people, I find lots of new customers, who come back to me time and again”.

However, the question arises as to whether women entrepreneurs who conduct their businesses in permanent retail stores in the British High Street market would have the same credibility as a pop-up owner in offering higher level customer experience? The facts, based on this study, suggest probably not (Gallellalage *et al.*, 2018).

2.4.3 Generate Buzz

One of the characteristics of a pop-up identified in the literature was to ‘generate buzz’ (Surchi, 2011). According to Pico-Copey (2014) and Surchi (2011) both the temporary nature and a limited duration of a pop-up often create a sense of urgency as a means of generating buzz within the retail market. Moreover, Warnaby *et al.* (2015) highlight the fact that pop-ups in general are launching limited editions collections and promoting their brands, all of which generates buzz within the market. Likewise, women in particular who conduct their retail businesses in temporary retail pop-ups will generate buzz and encourage their customers to buy their products (Gallellalage *et al.*, 2018).

2.4.4 Other characteristics

Firstly, from a functional perspective a pop-up can be identified as a creative business format and a new strategy of “marketing communication” within its target audience (Marciniak & Budnarowska, 2009, p.4). The pop-up is different from the traditional retail store and has gone beyond the traditional print and broadcasting marketing communication. Even though pop-ups do not operate with high-cost advertising campaigns, they often display the latest fashions and designs to customers. Di Sabato (2009) states that “the temporary store represents a sort of synthesis of communication and selling, perfecting the logic of entertainment, knowledge and experience” (Surchi 2011, p.260).

As highlighted by Pomodoro (2013) a pop-up retail store atmosphere is a fleeting experience as well as being conceived as an exciting event. Therefore, women pop-up owners are able to foster an exciting and immediate form of communication. As highlighted by Picot-Coupey (2014), pop-up owners use a word-of-mouth marketing communication strategy and women pop-up owners in particular are building community relationships with their customers and other stakeholders, which established women entrepreneurs find difficult to achieve. Women pop-up owners can gain the attention of a retail audience and position their retail brand within their target market (Marciniak and Budnarowska, 2010). These characteristics are shown below in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: Main characteristics of a retail pop-up store



Synthesised from: Niehm et al. (2007), Picot-Coupey (2014), Surchi (2011), Marciniak and Budnarowska (2009).

The following section provides a discussion of the internal business environment factors of women business owners including women pop-up owners.

2.5 Internal business environment factors

The literature review findings indicate that internal factors have a positive significant influence on the success of women-owned business. The literature also highlights some of the challenges women entrepreneurs encounter in general which can also relate to women micro-retail pop-up owners in particular. The following section presents a critical discussion on the success factors of women business owners as a whole, including women pop-up owners in the internal business environment.

2.5.1 Internal factors leading to the success of women-owned businesses including women-owned pop-ups in particular

The thematic literature review findings indicate that in the present era women are mostly recognised as successful entrepreneurs through their strong desire, qualities, and capabilities for robust economic development in the UK and other countries (Khan *et al.*, 2021). The literature on women entrepreneurship highlights several success factors, such as goal setting, self-confidence and motivation, entrepreneurial orientation, achievement, risk-taking etc. Due to the important contribution of women entrepreneurs, including women pop-up owners, to economic development, factors which lead to the success of women business owners' are now highlighted here.

2.5.1.1 Goal setting

More recent attention to women-owned business has focused on the provision of goal setting. Accordingly, studies have explored the relationship between 'goal setting' and 'business success' in women-owned business which relates to women-owned micro-retail pop-ups (Ettl and Walter, 2012).

In a comprehensive study of women entrepreneurship in the UK, Roomi and Harrison (2008) found business structure and goal setting to be other factors influencing women-owned micro and small business success. Similarly, Bridge *et al.* (1998), found that goal setting assists women business owners to develop their business management skills to make rational decisions in the business operation process and management. In their study, Roomi and Harrison (2008) found two of the most important goals for women entrepreneurs when establishing their businesses. They should “generate enough income to support themselves and their families and achieve enough balance between work, family responsibilities and other interests” (Roomi & Harrison, 2012, p.6). As a contrast women retail pop-up owners can have particular goals in addition to those of established women entrepreneurs. A compelling argument for expecting retail format differences in growth intention is that women retail pop-up owners show different intrinsic goals when compared with established women business owners. This can be on account of the temporary nature of their retail businesses. Some women pop-up owners may use a retail pop-up to test the market with the intention of developing the business to a more permanent location whereas others may simply want to generate buzz (Cook, 2021).

Studies have identified that determining women pop-up owners’ intentions in advance helps them to have a more successful pop-up event (We Are Women Owned, 2021). Studies in retail have identified that the number one key for pop-up success is developing clear and specific event goals. Understanding the pop-up’s hyper-targeted goals assists women pop-up owners to promote creative designs, identify pop-up venues and determine what kind of retail space to look for. This will determine what type of pop-up shop to run and how to market and operate it, and monitor its success (Cook, 2021). What is particular important to women pop-up owners is to increase product/brand awareness, gain new customers and provide customer engagement and experience (Social Tables, 2021).

2.5.1.2 Training and Motivation

To date, several studies have found that women business owners' motivation, intention and aspirations are crucial to their business performance. Similarly, Roomi *et al.* (2009), found that business success differentiates according to a woman business owner's commitment to develop the business. This view is supported by Gibb and Davies (1990) who write that, considering the 'personality dominated approach', a woman business owner's motivation is regarded as key to business development. Women-owned business development literature, (Vistaprint, 2016), identifies the importance of training and embracing a positive mindset towards a long-term survival in the marketplace. The literature indicates that there are now more online resources available to support retail pop-up owners (Asare, 2020; Sheehan, 2018; Enterprise Nation, 2017). However, one can argue as to whether or not women micro-retail pop-up owners are able to utilize such online resources due to the micro size and the temporary nature of their businesses along with certain limitations. These limitations can be due to childcare and family commitments and inadequate or insufficient knowledge and practice of Information Technology (IT) and time availability.

Empowering a woman pop-up owner with business management knowledge and skills can be just the beginning of a long journey to survive in the market. Moreover, a business venture consists of a daily learning process where each day comes with new information and technology. Much of available literature on training for women business owners deals with how to best utilize training to develop their businesses. However, considering the temporary nature and micro size of the pop-up, women pop-up owners are more concerned with balancing their multi-tasking responsibilities and to do this they seek convenient, simple and practical information (Gallellalage *et al.*, 2018).

The literature review findings reveal that women business owners in general have a genuine desire to participate in women only training. For example, The National Council of Graduate Enterprise (NCGE) reports that 98% of women business owners chose to participate in a specifically created business training programme called, 'Women's Flying Start Programme'. The number of women accessing the programme increased by 800% when a women-only option was introduced (Powess, 2017).

2.5.1.3 Entrepreneurial orientation

Researchers identify women business owners' entrepreneurial orientation as one of the determining factors for successful women-owned business. According to Miller (1983), the concept of entrepreneurial orientation includes three dimensions - innovation, reactivity and risk-taking. Entrepreneurial innovation or the skill and imagination to create new things has been considered as one of the key success factors of business success and survival (Chea, 2008). Therefore, innovation can be identified as women business owners' ability and willingness to create new ideas which may bring them to identify new products or services and attract new customers.

Recent evidence suggests that women micro-retail business owners have been able to identify the needs of the market and identify potential marketable products and delivery systems by learning, employing and practising successful innovative procedures (Kamberidou, 2020). Vossen (1998) suggests that following innovative ideas, successful small women business owners have been able to gain advantages within the market by effectively providing better quality products with additional features at a lower price.

The UK retail market has recently seen a plethora of pop-up stores. Women who conduct their businesses in retail pop-ups are mostly focused on providing a memorable experiential retail experience. Innovation provided by a retail pop-up store can lead to the diversification of customer experience (Gallellalage *et al.*, 2018). Studies suggest that technology can be used to implement innovation. According to the Harvard Business Review, access to technology is a key factor in increasing the influence of women-owned business globally as it competes with others in the market (Sweet, 2016). Technology innovation brings benefits. For example, it can increase productivity and bring customers new and better goods and services that improve their overall standard of living. However, there is a question as to whether or not women pop-up owners have the same opportunity, knowledge, skills and resources to access such technology and innovation due to their limited income and the micro-size of the retail pop-ups (Gallellalage *et al.*, 2018).

On the other hand, technological innovation is blurring the line which distinguishes retailers online from traditional in-store offerings. This brings additional challenges and opportunities to both women micro-retail pop-up stores and traditional retail outlets as to how they will interact with their customers. Pop-up retail, which includes women-owned pop-ups, has become an expected part of the shopping experience and plays a key role in customer engagement (Shi *et al.*, 2021; Gallellalage *et al.*, 2018).

Based on previous studies, it is important for women business owners to react positively to changes in the market as well as to their competitors (The Alison Rose Review of Female Entrepreneurship, 2019). Nevertheless, there is a question as to what extent established women entrepreneurs are able to react positively to the current changes which are happening in the UK retail market due to social, economic and environment issues.

This is evident in the cyclical nature of the market economy, reflected in periods of expansion and contraction. This situation has already created spatial, temporal and institutional gaps (Shi *et al.*, 2021). Here women-owned temporary retail pop-up interventions contribute to filling this gap as an interim solution. The temporary nature of women-owned pop-up is reflected in its description as ‘interim’.

Additionally, women-owned retail pop-ups benefit from urban space. They can also benefit from the temporary interruption to urban life which allow the appropriating of space in novel and potentially innovative ways for a limited period of time (Ferreri, 2016; Shi *et al.*, 2021; Gallellalge *et al.*, 2018). Taken together, thematic literature review findings support the notion that women business owners’ positive reactions (including those of women pop-up owners) leads them to be successful.

Risk has been a central issue in entrepreneurship research. However, there are limited empirical studies on risk as regards women business owners, (Brush *et al.*, 2009), and particularly in women-owned pop-up business. In their study, Verheul *et al.* (2012) identified that women are more risk averse and have a lower tolerance for risk. Risk significantly decreases women business owners’ development in the venture process. However, in their study Gemenez-Jimenez *et al.* (2020, p. 14) confirmed that socially supportive cultures can help to reduce the negative relationship between risk-taking and venture success. They also confirmed that in ‘socially supportive cultures, the impact of culture’ on risk is different to that found in ‘performance-based cultures’. The temporary nature of the women-owned micro-retail pop-up means that in difficult times it can be easily closed down if needed. This temporary nature also helps towards the reduction of risk (Gallellalge *et al.*, 2018).

2.5.1.4 Finance

Previous studies on women-owned businesses highlight that finance plays an important role in developing those businesses. Similarly, Vozza (2018), highlights that as a low investment strategy, temporary retail pop-up shops provide a great opportunity for women business owners to get their products in front of new customers and to make sales. In contrast, Powers (2017) found that women are around ten percent more likely to see finance as a barrier to entrepreneurship. Supportively, Koech and Namusonge (2015) state that quite often female business owners have lower savings to invest and develop their businesses perhaps due to traditional cultural limitations. The Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) recognises a special case for women by offering grant funding for micro and small women business owners, including retail pop-ups in order to encourage their start-ups. More importantly, RBS provides a boost to existing businesses that are in a rut. However, based on the findings resulting from the literature review themes, the question emerges as to whether researchers have given sufficient attention to detail as regards women-owned micro-retail pop-ups.

2.5.1.5 Networking and women-owned business success

Previous research in women-owned business management alludes to the important role of networks in the survival and success of individual businesses (Olm *et al.*, 1988; Aldrich, 1989; Rosa & Hamilton, 1994; Sandberg, 2003). Turkina *et al.* (2018, p1) have identified the important role of the “so-called relational aspect of network embeddedness”. Business owners’ engagement in social networking¹⁴ has been identified as “long-term purposeful arrangements among distinct but related” businesses to gain competitive advantage (Sarakar, 2018, p.91).

¹⁴ Definitions of Networking: “network is a pattern of social relations over a set of persons, positions, groups, or organisations” (Sarakar, 2018, p.91).

Researchers highlight that women business owners may encounter challenges in accessing network events and then successfully engaging in them (Van & Hulst, 2004; Aldrich, 1989; Alvesson & Billing, 1997; Benschop, 2009). Such challenges can result from the differences in qualifying for access to finance and creating and building a strong relationship and collaboration with financial institutions (Carter *et al.*, 2001).

Humaira *et al.* (2020, p. 163) highlight that business owners' 'inability to expand business networks is a major obstacle to the development of women's businesses'. They suggest that the retail pop-up is a concept within the marketplace which can be used by small-scale women entrepreneurs to support each other, strengthen the women's community and strengthen the pop-up market brand. As a consequence, it emerges that limited academic attention has been paid to identify any unambiguous relationships between women-owned business success and networking (Bruine *et al.*, 2006).

Women business owners' internal networking includes their friends, relatives, mentors, customers and employees (Turkina, 2018; Klyver & Grant, 2010). Klyver and Grant (2010, p.215) highlight that "female entrepreneurs' networks typically include a larger proportion of women and a smaller proportion of men". This view is supported by Ruef *et al.* (2003) and Cromie and Birley (1992). In their study findings Humaira *et al.* (2020, p. 163) reveal that 'women entrepreneurs as tenants in the pop-up market face difficulties in developing social and business networks and rely on personal relationships that often relate to their family. However, it is important to identify to what extent participating in networking activities assists women pop-up owners and affects their internal business environment as well as affecting the response to their external environment (Srakar, 2018).

Studies have identified that through engaging in social networking activities, women business owners may be able to gain financial capital, reputation, information, knowledge, skills, social legitimacy and social support (Welter & Kautonen, 2005; Ripolles & Blesa, 2005). Previous research in relation to social networks of women entrepreneurs has focused mostly on a particular venture phase, such as new start-up (Menzies *et al.*, 2004) or existing business (Garcia & Carter, 2009). However, there has been less consideration of the dynamic nature of networks and its effect on the entrepreneurial process (Klyver & Grant, 2010). A network member (e.g., immediate and extended family, partners, suppliers, customers, and bankers) could provide advice, service, and moral support (Sharafizad & Coetzer, 2016). Having a social network helps create necessary social capital for entrepreneurial development and hence business growth (Granovetter, 1983; De Vita *et al.*, 2014; Kumar & Sharma, 2011). Several significant studies investigating women-owned business management highlight that networking assists women to build links between their businesses and their environment (Aldrich *et al.*, 1989; Roas & Hamilton, 1994; Aldrich *et al.*, 1997; Carter *et al.*, 2001). RBS (2014) state that networking is an essential and crucial factor for women-owned business development, success and survival (RBS, 2014). In agreement with this, the National Black Women's Network (NBWN) has found that women want "intelligence and strategies for getting bank-ready" and for "access to high quality network support in order to take their business to the next level" (Inspiring Youth Enterprise, 2016, p.9).

According to the evidence provided by successful women business owners in previous research, the supply of funding alone will not necessarily make a successful business. The real support which benefits women business owners most is often not financial but facilitating and assisting them to connect with the right business network, supporting them to identify opportunities to connect with new customers along with resource personal and business-supportive organisations.

In their studies, Shim and Eastlick (1998) and Koech and Namusong (2015) identify networking as one of the essential and important business growth and survival factors for women-owned micro-businesses. In the same vein, Maina and Mwit (2016) have identify that social networks and the social-cultural environmental condition in which they operate have influenced the development of women-owned enterprises. Manifestly, women micro and small business owners with high growth resources tend to use formal business and social networks (Koech & Namusonge, 2015) which act as a bridge between the economy and society (Sabatini, 2006). The evidence shows that 77% of women micro entrepreneurs in the UK indicate that participating in a variety of business and marketing functions to promote their businesses is important or very important (Vistaprint, 2016). However, institutional aspects of entrepreneurship do affect women differently (Baughn, Chua and Neupert, 2006) and women's socialisation, social role or place leads them to perceive opportunities differently or might exclude them from social networks. This is tending to create information asymmetries (Walter *et al.*, 2006). As noted by Inspiring Youth Enterprise (2016), helping women business owners to engage in networking events is very important. Conversely, in the conclusion of their study, Maina and Mwit (2016) highlight that “women are overloaded with business and family responsibilities and may not have the time to join beneficial associations, and this automatically limits the women entrepreneurs’ wings of exploration” (p.213).

Studies including Zuwarimwe and Kristen (2010), clearly indicate that gaining access to a business mentoring advice service, being part of business associations, and participating in trade associations and women's groups are positively associated with women-owned micro, retail business growth. Successful National Black Women's Network (NBWN) small business owners stated that: “it has catapulted my business at least ten times further ahead than it ever was before. It was an idea initially” and NBWN “has really put some legs on it” (ibid, p.7).

In contrast, some studies have identified that women business owners are disadvantaged in participating in networking events due to a lack of suitable and effective social networks (Benschop, 2009; Klyver & Grant, 2010). In their study, Roomi and Harrison (2008) identify a lack of networking abilities and opportunities as a crucial barrier to the development of women-owned business. Researchers identify that the choice of targeted female-focused business support is very important to women.

Similarly, 98% of women involved in the pioneering Enterprising Women Initiative said women-specific support was either important or very important to them (Enterprising Women Evaluation and Research Report, 2007). Following a sustained strategy to make its services more women-friendly, the national Business Link service increased its proportion of female clients from one-fifth to one-third, between 2003 and 2006 (GROW Report, Women's Enterprise Task Force, 2009).

Some of the other business success factors related to women business owners which were mentioned by UK owners were: managing and operating their business according to a business plan (day-to-day basis) and previous business management knowledge. Additionally, they mentioned training (on the job), experience, style, capabilities¹⁵ and skills were also considered to be important success factors. That was not all because success was considered to result from personal characteristics and development, values, beliefs, abilities in empowering others (transformational leadership style), negotiation styles, communication and sharing information, compassion and encouraging others as business success factors (Buttner, 2001; Haffern, 2003; Roomi *et al.*, 2009; Maina & Mwiti, 2016; Park & Bae, 2004; Roomi & Harrison, 2008).

¹⁵ Social capabilities assist with access to resources (Brush *et al.*, 2004)

Together these studies provide important insight into the success factors of women-owned business, including women-owned micro-retail pop-ups. The following section provides a more detailed account of the challenges encountered by women business owners in general and also those encountered by micro-retail pop-up owners in particular.

2.5.2 Internal business environment factors affecting women-owned businesses

As highlighted by Gaskill *et al.* (1993), being a woman can become a significant differentiation point in women-owned business success and/or failure. The thematic literature review findings reveal some of the challenges encountered by women business owners, including retail pop-up owners, within the internal business environment. These challenges are discussed as follows:-

2.5.2.1 Challenges in accessing finance

The challenges women business owners encounter in accessing finance have become a major key theme which has been identified in the thematic literature review findings. Researchers in general have identified that women entrepreneurs, including pop-up owners start their micro and small businesses with insufficient financial investment (Gallellalage *et al.*, 2018). Studies highlight that women business owners start their businesses with low levels of initial capital. In their study, Carter and Show (2006) highlight that women start a business with around one-third of the generally acceptable level of finance. This applies irrespective of size and sector. Robert and Scott (2009) point out that 7.5% of women business owners in the UK are likely to encounter financial barriers in the business start-up and that the resultant low capital has caused them to gain a lower sales turnover. However, as discussed in the characteristics of a pop-up, women pop-up owners have the opportunity to start their businesses with lower investment in comparison with established women entrepreneurs.

Some of the factors that determine the total cost of setting up a pop-up are the intended location, duration and size, (Voidonicolas, 2021), which may, or may not, assist women pop-up owners to open their businesses with less investment. The sky's the limit as far as how much women pop-up owners may spend, but they can pull off a short-term pop-up for a very modest investment. Women business owners are over-represented in traditional sectors that have low start-up costs and limited barriers to enter the business, and especially within the sectors which sell home-based products (e.g., fast-food).

According to the GEM UK Adult Population Survey 2002 - 2010, women business owners have gained funding from: close family members, other kin or relatives, work colleagues, strangers, friends and neighbours, banks or financial institutes, government programmes etc. However, studies show that women business owners, including women pop-up owners, are more likely to see finance as the main barrier or a crucial factor in developing their business (Chea, 2008, Gallellalage *et al.*, 2018). Studies show that women business owners in general encounter challenges when they seek to access finance. Researchers then argue that women small business owner lack the ability to negotiate with financial institutions. Women pop-up owners may encounter further challenges in accessing finance due to the temporary nature and micro size of their pop-up (Bosse & Taylor III, 2012; Women Entrepreneurs, 2016, Gallellalage *et al.*, 2018, amongst many others).

In their study Carter *et al.* (2007) identify that women business owners find it hard to meet the qualifications to apply for a bank loan. The reason is that most financial institutions seek and require higher collateral from women business owners. For example, some financial organisations ask women business owners to have a male co-signer in order to open an account.

They also want to know the number of years the business has been in operation, the number of employees, its reputation, its credit history. Inability to access capital forces them disproportionately into bankruptcy (Efrat, 2010). This view is supported by Muravyev *et al.* (2009), who conducted research by employing a multi-country database of 14,000 businesses. The study reveals that women business owner-managers are 5% less likely to get a bank loan approved. One can argue that this situation has discouraged women business owners in applying for a bank loan, even when it is definitely needed.

Women pop-up owners may encounter more challenges in obtaining a bank loan on account of the temporary nature or impermanency and micro size of the business (Gallellalage *et al.*, 2018). Moreover, they may encounter an unsustainable debt level and the necessity of debt restructuring. In the same vein, researchers highlight that women business owners have significantly more fear of debt (London Business School, 2004).

Additionally, the National Women's Business Council (2008) highlight that even when a female business owner gets a loan from a bank they pay on average half a percentage point more in interest. In support of this, the UK Survey of SME Finance highlights that women business owners have been charged more on term loans than others (this gap was 2.9% vs. 1.9%). However, no other research has found such a difference and it is emphasised that there could be a need to conduct more research to explain the above differences (Carter and Shaw, 2006; Prowess, 2016).

Even when a women pop-up owner is able to obtain a loan, she will find it difficult to pay a continual monthly higher amount of interest throughout the year. This may be partly due to the seasonal variation of sales caused by fewer pop-up events in winter, for example.

Insufficient finance tends to limit women pop-up owners' capability of competing with established businesses. It also hinders their ability to develop new products and meet customer demand (Abor & Biekpe, 2006, Chea, 2008). The recent tendency towards retail bankruptcies as well as poor sales performance has resulted in a large number of business closings, including women-owned micro-retail pop-ups (Berman, 2018). Bankruptcy research clearly highlights that lower access to finance is one of the leading pitfalls which leads women business owners into a situation of bankruptcy (Women Entrepreneurs, 2016). When women start a business, they can feel the severity of coming off benefits more strongly because, on average, benefits and tax credits comprise one-fifth of women's income. Efrat (2010, p. 548) suggests that "women's business problems are attributable, in part, to six factors: inferior human capital, lower earnings, lower capitalisation, small size of business, lower access to capital, and greater reliance on high-cost financing". According to the thematic literature review findings, the next crucial challenge encountered by women business owners is business management related barriers.

2.5.2.2 Challenges encountered in business management

Previous researchers identify differences between managing a large retail business and a micro-retail business (Davis *et al.*, 1985; Sillan & Ziemnowicz, 2003). One of the differences is the tendency of micro-retail business owners to work fewer hours, some of which are at home. This allows the women to spend much needed time on housework and childcare responsibilities (GEM UK Adult Population Survey 2007-2009) all of which demonstrates that they have need to operate their businesses alongside their family responsibilities (Alison Ross Review Report, 2019). In this scenario women do not have, and perhaps do not need, the time to spend on the traditional management activities of the larger businesses but their time does need to be used in travelling and setting up pop-ups in different locations (Gallellalage *et al.*, 2018).

Women tend to operate their retail businesses within traditional industries due to the need for less requirements, less experience and lower start-up capital. The Alison Rose Review of Female Entrepreneurship Report (2019) highlights that women business owners are under-represented in low value, lower opportunity sectors (e.g., agriculture) but their low participation in high value sector carries a greater opportunity cost. Some of the industries that women pop-up owners engage in are fast food, creative jewellery and the designer clothes industry (Nicasio, 2021). Studies identify that women-owned businesses demonstrate slow or no growth due to a lack of education, business and managerial skills and work experience, vocational and technical skills (Heilbrunn, 2004; Roomi & Harrison, 2008). In agreement with this, some researchers emphasise the importance of a good general education, and a specific entrepreneurial education in order to manage and develop a business (Dickson *et al.*, 2008; Elmuti *et al.*, 2012). The latter's findings provide strong evidence in support of the relationship between the level of an entrepreneur's general education and business success. This fact is demonstrated by a business owner's ability in learning, copying and adapting technical and management skills within the changing business environment (Bridge *et al.*, 1998).

However, other researchers, including Singh and Vinnicombe (2003) and Brush and Hisrich (2002) identify that specific entrepreneurial education can have a marked impact on women-owned business. A woman business owner's lack of education can result in a significant challenge to develop the necessary business management skills (Jiang *et al.*, 2012). Initially, this could have a retarding effect and cause them to underperform or achieve little development within their entrepreneurial career (Heilbrunn, 2004; Brown *et al.*, 2002; Brush & Hisrich, 1999). Education and training create higher expectations in most industry sectors.

Studies in women-owned small business identify the importance of women business owners' level of education and training (Henry *et al.*, 2005) and report that the average education levels of women micro and small business owners fall short of requirements (Koech & Namusonge, 2015). However, as yet, there is no definite evidence to show that this situation is particularly applicable to women pop-up owners.

Nevertheless, in their study Roomi and Harrison (2008) identify appropriate training as a very important factor which contributes to women-owned business development and success. Further, the majority of Roomi and Harrison's participants (women business owners) mentioned that even though they had training, they felt the need for more, in order to be consistently strong throughout the business life cycle. A number of researchers report that successful women entrepreneurs are more likely to have a higher level of education, although there is still a need for more input for women (Powers & Magnoni, 2013). The aforementioned will be kept in mind when considering the special circumstances of women pop-up owners.

Researchers argue that women business owners inherit and develop business management skills differently with regard to self-perceptions, motivations and belief structures following the way they have been nurtured and socialised. Researchers identify that most women business owners tend to show an alternative management style. The reason is that women perhaps exhibit greater social leadership because they run their businesses democratically. Female business owners tend to manage their businesses using strategies which place a high value on relationships with customers and sharing knowledge and decision-making with employees in a team-oriented manner. Shmailan (2016) states that women business owners can think differently and may be identified as intuitive thinkers, a view supported by Brush (1992).

Women business owners' requirements in learning business management skills can vary within different venture developments, growth stages and cultures due to the nature of the target audience and market segmentation (Bridge *et al.*, 1998; O'Gorman, 1997). Additionally, previous researchers identify the need for facilitating training for women business owners, particularly to develop their capacity to sustain their businesses in the marketplace.

But Roomi and Harrison (2008) identify a clear lack of business management training facilities as a major challenge encountered by women business owners. They further highlight in their studies that only 28% of women received training on a topic related to their business development, whereas 67% of women business owners identified 'building a successful business as their first priority'. Most respondents to their study stated that they participated in three to five days of training on different aspects (e.g., business start-up, writing a business plan, time management, professional presence, telephone sales skills, and Inland Revenue training, etc.).

They identify that training on innovation and opportunity recognition is one of the most useful capacity-building activities that assists women small business owners to develop their business and sustain it in the marketplace. Women business owners themselves emphasise the need and importance of having formal business management training to manage their businesses professionally (Brown *et al.*, 2002). They highlight that having specific knowledge and skills for an entrepreneur's specific type of business is vital to success. Roomi and Harrison (2008) identify that women business owners lack support or a support system for decision-making and problem-solving skills development in their business development process, and that they seek support to overcome these challenges.

Reporting on 2014 government statistics, FSB (2016) shows that less than half (44%) of small firm employers had sought external information or advice. They were seeking support through the prevailing business advice on offer which was mostly concerned with how to grow a business, general financial issues and tax declaration requirements.

FSB Research (2015) identifies that two-thirds of women said that in the past that they had facilities to access both private and government-sponsored business support in the form of professional business advisors (34%), online training and support (10%), and education institutions (9%), in order to support their businesses. General business management information, in whatever form can provide women business owners with sufficient knowledge, skills and capability to generate and implement business ideas with creative solutions to solve the problems they encounter (Jiang *et al.*, 2012). Interviewees expressed their experience as follows:

“[...] Although I have had more than 20 years of industry experience in financial consulting services, the business model I launched (an education program) has not been successful, simply due to the fact that I cannot prove myself to be competent without a degree in education [...]” (Entrepreneur #2 – Jiang *et al.*, 2012, p.55).

This view is supported by another participant who stated that:

“[...] Human capital is essential to women’s entrepreneurial success. This may require a woman entrepreneur in particular to have the education and experiences to prove her credibility and professionalism to stakeholders, such as government officials, suppliers, investors, bankers and the larger community [...]” (Entrepreneur #2 – Jiang *et al.*, 2012, p.55).

These findings highlight the need for well-designed and delivered training programmes for women business owners to assist them in achieving their desires and goals to sustain their business in the marketplace. As discussed above, the challenges encountered by women business owners in the management of their businesses are summarised in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: Business management challenges

General comments about business management challenges	References
Lack of business premises	
Low business and management skills	
Poor knowledge of current legislation	Bruin <i>et al.</i> (2007)
Lack of technical skills and training facilities	
Lack of research skills and innovation	
Lack of appropriate assistance	Chung (1998)
Lack of support systems	
Lack of support in decision-making	
Structural barriers	Omar and Fraser (2010)
Rigidities and labour market	
A limited knowledge of business expansion	
Barriers to access skilled human resources	Bartlett and Bukvic (2001)
Inadequate knowledge, skills and experience in business management	

2.5.2.3. Innovation

Innovation and opportunity recognition have been recognised as the foundation for exponential development in entrepreneurship (Bruns, 2001). Likewise, researchers have stressed the importance of innovation for women-owned micro and small retail business success. Previous researchers emphasise the link between customer demand and expectations as an important driving force behind innovation in women-owned business.

The reason is customer preferences are changing. Accordingly, women business owners, including women pop-up owners, have a need to improve products and processes to meet customer needs and demands (Roomi & Harrison, 2008). Other scholars highlight that innovativeness enables women business owners in venture creation ideas (e.g., technology, product and market) where women business owners need to create a venture or expand the business.

The thematic literature review reveals several barriers to successful innovation. RBS (2014) finds that gaining a deeper understanding of business barriers can improve the success rate of women-owned business. The report further emphasises that apart from finance, many women entrepreneurs need help with identifying and accessing the right resources that will enable them to launch and innovate their businesses. Some of the factors that limit business innovation are limited financial resources, shortfall in marketing and management expertise, and weaknesses in external information and network links (Freel, 2000; Chea, 2008). Some of the challenges encountered by women micro-retail business owners are the ability to developing a new and more relevant retail format, offering consumers superior value, adapting the business to compete and sustain itself in the retail market, and a level of investment needed to differentiate the business (Mazzoarol, 2004). All these challenges are ever present while they are struggling to fulfil their family caring responsibilities.

2.5.2.4. Household and family caring responsibilities

Previous researchers have found that women business owners consume less time in building their businesses due to their domestic and caring responsibilities (Koech & Namusonge, 2015). The success of those women who have managed to avoid this restriction results in them having fewer children on average (Powers & Magnoni, 2013).

This can result in good relationships with their family and friends, customers and financiers, and be seen as an effective strategy towards business success (Kamau *et al.*, 1999).

2.5.2.5. Women-specific factors affecting business failure

Researchers, including Bridge *et al.* (1998) and Roomi *et al.* (2009), identify that women business owners' characteristics contribute to their business success or failure. Previous researchers identify factors that influence the success of women-owned business (Vistaprint, 2016; Roomi *et al.*, 2009; Chea, 2008; Heffern, 2003). Some of the women-specific personal factors that were identified are characteristics such as behaviour, personality, attitudes, capabilities, training, education (Storely, 1994; Henry *et al.*, 2005), social capital influencing access to resources (Brush *et al.*, 2004), previous business management experience, family history, functional skills, and relevant business sector knowledge (Storely, 1994). Likewise, De Tienne and Chandler (2007) highlight that women business owners socialise and perceive opportunities differently.

Together, these studies provide important insight into a female business owner's good relationship with family and friends, customers and financiers which can be likened to an effective strategy in business success (Kamau *et al.*, 1999). Based on the thematic literature review findings, success factors and challenges encountered by women business owners within the internal business environment are summarised below.

Table 2.4: Summary of success factors and the limitations to business success experienced by women business owners

Factors limiting business success	Factors promoting the success of women business owners	Factors suggestive of a successful performance	References
<p>Less motivation.</p> <p>Operating a business without having a goal.</p> <p>Lack of business model.</p>	<p>Motivation and goals. Personal goals and strategy to assess the performance.</p> <p>Business model, business strategies, planning and strategic choices, formulation of objectives.</p>	<p>Set realistic short-term and long-term goals.</p> <p>Strategically operate the business.</p>	<p>Lerner and Hisrich (1997).</p> <p>Theo <i>et al.</i> (2007). Hisrich <i>et al.</i> (1997). Machado <i>et al.</i> (2003).</p>
<p>Fewer or lack of opportunities in engaging in networking events.</p> <p>Women are overloaded with business and family responsibilities and may not have the time to join beneficial associations, and this automatically limits women business owners' wings of exploration.</p>	<p>Network affiliation, human capital and environmental influences, networking Participating in a variety of business and marketing functions to promote individual's business.</p> <p>Participating in mentoring programmes.</p>	<p>Engage effectively and often in networking events.</p> <p>It is important for women to engage in professional networking events in order to excel in their business and personal lives.</p>	<p>Lerner and Hisrich (1997). Theo <i>et al.</i> (2007). Dolinski <i>et al.</i> (1993). Brush and Hisrick (1991). Box <i>et al.</i> (1995). Vistaprint (2016). Maina and Mwititi (2016).</p>
Lack of finance	Amount of finance	Availability of finance can fuel the business	Thibault <i>et al.</i> (2002)
Inadequate knowledge of how to utilise technology to develop the business	Use of technology	Utilisation of technology along with innovation	Thibault <i>et al.</i> (2002)
Lack of confidence	Attributed personal factors, individual characteristics and entrepreneurial orientation	Confidently building a strong and long-term customer relationship	Thibault <i>et al.</i> (2002) Theo <i>et al.</i> (2007)
Lack of previous experience	Number of previous starts and experience Previous entrepreneurial experience Management practice	Previous experience can assist in developing the business	Box <i>et al.</i> (1995) Dolinski <i>et al.</i> (1993) Box <i>et al.</i> (1995)
Lack of education or lack of knowledge and skills in business management	Level of education, business skills	Having a good education background, business management knowledge and skills	Hisrich <i>et al.</i> (1997) Dolinski <i>et al.</i> (1993) Box <i>et al.</i> (1995)
Lack of entrepreneurial orientation Inadequate knowledge and skills in decision-making	Individual characteristics/ entrepreneurial orientation Strengths in generating ideas and dealing with people Decision-making style.	Higher level of knowledge can help decision-making and dealing with people	Machado <i>et al.</i> (2003) Dolinski <i>et al.</i> (1993) Box <i>et al.</i> (1995)

Evidence presented thus far, including recent empirical studies conducted by Bellucci *et al.* (2010) and Muravyev *et al.* (2009), indicate the existence of a ‘second glass ceiling’. This second glass ceiling signifies the challenges encountered by women business owners in the business world, hindering their full entrepreneurial potential. It is important to understand women business owners’ internal environment factors as well as their external environment factors and how they relate to one another. This is the key to effective strategy formulation in any business (Davis & David, 2017). Accordingly, the following section provides a discussion of the external environment factors that affect women-owned businesses, specifically to include women pop-up owners.

2.6 External factors influencing women-owned businesses

The thematic literature review findings of this study reveal that the external environment factors can have a significant influence on the success of women-owned business including women pop-up owners. Studies in general highlight that women-owned businesses in the UK have a higher level of business start-up and closures due to the challenges they face in the business environment (Marlow *et al.*, 2013). Brush *et al.* (2004) and Minnite *et al.* (2005) highlight the importance of investigating the problems and issues encountered by women business owners in surviving in the market.

Researchers suggest that it is important for women business owners to continually examine their external business environment in order to remain competitive. West *et al.* (2010), highlight the importance of anticipating the changes in the business environment because such anticipated changes will have a direct impact on marketing decision-making. Anticipating how a business’s environment might change in the short, medium and long term and detecting any possible impact would help women business owners, including women pop-up owners, to avoid any future threats.

Scholars cluster the external environment factors in various ways. The identified external environment factors of women-owned businesses as shown in the thematic literature review, is presented as follows under sub-themes by adopting the PESTEL analysis tool. This PESTEL analysis tool stands for Political, Economic, Socio-cultural, Technological, Legal and Environmental factors (Baines *et al.*, 2012).

2.6.1 The effect of political environment factors on women-owned business

Studies emphasise how the political conditions of a country or region can affect the development of women-owned businesses (Bridge *et al.*, 1998). Perhaps with this in mind the UK government is increasingly recognising the importance and contribution of women-owned businesses to the national economy (Roomi *et al.*, 2009). More importantly, the government sees pop-up as a strategy or a way to re-activate empty shops in the British High Street marketplace (GOV.UK, 2012). However, researchers highlight the drawbacks as well as the benefits of key policy issues in supporting women-owned businesses. According to Muthaih and Venkatesh (2012) women business owners face challenges in relation to business and entrepreneurship legislation, taxation, difficulties in interaction with the government, assessing and managing income tax, VAT, corporation tax and business rate payments (Kumar, 2015).

Allinson *et al.* (2013) found that 47% of micro-business owners reported that government and legal regulations hinder women's business development. Administering the regulations was thought to be too burdensome and there was fear that business growth would only lead to more regulations, disproportionately. Fear and uncertainty marked the expectation of future regulations. Forson (2006) argues that the common approach of the UK to business support provisions disadvantages women business owners.

There is the lack of a policy to address women business owner's specific needs. Here, the literature review findings show that there is inadequate information on UK government policy as regards women-owned micro-retail pop-ups. Scholars have proposed that policy measures need to be constructive towards supporting women business owners to overcome the challenges they encounter to achieve their entrepreneurial potential (Bruin *et al.*, 2007).

Researchers have given consideration to women micro-business owners' transition from benefits to self-employment. While highlighting the initiatives that support the transition, Marlow *et al.* (2003) argue that "the complexity of the whole benefit system delays" the process of "change from benefits to in-work tax credits", producing an unwanted period of "fragmented and uncertain income". When known this reality will always act as a discouragement to "self-employment" (Forson, 2006, p.428).

Therefore, it is not surprising that "take-up by women is relatively low, especially" in "the self-employment options in state sponsored bridging programmes such as New Deal in the UK" (Forson (2006, p.427; Small Business Service, 2002; Marlow *et al.*, 2003). The benefit system is based on aggregate information without sufficient consideration for the diverse population, distinct profiles and trajectories.

Previous scholars have suggested that the benefit system is probably unfavourable to women (Marlow *et al.*, 2003; Forson, 2006). The particular experiences of women (e.g., fragmented and "low paid work", poverty and "domestic workload") give reasons to believe that the aforementioned view is correct (Forson, 2006, p.428).

Here, in view of what has been previously stated, it is vital to mention that the thematic literature review findings demonstrate the importance of identifying a UK government policy in relation to women micro-retail pop-up owners' transition from benefits to self-employment. Such a UK government policy would need to ensure that current difficulties experienced by women during the year of transition are avoided.

As mentioned previously, the UK government has identified the contribution made by women-owned micro and small retail businesses to the UK economy and some initiatives have been established to develop their businesses in general. As highlighted in the FSB Report (2016, p. 12), "identifying and assisting the 'missing million' women entrepreneurs in the UK" has been described by the UK government as central to its plan to create a stronger economy (Economy Action Plan in November 2013).

The Strategic Framework for Women's Enterprise (SFWE) was launched in 2003 by the Department of Trade and Industry as a policy document. "The themes include encouraging a more dynamic start-up market, building the capability for small business growth, improving access to finance for small business, encouraging more enterprise in disadvantaged communities and under-represented groups", (Forson, 2006, p.419), especially for women entrepreneurs. Since the publication of the Strategic Framework for Women's Enterprises, the UK government has made several additional attempts to help women and has set up supportive programmes for women-owned businesses to realise their entrepreneurial ambitions in the UK¹⁶ (FSB, 2016).

¹⁶ E.g., The National Association for the Promotion of Women's Enterprises (established in 2002) was an independent non-profit commissioned by UK Government to produce the first UK national strategy and quality standards for women's enterprise support.

However, the Strategic Framework for Women's Enterprises lacks specific focus in dealing only with women entrepreneurs in general with little for women-owned micro-retail pop-ups in the UK in particular. Nevertheless, it is not clear on how the UK government supports women who conduct their retail businesses in temporary retail stores in the UK high street marketplace. The evidence reviewed here seems to suggest that the UK government may need to provide more clarification on its specific role in supporting women pop-up owners.

Following recommendations made by the Women's Business Council, the UK government made a commitment to address the wider challenges faced by small business owners. This included issues relating to investment, red tape and the existing culture around enterprise, and introduced different types of supportive programmes to assist women-owned businesses in the UK (FSB, 2016). In spite of this, very little is known about the impact of these initiatives on the business survival of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups in the UK, and how the effectiveness of the platform is perceived.

Women micro-retail pop-up owners demonstrate limited knowledge of government legislation and tax and have less experience on starting a temporary retail business. This can lead to discouragement and consequent unwillingness to comply with legislation (Gallellalage *et al.*, 2018).

Considering all of this evidence, it seems that the UK government needs to provide support tailored to address the specific needs of women micro-retail pop-up owners as opposed to women entrepreneurs in general. Without a doubt the economic and socio-cultural impact of women-owned businesses, including women pop-up owners, is substantial.

2.6.2 Economic, Socio-cultural, Technological and Environmental factors

To facilitate progress, more work needs to be done in order to better understand the function of the women-owned pop-up in society and its place in economic development. Considering ‘social science theory’, researchers highlight the importance of the role of education in the process of women’s status improvement. Economists consider education as an investment in the development of human capital which assists women pop-up owners to generate higher levels of income, improve their lifestyle, and make a positive contribution to the household (Hakim, 2002). Literature review findings reveal that it is important for women business owners, and women pop-up owners in particular, to gain new knowledge in managing and developing their businesses. It can be suggested that if women micro-retail pop-up owners do not respond to the changes in the environment and society, they may lose market share and demand for their goods and services. On account of this, most of the women business owners who sell their products in temporary retail pop-ups may need to gain new knowledge and identify ways to sell more sustainable products while competing with established women entrepreneurs in the market.

Women business owners are more likely to use technology to develop new and existing products and to identify high-tech product selling tools (Beales, 2021). FSB (2015) highlights the importance of improving women’s awareness of both private and public sources of business support for networking and the use of technology. According to the report by ‘Women Enterprise’ (2016, p.14), the majority of women entrepreneurs who participated in that study, agreed that “improved online and digital skills (55%), marketing expertise (56%) and business strategy skills (60%) would be most useful in growing their businesses”. One of the participants stated, “I’d like to be able to grow the online side of the business.

We can now take orders when we're on holiday, which is great, so that's how I am looking to grow" (A woman business owner, London).

Researchers argue that women business owners' limited knowledge and skills holds them back from accessing new technology and tools which in turn limits them from engaging in networking events (Jiang *et al.*, 2012). A participant of FSB (2016, p.15), stated that "there is a lot of stuff out there, and the internet is a big place. You just don't know where to start" (A woman business owner, London). It is evident that women business owners are willing to access government and non-government business support. Gaining skills in accessing technology and networking could have a high impact on women-owned business as social networking advances communication between businesses and customers in the current era. It suggests that business supportive organisations need to ensure that the support they provide is relevant and meets the needs of women business owners. However, there is a question whether all these existing business-supportive programmes have correctly focused on the characteristics and needs of women pop-up owners in the UK retail marketplace.

2.6.3 Legal environment factors

This section seeks to identify how laws and regulations affect women micro-retail business owners' ability to operate and develop their businesses. The UK's women-owned micro-businesses are a key economic force¹⁷ with the potential to be even greater, but they face particular challenges with regulations within the legal environment (BRE, 2010). The BRE (2010) report, which focuses on the experience of the UK's smallest businesses and summarises the experience they had in dealing with the overall regulatory burden, includes

¹⁷ Businesses with fewer than 10 employees account for 96% of UK businesses and around 7 million jobs (BRE, 2010).

interviews with 500 micro-business owners¹⁸ and found that they struggle to cope with existing or new regulations and changes to existing regulations. In other words, regulations can add problems to existing issues, giving a sense of frustration and the clear distress which is experienced.

It's hardly surprising that legal factors also have an adverse effect on pop-up stores (DEVIMO Pop-up, 2021). One can ask if there is a specific legal procedure to open a pop-up store. The answer is no, the procedure is the same as for opening any business such as a restaurant. Women micro-retail pop-up owners will have to follow the same regulations (DEVIMO Pop-up, 2021; Somerville, 2018). The literature review findings of this study reveal that policymakers in the UK government have paid scant attention to women-owned micro-retail pop-ups when initiating and implementing rules and regulations. Confused micro-retail pop-up owners are left wondering if there are specific regulations for pop-ups or if they should simply follow the general rules for starting a business and suffer the possible consequences.

The move to principle-based regulations allows for the taking of a proportionate and outcome-focused approach to regulations. For experienced businesses, many regulations are easy to manage and have become part of general business processes. Women-owned micro-retail pop-ups may need to rely on the same rules as any other company. It means that women-owned micro-retail pop-up businesses will also have to follow the same regulations to have independent status (DEVIMO Pop-up, 2021; Herfurth, 2016). As individuals, women micro-retail pop-up owners may have limited ability to understand and interpret regulations within the regulatory field.

¹⁸ Those with fewer than 10 employees

Women pop-up owners should be prepared to face a number of challenges in relation to UK government rules and regulations, licences and fees. They could feel confused and ‘on their own’ when trying to cope with regulation. As a result, they often, unknowingly, either under- or over-comply with regulations. Many businesses simply do not understand why certain regulations are introduced or why they are asked to provide information to government, e.g., data protection requirements, keeping written records of refused sales or statistics (Lightening the Load, 2010).

New laws and regulations are constantly being added to UK government bureaucracy following political and social environmental changes, and all entrepreneurs are required to abide by the legal system. The UK government’s new policies, rules and regulations (e.g., Brexit) may add additional costs, taxes or legal fees to the operation and development of women-owned retail pop-up businesses. Under this situation, women pop-up owners may encounter particular difficulties due to their limited income and micro-size and may have to adapt to laws and government interventions. This can increase the cost of running a retail pop-up and give less opportunity to increase profit margin and may hinder full entrepreneurial potential. As discussed previously, women business owners, including women pop-up owners, may encounter challenges in accessing support for the development of their business management knowledge and skills. Less experienced women micro-business owners can find it difficult to understand, interpret and deal with new rules and regulations of government. As a result, there is a feeling of being overwhelmed and the possibility of being prosecuted for non-observance of the rules. Women micro and small business owners including women micro-retail pop-up owners, have fewer resources. They can find it difficult to compete with established retailers in the market while keeping up with UK government rules and regulations.

The thematic literature review findings of this study reveal that UK government policymakers have not yet considered ‘small first’ when designing and implementing regulations. It is of concern that UK government decisions and policies in relation to labour law, social obligations and taxes may have an adverse effect on women-owned micro-retail pop-ups and their position in the retail marketplace. For example, despite the micro-size and temporary nature, women pop-up owners who operate fast-food businesses need to follow the same rules, laws of quality and safety and rights for employees as small and medium enterprises (DEVIMO Pop-up, 2021; Gallellalage, *et al.*, 2018).

The thematic literature review suggests that the cost of launching a pop-up varies across the UK. For example, cities like London, Leeds and Bristol have a real entrepreneurial spirit and a greater volume of small businesses and starting a pop-up will be at a higher cost in these places as there is a lot of competition. In Old Street tube station, it generally costs nearly £1000 a week as well as an upfront security deposit of £1000. Pop-up business owners do not need a licence but they must pay for public liability insurance (Somerville, 2018). The legal environment factors affecting women-owned businesses including women pop-up owners are summarised below in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5 Legal environment factors affecting women-owned businesses including women pop-up owners in the UK

Theme	Explanatory Detail
Try to do the right thing	Women small and micro business owners including women pop-up owners are less supported. However, they are expected by the government to cope with equal levels of paperwork and deal with the same level of rules and regulations as established large retailers in the market.
The cumulative burden of regulations	Different types of cumulative tax, fees and payments for licensing add to women micro-retail pop-up owners' stress levels and frustration, and this may directly affect their business profitability. Ultimately, for women pop-up owners, operating a business with an acceptable profit margin would be impossible.
Start-up	Mostly women-owned micro-businesses find it difficult to meet the requirements of health and safety risk assessment, food safety and licensing laws, and they need much support in meeting these requirements. During these activities, women micro-retail pop-up owners usually need to go through a steep learning curve. Apparently there is no definite place to which they can turn for clear guidance and explanations as they make each progressive step in building a business. In contrast there is Business Link which offers some very useful tailor-made regulatory checklists. However, in many cases they have provided insufficient detail about timing. It is also apparent that in most cases an action timeline is not available from the government. It is apparent that micro and small businesses tend to end up paying six times more than the established larger-scale businesses in meeting health and safety measures and risk assessments.
Complexity and misunderstanding	Women micro-businesses in general and women micro-retail pop-up owners in particular tend to limit business development and actively avoid the implementation of a plan for recruiting and expanding business activities on account of the challenges they encounter in the complexity of employment law, the regulatory burden in general and the fear of an employment tribunal. In addition to these drawbacks there is the responsibility for staff training, waste collection and recycling, food safety and refusals of under-age sales.

Synthesised from: BRE (2010); Lansdown *et al.* (2007); Lofstedt (2011); Arewa and Farrel (2012); DEVIMO Pop-up (2021); Herfurth (2016); Somerville (2018).

The literature review findings of this study suggest that in the future, the UK government, may need to pay closer attention to women-owned micro-businesses, particularly women-owned micro-retail pop-ups, when initiating rules and regulations. The government could consider simplifying and tailoring them.

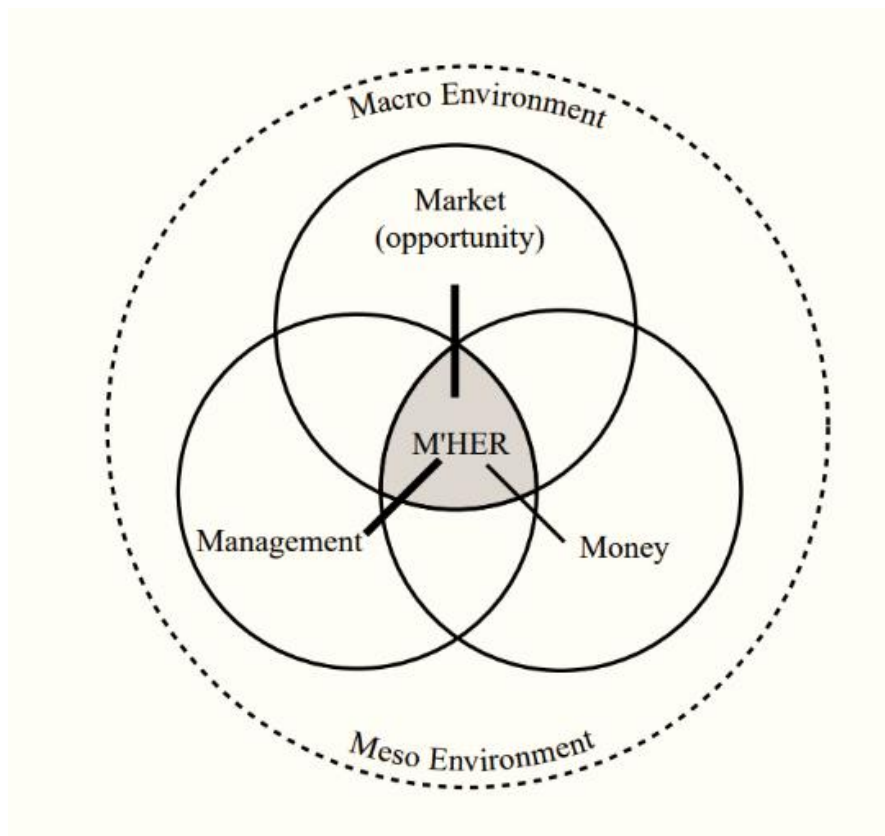
As a whole, these studies provide important insights into temporary, micro-retail pop-ups and emphasise the important role played by women pop-up owners in the UK retail market. The thematic literature review findings reveal that there is scant research which has already been conducted to identify success factors and challenges encountered by women pop-up owners (Brush *et al.*, 2009). Available studies remain narrow in focus and deal mostly with women-owned business in general. Surprisingly, this study shows that the effects of the internal and external business environment on women-owned micro-retail pop-ups in the UK had not yet been closely examined until this study, which now seeks to address the deficiency. Here, the study adopts the 5Ms framework (Brush *et al.*, 2009) to lay a strong theoretical foundation.

2.7 Theoretical framework of the study

As discussed in the literature review, women micro-retail pop-up owners demonstrate specific characteristics and conduct their temporary micro-retail pop-up business activities differently compared to women entrepreneurs in general (Gallellalage *et al.*, 2018; Green *et al.*, 2006). In agreement with this, Gallellalage *et al.* (2018) highlight that women micro-retail pop-up owners' social and cultural environment leads them to perceive opportunities and deal with them differently to women entrepreneurs in general. It is therefore important to understand the pop-up owners' internal business environment factors.

As mentioned previously, researchers (Brush *et al.*, 2009; Bruin, 2007), have considered the external environment factors to be the general force that does not directly touch on the short-run activities of women-owned micro-retail pop-up businesses, but that they can have an influence over the long term and affect survival in the UK retail marketplace. To address these issues the study uses the 5Ms theoretical framework. This is shown below in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2:2 Women micro-retail pop-up owners and the 5Ms framework



Source : Brush *et al.* (2009), Welsh *et al.* (2017)

As highlighted in Figure 2.2, Brush *et al.* (2009) argue that venture creation is generally built on three fundamental basic constructs of Money, Market and Management (3Ms) (Bates *et al.*, 2007). However, in their study which set out to determine venture creation in women-owned businesses, Brush and colleagues (2009) found that the 3Ms framework failed to consider the “underpinning reasons” of “why and how female entrepreneurs and their businesses are

different” (Brush *et al.*, 2009, p.3). The reason is Motherhood and the Meso-macro environment mediate the entrepreneurial activities of women business owners differently. Accordingly, recent critical and reflective research has focused on how knowledge of women as business owners has been constructed (Humbert & Brindley, 2015; Marlow *et al.*, 2009).

It follows that the theoretical foundation of this study is structured upon the 5Ms framework (Brush *et al.*, 2009): (i) as a lens for viewing the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners; (ii) to better understand the real nature and intricacies of the dynamic inherent in their retail pop-up businesses in such a way as to demonstrate; (iii) to discover how motherhood or the family embeddedness within the meso-macro environment affect women-owned micro-retail pop-ups (Welsh, 2017); (iv) to focus on the factors that influence or hinder their business development and sustain them in the UK retail market (Brush *et al.*, 2010).

The 5Ms framework allows the researcher to study women micro-retail pop-up owners and to identify their success factors and the challenges they encounter within Money, Market, Management, Motherhood and the Meso-macro environment.

The 5Ms in more detail.

(a) Money (venture creation): the venture capital industry is geographically concentrated with implications for women pop-up owners when accessing funding for business development and attempting to sustain themselves in the retail market (Brush *et al.*, 2001).

(b) The Market, where women micro-retail pop-up owners operate their temporary retail businesses, has been changing considerably over the last ten years due to: customer preference, e.g., customers are looking for sustainable products, and national and international rules and regulations, e.g., Brexit. Socio-economic changes have also

significantly impacted micro-retail businesses (Statista, 2020; The Future Relationship with the EU, 2020).

(c) Management: women micro-retail pop-up owners' social role, marketplace and family responsibilities, may limit their engagement in social networks, and institutional aspects may also affect women micro-retail pop-up owners (Brush *et al.*, 2010).

(d) Apart from money, market and management, women business owners encounter challenges related to their Motherhood role. "Motherhood is a metaphor to represent the household / family context, thus drawing attention to the fact that family / household contexts might have a larger impact on women" (Bruin, 2007, p.3; Bates *et al.*, 2009, p.2; Jennings & McDougald, 2007). Maternity can be identified as one of the challenges encountered by women business owners (Women's Business Council, 2012). Previous studies show that women business owners are less likely to take any time off as formal maternity leave and they usually encounter childcare issues while they are conducting their businesses (Rouse, 2009).

However, in their study, Jayawarna *et al.* (2011) highlight that more women tend to open businesses and come to self-employment as a temporary solution to combining childcare with income generation at a specific point in their lives, and will seek to go back to employment when appropriate for them. According to a report from Women Returners and Enterprise Time Foundation (2012), some women business owners have expressed the lack of affordable childcare provision to be a barrier to conducting their businesses. However, Prowess (2016, p.5) suggests that "rather than the key issues being the availability of formal childcare, it is often that women want to care for their children themselves". Still, within the UK context, enterprise training and development programmes are often ignoring issues relating to childcare, household and family caring responsibilities. The mothering role means spending time with children and family, and issues relating to the missing support of

appropriate, reasonable and affordable childcare facilities can cause women-owned businesses to fail, a reality which includes, of course, women-owned micro-retail pop-ups (Rouse & Kitching, 2006).

There has been a strong recognition that women entrepreneurs should consider the context of their status as (potential) mothers within the socio-economic context (Marlow *et al.*, 2009), particularly on issues such as work-life balance (Humber & Lewis, 2008). Researchers have highlighted that all entrepreneurship is socially embedded (Davidsson, 2003; Steyaert & Katz, 2004). In order to holistically study women-owned micro-retail pop-ups, researchers consider their norms, values, and social-cultural expectations to be important because of motherhood and the meso-macro environment mediating the entrepreneurial activities of women differently. Therefore, to identify the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners, it is necessary to consider their social-cultural factors, including norms, values and expectations as women (Elan, 2006; Bates, 2007).

- (e) The meso-macro environment reflects intermediate structural institutions and refers to expectations of society and cultural norms. The macro environment considers national policies, culture, laws and the economy which can affect women pop-up owners' socialisation and provide a wider range of opportunities (Brush *et al.*, 2010). Researchers have also identified the success factors of women business owners, as well as the challenges which may hinder their business development and success. Evidently, in their research findings, Jiang *et al.* (2012) reveal that women entrepreneurs encounter barriers in developing their businesses due to a certain social perception. In particular, when women start and conduct their micro-retail businesses they encounter a lack of social acceptance as entrepreneurs or business owners. In the Jiang *et al.* (2012) study, a participant stated that "the general perception from society is that women cannot run their own businesses" (Jiang *et al.*, p.54). Moreover, some women business owners encounter disadvantageous situations

in multiple ways. Bradshaw *et al.* (2003) give evidence that women can have a complex of “feeling poor” (p.419). They and their families can have a constant feeling of poverty, whether it’s an illusion or otherwise (Berthoud, 1998; Forson, 2006).

Many successful women business owners have achieved a work-life balance while they are fulfilling their caring responsibilities and spending time with their family. However, some women business owners do encounter challenges in managing their retail businesses while having to fulfil their mothering role and family caring responsibilities (Carranza *et al.*, 2018). Business-supportive training programmes have often not considered or have overlooked childcare issues which may act as a cause of business failure (Prowess, 2016). Therefore, family responsibilities and commitments (FSB, 2015) could be the biggest challenge that women micro-retail pop-up owners encounter in starting and managing their businesses and surviving in the market.

Studies show that women business owners do not wish to risk their home and work-life balance (The Alison Rose Review of Female Entrepreneurship, 2019). Studies in women-owned businesses identify that entrepreneurship comes “secondary to their wish to maintain other aspects of their lives”, such as the family, but “yet renegotiate that around the identity of” being a professional business individual (Warren, 2004, p.33; Chea, 2008). The temporary nature of retail pop-up businesses can help women to balance their work-life while fulfilling their family caring responsibilities and spending more time with their children (FSB, 2016).

2.8 Identification of solutions to the challenges faced by women business owners

The thematic literature review findings of this study reveal that it is important for women micro-business owners to increase their commitment and improve decision-making skills to achieve competitive advantage and above average returns (The Alison Rose Review of Female Entrepreneurship, 2019). However, some researchers identify that understanding individual

business development processes within the micro-retail business context is complex, multidimensional and challenging (Gartner, 1985). Researchers in women-owned micro and small businesses are considering strategic management as a solution to the challenges encountered by women (Deya *et al.*, 2015).

The analysis of the external environment has received considerable critical attention in strategic management. Johnson *et al.* (2008) suggest that it is important for every business to anticipate how its external environment might change in the short, medium and long terms, and be prepared to adapt its activities so that any changes will have a direct impact. The key aspects of the external environment can be listed as follows: “(1) economic forces; (2) social, cultural, demographic and natural environment forces; (3) political, governmental, and legal forces; (4) technological forces; and (5) competitive forces” (Davide, 2011, p.93). The external environment of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups consists of all the entities that exist outside their businesses, but which have a significant influence on their business development and survival. David and David (2017) highlight the potential outcome of the external environment analysis and the importance of detecting opportunities and threats within the market at present and in the future. Researchers suggest that the macro-meso environment gives consideration to the market and beyond to include factors such as regional business support and policies, services and business supportive initiatives and expectations of society (Lynch, 2018; David, 2013; Dopfer *et al.*, 2004).

This study identifies that women pop-up owners have little or no control over their environment but need to constantly monitor and adapt to external changes with a proactive or reactive response leading to significantly different outcomes. Strategic management will help towards satisfying this requirement. However, literature review findings reveal that there is a lack of a strategic framework to support women pop-up owners in the UK retail marketplace. This lack

needs to be addressed and to do this the study aims at developing a strategic framework for women micro-retail pop-up owners. With this in mind chapter 3 presents thematic literature review findings in strategic management. It also presents the development of the conceptual framework.

The following section presents a summary of chapter 2.

2.9 Summary

These studies indicate the importance of identifying the success factors and the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners in the UK retail marketplace. Therefore, based on the thematic literature review findings and the 5Ms theoretical framework, this study has developed a semi-structured interview guide for the conducting of interviews with women micro-retail pop-up owners which assist in the identification of the success factors and the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners in the UK retail market. A detailed account of the data collection and analysis is provided in Chapter 4, Methodology. A detailed discussion of the identified success factors and the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners in the UK is given in Chapter 5. Based on the semi-structured interview findings, this study needed to develop a strategic framework. For this purpose, the researcher conducted a thorough literature review in strategic management. It is worth mentioning that ‘strategic management’ was one of the themes identified in the thematic literature review. The following Chapter 3 – Literature Review II, presents a discussion on strategic management and is based on the thematic literature review findings. The chapter assists the researcher in building a strong foundation for the development of a strategic framework, namely, The Pop-up Pathway for Women Micro-retail Pop-up Owners.

CHAPTER 3
LITERATURE REVIEW PART II
STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

3.0 Introduction

Literature review is an integral part of the Participatory Action Research Process (PAR). The previous chapter presents success factors and the challenges encountered by women entrepreneurs including women micro-retail pop-up owners. Thematic literature review findings reveal that previous researchers have developed strategic frameworks to support business owners. However, there is a lack of strategic framework specifically for women micro-retail pop-up owners. By addressing this gap/need the study aimed to develop a strategic framework specifically for such women. Thematic literature review findings in the strategic management of micro and small businesses within women entrepreneurship helped to lay a strong theoretical foundation for the development of a strategic framework for the specific women micro-retail pop-up owners. Accordingly, this chapter presents a theoretical insight into the strategic management of micro and small businesses. It also shows how strategic management tools have needed adaption so that they are more readily applicable to the temporary nature and micro-size of these women owned businesses.

The chapter starts by defining the concepts of ‘strategic management’ after giving consideration to a variety of definitions linked to business management and women-owned businesses and the connection between strategic management and the Pop-up Pathway (3.1). The stages of strategic management are discussed in section 3.2.

Section 3.3 presents the strategy formulation and the study adopts the Design School Model. Here, the identification of a vision, a mission and goal setting are considered to be important in developing the Pop-up Pathway.

Based on the literature review findings in strategic management, emphasis is given to an analysis of the environment (3.4).

Section 3.5 presents the pattern towards a successful transition and provides a discussion on the adaptation of SWOT analysis and TOWS matrix in developing the Pop-up Pathway.

The conceptual framework of the study which was developed based on the 5Ms theoretical framework was discussed in chapter 2 and is now presented in section 3.6 along with the SWOT analysis and TOWS matrix.

The strategic management process followed in developing the Pop-up Pathway will be discussed in section 3.7. Also discussed is how women pop-up owners can utilise their strengths to overcome their weaknesses and threats. Identification of opportunities can also help them to overcome their weaknesses and avoid or manage threats. In developing the Pop-up Pathway, the researcher paid attention to women specific characteristics.

Section 3.8 presents a discussion on how SWOT analysis and TOWS matrix were adapted, as the study progressed, to be more appropriate in line with the women specific characteristics. The focus here is to develop a more supportive tool with collaboration. Accordingly, the discussion starts by introducing strategic management and defining it. The section 3.9 The collaborative and supportive approach of the Pop-up Pathway and section 3.10 provides a summary.

3.1 Strategic management

Prior to a review of the literature, it is important to define the term ‘strategic management’. For this purpose, the following section presents definitions of strategic management with reference to micro and small businesses in women entrepreneurship.

3.1.1 Defining strategic management

According to Lynch (2018, p.9), strategic management is “the identification of the *purpose* of the organisation and the plans and actions to achieve that purpose”. Sarbah and Out-Nyarko (2014) explain that generally, the strategy¹⁹ is a simple systematic way which assists businesses to analyse and recognise the business’s current situation and to analyse the external threats and opportunities in order that the internal capabilities and resources can be effectively utilised. Then it is paramount important to identify and determine the future situation and confidently choose the right direction to achieve the set short-term and long-term goals.

For David (2013), strategic management means “the art and science of formulating, implementing and evaluating cross-functional decisions that enable an organisation to achieve its objectives” (p.35). However, Charles *et al.* (2015) show that many researchers have viewed the term strategic management differently. In the same vein, Miller (2011) noted that strategic management in small firms is seen as a complex and multifaceted process. However, other researchers (Vaoberda *et al.*, 2010) argue that the size of the organisation does not necessarily reduce the importance of creating a strategy towards gaining a competitive advantage.

¹⁹ Strategies are formulated by organisations in order to achieve a more favourable position (Feurer & Chaharbaghi, 1995).

Researchers in women-owned small businesses argue that strategic management “is not only important for larger organisations but for small businesses as well”, (Rue & Ibrahim, 1998; Deya *et al.*, 2015, p.251), and they have seen strategic planning as one of the contributing factors to the success of women-owned micro and small business (Deya, 2015).

3.1.2 Strategic management in women-owned businesses

In a study investigating women-owned small business, Sovick (2017) identified strategic management as one of the major factors in the success of women-owned businesses. Moreover, Sovick (2017) identifies the importance of skills in managerial strategies and decisions taken in managing day-to-day business activities. Similarly, Branker *et al.* (1998) found that women micro-business owners who followed best strategic planning practice have performed well, achieving a higher level of business performance. They also identified (a) business owners’ entrepreneurial competence, (b) managerial competence, and (c) application of strategies, as important.

3.1.3 Strategic management and the Pop-up Pathway

After conducting a thematic review of the previous literature in the field of women-owned micro and small business, the researcher identified that developing a strategic framework for women pop-up owners is one of the best solutions to strategically²⁰ establish, manage and develop their micro-retail pop-ups. The new framework is designed to assist women micro-retail pop-up owners to (a) set business goals, (b) bring strategy into the retail business life cycle as part of its day-to-day business activities and decision-making process, (c) recognise a dynamic path

²⁰ “(a) strategy is a plan, or something equivalent – a direction, a guide or course of action into the future, a path to get from here to there, etc” (Mintzberg, 2000, p.23).

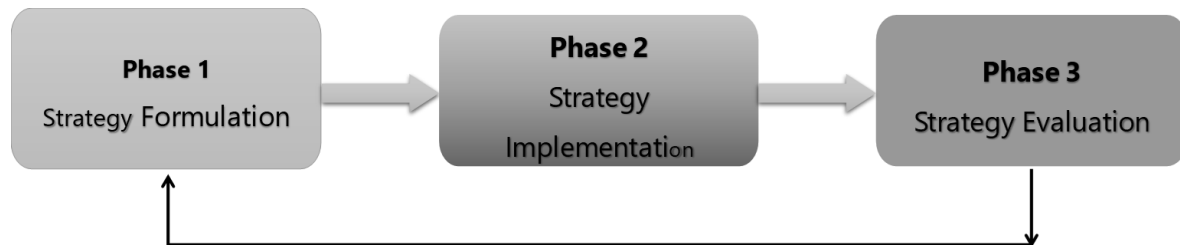
“(b) Strategy is also a pattern, that is, consistency in behaviour over time” (ibid).

(pattern) for goal realisation and (d) continually involve them in developing their business management knowledge and skills (Feurer & Chaharbaghi, 1995). Some of the considered reasons are: strategic management assists women micro-retail pop-up owners to (i) create a roadmap (blueprint) and set realistic goals and successfully achieve them, (ii) evaluate and modify them to adjust to the rapidly changing environment, (iii) develop their skills, (iv) manage finance, (v) identify threats and opportunities, develop products and information systems to build a strong and significant link to achieve higher business performance.

3.2 Stages of strategic management

Considering the theories and models in strategic management, previous literature offers “literally hundreds of models of a process by which strategy could supposedly be formally developed and operationalised” (Mintzberg, 2000, p.35). Some of these concepts and techniques have focused on how business can utilise resources, strengths, skills and opportunities to overcome the challenges, risks and threats they encounter and would arise within the environment (Feurer & Chaharbaghi, 1995). In other words, the business can conduct an environmental analysis to identify the ideal position of their business, which is known as a traditional approach to strategy formulation (Feurer & Chaharbaghi, 1995, p.39). Based on the internal and external environment analysis, David (2013) suggests that there are a further three formalised different stages in strategic management which are considered to be within a more systematic approach, namely (1) strategy formulation, (2) strategy implementation, and (3) strategy evaluation which can be depicted as below in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Strategic management phases



Synthesised from David (2013); Mintzberg et al. (2003)

The view of David (2013) is supported by Dudzeviviute and Peleckiene (2010), Mintzberg *et al.* (2003) and Feurer *et al.* (1995). According to David, there are strategists who, because of their own philosophies, will not give consideration to some strategic views. Strategists will differ in their attitudes, values, ethics, willingness to take risks, concern for social responsibility, concern for profitability and concern for short-run versus long-run aims as well as in their management style. Likewise, the mainstream approach researchers (Acur & Bititci, 2004; Bear & Pawlack, 2010) have challenged some of David's conclusions, arguing that there are four phases in strategic management, which include (i) analysis of internal and external business environment and strategy, (ii) formulation, (iii) implementation, and (iv) evaluation.

According to Farjoun (2002), Kessler and Kelley (2001) and Dooley *et al.* (2000),²¹ there is a distinct separation between strategy formulation and the implementation phases. This view is supported by Mintzberg *et al.* (2003), Feurer *et al.* (1995), and Dudzeviviute and Peleckiene (2010). In the same vein, Brew and Hunt (1999) suggest that strategy formulation and implementation phases need to be separated to achieve improved strategy outcomes. This view

²¹ However, researchers have not come to a conclusion or settled the term of separation in strategy formulation and implementation (Bear and Pawlak, 2010).

is supported by Andrews (1971), Chandler (1962), Ansoff (1965), Rumelt *et al.* (1994), Brew & Hunt (1999) and Moussetis (2011). Farjoun (2002) also highlighted that there is a separation between these two phases within the strategic management process and additionally, the view of Brew and Hunt is supported by Kessler and Kelley (2000), Barney (2001), and Dooley *et al.* (2000). But, contentiously, this view has been challenged by a number of researchers. They argue that this approach could be unsuccessful due to the changes in the business environment before the implementation of the developed strategy.

However, it should be clearly taken on board that Wang and Shi (2011) cautiously point out that the strategy formation and the implementation process in small businesses are very different to those of large-scale business. This view is supported by Charles *et al.* (2015, p.4) who stated that “the concept of strategic management is viewed differently by scholars of small enterprises”. In the same vein, Miller (2011) notes that strategic management in small firms is a complex and multifaceted process. Likewise, in their seminal article, Damke *et al.* (2018) identify environmental factors, the business process and owner’s orientation as the major causes of strategy formulation in micro businesses. In this study the researcher has specifically identified the strategy formulation and implementation as two separate phases because of their importance and interrelation in developing the strategic framework for women micro-retail pop-up owners. The following section presents the strategy formulation.

3.3 Strategy formation

In strategy formulation, several lines of evidence highlight the importance of integrating environment factors, organisational structural factors, strategic ideas, organisational capabilities and resources (Damke *et al.*, 2018). In a follow-up study, Feurer and Chaharbaghi (1995) found that a number of previous researchers had followed traditional approaches in strategy

formulation. During this stage some of the activities conducted by businesses can be considered as scanning the internal and external environments to recognise the changing environmental conditions and to adopt a strategy revision in the evaluation of the business performance. Such a revision can be based on earnings per share, return on investment and taking proactive and correct actions. According to Feurer and Chaharbaghi the reason for this is that when the strategic approach is applied it could easily fail due to the changes that have already taken place within the business environment.

The strategy formation phase is considered as the ‘action stage’ (Persaud *et al.*, 2016) which includes translating the business’s strategy into reality via findings, and then allocating resources for the implementation of the strategy. Strategy formulation assists a business to develop (a) a strategic supportive culture, (b) an effective business structure, (c) redirected marketing efforts, (d) accessing, obtaining and allocating funding and resources, (f) information systems, and (g) strategy execution to achieve the highest business performance (Lynch, 2018; David, 2013). However, researchers state that the strategy formulation in small business is complex and different from large-scale businesses (Damke *et al.*, 2018). In consideration of the strategic management process of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups, there is a need to adapt their business models in order to minimise resistance to change and to adapt production and operation processes to meet women-specific needs. In view of the aforementioned considerations, here the researcher benefits from the emergent approach in developing the Pop-up Pathway (Mintzberg, 2000), and receives interest from those involved in the discipline of marketing. Next, the theoretical foundation is built by adapting “The Design School Model”²².

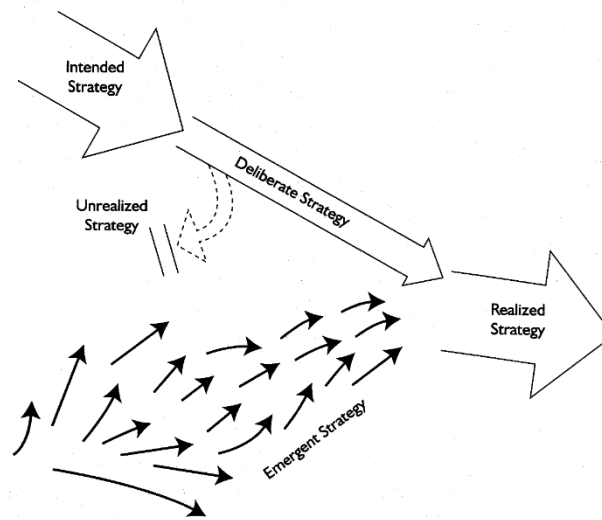
²² “builds on the belief that strategy formation is a process of conceptions – the use of a few basic ideas to design strategy” (Mintzberg, 2000, p.36).

3.3.1 Adaption of the Design School Model

Literature on strategic management highlights ten schools of strategy formulation (Mintzberg, 2000). The Design School Model is one of the ten schools of strategy formulation, focusing on achieving “the balance between” an organisation’s internal capabilities and external forces that are harmful and favourable to the organisation (Sarbah & Out-Nyarko, 2014, p.231). The model synthesises the business development “concepts” and activities into a well-established framework as a continuous “process” (Mintzber, 2000, p.36).

The Design School Model (Mintzberg, 2000), which endorses a prescriptive view of strategy formulation, has been considered to be the most relevant model for developing strategies for women micro-retail pop-up owners. Within the strategy formulation phase, women micro-retail pop-up owners are able to conduct both an internal and external environmental analysis which can be identified as the first action phase essential to the translation of the business’s strategy into reality (Persaud *et al.*, 2016; Carpenter & Sanders, 2007). Considering the Design School Model, Mintzberg stated that it is important for businesses to recognise and consider whether or not intended strategies have been fully realised as illustrated as below, in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2: Intended and realised strategy



Source : Mintzberg *et al.* (2005, p.12)

According to Lynch (2018), the analytical phase of the emergent approach identifies three phases, namely: (i) conducting a business environment analysis, (ii) identification of an organisation's competencies and available resources and (iii) identification and creation of a vision statement with a complementary mission statement and the definition of goals and objectives which assists in the identification of a clear path.

However, David in his Strategic Management Concepts textbook has put the third element before the other two, (Nag *et al.*, 2007), and suggests that in strategy formulation, organisations need to set their goals first and then identify the ways of how to reach the set goals. David (2013) points out that vision and mission statements are essential to strategy formulation and to developing identifiable strategies as well as the necessary evaluation of the strategy implementation process.

In this study the researcher follows the strategy formation process, suggested by David, in developing the Pop-up Pathway. This means that firstly employing the identification of the pop-up's vision, mission and goals, concurs with David's view. Secondly, it means analysing the pop-up's internal environment in order to assist women pop-up owners to determine their strengths as well as their weaknesses, and the opportunities available to them, as well as any threats which can arise in the external environment, along with the resources and capabilities to deal with them. This process will assist women pop-up owners to identify available strategic options and to make a selection from them for the realisation of their set goals.

3.3.2 Creating vision and mission statements and setting goals

To date, previous studies have confirmed the effectiveness of creating a vision statement and a mission statement, both of which are recognised as essential tools in a strategic management process within organisations. David (2013, p.78) states that “vision is a possible and desirable future state of an organisation that includes specific goals, whereas mission is more associated with behaviour and the present”.

3.3.2.1 Vision

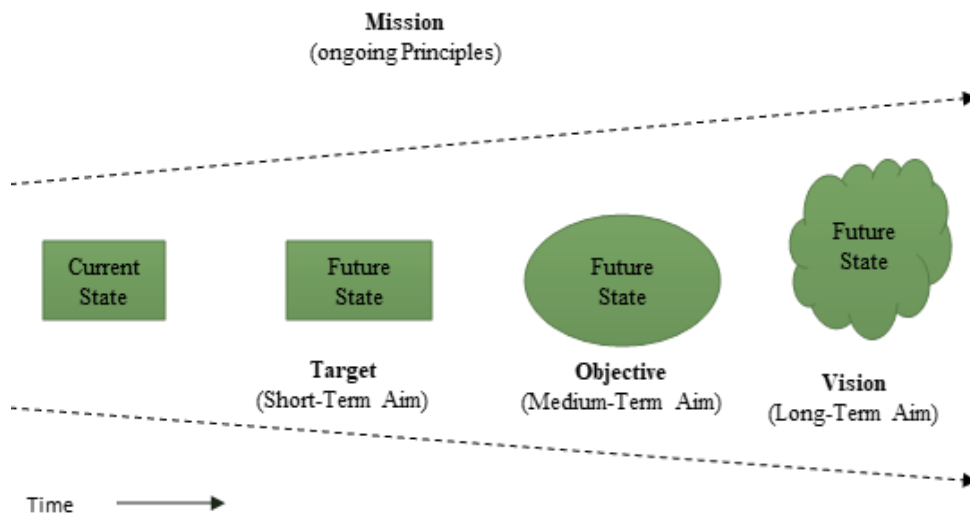
In view of all that has been mentioned so far, the researcher suggests the importance of creating a vision statement as the first step (David, 2013) of the Pop-up Pathway. ‘A vision statement provides direction for all planning activities’ (ibid, p.84). Overall, there is some evidence to indicate that most successful businesses have a clear vision and well-defined values (Purcell *et al.*, 2004, p.vii). Lynch (2018) states that ‘vision provides a clear picture of the organisation’s “desirable future” condition (p.198).

According to Hania & Ahmad (2017, p.93) “vision can be defined as where the organisation wants to be in the future”. Accordingly, vision can be identified as a picture of the future created in the wake of a clear purpose, which women micro-retail pop-up owners specifically choose in the light of their present state (Lynch, 2018). However, in this study, creating a vision (or imaginative picture of the business) and setting goals can be challenging for women micro-retail pop-up owners, especially in overcoming challenges which arise within the external business environment and having to compete with their competitors in their particular industry and in the retail market in general. In the following section there is a discussion of what businesses need to do in order to achieve the vision, in other words - mission.

3.3.2.2 Mission

As a business management concept, a mission statement demonstrates an organisation’s values and beliefs (Khalifa, 2012). It also defines the purpose and priorities of the organisation and assists in establishing its identity, laying a strong foundation for its future operation (Wit & Meyer, 2015). This information is illustrated as shown below in Figure 3.3. Based on the Ashridge Mission Model, (Sudbury-Riley, 2008), a clear and well-designed mission statement demonstrates the organisation’s values and priorities, and defines the specific products and services that it offers under its market terms and clear strategic directions for the future (David, 2013). In other words, it addresses the basic question that all strategists must face, namely, what is our business? Another way of putting it is to say that the mission statement is a management concept (Khalifa, 2012) and a declaration of a business’s ‘reason for being’ which raises the question what really is my business? Vision and mission statements can be used as effective determining factors in the formulation of strategies (David, 2013; Lynch, 2018), the Pop-up Pathway as illustrate below, Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3: Vision and mission



Synthesised from: Wit and Meyer (2010)

The key advantages of having a clear vision statement and a well-established mission statement can be summarised as below in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Advantages of creating a vision statement and a mission statement

Advantages of creating a vision statement and a mission statement	Reference
Firms with formalised mission statements have twice the average return on shareholders' equity than those firms without a formalised mission statement.	Rarick and Vitton (1995)
A positive relationship between mission statement and organisational performance. Firms using mission statements have a 30% higher return on certain financial measures than those without such statements.	Orhan <i>et al.</i> (2014)
Getting together the manager and employees in developing the vision and mission, provides direction to achieve higher organisational performance. An effective mission statement generates the impression that a firm is successful, has direction, and is worthy of time, support and investment from all socioeconomic groups of people. A clear mission statement helps to identify potential strategic options available for the organisation.	David (2013)
To ensure unanimity of purpose within the business. Assists in effectively allocating the resources of the organisation. Assists in creating an effective environment within the organisation.	Gunasekara (2016)

However, there are criticisms with some other researchers stating that having a mission statement does not specifically contribute to the financial performance. Based on the literature findings and considering the experience in strategic management, this research considered that it is important for women micro-retail pop-up owners to create a mission statement for their retail outlet as it provides clear future direction for successful operation in the UK retail market.

3.3.3.3 Goal setting

Another significant aspect of strategic management is goal setting. Vision, mission and goals setting appear to be closely linked (David, 2013; Lynch, 2018). Researchers highlight the importance of goal setting and identifying an appropriate path to pursue the set goal and then evaluating the path in consideration of the likely changes happening in the business environment. However, in a dynamic environment, such an approach can fail when the environment changes prior to the implementation of the strategy. Moreover, they suggest that it is important to a business to conduct a constant reconciliation of the business goals with the reality of the current business environment and to identify a selection of dynamic paths for updated goal realisation and the learning process. Goal setting assists small and micro businesses to identify new business ventures, avoid risks, efficiently allocate resources, and develop or expand the business activities. Likewise, the Pop-up Pathway assists them to create the vision, the mission and the goals/objectives of the business.

David suggests that once the goals have been set, the next step is to conduct: (a) an internal appraisal to understand the organisation's strengths, resources, competencies and weaknesses; (b) an external business environment analysis which will assist an organisation to identify available opportunities and unexpected threats.

3.4 Business environment analysis

In his strategic management textbook, John (1994), defines environment analysis as a procedure which assists organisations to deal with the competition in the market and address the issues arising in the social and economic environment. Further, he emphasises that environment scanning assists business owners to identify emerging situations, opportunities and threats in the market. Vezina and Sabourin (2005) have been able to show that environment scanning is a

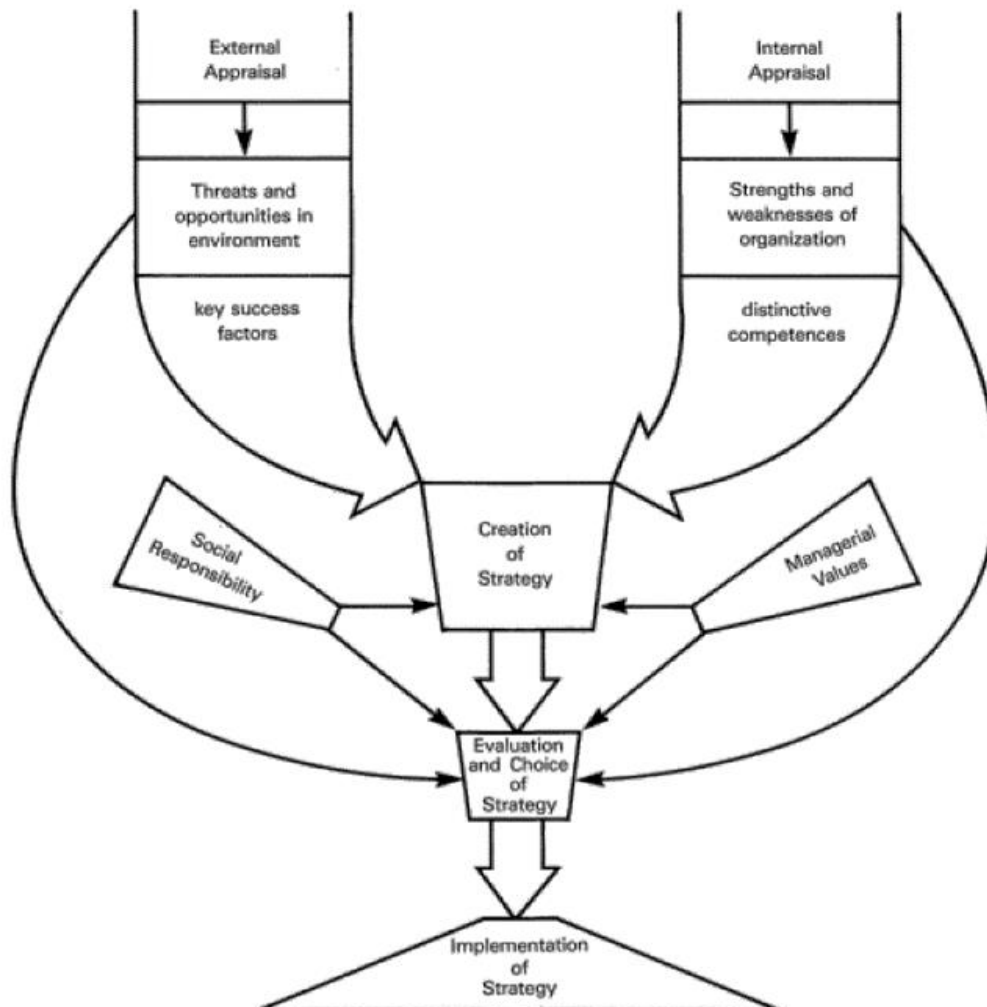
prerequisite to the concept of strategic management. Moreover, previous researchers, (Cote *et al.*, 2005), have identified environmental analysis as one of the most important requirements of the strategic management process.

Likewise, almost every paper that has been written on strategic management has included a section relating to environment scanning. In strategic management, environment analysis assists businesses to identify which business activities should be performed and how to gain maximum competitive advantage.

In this study, environment scanning has been recognised as the fourth phase of the strategic management process in developing the Pop-up Pathway. The researcher places the primary emphasis on the appraisal of women micro-retail pop-up owners' internal environment strengths and weaknesses and external environment threats and opportunities. As mentioned above, in developing the Pop-up Pathway, the study adapted the Design School Model²³ as a convenient tool (Mintzberg *et al.*, 2009) as shown in Figure 3.4.

²³ “But the real impetus for The Design School came from the General Management group at the Harvard Business School, beginning especially with the publication of its basic textbook, *Business Policy: Text and Cases*” by Learned *et al.* (Mintzberg, 2009, p.25).

Figure 3.4: Design School Model of strategy formulation



Source: Mintzberg (2000, p.37)

As shown in Figure 3.4, the model focuses on the preliminary plan of the medium to long-term development of the business. However, the real impetus for the use of this design school model in this study, came from the General Management Group at Harvard Business School which includes Mintzberg’s co-author, Kenneth Andrew who ‘stands as the most outspoken and the originator of one of the clearest statements of this school’ (Mintzberg *et al.*, 2009, p.25; Andrew, 1987). The development of the Pop-up Pathway follows the Design School Model, associated

with the Andrews text, (in Christensen *et al.*, 1982), which identified “the importance of connecting the organisation’s purpose – its mission and objectives – with its strategic options and subsequent activities” (Lynch, 2018, p.267).

The Design School Model assists women micro-retail pop-up owners to create successful strategies by asking and answering the questions of ‘where am I now?’, ‘where do I want to be?’ and ‘how am I going to get there?’ within the process of business planning. Accordingly, the Design School Model has been employed in this study as a tool to assist women micro-retail pop-up owners to anticipate (a) ‘what future retail business environments are to be likely to be and (b) how to identify and develop appropriate product-market strategies. The following Table 3.2 depicts several basic premises underlying the Design School Model and how they have been adapted in developing the Pop-up Pathway.

Table 3.2: Basic premises underlying the Design School Model

Environment analysis and strategy formulation	Creation/formulation of strategy	Evaluation of choice of strategy
Strategy formulation considered as a deliberate process of conscious thought.	Action must flow from reason.	“Effective strategies derive from a tightly controlled process of human thinking” (Mintzberg, 2009, p.30). Women micro-retail pop-up owners “know what they are really doing only if they make the strategy as ‘deliberate’ as possible” (Andrews, 1981a, p.24).
The model of strategy formation must be kept simple and informal.	The idea of corporate strategy constitutes a simple practitioner’s theory, a kind of everyman’s conceptual scheme (Andrews, 1981a).	It is important to maintain and evaluate the strategic management process as a simple process (David, 2013; Lynch, 2018).
Strategies should be one of a kind: the best ones result from a process of individualised design.	Need to consider the unique and individual conditions of the business.	Strategies have to be tailored to the individual case. It is important to maintain a clear focus during the strategy implementation process. This will allow the business to actively create and build capabilities (Mintzberg, 2009).
Design process is complete when strategy appears fully formulated, as a perspective.	The model offers little room for an incrementalism view or for emergent strategies.	Strategy formulation needs to be allowed as a continuous process during and after strategy implementation. Strategy may appear as ideas and insights which may later be formulated and implemented (David, 2013; Lynch, 2018).
Strategies should be explicit, so they have to be kept simple.	Strategies should be explicit for those who make them and if at all possible, articulated so that others in the business can understand them.	Strategies need to be clear and simple. Simplicity can be found as the core of an effective strategy (Andrew, 1981a).
Simple strategies are fully formulated so they can then be implemented.	In strategic management processes, there is a considerable distinction between strategy formulation and strategy implementation.	The Design School Model assists in generating ideas and then taking action to implement those ideas in developing the Pop-up Pathway (Mintzberg, 2005).

The model “places the primary emphasis on appraisals of the external and internal situation, the former uncovering threats and opportunities in the environment, the latter revealing strengths and opportunities of the business” (Mintzberg, 2009, p.25). Likewise, when adopting the model to this study, the emphasis was placed on business environment analysis of women micro-retail pop-up owners. The reason is that most of the women conduct their retail pop-ups within a constantly changing business environment which has a huge impact on their pop-ups and the strategic decisions they make.

Moreover, environmental analysis deals with issues that do not lend themselves to unilateral definition or solutions, even though they may critically influence the business’s operation, performance, success and survival. John (1996) stated that environmental scanning invokes and encourages business owners to examine the inside and the outside of the business such as present and prospective competitors, customers and regulators. Business owners can conduct observations and learn what is happening within the business environment. The lowest level of environmental scanning is “observations” while the highest level “is prediction or synthesis, as the business seeks to integrate signals of future events or conditions into a meaningful model upon which to build a strategy” (John, 1996, p.2). Whether the changes happen in the internal or external environment, businesses are expected to adapt according to the changes (Darrow, 1983). However, businesses have limitations when responding to the changes within the external environment. This situation emphasises the importance and the need for conducting an external and internal environmental analysis for a successful strategy formulation (Mintzberg, 2009; David, 2013; Lynch, 2018).

Accordingly, business environmental scanning assists women pop-up owners to expose events and circumstances and gain benefits. It helps them to identify the opportunities and threats

which can assist businesses in the creation of value through strategic adaption by viewing outside the business's boundaries. The reason is that, changes happening outside the business, influence performance (Dobni & Luffman, 2003). More importantly, environment analysis allows women pop-up owners to develop their retail businesses by designing and formulating a strategy as a controlled and conscious process of thought (Sarbah & Out-Nyarko, 2014). Previous researchers highlight the importance of beginning environment scanning by conducting an external environment analysis.

3.4.1. External environment analysis

The external environment can be considered as a set of forecasts made about future conditions (Mintzberg, 2009). Evidently, previous researchers have emphasised the importance of forecasting the external environment of the business "because short of being able to control the environment, an inability to predict means an inability to plan" (Mintzberg, 2009, p.53). This is because the external environment factors affect business growth and profitability (Wheeler & Hunger, 2012; Hill *et al.*, 2007) and influence the business's strategic options, as well as the decisions made in light of them.

Businesses have little control over the events in the external environment, therefore businesses need to seek to anticipate and understand them. External environment analysis assists businesses to identify and develop a finite list of opportunities that benefit business as well as those that pose threats of competition. It also highlights the characteristics of the market, government ideologies and policies that should be avoided and key variables that offer actionable responses (David, 2013, Porter, 2008, Ashill & Jobber, 2001). David's external environment scanning refers to the identification of opportunities and threats as well as competitive trends and events that could significantly benefit or harm a business's future.

Accordingly, a business's understanding of the external environment is matched with the knowledge about its internal environment to form its vision, to develop its mission, and to take actions that result in a strategic competitiveness and, potentially, an above-average return.

3.4.2 Internal environment analysis

Dyson (1990) stated that “the demand of the external environment on the organisation must be matched with the resources of the firm. The internal environment can be identified as the corporate environment of a business which has a direct and specific implication” (Hubeis & Najib, 2008, p.32). Previous researchers have identified the internal environment analysis as less complicated than the external environmental analysis as they already have information about the business.

“Internal strengths and weaknesses vary greatly” for different enterprises (Groom & David, 2001, p.22). Some of the key aspects of internal resources can be listed as follows: (a) management and organisation; (b) operations; (c) finance; and (d) other factors important for a particular business or organisation. Similarly, Mintzberg (2009) focused on the effect of the internal environment analysis which is conducted by evaluating the functional areas of the business and facilitating business owners to identify their strengths and weaknesses. Together these studies indicate that women micro-retail pop-up owners must carefully look into their businesses to identify internal strength and weakness strategic factors, in addition to resources, capabilities and competencies (Pearce & Robinson, 2013; Ireland, Hoskinson & Hitt, 2011, Hooley *et al.*, 1998).

The evidence presented in this section suggests that women pop-up owners are able to employ the Resource Based View (RBV) to take advantage of existing opportunities to give a

maximum competitive advantage (David, 2013; Lynch, 2018). However, findings from several studies suggest that, even though all businesses have their own strengths and weaknesses, it is difficult to find a business which is equally strong or weak in all areas. In view of all that has been mentioned so far, one may suppose that it is important for business owners to seek to take advantage of the businesses strengths and disregard the weaknesses.

Directions having been established, there will be a constant scanning and analysing of factors within the internal and external environments (Sarbah & Olu-Nyarko, 2014). This focus should lead to a continuous refinement of the pathway involving the business assets in periodic reappraisal of the competitive environment. The Pop-up Pathway is there to assist women micro-retail pop-up owners to formulate strategies towards success and survival in the market.

3.5 Pattern towards a successful transition

“With strategic decisions having enduring effects and being difficult to reverse, a key issue in strategic planning and decision-making is the uncertainty of the future” (Dyson, 1990, p.11). This is especially relevant to the UK retail market and is why the Pop-up Pathway focuses on possibilities as well as on problems or issues of uncertainty to help business owners to deal with an uncertain future, encouraging them to continually ask where the business wants to be and how it can get there. The reason is women-owned micro-retail pop-ups operate in an economic, political and social environment and aspects of this environment affect performance, but the future state of the environment when key decisions have to be taken, is as yet unknown (Stoffels, 1994).

In this study, the Pop-up Pathway has been developed in such a way as to use the uncertainty for the benefit of women micro-retail pop-up owners. The Pop-up Pathway is being created by

deploying the entrepreneurial mindset as a way of thinking about micro-retail pop-ups that capture the benefits of uncertainty. Once the thinking of women micro-retail pop-up owners becomes second nature, they will be able to continuously identify uncertain yet high potential business opportunities and exploit those opportunities with speed and confidence.

With this fact in mind, uncertainty becomes an ally instead of an enemy. There are three ways in which the Pop-up Pathway is different from the strategic frameworks of women entrepreneurs in general.

Firstly, since successful women pop-up owners are action-oriented, so is the Pop-up Pathway. Each step of the Pop-up Pathway is intended to provide women pop-up owners with ideas that they can put to work immediately, even if their situation is uncertain.

Secondly, the Pop-up Pathway has been kept simple and informal and the concepts, as described, kept simple to use (Mintzberg *et al.*, 2009). When women micro-retail pop-up owners are experiencing rapid progress, complexity only creates confusion and delay.

Thirdly, the Pop-up Pathway is intended to be developed through the participation of women pop-up owners. Women micro-retail pop-up owners play a central role in formulating, validating and evaluating the newly built Pop-up Pathway.

Action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway start simply, after which they can add to the level of challenge as the Pop-up Pathway moves on. “A huge part of becoming an entrepreneurial leader is learning to simplify complexity” (McGrath & MacMillan, 2000, p.2).

The entrepreneurial mindset assists women pop-up owners to begin to think and act like unusual people (habitual entrepreneurs²⁴) and hone their skills in forging opportunities from uncertainty.

The Pop-up Pathway assists women micro-retail pop-up owners to rationally analyse and identify their external opportunities and threats along with their internal strengths and weaknesses. It also helps them to set long-term goals and identify alternative strategies and choose best suitable strategies to pursue (Lynch, 2018). Academic literature on strategic management in micro businesses reveals the emergence of several contrasting tools. Moreover, “there are hundreds of different strategic planning models” available (Mintzberg, 2009, p.51). It seems that there is no single correct approach to the conducting of an internal analysis. However, the researcher is adhering to the same basic SWOT analysis idea but adapting it to develop the Pop-up Pathway. SWOT analysis has been adopted as an effective tool to conduct an internal analysis of a pop-up and summarise its current position (Lynch, 2018; Baines *et al.*, 2012; Porter, 2008). The following section shows how the elements of SWOT analysis and TOWS matrix have been adopted in this study.

3.5.1 Description of SWOT analysis and TOWS matrix

One of the main central tools of the Design School Model, has been adapted for the Pop-up Pathway to conduct environment scanning²⁵. According to David (2013, p.37), “the strategic management process is based on the belief that organisations should continually monitor internal and external events and trends so that timely changes can be made as needed”. As a

²⁴ “Habitual entrepreneurs have made careers out of starting businesses, some working within existing businesses and some in independent start-ups” (McGrath & MacMillan, 2000, p.2).

²⁵ “Environment scanning: a methodology for coping with external competitive, social, economic and technical issues that may be difficult to observe or diagnose but that cannot be ignored and will not go away” (Stoffels, 2009, p.1).

strategic management tool, SWOT analysis has been adapted in this study to develop the strategic framework, namely the Pop-up Pathway, for women micro-retail pop-up owners because of its simplicity and value (Gurel & Tat, 2018).

3.5.2 SWOT Analysis

The Pop-up Pathway decouples the complexity of women micro-retail pop-up owners' entrepreneurial awareness into an identification of Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats and Opportunities (SWOT), (Lynch, 2018; David, 2013), which was originally explained by Learned *et al.* (1969). SWOT analysis can be identified as a simple but perhaps most common, potential, significant and powerful analytical tool in identifying factors that influence the development of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups (Baines *et al.*, 2012; Pickton & Wright, 1998). It helps to categorise the significant environmental factors (internal and external) as it contains both theoretical and practical insight.

The Pop-up Pathway is designed to assist women pop-up owners to conduct an analysis of internal strengths and weaknesses in one dimension, coupled with external opportunities and threats in another dimension, in order to gain competitive advantage. The internal environment analysis is conducted to identify the organisational strengths and weaknesses of business owners and their capabilities and resources. In contrast, the external environment analysis is conducted to identify available threats and opportunities. Importantly, this analysis activity will assist them to be proactive and exert control over their future destiny (David & David, 2017).

3.5.2.1 Strengths

Strength can be identified as “something an organisation is good at doing or something that gives it particular credibility and market advantage”, (Baines *et al.*, 2013, p.170), e.g., financial

resources, broad product line and no debt (Osita *et al.*, 2014). In this study, the strengths of women micro-retail pop-up owners can be identified (a) as something that they are doing well, valuable know-how, human, physical, tangible or intangible assets including expertise, capabilities, personalities, qualities and distinct features, (b) higher levels of customer demand for products and services, human resources, broad product line, no debt and a committed group of employees or people etc., or (c) their characteristics and attributes which assist them to achieve their pop-up business mission and objectives, and continue to succeed in the retail market (Osita, 2014). Identification of strengths provides more insight into the identification of resources, capabilities and competencies.

3.5.2.2 Weaknesses

“Weakness is something an organisation lacks or performs in an inferior way in comparison to others” (Baines *et al.*, 2012, p.170). Baines *et al.* (2012) state that weakness is a quality in a business which displays a lack or inferior performance in comparison with others. In this study, weaknesses can be identified as the qualities that prevent women pop-up owners from accomplishing their mission and achieving their full entrepreneurial potential (Osita *et al.*, 2014). An external environment analysis assist women micro retail pop-up owners to identify threats and opportunities. The identification of threats will show how the business could evolve because of them. Identification of opportunities will show how a business could be improved by taking advantage of them (Gurel & Tat, 2017).

3.5.2.3 Threats

“A threat is something that at some time in the future may destabilise and reduce the potential performance of the organisation” (Baines *et al.*, 2012, p.170). The main obstructions and unfavourable situations, (Strategic Management, 2004), encountered by women micro-retail

pop-up owners in developing their pop-ups can be seen as a threat to the development of their pop-ups in the present as well as in the future. Threats can be seen as new pop-ups entering the retail market, slow developments in the industry and the market, changes to technology in addition to government regulations. The Pop-up Pathway assists them to consider the obstacles they encounter and identify competitors' strengths including different marketing communication methods. Using the Pop-up Pathway, owners can consider changes to the retail market as well as new trends to the economy, industry, market, product and customers.

3.5.2.4 Opportunities

According to Baines *et al.* (2012, p.170), “an opportunity is the potential to advance the organisation by the development and satisfaction of an unfulfilled market need”. Identification of future opportunities in the market will assist women pop-up owners to successfully achieve the goals they are currently working towards. They can find specific ways to attract more customers with perhaps the identification of potential products according to customer needs and desires. The Pathway is assisting women pop-up owners to analyse the business environment and develop their pop-up businesses while managing family, societal and cultural responsibilities. This analysis is depicted here below in Figure 3.5.

Figure 3.5: Environment analysis of the Pop-up Pathway

Internal Strengths	Internal Weaknesses	External Opportunities	External Threats
Characteristics that give advantages to others in the industry.	Internal factors that are unfavourable to the achievement of a pop-up retail's goals.	External elements in the environment that benefit the pop-up business.	External elements in the environment that could cause trouble for the women-owned pop-up.
Internal factors that are favourable to the achievement of a pop-up retail business's objectives.		External factors that are favourable to the achievement of a pop-up's goals.	External factors that are unfavourable to the achievement of a pop-up's goals.
Everything that we, as a business are good at?	What do we need to get to grips with?	Is anything happening outside which might benefit us if we take advantage of it?	Is there anything happening outside from which we need to be able to defend ourselves?

Source: Gallellalage *et al.* (2020)

The Pop-up Pathway define the key success factors and helps in the design of action-learning activities to find the strategic ‘fit’ (from available strategic alternatives) between what the environment wants and what the pop-up has to offer, between what the pop-up business needs and what the environment can provide. To avoid a potential pitfall associated with the SWOT analysis framework, the researcher benefits from the TOWS matrix as a complementary framework in developing the Pop-up Pathway by using business strengths and identification of opportunities.

3.5.3 TOWS matrix

TOWS stand for Threats, Opportunities, Weaknesses and Strengths and it is a pathway to invest in strengths and turn threats to opportunities and weaknesses to strengths. Accordingly, the

Pop-up Pathway facilitates a clear understanding of how critical the retail market competition is and assists in predicting current and future threats as well as opportunities within the retail market. Some of the reasons considered are neatly delineated steps, each articulated with lots of checklists and techniques and giving special attention to the setting of goals on the front end and the elaboration of budgets and operating plans on the back end.

The TOWS matrix uses a structured approach. It uses concepts to assist women pop-up owners to conduct a market situation analysis and develop strategies. These strategies should enable pop-up owners to achieve their goals and missions by turning weaknesses into strengths and threats into opportunities. By this means, owners can thoroughly examine, identify and develop their business management capabilities and entrepreneurial orientation (Lynch, 2018; David, 2013). Hence, they can identify the areas they need to improve and promote and differentiate their businesses from their competitors. Pop-up owners' market orientation and learning orientation will be conditioned by their entrepreneurial orientation and affect performance (Gutierrez *et al.*, 2014). They will be able to gain a solid understanding of where their pop-ups currently stand, and then identify available strategic choices followed by the formulation of a realistic and actionable mind map to move forward successfully.

The Pop-up Pathway assists women micro-retail pop-up owners to identify relationships between the aforementioned factors and then base strategies on them to gain greater market prominence in the future for their pop-ups (Dyson, 1998). Conceptually conducting strategic planning, including analysing the current and expected future situation, determining the future direction of the business and developing means for achieving the mission might be seen as comparatively easy (Lynch, 2018; David, 2013). However, in reality, women micro-retail pop-up owners will invariably find the strategic planning process to be complex. The process

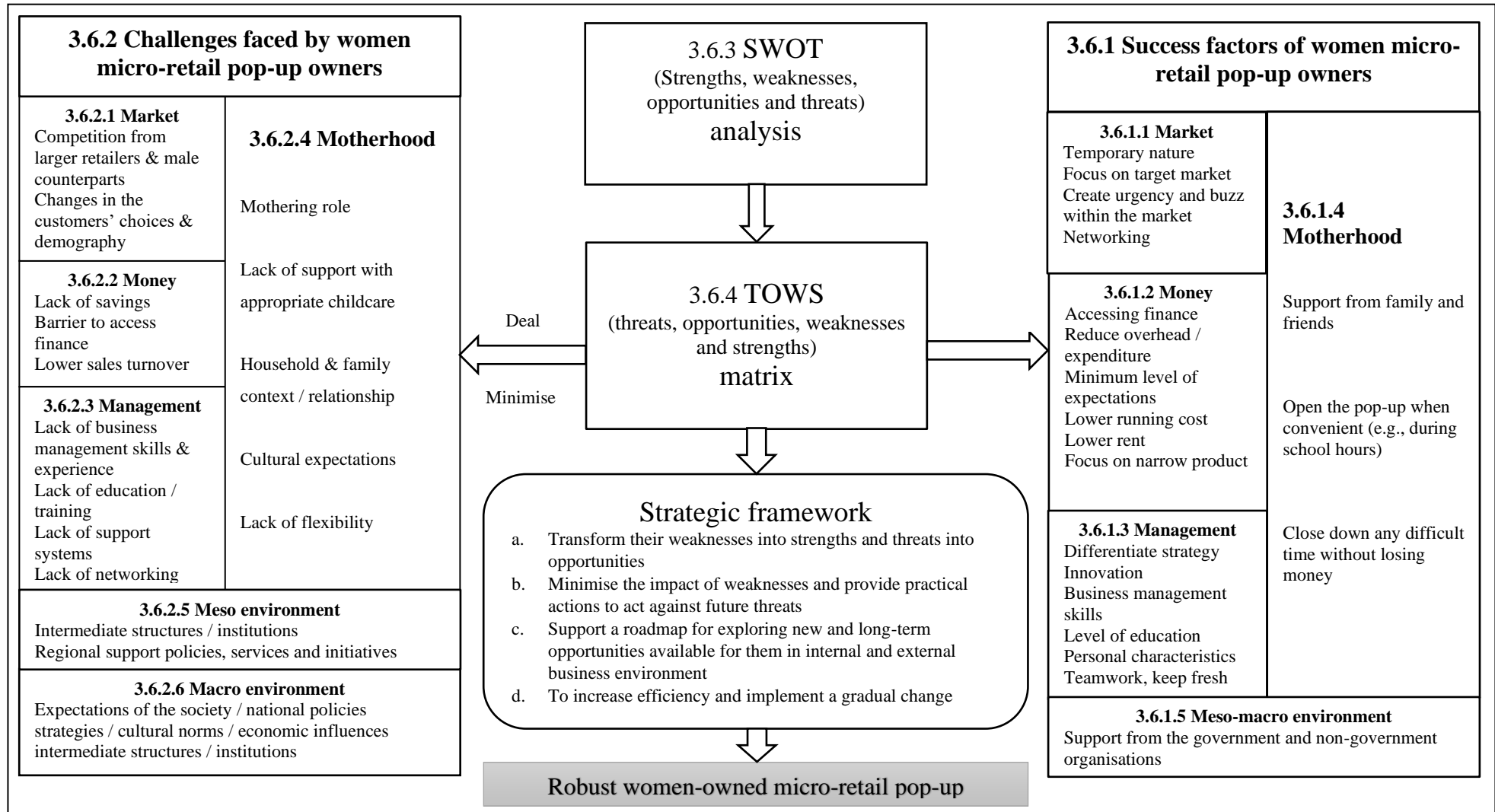
includes a systematic analysis to identify external environment factors and match them with individual capabilities and resources. Accordingly, the following section has two main purposes: (i) to review the general consideration in developing the Pop-up Pathway; (ii) to introduce the TOWS matrix (Dyson, 1998).

Wehrich (1982) developed TOWS as the next step of SWOT in developing alternative strategies: adapting the TOWS matrix to develop the Pop-up Pathway by combining environmental factors may require distinct strategic choices (Dyson, 1998). However, there are some other ‘tools’ that have been used effectively in strategic management, for example, Business Portfolio Matrix and General Electric’s Business Screen. However, both matrices “appear to give insufficient attention to the threats and constraints in the external environment” (Dyson, 1998, p.27). Hence, to address that deficiency the TOWS matrix has been adapted here in this study because of its wider scope and emphasis. SWOT analysis and TOWS matrix now appear as a conceptual framework for the analysis that provides a means to develop strategies, along with the 5Ms theoretical framework which is discussed in chapter 2.

3.6 Conceptual Framework of the study

The conceptual framework for this study was developed based on the 5Ms theoretical framework, SWOT analysis and TOWS matrix (Brush *et al.*, 2009; Lynch, 2018). Miles and Huberman (1994) defined a conceptual framework as a visual product which “explains, either graphically or in narrative form the main things to be studied – the key factors” and “the concepts and the presumed relationships among them” (p.18). That is the reasoning behind the conceptual framework of this study consists of concepts, expectations, theories, adapted theories, strategic management tools and the presumed relationships among them, all of which are depicted as below in Figure 3.6.

Figure 3.6: Conceptual framework aim: Sustainable retail presence for women micro-retail pop-up owners



As shown in Figure 3.6, the researcher develops the conceptual framework to make sense of the rich detailed evidence from the theory and its application within the real practical business environment. Accordingly, the study adapts strategic management tools such as SWOT analysis and the TOWS matrix, which “can be both contextual and have a general application by analysing them for transferability” for women-owned micro-retail pop-ups to survive successfully in the UK retail market beyond five years (Shannon-Baker, 2015, p.4).

3.7 The strategic management process followed in developing the Pop-up Pathway

The above discussed strategies can now be based on logical combinations of factors related to matching the external threats and opportunities with the internal weaknesses and strengths of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups (Dyson, 1998). Yes, the researcher considers that it is important for women pop-up owners to scan and analyse up-to-date information. What type of opportunities are available or will be available? What type of threats exist and will arise within the environment? What are the changes taking place in the UK retail market?

With these matters in mind the TOWS matrix assists women micro-retail pop-up owners not only to (a) utilise their experience, current information and knowledge, to identify the goals of their business and assist them to identify and utilise opportunities to overcome threats, but also to (b) maximise and utilise their strengths to overcome the weaknesses and perform well to improve their future retail business activities. It will also help women to “use a rational approach toward anticipating, responding to and even altering the future environment” to remain effective (Dyson, 1998, p.17).

This process is complemented by other factors identified and subscribed within four conceptually distinct strategic groups as follows:-

3.7.1 Strengths - Opportunities (SO) Maxi-Maxi strategy

Strength-driven strategy (how to utilise strengths) – most successful women business owners' testimonies prove that women have a lot to offer in the business world and that they are well motivated to build a business. Capitalising on their strengths, they can utilise resources to take advantage of the market for its products and services. They will often attempt to get into a situation where they can work with their strengths to take advantage of opportunities.

3.7.2 Strengths - Threats (ST) Maxi-Mini Strategy

This strategy is based on the maximum utilisation of pop-up strengths to minimise threats. Successful women business owners emphasise collaboration over competition by sharing experiences and helping each other. For example, networking events facilitate women business owners to learn from others (FSB, 2016; Vistaprint, 2016).

3.7.3. Weaknesses – Opportunities (WO) Mini-Maxi Strategy

This strategy attempts to minimise the impact of weaknesses by utilising strengths, maximising the opportunities, and taking practical action against existing threats, thus avoiding future threats. Weakness is the absence of strength. The majority of women business owners state that they need to be seen as entrepreneurs (without any reference to women) so that they can build a purely positive image. The Pop-up Pathway assists women pop-up owners to take advantage of their strengths and exploit opportunities to overcome their weaknesses. For example, brainstorming sessions help women pop-up owners to recognise their inner strengths.

3.7.4 Weaknesses – Threats (WT) Mini-Mini Strategy

The aim of the Weaknesses – Threats strategy is to attempt to minimise the impact of both weaknesses and threats. A woman micro-retail pop-up owner who encounters external threats and internal weaknesses may indeed be in a precarious position.

The following Table, 3.3, presents how the study adapts TOWS matrix and conducts the situational analysis in developing the Pop-up Pathway.

Table 3.3: The TOWS matrix – A tool for situational analysis

<p>Step 1: Identify the vision and mission of the pop-up business and define its future goals (a) the kind of pop-up; (b) geographic domain; (c) competitive situation; (d) top management/owner’s orientation.</p>			
<p>Internal Factors</p>	<p>Step 4: Prepare a Strengths & Weaknesses (SW) audit in the fields of (a) management and organisation; (b) operations; (C) finance; (d) marketing; (e) other</p>		
	<p>Step 5: Develop alternatives. Step 6: Consider strategic options, make choices and actions.</p>	<p>Internal Strengths (S)</p>	<p>Internal Weaknesses (W)</p>
<p>External factors</p>	<p>Steps 1 to 6 – test for consistency. Step 7: Prepare contingency plan.</p>		
<p>Step 2: Identify and evaluate the following factors: economic, social, political, demographic, products and technology, market and competition. Step 3: Prepare a forecast, make predictions and an assessment of the future.</p>	<p>List of external Opportunities (O):</p>	<p>Strengths & Opportunities (SO) “Maxi-Maxi” Strategy - strategies that use strengths to maximise opportunities.</p>	<p>Weaknesses & Opportunities (WO): “Mini-Maxi” Strategy - strategies that minimise weaknesses by taking advantage of opportunities.</p>
	<p>List of external risks, some seen as Threats (T).</p>	<p>Strengths & Threats (ST) “Maxi-Mini” Strategy - strategies that use strengths to minimise threats.</p>	<p>Weaknesses & Threats (WT): “Mini-Mini” Strategy - strategies that minimise Weaknesses and avoid threats.</p>
<p>SO: Strategies that utilise opportunities that are a good fit for the organisation’s strengths. ST: Strategies that indicate ways for the organisation to use its strengths to counter external threats. WO: Strategies that help the organisation to overcome its weaknesses to pursue opportunities. WT: Strategies that help the organisation to prevent its weaknesses from rendering it vulnerable to external threats.</p>			

Synthesised from: Wehrich (2012)

The TOWS matrix supports the drawing and developing of a roadmap for exploring new and long-term opportunities available to women in the internal and external pop-up business environment: mind mapping assists women pop-up owners to recognise the long-term path for developing their businesses and increasing efficiency by gradual change to survive in the retail market (Baines *et al.*, 2012). Women pop-up owners can find the right move to make by reconsidering their own terms, experimenting and then continually applying themselves. This will enable them to utilise opportunities and handle the resultant changes.

In developing the Pop-up Pathway, SWOT analysis has been adapted to the internal prospects (strengths and weaknesses) and the external circumstances (threats and opportunities) and then taken into consideration women-specific characteristics and needs as well as their social and cultural expectations. There has also been an acceptance of the micro size and temporary nature of retail pop-ups in conceptualising, designing and developing the Pop-up Pathway. However, SWOT analysis and TOWS matrix needed to be adapted to cater for women-specific characteristics and the temporary nature of micro-retail pop-ups, as a contrast to the normal globally recognised perspective. Hence the emphasis is on action-based training for women micro-retail pop-up owners.

3.8 Adaption of SWOT analysis and TOWS matrix to match women-specific characteristics for the temporary micro-retail pop-up

SWOT analysis and TOWS matrix have been adapted in this study to match the characteristics of women micro-retail pop-up owners. Their characteristics such as values, attitudes, skills, previous business management experience, traits and educational background have an influence for gaining competitive advantage and improving competency but there can now be a further improvement through SWOT analysis and TOWS matrix (Rwigema *et al.*, 2008;

Mandishaya *et al.*, 2015). The following section explains the adaptation requirements of SWOT analysis and TOWS matrix to address and meet women-specific needs beyond the globally recognised general entrepreneurial perspective. The section addresses women-specific characteristics related to micro size, the temporary nature, and the retail industry. The Pop-up Pathway aims to provide convenient support for women micro-retail pop-up owners within the environment of collaboration which it creates and foster. It gives consideration to the practical implications, challenges and difficulties of adapting the SWOT and TOWS tools due to the women's limited experience in business development and management in a practical context (Pickton & Wright, 1998).

As mentioned before, women-owned businesses in the UK are growing in importance and numbers (Brush, 2006; Shneor & Jenssen, 2014). When considering previous studies in context, most researchers place the emphasis on examined women “at stages of active entrepreneurial engagement and hence at the action stage of behaviour” (Shneor & Jenssen, 2014, p.15). Also, few researchers have identified that women entrepreneurs have distinct differences in decision-making styles, risk tolerance, business goals, financing of the business, management styles, networking ability and motivation (Shmalian, 2016).

Academic research into women-owned micro-retail pop-ups remains relatively limited and as a consequence insight into similarities and differences between women entrepreneurs and women micro-retail pop-up owners at the intention formation stage remain scarce. Previous researchers have not paid any attention to the identifying of women micro-retail pop-up owners' knowledge in relation to setting long-term goals and understanding the strategic management process in developing their retailing businesses.

Until recently, there has been no reliable evidence to show how women manage their time in developing their temporary micro-retail pop-ups differently from women entrepreneurs in general. The reason is that women micro business owners in particular have limited time to attend and participate in training programmes due to their family caring responsibilities and social and cultural expectations.

Hence, the researcher has focused on women-specific characteristics and the disadvantaged situation they can encounter (e.g., childcare and family responsibilities). Furthermore, the researcher has comprehensively examined women specific characteristics as regards their strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities which can have a decisive impact on women-owned micro-retail pop-ups (Li & Ding, 2015).

Previous researchers have recognised that micro retail business owner have distinct characteristics as entrepreneurs (Wennekers *et al.*, 2002). In general entrepreneurs are more interested in “maximising profits, generating growth, fostering innovation, and exploiting opportunities” rather than their resources whereas micro and small business owners are interested in their personal goals, spending most of their time in the business and linking business income to provide for family needs and desires (Shmailan, 2016, p.2). A number of researchers have paid attention to identifying whether small businesses choose a strategic management process due to their own personal characteristics: competency, small business characteristics, scope and scale of the business, and external environmental factors, classified as political, economic, sociocultural, technological and ecological (Cragg & King, 1988; Oswald, 2000; Charles *et al.*, 2015).

However, previous researchers have given little attention to the women specific characteristics required for the development of their retail pop-ups in the UK context. As discussed above, in developing the Pop-up Pathway the researcher has taken into account how SWOT analysis and TOWS matrix can be adapted to match women-specific characteristics in order to support them in the development of their temporary retail pop-ups.

3.8.1 Women specific characteristics

Women business owners often have difficulty in making decisions, as they can be sensitive, to issues, especially to financing (Brush, 1992). Previous researchers have highlighted that women need more time for decision-making partly because they are keen to make a social contribution and want to ensure its quality. Women tend to open a business in specific industries. Researchers have found that women business owners are mostly goal-oriented, care about their customers and the quality that they can provide as well as focusing on making a social contribution, which gives them personal satisfaction (Orham & Scott, 2011). In their study, Moore and Buttner (1997) found that a number of women started their businesses to feel self-fulfilled.

Researchers have also found that women business owners have a different attitude towards risk. They are less likely to take risks (less risk-tolerant), are more aware of the cues that indicate risk, and they tend to ensure that they have proper social support before they start their business (Ljunggren, 1996). Many women start their businesses with support from their family and friends (Brindley, 2005). In contrast, in their study, Rosa *et al.* (1996) found that women business owners have fewer initial resources and are more likely to face closure.

Women business owners process information differently, (Sexton, 1990), are more detail-oriented and manage their businesses in a different way (Brush, 1992). Buttner and Moore (1997) highlight that in managing businesses, women business owners empower their employees, focus on relationships, team building and perseverance, and often choose to have a small retail operation or service business rather than one of construction, technology or manufacturing operations. They often focus more on product quality (Rosa *et al.*, 1996). However, in their study, Benard and Victor (2013) indicate that only a very small proportion of women business owners are able to develop their businesses in a totally effective manner.

A now outdated attitude to female entrepreneurship, which still exists in some quarters, can sometimes be identified as a threat to the development of women-owned micro-retail pop-up implementation. The dual pressure of work and family expectations can weigh heavily on women's shoulders (Li & Ding, 2015). They also face the satisfying of the expectations that society places on women in the family in addition to pressure from the business (Vistaprint, 2016).

Women in general have the desire to conduct their retail business effectively but they are family-centred and entrusted with household responsibilities. This has been an unalterable truth for millennia (Li & Ding, 2015). But, as a counterbalance, nowadays they are benefactors of improved rights and attitudes. A more detailed demonstration of the situation encountered by women business owners in general is given in the following SWOT analysis table.

Table 3.4: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats analysis for women business owners

SWOT chart constructed to identify women business owners' strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities.			
1. Language competence			
Strengths		Weaknesses	
Identified theme	Literature review findings	Identified theme	Literature review findings
Focus on communication skills. Communication richness. Expressive, adept communicators	"Women tend to have stronger expressive language skills compared" (Li & Ding, 2015, p.211).	Unfocused communication. Too talkative. 'Lose scope and attention' of the customers.	Communication loses scope, or gives the impression of "Under some circumstances, women are too talkative" (Li & Ding, 2015, p.212).
		'Barriers to build a strong customer relationship'.	"Though eloquence is conducive to promoting conversation, constant chatter can be extremely unpleasant" (Li & Ding, 2015, p.212).
Attract customers. Build a strong, long-term customer relationship.	Women "are more adept at communicating with people as they speak fluently and clearly with a tactful tone and appropriate wording" (Li & Ding, 2015, p.211) ²⁶ .	Customers experience 'unpleasant shopping experience'.	"Women tend to use interrogative words and vague language, leaving an impression of indecisiveness" (Li & Ding, 2015, p.212).
		Demonstrates less focus on business development.	"Casual conversation may sound trivial and deviate from focus, causing their views to be easily overlooked when doing business" (Li & Ding, 2015, p.212).

²⁶ "Strengths of language competence play an important role in promoting communication and entrepreneurial development. For instance, women will talk about the weather or hobbies" (Li & Ding, 2015, p.211)

2. Business competence			
Strengths		Weaknesses	
Identified theme	Literature review findings	Identified theme	Literature review findings
Business management knowledge and skills.	Women “are confident, creative, innovative and are capable of achieving self-economic independence individually or jointly” (Aggarwal & Jain, 2014, p.837).	Absence of support from friends and families.	“Absence of proper support, cooperation and back-up for women by their own family members and the outside world. People force them to drop the idea of excelling in the enterprise field” (Aggarwal & Jain, 2014, p. 837).
Contribute to the economy’ and ‘support their families.	Women can generate employment opportunities for others by initiating, establishing and running the enterprise by keeping pace with their personal, family and social lives” (Aggarwal & Jain, 2014, p.837).	Family caring responsibilities hinder women business owners’ full entrepreneurial potential.	“Women’s family obligations bar them from becoming successful entrepreneurs in both developed and developing nations” (Aggarwal & Jain, 2014, p. 837).
Entrepreneurship assists women to ‘achieve work-life balance’.	“Women prefer to work from their own residence because of difficulty in getting a suitable job. The desire for social recognition motivates self-employment” (Aggarwal & Jain, 2014).	Women less likely to achieve higher level of business performance compared with their male counterparts.	“Female folk lack achievement motivation as compared to male members” (Aggarwal & Jain, 2014, p.837).

2. Business competence continued.

Strengths		Weaknesses	
Identified theme	Literature review findings	Identified theme	Literature review findings
Women business owners are able to build a 'strong customer relationship'.	Women are able to "establish friendly relations in business, boost bilateral ties with a tactful tone and express a polite attitude to reach consumers" (Li & Ding, 2015, p. 211).	Women-specific characteristics hinder women business owner's full entrepreneurial potential.	"The greatest obstacle for women entrepreneurs is that they are women" (Aggarwal & Jain, 2014, p.837).
Women 'consider carefully when making business decisions' (e.g., obtaining a bank loan). They are 'less willing to take risk'.	Women make decisions differently and need more time. Women are less willing to undertake risk (Shmalian, 2016).		
Women business owners 'mostly tend to sell quality products at a reasonable price'.	Women seek to make a social contribution and want to ensure its quality.		
Goal setting assists women business owners to 'operate their businesses with a clear direction'.	Women have goals that drive them to achieve (Orhan & Scott, 2001).	Women are less task oriented.	Conducting a business without a plan hinders the long-term success of women-owned businesses.

3. Psychological traits

Strengths		Weaknesses	
Identified theme	Literature review findings	Identified theme	Literature review findings
‘Unique soft power’.	“Women, with their delicate feelings, gentle temperament, and the pursuit of goodness as their unique soft power, are synonymous with the terms “attentive”, “beautiful”, “goodness”, and so on” (Li & Ding, 2015, p.211).	Unfavourable sensitivity. Impression of untrustworthiness because of lack of confidence.	Women are generally dependent (Li & Ding, 2015, p. 212). Women “seem to be sceptical, hesitant and passive and can be easily influenced by others, giving the impression of obedience, indecision, subjectivity and low confidence” (Li & Ding, 2015, p.212).
‘Flexibility’	Women can be more flexible than men, so they can resolve many contradictions, whereas men persist in their own opinions and often don’t concede their positions (Li & Ding, 2015).		
‘Make efforts to achieve mutual benefit’	“In business, men often only want to be successful, while women try to achieve mutual benefit and reach a win-win state” (Li & Ding, 2015, p.211).	Inadequate strengths to face challenges.	“Women may shy away from challenges and failures while men are aggressive and adventurous” (Li & Ding, 2015, p.212).

4. Ideological mode			
Strengths		Weaknesses	
Identified theme	Literature review findings	Identified theme	Literature review findings
Capture business opportunities.	“Women can subconsciously capture business opportunities and perceive subtle messages with high sensitivity and keen observation, particularly in the field of fashion” (Li & Ding, 2015, p.211).	Poor concentration	Poor concentration and over-thinking are two common reasons for an unfocused mindset” resulting in confusion (Li & Ding, 2015).
		Over-thinking	
		Confronting an excess of information.	“It is hard for women to make a decision when confronting an excessive amount of information” (Li & Ding, 2015, p.212).
Circumspection	“Circumspection is one of women’s specialities which can bring immeasurable advantages for women in business” (Li & Ding, 2015, pp.211-212).	Limited innovation	“Being accustomed to imitation and consistency, women hardly dare to innovate and boldly break through tradition compared to men” (Li & Ding, 2015, p.212). “As the saying goes – no innovation, no development; no pen, no progress” (Li & Ding, 2015, p.212; Li, 2004)

5. Business development			
Opportunities		Threats	
Identified theme	Literature review findings	Identified theme	Literature review findings
Innovation	Rapid development of information technology is leading to a digital, networked world that favours physical labour less than ever. This fact is helping women to be more competitive in the retail world (Li & Ding, 2015).	Supposed Male superiority	Assumed male superiority is still found occasionally in parts of society and, of course, this is disadvantages to women micro-retail pop-up owners (Li & Ding, 2015).
'Digital skills'	"As digital skills increase in value, women are gaining more respect and benefiting in most areas of daily life, education and employment" (Li & Ding, 2015, p.212).		
'Humanised service with exquisite personalities'	"Humanised service and exquisite personalities are increasing in demand, especially in tertiary industries (e.g. retail sales) and the quaternary industries (e.g. healthcare and information technology), where women" pop-up owners "can use their natural advantages to succeed" (Li & Ding, 2015, p.212).	Family caring responsibilities Family commitments and household responsibilities.	Men play a key role in society while women are confined to the family chores. This point of view has been an assumed truth for millennia (Li & Ding, 2015). Women are expected to be family centred. Even though women have business opportunities, they still have to maintain their household responsibilities (Li & Ding, 2015).

5. Business development continued			
Opportunities		Threats	
Business management knowledge and skills.	Women business owners have been increasing in recent years because of changes to a management mode which women are better suited for (Li & Ding, 2015, p.212).	Challenges in work life balance.	The dual pressure of work and family seem like two invisible mountains weighing on women's shoulders (Li & Ding, 2015).
Management style. Women's inherent talent. Observation and analytics.	There is a growing view in management circles that the feminine management style is a new trend because of inherent feminine talents such as observation and analytics (Li & Ding, 2015).	Inequality	The assumption of some unwarranted inequality still persists (although women are gaining more rights nowadays) (Li & Ding, 2015)
Excellent social skills. Interpersonal relationships.	"Excellent social skills are essential requirements because interpersonal relationships play a particularly important role in business" (Li & Ding, 2015, p.212)	Bearing physical and mental pressure.	All of the aforementioned above bring physical and mental pressure to bear on women micro-retail pop-up owners (Li & Ding, 2015).
Finding entrepreneurial opportunities.	"More and more women are finding entrepreneurial opportunities and pursuing them with great success" (Li & Ding, 2015, p.212).	Traditional ideas	The traditional ways of looking at things do not normally favour women business owners (Li & Ding, 2015).

5. Business development continued			
Opportunities		Threats	
Identified theme	Literature review findings	Identified theme	Literature review findings
Inculcation of entrepreneurial values – vital for business.	Women get inculcated with entrepreneurial values because they are greatly involved with business dealings (Aggarwal & Jain, 2014).	Coping with business size	Fear of business expansion and lack of access to technology (Aggarwal & Jain, 2014).
Business opportunities. Eco-friendly technology. Biotechnology. Information Technology facilities. Knowledge of management.	“Business opportunities that are accessible for women entrepreneurs are as follows:- eco-friendly technology, biotechnology, IT-enabled enterprises, event management, tourist industry, telecommunication, plastic materials, mineral water, herbal & healthcare, food, fruits and vegetables processing” (Aggarwal & Jain, 2014, p.837).	Lack of will power. Lack of strong mental outlook. Lack of optimistic attitude. Credit discrimination by finance institutions.	Lack of willpower coupled with the lack of a strong mental outlook and optimistic attitude amongst women creates a fear of committing mistakes (Aggarwal & Jain, 2014). Credit discrimination by sometimes prejudiced non-cooperative officials (Aggarwal & Jain, 2014).

Women specific strengths and weaknesses along with the opportunities and threats that exist in the external business environment, as mentioned in the above SWOT analysis table, tend to condition the way women operate their businesses. As revealed in the thematic literature review findings, temporary micro-retail pop-up has its own strengths and provide opportunity for women to start and operate their businesses.

Previous researchers (Wennekers *et al.*, 2002) have recognised distinct differences between entrepreneurs in general and small business owners. Entrepreneurs are more interested in “maximising profits, generating growth, fostering innovation, and exploiting opportunities rather than resources” whereas micro and small business owners focus interest on their personal goals, “spending most of their time in the business and linking business with family needs and desires” (Shmailan, 2016, p.2) (e.g., to generate income to provide for the needs of their families).

A number of researchers have paid attention to identifying whether small businesses choose a strategic management process due to their own personal characteristics: competency; small business characteristics; scope and scale of the business; external environmental factors (political, economic, sociocultural, technological and ecological factors) (Cragg & King, 1988; Oswald, 2000; Charles *et al.*, 2015). Considering the last three decades, changes have occurred within the micro and meso environment. The declining British High Street market, globalisation, and advancement of technology have all considerably affected women-owned businesses, especially micro-retail pop-ups survival (Williams-Grut, 2017).

We should keep in mind that the Pop-up Pathway has developed as a process which goes through a spiral of action research cycles consisting of three major phases: (i) planning, (ii) action taking, (iii) reflecting (Saunders *et al.*, 2012; McKernan, 1998) (see chapter 4).

3.9 The collaborative and supportive approach of the Pop-up Pathway

It is proposed that the Pop-up Pathway needs to adopt a collaborative and supportive (or shared) approach to provide a coherent framework for the benefit of women micro-retail pop-up owners (Aaker, 2017). Accordingly, the researcher adapts to this study one of the most suitable and best possible frameworks in order to provide a continuing support to enable women micro-retail pop-up owners to maximise their entrepreneurial potential. It also enables them to develop a range of skills using group dynamics to endure in the UK retail market.

3.10 Summary

From the thematic literature review in Chapter 2, it is apparent that there is the lack of a strategic framework to assist and support women micro-retail pop-up owners to overcome the challenges they encounter. This study aimed, therefore, to develop a strategic framework specifically to address the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners in the UK retail market. This chapter has established the initial key definitions of strategic management and reviewed the literature related to strategic management in micro and small enterprises with focus on women-owned businesses. As David (2013) suggests, the researcher considered that there are three formalised different stages in strategic management, namely strategy formulation, strategy implementation and strategy evaluation. In the strategy formulation stage, the Designed School Model has been adapted,

(Mintzberg, 2000), to identify the importance of assisting women pop-up owners to create a vision, mission and goals.

As David (2013) suggests, strategy formulation then considered the importance of internal and external business environment analyses. For this purpose, the literature review assisted to identify the best suitable strategic management tools which complement the 5Ms theoretical framework (chapter 2), which turned out to be the Design School Model for addressing the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners. This conditioned the designing of the conceptual framework for the study (Figure 3.6). There was then an explanation of how the study needed to adapt the strategic management tools of SWOT analysis and TOWS matrix in order to develop the Pop-up Pathway. The thematic literature review in strategic management provided a strong theoretical foundation to design the action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway. TOWS matrix was especially adapted to identify how women pop-up owners could utilise their strengths, capabilities and resources to overcome challenges, and how they could utilise their opportunities and strengths (for example, women specific characteristics, temporary nature, micro-size) to deal with threats in the external business environment (see Table 3.3). The thematic literature review in strategic management was of assistance in conducting the background research prior to developing the strategic framework. The action learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway have been designed to support women pop-up owners to build self-confidence and courage. Their collaborative nature motivates the women to stand as business owners, prepared to face the future challenges and competition (as an example, Brexit might generate more opportunities and increase demand for local and national product in the UK retail market). The brainstorming sessions and group activities have been designed to meet the needs of women pop-up owners.

As discussed in chapter 2, there is currently inadequate research within the context of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups in the UK. Surprisingly, the total effects of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups have not as yet been closely examined. As a research field it is still in the developing stage. It is important to have this gap addressed with a view to a more complete identification of the success factors and the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners.

Based on the thematic literature review findings, this study has formulated and developed an appropriate research design to collect and analyse empirical data in order to address the research problem and achieve the study aims and objectives (Bryman & Bell, 2015). To achieve the research aims and objectives, the study has been designed as being fully qualitative interpretive by following a Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach. The overall decision of selection of the appropriate approach was based on an audience of women micro-retail pop-up owners and their challenges which the researcher needed to address, following on from previous academic and professional experiences in the field of women owned MSMEs. Chapter 4 presents the interpretive research philosophy along with the qualitative multiple methods followed within this PAR.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.0 Introduction

This study is aimed at identifying the success factors and the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners and developing a strategic framework to give support to women micro-retail pop-up owners to enable them to survive in the UK retail market beyond five years. The research process has been developed methodologically as an interactive continuum to answer the research questions and reach the aims and objectives of the study (Ridenour and Newman, 2008). Based on the researcher's prior experience as well as indicated in the literature review carried out in this study, a qualitative research approach has been identified as the most appropriate. This means that methodological choices have been assessed with the study being seen best framed as purely qualitative (Braun and Clarke, 2013; Creswell, 2013). Qualitative research design offers an effective way of gaining more insight into the experiences of women pop-up owners in the UK retail marketplace. Within the chapter, all sections are related to research questions which consist of (1) What are the characteristics of a retail pop-up? (2) Why do women open their businesses in temporary retail pop-ups? (3) What are the success factors of women pop-up owners (4) What are the challenges encountered by women pop-up owners? (5) How to adopt and utilise the SWOT analysis and TOWS matrix to support women to develop their micro-retail pop-ups?

With reference to Denzin and Lincoln (2010), the chapter presents the research paradigm and provides justification for the choice of a qualitative research design. In an attempt to address the research, aim, objectives and questions, the study employs a qualitative methodology. Qualitative 'multiple method' design has been adopted to ensure the

collection of qualitative, primary, empirical data (Creswell, 2013, p. 45). The following section 4.3, provides the research methodology followed and then the precise methods employed in this study. The qualitative research methodology employed is explained in connection with the research instruments, the pilot study, the sample size, and the criteria for selection of the research participants. The chapter also presents data collection procedures and then data analysis and interpretation. In addition, the overall decision-making process involved along with ethical considerations, as well as the reliability and internal validity of the empirical qualitative data are also presented.

Again, with reference to Denzin and Lincoln (2010), and now also Mertler (2017), this chapter also outlines and illustrates how the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach has been adopted in this qualitative, interpretive study. There is a critical discussion of the action research cycles in detail in terms of principles and how they have been applied to lay a strong foundation of PAR to include collaboration, trust, respect and creativity (Fine, 2012; Marvasti & Trevino, 2019). In relation to the research questions, the chapter also includes to what extent the researcher makes a case for using the PAR approach to answer them and subsequently reach the aims and objectives of the study (Genat, 2009). The chapter is aimed at justification according to three fundamental questions, namely where, why, and how data were collected and analysed. Thus, the research approach proposed for the conducting of this study involves a combination of philosophy, research design and methods and procedures and how they translate into practice (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Now follows a presentation of the philosophical assumptions of the research paradigm and the overall decisions made in guiding this purely qualitative, interpretive study.

4.1 Research paradigm

The researcher considers that it is important to identify the philosophical ideas because they influence study practice²⁷. Following suggestions made by Antwi and Hamza (2015), this study is based on some underlying ‘philosophical assumptions’ about what constitutes valid research and which research methods are appropriate for the development of knowledge of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups in the UK. Creswell and Creswell (2018, p.5) use the term “philosophical worldview” which means “a basic set of beliefs that guide action” (Guba, 1990, p.17). Thomas (2017) says a worldview refers to a way of belief or thinking about the world. Crotty (1998) says that the philosophical worldview refers to ontologies and epistemologies while scholars like Mertens (2010) and Lincoln *et al.* (2011) name it as a ‘paradigm’. The term ‘paradigm’ was first used by Kuhn (1977). He says that ‘paradigm’ refers to a research culture with a set of belief, values and assumptions that a community of researchers has in common regarding the nature and the conducting of research (Antwi and Hamza, 2015, p.2).

On account of the research questions, the interpretivism paradigm has been considered as a philosophical guideline for the undertaking of this qualitative research. The philosophical assumptions and hence the research paradigm or key concepts followed in this study are explained in the following two subsections:

4.1.1 explains the ontological and epistemological assumptions followed in this study which led to the laying of a strong foundation of purely qualitative multiple method research.

4.1.2 describes the paradigm adopted with respect to the interpretive framework (Tekin & Kotaman, 2018, p.81).

²⁷ Previous researchers argue that, in research, philosophical ideas usually remain hidden.

4.1.1 The relationship between key elements of research: ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods.

In choosing a research philosophy for the study, the researcher recognises that there are three bases - ontological, epistemological and methodological. Saunders *et al.* (2012, p. 130) state that ontology is ‘concerned with’ the ‘nature of reality’. According to Creswell *et al.* (2007, p. 238) epistemology is making assumptions about knowledge. Alkhalifah (2017, p. 219) states that epistemology is a way of knowing or understanding ‘how we know what we know’. Corbetta (2013) says that methodology refers to the specific procedures or techniques used to identify, select, process and analyse information about the research topic (Corbetta, 2003).

Researchers see ‘worldview’ as a general philosophical orientation about the world and the nature of the study that a researcher brings to it. The worldview of this study was based on (a) the researcher’s more than twenty years previous experience in conducting empirical, qualitative action research; (b) ‘discipline orientation and study commitments (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p.6), within the context of women-owned micro, small and medium sized businesses in developed and developing economies around the world (e.g. Sweden, UK and Sri Lanka); and (c) following the directions provided by an experienced supervisory team. Correspondingly, the reasons behind the philosophical classifications are: (a) the purpose of the study being to make positive practical implications; (b) to create new, richer understanding and interpretation of the experiences of women micro-retail pop-up owners; (c) to enhance and develop the skills of reflexivity.

In order to adequately understand the philosophy behind the study, a development of the researcher's skills and powers of reflection was required. The researcher examined personal beliefs with the same scrutiny that would be applied to those of others. So that there is now a recognition that a realistic ontology and interpretivist epistemology are fundamental to the study because they determine the methodology and the consequent choice of methods adopted.

There now follows a discussion of the philosophical assumptions made in this study and how they have been used within a qualitative approach and then linked to an interpretive framework employed within PAR.

4.1.1.1 Ontological assumptions

In this qualitative multiple research, the researcher makes ontological assumptions. Arthur *et al.* (2014, p.4) defined ontology as 'what there is to know about the world'. Kivunja & Kuyini (2017, p. 27) highlight that ontological commitments relate to what constitutes reality 'or the very nature or essence of the social phenomenon'. The researcher considered that (a) there is a real social world that consists of personal acceptance and attributes, that (b) there are 'issues relating to the nature of reality and its characteristics' (Creswell, 2013, p. 20). In the identification of women pop-up owners' experiences, the study is conducted with the intent of reporting multiple realities. This study is adopting a qualitative multiple method and embracing the idea of multiple realities. As suggested by Creswell (2013, p. 45), evidence of multiple realities includes the use of 'multiple forms of data' in themes using the actual words of different participants. The study findings report how the individual women pop-up owner participants, view their experiences differently to one another.

Researcher has been engaged with women pop-up owners to understand the reality (very nature or essence) of the pop-up phenomenon within the context of women entrepreneurs in the UK retail market. It is known that the social world has specific important attributes (Scott & Usher, 2004). The action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway have been designed and implemented with participants in a value-laden manner in order to offer effective practical solutions to address the identified challenges. The researcher's approach to the study of managing women-owned micro-retail pop-ups follows from a subjective view. The view is taken that subjective aspects of managing a woman-owned retail pop-up are important. Women pop-up owners' individual meanings attached to their pop-up businesses and the way they think that those temporary, micro-size pop-up businesses should be managed are considered as worthy of respect. An acceptance of subjectivism assisted the researcher to determine the real nature and foundational concepts (which constitute themes) that were analysed 'to make sense of the meaning embedded in' the qualitative data²⁸ (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017, p.27). Ontology assumptions assisted in the orientation of thinking about the research problem and gathering of knowledge by engaging with participants.

4.1.1.2 Epistemological assumptions

According to Torre *et al.* (2012), PAR is "an epistemology that engages research design, methods, analyses and products through a lens of democratic participation" (p.171). Crotty (1998, p.3) state that epistemology as 'a way of understanding and explaining how I know what I know'. Epistemology is about how the researcher makes meaningful sense of our

²⁸ which cannot be achieved by following a quantitative method or measuring participants' experiences objectively.

world. It denotes ‘the nature of human knowledge and understanding that can possibly be acquired through different types of inquiry and alternative methods of investigation’ (Hirschheim *et al.*, 1995, p.20). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) state that epistemological inquiry looks at the relationship between the knower (the inquirer) and the known (or knowledge), and asks ‘how do I know the world?’ (p.183). Here, the concept of epistemology describes how the researcher comes to know the truth about the reality of the study: how we know what we know (Husserl, 1981, p.139). The realised knowledge will have a significant impact on this scientific endeavour of the pop-up phenomenon within the context of women.

In articulating the answers to the research questions, the researcher draws from sources of knowledge, particularly from empirical knowledge (Salvin, 1984), and leans towards an empirical epistemology approach (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). To gain a deeper understanding of the epistemological elements of the research paradigm, the assumptions made in this study focus on determining the nature of women micro-retail pop-up owners’ business management knowledge and experiences, and their social and cultural context. The underpinning epistemological assumptions of this PAR assist in embracing new knowledge as a result of being actively engaged in the research process. The task of gaining new knowledge is an important part of research as an academic.

As inferred by Holmes (2010), ontological and epistemological assumptions about women pop-up owners’ nature and experiences shown through this study assist the researcher to effectively engage in the PAR process (Holmes, 2010). This study is based on the interpretive paradigm (Creswell, 2013). On account of its role in this thesis, the interpretivist paradigm is discussed in the following section.

4.1.2 Research paradigm adopted in this study - interpretivist

Previous researchers have used either a positivist (Carter *et al.*, 2015) or an interpretivist (Munkejord, 2017) philosophical paradigm as a basis for studying women-owned businesses. The epistemological dimension of the qualitative approach of this study highlights the purpose behind the ‘interpretive’ paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p.4; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This view is supported by Trauth (2001b, p.7) who says that ‘interpretivism is the lens most frequently influencing the choice of qualitative method’. In view of the research questions²⁹ the interpretivism paradigm is seen as the most appropriate and has been applied as a philosophical guideline in undertaking/conducting this qualitative research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Table 4.1 below presents the interpretive paradigm - a summary of the philosophical assumptions made in this qualitative research with implications for the retail-pop-up practice. A discussion around the details is then provided.

²⁹ with considering the origins and principles of the paradigm,

Table 4.1 Research paradigm adopted in this study: Interpretivism

Philosophical assumption	Interpretivism
Ontology (what is a truth? and what are we considering?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Truth is socially constructed. It can be understood differently depending on a particular context. • Interpersonal relationships and interactions among research participants: women micro-retail pop-up owners in the UK.
Epistemology (theory of knowledge) (How is the world or knowledge understood?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be subjective • Meanings behind interactions are understood by meanings behind interpretation.
Axiology What is the role of values?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Researcher openly discusses values that shape the narrative and includes own personal interpretation in conjunction with the interpretations of participants.
Methodology (aims of scientific investigation) (What is a framework for undertaking this research?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative approaches
Research Methods (techniques and tools) - within the qualitative multiple method (What are specific techniques used to collect and analyse research data?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-structured interviews • Focus groups • Semi-structured short interviews • Audio recording, taking notes. • Thematic analysis

Synthesised from: McLinden *et al.* (2018)

Table 4.1 shows a descriptive presentation of the interpretive research paradigm in relation to epistemology, methodology and methods. Interpretivism is a school of thought that concentrates on the meaning of social interactions. The interpretivist paradigm supports the qualitative view and is used to get insight into the experiences of women micro-retail pop-up owners with respect to their success factors and the challenges they encounter.

Mitch (2005) supports this view and says that interpretive researchers believe that reality consists of people's subjective experiences of the external world. Thus, reality is socially constructed, and it is a human construct (Mutch, 2005). Schutz (1962, p. 59) states that "social reality has a specific meaning" and is a relevant structure composed of beings which are "living, acting, and thinking within it". Guba and Lincoln (1985) argue that interpretivists see the world as constructed, interpreted and experienced by people in their interaction with each other and within wider social systems. This infers that meaning is embedded in participants' experiences and that this meaning is mediated through the researcher's own perceptions (Merriman, 1998). According to Thomas (2017, p.111), interpretivism focuses on the understanding of interpersonal relationships and interactions between the researcher and research participants, including other relationships, with regard to "what understandings do the people we are talking to have about the world, and how can we in turn understand these?". As mentioned earlier, this research attempts to address research questions with regard to why women start their businesses in temporary micro-retail pop-ups, and looks at the success factors and the challenges they encounter and how SWOT analysis and TOWS matrix can be adopted to support women pop-up owners in surviving in the UK retail market beyond five years. The researcher intends to make sense of subjective and socially constructed meanings expressed by women about their temporary micro-retail pop-up businesses. It gives support to the qualitative view.

The researcher accepts the naturalist philosopher's view, and in particular that of the interpretive constructionists, that the reality of women-owned micro retail pop-ups cannot be measured directly. It can only be perceived through women pop-up owners themselves and in particular through the participants of this study because they view reality through the lens of their own experiences, knowledge and expectations. Accordingly, the researcher aims to understand the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up

owners along with their interpretations which are embedded in a complex and changing retail marketplace in the UK (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Bogdan & Biklen, 1998)³⁰. The interpretivism paradigm assists the researcher: (a) to identify effective ways to communicate and actively engage with women pop-up owners; (b) to meaningfully understand the way that participants interpret their different social realities such as experiences, ideas, motivations and intentions (Noblit & Eaker, 1987; Foster, 1996).

Here, the interpretive paradigm focuses primarily on recognising and narrating the meaning of women pop-up owners' experiences (e.g., social-cultural reality from perceptions) and actions and making sense of them directly and immediately in order to communicate and share them meaningfully (Fossey *et al.*, 2002; Burrell & Morgan, 1979).

The researcher's choice of the interpretive philosophical approach reflects her personal values. As suggested by Carter *et al.* (2014), there was also an awareness of a somewhat unique individual personal background and ideological assumptions which could undoubtedly influence data. To consolidate this awareness, it was thought that the researcher needed to begin with her own story. If one wanted to understand the stories of others, it was imperative to start by understanding one's own personal story to lead to the identification of any personal stance which could shape interpretations (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

The following section now provides a discussion of the researcher's positionality and value-laden nature demonstrated during the PAR process (Creswell, 2013).

³⁰ The interpretivism paradigm has been called the 'constructivist paradigm' (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017, p.33).

4.1.3 The researcher's role: positionality

All researchers bring values to their research. The researcher's values are the guiding reasons behind the conducting of this PAR and those values play a role in almost every stage of the study. Creswell (2013) says that the researcher's positionality influences the way in which studies are conducted. Positionality describes a researcher's world view (Holmes, 2020). According to Holmes, a researcher's world view - 'where the researcher is coming from' concerns: (a) ontological assumptions - an individual's beliefs about the nature of social reality and what is knowable about the world; (b) epistemological assumptions - an individual's beliefs about the nature of knowledge and how it is acquired; and (c) assumptions about human nature and agency – an individual's assumptions about the way we interact with our environment and relate to it.

Here, the positionality 'reflects the position that the researcher has chosen to adopt' in this study (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013, p.71). Following suggestions made by Holmes (2020), the researcher's positionality is explained here, and the reflexivity issue is discussed: how the researcher's positionality influences within this PAR process and its social and business context. It is recognised that the researcher's ontological and epistemological beliefs influence this research and incorporate a reflexive approach to the study. Reflexivity, which is driven by a social constructionist epistemology, is also discussed here. The purpose is to open-up for discussion the ways in which the researcher is embedded in this PAR. In this way the reader may better understand why the researcher's role is considered to be significant. In supporting this view, Griffiths (1998, p.4) says 'knowing something of the writer's identity and intention helps in responding to the

researcher's work'. The researcher shifts from researcher to facilitator to moderator in developing this PAR.

Positionality has influence during the action research cycles (how research is conducted) by interpreting the research outcomes and results (Row, 2014). It also influences what the researcher has chosen to investigate - namely women-owned retail pop-ups in the UK (Grix, 2019).

The researcher's positionality is identified within three areas by locating the researcher within the PAR process: (i) within the women-owned micro-retail pop-up phenomenon - the subject under investigation; (ii) within the world of women micro-retail pop-up owners - the participants of the study; (iii) within the UK retail market itself - the research context, and the PAR process. Additionally, there are major ways in which the researcher's positionality has impacted this study: firstly, by helping participants to gain access to an understanding researcher, as they may be more willing to share their experiences in managing their micro-retail pop-up experiences with someone who is willing to listen to their passion, success as well as their circumstances; secondly, the nature of the PAR and the study has been influenced by the researcher's shifts from facilitator to moderator to researcher; thirdly, the researcher's worldview, background and experiences shape the lens of the research (Berger, 2015).

It is essential to lay open the researcher's role and prior experiences in conducting PAR all of which can influence the thesis (Gair, 2012, p. 137). The following presents an initial exploration of the researcher's own position in relation to this study.

The researcher's positionality influenced by multiple factors: the researcher's motivations, values, cultural background, previous experiences in conducting qualitative research and work experience, age, level of education and ideological stances will affect the process of interpretation of the qualitative research. It is recognised that some aspects of the researcher's positionality are culturally ascribed or generally regarded as being fixed, such as being a woman with personal experiences. As argued by Holmes (2020, p.3), the above fixed aspects may predispose someone towards a particular point of view. However, "that does not mean that it will necessarily automatically lead to particular" influenced views or perspectives. All the participants of this study were British citizens. The researcher did not make any assumptions about the contributors' perspectives and their worldview and then pigeonhole them based on her own perception. The researcher was fully engaged collaboratively with participants during this PAR.

The researcher's educational background as well as prior research experience has had an influence in the designing of this PAR. Prior to conducting this study, the researcher studied Anthropology and Sociology in a Bachelor's Degree (1996) and again in a Master's degree in Sociology (1998), going on to gain a Master's degree in International Business Management (2013). This is particularly noteworthy because of the experience gained during a cross cultural exchange programme, namely, the Youth Partners in Development (YPD) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) held in Sweden in 1997. During that programme the researcher had the opportunity to work collaboratively with counter partners from Sweden and Zimbabwe as well as with other beneficiaries (students in Higher Education Institutions in Sweden).

The theoretical and practical experience provided by this stay in Sweden has contributed to the development of the researcher's skills in relationship building and collaboration with partners and participants from many different social, cultural, and economic backgrounds. It was evident that this experience was one of the reasons for the warm welcome that the researcher received from participants and that they willingly and actively participated throughout the PAR process (Yet Jansson, 2010). The willing and collaborative attitude of participants is contributed to the success of the study.

It should not be overlooked that the researcher's experience will have influenced the designing of the Pop-up Pathway. Chiseri-Strater (1996) identifies a researcher's experience as being fluid, subjective and contextual in the development of a particular study. During 1991-1997, the researcher worked as a Programme Coordinator in the Poverty Eradication and Empowerment Division (PEEP) of the Sarvodaya Organisation [the Largest Non-government Organisation (NGO) for social development in Sri Lanka]. It was through this that the development of a 5year Strategic Framework for selected 5000 villages in Sri Lanka was realised.

The activities within the framework were aimed at supporting people in general, but particularly those who live in urban, rural, plantation and costal-belt areas in Sri Lanka. The researcher worked collaboratively with representatives of International Donor Organisations (e.g., UNDP and JICA), and obtained grants/funding for development activities. Knowledge gained through this experience inspired the researcher to contribute not only to the current theoretical knowledge but also to the real practical business world when conceptualising and designing the Pop-up Pathway of this study.

The activities of the above mentioned 5-year strategic framework were planned to give assistance to villages by initiating spiritual awareness activities; by engaging in collaborative development projects to fulfil village level needs (e.g., access to clean drinking water); by learning and engaging in farming and micro level business development activities which ultimately assisted them to be self-reliant both spiritually and financially.

The researcher worked as one of the leading coordinators at the Head Office level in planning, coordinating, implementing and evaluating development activities. By travel within 23 districts, a contribution was made to the coordination of and facilitation of training programmes for field staff members (at district, divisional and village level) in order to improve their knowledge and skills and help them to implement activities.

The researcher is strongly self-identified as a community development practitioner supporting beneficiaries to meet their spiritual and physical needs within a collaborative environment. Inspiration is derived from prior experience and has enabled the designing of the action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway. This offers access for the participants engaged within the study and gives insight to women pop-up owners in three different cities in the UK, namely, Birmingham, Manchester and Nottingham.

During the period 1999-2010, the researcher worked in the Government of Sri Lanka within the Ministry of Trade, Commerce and Consumer Affairs, and within the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Department of Official Languages. During this period the MSMEs in the North-East were affected by the 30-years war in Sri Lanka.

‘The Development Policy Framework of the GoSL’ had been created and had made considerable progress in supporting Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the North-East province of Sri Lanka under the ‘Uthuru Vasanthaya’ accelerated development project of ‘Vision for the Future’ (Sri Lanka - the Emerging Wonder of Asia, 2010, p. 1). The researcher worked collaboratively with officials from different departments and statutory boards, and in conjunction with the Parliament of Sri Lanka in reporting regularly on activities and their impact in order to measure progress made towards overall goals and objectives. This was done to ensure beneficiaries received support as quickly and efficiently as possible in conjunction with the maximum effectiveness of resources. Progress reports were prepared, and answers given to questions raised by the Cabinet (Joint Plan for Assistance, Northern Province, 2012).

This experience enabled the bringing together of a collaborative nature to this present study and enabled the development of the action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway. The Pop-up Pathway has been tailored to match the needs of women micro-retail pop-up owners and to enable the adoption of it within county and district councils and even at national level in the UK to give support to women pop-up owners.

The researcher’s experience as a Senior Lecturer in Entrepreneurship and Strategic Management at NTU and her qualifications in Higher Education (e.g., AFHE, ETTiHE, SCALE-UP) have been of benefit towards successfully conducting the action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway during the focus groups. At this stage, the researcher’s role shifts from researcher to facilitator. As a facilitator, the researcher became more open to participants and employed a less controlling position over them (McKernan, 1998).

This situation motivated/encouraged participants to identify their strengths as well as their weaknesses within a collaborative learning environment. The researcher managed the group process and tasks during focus group activities. Group processes and dynamics were managed to ensure the discussions ran smoothly. The experience gained from supervising MSc students with their Consultancy and Work Experience Projects enabled the researcher to respond to questions raised by participants and support them in identifying solutions to the challenges they encountered. The researcher's experience also helped with the putting forward of ideas to ensure that participants' objectives were met in accordance with the Pop-up Pathway.

Additionally, as a qualitative researcher, there is a shifting from facilitator to moderator during PAR. Krueger and Casey (2015, p. 2) say a focus group is 'a carefully planned series of discussions designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment'. With this in mind, the researcher as a moderator took time to fully prepare for every session (three focus group discussions). Hence, the action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway have been designed based on the findings of the semi-structured interviews. As a moderator, the researcher was required to, (a) know inside and outside of the Pop-up Pathway and to, (b) be aware that the order of the activities of the Pop-up Pathway is not carved in stone but rather, a sequence of ideas that needs to be explored in a way that makes sense for each unique set of research participant results. The involvement of the researcher signified greater group management, providing directions to participants and taking responsibility for study outcomes. During focus groups, participants were able to smoothly move from one activity to another without disturbing the flow by the need for frequent note checks.

The researcher's experience in teaching in Higher Education in the use of Scale-up helped to make participants feel welcome and showed that their contributions were important. As a qualitative researcher, there was a feeling of comfort with participants whatever their characteristics, whether rich or poor, formal, or informal, boisterous, or shy. In this scenario the researcher was like a counsellor or coach.

Right from the beginning the Pop-up pathway was introduced to the focus group participants and they were informed about the way the findings would be used. There was a need to listen with sensitivity and compassion to all participants. This helped to elicit participants' stories in rich detail. For example: when some participants reported that it is hard for them to mention the product price to their customers, the researcher as moderator encouraged them to be more confident and accept that their products have value, sometimes more than they think. However, on a few occasions the researcher had to step back from the conversation as appropriate. The moderator role facilitated, and guided participants as needed, rather than having a direct control over group discussions (Flick, 2009).

At the end of focus group activities there was much team spirit among participants, and they continued to share their experiences with examples. The moderator had to lead the participants in a way that did not make them feel snubbed or less important. Here, the moderator, praised participants for their ability to share their opinions. This situation helped to identify a collaborative support aspect and move the Pop-up Pathway further forward. This is where the moderator's experience helped in the reading of body language and the facial cues of quiet participants and helped to identify when an idea might be sparked (e.g., in identifying individual strengths). Some participants, those who found it

difficult to contribute to implementing the action-learning activities, were finally able to speak and contribute during a heated discussion. The moderator had a treasure trove of neutral probing questions. Verbal intonation and encouragement were given to open the door/room for participants to expand their ideas. Intonated questioning was used with specific phrases. For example, in identifying participants' strengths – “so it could be something you are good at doing?”.

When some participants were struggling to find their strengths, the moderator role helped to create something out of nothing. For example, in identifying some of the good things about their pop-up businesses, the moderator role helped to give participants a chance to think for a moment and offered encouraging but generic probes which made a difference. For example: “are there good things about your pop-up business/products?”. The moderator listened to the participants' excitement of sharing personal stories within the group and genuinely wanted to hear every detail, this helping them to make further advancement.

Moderators are only human so that during the first focus group it was found to be hard to cover action-learning activities effectively and be a moderator for around 90 minutes at the same time. Nevertheless, participants were helped to loosen up and feel more comfortable, sharing more insightful opinions. The moderator enjoyed very much meeting and working with the participants. However, there is a running debate on ‘Should qualitative researchers be members of the population they are studying, or should they not?’ (Dwyer *et al.*, 2009, p. 1). This issue has been explored previously within the context of qualitative research but it has been generally ‘reserved for discussion of observation, field research, and ethnography’ (ibid).

The researcher expands that discussion and explores the population self-membership role by illustrating the insider and outsider roles played in conducting this study with women pop-up owners. The point of view of each different role of membership is examined. It is important to explore the notion of space between the different roles that allows the researcher to occupy the position of insider and outsider rather than always being insider or outsider. The Following section illustrates the researcher's experiences as a qualitative researcher of switching from an outsider to an insider, and vice versa. It is an essential and ever-presented aspect of the study.

4.1.4 Outsider and insider role of the researcher

As emphasised in postmodernism thinking, there is a need here to explore the researcher's role in this qualitative study (Angrosino, 2005). Focus is needed to be given to the researcher's tension of switching from outsider to insider role within PAR. The reason is that the researcher played an outsider as well as an insider role in both data collection and analysis within the area of field research. On reflection, it is realised that the researcher shared experiences, opinions, and perspectives with participants, and at other times did not. This is not to say that sometimes the researcher's self-view changed whimsically. As highlighted by Angrosino (2005, p. 734), here is identified the development of 'a critique of researcher's roles in response to a greater consciousness of situational identities and to the perception of relative power'.

From interpretive perspectives, a researcher can be an outsider (at least at the beginning) when seeking to get an in-depth understanding of the study phenomena (Carry, 1988).

In this study, the researcher became much more aware of the status of an outsider, especially after having been asked pointedly by some of the participants whether she belonged to their group. The researcher, as an outsider to the commonality shared by participants, had to think about status in relation to those participating in the research. During semi-structured interviews, the researcher gained more insight into the experiences of women micro-retail pop-up owners and their reality from different perspectives according to how participants emphasised their success factors and the challenges they encounter.

The current position is that interpretive researchers place strong emphasis on a better understanding of the world through first-hand experience, truthful reporting and quotations of actual conversations from an insider's perspective (Merriam, 1998). This is considered to be more important than testing the basic laws of human behaviour (Bryman, 2001). It demonstrates the position of the researcher within this qualitative study (Fly *et al.*, 1991) as one who is closely interconnected and attains an insider's view of all participants - women micro-retail pop-up owners (Antwi and Hamza, 2015). On further reflection, the richness of the researcher's experiences and the impact of insider epistemology have been explored. However, this is not to say that being an insider makes a better or worse researcher but that it does make a difference perhaps because of experience in conducting community and business development projects. As previously discussed, and can now be seen, the researcher has been engaged in much self-reflection and is continuing to do so in this research as demonstrated here.

The study has employed qualitative data collection methods that are sensitive to the context of women pop-up owners (Neuman, 2003).

The qualitative multiple methods approach has enabled the researcher to gather a rich and detailed description of the pop-up phenomenon. The multiple methods have given encouragement to participants to speak freely and to understand the researcher's quest for insight into the pop-up phenomenon has been experienced by participants. The researcher played an insider role by facilitating the action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway during focus group discussions. This role shifts to facilitator and then to moderator, respectively, in (a) facilitating a collaborative and supportive learning environment and in (b) implementing the action learning activities of the Pop-up pathway (Adler and Adler, 1987). The researcher followed Asselin's report (2003), and collected qualitative data with 'eyes open' but assuming that nothing is known about the pop-up phenomenon under study. As an insider, the researcher shared personal characteristics such as, role, experience, opinions and perspectives with study participants. In situations like this the researcher felt an integral part of belonging to the community of women pop-up owners under study. However, this was not always the case. Even when feeling to be an integral part of the culture of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups, it was often difficult to understand the sub-culture within women-owned micro-retail pop-ups especially when it came to the topic of cost and profit of their business activities.

The researcher's outsider and insider roles allowed for the designing of a coherent and influential PAR in which all necessary research elements could fit together to make a positive change in women-owned micro-retail pop-up experiences. The insider role allowed the researcher to develop knowledge and understanding of the experiences of women pop-up owners. It has also helped in a personal way in the role of teacher and facilitator in strategic management and entrepreneurship.

4.1.5 Research approach

The research approach refers to the method of reasoning adopted in a study. There are two general approaches to reasoning which may result in the acquisition of new knowledge - inductive and deductive. Hyde (2016, p.82) says that ‘both qualitative and quantitative researchers practice deduction and induction in their research’. However, Rocco and Plakhotnik (2009, p.2) say that ‘qualitative studies are often inductive’. In contrast, Patton (1991, p. 194) argues that qualitative researchers can adopt both inductive and deductive processes, which can be complementary. Researchers in women entrepreneurship have widely used either the deductive or inductive approach, or a combination of both.

In choosing the reasoning approach of this study, the researcher considered its purpose and the methods that are best suited to answer its research questions. The qualitative PAR commenced with ideas of an inductive approach followed by a research design which took a more naturalistic and emergent deductive approach and offered a rich theoretical perspective. But then, at that time there was a realisation on the part of the researcher of the limitations of separate deductive or inductive reasoning and hence, both reasoning approaches were considered to be more suitable to meet the study purpose and the expectations of women pop-up owners (Garbuio *et al.*, 2018). For this reason, the study employs a combination of the two separate approaches of deductive and inductive to give a more complete understanding of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups.

Any approach needs to complement an attempt to establish a link between theory and research (Saunders *et al.*, 2018). Now follows a discussion of how the deductive approach sits with this qualitative study.

4.1.4.1 The deductive approach

Deductive reasoning is a theory testing process. A deductive approach begins with an established theory in general and ends with the specific. It seeks to ascertain if the theory applies in specific instances. This approach is also known as ‘theory testing’ or a ‘top-down approach’ or a ‘theories to data’ approach. Researchers in marketing have historically emphasised deductive processes (Deshpande, 1983; Bonoma, 1985). Hyde (2016, p. 83) argues that the adoption of formal deductive procedures can represent an important step forwards, assuring conviction in qualitative research findings. The deductive approach is an explanation of the circumstances under which deductive reasoning and procedures have been applied in this qualitative study.

The thematic literature review findings have been instrumental in identifying some of the success factors and the challenges encountered by women business owners in general with the particular focus on women-owned retail pop-ups. The ‘broad themes’ shown through the literature review have enabled the identification of a best suitable theoretical framework namely, the 5Ms framework, to study the women-owned micro-retail pop-up phenomenon (Brush *et al.*, 2009; Creswell, 2003, p. 32-33). The deductive reasoning process in this study commenced with an established theory from the academic discipline of women entrepreneurship and the researcher’s own professional application.

Consequently, this research ‘emanates from the researcher’s implicit’ as well as ‘explicit theory’ of women-owned business as identified by the literature review findings. At this stage, a deductive reasoning approach is used and seeks to see if the 5Ms framework theory applies to women-owned micro-retail pop-ups in the UK.

The study develops through the linkage made between the research questions and theoretical concepts and demonstrates how it serves to illuminate issues which are significant. From the beginning the study has aimed to answer ‘why’, ‘what’ and ‘how’ questions. For example, why women open their micro-retail businesses in temporary retail pop-ups? What are the success factors and challenges encountered by them? How SWOT analysis and TOWS matrix can be adopted to match the characteristics of women pop-up owners?

This process, however, was applied prematurely, ‘before an adequate understanding’ of the women-owned micro-retail pop-up concept had been developed (Hyde, 2000, p. 2). As described by Campbell (1975), theory testing by ‘pattern matching’ adopts a procedure for linking data to propositions (Hyde, 2000, p. 4). The need for a theory (5Ms framework) testing was stated prior to the commencement of the empirical data collection - phase 1. Then the researcher moved from a more general level to a more specific one. This meant that the semi-structured interviews, (Hyde, 2000), were conducted with 69 women pop-up owners to identify the success factors and the challenges they encountered. Following a deductive reasoning approach, the researcher identified patterns, themes, and categories (Patton, 2002). Using deductive reasoning, the qualitative data confirmed the 5Ms theoretical framework to be suitable for application in studying women-owned micro-retail pop-ups.

The qualitative empirical data findings are connected to the literature review findings within the context of women. The common themes identified from the qualitative data analysis were matched to the 5Ms theoretical framework which was then linked to the conceptual framework.

This understanding was further developed and confirmed through unstructured discussions with representatives from business supportive organisations who were considered to be experts in women-owned business development and also through the advisors and support workers for government and non-government organisations. Additionally, based on the literature review in strategic management (see Literature Review Chapter 2), the study adopted the SWOT analysis and TOWS matrix to lay a strong theoretical foundation for the development of the Pop-up Pathway. The Action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway were tested and validated by conducting three focus group discussions and fifteen further short interviews. In practice, many ‘qualitative researchers’ use an inductive approach (Saunders *et al.*, 2012, p. 163). Hence, inductive inferences have been developed in this study. The following section explains how the researcher made an inductive approach within this study.

4.1.4.2 Inductive reasoning approach

Inductive reasoning can be identified as a theory building process. This process starts with observations of specific instances. It then seeks to establish generalisations about the phenomenon under investigation (Hyde, 2016). This approach is seen as moving from the specific to the general (theory building or bottom-up or data to theories). For research question 1, there was inadequate or no research that had explored the reasons for women to open their businesses in temporary retail pop-ups, particularly within the UK context. The review of previous studies assisted the researcher to identify some of the success factors and challenges encountered by women entrepreneurs in general. Nevertheless, as regards women-owned micro-retail pop-ups in the UK, it was apparent from the literature review that there has been inadequate research into the identification of the success factors and challenges encountered by those women.

This was apparent because the researcher was particularly interested in identifying success factors and challenges encountered specifically by women owners of pop-ups. To rectify the noticeable lack of research in this area, the study employs a multiple method to collect empirical/primary data³¹. With inductive reasoning, the study uses research questions to narrow its scope to women-owned micro-retail pop-ups. Empirical qualitative data were collected specifically for this research by conducting semi-structured interviews with women pop-up owners. Primary data were analysed thematically in an inductive way or ‘bottom-up way’. In coding data, the researcher focused on identifying more relevant concepts which are specific to women micro-retail pop-up owners. The qualitative data were read and re-read in an attempt to discover themes related to success factors and challenges. This process helped to identify a number of themes and patterns specific to women pop-up owners. At this stage, the study findings revealed that women micro-retail pop-up owners encounter challenges different to those of women entrepreneurs in general, specifically due to the micro-size and temporary nature. The study found the temporary nature as a success factor which is again different from the general women entrepreneurial population. Here, the researcher moved from a more general level of women entrepreneurship to a more specific one in women-owned micro-retail pop-ups. Nonetheless, the inductive approach employed means that specific themes identified are strongly interlinked (Patton, 1990).

The initial findings reveal not only how the 5Ms framework is applicable in studying women pop-up owners but also provides new insight about how this 5Ms framework is complementary in supporting them to develop their temporary micro-retail pop-ups.

³¹ As such, this study commenced with the intention to identify the success factors and the challenges encountered specifically by women micro-retail pop-up owners in the UK retail market.

This partially rectifies the lack of a strategic framework, as mentioned in the literature review, which should be specifically designed to match the needs of women pop-up owners. At this stage the intention was to find out more about how to support them to address the identified challenges within Money, Market, Management, Motherhood, and Meso-macro environment. The researcher identifies that developing a strategic framework which is tailored to the needs of women pop-up owners is essential for success. This would help them to develop their business management knowledge and identify a long-term perspective of the temporary pop-up business which ultimately enables survival in the UK retail market beyond five years. The identified themes in the primary qualitative data findings are suggestive of a possible framework which might be called the Pop-up Pathway which would explain the way women pop-up owners in the UK might benefit in the interests of the development of their micro-retail pop-ups over the long-term.

The deductive and inductive reasoning approaches followed in this study help to mitigate any disadvantages that might arise from an individual application of either deductive or inductive reasoning and then adequately address the aim, objectives and research questions of the study. Accordingly, a flexible and reflexive approach is adopted in designing an appropriate methodology to address the research questions of the study. The researcher unifies this study under a definite research philosophy, paradigm and methodology.

The research design needed to show coherence and be appropriate for answering the research questions. A primarily qualitative approach was chosen as being best suited to the achievement of this objective within the context of women-owned pop-ups (Blaikie, 2009). The following section presents a discussion as respects the qualitative research design.

4.2 Qualitative research design

A research design can be identified as a plan for a research project which attempts to address research questions (Robinson and McCartan, 2016). Creswell and Creswell (2018, p.3) defined ‘research approaches as plans and procedures for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation’. A research design can be seen as a ‘scaffold’ of the research process in relation to data collection and analysis (Bryman, 2016; Thomas, 2017, p. 139). Hedges (2017) argues that different research designs are created depending on different problems. Research designs also often rely on empirical data which can be collected. There are three main research approaches, namely quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods (Bell *et al.*, 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2018)³²: -

Qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. It is framed in terms of descriptive words. This study follows a qualitative approach.

Quantitative research is an approach for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables and framed in terms of using numbers.

Mixed methods research is an inquiry approach involving the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data and the interpretation of the two forms of data, both words and numbers³³.

This study adopts a qualitative research design and complies with the research standards specific to a qualitative research paradigm.

³² The quantitative research approach aims to quantify the research problem and can be defined as a systematic inquiry of a phenomenon which gathers quantifiable data (e.g., survey, questionnaire) or numerical data, uses a larger sample to quantify variables (e.g., attitudes, opinions and behaviour) and generalises the findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Yin, 2018). The mixed methods approach is a mix of both the above discussed methods: quantitative and qualitative (Bell *et al.*, 2018).

³³ Mixed methods research mostly use distinct designs that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks (ibid).

The qualitative approach adopted in this study is based on the nature of the research problem (the issue being addressed), the researcher's experiences, and potential interested parties of the study.

According to Creswell (2018) the qualitative research approach is associated with non-numerical data (e.g., words) rather than numbers. As suggested by previous qualitative researchers in women entrepreneurship, the qualitative research design was considered to be particularly appropriate in understanding the nature and the context of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Yin, 2018).

The following criteria were considered when selecting the qualitative research design:- The use of life story data has a relatively long tradition within the qualitative method on account of the origin of the qualitative method coming from within anthropology and sociology (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The qualitative method offers rich detailed information, (Yin, 2018), ideal for conducting an in-depth investigation to gain more insight into the experiences of women pop-up owners, (Creswell & Clark, 2017), and answer the research questions to subsequently reach the research aims and objectives (Pearson & Brown, 2002).

For these reasons a qualitative multiple method was adopted to enable the conducting of an in-depth investigation, (Choudrie & Culkin, 2013), which offered reliability and an internal validity (Yin, 2018). Some of the characteristics of qualitative data namely, richness, fulness and meanings principally derived from words not from numbers, were found to be very informative (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Yin, 2018).

For this particular study, the research design was conditioned somewhat by the inclusion of field work for the conducting of semi-structured interviews and focus groups. The qualitative method offers rich detailed information, (Yin, 2018), to enable the gaining of more insight into women micro-retail pop-up owners' experiences in the UK retail context³⁴. The qualitative data enabled the researcher to interpret the meanings and experiences of participants which in turn enabled the design of a more comprehensive coherent study to include an appropriate research strategy, along with data collection techniques and data analysis procedures (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The following section explains how the researcher acquired new knowledge and adds it to the bank of existing knowledge through the chosen qualitative research methodology.

4.2.1 Qualitative research methodology

Methodology refers to the theoretical rationale or principles that justify the research methods appropriate to the field of study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Yin, 2018; Bryman & Bell, 2015). Here, methodology refers to finding out in practice and verifying or otherwise what is thought to be true in theory. This research can be considered as a strategy that translates epistemological principles into guidelines that show how research is to be conducted (Sarantakos, 2005). In this way the principles, procedures, and practices to govern this study have been determined.

³⁴ It is considered that the quantitative or mixed methods approach is not effective for this study. The reason is the focus of the study is neither to examine the relationship between quantitative variables nor to establish whether a relationship exists between known variables by asking closed-ended questions. The researcher identified that the quantitative method is less supportive to gaining more insight into participants' spoken words and hearing participants' voices directly. For example, if this study had adopted a quantitative approach, the researcher would not have been able to gain more insight into the women micro-retail pop-up owners' experiences (see Chapter 1, section Research aims and questions, objective 3).

The researcher, by using the qualitative methodology, became immersed in a culture by interviewing women pop-up owners, interacting with them and developing action-learning activities for the Pop-up pathway which was a reflection of those experiences (Antwi and Hamza, 2015). Qualitative methodology was focused on as a tool to connect thoughts ‘about the nature of knowledge’ to ‘efforts to produce it rather than separating philosophical threads from the research design’ (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019, p.6). Therefore, following suggestions made by MacDonald (2012, p. 35), Participatory Action Research (PAR), being a qualitative research methodology, is adopted in this study.

A qualitative method has an emphasis on investigating respondents’ interpretations. It enables and provides opportunity to explore the reality of the social construction of the participants (Neergaard *et al.*, 2005). This is exemplified in the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners and how they benefit from their success factors (e.g. collaboration and networking) to survive in the UK retail market. As suggested by Gartner (2010) “narrative scholarship can best address issues in entrepreneurship that are concerned with entrepreneurial intentions and actions and their interrelationships with circumstances” (p.12).

In the designing of PAR, several specific decisions were taken about the various elements of the research method. For example, designing and following the procedures in data collection and analysis (Johnson, 2008); selecting legitimate research instruments and techniques to collect the qualitative data (Persons & Brown, 2002). As part of a qualitative multiple method, (Greene & Caracelli, 2003), primary data is collected in three independent waves by following a three-phase procedure. On account of conducting the research within a particular group of women pop-up owners in the UK, the researcher could

be held to be linked to a qualitative multiple method in relation to a target population within a specific location, namely in Birmingham, Manchester and Nottingham in the UK (Grix, 2019).

4.2.2. The qualitative multiple method

Researchers highlight the quality to be achieved by combining different qualitative methods: a combination of methods provides for a “richer account”, (Sade-Beck, 2004, p. 50), for a deeper understanding, (Tierney *et al.*, 2019), and offers a stronger “trustworthiness”, (Abramovich, 2017, p. 1486), or a “better unbiased” analysis (Kerins *et al.*, 2019, p. 6). This study adopted a qualitative “multiple method” which utilized multiple methods in exploring and interpreting the living experiences of women micro-retail pop-up owners in various forms of qualitative data (more than one qualitative data collection method technique) (Silverman, 2020, p. 402).

As do Choudrie and Culkin (2013), this empirical research adopts a qualitative multiple method and collects empirical data in three phases by conducting (i) semi-structured interviews (ii) focus groups and (iii) follow up, semi-structured short interviews. Greater insight into the experience of women micro-retail pop-up owners was vital in order to understand the actions required to support them to successfully manage their temporary retail pop-ups in the long term. A more thorough and multi-faceted investigation strategy fosters a deeper understanding of the success factors and the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners than could otherwise be gained from any single method. The chosen approach was needed to obtain an insider’s perspective on the experiences of the women and to maximise validity, trustworthiness, credibility and confirmation of the findings.

This method led to the gathering of a wealth of knowledge and understanding about the living experiences of women micro-retail pop-up owners. In this way, a qualitative multiple method contributes to a better understanding of a research problem in comparison with research that is based entirely on a single methodological approach (Creswell, 2015).

4.2.3 Qualitative data collection

The researcher relies on more than one qualitative method. Data were collected in three phases: semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and follow up short interviews (Patton, 2002).

(i) **Semi-structured interviews**

The data collection process is started by conducting semi-structured, open-ended, face-to-face interviews (including a pilot study) in order to gain more insight into the meanings of the spoken words of women micro-retail pop-up owners and subsequently to inform and direct the next phase.

(ii) **Focus groups discussions**

Three focus groups were conducted in order to validate the action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway.

(iii) **Semi-structured follow-up short interviews**

Semi-structured short interviews (see Chapter 6) were conducted to gain more insight into participants' experiences (e.g., answers to how they find the action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway, to what extent they are useful to them or must the activities be improved still further).

Table 4.2 presents the PAR cycles of the study.

Table 4.2 Participatory Action Research cycles of the study

PAR Cycle	Action taken
Cycle 1	Thematic literature review
Cycle 2	<p>Semi-structured interviews The researcher conducted semi-structured open-ended, face-to-face interviews with the women pop-up owners by using a semi-structured open-ended interview guide as the research instrument.</p> <p>(a) To provide an effective way of exploring women’s self-employment experiences (Foster, 2011). (b) To allow the researcher to gain detailed information from the participants (Yin, 2014). (c) To assist in gaining more insight into the meaning of the spoken words of the participants (Creswell, 2014). (d) To allow the researcher to probe questions and obtain rich data (Bryman & Bell, 2015).</p> <p>The semi-structured interviews were conducted with 69 women micro-retail pop-up owners in three cities namely, Birmingham, Manchester and Nottingham in the UK. The participating women pop-ups owners’ numbers per city depend on city size and diversity of retail presence (Yin, 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). See Appendix 1 for the semi-structured interview guide. Along with the thematic literature review findings, the semi-structured interviews findings allowed the researcher to address the second objective of the study. The action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway were designed to support the women pop-up owners.</p>
Cycle 3	<p>Focus groups Three focus groups were conducted to validate the action-based training of the Pop-up Pathway. The researcher conducted three focus group discussions with women micro-retail pop-up owners to validate the developed Pop-up Pathway. These participants had already participated in the semi-structured interviews. The number of participants per focus group was six. The action learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway were tested during the focus groups (Mertler, 2017; Yin, 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). See Appendix 2 for the focus group questions.</p>
Cycle 4	<p>Follow up individual short interviews The researcher conducts eighteen (18) short interviews with the participants who had already participated in the semi-structured interviews and the focus groups and benefits from the feedback of the participants and accordingly, makes some further improvements. See Appendix 3 for the follow up interview questions.</p>

The methodological link between the research ‘philosophy and a subsequent choice of method to collect data and analyse data’ is called a ‘research strategy’. The research strategy followed in this qualitative research is discussed in the following section (Saunders *et al.*, 2012, p. 173).

4.3 Research Strategy: Participatory Action Research (PAR)

A research strategy can be defined as a plan of action for answering the research questions. It is conditioned by the philosophical premise and determines the subsequent choice of method to collect and analyse data (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Saunders *et al.*, 2012). This qualitative multiple research has followed a Participatory Action Research (PAR) strategy. A PAR strategy is guided by the research questions and objectives, and should show that it is coherent with the interpretive philosophy and the inductive and deductive reasonings. The PAR strategy is principally linked to the qualitative research design followed in this study (Saunders *et al.*, 2012, p. 173). The choice of a PAR strategy afforded the achievement of a reasonable level of coherence of the research design and enabled answers to be given to the research questions, meeting the objectives of the study. The following section provides an overview of PAR principles.

4.3.1 Overview and principles of Participatory Action Research (PAR)

Action research (AR) can be described as a group of activities based on the premise that change comes more easily when people get together and work collaboratively in groups with shared concerns, rather than work as individuals to identify the challenges and then find the solutions (Kemmis & McTaggar, 1988). Kurt Lewin (1946)³⁵ was the first to use

³⁵ Kurt Lewin “is probably better known as the social psychologist who devised the ‘field theory’ of concepts” (topographical psychology) (Adelman, 1993; 2006, p.1).

the term ‘action research’³⁶. His Group Dynamics movement of the post-war reconstructionist period focused on how to conceptualise (Greenwood & Levin, 2007; Waterman, 2007) and solve social problems (McKernan, 1998) with the central thrust of social change³⁷. Lewin (1946), therefore, has often been referred to as the originator or founding father of action research³⁸.

The term ‘action research’ is used by Lewin (1946) to refer to possible social change: (a) through education of both researchers and research participants; (b) believing that independence, equality and co-operation among people would lead gradually to change through a process (Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Waterman, 1994). This process includes three stages: (i) dismantling former structures; (ii) changing structures; and (iii) locking them back to an enduring structure (Greenwood & Levin, 2007). According to Lewin, AR assists in improving understanding, situation and practice. It is underpinned by a view of truth and action as socially constructed (Care & Kemmis, 1994). Social entities are not fixed but they are created, developed and modified and can change during the process of interaction (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008).

Kemmis & McTaggart (1988), and Winter & Munn-Giddings (2001) emphasise that AR requires people to put their practice, ideas and assumptions about their situation to the test gathering compelling evidence. It is evident that researchers have proposed a number of distinct approaches/models and methods to classify the term ‘action research’ (Bradbury, 2006; Torrer *et al.*, 2012).

³⁶ Post-war America, in his quest for empowerment and justice for the oppressed (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988).

³⁷ Lewin was concerned with solving social problems, e.g. discrimination against minority groups. He believed that social and psychological researchers did not improve the lives of people.

³⁸ Lieberman and Miller (1984) posit that in the 1970s, action research was rediscovered and renamed ‘interactive research and development’ (McKernan, 1998, p.11).

However, based on a rather different paradigm from conventional academic studies, AR has different purposes, relationships, ways of conceiving knowledge and its relation to practice (Bradbury, 2006). Therefore, it is important to clarify how the term is used in this study.

According to Berg (2001), there are three types of AR.

- a. Technical/scientific/collaborative AR which assists “to test a particular intervention based on a pre-specified theoretical framework” (p.186).
- b. Practical/mutual collaborative mode which “seeks to improve practice-and-service delivery” (p.186).
- c. Emancipating/enhancing/critical science mode which “can assist practitioners in lifting their veil of clouded understandings, and help them to better understand fundamental problems by raising their collective consciousness” (p.187).

Since the focus of this study is on a collaborative practical, participatory action research which seeks to improve the situation of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups, it is strongly linked to the previously mentioned type b. As suggested by MacDonald (2012), a Participatory Action Research (PAR) strategy is associated with the qualitative, multiple method followed in this study.

4.3.2 Participatory action research

Reason and Bradbury (2001) have provided a definition of PAR: “action research is a participatory, democratic process concerned with developing a practical knowing in the pursuit of a worthwhile human purpose, grounded in a participatory worldview” (p.1). PAR has been adopted in various disciplines to address issues within disadvantaged societies, (Fals-Borda, 2001; Kacobs, 2016), on account of being a natural research paradigm with a long tradition of adequate rigour (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014).

Moreover, from a postmodern perspective, PAR has a powerful intellectual influence on women's research. Herr and Anderson (2015), Pine (2009), and some other researchers have emphasised how PAR can have a notable influence when inquiring about the context of women-owned businesses. This research conforms to that view and considers it to be convenient and flexible for the study of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups in the UK due to its characteristic of having a "rich, open, dynamic, situation-based and participatory dimension" (Herr & Anderson, 2015; Kotaman, 2013, p.1; Fals-Borda, 2001; Greenwood & Levin, 1998). Marvasti and Trevino (2020) offer two definitions of PAR to distinguish two distinct camps (traditions) of researchers.

The first camp (type one), is a British tradition which is mostly linked to education, and tends to view critical participatory action research as an attempt to enhance direct practice where a single researcher is investigating an issue in his/her intended research area. The researcher considered AR to be a practical process for the development of knowledge. Carr and Kemmis (1986) state that "action research is simply a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations to improve the rationality and justice of their practice, their understanding of such and the situations in which the practice is carried out" (p.162).

The second camp (type two) is collaborative participatory action research. PAR may include as few as two people or a group of researchers, participants and other interested people. They work together on a common problem. This approach can be identified as a "systematic collection of information that is designed to bring about social change" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p.223)³⁹.

³⁹ The detached work conducted by Goetschius and Tash (1967) considered as AR.

However, both camps have focused on conceptualising and designing PAR research. According to Reason and Bradbury (2016), “a participatory process [is] concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes. It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities” (p.37).

Previous researchers consider PAR as ‘a subset of action research’ (McDonald, 2012, p.35). The PAR approach adopted in this study depends on the goals and purpose of taking actions to support women micro-retail pop-up owners to make positive change by developing a practical strategic framework resulting from empirical qualitative data collection and analysis (Gillis & Jackson, 2002, p.264). These distinctions have been considered significant in designing and developing this inquiry-based multiple case study.

Previous researchers have identified AR in numerous terms. According to Cornwall (1996), there are six modes of participation, namely ‘co-option’, ‘compliance’, ‘consultation’, ‘co-operation’, ‘co-learning’ and ‘collective action’ (p.96). This is shown below in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Types of action research design

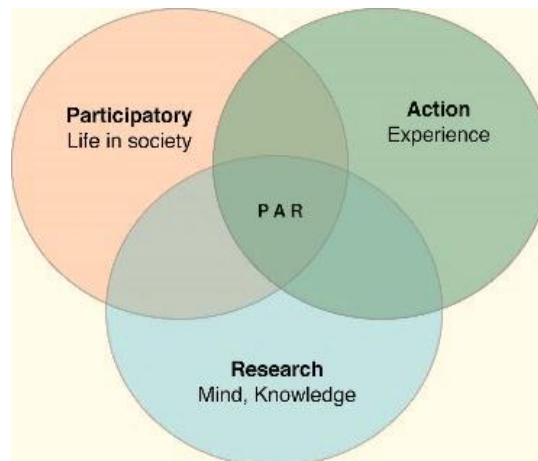
Mode of participation	Involvement of local people	Relationship of research and action to local people	Action research types – A, B, C	References
Co-option	Token representatives are chosen, but no real input or power	On	Type A: Technical	Grundy (1982), Carr and Kemmis (1986) McKernan (1991) McCutcheon and Jurg, (1990) Holter and Schwartz-Barcott (1993)
Compliance	Tasks are assigned, with incentives; outsiders decide agenda and direct the process	For	The scientific-technical view of problem-solving The positive approach The technical collaborative approach	
Consultation	Local opinions asked and those of outsiders; analyse and decide on a course of action	For/with	Type B Practical	Grundy (1982), Carr and Kemmis (1986) McKernan (1991) McCutcheon and Jurg (1990) Holter and SchwartzBarcott (1993)
Cooperation	Local people work together with outsiders to determine priorities; the responsibility remains with outsiders for directing the process	With	Practical-deliberative action research, interpretive Mutual collaborative approach	
Co-learning	Local people and outsiders share their knowledge to create new understanding and they work together to form an action plan.	With/by	Type C Emancipatory	Grundy (1982) Carr and Kemmis (1986) McKernan (1991) McCutcheon and Jurg (1990) Holter and Schwartz-Barcott (1993)
Collective action	Local people set their own agenda and mobilise to carry it out in the absence of outside initiators and facilitators.	By	Critical emancipatory action research Critical science Enhancement approach	

As shown above in Table 4.3, 'Type B' AR has been identified as more suitable, convenient and flexible for this study and adopted as a more practical strategy (McCutcheon & Jurg, 1990; Holter & SchwartzBarcott, 1993; Mertler, 2017).

The participatory nature of AR provides for 'joining social movements' and "structural distributions of opportunity' and resources (Torre *et al.*, 2012, p.171). In view of the above, Kemmis and McTaggar's (2000) PAR model has been adopted due to its dynamic nature in bridging the gap between theory and practice (Mertler, 2017; Bringerg & Hirschman, 1986). The model's quality of a 'rich, open, dynamic, situation-based and participatory dimension', (Kotaman, 2013, p.1), and its strengths of breadth and versatility were considered (Marvasti & Trevino, 2020).

In recent years a number of practitioners and researchers in small business research have identified PAR as a practical research method and it has been successfully applied in this study (Tasker *et al.*, 2012; Leitch, 2007). PAR can last for long intervals of time (e.g., 5-10 years) but the study purpose required this particular PAR process to be completed within four years. However, as and when needed, women pop-up owners can continue the process in the future. In developing this PAR the three PAR pillars of participation, action and research have been applied (Marvasti & Trevino, 2020). It is depicted in Figure 4.1 below.

Figure 4.1: Three PAR pillars



Source: Marvasti and Trevino (2020)

As illustrated in Figure 4.1, the researcher identified three modes of PAR, namely (a) a knowledge-generating (creating) mode (b) an improving the business management practice mode (c) a collaboration model all important to conceptualise validity and justify knowledge claims (White, 1999; Berg, 2001; Habermas, 1987). Many scholars have identified ‘participation’ as the key point of action research (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014; Greenwood & Levin, 2007). The main emphasis on PAR has been driven by the researcher having more than twenty-five years’ experience in conducting PAR. It is thought that the inquiry-based participatory nature of AR and its democratic nature can assist women pop-up owners to improve their business management knowledge and practice “through a combination of systematic reflection” and strategic thinking (Savin-Baden & Wimpenny, 2007, p.332) within a collaborative environment.

Hence, an inquiry-based “action-oriented” PAR⁴⁰ strategy, otherwise known as the scientific method of PAR, has been applied in this study with the dual aims of action and research (Park, 2001, p.81; Mertler, 2017).

Firstly, the study takes the form of increasing the understanding of the temporary, micro-retail pop-up phenomenon in the context of women directly involved in this study, and then identifying the women micro-retail pop-up owners’ success factors and the challenges they encounter by gathering qualitative evidence.

Secondly, the study offers a collaborative, practical strategic framework, namely the Pop-up Pathway with the aim of assisting and supporting individual micro-retail pop-up owners to improve their business management knowledge and practice and to encourage and empower their capacity-building / development through collaboration (McDonald, 2012, p.40; McTaggart, 1997).

The women micro-retail pop-up owners’ involvement, collaboration, and participation in this study is identified as an ongoing process. In this regard, the outside researcher and the participants (insiders) work collaboratively, (Fals-Borda, 2001; Coghlan & Brannick, 2014, p.15), during the study process. The primary purpose of the participative nature of this PAR is to impart social change and the specific action to be taken by participants (MacDonald, 2012, p.34). It is not to provide solutions given by powerful outsiders. Focusing on Lewin’s work in Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), the researcher identified ‘group decision’ and ‘commitment’ as two fundamental ideas which have become distinctive features in this PAR process.

⁴⁰ This cross-sectional study of the women-owned micro-retail pop-up phenomenon was conducted for academic purposes from 1st October 2015 to 30th July 2020.

The participatory nature of this study provided opportunities for women micro-retail pop-up owners to improve their existing relationships with friends, family, business support organisations and resource persons (social and cultural relationships), and more importantly, to interact collaboratively with other women pop-up owners. Participants' connections with society are held to be important because all levels of society could, and perhaps should, participate to address the challenges they encounter (Greenwood & Levin, 2007). More importantly, the development of the women-owned micro-retail pop-ups could be a solution at least in part, for the declining British High Street and could contribute considerably to the UK national economy. Micro-retail pop-ups could change lives of women, children and families for the better! This approach is intended to assist individual women pop-up owners to increase their business 'mindset' level and through this mindset be able to experience success which will ensure survival in the UK retail market (McGrath & O'Toole, 2011). This is achieved through PAR of the Pop-up Pathway along the lines of Lewin's spiral (Greenwood & Levin, 2007).

The participatory nature of this study links directly to action which can engage (embed) learning into practice as a core objective (McGrath & O'Toole, 2011), bridging the gap between theory and practice (Brinberg & Hirschman, 1986). The participatory nature of the study assisted the researcher to develop new knowledge and work collectively and collaboratively with participants. The researcher's self-reflective inquiry nature and the principles and characteristics of PAR also assisted in actively supporting women micro-retail pop-up owners to improve their business practice and develop their temporary retail pop-ups through positive change. The study makes a connection between existing knowledge and the construction of new knowledge within a collaborative environment (Pine, 2009; Jacobs, 2016).

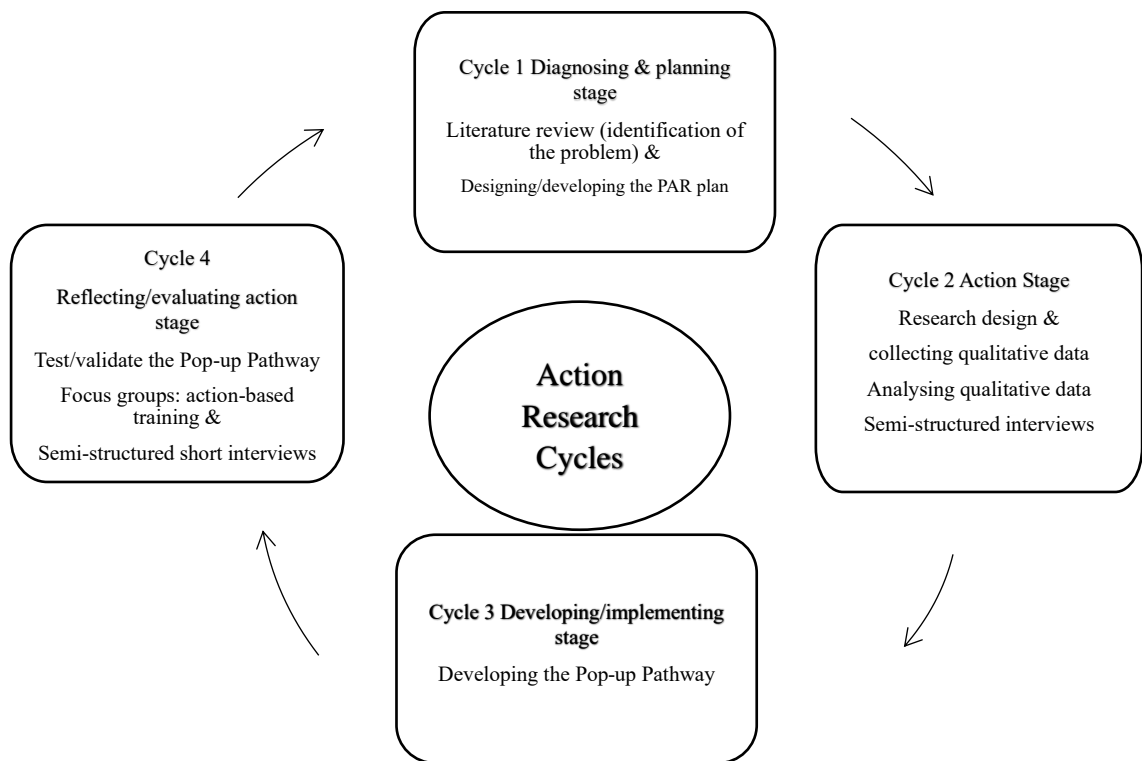
4.4. Participatory Action Research (PAR) cycles of the study

According to the ‘original Lewinian and simplest form’ and principles of PAR, this study develops in a cyclic process of research, (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014, p.9). Minkler (2000), and highlights that PAR encompasses a ‘cyclical process of fact findings, action and reflection, leading to further inquiry and action for change’ (p.191). The study is conducted in a spiral cyclic nature and consists of four cycles which operate concurrently to make a positive change within women-owned micro-retail pop-ups. The spiral of PAR cycles - the process adopted in this study - includes four main cycles which can be seen as a ‘four-stage procedure’, namely (Mertler, 2017, p.35):

1. Cycle one – The planning stage
2. Cycle two – The acting stage
3. Cycle three – The developing stage
4. Cycle four – The reflecting/evaluating stage.

These planning cycles match the needs of women micro-retail pop-up owners. The study begins with a series of planning actions initiated by the researcher to work collaboratively with the women micro-retail pop-up owners. The pre-step of the study, (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014), encompasses identifying and defining the objectives of the study (Lewin, 1946). The objectives were to identify the success factors and the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners and develop a strategic framework which assists and supports them to survive in the UK retail market beyond five years. As highlighted by Coghlan and Brannick (2014, p.10), “the spiral of action research cycles unfolds in real-time and begins with seeking an understanding of the context of” women-owned micro-retail pop-ups. The action research cycles followed in this study are depicted below in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2: Action research cycles



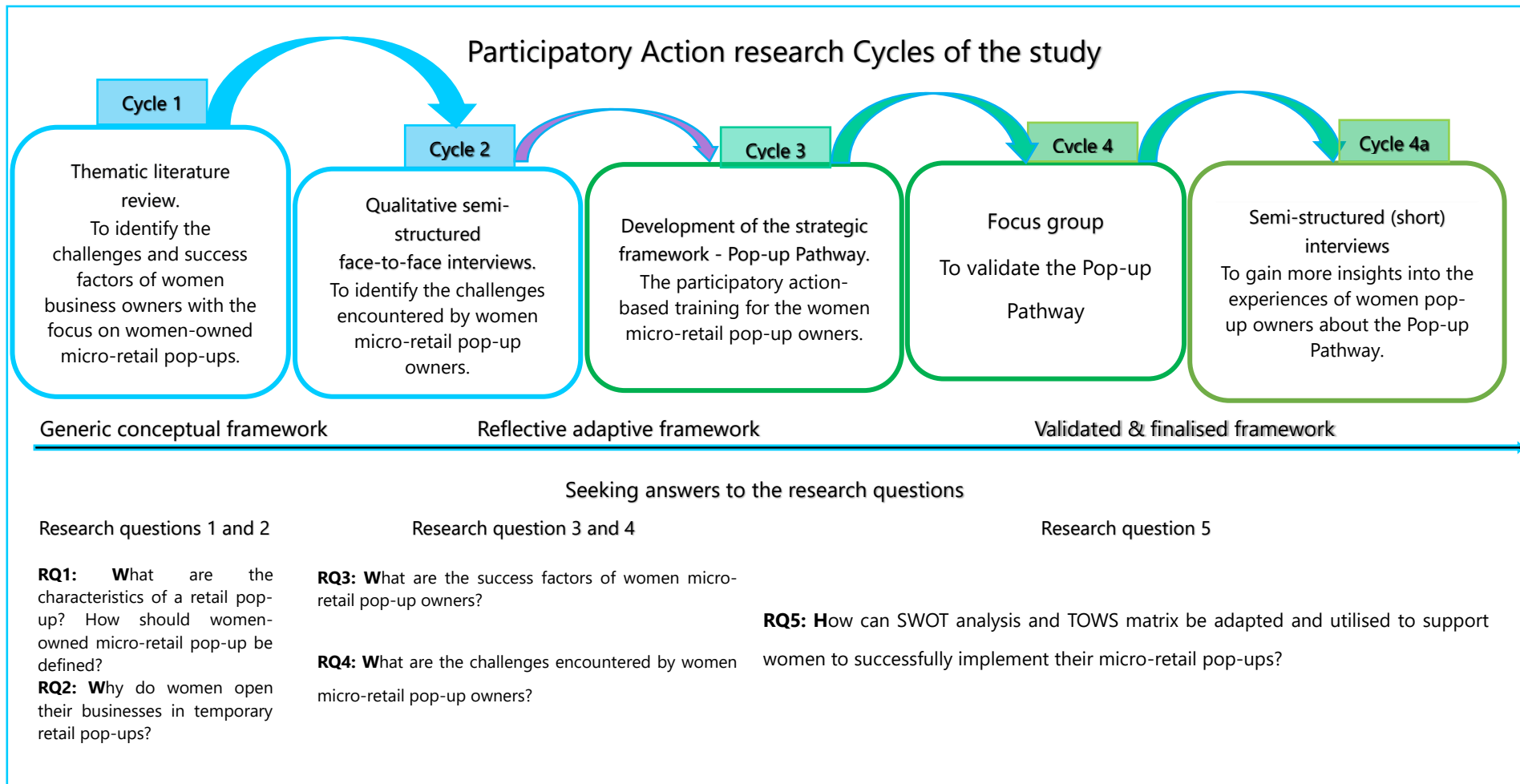
Source: synthesised from Lewin (1946); Kemmis and McTaggart (1998); Mertler (2011)

As shown above in Figure 4.2, the PAR cycles of this study are depicted in the following manner:

- (1) Diagnosing and planning stage - identification of the problem of the study.
- (2) Taking action – qualitative data collection and data analysis.
- (3) Developing / implementing the action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway.
- (4) Reflecting/evaluating the Pop-up Pathway, further development and actions.

The adoption of Lewin’s (1946) basic AR model was seen to be appropriate for this study. Analysis of literature review findings and the primary data findings helped to determine the PAR cycle which in turn provided answers to research questions. This is illustrated below in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3: Participatory action research cycles of the study



Source: Gallellalage *et al.* (2018)

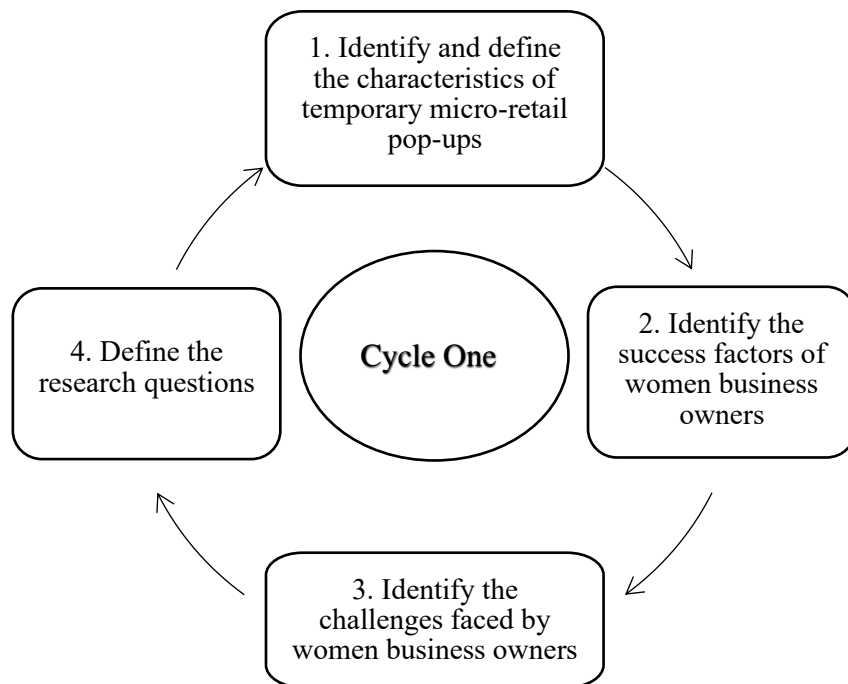
In accordance with the depiction in Figure 4.3, the next section presents the PAR cyclical process of this study by following a standard approach (Lewin, 1946; Mertler, 2017). There is an explanation of each cycle in detail in terms of its principles and how they have been applied.

4.4.1. Cycle 1: Planning stage – preliminary diagnosis

Several studies have already been conducted in retail pop-ups (Shi, 2018; Warnaby and Shi, 2018). However, there is inadequate research on the question of what are the success factors and the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners in the UK retail market. On account of this inadequacy, the PAR process begins with conducting a thematic literature review of women-owned business in general with the focus on women-owned micro-retail pop-ups. Cycle 1 includes a thematic literature review of the previous research in (i) retail pop-ups and (ii) women-owned micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), inclusive of ‘existing sources of information that can shed light’ (Mertler, 2011, p.40)⁴¹. The 5Ms framework has been identified as a theoretical framework for this study. The thematic literature review is thus conducted in line with this framework (Brush *et al.*, 2009), with the objective of analysing the entrepreneurial journey of women business owners and having a focus on women-owned micro-retail pop-ups (Vistaprint, 2016; FSB, 2016; McNeill *et al.*, 2015; DTI, 2011; Bruni *et al.*, 2006). The thematic literature review furnished preliminary information which identified and defined the characteristics of a retail pop-up. Figure 4.4 now follows with a presentation of cycle 1 – thematic literature review.

⁴¹ For example, academic journal articles, government and non-government reports, websites, textbooks, district and state data, training and curriculum materials in women-owned MSMEs (Creswell, 2005; Johnson, 2008).

Figure 4.4 Cycle 1 – Thematic literature review

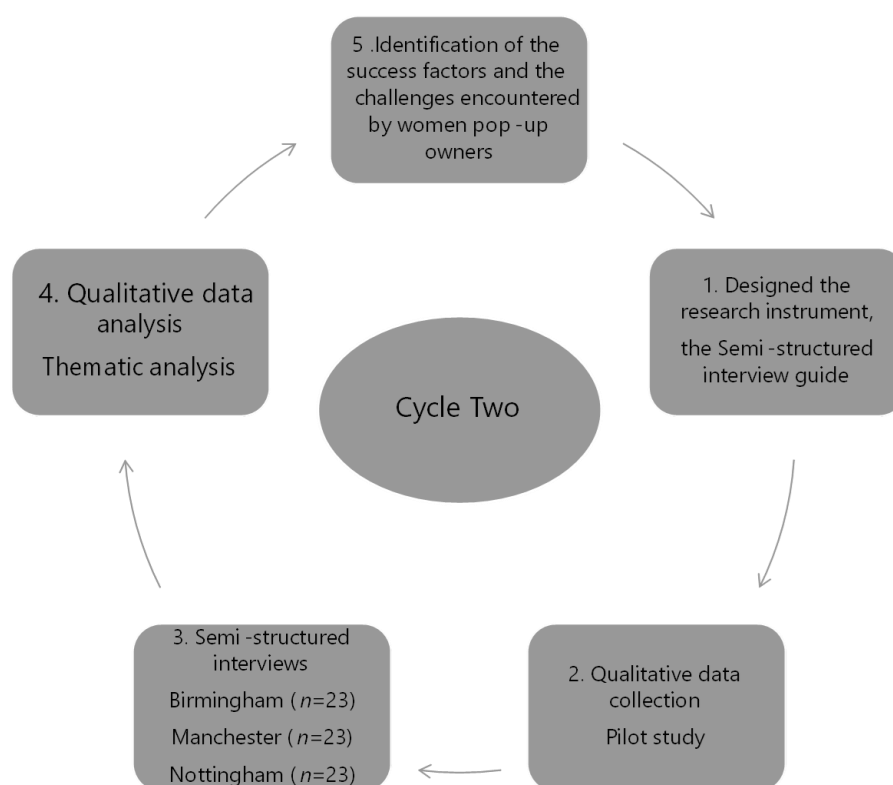


The thematic literature reviews of this study were instrumental in identifying the success factors and the challenges encountered by women business owners in general with the focus on women-owned micro-retail pop-ups in particular. This knowledge was required on account of the study aims, objectives and research questions. These reviews also enabled the identification of what needs to be done in line with the methods and instruments that previous scholars used. Previous researchers' ideas and guidance helped to understand what works and what does not work. Based on the thematic literature review findings, the 'action taking stage' of PAR, namely, the research design was developed to collect and analyse qualitative data (Mertler, 2017). The following section presents Cycle 2 of PAR.

4.4.2 Cycle 2: Action taking: Semi-structured, face-to-face interviews

In cycle 2 of PAR, the researcher collected primary, qualitative data by conducting semi-structured interviews with women micro-retail pop-up owners with the aim of identifying their success factors and the challenges they encounter. This process is shown as below in Figure 4.5.

Figure 4.5: Cycle 2 - Primary data collection: semi-structured interviews



Following Creswell and Creswell (2018), semi-structured face-to-face interviews were selected in this study to collect qualitative empirical data. This method has been used often in qualitative research within the context of women, micro, small and medium businesses. Semi-structured interviews were considered to be appropriate for the interpretive nature of the study.

In selecting the semi-structured interviews, the following advantages were considered. The method is more useful where the women micro-retail pop-up participants cannot be directly observed. It allows the researcher control over the line of questioning and gives opportunity to gather thorough data for triangulation by asking questions and having them respond verbally (Heale & Forbes, 2013).

The semi-structured interview method enables more insight to be gained into the meaning of the spoken words of the participants (Creswell, 2014). It helps to get in-depth understanding of the success factors and the challenges they encountered in the socio-economic and cultural context, some of which might have hindered their full entrepreneurial potential to excel in the UK retail market (Gallellalage *et al.*, 2018). The semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to probe with questions and obtain a wealth of data (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

The researcher's knowledge and past experience in collecting and analysing qualitative data proved helpful in conducting the interviews with the pop-up owners and provided high-quality data. However, one disadvantage of this method was identified by previous researchers, namely that participants can control or alter the information they provide during the interviews and show bias (Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014). But there was no evidence of an appearance of that disadvantage during those interviews.

4.4.2.1 Research instrument: semi-structured interview guide

Based on the secondary data findings, the researcher developed a semi-structured interview guide as the research instrument to conduct face-to-face interviews with the women micro-retail pop-up owners of the study (see Appendix 1 for the semi-structured interview guide).

Questions were formed and tailored according to the emergent themes as identified by Brush *et al.* (2009) in their 5M framework in answer to the fundamental research questions and to ultimately reach the aims and objective of the study. This method is similar to the one outlined by Choudrie and Culkin (2013) who have conducted qualitative research of innovation diffusion in small firms. Once the questions were formed, opinions were sought from three academic experts and three business support resource persons (those representing government and non-government business supportive organisations) to gauge the depth and clarity of expression.

Following the recommendations of Creswell and Creswell (2018), the interview guide (protocol) consists of two pages in length. It includes some spaces and tables between the questions for the interviewer to write short notes and quotes in case the audio-recording device does not work. Creswell & Creswell (2018, p.190) did not ‘specify a precise number’ of questions but this part of the study employs 20 in all. The interview guide consists of an introduction, content questions with probes, and closing instructions (Creswell, 2016). The interview guide was prepared in advance. The NTU Research Ethics Committee had granted permission to conduct the interviews (see Appendix 4 for the ethics approval). Prior to starting the interviews, there was a thorough familiarisation with the questionnaire so that a smooth discussion could be conducted with participants rather than having to read the interview protocol during the interviews. The interview guide was pilot tested.

4.4.2.2 Pilot study

Interview guide piloting is considered to be an integral part of conducting qualitative interviews and is useful in highlighting any shortfall of improvisation to the study (Majid *et al.*, 2017). The aim of the pilot study was to test and validate the interview guide and to develop a potential

semi-structured interview guide. Individual, semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were conducted with eight women pop-up owners in Nottingham, UK from 1st September to 20th October 2017 (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Collected qualitative data were transcribed and analysed manually and using NVivo software. Based on the pilot study findings the semi-structured interview guide was amended and validated after confirmation that the semi-structured interview guide was best suited to answer the research questions. The pilot study data findings were administered to the sample of the population (women micro-retail pop-up owners in the UK retail market). The pilot study helped to assess the researcher's approach to qualitative data collection, and then practise the necessary techniques required to conduct the study. Here below follows a presentation about the sample size and the specific technique followed in recruiting participants for the actual study.

4.4.2.3 Snowball sampling technique and the sample size

A non-probability sampling technique, namely the snowball sampling technique was considered as appropriate to be used when the members of a certain population are difficult to locate (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The first participants were recruited through community challenges such as self-help, support groups, through the Creative Quarter in Nottingham, through the Nottingham Women Centre and The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints and through the Chambers of Commerce of Nottingham, Birmingham and Manchester, not to forget family and friends. Prior to the study, the researcher had already gained access to local authorities. These channels were seen as natural settings where participants would be willing to offer their participation voluntarily. The initial participants were drawn from the mentioned organisations. They were asked to refer further potential respondents in order to reach a larger pool of participants.

The sample size is 69. The chain referral process of the snowball sampling technique allowed the researcher to simply reach the population of the study - women micro-retail pop-up owners in the UK. This process was cost and time efficient in comparison with other sampling methods (e.g., probability sampling). By following the snowball sampling technique for volunteer sampling, the researcher was able to find an ever-expanding set of potential participants who volunteered to be part of the research rather than being specifically chosen (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The sample and the number of participants are presented below in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Research participants by city

City	Participants by city				
	Phase I Semi-structured interviews		Phase II Focus groups		Phase III Semi-structured (short interviews)
	P=Participant		C= Contributor		P=Participant
	Women pop-up owners	Resource persons (R)	Women pop-up owners	Resource persons (R)	Women micro- retail pop-up owners
Nottingham (N)	PN1-23	RN1-3	C1-5	R-1	C1-5
Manchester (M)	PM24-46	RM4-6	C6-10	R-2	C6-10
Birmingham (B)	PB47-69	RB6-9	C11-15	R-3	C11-15

Participants were referred to as PN1-PN23 (participants in Nottingham), PM24-PM46 (participants in Manchester), and PB47-PB69 (participants in Birmingham).

Sixty-nine (69) semi-structured, open-ended, face-to-face interviews were conducted with women who had owned and operated a temporary micro-retail pop-up for 0-5 years (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

In December 2015, data were collected in specific geographical areas in the UK, those well populated by women-owned micro-retail pop-ups, namely, Birmingham ($n = 23$), Manchester ($n = 23$) and Nottingham ($n = 23$). These three areas were selected for having recorded lower survival rates during a three consecutive year period of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) based on enterprises initiated in 2008 (Business Support: Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, 2013). However, statistics differed somewhat during the last four years.

The first city, Manchester (UK) is a modern, large city with a population of 2,639,000 (Census Data, 2011). It was to be involved since it had been recorded at the lowest survival rate of 49.9% during the considered three years. At the beginning of the first year (2008) there were 2155 MSMEs. However, at the end of the third year (2010) just 1075 MSMEs had been able to survive.

The second city, Nottingham (UK) is a small-medium city with a population of 755,000 (Census Data, 2011). The city was to be involved since it had been recorded at the second-lowest survival rate of 53.6% during the considered three-year period. At the beginning of the first year (2008) there were 915 MSMEs. However, at the end of the third year (2010) just 490 MSMEs had been able to survive in the market.

The third and final city, Birmingham (UK) is a medium-large city with a population of 2,512,000 (Census Data, 2011). The city was to be involved because it had been recorded at the third-lowest survival rate of 54.4% during the considered three-year period of time. At the beginning of the first year (2008) there were 3610 MSMEs.

However, at the end of the third year (2010) just 1965 MSMEs had been able to survive.

69 interviews were conducted with women pop-up owners - see Appendix 10 for the profile of the pop-up businesses. This number was reached through data saturation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). At this point, no new themes emerged from semi-structured interviews or the interview materials (Bowen, 2008).

Participants in the focus groups and short interviews ($n=15$) were selected from the above participants due to their availability to participate in focus group discussions and short interviews. Participants in this study, namely women micro-retail pop-up owners, played a crucial role in bringing context to the analysis and making decisions on the feedback provided, as well as having an influence on the scaffolding and the adaptation of the participatory action-learning (Corrin, 2019). Participants had the characteristics of being information-rich and relevant to the study and the practical experiences of some of them of being a mother added advantage to this research.

4.4.2.4 Data management

The semi-structured, open-ended, face-to-face interviews were conducted with women micro-retail pop-up owners and mainly lasted for an hour, but some interviews lasted for one-and-a-half hours. The researcher identified and planned her approach to data recording during the semi-structured interviews. All the interviews were conducted in the English language (British) and were audio-recorded using a voice recorder. Information was recorded through the making of handwritten notes. In this case, even if the recording equipment had failed there would still have been information available. There was a planned transcription of the tape with interviews being transcribed verbatim (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

4.4.2.5 Qualitative data analysis: thematic analysis

Following data acquisition and transcription, the researcher attempted to become familiar with the data by listening to the interviews, reading and re-reading the transcribed qualitative data and forming ideas and views. The qualitative data were analysed thematically as a process in which a researcher connects ideas and makes sense of the important facts (Silverman, 2014;

Bazeley, 2013). Thematic analysis can be defined as an approach to ‘identifying, analysing and interpreting patterns of meanings (themes) within data’ (Clarke and Braun, 2017, p. 297). This method was employed to find information within the answers from participants which ultimately assists in answering the research questions of the study.

Other data analysis methods (e.g., content analysis) were found as less suitable in answering the research questions. Some researchers in women-owned business have used content analysis to understand concepts by taking into account the frequency of concepts of the data. However, researchers such as Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2011) and Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that content analysis reduces the meaning embedded in the context.

Identification of themes was found to be a process to aid further abstraction from the qualitative data at every stage of analysis from manifest and literal content to latent meaning (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017). As proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), the researcher employed thematic analysis in six stages, namely: (i) familiarising oneself with the data; (ii) generating initial codes; (iii) searching for themes; (iv) reviewing themes; (v) defining and naming themes; (vi) writing up the findings. Table 4.5 presents a summary of the thematic data analysis process followed in this study.

Table 4.5: Thematic data analysis stages

Stage	Description of the stages	
	I. Grounded (iterative) analysis	II. NVivo software
1. The researcher became familiarised with the qualitative data	The researcher transcribed the qualitative data and then read and re-read the transcribed data. Identified challenges and success factors of the women micro-retail pop-up owners were noted down initially. Then the researcher highlighted the important themes in different colours (e.g., money – yellow; market – green; management – blue). Reflective notes were kept from the beginning of the study.	Uploaded the transcribed data into NVivo software. Continued further reading and reflecting on the data.
2. Generated initial codes	The iterative process of the inductive analysis: the researcher read and re-read the text; engaged in open coding; highlighted/noted down codes within the categories which assisted in answering the research questions set at the beginning of the study.	The researcher coded the highlighted phrases from the interviews and the initial themes generated from the thematic literature review.
3. Searched for themes and sub-themes	Developed grounded codes: after initial coding, the researcher went back to amend / edit and break down codes. Accordingly, the initial codes generated from the qualitative data were sorted into themes (e.g., challenges: theme – accessing finance; sub-theme – obtaining a bank loan). Coding was finished when saturation was achieved.	The researcher created the main themes (e.g., success factors, challenges) and sub-themes (e.g., money, market) in the NVivo nodes. Data extracts were copied and pasted in the themes.
4. Reviewed the identified themes	The researcher looked for connections between themes and looked for subcategories, relationships, and cause-effect. Each identified theme was examined and checked to confirm whether the qualitative data of the study reflected the recognised themes.	The researcher examined and re-examined the coded data sets to reflect the categorised themes. By doing so, accurate representation was ensured.
5. Defined and named themes	Further refined the themes. This was done by identifying the true essence of the collected primary data; defining and naming each theme; at this stage developing a matrix of codes and themes.	The categorised themes were organised into the overarching category of themes / sub-themes generated. These themes are presented in the analysis and discussion.
6. Wrote up the findings	To build for a discussion on the study findings, the researcher selected data extracts to each theme and sub-theme.	The researcher presented the data extract in the Findings chapter by making reference to the themes and relating them to previous study findings.

Synthesised from: Yin (2018); Creswell and Creswell (2018); Bazeley (2013); Braun and Clerke (2006)

As shown above in Table 4.5, empirical qualitative data were thematically analysed and interpreted in order to answer the research questions of this study.

Firstly, the researcher followed an inductive coding style within an iterative analysis process, referred to as ‘grounded analysis’ and categorised highlighted facts into the emergent themes. Secondly, the gathered qualitative data were analysed thematically in two rounds (i) manually and (ii) using the NVivo qualitative data analysis software to confirm the accuracy of the study findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Bazeley, 2013). Participants’ responses were uploaded to NVivo software which then determined the codes to be formed. Codes were identified after examining for repeated patterns in the text. These codes were applied across all documents. In examining various codes and themes, reference was made to the emergent themes developed within the literature. The codes then sectioned into the themes were identified in the 5Ms theoretical framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006). However, the themes of temporary nature and micro-size were identified as being specific to this study. The findings were pursued in order to identify what data fitted with a particular theme – for example, lack of business management knowledge – which was then placed into a specific category, namely management. Accordingly, emergent themes formed from the empirical data were compared with the understanding formed after an earlier literature review.

The emerging themes were clustered into subordinate themes that formed the basis for the findings and discussion. In this way, accuracy and transparency in analysing the primary data was maintained. The codes then led to the formation of themes. The thematic analysis technique assisted in finding the main themes within the empirical data which enabled the gaining of more insight into participants’ experiences.

Semi-structured qualitative data analysis revealed two main themes and a third theme, all of which reflected the research aim. The findings depict the women micro-retail pop-up owners' real-life experiences.

Firstly, women micro-retail pop-up owners' success factors: referring to the conceptual framework (Adom *et al.*, 2018), one of the most interesting findings was the identification of the success factors which were assisting the women to survive in the UK retail market place.

Secondly, the challenges encountered by women pop-up owners: another important finding was the challenges encountered by women pop-up owners which hinder their full entrepreneurial potential⁴² (Gallellalage *et al.*, 2018), from survival in the UK retail market.

Thirdly to understand their motives to start a retail pop-up and the experiences underlying the data. The researcher interprets the data to generalise the findings, and subsequently informs and directs to cycle 3, laying a strong foundation for the next stage of the study.

The participants' entrepreneurial journey was considered over a five-year period of time from start-up. The thematic data analysis allowed the researcher to interpret the meaning of the spoken words of the participants. It also helped to identify how economic, socio-cultural factors influence their pop-up businesses.

⁴² Reflecting on this primary qualitative data, the study findings are presented in relation to the theoretical framework (Adom, 2018) adopted in this study and the 5M framework, (Brush *et al.*, 2009), concepts illustrated in the conceptual framework. The purpose of the application of these two frameworks was to (a) lay a strong theoretical foundation, (b) explain the study process more clearly and (c) "make research findings more meaningful, acceptable to the theoretical constructs in the research field", (Adom, 2018, p.438), of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups. .

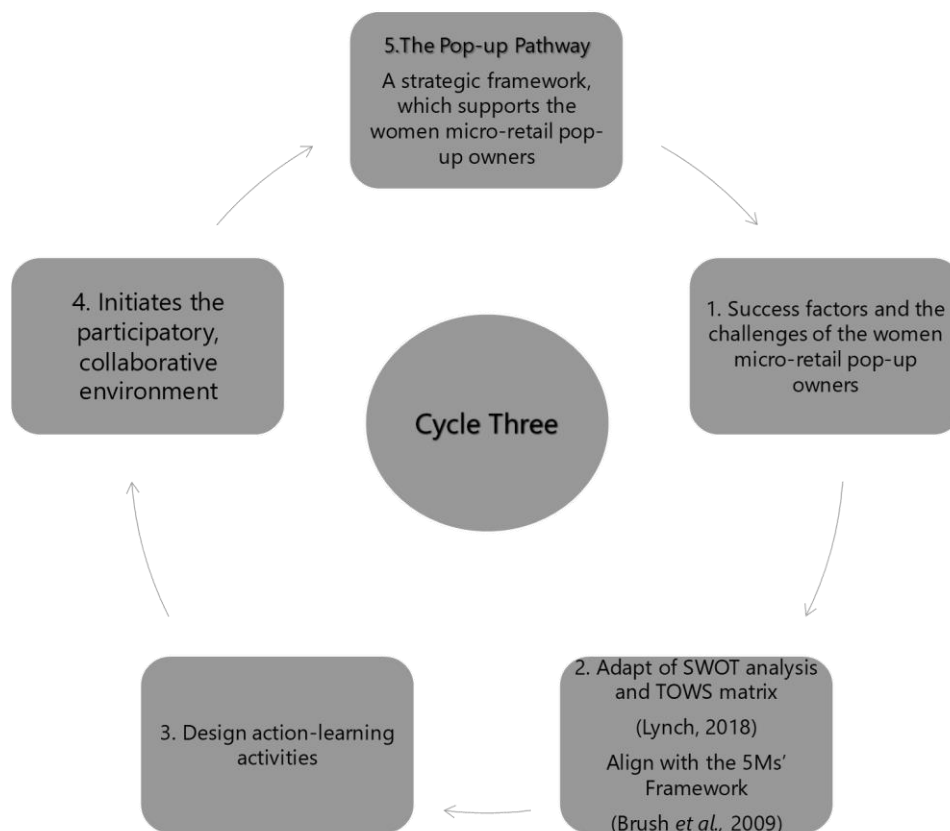
It specifically helped to identify their business success factors, as well as the challenges they encountered (Miles & Humberman, 1994). The study aimed to support women pop-up owners to develop their business management knowledge which ultimately would help them to deal with the challenges they encounter. The following section presents Cycle 3 – the implementing stage, and explains the steps followed in developing the Pop-up Pathway.

4.5 Cycle 3: Implementing stage – development of the Pop-up Pathway

The identified challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners were considered with a view to designing and developing the strategic framework - the Pop-up Pathway. In developing the Pop-up Pathway, the researcher utilised strategic management tools such as SWOT analysis and TOWS matrix which are used in larger organisations and have been adapted here to fit the characteristics of women, and the temporary nature of their micro-retail pop-ups (Lynch, 2018). The Pathway includes interactive action-learning activities associated with reflective thinking and an action-based training strategy. The effective and collaborative learning environment of the framework assisted participants to identify solutions to their challenges.

The researcher aimed to improve research practices through dialogue and reflection with the supervisory team, and through ‘regular checks to ensure that the agenda of the least powerful became an important focus of the group’s work’ (McTaggart, 1989). The researcher focused through a dual emphasis on individual women pop-up owners’ personal and retail market transformation along with a recognition of their strengths and success factors. The process conducted in developing the Pop-up Pathway is shown in the following Figure 4.6.

Figure 4.6: Cycle 3 - Development of the Pop-up Pathway



The Pop-up Pathway has been designed after combining the identified internal and external environment factors and conceptualising the identified success factors and challenges of women pop-up owners (Lynch, 2018). This facilitated the creation of a strategic framework, namely the Pop-up Pathway which is aligned with the 5M framework to map the potential solutions (Brush *et al.*, 2009). Information was derived from existing models and was adapted to meet the needs of women micro-retail pop-up owners. Results were compared with those of models adopted in previous studies in women entrepreneurship. The researcher adapted the strategic management tools of SWOT analysis and TOWS matrix in developing the action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway (Lynch, 2018; David & David, 2013; Mertler, 2017).

The study employed a participatory action-based training strategy (McKernan, 1998). There has been a shift towards a more people-centred engagement approach which offers an inclusive community-driven approach for the design, implementation, deliverance and validation of the Pop-up Pathway action-learning activities (Mertler, 2017).

Prior to taking action to develop the Pop-up Pathway, the researcher conducted the following preparation, receiving guidance from academic professionals:-

- (a) highly productive and constructive discussions with supervisors about interview findings, subsequently following their valuable guidance.
- (b) continual engagement in constructive discussions with scholars, academic professionals, business development advisors and colleagues who are experienced in strategic management, women entrepreneurship and micro-retail pop-ups and thus received valuable guidance and insight as a consequence.
- (c) empirical data findings and interpretations have been presented in conference proceedings and research groups to identify the most suitable strategies for designing and developing the Pop-up Pathway. Representations were made as follows:- to the British Academy of Management Conference, Nottingham Trent University Doctoral Research Festival 2018 and to internal research groups such as MACS Research Group NTU and Innovation Digitalisation Entrepreneurship Operations Research Group NTU (Gallellalage *et al.*, 2018a; Gallellalage *et al.*, 2018b; Doctoral Symposium, NTU 2020).
- (d) The researcher has been continually engaged in constructive discussions with scholars, academic professionals in the strategic management of women entrepreneurship in micro-retail and pop-up business, and other business development advisors and colleagues. Their valuable critical insights and positive feedback has been of

considerable assistance to the researcher in the development of an appropriate strategic framework for women micro-retail pop-ups.

- (e) theories in strategic management in small business and existing strategic frameworks for women entrepreneurs in the UK were diligently studied (e.g. Strategic Framework for Women Entrepreneurs, 2016; Vistaprint, 2016), resulting in the adoption of the strategic management tools in developing the Pop-up Pathway: action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway being designed based on the philosophy of participatory action research (PAR) through a spiral of idea-generating, action-taking and evaluation (Mertler, 2017).

4.5.1 Action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway

The researcher used quotes, codes and themes in developing the Pop-up Pathway. In designing the action-learning activities, the strategic management tools and techniques were adapted to match the characteristics of women pop-up owners as they are the target audience and main beneficiaries. Their socioeconomic significance was considered as important. As example of this: their mothering role and family caring responsibilities; family-business life balance; level of education; their business knowledge and skills; previous experience; opportunities and resources available to them (McKernan, 1998). With the 5M framework a strong link was developed to a richer theoretical perspective within the subject of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Denzin & Lincoln, 2015).

The participatory action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway assist and support women micro-retail pop-up owners within the following areas (Mertler, 2017).

- (a) To work with potential group members.
- (b) To strengthen each other by sharing and utilising their diverse business management knowledge, skills, expertise, practice and experiences.

-
- (c) To identify their strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities.
 - (d) To decouple the complexities and identify strategies to turn their weaknesses into strengths and threats into opportunities (Baines *et al.*, 2012; Lynch, 2018).
 - (e) To improve their business management skills and develop an entrepreneurial mindset.
 - (f) To utilise their strengths, capabilities and resources to respond positively to the changes in the retail market.
 - (g) To identify potential solutions and take action within a collaborative learning environment to overcome the challenges (Greenwood & Levin, 2007; Boon & Ram, 1997; Greenwood & Levin, 1998).

The objective of the action-learning activities is to assist women pop-up owners to dismantle former structures in the pursuit of best practice and conceptualise actions to identify solutions for the real-world challenges they face. The researcher adopts a participatory, collaborative approach which involves the researcher, women pop-up owners and resource persons in developing the Pop-up Pathway (Mertler, 2017). PAR combines theory, practice and diagnosis, action and reflection as a more practical method with a vested interest in finding solutions for the challenges they face (McNiff, 2002). By applying team working approach, the researcher engages collaboratively with women pop-up owners (internal) and resources persons (external) from business supportive organisations (Kempis & McTaggart, 1988; Reason & Bradbury, 2001).

The Pop-up Pathway is projected to assist women pop-up owners to identify practical solutions; gain required support to implement those solutions; take effective and prolific decisions; foster positive improvements and evaluate and reflect on the process and the outcomes of change ((Mertler, 2017; Reason & Bradbury, 2001). Furthermore, it helps them to compete within a competitive but collaborative retail environment; share their knowledge, ideas and views to

support their colleagues; strive for improvement and create a competitive but collaborative support model which aims to gain effective and positive responses for improving the performance of women-owned retail pop-ups.

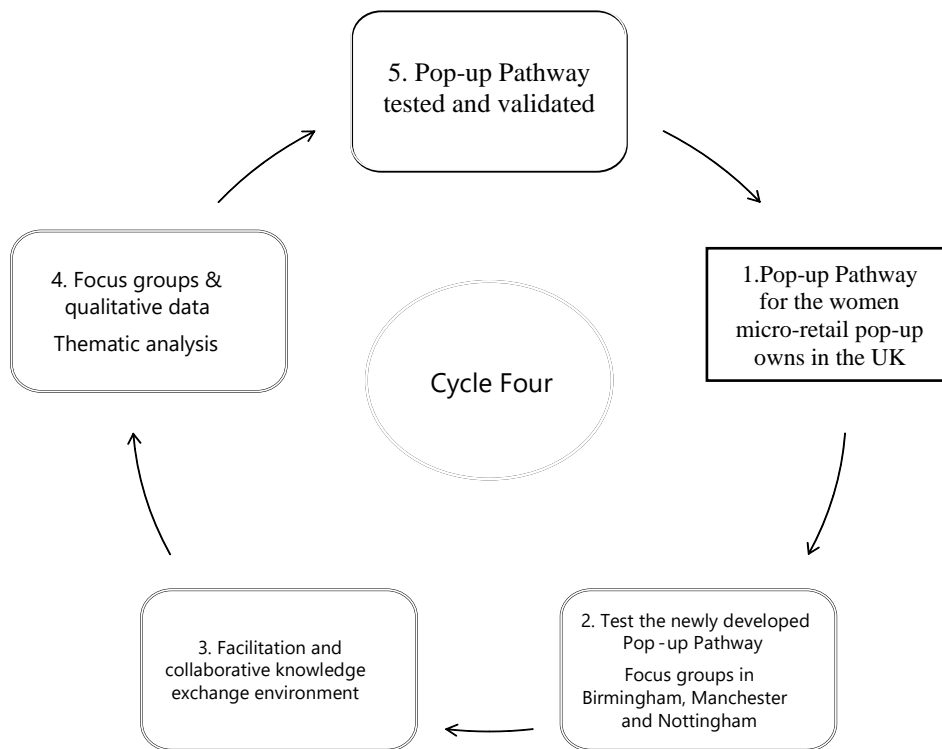
The Pop-up Pathway assists women to engage inclusively in a positive, diversified and collaborative environment and to empower them to gain self-confidence to build their temporary micro-retail pop-ups. The reasoning is that the self-confidence they get from being empowered breeds happiness; it encourages their wellbeing; inspires them to have braver, better business ideas and to set higher goals and to find novel ways to achieve them. Building self-confidence assists them to gain strengths and believe in themselves to take successful paths and break new ground. Accordingly, the researcher ensures that their interventions are relevant, appropriate and inclusive. The researcher embraces diversity in facilitating women pop-up owners to engage collaboratively with representatives from business support organisations to identify, clearly define and share their vision, mission and strategy of their pop-up businesses to survive in the UK retail market where their excellence and success can be celebrated. This, in turn, leads to actions which support mutual aid and collective action at the grassroots, informs business supportive organisations to enable programme change and enables evidence-based contributions to policy development in the UK.

4.6 Cycle 4: Reflecting stage - focus groups

The methodology adopted in this study ‘relies on an action-reflection cycle’ to develop a suitable strategic framework to support women micro-retail pop-up owners (McGrath & O’Toole, 2014, p.508). The PAR process assists the researcher to engage with participants collaboratively in identifying their challenges and bringing in possible solutions (Cammarota & Fine, 2008; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2007).

The action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway directly link to action and assist women pop-up owners to become involved in self-reflection and identify ways to overcome their weaknesses and threats by utilising their strengths and opportunities. In cycle four, three focus group discussions were conducted to test and validate the newly developed Pop-up Pathway. The process conducted is shown below in Figure 4.7.

Figure 4.7: Cycle 4 - Focus groups, action-based training and testing the Pop-up Pathway



As shown above in Figure 4.7, the action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway were implemented and tested by conducting three focus group discussions⁴³ (Smith, 2001), one in each of the cities of Birmingham, Manchester and Nottingham. In total, 15 women pop-up owners participated in the focus groups.

⁴³ (FG1- Manchester; FG2 – Birmingham; and FG3 - Nottingham)

Each focus group consisted of five women pop-up owners and a resource person. The women pop-up owners who participated in the individual semi-structured interviews were invited to join in the focus groups due to their availability. The resource persons were drawn from business supportive organisations and were invited according to their availability and due to prior contact with the researcher. Their participation was completely voluntary. Accordingly, the researcher was able to find an ever-expanding set of potential participants who volunteered to be part of the research rather than being chosen.

The aim of the focus group discussions was to test and validate the action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway and identify areas needed for further development. Prior to starting the focus groups, the participants were given a printed draft copy of the Pop-up Pathway (see Appendices 8 and 9). The study employed an action-based training method (e.g., brainstorming). The researcher adopted and performed the facilitator role which reflected on the epistemological position during the focus group discussions to develop collaboration among participants and to promote a level of dialogue.

During the focus groups, the researcher worked collaboratively and professionally with participants and facilitated their active engagement in the action-learning activities (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The researcher also asked questions that yielded powerful information. As mentioned above, the study adopts a qualitative approach for its validity and reliability and as an effective way of exploring women's self-employment experiences (Ritchie & Brindley, 2005; Foster, 2011). As discussed by Creswell (2018), the basic idea behind these qualitative focus groups was to purposefully select participants who would best be able to understand the appropriateness of the new framework for the development of women-owned pop-ups.

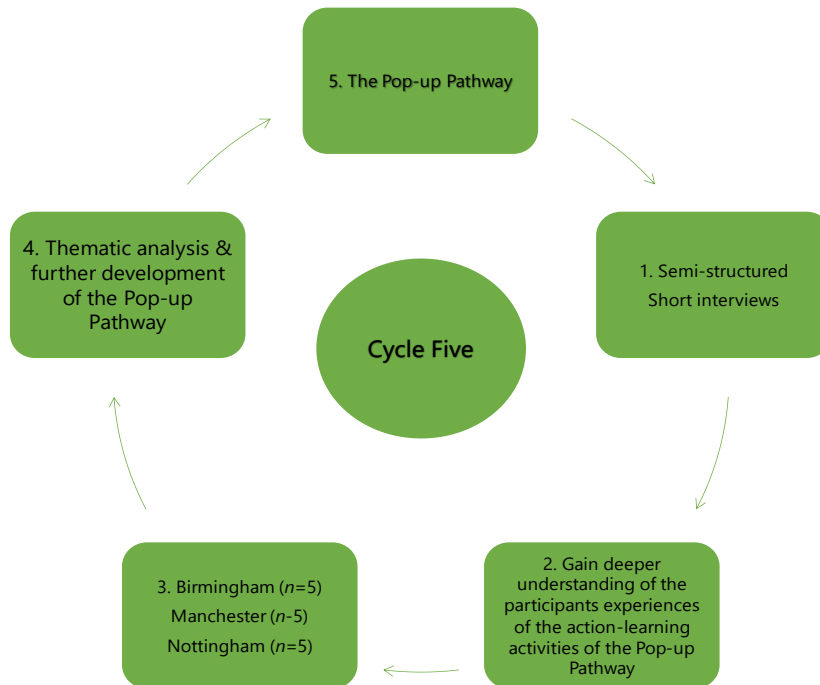
Some of the questions asked of the participants were: (a) Strengths of micro-retail pop-ups are temporary in nature and can move to different markets – how do you perceive these? (b) Identifying your strengths and opportunities would assist you to overcome the challenges and threats you encounter – do you agree with this statement?

The focus groups were audio-recorded and transcribed. The transcribed qualitative data were analysed (a) manually and (b) using the qualitative data analysis software, NVivo, which allows the generating of themes across the data to be coded through a thematic analysis (Creswell, 2018). The areas that needed to improve were identified and the necessary improvements made. This meant that the Pop-up Pathway was now validated.

4.6.1 Cycle 5: Reflecting stage - individual follow-up short interviews

After introducing the Pop-up Pathway to the women pop-up owners, fifteen follow-up short interviews were conducted with fifteen women micro-retail pop-up owners to get their impressions and understand their experiences about the Pop-up Pathway. Cycle 5 is shown below in Figure 4.8.

Figure 4.8: Cycle 5: Reflective stage



As shown above in Figure 4.8, fifteen short interviews (Birmingham: $n=5$, Manchester: $n=5$, Nottingham: $n=5$) were conducted with women micro-retail pop-up owners.

The aim of the short interviews was to get the women micro-retail pop-up owners' impressions about the Pop-up Pathway. It also helped to explore (a) their impressions and opinions about the Pop-up Pathway and (b) identify the factors which could be implemented, changed or added in order, to develop the content and activities of the Pop-up Pathway. Participants were selected from those women who had already participated in the semi-structured interviews and the focus groups. During the follow-up interviews, participants were asked questions that yielded significant information. Typical questions were:-

(a) what do you think of the action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway? (b) do you think that the Pop-up Pathway helps you to develop your pop-up business? (c) what do you like best about the proposed Pop-up Pathway? The researcher considered that the constructive feedback received from participants not only allowed them to identify what is working and what is not but enabled them to make changes for the further development of the Pop-up Pathway.

The follow-up interviews were audio-recorded. Collected data were transcribed. The transcribed data were analysed (a) manually and (b) using the qualitative data analysis software, NVivo, which allowed themes to be generated across the data to be coded through thematic analysis (Creswell, 2018). The analysis helped to validate the Pop-up Pathway.

Time horizon – cross-sectional: This research is a cross-sectional study conducted to fulfil part of the PhD project for Nottingham Trent University and conducted during the limited period of 1st October 2015 to 31st August 2020. The following section presents the ethics followed in conducting this PAR⁴⁴.

4.7 Ethical Considerations

For the purpose of this study, research ethics were approved by the College Research Ethics Committee (CREC) of Nottingham Trent University. Ethical clearance was obtained on 26.09.2017 under approval No. 2017/227, (see Appendix 4), to conduct the semi-structured interview, and then again on 13.12.2019 under approval No. 2019/269 to conduct the focus groups and follow-up short interviews (see Appendix 5). Participants' confidentiality and anonymity were priorities in this project.

⁴⁴ The researcher inevitably shapes the understanding of the research questions, research strategy, data collection techniques and analysis procedures, interpreting the study findings (Crotty, 1998).

The qualitative semi-structured interviews were designed to identify the success factors and the challenges encountered by women pop-up owners. The focus groups and follow-up interviews were carefully designed to inquire how the Pop-up Pathway influences and helps to develop their temporary micro-retail pop-ups. Disclosure of personal information was discouraged during the semi-structured interviews, focus groups and follow-up interviews and this was made clear prior to and during the interviews, the focus groups and the follow-up interviews.

Prior to the collection of data, participants were informed of the purpose and overview of the research project. A participant information sheet and a consent form with clear explanations were given to each participant (see Appendix 6 and Appendix 7). The semi-structured face-to-face interviews, focus groups and short interviews were started after all participants had signed a consent form and given their permission. Before participants added their signatures they were given the opportunity to ask any questions about the project.

Participation was entirely voluntary, and permission was given to withdraw from the project without having to give a reason. Also, the information they provided was not to have any effect on conducting their pop-up businesses. That ensured the anonymity and safety of the information provided. All research instruments were explained in terms of instructions and questions. Additionally, the use of audio-recording and note-taking was clearly explained. The gathered data were stored and saved as a separate word-processing file, password protected, with confidentiality maintained and anonymity preserved. The data were collected anonymously and safely.

Women micro-retail pop-up owners' names were replaced by pseudonyms and coding in order to protect an individual's identity. The collected data was to be destroyed six months after the researcher's graduation and dissemination of the outcome.

The researcher followed the highest possible standards of Nottingham Trent University's ethical practice in the conduct of this study. To maintain confidentiality, pseudonyms were used for the participants involved. The researcher triangulated the data to mitigate occasional biases from the participants due to their experiences and the process of selection of prospective candidates (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012). The researcher maintained the trustworthiness of data and was not open to bias. As an example, participants checked the transcripts and conducted some peer-review sessions to confirm that the data had no bias. Once the researcher had coded the data, verification and validation that the correct codes and understanding had been formed was ensured by meetings with three supervisors and confirmation of the data interpretation. To prevent merely an academic perspective, a solution was sought that involved holding informal interviews with three business support resource persons which included members of the local county council enterprise network.

Two of these support resource persons had designed training programmes in micro-retail business development as operated in Nottingham, Manchester and Birmingham in the UK.

The third person was selected as she had experienced challenges in developing her own micro-retail pop-up and had survived in the UK retail market as a micro-retail pop-up owner and, as a trainer in Nottingham City Council she conducted training for women micro-retail pop-up owners. Opinions were also sought from leading academic experts, three of which regularly research the retail marketing area and two others who are in the women-owned micro-business area, and from one expert in education and training, a trainer in small business development in NTU.

This strategy was pursued in order to compare and contrast the study findings with the views of experts within the research field and small business sector. A number of scholars and resource persons' views assisted the researcher to compare the primary data findings with the secondary data findings. Validation of the primary data by means of previously published research materials allowed for theory triangulation. At this stage, the gathered qualitative data was processed following an inductive reasoning approach, by starting broad and general and then moving towards the particular.

In this PAR there is no hierarchical order between researcher and participants. The researcher was the primary data collection agent for this study and conducted the semi-structured interviews, focus groups and short interviews with each of the participants face-to-face. To maintain the quality of the epistemological research design and the qualitative methodology, the role of the researcher was seen as that of a friendly outsider seeking data (Greenwood & Levin, 1998).

The researcher worked collaboratively with the participants and directed the process to identify the success factors, challenges, strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities, as well as to find solutions by utilising their strengths and opportunities within a collaborative, peer-to-peer learning environment (Holter & Schwartz-Barcott, 1993). The researcher administered all aspects of the interviews to ensure saturation and put aside any bias during the process of data collection and analysis and maintained self-reflection / reflexivity over the research process (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). The researcher implemented the research design, strategies and data collection techniques in an ethical manner, obtaining guidance from the supervisory team where necessary.

Participants' engagement in the decision-making process facilitated the application of interventions because they were part of the decisions for which they will be responsible. The findings of this study were produced by the participants' responses and their participation and not by any intended bias on the part of the researcher due to motivations, interests, or perspectives' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.290). As highlighted by Baum *et al.* (2006) and Bellman *et al.* (2003), this increases the motivation level of participants. The advantage of this approach was that during the process the researcher was able to benefit from different forms of knowledge which have implications for women pop-up owners beyond this study. However, the result of the PAR method are not just solutions to the immediate problems encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners but are also about important learning outcomes and contributions to scientific knowledge and theory.

4.8 Validity and Reliability

Since validity and reliability were considered as essential and as more inclusive concepts in undertaking this qualitative study, (Braun and Clarke, 2013), ongoing measures were taken to improve reliability and validity.

4.8.1 Validity

Validity in research is concerned with the 'accuracy and truthfulness of scientific findings' (Le Compte and Goetz 1982, p. 32)⁴⁵. However, Cohen *et al.* (2007) and Maxwell (1992) suggest an emphasis on 'understanding' rather than 'validity'⁴⁶ in qualitative research. There are different types of validity. Campbell and Stanley (1966) have defined two major forms of validity: internal and external.

⁴⁵ Validity in qualitative research has different connotations than in quantitative research.

⁴⁶ Validity is generally associating with quantitative research methods.

Here, the internal validity is considered to refer to the extent to which study findings are a true reflection or representation of the reality of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups in the UK. Wider, in-depth reading within the context of retail pop-up, women entrepreneurship and strategic management helped to gain an in-depth understanding of research issues in exploring women-owned micro-retail pop-ups and thus helped to enhance the validity of this PAR⁴⁷. The study used 5Ms framework, SWOT analysis and TOWS matrix, to overcome the deficiencies intrinsic to a single theory, thus increasing the validity of the study (Denzil, 1989).

This understanding is further developed through-out the empirical data collection and analysis process. In this study, the researcher gained an understanding about the real meaning of the qualitative data collected from women pop-up owners. A clear disinterestedness and objectivity/openness on the part of the researcher was apparent through a willingness to accommodate any legitimate possibility as how to achieve the research aims and objectives through the data collection and analysis methods (Cohen *et al.*, 2007).

In this qualitative research, validity has been associated with honesty, which means an authentic way of data collection, accurate data analysis, interpretation and presentation of the qualitative data. The triangulation achieved in this study by using method triangulation means the use of multiple methods, which in turn means the collection and analysis of data from various sources and by means of various methods, ultimately defined as a multiple method approach.

⁴⁷ In particular, the researcher reviewed relevant literature in women-owned business to identify the best methods and content to address the research problem and research questions, which raised 'how and why questions' (Yin, 2018, p.45). For example, why do women micro-retail pop-up owners start their businesses as temporary retail pop-ups?

Qualitative data were collected in three phases using semi-structured interviews, focus groups and further short interviews, resulting in the necessity of more than one data collection. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in three different cities. Action-learning activities were tested by conducting focus groups discussions. Further short interviews were conducted to get the impressions of the Pop-up Pathway. The gathered qualitative data were analysed (a) manually and (b) using NVivo software which rectified the deficiencies intrinsic to a single method. A depth of data has been achieved via a detailed and comprehensive collection and analysis which furnished a wide scope and rich resources.

Critical self-reflection a critical look at the researcher's own analysis and interpretation processes with a view to a validation of the study. Respondent validation was achieved through checks made by member participants, which in turn enhanced the validity of this qualitative research. This was especially the case with interviews, focus groups discussions and short interviews. Transcripts and conclusions were given to the participants and their feedback about the accuracy of the content was requested and received. This tended to ensure that the researcher and the participants viewed the data consistently.

The researcher considered that in-depth explanation is important in developing a broader understanding of the PAR process. Validation from others was held to be via their expert consensual view which was followed throughout this study and which promoted familiarisation with the topic of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups at various stages of the PAR process. There was a periodic peer review of the data collection tools, data collection process, transcripts and interpretation process (interview data and focus group data).

The researcher increased validity by receiving constructive feedback and thought from a number of scholars who are experts in women-owned micro-retail business and strategic management. This included constructive feedback from the supervisory team of three individuals, positive and productive feedback and comments from the College Research Degree Committee and the feedback gained from several research group presentations and conference proceedings. Feedback from others came from research colleagues, independent fellow researchers and participants as informants, all which contributed to the validity of the study.

Triangulation has considered as another way of achieving validity. Data collection sources were triangulated. Qualitative data were collected from more than one source. A number of data collation tools are generally used in order to make the process of qualitative research more valid. The first data were collected by conducting semi-structured interviews and then utilised for the development of the pop-up pathway.

This particular PAR has implications for understanding similar situations by reason of its constituent methods. It follows that this qualitative research is even more valid through its transferability – it can be very helpful when trying to understand similar situations. It is the measures taken to improve validity which led to an improvement in the reliability of this qualitative research.

4.8.2 Reliability

Reliability is concerned with the consistency, stability and repeatability of the informants' accounts as well as the researcher's ability to collect and record information accurately (Selltiz *et al.*, 1976, p. 182).

Reliability in common sense terms means a replication of the same research process with the possibility of getting similar outcomes. However, reliability in qualitative research depends firstly on the description of the research process, then on the research sites and the research informants, and ultimately on data collection analysis and interpretation. The researcher adopted standard and approved tools to increase reliability. This was exemplified in the researcher developing a written protocol for interviews and properly documenting the research using critical discussion and brought originality to the study.

The researcher comes up with a description of the study in the interests of aiding the reliability of the research process and especially the reporting process. What the researcher reported depended on the position within the participants groups, the status accorded to participants, and the role behaviour expected of them. Hence, the status position of the researcher was as both an outsider and insider to the study as and when required.

Honest reporting is considered as extremely important whatever shortcomings the researcher faced, whatever the factors that might have influenced data collection, analysis and the interpretation process. All reporting must be honest and in keeping with the context. Analysis of the whole process with reference to the context was considered to be important in improving the reliability.

A comprehensive inclusion of the findings, the discussion and interpretation and the conclusion itself with reference to the women-owned micro-retail pop-up context was considered to be important. For this reason, both the research context and the background were analysed in-depth. This led to the conclusion of reliability for this qualitative PAR process.

The question of the validity and reliability of this qualitative research takes into account the whole PAR process rather than merely focusing on data collection and analysis. It means that the research design, qualitative data collection, the thematic analysis and interpretation of data have all been taken into account when assessing validity and reliability. Checking for the representativeness of data as a whole, of the coding categories and of the examples used to analyse and present the data, all contributed to a trustworthy study assessment of validity and reliability.

4.9 Summary

The researcher has critically discussed the overall decision-making process involved in this study and provided some justification for the selection of the research approach, the qualitative method employed, and focused on the whole of the women pop-up owner experience. Further consideration has been given to the meanings implied by individual women pop-up owner's day-to-day experiences. Through this study there has been the realisation of a broader understanding and deeper insight into complex social and cultural issues. The researcher worked with women micro-retail pop-up owners and resource persons to create a woman pop-up owner-focused, collaborative business support framework. To achieve this, the researcher conducted careful planning, listening, evaluation and critical reflection sessions.

In accordance with Guba and Lincoln (2006), the participatory action-learning activities of this study assisted the researcher to 'produce credible findings including prolonged engagement' with the women micro-retail pop-up owners who participated in this study (Treharne & Riggs, 2017, p.57). The working together approach employed assisted the researcher to better understand the experiences of individual women pop-up owners. The PAR method enabled the provision of a rich description of the responses and experiences of women micro-retail pop-up

owners. This process allowed the researcher to work together with women pop-up owners to identify possible solutions (Holter & Schwartz-Barcott, 1998). The transferability of this qualitative data analysis and interpretation make for an easier application to other geographical areas in the UK.

The following Chapter 5 presents the findings of the semi-structured interviews.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS FROM SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

5.0 Introduction

As mentioned in the previous chapter, semi-structured interviews were conducted with women micro-retail pop-up owners to get more insight into their experience in operating the temporary micro-retail pop-up. Gathered qualitative data were transcribed and analysed thematically (Yin, 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Bazeley, 2013). The qualitative data findings revealed two main themes which reflected the study's research aim. Firstly, section 5.1 presents the success factors of women micro-retail pop-up owners. Secondly, section 5.2 presents the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners.

5.1 Women micro-retail pop-up owners' success factors analysis⁴⁸

Research question three (RQ3): “what are the success factors of women micro-retail pop-up owners?”

The themes which emerged from the qualitative data assist in identifying women micro-retail pop-up owners' success factors in five broad themes, in connection with (a) the 5Ms theoretical framework (Brush *et al.*, 2009) and (b) the conceptual framework, designated 3.6.1. The corresponding sub-themes follow as market, money, management, motherhood and meso-macro-environment. During the semi-structured interviews, women micro-retail pop-up owners answered question 9 (see Appendix 1 for the semi-structured interview guide). Question 9 stated “in your opinion how would you rate these factors (Market, Money, Management – rated 1-10) contributing to the success of your retail business?”

⁴⁸ Results from the qualitative data analysis

5.1.1 Theme one: Market

‘Market’ which is depicted in the conceptual framework at 3.6.1.1 along with the 5Ms theoretical framework is identified as one of the business success factors of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups. For the market only out of 69 participants, 46 indicated 10 (very large contribution), seven participants rated it as 9; 11 participants as 8; three participants as 6 and two participants as 5. Overall, all the participants revealed that they strongly consider that operating in the temporary retail market assists them to succeed. However, in detailed discussion they emphasised that despite the success factors they encounter some challenges in operating their temporary retail pop-ups in the UK retail market. These challenges will be discussed in the following Section, 5.1.1. Under the theme of market, six sub-themes emerged from the interview data findings (see conceptual framework – 3.6.1.1) which can be discussed as follows:-

- i. Operating in micro-retail pop-ups
- ii. Temporary nature and short-term retail space
- iii. Experiential marketing format and gain public interest
- iv. Create urgency and buzz with the retail market
- v. Focus on the target market
- vi. Networking

i. Operating in micro-retail pop-ups

The current study found operating a business in a micro-retail pop-up to be a success factor for women-owned pop-ups. A possible explanation for this, provided by the participants, was that the micro-size assists them to reduce the operating cost and to design a pop-up that complements their brand.

The micro-size also helps them to locate and manage their pop-up effectively in a busy marketplace in front of customers who are shopping and ready to buy products. This is evident by a statement from one of the participants:

“[...] it is much easy to layout and manage my business in a small retail pop-up shop because I have a limited number of products. A small-sized store allows me to design it to fit my products and engage with the customers [...]” (PM4) (Participant Manchester 4).

Similarly, another interviewee explained how small size assists her to reduce the cost of managing her pop-up retail business.

“[...] I prefer to sell my products out of a small retail space because I only have a small number of products and it costs less money to manage as well. During the week I move to different markets. For example, pop-up events in Mansfield and Nottingham. [...]” (PB12) (Participant Birmingham 12).

Figure 5.1 below illustrates the above discussed characteristics of a micro-retail pop-up which they considered as a success factor.

Figure 5.1: A women-owned micro-retail pop-up at the ‘Christmas Market’ in Market Square, Nottingham in 2016



Source: Gallellalage (2016)

The findings of this study reveal that the effective management of a business in a pop-up retail format will assist women to encapsulate business opportunities and will support them to grow their businesses. 67 participants agreed that managing or selling their products in a micro-retail pop-up is a business success factor. This finding is similar to the previous research findings in women entrepreneurship (Pop-up, 2016). As discussed in Chapter 2, Literature Review, previous researchers have indicated that business success can often be related to the micro-retail pop-up phenomenon.

ii. Temporary nature and short-term retail pop-up

Women-owned micro-retail pop-ups are temporary retail locations by nature. It is interesting to note that 56 participants indicated the ‘temporary nature’ and ‘short-term retail pop-up’ as business success factors (e.g., PN1; PM10). This result may be explained by the fact that these factors provide opportunity for women pop-up owners to access a retail market and move to different places in order to introduce their new products and continue selling existing products during different time frames. Participants further stated that temporary pop-up stores provide access for all sizes of business. These results match those observed in earlier studies (Pop-up Store, 2016). The themes of ‘temporary nature’ and ‘short-term retail pop-up’ recurred throughout the dataset. A common view among interviewees was that selecting a suitable location is critical for the success of their pop-ups. As one interviewee put it:

“[...] the pop-up events where I sell my products are important for the development of my business [...]” (PB3).

The women micro-retail pop-up owners who participated in this study mentioned that they sell their products in many different locations in the UK retail market, namely event spaces, shopping centres, and vacant street-level retail outlets. Some of the examples they mentioned were (a) Christmas Market at Nottingham Market Square (b) Levenshulme Market in Manchester and (c) the German Christmas Market in Birmingham. 65 participants of this study noted a strong need to take the pop-up store to different markets or locations. One participant commented:

“[...] small size pop-up stores are becoming more popular in the UK retail market. The pop-up helps me to build my brand. If I am not successful in one location, I am able to sell my products at another place or different event [...]” (PB8).

PM5 shared the importance of moving to different markets:

“[...] I open my pop-up in Chorley from Monday to Wednesday. On Saturday, I go to a pop-up event in Manchester city [...]” (PM21).

PN5 (Participant Nottingham 5) revealed her desire and excitement to go to different markets as another strategy for her pop-up retail business success. She commented:

“[...] it was so easy for me to travel to different cities, to sell my products and introduce new products to the customers”.

The study findings revealed that they operate their pop-ups in each market for a short time period and have found this to be one of the success factors. Evidently, the participants responded that they operate their pop-ups from (i) a few hours per day; (ii) a day (e.g., Valentine’s Day); (iii) during the weekend; (iv) few days; (v) several weeks; and (vi) several months during the year. This study supports evidence from previous observations (e.g., Surchi, 2011; Pop-ups, 2016). 62 women micro-retail pop-up owners who participated in this study conduct their pop-ups during the week and also at special seasonal events of the year in different markets in the UK. 10 participants stated that they mostly operate their pop-up businesses during the weekend. The majority of participants stated that moving to different markets assists them to meet more customers in different locations, and maximise their income by selling their products directly. The majority of those who participated in this study reported operating a micro-retail pop-up temporarily for a short period of time as a success factor. The theme ‘temporary nature’ including ‘short-term period’ corroborates the findings of a great deal of the previous studies conducted in retail pop-ups in general (including male and female); for example, Niehm *et al.* (2007), Haas and Schmidt (2016), Cochrane (2010), Pomodo (2013) and Alexander and Bain (2014).

However, this result has not previously been described specifically within the context of women-owned businesses and the UK retail market. The results of this study indicate an experiential marketing format as a success factor for women-owned micro-retail pop-ups.

iii. Experiential marketing format and gaining public interest

Another sub-theme which appeared from the interviews under the main theme of ‘market’ was the unique and interactive experiential marketing format of a woman-owned micro-retail pop-up. Micro-retail pop-ups can be identified as physical shopping stores which are memorable, engaging and exciting events which have a limited period as to ‘when’ and ‘how long’ the pop-up will appear in the retail marketplace (Cochrane, 2010; Pomodo, 2013). Evidently, just over half of the participants reported experiential marketing format as a success factor. Participants further explained that having a physical presence in the form of a micro-retail pop-up facilitates meeting customers face-to-face, putting their brand in front of customers and encourages sales. Accordingly, women micro-retail pop-up owners are able to create a unique interactive experience with their customers which helps them to gain a higher level of customer engagement and a bigger audience. Such a beneficial factor is hardly obtainable through a permanent retail format (Alexander & Bain, 2014). As one interviewee said:

“[...] selling products at a pop-up event offers me the opportunity to engage with customers. It is difficult to find this kind of communication with the customers in a permanent retail shop [...]” (PB12).

And another participant commented:

“[...] at pop-up events I mould the hands and feet of new-born babies. Customers are so excited to get the cast for their babies. Parents are so excited to see the final product [...]” (PN6).

In all cases, the informants reported a creating of urgency or buzz within the retail market as a success factor.

iv. Create urgency with buzz in the retail market

Another success factor of women-owned pop-ups is the ability to create a sense of scarcity which generates a buzz and a sense of an extravagant experience for customers. Turning now to the experimental evidence on ‘generate buzz’, this theme came up in discussions with women pop-up owners about their success factors in the context of the retail market. Participants stated that they mostly attend pop-up events which appear unexpectedly and surprisingly in the retail market in different places. The reason is that limited offers create a strong sense of urgency within the market. A possible explanation for this might be that pop-up events open for a limited time. This situation increases the customers’ desire to buy exclusive or limited products before the event finishes. There are, however, other possible explanations; for example, unexpected pop-up events provide an extravagant experience for customers within the retail market. 67 participants stated that pop-up events ‘generate buzz or emergency’. One participant commented:

“[...] pop-up events encourage customers to buy the product as we are only there for a limited time [...]” (PB12).

The study findings reveal that pop-ups appear surprisingly, and customers are mostly encouraged to make the decision to buy the product. One participant expressed that it is important to keep the pop-up fresh:

“[...] I open my pop-up store at specific times. I only open my pop-up in Mansfield once a week. I always bring new products which attract young female customers. They know that I only open once a week. So, they know that they have to buy what they want on that day or wait another week or miss the opportunity. This helps me to encourage them to be motivated to buy my products with urgency. If they don’t buy there and then, they will revisit my pop-up at a later day, or they will come to one of my pop-ups in another city nearby if it is convenient for them [...]” (PN10).

This view is supported by previous research. Pop-ups appear unexpectedly and surprisingly and generate buzz to become an extravagant experience for customers (Shopify, 2014). In addition, it follows also that keeping the pop-up store fresh can be seen as a success factor which helps women micro-retail pop-up owners to sell more products, increase their sales volume and survive in the retail market in the long term.

v. Focus on the target market

Another success factor which the interviews reveal is that of focusing on the target market or the audience within the retail market. Participants state that communicating with customers assists in building a strong customer relationship in the short term and long term.

One participant stated:

“[...] young people are my target audience because they are more likely to spend their money on fashion and lifestyle products. They bring in more business by telling their friends about my store and my products and also post pictures on Instagram with my location tagged [...]” (PN10).

This participant highlighted that inexpensive marketing communication methods, such as word of mouth were particularly affective in attracting new young customers.

Such a view is supported by the findings of the studies conducted in pop-up retail in general. For example, Pop-up Stores (2016) has identified that choosing the right target audience to sell to assists business owners to conduct their businesses successfully.

vi. Networking

Another reported success factor is networking. The current study found that networking is a key success factor for market development. When participants were asked about success factors, the majority mentioned networking.

15 participants stated that they have participated in networking events in their local communities (e.g., Nottingham City Centre, networking events at Chambers of Commerce in Birmingham and Manchester) and that this proved to be helpful to them. There are several explanations for this result. For example, one interviewee said:

“[...] I attend a Blue Stockings Brunch once a month where we get a team of fabulous women business owners. Most of them are pop-up business owners and we help each other with our businesses. Most of us discuss our problems, difficulties and pain point in groups and offer advice for business development [...]” (PN23).

The majority of the participants agreed that participating in networking events helps them to develop their businesses. In all cases (69), participants reported that their family and friends are supporting them throughout their business journey. Taken together, these results suggest that there is an association between participating in networking and business success. This study supports evidence from previous observations (Foster & Brindley, 2017; Jack *et al.*, 2010). However, 54 women pop-up owners mentioned the challenges they encounter in participating in networking events (e.g., the networking events are expensive and difficult to afford). The results in this section show the success factors of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups within the context of ‘market’ and are summarised in Table 5.1 below.

Table 5.1: Extract from the coding template

Success factors of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups - “Market”.

Comparison of research findings to literature findings.				
Theoretical category.	Sub-theme.	Specific themes within the sub-themes.	Quote examples from interviews findings (primary data findings).	Quote from the literature review findings (secondary data findings).
Generic theme – Market.	i. Operate in micro-retail pop-ups.	Micro-size.	<p>“[...] it is very easy to layout and manage my business in a small retail pop-up shop, because I have a limited number of products. A small-sized store allows me to design it to fit my products and engage with the customers [...]” (PM4).</p> <p>“[...] I prefer to sell my products out of a small retail space. Because I only have a small number of products and it costs less money to manage as well. During the week I move to different markets. For example, pop-up events in Mansfield and Nottingham. [...]” (PN15).</p>	No or inadequate apparent literature
	ii. Temporary nature	<p>Short-term retail store.</p> <p>Opportunity to enter the retail market.</p> <p>Move to different markets</p> <p>Introduce new products.</p>	<p>“[...] the pop-up events where I sell my products are important for the development of my business [...]” (PB3).</p> <p>“[...] small size pop-up stores are becoming more popular in the UK retail market. It helps me to build my brand. If I am not successful in one location, I am able to sell my products at another place or different event [...]” (PB8).</p> <p>“[...] I open my pop-up in Chorley from Monday to Wednesday. On Saturday, I go to a pop-up event in Manchester city [...]” (PM21).</p>	<p>“[...] pop-up stores are temporary shopping opportunities that display products and services in a surprising way in order to attract the consumers’ attention” (Hass & Schmidt, 2016, p.90).</p> <p>Temporary presentation is one of the business success factors of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups (Pop-up Republic, 2015).</p>

Comparison of research findings to literature findings				
Theoretical category.	Sub-theme.	Specific themes within the sub-themes.	Quote examples from interviews findings (primary data findings).	Quote from the literature review findings (Secondary data findings).
Generic theme – Market.	ii. Temporary nature.	Sell existing products.	“[...] it was so much easier for me to travel to different cities, to sell my products and introduce new products to the customers” (PN5).	Pop-up stores assist women to test their new products and can be identified as a ‘platform’ to build brand awareness and loyalty within the retail market (Esch <i>et al.</i> , 2014; Hass & Schmidt, 2016).
	iii. Experiential marketing format.	Gain public interest. Create unique /interactive experience.	“[...] selling products at a pop-up event offers me the opportunity to engage with customers. It is difficult to find this kind of communication with the customers in a permanent retail shop [...]” (PB12). “[...] at pop-up events I mould the hands and feet of newborn babies. Customers are so excited to get the cast for their babies. Parents are so excited to see the final product [...]” (PN6).	“as a form of experiential marketing, flagship stores allow customers to interactively experience brands and help to establish an emotional bonding to it.” (Haas & Schmidt, 2016, p.89; Lehmann, 2018; Di Somma, 2014). As a success factor, experiential marketing of pop-up stores assists women pop-up owners to establish emotional and strong bondage with their customers.
	iv. Create urgency	Generate buzz	“[...] pop-up events encourage customers to buy the product as we are only there for a limited time [...]” (PM16). “[...] I open my pop-up store at specific times. As an example, I only open my pop-up in Mansfield once a week. I always bring new products which attract young female customers. They know that I only open once a week. So, they know that they have to buy what they want on that day or wait another week. This helps me to encourage ... motivate them to buy my products with urgency. Otherwise, they will need to revisit my pop-ups at a later day, or they will come to one of my pop-ups in another city nearby if it is convenient for them [...]” (PN10).	‘Urgency and buzz’. Pop-ups create an urgency within the market and generate a buzz (Surchi, 2011). Mostly customers increase the emotional bondage that was created in the temporary pop-up store and they tend to make the buying decision (or will pick brands) (Krug, 2002) which assist women pop-up owners to increase their sales and develop their pop-up business (Hass & Schmidt, 2016, p.89).

Comparison of research findings to literature findings				
Theoretical category.	Sub-themes.	Specific themes within the sub-themes.	Quote examples from interviews findings (primary data findings).	Quote from the literature review findings (Secondary data findings).
Generic theme – Market.	V. Focus on the target market	Target audience	“[...] young people are my target audience because they are more likely to spend their money on fashion and lifestyle products. And because they bring in more business by telling their friends about my store and my products and also post pictures on Instagram with my location tagged [...]” (PB16).	Choosing the right target audience to sell the products assists the business owners to conduct their businesses successfully (Pop-up Stores, 2016).
	Vi. Networking	Friends and family. Local community. Social media groups.	“[...] I attend a Blue Stockings Brunch once a month where we get a team of fabulous women business owners. Most of them are pop-up business owners and we help each other with our businesses. Most of us discuss our problems, difficulties and pain points in groups and offer advice to develop our businesses [...]” (PN21).	Women pop-up owners who are part of a business community have or demonstrate a more positive outlook about pop-up business development.

Turning now to the empirical evidence on success factors within the context of “Money”.

5.1.2 Theme two: Money

As depicted in the conceptual framework 3.6.1.2, in the identification of women pop-up owners’ success factors, in all cases, the informants reported “money” as one of the business success factors. This result corroborates the findings of a great deal of the previous work in women-owned business research; for example, the Alison Rose Review of Female Entrepreneurship (2019), FSB (2016) and DTI (2011). In other words, as discussed in Chapter 3, a strong relationship between money and success of women-owned business has been reported in the literature. During the semi-structured interviews, all the participants answered question 9 – Finance, which stated, “in your opinion how would you rate how these factors (factors i - finance) contributed to the success of your retail pop-up business?” Out of 69 participants, 52 indicated 10 (extremely contributed), 10 participants rated as 9, seven participants indicated as 8. Overall, all the women micro-retail pop-up owners who participated in the semi-structured interviews of this study stated that they strongly considered money as an important business success factor in developing their temporary, micro-retail pop-ups to survive in the UK retail market. In contrast, participants claimed that they find it difficult to access finance. Further, they stated that there is a lack of a support system to access finance, especially when they apply for a bank loan and need a guarantee. This situation hinders their full entrepreneurial potential, which this research discussed in detail in 5.2 (see Challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-ups). The most obvious finding to emerge from the qualitative data analysis is that a variety of perspectives were expressed by the participants in relation to the theme “money”. Six sub-themes emerged from the analysis under the success factor of “money” which is depicted as “3.5.1.1 – Money” in the conceptual framework.

These sub-themes specified by the participants fell into the following six categories:-

- i. Access finance (capital)
- ii. Reduce or minimise level of expenditure
- iii. Lower running costs
- iv. Lower rent
- v. Focus on lines which have a limited number of products
- vi. Small retail space.

Primary data findings in relation to the above sub-themes can be discussed as below.

i. Access finance (capital)

63 out of 69 participants stated that it is very important for them to access finance. This view is encountered mainly in relation to the very aggressive competition which arises from the established and multi-national retailers and the competition from male pop-up owners. More importantly, the information gathered revealed that participants considered availability of support in accessing finance as one of the key success factors in developing women-owned micro-retail pop-ups and surviving in the UK retail market beyond five years. This view is supported by all interviewed participants who indicated that they valued the availability of finance support to develop their temporary retail pop-ups. In particular, they wanted to identify the available support or services that would help them to access finance. These results corroborate findings of a great deal of the previous work in women entrepreneurship in the UK (e.g. RBS, 2016; Vistaprint, 2016; DTI, 2011). 23 participants stated that they received help from their friends and family members at the start of their retail pop-up business. One participant stated that:

“[...] yes, I think finance probably has been one of the major struggles really. I’m not that sort of person who likes risks, so I didn’t apply for a bank loan or anything like that, so I borrowed some money from my parents, although they said don’t bother to pay it back which is very kind of them, so that’s set me off. That helped me to set up my pop-up business and to have some publicity material produced that was very helpful [...] (PN9).

34 participants mentioned the importance of obtaining a bank loan or support from finance institutions. A commonly held view, expressed by one participant was:

“[...] it is important for me to be able to get help from someone to get a bank loan or find someone to invest in my pop-up business. It would help me to grow my business [...] (PB4).

This view is supported by another participant:

“[...] I think... when we are in a good position with our finance it is easy to go to different pop-up events in different locations. I need to invest money to develop my retail business [...]” (PM12).

The second sub-theme which emerged from the semi-structured interview findings, also within the success factors dimension, was ‘minimise or reduce the expenditure’.

ii. *Reduce or minimise level of expenditure*

Twelve participants suggested that minimising their expenditure assisted them to manage their pop-up businesses. This view is supported by PN6, who revealed that minimising the level of expenditure is an emerging strategy for successfully being in the micro-retail pop-up business for more than four years.

During the interview, PN6 confirmed:

“[...] I always try to reduce my expenditure. Especially, I make sure to use less expensive and environmentally friendly resources. I try to use less costly interior decorations to reduce my expenses so I can increase my profits and savings [...]” (PN15).

This view was echoed by another participant, who stated:

“ [...] I am always trying to reduce my expenditure. Especially, I make sure to use environmentally friendly and reusable materials. For example, I don't use plastic. I use papers for packaging. I try to use less costly interior decoration to reduce my expenses.” (PB18).

Commenting on success factors in relation to ‘money’, one of the interviewees said:

“[...] three years ago, I started my zero-waste, plastic-free sustainable shopping pop-up. I work with sustainability at the heart of my pop-up business and offer sustainable products. Customers like a sustainable shopping experience. It helps me to reduce my expenditure. I spend less money on packaging. It helps me to continue my business [...]” (PN22).

Almost two-thirds of the participants (64%) said that a minimal level of expenditure assists them to build their micro-retail businesses successfully. The findings align with Pop-up Store (2016) which found that a minimum level of expenditure remained a success factor in running a pop-up retail.

iii. Lower running cost

The study has identified that the running cost of a pop-up retail is lower compared with a permanent retail shop.

This is reflected in the statement of PN16, who stated that:

“[...] I have a few friends who started their first business in a permanent retail store. Almost all of them closed their business in less than a year. The reason was that the running cost was higher. They needed to buy items to decorate the shop, [and] pay for the electricity, gas and other bills. For me it is easy to go to the pop-up event, the landlord provides the place and other facilities. So, I do not need to pay for other services. I have to pay only the rent. [...]” [PN16].

The majority of those who responded to this item felt that lower running costs of a retail pop-up were a success factor.

iv. *Lower rent*

The majority of the participants commented that lower rent is a success factor. Further, they mentioned that operating their retail business as a temporary pop-up assists them to reduce costs. Pop-ups are temporary retail stores. The rent of a micro-retail pop-up is lower compared with that of a permanent retail store. This is evident from participant PB15, who stated that:

“[...] I don’t have money to rent a permanent retail space because the rent of a permanent retail shop is higher than the rent of a pop-up. Pop-up retail space is more convenient and affordable for me [...]” (PB13).

70% of those who were interviewed indicated lower rent of a pop-up as one of the business success factors. It is apparent from the interviews that women micro-retail pop-up owners found that the rent of a pop-up store is very affordable. Women can open their businesses as temporary shops even when they do not have enough money to run a business in a permanent retail shop.

v. *Focus on narrow product lines*

57 participants mentioned that having a unique and narrow product line assists women pop-up owners to continue their business in the retail market. For example, an interviewee alluded to the notion of a sustainable products range.

“[...] customers can find many sustainable gift ideas in my pop-up. Most of the products are locally made and ethically sourced. I have lots of bulk, unpackaged whole foods. So, my customers can bring their containers to fill with store cupboard essentials [...]” (PN22).

“[...] I always sell less expensive, environmentally sustainable products and fashion and lifestyle products [...]” (PN4).

Previous researchers have identified focusing on narrow products lines / market segments as a business success factor. Choosing a specific product category, especially lifestyle and luxury goods with high customer engagement helps to attract customers in the retail market (Surchi, 2011).

vi. *Small retail space*

The results of this study indicate that more than 90% of the participants conduct their businesses in a small retail space. The majority of the participants agreed with the statement that conducting their businesses in a small retail space assists them to determine or reduce the cost, and they identified it as a business success factor. This is especially so as there is a limit on money available for conducting a micro-retail pop-up. Commenting on the micro-size of a pop-up as a success factor, one of the interviewees said:

“[...] I always sell my products in a small retail pop-up because they are less expensive to set up and maintain. Especially when we compare [them] to the traditional retail shops [...]” (PB22).

Another participant added:

“[...] I prefer the small size of retail pop-up space. It helps me to lower the operating cost and maximise my profit [...]” (PM12).

Table II provides a summary of the success factors identified within the theme of ‘money’ (CF: 5.1.1) with a comparison of the literature review findings.

Table 5.2: Extract from the coding template

Success factors of women micro-retail pop-up owners – “Money”.

Comparison of research findings to literature findings.				
Theoretical category	Sub-theme	Specific themes within the sub-themes	Quote examples from interview findings (primary data)	Quote examples from the literature review findings (secondary data)
Generic theme – Money.	i. Access to finance.	Obtain a bank loan. Invest in my pop-up business.	“[...] for me it is important being able to get help from someone in order to get a bank loan or find someone to invest in my pop-up business. I think it is important to invest some money in the pop-up business. It will especially help me to continue my pop-up business if I am ever facing financial difficulties [...]” (PB4).	“Access to bank credit facilities is generally believed to result in success; as a result, the provision of credit facilities to women has been called for by various international and national organisations in the light of their productive role for economic development” (Gupta & Mirchandani, 2017, p.222).
	ii. Reduce or minimise level of expenditure.	Reduce packaging costs.	“[...] I don’t use polyethene. I use papers for packaging... reusable and environmentally friendly material [...]” (PM12). “[...] three years ago, I started my zero-waste, plastic-free sustainable shopping pop-up. I work with sustainability at the heart of my pop-up business and offer sustainable products. Customers like the sustainable shopping experience. It helps me to reduce my expenditure. I spend less money on packaging. It helps me to continue my business [...]” (PN22).	“Reduce the overhead/expenditure” assist women entrepreneurs (Alison Rose Review of Female Entrepreneurship (2019).

Comparison of research findings to literature findings.				
Theoretical category	Sub-theme	Specific themes within the sub-themes	Quote examples from interview findings (primary data)	Quote examples from the literature review findings (secondary data)
Generic theme – Money.		Minimise the expenditure.	“I always try to reduce my expenditure. Especially, I make sure to use less expensive and environmentally friendly resources. I try to use less costly interior decoration to reduce my expenses so I can increase my profit and savings. Also, I try to offer products which are highly attractive to my customers. For example, I give some offers on specific products or buy-one-get-one-half-price” (PN7).	‘Minimum level of expenditure’ (Pop-up Stores, 2016).
	iii. Lower running cost	Mostly event organisers provide the facilities and service.	“[...] I have a few friends who started their first business in a permanent retail store. Almost all of them closed their businesses in less than a year. The reason was the running costs were too high. They needed to buy items to decorate the shop, [and] pay for the electricity, gas and other bills. For me it is easy to go to the pop-up event, the landlord provides the place and other facilities. So I do not need to pay for other services. I only have to pay the rent. [...]” [PN16].	
	iv. Lower rent		“[...] for me it is easy to go to the pop-up event, the landlord provides the place and other facilities. So, I do not need to pay for the whole month or other services. I only have to pay for a specific period such as rent for one day or three days [...]” [PN16].	

Comparison of research findings to literature findings.				
Theoretical category	Sub-theme	Specific themes within the sub-themes	Quote examples from interview findings (primary data)	Quote examples from the literature review findings (secondary data)
Generic theme – Money.	v. Focus on narrow product line	Sustainable products. Zero-waste products.	<p>“[...] customers can find many sustainable gift ideas in my pop-up. Most of the products are locally made and ethically sourced. I have lots of bulk, unpackaged whole foods. So, my customers can bring their own containers to fill with store cupboard essentials [...]” (PN9).</p> <p>“[...] I always sell less expensive, environmentally sustainable products and fashion and lifestyle products [...]” (PN4).</p>	<p>‘Focus on narrow product / market segment’.</p> <p>Choosing a specific product category, especially lifestyle and luxury goods with a high level of customer engagement products, helps to attract customers in the retail market (Surchi, 2011).</p>
	vi. Small retail space		<p>“[...] I always sell my products in a small retail pop-up because they are less expensive to set up and maintain. Especially when we compare [them] to the traditional retail shops [...]” (PB22).</p>	

Turning now to the empirical evidence on success factors within the “Management” environment.

5.1.3 Theme three: Management

As depicted in the conceptual framework 3.6.1.3, in the identification of women pop-up owners’ success factors, some participants reported “management” as one of the business success factors. During the semi-structured interviews, all the participants answered question 9-iv, which stated “in your opinion how would you rate that these factors contributed to the success of your retail pop-up business?” Out of 69 participants, 68 participants indicated as 10 (extremely contributed) and one participant rated as 1 (least contributed). Overall, all the women micro-retail pop-up owners who participated in the semi-structured interviews of this study stated that they strongly consider business management (including support programmes) as an important business success factor in developing their temporary, micro-retail pop-ups to survive in the UK retail market. However, most of the participants claimed that they found it difficult to access business support programmes and would likely continue to do so. Further, they stated that there is a lack of an effective support system to develop women-owned micro-retail pop-ups. This situation tends to hinder women pop-up owners’ full entrepreneurial potential, which this research discussed in detail in 5.2 – The challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners.

The most obvious finding to emerge from the qualitative data analysis is the variety of perspectives expressed by the participants in relation to the theme “management”. Four sub-themes emerged from the analysis under the success factor of “management” which is depicted as “3.5.1.3 – Management” in the conceptual framework. Accordingly, the sub-themes specified by the participants fell into the following four categories:

-
- i. Business management knowledge and skills
 - ii. Building a long-term customer relationship
 - iii. Keeping fresh
 - iv. Product differentiation strategy

These success factors are discussed as follows:-

i. Business management knowledge and skills

52 participants stated that having knowledge and good understanding about business management assists in running their pop-up business. Accordingly, business management knowledge and skills have been found to be a success factor of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups. One participant stated that:

“[...] from my experience, I think it is important for us to have the knowledge in how to identify a good product to sell in the market, how to manage the necessary documents, how to record income and expenditure and how to pay the required tax [...]” (PM3).

Another participant commented:

“[...] I haven't done any business management course or degree. I think it's very important to know how to manage a business. It is also important to develop business management skills. At the moment, I am just doing my business. I think that if I had known how to run a pop-up business and planned the future business activities, I could have done it very successfully [...]” (PN15).

Over half of those who participated in the interviews commented on the importance of having knowledge to understand their customers' needs.

56 participants mentioned that having knowledge and skills to understand their customers' assists them to build a strong long-term relationship which helps them to meet the customer needs and as a consequence to survive in the UK retail market in the long term. 45 participants stated that it is important for them to have knowledge about the business environment of the UK retail market, and they identified this as a success factor.

Participants stated that a good understanding of the changes in the retail business environment assists them to understand the factors which affect their businesses. However, 59 participants stated that they considered they need to develop their business management knowledge and skills. More importantly, participants highlighted the challenges they encounter in developing their business management knowledge and skills and the lack of support that they have.

These factors are discussed in detail in Section 5.2 of this chapter. Success factors related to education were particularly prominent in the interview data.

“[...] I qualified as a yoga teacher. I always loved accounting. I wanted to have that qualification too. I did get it and it has helped me to record my pop-up business finance accurately [...]” (PN13).

Education can provide women entrepreneurs with adequate knowledge, skills and the capability to generate and implement business ideas with creative solutions to solve the problems they face (Jiang *et al.*, 2012).

During the interviews, 37 participants reported the importance of 'motivation' and 'goal setting' as business success factors.

A very talented woman pop-up owner from Nottingham, owner of a children's toy pop-up, stated:

“[...] I always love making things for children. I have eyesight problems. Eventually I might lose my eyesight. I used to work in an office, but I knew that paperwork would be difficult for me as I got older. I love to make toys for children; I wanted to do something that would enable me to do that. That would be easier on my sight, and I love children. I decided to make simple toys for children. It is the main part of my retail pop-up business [...]” (PN3).

These findings broadly support the work of other studies in women entrepreneurship in this area. They link together motivation, personal goal setting and business success (Solesvik *et al.*, 2019; Vistaprint, 2016). A considerable number of previous studies in the UK have taken various approaches to explaining the importance of motivation and goal setting as business success factors. Another theme identified was ‘collaboration’. During the interviews, the majority of those who participated in the interview felt that working collaboratively makes a successful retail pop-up business more likely. One participant stated that:

“[...] even when we do a different kind of retail business and compete in the same market, it would be great if we have some opportunities to share our ideas and experiences [...]” (PB7).

Turning now to the empirical evidence on success factors within building a long-term customer relationship.

ii. Building long-term customer relationships.

Another identified sub-theme was ‘long-term customer relationship’. All the women pop-up owners who participated in this study revealed their views and stated a strong customer relationship as one of the pop-up business success factors, especially to survive in the UK retail market beyond five years. Commenting on success factors, one of the interviewees said:

“[...] we need to identify the right customers [...]” (PM8).

The study findings show that it is important for women pop-up owners to identify their target audience (or customer segmentation) and understand their customers and their preferences.

PB16 emphasised the importance of understanding her customers as follows:

“[...] especially, young people are my target audience because they are more likely to spend their money on fashion and lifestyle products. Another reason is we have different weather seasons in the UK. So, they like to buy new fashion designs [...]” (PM13).

90% of those who were interviewed indicated ‘building a strong customer relationship’ as a success factor, interacting with existing customers and communicating and presenting their brand to potential new customers. Additionally, it is revealed that building a strong customer relationship is a success factor which assists women pop-up owners to expand the customer segmentation. In the busy and ever-changing retail market in the business world, nurturing and building a strong customer relationship is a success factor which assists women pop-up owners to sell their products and reach new customers through their existing customers. Ultimately, this strategy assists them in striving towards their long-term goals and to survive in the UK retail market through being effective (Watson *et al.*, 2015).

This fact is evident from PM17:

“[...] I always value my customers. It helps me to build a good relationship or strong bond with them. Mostly I use inexpensive marketing communication methods especially attractive to young customers. As an example, they spread the word about my products with their friends and share my product photos on social media, such as Facebook [...]” (PB16).

iii. *Keeping fresh*

Participants revealed that to establish a highly creative and fashionable retail pop-up it is important to ‘keep the pop-up fresh’. PN6 explained that:

“[...] we open our pop-up stores for a specific time. As an example, I open my pop-ups in the Mansfield market once a week. Always I bring new product lines which attract young female customers. They know the opening days. So, they try to buy what they like on that day. It helps me to encourage or motivate my clients to buy my products with urgency because of my limited time there. Otherwise, they will need to revisit my pop-ups at a later day, or they will need to come to my pop-ups in other cities if it is convenient for them [...]” (PN19).

Another participant stated that:

“[...] these kinds of pop-up events⁴⁹ mostly encourage the customers to buy the product [...]” (PM21).

⁴⁹ “pop-ups appear unexpectedly and surprisingly, and generate buzz, being an extravagant experience for customers within the market” (Shopify, 2014, p.2).

The initial research findings show that macro and meso environments (dimensions of the 5Ms framework) play an important role in the success and survival of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups. Especially, networking events assist women micro-retail pop-up owners to get funding and grow their businesses. However, considering previous studies of the success and failure in women-owned micro business, some factors that are regarded as reasons for business failure may also appear as factors that hinder business success. As discussed above, women micro-retail pop-up owners face barriers that hold them back from growing. Challenges faced by women micro-retail pop-up owners were found in terms of internal and external environmental factors. Participants emphasised the need to focus on narrow product lines (e.g., environmentally friendly or sustainable products) and a specific market segment. PN4 expressed this during the interview about the product she introduced to the market. She added that:

“I always sell less expensive, environmentally sustainable products along with fashion and lifestyle products” (PN4).

Surchi (2011) expressed a pop-up business success factor to be an appropriate choosing of a specific product category, especially lifestyle and luxury goods together with high demand products, all of which help to attract customers.

iv. *Product differentiation strategy*

“[...] I sell unique products. I always try my best to sell something different from my competitors [...]” (PN11).

More than 42 participants mentioned that they do not want to develop their businesses to permanent retail status. Most of these women micro-retail pop-up owners expressed that they like to differentiate their products from their competitors, and they are happy to run their micro-retail business as a temporary retail pop-up.

However, principally they want to develop their pop-up businesses to survive in the UK retail market. A participant illustrated this thought as follows:

“[...] I think I know that for some people the business often starts at the kitchen table or something like that, and they do want to become bigger and bigger, and someone like Laura Ashley in this country who started out like just printing tea towels and selling them from her car now she is a multi-national company, but it’s never been my ambition. I just wanted to make things and sell things, because my brand is about resilience and resourcefulness and all the things my gran taught me, and that’s so important to me about making something that is unique and beautiful out of a piece of fabric that somebody else might have just thought ‘oh, I don’t have any use for that, I will throw it away’. I think if I got bigger, that unique possibility would be lost. I hate to think that in terms of building a purpose-built jam factory in the middle of a field, something like that, to me, I would lose the whole identity of my brand [...]” (PN9).

The following Table 5.3 presents a summary of the findings within ‘management’. Then the research will turn to the empirical evidence on success factors within the ‘meso-macro-environment’.

Table 5.3: Extract from coding template

Success factors of women micro-retail pop-up owners – Management

Comparison of research findings to literature findings.				
Theoretical category	Sub-theme	Specific themes within the sub-themes	Quote examples from interview findings (primary data)	Quote examples from the literature review findings (secondary data)
Generic theme - Management	i. Business management.	Knowledge and Skills.	<p>“[...] from my experience, I think it is important for us to have the knowledge in how to identify a good product to sell in the market, how to manage the necessary documents, how to record income and expenditure and paying tax [...]” (PM3).</p> <p>“[...] I haven’t done any business management course or degree. I think it’s very important to know how to manage a business. It is also important to develop business management skills. At the moment, I am just doing my business. I think that if I had known how to run a pop-up business and planed the future business activities, I could have done it very successfully [...]” (PN15).</p>	
		Motivation	<p>“[...] I always love making things for children. I have eyesight problems. Eventually I might lose my eyesight. I used to work in an office, but I knew that paperwork would be difficult for me as I got older. I love to make toys for children; I wanted to do something that would enable me to do that. That would be easier on my sight, and I love children. I decided to make simple toys for children. It is the main part of my retail pop-up business [...]” (PN3).</p>	

Comparison of research findings to literature findings.				
Theoretical category	Sub-theme	Specific themes within the sub-themes	Quote examples from interview findings (primary data)	Quote examples from the literature review findings (secondary data)
Generic theme - Management.	i. Business management.	Collaboration	“[...] even when we do different kinds of retail business and compete in the same market, it would be great if we have some opportunities to share our ideas and experiences [...]” (PB7).	
	ii. Building a long-term customer relationship.	Identify the potential customers	“[...] it is important for us to identify the right customers [...]” (PM8).	
		Identify the audience	“[...] especially, young people are my target audience because they are more likely to spend their money on fashion and lifestyle products. Another reason is we have different weather seasons in the UK. So, they like to buy new fashion designs [...]” (PM13).	
		Build a long-term customer relationship	“[...] I always value my customers. It helps me to build a good relationship or strong bond with them. Mostly I use inexpensive marketing communication methods especially attractive to young customers. As an example, they spread the word about my products with their friends and share my product photos on social media, such as Facebook [...]” (PB16).	
		Urgency	“[...] we open our pop-up stores for a specific time. As an example, I open my pop-ups in the Mansfield market once a week. Always I bring new product lines which attract young female customers. They know the opening days. So, they try to buy what they like on that day. It helps me to encourage or motivate my clients to buy my products with urgency because of my limited time there. Otherwise, they will need to revisit my pop-ups at a later day, or they will need to come to my pop-ups in other cities if it is convenient for them [...]” (PN19).	

Comparison of research findings to literature findings.				
Theoretical category	Sub-theme	Specific themes within the sub-themes	Quote examples from interview findings (primary data)	Quote examples from the literature review findings (secondary data)
Generic theme - Management.	iii. Keep fresh.	Focus on products within a specific category.	<p>“[...] these kind of pop-up events mostly encourage the customers to buy the product [...]” (PM21).</p> <p>“I always sell less expensive, environmentally sustainable products along with fashion and lifestyle products” (PN4).</p> <p>“[...] I sell unique products. I always try my best to sell something different from my competitors [...]” (PN11).</p>	As a success factor, a micro-retail pop-up assists pop-up owners to sell their product within a fresh experiential marketing format (Niehm <i>et al.</i> , 2007).
	iv. Product differentiation strategy.	Product differentiation strategy.	<p>“[...] I think I know that for some people the business often starts at the kitchen table or something like that, and they do want to become bigger and bigger, and someone like Laura Ashley in this country who started out like just printing tea towels and selling them from her car now she is a multi-national company, but it’s never been my ambition. I just wanted to make things and sell things, because my brand is about resilience and resourcefulness and all the things my gran taught me, and that’s so important to me about making something that is unique and beautiful out of a piece of fabric that somebody else might have just thought ‘oh, I don’t have any use for that, I will throw it away’. I think if I got bigger, that unique possibility would be lost. I hate to think that in terms of building a purpose-built jam factory in the middle of a field, something like that, to me, I would lose the whole identity of my brand [...]” (PN9).</p>	As a business success factor the micro-retail pop-up is based on a scarcity marketing format and includes exclusivity and surprise (Niehm <i>et al.</i> , 2007).

Turning now to the empirical evidence on success factors within “Motherhood”.

5.1.4 Theme four: Motherhood

As depicted in the conceptual framework 3.6.1.4, in the identification of women pop-up owners’ success factors, some of the informants reported “motherhood” as one of the business successes factors. During the semi-structured interviews, respondents were asked to suggest other reasons for the success of their pop-up business. Most of the participants answered question 10 which stated, “Do you have any other success factors which assist to grow your business?” 12 women out of 69 participants stated that being a mother was a business success factor. In contrast, most of the other participants claimed that they find it difficult to manage their retail pop-up business while looking after children. Further, they stated that there is a lack of a support system which would allow access to appropriate childcare facilities and they thought that this situation tends to hinder their full entrepreneurial potential, as discussed in detail in 5.2 entitled Challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners. The most interesting finding to emerge from the qualitative data analysis is that a variety of perspectives were expressed by the 12 participants who considered motherhood to be a success factor. Under this theme, three sub-themes emerged. These sub-themes specified by the participants fell into the following three categories:-

- i. Support from family and friends.
- ii. Open the retail pop-up when convenient.
- iii. Close down if difficulties are unsurmountable, without losing money.

By looking at these sub themes we can see how and why those participants considered motherhood to be a success factor.

i. Support from family and friends

This theme came up, for example, in discussion of motherhood and business success factors. Participants explained how they built their micro-retail pop-up businesses, being mothers in business with big entrepreneurial aspirations. As mothers, the participants explained the success factors that they found worked well for them. Six participants expressed that it is important to have supportive partners and family members to successfully run a pop-up business.

“[...] Firstly, I do have a supportive husband. He supports me [in] choosing the best product to sell to my customers [...]” (PN10).

ii. Open the retail pop-up when convenient

Concern regarding opening their retail pop-ups when convenient was more widespread as a business success factor.

“[...] I have the opportunity to open my retail pop-up while my two children are in school. Some Saturdays ... I go to pop-up events with my children. They enjoy it. More importantly, they learn how to do a business [...]” (PB17).

iii. Close down if difficulties are unsurmountable, without losing money.

There was a sense of ‘difficult times’ amongst the interviewees. For example, having a baby and taking maternity leave (PN1), unexpected illness (PB11), personal circumstances (PM4).

“[...] ten years ago, I suffered from cancer and my daughter was three years old. I had to close down my retail business. I was able to close my pop-up business without losing any money. After ten years again I started my retail business in a pop-up. Operating a

retail business in a temporary pop-up provided me the opportunity to close down my business without losing money [...]” (PN11).

The following Table 5.4 presents a summary of the findings within ‘motherhood’.

Table 5.4: Extract from coding template

Success factors of women micro-retail pop-up owners – Motherhood

Comparison of research findings to literature findings.				
Theoretical category	Sub-theme	Specific themes within the sub-themes	Quote examples from interview findings (primary data)	Quote examples from the literature review findings (secondary data)
Generic theme - Motherhood	i. Support from family and friends	Support from family members	“when my children were little, my mother used to look after them. It helped me to start and grow my retail pop-up. I had the opportunity to go to different pop-up events during the term time” (PN19).	
	ii. Open the retail pop-up when convenient	Convenience	“I have the opportunity to open my retail pop-up while my two children are in school. Some Saturdays ... I go to pop-up events with my children. They enjoy it. More importantly, they learn how to do a business” (PB17).	
	iii. Close down if difficulties are unsurmountable, without losing money	Flexibility	“ten years ago, I suffered from cancer and my daughter was three years old. I had to close down my retail business. I was able to close my pop-up business without losing any money. After ten years I started again my retail business in a pop-up. Operating a retail business in a temporary pop-up provided me the opportunity to close down my business without losing money” (PN11).	

Turning now to the empirical evidence on success factors within the “meso-macro” environment factors.

5.1.5 Macro-meso environment factors

As depicted in the conceptual framework 3.6.1.5, in the identification of women pop-up owners’ success factors, some of the informants reported “meso-macro-environment factors” as one of the business success factors. During the semi-structured interviews, the respondents were asked to suggest other reasons for the success of a pop-up business. Most of the participants answered question 9 (see Appendix 1 for the semi-structured interview guide question 9) which stated, “in your opinion, how would you rate these factors contributed to the success of your retail pop-up business?” The most obvious finding to emerge from the qualitative data analysis is a variety of perspectives were expressed by the participants in relation to the theme “meso-macro-environment”. Two sub-themes emerged from the analysis under the success factor of “meso-macro-environment” which is depicted as “5.1.5 – Meso-macro-environment” in the conceptual framework. The sub-themes specified by the participants fell into the following two categories, namely:

- i. Macro-environment factors
- ii. Meso-environment factors

These factors are discussed in detail as follows:-

i. Macro environmental factors

Whilst a minority (six participants) mentioned that the UK community infrastructure (planning legislation) assists in developing their temporary retail pop-ups, all agreed that there are inadequate facilities for the development of women-owned temporary micro-retail pop-ups.

26 participants mentioned that Brexit would reduce the competition from the European market and would assist them to develop their local business. However, some other participants were concerned about the changes which could occur in the supply chain and manufacturing. Two participants mentioned the technological advancements which help them to sell their products online. However, the majority of participants mentioned the challenges they encounter in selling their products online, as explained in Section 5.2.5. A common view among the interviewees was that the increasing number of students (demography) in the town centres (e.g. Nottingham, Birmingham and Manchester) assists them to increase their sales and income. However, the majority of participants (more than 36) mentioned the impact of the economy, changes in supply chains and manufacturing, social changes such as the increasing student demography, technological changes such as ability to sell products online, support from the government and non-government organisations, support from business-supportive organisations (e.g., networking and support mechanism), support from family and friends. Other factors of possible impact included things that are managed (or could be managed) at the town centre level. This includes retail mix, the availability and pricing of parking, whether town centre management is in place, the impact of branding or marketing, etc.

ii. Meso-environment factors

Family support

“[...] my husband and I do it together. We have a little girl. She doesn't go to school. My husband looks after the baby in the morning. So, I go home in the evening and look after her [...]” (PN1).

This view was echoed by another participant who stated:

“[...] when my children were little, my mother used to look after them [...]” (PB19).

The research discusses the findings relating to the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners which include threats encountered from established women retailers. The study findings show that starting and developing a micro-retail pop-up can be identified as one of the most powerful tools for women to build a better future for themselves, their families and communities. However, considering the last fifty years, the retail market has been changing slowly and silently. Therefore, women micro-retail pop-up owners have had to (a) manage their businesses steadily and forcefully, (b) improve business performance by achieving competitive advantage, (c) accomplish modest financial targets while dealing with constantly shifting socio-economic conditions, regulatory barriers, customer choices, demography and shopping patterns (Omalaja & Eruola, 2011). Despite all the above identified success factors, the majority of the women participants stated that they encounter a number of challenges that hold them back in managing, developing/scaling their temporary retail pop-up businesses and surviving in the UK retail market. Therefore, it is important to identify the challenges encountered by them in finding a marketplace, operating and managing their retail pop-ups in the fast-growing, changing and competitive UK retail market. Mostly, women micro-retail pop-up owners tend to operate their businesses in temporary retail marketplaces with emphasis on the micro and the service sector.

As depicted in the conceptual framework (3.5.2), the following section, 5.2, presents in greater detail the study findings of the key challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners which hinder their full entrepreneurial potential. These challenges were identified within money (5.2.1), for example accessing finance; market (5.2.2), for example, competing with established retailers; management (5.2.3), for example, strategy development; motherhood (5.2.4), for example, caring responsibilities; and meso-macro-environment factors (5.2.5), for example, socio-cultural expectations [5Ms framework (Brush *et al.*, 2009)].

5.2 The challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners

Based on the semi-structured interview findings, this section presents the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners in the internal environment. One of the objectives of this study was to identify the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners. By answering research question three of this study, this section presents the study findings in relation to the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners.

Research question three (RQ4): “What are the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners?”

During the semi-structured interview with the women micro-retail pop-up owners, all participants answered question eight (8) which stated, “In your opinion, would you say the following challenging factors affect the success of your retail pop-up business?” Accordingly, this section presents the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners in the UK retail market. The challenges they encounter fall in to the two main categories of internal and external environments. These can serve as barriers to the success of their temporary micro-retail pop-ups but they do enable us to identify the structural factors and socio-cultural factors which hinder their full entrepreneurial potential. Based on the qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews, the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners were identified in five broad themes in connection with the 5Ms framework (Brush *et al.*, 2009) and the conceptual framework (CF: 2.5.2), given as, market (CF: 2.5.2.1), money (CF: 2.5.2.2), management (CF: 2.5.2.3), motherhood (CF: 2.5.2.4) and meso-macro-environment (CF: 2.5.2.5). Sub-themes were also identified under these themes and are now discussed in the following section which identifies the internal and external factors effects within the women-owned micro-retail pop-ups.

5.2.1 Theme one: Market

“Market” which is depicted in the conceptual framework 3.6.2.1 and 5Ms theoretical framework, if not properly assessed and appreciated, is seen as one of the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners and hence can hinder their business success. During the semi-structured interviews, all participants answered question 8-i which stated, in your opinion, would you say that the market factor is seen as a challenge? (see Appendix 1 for the semi-structured interview guide). Out of 69 participants, 59 participants indicated ‘yes’. During the interviews, the participants emphasised that despite any success factors within the temporary retail market, they encountered considerable challenges in operating their temporary retail pop-ups. These challenges are now discussed in detail under the theme of market where three sub-themes emerged from the interview findings (see conceptual framework – .5.1.1).

- i. Competition from larger retailers
- ii. Inadequate or lack of networking

Finding a permanent or regular place poses problems for women micro-retail pop-up owners due to the high rental level required (Surchi, 2011). Women micro-retail pop-up owners encounter challenges from larger retailers. Accessing a network was one of the challenges that women entrepreneurs face in developing their businesses. In particular, women entrepreneurs have less access to networks because these, as external environment factors, have control over resources and funding vital to business start-ups and growth. This view is supported by previous studies which in essence have said that attempting access to information, assistance and contacts via networks can sometimes reveal an overt mechanism of unwarranted exclusion (Bruni, 2004, p.262; Aldrich *et al.*, 1989).

Table 5.5: Extract from coding template

Challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners – Market.

Comparison of research findings to literature findings.				
Theoretical category	Sub-theme	Specific themes within the sub-themes	Quote examples from interview findings (primary data)	Quote examples from the literature review findings (secondary data)
Generic theme Market	ii. Competition from permanent retailers	Competition from Permanent retailers	“we have to compete with multinational retailers” (PB23).	
	iii. Changes to customer choice and demography.	Changes to customer choice.	“my customers find it difficult to travel to different locations to buy my products” (PB9). “many customers like to buy online” (PN7).	
	iv. Networking	Inefficient or lack of networking opportunities.	“networking event tickets are expensive” (PM 7).	Accessing a network was one of the challenges that women entrepreneurs face in developing their businesses (Bruni, 2004; Aldrich <i>et al.</i> , 1989).

Turning now to the empirical evidence on challenges factors within “money”.

5.2.2 Theme two: Money

As depicted in the conceptual framework 3.6.2.2 – Money, answering question 8 – i; 68 out of 69 participants mentioned “finance” as a challenging factor in the development of their micro-retail pop-up business and, as a factor which tends to hinder their full entrepreneurial potential. This factor is depicted in the conceptual framework 2.5.2.2 which is linked to the 5Ms theoretical framework. The success factors of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups do not in any way compensate for the aforementioned financial challenge. Nearly two in five respondents said that they have a second job to fund their micro-retail pop-up business and provide a supplementary income. In addition to this 56 participants indicated the need for securing financial capital for their micro-retail pop-up needs. All this points to the fact that there is insufficient capital to fuel a pop-up business, lack of finance to operate it properly, challenges to accessing capital and a lack of alternative sources of finance. The sub-themes which emerged under the theme “money” are listed as follows:

- i. Lack of savings
 - ii. Barriers to access finance
 - iii. Lower sales turnover
-
- i. Lack of savings

What must not be overlooked here is that eight participants expressed that even getting financial support to develop their retail pop-up business would not have been helpful because they have no interest in obtaining a loan from bank or other institution. One interviewee put it this way:

“[...] I am careful with money, I can manage my own money, but I think I don’t have enough financial acumen to find where money is [...]” (PM5).

Further, they stated that they do not wish, or are afraid, to take on financial risks, partly because of their commitment to their children and family. Previous studies seem to confirm these views by suggesting that women micro or small business owners are less likely to access external finance (e.g., loans, overdraft, credit cards) compared to their male counterparts.

Most of the participants expressed that they do not have a considerable amount of money in their savings accounts. In spite of what has already been said here, it is apparent from the interviews that most women pop-up owners struggle to continue their pop-up retail without some financial support. PN2 stated that:

“[...] as I sell creative jewellery, in some weeks my sales go down. It is difficult for me to save some money to invest in my business [...]” (PN8).

Other responses to this question included:

“[...] Yes, I think finance has been a struggle for me. I am still really at the stage where, as soon as some money goes into my business account, it’s being used up for something else. I’m not really making a profit at the moment [...]” (PB6).

The next section of the interview findings is concerned with barriers to accessing finance.

ii. Barriers to accessing finance

The majority of women micro-retail pop-up owners interviewed stated that accessing finance proved to be a challenge which turned out to be a distinct barrier to the survival of women micro-retail pop-up owners in the UK retail market beyond five years. This challenge was emphasised by more than 90% of those interviewed. The study findings show that in certain

instances funding should be available if needed to start and develop a successful women-owned micro-retail pop-up. As one interviewee said:

“[...] I think there were various schemes around at the time that looked quite promising - government packages for start-up businesses - things like that. But, when I looked into them I got the impression that it was expected the business would be quite financially secure in the first place. There is an advert that goes around on Facebook about money that’s available from the government for small and medium businesses, but as soon as you go on the website the first thing it says is that you have to have a turnover of a million pounds a year or something like that [...]” (PN10).

The majority of the participants felt that there is a lack of a support system to give an option to women temporary micro-retail pop-up owners to access finance to fuel and develop their businesses, if required. More than fifty two out of the sixty-nine women interviewed were self-funded when they started their micro-retail pop-ups. Five participants stated that they were able to take out a small business loan and six participants stated that they had received financial support from investors or business support organisations. Many pop-up owners stated that they were unable to receive funding because of a lack of legal documentation and the guarantee. Twenty-three women expressed that it was difficult for them to find a guarantor to sign the loan application.

Participants expressed that challenges encountered in operating and developing a micro-retail pop-up are relevant to both men and women. However, most participants believe that negotiating or obtaining funding comes more easily to male pop-up owners than it does to women. Further, they highlighted that they felt finance organisations (e.g., banks) were less receptive to their loan applications. This is evidenced by Federation of Small Businesses (2016).

According to the study findings, these women pop-up owners go through unique individual circumstances (e.g., belonging to an ethnic minority group; being a single parent). 41 participants stated that they have inadequate access to finance in order to develop their retail pop-up. PN2 expressed during the interview the experience she had when she sought financial support to start and develop her temporary retail pop-up:

“[...] I found it very difficult to get financial support to invest in my pop-up business. It was especially difficult for me to get a bank loan as a female who has childcare responsibilities and as I operate my retail business as a temporary pop-up [...]” (PN6).

Some participants highlighted that they felt financial institutions (for example, banks) were less receptive to their loan application, mostly due to their individual circumstances (for example, being a single mum with two children). They further explained that sometimes financial institutions want to know how much they have in their savings account. In support of this, some previous studies continually highlight women business owners' perception that financial institutions treat women differently from their male counterparts (Federation of Small Business, 2016). However, there are other studies which suggest that there is no longer an issue of financial institutions in the UK refusing to grant finance support for women just because they are women. Evidently, there are some financial institutions or banks which provide highly favoured support for women to start, develop and scale up women-owned businesses (e.g. NatWest Bank, UK).

PM5, PM20, PB12 and PB19 shared similar experiences in applying for and obtaining a loan or financial support from government and non-government business-supportive organisations. More than 55% of participants stated that it is hard for them to find a guarantor when they apply for a loan or financial support.

They expressed that it is apparently more difficult for women to get a loan than it is for their male counterparts. More than 65% of participants claimed that finding a guarantor was often found to be difficult and hence discouraged many women micro-retail pop-up owners, who subsequently lost interest in applying for funding from financial institutions in the UK.

Finance usage among women retail pop-up owners can vary due to the industry sector (e.g., food, creative jewellery), age of the pop-up business, pop-up business size and temporary nature. Accessing finance can be identified as an obstacle preventing women starting, developing (Carter, 2009; DTI, 2003; Vistaprint, 2009), and scaling a temporary micro-retail pop-up business to a successful business. This information is summarised here in Table 5.7.

Table 5.6: Extract from coding template

Challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners – Money.

Comparison of research findings to literature findings.				
Theoretical category	Sub-theme	Specific themes within the sub-themes	Quote examples from interview findings (primary data)	Quote examples from the literature review findings (secondary data)
Generic theme MONEY	i. Lack of savings	Invest in my pop-up business	“I don’t have. As I sell creative jewellery, in some weeks my sales go down. It is difficult for me to save some money to invest in my business. I always try to do a corporate world job. From that salary, I can develop my business” (PN8).	Insufficient financial investment and lack of capital resources; inadequate level of finance and venture capital (Jamali, 2009; Roomi <i>et al.</i> , 2009).
	ii. Barriers to access finance	Access to start-up finance	“It was so hard for me to find the start-up money. First, I saved a little money and started my business” (PM23).	Women may be at a disadvantage in their ability to raise start-up and fund (Sandberg, 2003; Carter & Cannon, 1992; Johnson & Storey, 1993; Koper, 1993; Van Auken <i>et al.</i> , 1993). “Access to finance is one of the issues which is consistently identified as a barrier to business start-up and growth” (DTI, 2011, p.34).

Comparison of research findings to literature findings.				
Theoretical category	Sub-theme	Specific themes within the sub-themes	Quote examples from interview findings (primary data)	Quote examples from the literature review findings (secondary data)
Generic theme MONEY	ii. Barriers to access finance	Finding guarantees	“It was difficult to find a guarantee” (PB10).	Guarantees required for external financing may be beyond the scope of most women’s personal assets and credit track record (Riding & Swift, 1990; Sandberg, 2003).
		Access to growth finance	“However, what we actually need is running business capital. Sometimes I felt why I am doing this business” (PM23).	Finance for ongoing business costs may be less available for female-owned firms than male enterprises; largely due to women’s inability to penetrate informal financial networks (Olm <i>et al.</i> , 1988; Aldrich, 1989; Sandberg, 2003).
		Barriers to obtaining a bank loan. Relationship with lenders	“I found it very difficult to get financial support to invest in my pop-up business. Also, it is very hard to get a bank loan as I conduct my business [as] a temporary retail pop-up. Sometimes they ask how much money you have in your savings account” (PB10).	‘Systematic issues’ Many different systematic issues, disadvantageous situations in finding, accessing, obtaining and managing capital assets or investments are needed to start and fuel the growth of their small businesses (DTI, 2003). Access to capital; whether women entrepreneurs apply to an institutional financier (a bank, a finance agency), a friend, a relative or even a spouse, they are likely to come up against the assumption that “women can’t handle money” (Bruni, 2004, p.262). Female entrepreneurs’ relationships with bankers may suffer because of sexual stereotyping and discriminations (Hisrich & Brush, 1986; Buttner & Roses, 1989; Sandberg, 2003).

Turning now to the empirical evidence on challenges within the “management” environment.

5.2.3 Theme three – Management

“Management”, which is depicted in the conceptual framework 3.6.2.3 and 5Ms theoretical framework, is identified as one of the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners which hinder their business success. Accordingly, the third theme which emerges from the participants’ responses within the challenges they encounter was ‘managing a retail pop-up’.

During the interviews some sub-themes appeared in managing a retail pop-up. During the semi-structured interviews all the participants answered question 8-i which stated that “in your opinion, would you say that the following factors (iii. Management) can be viewed as a challenging factor?” Out of 69 participants, 59 participants shared their challenges in managing their micro-retail pop-ups. Three sub-themes emerge from the qualitative data analysis under the challenges of “management” as follows:-

- i. Inadequate or lack of business management knowledge, skills and experience
- ii. Inadequate or lack of education / training
- iii. Inadequate or lack of support systems

The study findings in relation to the above three themes are discussed in detail as follows:-

- i. Inadequate or lack of business management knowledge, skills and experience

46 out of 59 respondents indicated that it is important for them to get support to identify a variety of business functions in managing the day-to-day operations of their micro-retail pop-up.

More than 48 out of 59 respondents expressed that it is important for them to develop their marketing skills to promote their products.

“[...] Although I have had more than 10 years of experience in this business, my business has not been successful simply due to the fact that I have been unable to show myself to be competent without the possession of a higher qualification in business management [...]” (PN6).

The majority of participants showed that they struggle with confidence.

“[...] when I started my business ... three years ago, I was reluctant to make known the price of my products. I was worrying whether my price was too high for customers. I struggle when I introduce my products to new customers, especially when it comes to the price [...]” (PN6).

The study findings show that women micro-retail pop-up owners need help with understanding their own skills and values.

ii. **Inadequate or lack of education and training**

The study findings show that women micro-retail pop-up owners need a lot of support to gain confidence and understand their own strengths. More than 32 participants mentioned that there were challenges due to the fact that they felt that they were not included in educational and entrepreneurial opportunities. In support of this, previous researchers have highlighted the exclusion from education as a cause of failure or under-performing in women-owned business (Jiang *et al.*, 2012).

One participant highlighted her need in this area.

“[...] I did not have business management training. Literally, worked out for myself what worked for me, what didn't work for me – yeah, just worked out myself. Probably would have been more effective with a little bit of business knowledge. I tried to be creative. I did not have knowledge of how to run a business [...]” (PB3).

iii. Inadequate or lack of support systems

The study findings revealed that women micro-retail pop-up owners need support to develop their business management knowledge and skills due to the temporary nature of the business, family caring responsibilities, and women specific psychological characteristics. One participant stated that,

“[...] I would like to improve my skills to use the new technology so I can create my own online web page in addition to my pop-up retail store. However, I need some support to learn the skills to use the computer and Facebook and other social media in order to introduce my products to my existing customers and new customers. I know a few friends who do this very well. I want to do the same. But I need to get some support to develop my skills [...]” (PN8).

Table 5.7: Extract from coding template

Challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners – “Management”.

Comparison of research findings to literature findings.				
Theoretical category	Sub-theme	Specific themes within the sub-themes	Quote examples from interview findings (primary data)	Quote examples from the literature review findings (secondary data)
Generic theme Management	i. Lack of business management knowledge, skills and experience	Business Management: knowledge skills and experience	“Probably would have been more effective with a little bit [of] business knowledge. I was only creative. I did not have knowledge [of] how to run a business” (PB11).	‘Lack of training and support’ Lack of business management skills or barriers to access training to develop managerial skills and gain experience has been identified as one of the main barriers in women entrepreneurship.
	Inadequate or lack of education and training	Limited access to education and entrepreneurial opportunities	“[...] Although I have had more than 10 years of experience in this business, my business has not been successful simply due to the fact that I have been unable to show myself to be competent without the possession of a higher qualification in business management [...]” (PN6).	‘Limited education’ Insufficient or limited education causes failure or under-performing in women-owned micro-retail pop-ups (Jiang <i>et al.</i> , 2012).
			“[...] I did not have business management training. Literally, worked out for myself what worked for me, what didn’t work for me – yeah, just worked out myself. Probably would have been more effective with a little bit of business knowledge. I tried to be creative. I did not have knowledge of how to run a business [...]” (PB3).	Due to inadequate training and support, women entrepreneurs have low credibility in running their businesses, are under-performing, or showing slow or no growth in their entrepreneurial career. In this respect they appeared to be disadvantaged in comparison with some others (Jiang <i>et al.</i> , 2012).

Comparison of research findings to literature findings.				
Theoretical category	Sub-theme	Specific themes within the sub-themes	Quote examples from interview findings (primary data)	Quote examples from the literature review findings (secondary data)
Generic theme Management			“No, I did not have a mentor. But I had [the] opportunity to participate in a business development training programme” (PB19).	
	Lack of support systems		“I would like to improve my skills to use the new technology so I can create my own online web page in addition to my pop-up retail store. However, I need some support to learn the skills to use the computer and Facebook and other social media, to introduce my products to my existing customers and new customers. I know a few friends who do this very well. I want to do the same. But I need to get some support to develop my skills” (PN8).	

Turning now to the empirical evidence on success factors within the “motherhood” environment.

5.2.4 Theme four - Motherhood

Initial research findings show that family is an important source of support to women pop-up owners and constitutes a fundamental element for women-owned micro-retail pop-up success. However, according to all research participants who were mothers, motherhood mediates their business activities in different ways as part of the “motherhood” dimension of the 5M framework. Family embeddedness, household responsibilities, along with the mothering role within the family, limit the time available for networking events, interacting with professional women pop-up owners, and with supportive organisations (Brush *et al.*, 2009). Furthermore, family support has been identified as one of the important factors in providing emotional input for women micro-retail pop-up owners to develop their businesses. Women micro-retail pop-up owners are seen as having a need to benefit from family-to-business affective support to a greater extent. The study has identified challenges and constraints that limit opportunities for women-owned micro-retail pop-up development to enable survival in the UK retail market beyond five years. The sub-themes which emerged under the theme “motherhood” are listed as follows:-

- i. Mothering role
- ii. Lack of support with appropriate childcare
- iii. Household and family context and relationship
- iv. Lack of flexibility
- v. Socio-cultural expectations

The study findings in relation to the above five sub-themes are discussed in detail as follows:-

i. **Mothering role**

This study reveals that apart from money, market conditions and management, women micro-retail pop-up owners encounter challenges associated with their mothering role. A majority of participants mentioned work-life balance and competing demands on time as challenges. They were concerned about fulfilling their family caring responsibilities together with a dedication to build the retail pop-up business. With regard to the mothering role, participants mentioned the importance of spending time with children and family and that issues relating to a lack of child care support can lead to a failure of women-owned micro-retail pop-up businesses. This was confirmed by PN3, who said that:

“[...] I had problems in looking after my children. That was the biggest problem I had at that time. Three children and looking after the family, relatives, extended family needs, taking care of the home, needing to take care of bills to be paid, obviously, but definitely the children. And always working around the children with difficulty because of the many hands and feeds impressions I had to take during the day. When the children have gone to bed that is when the real impressions work starts. Then I will be able to make the actual frame as well. Yes, I would work late at night when the children are sleeping. At that time I will be able to produce the actual product remembering that the impression was the easy bit. Time is definitely an issue with children [...]” (PN6).

This view is supported by previous studies. The mothering role, spending time with children and family and issues relating to lack of support for childcare are all contributory causes towards the failure of women-owned businesses. Motherhood can be a metaphor to represent the household/family context, thus drawing attention to the fact that family/household contexts might have a large impact on women (Prowess, 2016).

The result of this study indicates the need for childcare allowances for women micro-retail pop-up owners who are still developing their businesses, seeking advice and participating in business development training programmes. Concerns were expressed about the availability of access to affordable child-caring facilities. One informant reported that:

“[...] childcare facilities are very expensive. It is very difficult for me to pay for the childminder, especially while I am developing my pop-up business [...]” (PB6).

ii. Lack of support from appropriate childcare

Accordingly, apart from money, market and management, women pop-up owners encounter challenges around their motherhood role in their family. Most women-owned business training and support programmes are designed without considering childcare issues. Hence, the mothering role including spending time with children and family, and issues relating to appropriate childcare support, can contribute to the failure of women-owned pop-ups. Most women pop-up owners face the childcare issue as and when they are conducting their retail pop-up. Some women open a business and become self-employed as a temporary solution to combining childcare and income generation at a specific point in their life, and may then seek to return to employment when appropriate. The participants expressed that lack of affordable childcare provision was a barrier to conducting business.

“[...] Definitely, I had problems in looking after my children. That is the biggest problem I had at that time. I found it very difficult to pay for childcare when I went to Saturday events [...]” (PN3).

This finding is consistent with those of other studies: rather than the key issue being the availability of formal childcare, it is often that women want to care for their children themselves, not wishing to risk their home, work-life balance (Prowess, 2016).

iii. Household, family context and relationship

Most of the participants stated that improved and specialised assistance and support should be available for women micro-retail pop-up owners who want to have children. The study findings reveal that women-owned micro-retail pop-up businesses need to be recognised and given appropriate needed support. In accordance with the present results, previous studies have demonstrated that “women in the UK are still responsible for 80 percent of caring and domestic responsibilities” (DTI, 2011, p.34).

Previous studies conducted in women entrepreneurship in Western countries have identified the social-cultural status of women as a primary role for them within family and domestic responsibilities which tends to reduce the acceptability of women intent on setting up business in a variety of ways (Bruni, 2004).

iv. Lack of flexibility

Participants in this study expressed that women micro-retail pop-up owners’ household and family caring responsibilities and relationships tend to hinder their full entrepreneurial potential.

v. Socio-cultural expectations

Participants also mentioned their socio-cultural status, family and domestic responsibilities and expectations from society. 26 out of 69 indicated that they feel they have been discriminated against because they are women. One interviewee stated:

“[...] Looking after three children, family and relatives with the extended family needs, taking care of the home, taking care of bills which need to be paid, obviously, but with particular attention to the welfare of the children [...]” (PN6).

Expectations of society and cultural norms:

Special challenges for women pop-up owners are encountered in the motherhood role and family life which are not experienced by other entrepreneurs (Bates, 2007). The identity of women as entrepreneurs in whatever form came secondary to their wish to be seen as family carers (Chea, 2008). Additionally, more than half of participants were concerned about their experiences in relation to ‘attitudes towards women within the culture’ and how this affects building their temporary retail pop-up businesses. For example, one interviewee said:

“[...] As a woman, I encountered many challenges and issues when I worked in contract jobs which turned out to be a learning process for me over the years. Now, when I conduct my pop-up store I know how to respond to those people who neglect women. By my own very painful experiences, I know how to overcome an abusive situation and stand firmly as a woman small business owner [...]” (PB2).

These results reflect the ideas of Brush *et al.* (2010) who also found that cultural attitudes towards women have an affect on women-owned business operations.

Table 5.8: Extract from coding template

Challenges encounter by women micro-retail pop-up owners – “Motherhood”

Comparison of research findings to literature findings.

Theoretical category	Sub-theme	Specific themes within the sub-themes	Quote examples from interview findings (primary data)	Quote examples from the literature review findings (secondary data)
Motherhood	Mothering role	Lack of affordable childcare provision	<p>“[...] I had problems in looking after my children. That is the biggest problem I had that time. Three children and looking after the family, relatives, extended family needs, taking care of the home, needing to take care of bills needing to be paid, obviously, but definitely the children. And always working around the children with difficulty, so often I take the impressions during the day, have events, and when the children are gone to bed that [is] when the real work starts. Making the cast from the impressions. Then I will be able to make the actual frame as well. Yes, I would work late [at] night when the children are sleeping. That time I will be able to produce the actual product. Taking the impression is the easy bit. Time is definitely an issue with children [...]” (PN6).</p> <p>Concerns were expressed about the availability of access to affordable child-caring facilities. “[...] childcare facilities are very expensive. It is very difficult for me to pay for the childminder. Especially while I am developing my pop-up business [...]” (PB6).</p>	<p>Motherhood is a metaphor to represent the household/family context, thus drawing attention to the fact that family/household contexts might have a larger impact on women (Prowess, 2016).</p> <p>The mothering role, spending time with children, fulfilling childcare responsibilities, and the lack of appropriate childcare support, limits the hours which can be spend in the development of the pop-up business, acting as a hindrance to its success.</p>

Comparison of research findings to literature findings.				
Theoretical category	Sub-theme	Specific themes within the sub-themes	Quote examples from interview findings (primary data)	Quote examples from the literature review findings (secondary data)
	Lack of support with appropriate childcare	Lack of affordable childcare provision	“Definitely, I had problems in looking after my children. That is the biggest problem I had that time. I found it very difficult to pay for the childcare when I went to Saturday events” (PN6).	Rather than the key issue being the availability of formal childcare, it is often that women want to care for their children themselves, not wishing to risk their home, work-life balance (Prowess, 2016).
	Household and family context/ relationship Lack of flexibility	Lack of flexibility	“[...] my husband goes to work early in the morning. So, I have to drop the children [at] their school, clean the house and do the cooking. Before I go to pop-up events ... I need to fulfil my responsibilities for my family. Could do better [in] my business if I had more support from my own family [...]” (PB16).	Fulfilling family caring responsibilities can hinder the success of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups.
	Socio-cultural expectation from women	Socio-cultural status	“As a woman, I encountered many challenges and issues when I worked in contract jobs. I learnt over the years. Now when I conduct my pop-up store, I know how to respond to those people who neglect women. By my own very painful experiences, I know how to overcome an abusive situation and stand firmly as a woman small business owner” (PB2).	‘Attitudes towards women and culture’ - affects women-owned business operations (Brush <i>et al.</i> , 2010).

Turning now to the empirical evidence on success factors within the meso-macro-environment.

5.2.5 Theme five – meso-macro environment factors

The meso-macro environment which is depicted in the conceptual framework at 3.6.2.5 along with the 5Ms theoretical framework is identified as one of the challenging factors encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners. During the semi-structured interviews, women micro-retail pop-up owners answered questions 9-iv and v. A variety of challenges were expressed by participants in relation to the theme meso-macro environment and the sub-themes which emerged from the empirical data findings fell into the following two categories, namely:

- i. Meso environment factors
- ii. Macro environment factors

These factors are discussed in detail as follows:-

- i. Meso environment factors

Initial findings show that human capital (e.g., level of education, management skills) is positively related to a pop-up's performance. In support of this, results, such as these are indicated in several previous studies (Krimosop *et al.*, 2016; Hampel-Milagrosa *et al.*, 2013). However, all participants reported that they encounter challenges in managing their pop-up retail businesses due to the micro size and the lack of, or inadequate support.

The majority of participants - 36 - mentioned as challenges the impact of the economy, changes in supply chains and manufacturing and demographic and technological changes. The sub-themes which emerged under the theme "meso-environment" are listed as follows:

- i. Building support networks
- ii. Competition coping with the fear of failure
- iii. Organising and preparing for pop-up events –
- iv. Balancing business and family life
- v. Retail market related issues
- vi. Customer related issues

One interviewee said:

“[...] I do not receive regular income from my retail pop-up business. During the wintertime it is difficult for me to find pop-up events and go to different markets as I have a three-year-old boy. I do not have family members or friends to look after my son [...]”.

Interview findings revealed that specific changes that occur within the UK retail market may hinder women micro-retail pop-up success. Other factors include things that can be managed at the town-centre level such as the retail mix, the availability and pricing of car parking, town centre management.

- ii. Macro environment factors

Challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners in the macro environment are factors outside their pop-up businesses (or external business environment) and should typically be addressed within the long term, keeping in mind that pop-up owners have little or no control over external factors. These study findings show that women micro-retail pop-up owners do indeed encounter challenges within their external environment.

The source of these challenges can be government and national-level policies, cultural expectations of society and changes to the retail market. All of these have an impact on the long-run strategic decisions which must be made (Burin, 2007).

The sub-themes which emerged under the theme “macro-environment” can be listed as follows:

- i. National policies
- ii. Strategies
- iii. Economic influences
- iv. Intermediate structures and institutions - defying social expectations
- v. Regional support policies, services and initiatives

Transition from receiving benefits to being the owner of a micro-retail pop-up. These results corroborate the findings of a great deal of the previous work in women entrepreneurship. Previous researchers have consistently highlighted the issues related to the obtaining of benefits and to the support of women business owners through which they can “make a transition from welfare to enterprise” (DTI, 2011, p.35).

The above environmental factors may affect every single woman pop-up owner in the retail market environment regardless of industrial sector. It seems essential for women pop-up owners to have support to constantly monitor changes so that they can adapt accordingly.

Fifty-eight women micro-retail pop-up owners expressed that they would like to receive support from government, non-government and business-supportive organisations in order to tackle the obstacles they encounter which are specifically relevant to pop-up owners. More importantly, participants emphasised that they need support to survive in the UK retail market in the long term.

The majority of those who responded to the interview questionnaire 9, felt that the government and business-supportive initiatives need to provide further assistance to women micro-retail pop-up owners in making the transition from welfare into the micro-retail pop-up business.

Preliminary findings of this study show that as part of the macro-environment dimension of the 5M framework, the government should ensure a smooth transition for women pop-up owners from benefit dependency to business ownership and could also give suggestions about the long-term strategic decision process.

Participants emphasised the need for support tailored specifically to women micro-retail pop-up owners. Currently, the available support from the government and non-government organisations has given inadequate focus to the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners. Overall, most of the women pop-up owners stated that they have difficulty in engaging in networking events due to cost (e.g., price of tickets), time (e.g., most of events are conducted in the evening), and lack of childcare facilities. Based on the findings, it is clear that women micro-retail pop-up owners encounter challenges different to those of women entrepreneurs in general. Therefore, it is suggested that women micro-retail pop-up owners need support which differs from that of general women business owners.

5.3 Summary

Overall, these findings highlight the success factors and challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners in the UK retail market. The identified success factors and the challenges link to the 5Ms theoretical framework adopted in this study. This study is different from previous studies in women entrepreneurship. The reason is that this PAR is not just limited to the identification of success factors and challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners. As discussed in chapter 3 – Literature II, Strategic management, the study has been designed to identify the solution to the challenges encountered by those women.

Based on the semi-structured interview findings, an appropriate strategic framework, namely the Pop-up Pathway has been developed, implemented and validated. The Pop-up Pathway has been tailored to meet the needs of women micro-retail pop-up owners and designed to assist and empower them to take effective action to successfully survive beyond five years in the UK retail market. The following chapter presents how the study has developed the Pop-up Pathway as a vehicle to address the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners. It also explains how the researcher shifts from researcher to facilitator and then to moderator in support of the women pop-up owners who participated in this study. The findings also show how the researcher as facilitator enabled participants to identify and use their resources, capabilities and strengths to overcome the challenges and threats they encounter. Finally, these findings demonstrate how the researcher shifts from facilitator to moderator by engaging with the participants and how they were supported to utilise their strengths to overcome the weaknesses as well as to identify and utilise opportunities to deal with threats.

The action-learning activities were tested and validated by conducting three focus group discussions. To get the impression and experiences of the women pop-up owners about the Pop-up Pathway, 15 further short interviews were conducted. The gathered qualitative data were transcribed and analysed thematically. The findings of the focus group discussions and short-interviews are presented in the following chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6

FINDINGS FROM FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS AND THE FOLLOW-UP SHORT INTERVIEWS

6.0 Introduction

As discussed above in Chapter 5, the semi-structured interviews findings contribute to identifying the success factors and the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners in the UK retail market. As highlighted in the literature review – Chapter 2, researchers have developed strategic frameworks to support women entrepreneurs in general to overcome the challenges they encounter (Vistaprint, 2016; FSB, 2018; FSB, 2016). However, there is the lack of a strategic framework specifically designed to address the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners in the UK. Hence, to address the identified challenges encountered by these women, the study develops a strategic framework, namely the Pop-up Pathway.

The Pop-up Pathway includes action-learning activities which support women pop-up owners to develop their business management knowledge and practice to be successful in the UK retail market and ultimately survive beyond five years. The action learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway have been tailored to match the characteristics of women, their micro-size businesses and the temporary nature of those businesses. Three focus group discussions were conducted with women pop-up owners to introduce and validate the Pop-up Pathway. Further follow-up short interviews were conducted with 15 women pop-up owners who had already participated in the focus groups and gained a deeper understanding of their experiences and perceptions about the Pop-up Pathway.

The qualitative data were analysed thematically. The participants' constructive feedback enabled the development of an effective strategic framework for those pop-up owners. This chapter presents the findings from focus group discussions and the follow-up short interviews under main themes.

Section 6.1 presents the development of the Pop-up Pathway. Sub-section 6.1.1 presents the findings in relation to action-learning activities.

Section 6.2 presents the findings within the strategy formulation phase. 6.2.1 presents the identification of a vision and 6.2.2 the findings in relation to setting realistic goals. Section 6.2.3 presents the findings in the environment analysis phase. Accordingly, 6.2.3.1 identification of strengths and weaknesses and 6.2.3.2 threats and opportunities. Section 6.3 presents the findings in the strategy implementation phase: 6.3.1 presents the findings on strengths driven strategies; 6.3.2 findings on opportunity driven strategies.

Then section 6.4 presents the findings of the strategy evaluation phase: 6.4.1 presents the findings on the collaboration, participation and networking opportunity provided within the Pop-up Pathway and 6.4.2 presents findings in relation to the facilitation provided during the focus group discussions based on the follow up short interviews. Finally, section 6.5 provides a summary of the chapter and an indication of what to expect in the following final chapter.

6.1 A strategic framework for women micro-retail pop-up owners: The Pop-up Pathway.

The overall proposition of the process and the steps followed in formulation, implementation and validation of the Pop-up Pathway is discussed below (Lynch, 2018). Semi-structured interview findings assist in the identification of the success factors and challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners. The study aims to develop a strategic framework specifically for women micro-retail pop-up owners as a potential solution to the challenges they encounter.

The Pop-up Pathway consists of two main elements: The Play Book and the Resource Guide. The Play Book acts as a decision support tool (see Appendix 9). The Resource Guide facilitates the conducting of the Play Book activities and broadly provides guidance and pointers to the action-learning activities together with tasks which assist women pop-up owners to refresh their existing knowledge and further develop their business management knowledge and skills (see Appendix 8), (Cotton, 1995; McKernan, 1998; Mertler, 2017). Prior to starting focus group discussions, each participant was given printed copies of both the Play Book and the Resource Guide, received with appreciation. A common view amongst all the participants was that they valued the ability to access the printed material and the action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway. During the follow-up short interviews, a participant stated:

[...] it was really helpful to have the book with the tasks. I really appreciate it and the group activities helped me to develop my business skills to build my pop-up business ... thank you [...] (PN10 or C2).

The action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway are discussed in the next section.

6.1.1 Action-learning activities

The action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway are based on the philosophy of participatory action-learning (Mertler, 2017). The study adopts existing strategic management tools in designing the participatory action-learning activities which were formulated to match the characteristics of women micro-retail pop-up owners and their socio-economic conditions. The characteristics that needed to be matched were mothering role and family caring responsibilities, family-business life balance, level of education, business management knowledge and skills, previous experience, resources, capabilities and opportunities available to them.

The action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway link to strategic management theories and are considered as a process of concepts which ultimately outline the activities to form one single set of concepts (Mintzberg, 2000, p.36).

During the focus groups the participants had the opportunity to engage in action-learning activities within a collaborative and interactive learning environment and they learned how to use the Play Book and the Resource Guide. Each focus group lasted between two and three hours. The duration of the focus groups was identified as important. One participant stated:

[...] I like the activities. You did a very good job by helping us to engage in the activities [...] (PB10 or C12).

Another participant added:

[...] You clearly explained what we need to do. We had a very productive time ... and time went very fast [...] (PM3 or C7).

The first activity was an icebreaker. Participants had the opportunity to introduce themselves and share information about their retail pop-up businesses. The activity provided a good start to the forming of an effective group discussion. The following sections provide a detailed discussion on the action-learning activities and the findings from the focus groups and the follow-up short interviews.

6.2 Strategy formulation

Action-learning activities within the strategy formulation stage focus on the events that occur throughout the development of a pop-up business. From the semi-structured interview findings it is apparent that the majority of women pop-up owners have not thought about the vision, mission and goals of their business. The action-learning activities helped participants to identify a vision, mission and goals.

The following is a discussion of the findings from the focus groups in relation to a vision and mission (question one: “identify a clear vision and mission for a retail pop-up which will assist planning for future business activities. What do you think about identifying a vision and mission for your pop-up?” (Appendix 2).

6.2.1 Vision and mission

It was considered vital to assist participants to identify the principal beliefs of their pop-up businesses and develop vision and mission statements. Therefore, participants engaged in action-learning activities in setting direction, identifying and developing a vision statement and a mission statement for their pop-up business.

Here, women micro-retail pop-up owners’ visions concern ‘why their pop-up business exists and what it aims to become?’ (Thompson *et al.*, 2014, p. 7). Participants were helped to reflect on the question of ‘what I/we want to become?’ Then participants were asked to find an answer to the question ‘what does my pop-up business stand for?’ and this was then discussed in their groups. The vision statement should be able to answer the above questions and should be short and pithy. Participants were given assistance to articulate a vision statement for their individual businesses. Participants were asked to come up with phrases that describe the vision of their pop-up. One of them as a volunteer wrote down for all to see suggested phrases during the brainstorming session. To start with, no one stated preferences and finally no further ideas were forthcoming. After a while participants were asked to identify the most common phrases and to group them and then assemble them into a refined statement. This is what helped participants to generate ideas, buzzwords and create a more compelling vision and mission statement for each pop-up business. Most of the participants could now see the importance of identifying vision and mission statements for their pop-up businesses.

According to another participant:

“[...] creating the vision of my pop-up retail business helped me to have a clear picture of where I want to be in three to five years’ time [...]” (PB11/C13).

Findings revealed that the majority of the women micro-retail pop-up owners (twelve out of fifteen participants) had been operating their retail pop-ups without identifying a vision and a mission for their businesses. And yet another participant said:

“[...] during the last three years I have worked hard to build my pop-up business. However, I hadn’t thought about the vision of my business. It is really helpful for me to clearly identify what I want to achieve in the future [...]” (PM08/C8).

Most of the participants had been conducting their pop-up business simply following the desire to be in business. This statement was made:

“[...] now I know what I want to do in my pop-up business, and I know exactly what change I would like to bring about. Unfortunately, before, I never gave any thought to having a vision of it [...]” (PM16/C10).

This activity helped them to describe where their pop-up business wants to be in the long-term (desired future state) and its aspirations (Johnson *et al.*, 2008, p.9). Then participants were asked to think about their pop-up’s mission statement. They were able to develop a mission statement for their pop-up business by answering the question of “what my/our pop-up business is?” This question assisted them to distinguish their pop-up business from their competitors since it represents the “reason of being” of a retail pop-up. Participants were given some example mission statements of small businesses in different industries.

Participants stated that this activity helped them to understand ‘what they should include in a mission statement’.

In developing the mission statement, participants were encouraged to consider their customers, product or service, market, concern for profitability and survival, the gaining of competitive advantage, their concern about public image, all as important components. In preparation of their mission statements, four participants out of fifteen were influenced by their pop-up's history and tradition. Four participants considered their resources, and five participants considered their strengths. Two participants considered zero waste and sustainable products. After writing their mission statements, participants had the opportunity to share them within the group and receive feedback from their peers. They stated that the activity had helped them to understand what should be included in a mission statement.

6.2.2 Setting realistic goals

The qualitative methodology, and the PAR approach adopted in this study helped facilitate the gaining of insight into the voice of women micro-retail pop-up owners' spoken words. During focus groups, goal setting activity assisted the women to identify guiding principles and to create a road map by setting realistic goals for their pop-up business. They were asked to reflect on the question 'what does my pop-up business want to achieve?' Then, they set out a time frame by specifying when they would like to achieve a set goal. For example, two years, five years. Study findings reveal that participants found this activity to be very useful to them to assure survival in the UK retail marketplace. After setting goals, one participant stated:

[...] In three years-time I want to deliver our sustainable products to local homes by bike [...] (PN22 or C4).

Another participant added:

[...] I am really happy that I set a goal to add another product to my business. I want to sell plastic-free gift wrapping for next Christmas. It will help me to increase the number of my new customers [...] (PN9 or C1).

The pop-up owners defined a period of time after which they aimed to look back and reflect on their achievements (e.g., they could look back and say, I have achieved a set goal). During this activity participants were able to succinctly set general goals. They were able to focus on gaining revenue, increasing profit, and increasing the number of new customers for different time frames.

Having got to this point, participants were then facilitated to generate ideas and identify ways to accomplish those set goals and fulfil their pop-up vision and mission. For this purpose, internal and external environment analysis was considered to be important within the Pop-up Pathway. This environment analysis idea was generated from the Design School Model mentioned in Chapter 3 and proved to be a convenient tool (Mintzberg *et al.*, 2009). The action-learning activities relating to environment analysis are discussed in the next section.

6.2.3 Environment analysis

Here now follows an exploration of how action-learning activities were designed and conducted in support of women pop-up owners when required to analyse their internal and external business environment.

As a simple but powerful strategic management tool, SWOT analysis was used during the focus groups. The action-learning activities facilitated the engagement of participants in group activities to identify their strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities and to develop their skills by empowering each other within a collaborative knowledge exchanging environment (Coghlan and Brannick, 2014; Chevalier and Buckles, 2013). It also helped them to identify threats and opportunities in the external business environment and get an overall view of the most important factors influencing the future of their retail pop-up.

Participants used the format and worksheet of the Play Book along with super-sticky notes to write down their ideas and then exchange them. The following is a discussion of the findings in the identification of strengths and weaknesses (focus group question two: “strengths of micro-retail pop-ups are of a temporary nature and can move to different markets. How do you perceive these?” (Appendix 2).

6.2.3.1 Identification of Strengths and Weaknesses – the findings

Participants had the chance to discuss identified strengths and weaknesses in the group. During this activity, the facilitator led the discussion and walked them through the process with each one having the opportunity to express thoughts and make comments. During this activity each small group was able to identify and list some of their strengths. Some of the common strengths that were identified and mentioned by the participants are discussed below. All participants agreed that the temporary nature of a pop-up is a strength. They were also able to identify some other strengths. As one participant stated:

[...] I had the opportunity to listen to some good things about my pop-up business. I am glad to know that I am strong and that there are so many good things about it [...]
(PM15 or C9).

Traditional women specific characteristics such as gentleness, friendliness and obedience were identified as some of their strengths. Ten participants mentioned their language competence and communication skills as a strength. They further emphasised that their language skills helped them to achieve a rich communication style, especially when communicating with customers. As one participant explained:

[...] some of my customers said, we love your products, but we love more to talk with you [...]
(PN15 or C5).

Another participant added:

[...] while I am selling my products, I take time to talk a little bit about the weather or their hobbies with my customers. It helps me to get to know my customers and build a good relationship with them [...] (PB5 or C11).

A woman pop-up owner's personality has been identified as a strength. Based on the focus groups and the follow-up short interviews findings, the researcher deduces that the women pop-up owners who participated in this study are unwilling to fail. Participants considered their own personality to be a strength. They explained their unwillingness to accept failure, being a person with good ideas and attitudes and having special perspectives about the business and life in general as being more specific strengths within their personality. For example, ten out of fifteen participants have been continuing to conduct their pop-up business despite all the challenges they encounter, and even without having clear guidance and structure, simply because of their motivation and desire to do business. One participant stated that:

[...] there were times when I failed in my business. I didn't get any profit from doing my pop-up business. But I didn't want to fail. I just kept moving forward with it [...] (PM2 or C6).

Based on the study findings of the follow-up interviews, the majority of the women micro-retail pop-up owners who participated in this study revealed that they have identified 'multitasking' as one of their strengths. Thirteen participants out of fifteen expressed that they have to wear many different hats. For example, operating their temporary retail pop-ups, fulfilling family caring responsibilities, everyday household tasks including cooking, and nurturing their children. Ten participants (out of fifteen) in the follow-up interviews mentioned that they have the opportunity to meet a number of potential customers while they are fulfilling their family caring responsibilities.

Another theme mentioned by participants under the category of women micro-retail pop-up owners' strengths was 'work hard'. The focus group findings demonstrate that women micro-retail pop-up owners at heart are willing to work hard to build their retail pop-ups. The majority of participants revealed their desire to continue pop-up business activities despite many obstacles. In this study, the women micro-retail pop-up owners' desire for unwillingness to fail was identified as one of their strengths, thus acknowledging their passion and desire towards the development of their temporary retail pop-up while fulfilling their family caring responsibilities. Yet another participant added:

“[...] I have a temporary retail business. However, I have to wear many hats and multitask. I think it is one of my strengths. During the day I am nimbly jumping from task to task. Basically, my brain has to think about my business, my children and my family [...]” (PN10 or C2).

It is interesting to note that ten participants out of fifteen emphasised that they always make an effort to ensure they sell quality products to their customers while achieving their financial goals. For example, sustainable or eco-friendly products. Seven participants mentioned social contribution as a strength they possessed. They have also identified the quality of their products and the service they offered as a strength. Another participant added:

[...] our eco-friendly, zero waste products help people to cut their environment impact and have a positive impact on our environment. A big part of my pop-up business is to help people to live a more sustainable lifestyle [...] (PN22 or C4).

The identification of strengths and opportunities helped participants to determine what their greatest strengths are and what strengths they need to develop to compete in the market in the future. Participants appreciated the engagement in action-learning activities for the identification of strengths and weaknesses. Thirteen participants of the focus groups wanted to engage in those activities within a collaborative environment with each other over time.

The action-based training of the Pop-up Pathway assists women micro-retail pop-up owners to identify their weaknesses. Study findings in relation to the identification of weaknesses are discussed below. Five participants mentioned that sometimes they tend to engage in more detailed oriented discussions while selling their products which they identified as a weakness. Four participants mentioned their unwillingness to undertake risk as a weakness. Six participants mentioned sensitivity and a lack of confidence as one of their weaknesses. One participant mentioned:

[...] I am less confident when declaring the product's price to my customers [...]
(PN16 or C3).

Some other weaknesses identified were, limited resources, limited time due to family caring responsibilities. Findings also reveal weaknesses related to business competence such as lack of or inadequate decision-making skills, less willingness to take risk and less task oriented. The action learning activities helped participants to overcome their weaknesses. Group members supported each other in identifying ways to over-come their identified challenges. That same participant explained:

[...] when we discussed in the group, I was able to recognise that my products are unique and different from others. My products are especially homemade and healthy. From now on I will be considering the good things about my products. It will help me to confidently declare the price to my customers [...] (PN16 or C3).

Another participant added:

“[...] the group discussion helps me to recognise that my products are so valuable. Most of the time ... I am shy to tell the product price to my customers. Colleagues in my group gave me a few tips to build my confidence and communicate well with customers... it was really helpful [...]” (PB10 or C12).

Another participant:

“[...] I had the opportunity to recognise some of the good things about my pop-up business. I am glad to know that I am strong and there are so many good things about my business [...]” (PN22 or C4).

During identification of strengths and weaknesses, participants’ responses were prioritised. At the end of the session participants identified that, as they planned, they were able to alter internal environment factors because they now saw them within their own control. One participant stated:

“[...] thank you for helping me to understand that I can plan my retail business for the better. And now I understand that I have to control and improve my business. I need to try to find ways to develop my business [...]” (PB20 or C15).

All participants stated that the activity helped them to determine their greatest strengths and what kind of strengths they need to develop to compete in the market in the future. All of the focus group and short-interview participants valued their newly discovered ability that they were now able to identify their most significant weaknesses and work on them as women micro-retail pop-up business owners.

The following discusses the threats and opportunities which were identified during the focus group discussions.

6.2.3.2 Threats and opportunities

In the identification of threats and opportunities, participants were engaged in small groups and conducted a detailed analysis of the external environment. The group activity helped participants to gather missing information and identify opportunities and threats from the market. They were able to identify the specific threats encountered more often in the UK

temporary retail market, including in the British-High Street. They were able to write down lists of threats and opportunities in priority order and discuss them later in a plenary session.

They were required to identify the factors that hold them back in the market. All participants highlighted aggressive competing from permanent or established retailers as their biggest threat. Participants had the opportunity to discuss and identify opportunities to build needed capabilities to compete in the market. The majority stated that this activity was very useful to them and really helped them to identify opportunities. One participant stated that:

“[...] this activity helped me to think differently. I was able to identify a number of opportunities which help me to develop my business [...]” (PM3 or C7).

Another participant identified demand for sustainable products in the retail market as an opportunity:

“[...] I never thought about how my products are linked to sustainability. Now I have recognised that I am offering valuable and eco-friendly products to customers and helping to save the world. Customers would be bound to love them as they are very concerned about sustainability [...]” (PB11 or C13).

Internal environment analysis related action-learning activities helped the women pop-up owners to identify their strengths and weaknesses. It helped them also to recognise the threats and opportunities within the external business environment.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the TOWS matrix is adopted in this study to support women pop-up owners to identify ways to utilise their strengths to overcome their weaknesses. It can also enable the utilisation of opportunities to overcome the threats that arise within the external environment. The following is a discussion of the study findings relating to strategy formulation.

6.3 Strategy formulation: adaption of TOWS matrix

The action-learning activities within the strategy formulation helped the participants to gather ideas and formulate strategies to develop their micro-retail pop-ups within a collaborative and supportive environment. The following sub-section presents the findings in relation to strengths driven strategies of the Pop-up Pathway. (Focus group discussion question three: “identifying your strengths and opportunities would assist you to overcome the weaknesses and threats you encountered. Do you agree with this statement?”).

6.3.1 Strengths driven strategies

Action-learning activities within the strategy formulation phase guide women micro-retail pop-up owners to identify ways to utilise their strengths to overcome from their weaknesses. The activities also helped them to allocate their resources carefully and effectively. One participant stated:

“[...] the activity helped me to identify that homemade, healthy products are my strengths compared with others in the market. Now I want to tell the product price to customers without feeling hesitant” [...] (PN16 or C3).

Another informant reported that:

“[...] I was able to identify some of my strengths. It helped me to add a few products to my pop-up business. The activities will help my business in the long run. I mean ... I will be able to run my pop-up business better than I did before [...]” (PM16 or C10).

The study findings revealed that identification of women pop-up owners’ strengths will help them to overcome their weaknesses. It will also help them to differentiate their products and service from their competitors and achieve a competitive advantage.

This will allow them to be more productive and efficient in achieving their set short-term and long-term goals. To conduct their pop-up successfully, women owners need to take initiatives, be ambitious, have good negotiation skills and be ready to grasp advantages. Ultimately, this process helps them to identify their competencies and utilise their strengths, knowledge and perception (or build on those strengths) to overcome their weaknesses. For example, eight participants out of fifteen stated that the peer-to-peer support of the action-learning activities helped them to identify ways to build their confidence and identify business development ideas.

However, such characteristics are not usually well-developed in women. Some women pop-up owners may have developed the required skills to some extent whilst working in an informal role. Others must acquire them, especially those who have worked previously as employees in the corporate world and have not been used to generating business and customers for themselves. The Pop-up Pathway assists them to recognise their strengths by conducting brainstorming sessions and group activities. Women pop-up owners can build on those strengths and use them to overcome their weaknesses, going on to maximise their response to opportunities.

6.3.2 Opportunity driven strategies

Action-learning activities helped participants to identify further potential opportunities in the market. The study findings reveal that the activities helped them to identify new economic opportunities and boost their self-confidence, all of which enabled them to better manage their retail pop-ups. A participant explained:

[...] before I joined this group, I saw Brexit as a challenge (threat) to my pop-up business. However, now I can recognise there are more opportunities in the market for our local products [...] (PB5 or C11).

The study findings revealed that action-learning activities helped the women pop-up owners to utilise their opportunities to overcome the threats they encounter in the external business environment.

The action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway assisted the women pop-up owners to get together and work within a collaborative learning environment. The study findings in relation to collaboration, participation and networking are discussed in the following section. [Focus group discussion questions four: “do you like to network face-to-face or virtually (e.g., social media – messenger, Skype meetings)?” and question five: “engaging in networking event helps to develop confident and compete collaboratively. How do you find time to engage in the networking?].

6.4 Strategy implementation and evaluation

The face-to-face approach offered the opportunity to gather participants’ viewpoints and their rationale behind business decisions and opinions. The following presents the findings of the strategy evaluation phase.

6.4.1 Collaboration, participation and networking of the Pop-up Pathway

A face-to-face approach offered the opportunity to gather participants’ viewpoints and their rationale behind their business decisions and opinions. From the beginnings of the focus groups the discussion did not draw naturally. The researcher, as the facilitator, had to intervene to build the discussion and support the participants to engage in the peer-to-peer event. One of the lessons that were learnt during the focus groups was that it would have been difficult for micro-retail pop-up owners to use the material themselves without being introduced, guided and supported on how to use it.

One participant commented:

“[...] it was really great that you showed us how to start with the activities... otherwise it could have been difficult for me to do on my own [...]” (PM2 or C6).

The focus groups and the follow up short interviews’ findings reveal that a collaborative nature developed within the focus groups and proved to be successful in adapting the strategic management tools (SWOT analysis and TOWS matrix) with appropriate action-learning activities. Participants shared and exchanged their knowledge and experiences during the focus groups. They recognised similar strengths and similar weaknesses. Thus, the tool provides the first step for initiating a collaborative environment between the participants by helping and empowering each other. The findings of the follow up short interviews (question one: what do you think about the Pop-up Pathway?) show that all participants valued the Pop-up Pathway. For example, one interviewee said:

“[...] it was nice to work in the group with other pop-up business owners. In my experience, it was much easier to apply the tools in the groups. I received valuable comments and ideas from the people in my group [...]” (PB14 or C14).

Another participant commented:

“[...] Members in my group helped me to recognised that I am offering valuable and eco-friendly products to the customers and helping to save the world. As they suggested, I am going to add the slogan of ‘sustainable or environment friendly products’. More customers would love to buy my products as they are very concerned about the sustainability [...]” (PM2 or C6).

The findings of the follow up interviews (question three: what do you like best about the Pop-up Pathway?) show that all participants appreciated the collaborative nature and peer-to-peer support of the Pop-up Pathway.

One of those participants stated:

“[...] working in the group helps me to use my own interests and experiences to identify... generate some ideas to develop my pop-up business and recognise some new business ideas as well [...]” (PM8 or C8).

According to the findings for the follow up interviews (question two: do you think that the Pop-up Pathway helps to develop your pop-up business?) fifteen participants stated that the Pop-up Pathway helped them to develop their pop-up businesses. As expressed by one participant:

“[...] I really would like to apply the things I learnt in the group. I feel like... it is going to help my business in the long-term. I mean... now I will be able to run my business better [...]” (PN22 or C4).

The findings of the follow up interviews (question four: how did you feel about the introduction to the Pop-up Pathway?) show that all the participants felt welcomed to the group. They also found that the action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway provided a first step for the pop-up owners towards initiating a collaborative environment to help each other. Participants had the opportunity to talk to someone who (a) could understand them and (b) was going through the same process of conducting a temporary retail pop-up. All participants indicated the importance of engaging in peer-to-peer discussions. Evidently, working collaboratively in groups supported the women to deal with or engage in the action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway. One informant reported that:

“[...] it was nice to work in the group with other pop-up business owners. In my experience, it was much easier to apply the tools in the group. I received valuable comments and ideas [...]” (PB14 or C14).

The collaborative nature assisted participants to learn how to apply the tool in a practical way in their daily pop-ups.

The power of the participatory approach of the Pop-up Pathway encourages women pop-up owners to focus on themselves as pop-up business owners, rather than as wives/mothers. The collaborative nature of the Pop-up Pathway assists them to transform from just perception to an application of the interrelatedness of its tools (e.g., action-learning activities). It also helps to decouple the complexity of the strategic policy formation and have it implemented in the women pop-up owners' real, practical business world.

Participants had an opportunity to discuss with peers (other women pop-up owners) and reconcile how they could complete activities together (e.g., find time and gather together as a group) and how they might be enabled to follow the Pop-up Pathway after the focus groups. Thirteen of the fifteen focus group participants stated that they would like to continue engaging in action-learning activities weekly (after completing the focus groups instructional session). They stated that the Pop-up Pathway provided them with strategic directions in the interests of creating a proper behaviour in managing their pop-up business so as to achieve higher level of performance over a long-term. As one interviewee said:

“[...] I will practice the activities you taught me at this event. I feel like it is going to help my business in the long-term. I mean.... I will be able to run my business better than I did before [...]” (PN15 or C5).

There were a few participants who were quiet and participated less. Throughout the idea generation session they were encouraged and later they had the ability and desire to participate in the process effectively. There were just a few “dominators” or “overly vocal participants” but throughout the discussion they gradually changed to become more ‘normalised’. The follow up short interview findings reported that the focus group discussions helped to create a collaborative environment.

In particular, participants expressed an interest to engage in action-learning activities in the future because the activities were valuable to them for identifying solutions to the challenges they encounter in developing their pop-up businesses.

6.4.2 Facilitation

During the focus group discussions, the researcher shifted role from researcher to ‘facilitator’ to ‘moderator’ (Nyumb *et al.*, 2018, p. 2). In the facilitator role, the action-learning activities were conducted, and discussions were built with the women micro-retail pop-up owners. The researcher played a considerable role in facilitating participants to actively engage in the action-learning activities within the group discussion between the participants. Unlike the semi-structured interviews, during the focus groups the researcher took a peripheral, rather than a centre-stage role (Hohenthal *et al.*, 2015; Nyumb *et al.*, 2018). The participant actively engaged in action-learning activities and played a crucial role in bringing their passion to the context of the analysis. The participants contributed to constructing the overall themes and designing and implementing the action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway. Feedback received from them during the focus group discussions and the follow up short interviews helped in the implementing of the Pop-up Pathway within their owned pop-up context.

The follow up interview findings helped the researcher to identify what might work and what might not work within the Pop-up Pathway. Findings revealed that women micro-retail pop-up owners might not be able to use the Pop-up Pathway themselves without it being introduced to them. It is evident that the women micro-retail pop-up owners need some support at the initial stage of the action-learning activities due to the challenges they encounter and limited available time along with family caring responsibilities.

At least from the beginning, a facilitator needs to involve, guide and support the women for at least two hours to familiarise themselves with the Pop-up Pathway. More importantly, the facilitator needs to help the pop-up owners step-by-step to understand how to use the materials, when they should use them, and how to complete the action-learning activities towards building their pop-up businesses.

The follow up short-interview findings indicated that participants valued the contribution of the facilitator and the peer support they received during focus group discussions, and it is apparent that the success of engaging in the action-learning activities would not have been possible without their support. The action-learning activities assisted and influenced participants to make sound strategic decisions and propositions focusing on the short-term as well as the long term (Haider and Mariotti, 2016). These experiences helped the researcher to improve certain aspects and critical events of the Pop-up Pathway.

6.5. Summary

This section provides the findings of the focus groups and the follow up short interviews. These results suggest that participants valued the ability to access the printed material of the Pop-up Pathway which consists of the Play Book and the Resources Guide. Overall, these results indicate that participants appreciated the opportunity they had to engage in action-learning activities within a collaborative and interactive environment. In summary, these results show that participants were able to identify a vision and mission for their pop-up businesses, something which they had been unable to do previously. Together these results provide important insight into the long-term perspectives of their pop-up businesses. Participants especially appreciated that they were able to set short-term and long-term business goals. They also appreciated the Pop-up Pathway as a guide which helped them to create a road map by

setting realistic goals for their pop-up businesses. Taken together, these results suggest that there is an association between the internal and external business environment where women operate their businesses. They appreciated that they were able to identify their weaknesses and strengths as well as threats and opportunities. The results shown in this chapter indicate that participants were able to see their businesses more positively by recognising their resources and capabilities as well as opportunities in the market. Participants valued the support and facilitation they received throughout the research process. Participants who had share in the focus groups and follow up short interviews especially appreciated the opportunity they had to participate throughout the action research cycles. The collaborative nature and the peer-to-peer support learning environment assisted the development of an effective framework to support the women micro-retail pop-up owners.

The next chapter moves on to discuss the findings of the semi-structured interviews, the focus group discussions and follow-up short interviews.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION

7.0 Introduction

The chapter provides a discussion of the study findings in relation to the research questions. The aim of the study was to identify the success factors and challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners and to design a strategic framework which would assist them to develop their temporary micro-retail pop-ups to survive in the UK retail market beyond five years. The study has addressed a wider call for further research relating to women business owners' experiences within the context of micro-retail pop-ups (Gallellalage *et al*, 2018 and 2020). To achieve the study aims and objectives the following research questions were established (Chapter 1). What are the characteristics of a retail pop-up? How should women-owned micro-retail pop-ups be defined? (RQ1); Why do women open their businesses in temporary retail pop-ups? (RQ2); What are the success factors of women micro-retail pop-up owners? (RQ3); What are the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners? (RQ4); and, How can SWOT analysis and TOWS matrix can be adapted and utilised to support women to successfully implement their micro-retail pop-ups? (RQ5).

To answer the research questions, the conceptual framework was developed so that this study goes some way to addressing the gap that currently exists in women-owned micro-retail pop-up within women entrepreneurship literature. It does not merely focus on identifying the success factors and the challenges but actually goes on to develop a strategic framework for them to use to survive in the UK retail market in the long term. A strategic framework, namely the Pop-up Pathway, has been developed by making a strong link between theory and practice through the provision of support for them to survive in the UK retail market in the long-term and thus contribute to the UK economy.

This study makes several new theoretical, practical and methodological contributions to the specific field of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups within women entrepreneurship in general. It also gives support to the research area of strategic management in micro and small enterprises because of its specific focus on women-owned temporary pop-ups in the UK retail market.

By answering Research Question 1, the characteristics of a pop-up are discussed based on the thematic literature review findings and the empirical data findings (7.1.1). There is no previous research in the field of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups. It is, therefore, important firstly to define them. In attempting to address this gap, section 7.1.2 presents a definition of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups which is developed in this study as an original contribution.

Section 7.2 discusses the reasons for women to start their businesses in retail pop-up with a view to answering Research Question 2.

As discussed in Chapter 2, researchers have identified the success factors of women entrepreneurs in general but until now, no research has identified the success factors of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups. By addressing this gap, the study has been able to identify their success factors. Section 7.3 discusses the identified success factors which are linked to 5Ms theoretical framework, and as a consequence goes on to answer Research Question 3.

In answer to Research Question 4, the study has identified the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners. This original contribution to the field will be discussed in section 7.4.

As identified in the thematic literature review, few studies have developed strategic frameworks to support women entrepreneurs in general within the UK context - Vista Print (2016) and Department of Trade and Industries (2009). It is apparent that there is a lack of a strategic framework in support of women micro-retail pop-up owners in the UK.

The challenges that they encounter have not been adequately addressed. As an original contribution, this study has addressed this lack by developing a strategic framework to support women micro-retail pop-up owners in the UK by adapting strategic management tools namely, SWOT analysis and TOWS matrix. In this manner Research Question 5 has now been answered in section 7.6.

The following section is a discussion of the study findings in relation to Research Question 1 - What are the characteristics of a retail pop-up? How should women-owned micro-retail pop-up be defined?

7.1 Characteristics of a retail pop and a definition of a women-owned micro-retail pop-up.

The characteristics of a retail pop-up are now discussed based on the thematic literature review findings. This discussion has support from the empirical evidence of the study. The thematic literature review findings revealed that there was currently no precise definition of a women-owned micro-retail pop-up, a fundamental deficiency which needed addressing.

7.1.1 Characteristics of a micro-retail pop-up.

Research Question 1 of this study sought to identify the characteristics of a micro-retail pop-up. The thematic literature review and semi-structured interview findings helped to identify its specific characteristics. As mentioned in Chapter 1, temporary nature has been identified as an inherent characteristic of a retail pop-up. The reason is that a retail-pop-up has a short-term retail presence and retail activities mostly last for a short-time during different time periods. This is supported by the views of Pomodoro (2013) and Surchi (2011) both of whom identified that a retail pop-up operates from a weekend up to one year, with a mean duration of about one month.

The study findings also revealed that some retail pop-ups operate seasonally, for example during Christmas time or summertime. This is different from the traditional, established retail stores where women entrepreneurs in general operate their businesses. Also interesting are the narratives that the women used to describe their experiences. This is a key contribution of the thesis in that qualitative methodology has given a voice to those women, thus ‘acknowledging the significance of the personal reflections’ of women pop-up owners on their pop-up retail activities (Foss, 2010. P.89; Foster and Brindley, 2018).

The majority of participants indicated that the temporary nature of their businesses facilitates all types to enter the market. Not only that, but they have also identified the temporary nature as a success factor, enabling them to move to different locations in the UK in order to introduce their products and services (PB8, PM21, PB3). The temporary nature of the pop-up provides great opportunities for women micro-retail pop-up owners to build their brand and sell their products effectively in a different way to women entrepreneurs in general who sell their products mostly in permanent retail stores (Gallellalage *et al.*, 2018).

The temporary nature of a retail pop-up provides opportunity for women to sell their products in a brick-and-mortar environment without the risk of commitment and overheads. Mostly, due to the temporary nature, women pop-up owners sell their products in a small retail space. As highlighted by Niehim *et al.* (2007) and Surchi (2011), pop-ups provide an opportunity for women to establish their businesses with a different strategy which is unlike that of established women entrepreneurs.

The experiential marketing format was seen as a characteristic of a pop-up which assists the women owners to gain public interest. Additionally, in this study, the interactive marketing format was identified as a characteristic of a pop-up. A further exploration of the women's narratives also finds that the pop-up is a physical shopping store which is a memorable, engaging, and exciting event. It is acknowledged that the findings support existing research on pop-ups where researchers identify the experiential orientation as a key characteristic.

The study findings show that small retail space is another characteristic of a pop-up. Retail pop-ups utilise a variety of low-cost retail spaces ranging from village halls, galleries, shopping centres, fetes and fairs, through to even less conventional spaces (Surchi, 2011). As one participant stated, 'the characteristic of the small size of pop-up stores is becoming popular in the UK retail market' (PB8). This supports Dean's (2014, p.2) view which identified that '...the summer brings with it lots of lovely street markets full of life and atmosphere – these are great for independent pop-up shops....'. Generate buzz has been identified as a characteristic of a pop-up. As discussed in Literature review Part 1, the temporary nature and limited duration of a retail pop-up creates a sense of urgency and generates buzz within the market and stimulates purchasing action from new and existing customers (Marciniak and Budnarowska, 2009).

The results of this study indicate that word-of-mouth marketing communication is seen as a characteristic of a retail pop-up where women described that selling products at a pop-up event offers them the opportunity to communicate. Empirical data has revealed that the special cultural ethos behind a pop-up does continually help to build a customer relationship and gain a higher level of customer engagement. It is acknowledged that the findings support existing research in retail pop-up. As Alexander and Bain (2014) report, such a benefit factor can hardly be obtainable through a permanent retail format.

Despite its support for existing research, this study makes several contributions as a result of researching an important area which to date has not received due warranted attention – women in temporary micro retail. As a result, the study has added a definition of a women-owned micro-retail pop-up to the existing knowledge in women entrepreneurship not only within the UK context but in general. These results provide further support for the development of research in retail pop-ups not only within the UK context but also internationally.

7.1.2 Definition of a women-owned micro-retail pop-up

As discussed in the literature review, a pop-up is a relatively new phenomenon (Townsend-Wheeler, 2016). Researchers such as, Neihm *et al.* (2006), Kim *et al.* (2010) and Surchi (2011) have all defined retail pop-ups. However, it is apparent from the literature review, that there is a lack of a universal definition of a women-owned micro-retail pop-up, hence the need for a clear definition (Gallellalage *et al.*, 2018). By addressing this gap, the study has developed a definition which can be accepted as an original contribution. Here a clear definition of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups is given:-

‘a women-owned micro-retail pop-up is a temporary micro-retail business, owned by a woman and operating in different shopping locations, including high traffic shopping areas in different time frames’ (Gallellalage *et al.*, 2020).

This finding has important implications for the development of the research area in women-owned micro-retail pop-ups and future researchers can benefit by starting their studies with a clear definition. The current study discovered the reasons for women to start their businesses in micro-retail pop-ups. These reasons are discussed in the following section.

7.2 Reasons for women to open their businesses in micro-retail pop-ups

Previous research has not identified the reasons for women to operate their businesses in micro-retail pop-ups. As an original contribution made by this study, the semi-structured interview findings revealed reasons for them to start and operate their businesses in temporary retail pop-ups.

Those findings revealed that women tend to open their businesses in a retail pop-up to achieve flexibility around family care. These results match those observed in earlier studies in women entrepreneurship in general in the UK as well as those observed in an international context. Prior studies such as Vista Print (2016), Alison Rose Review of Female Entrepreneurship (2019) likewise observed that the number one motivation for women to start a business is flexibility around family care. Women were nearly five times more likely to mention family reasons for becoming self-employed. As highlighted in the Rose Review of Female Entrepreneurship (2019), a fifth of females chose to work as self-employed to help them combine 'family commitments and the desire to work at home' and have employment which is flexible.

However, study findings revealed that women choose to open their businesses in temporary micro-retail pop-ups for reasons which differ from prior studies as follows:-

Women tend to conduct a pop-up business to do what they like to do in their lives. Their business ideas were generated especially following their passion. This is exemplified in the case of a pop-up owner who started experimenting with raw, vegan, sugar free baking, after her Dad was diagnosed with a condition that meant he could no longer eat dairy products or refined sugar.

A majority of participants indicated that the temporary nature of the pop-up motivated them to start and manage their businesses in a retail pop-up. There is no record of any previous description like this, neither is there any previous record of the benefit that some participants mentioned, namely that of being able to close the business anytime without losing money. This is in contrast to established women entrepreneurs in general who have less opportunity to close their businesses without losing money (Supporting Women' Enterprises in the UK, 2018; Vista Print (2016), Alison Rose Review of Female Entrepreneurship (2019).

Another important finding is that the micro-size was another reason for them to start their businesses in the style of a retail pop-up. According to these study findings, the micro-size assists them to design their pop-ups to complement their brands. It also helps them to effectively manage their pop-up stores in a busy marketplace in front of customers. The study findings revealed that women open their businesses in pop-ups to reduce the operating cost and because they can have a high impact while simultaneously being cost effective.

Another important finding was that a pop-up retail facilitates meeting a new customer face-to-face, putting brands in front of customers and encouraging sales. Meeting customers face-to-face facilitates the creation of a unique interactive experience with customers to gain a higher level of engagement and a bigger audience. The findings suggest women pop-up owners tend to open their businesses in pop-ups because starting and managing a pop-up store is low cost and does not require a high amount of money as a deposit. This finding is, of course, different from previous research in women entrepreneurship in general where women business owners were required to offer significant amounts of money as deposit at the start of their business.

The results of this study indicate that the limited time of pop-up events creates urgency or buzz within the retail market. The findings revealed that women can benefit from these situations where customer desire increases, moving them to buy exclusive or limited products before the event finishes. The findings also revealed that women are able to host seasonal pop-ups regularly and build a sense of anticipation among their most loyal customers. Some customers bookmark the dates for every year. Findings reveal that the women would not be able to gain these benefits by operating a permanent retail store which gives a contradictory view in comparison with previous research findings in women entrepreneurship in general.

This study differs from the prior research that has investigated women entrepreneur's success factors, challenges and strategic management for a variety of reasons. One explanation for the contradictions is the temporary, micro-retail pop-up context. Much of the existing research in women entrepreneurship such as Roomi *et al.*, (2008) and A Strategic Framework for women entrepreneurship (2009), focused mainly on established women entrepreneurial growth within contexts that are significantly different from women-owned micro-retail pop-ups.

The study findings revealed that the context of women-owned temporary micro-retail pop-ups is different to that of women entrepreneurs in general and has unique characteristics at social, economic and business level, as well as in connections and interactions with customers and at business management level. This specific context opens up opportunities and challenges to women pop-up owners and to some degree conditions their potential (Welter, 2011). The study findings revealed that women micro-retail pop-up owners' success factors and their challenges determined the survival, or otherwise, of their businesses in the long-term.

In this study the success factors and challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners are held to be an original contribution to the field. Researchers have identified success factors and challenges encountered by women entrepreneurs in general but prior to this study no research has found these factors specifically within the women-owned micro-retail pop-up context. What is also interesting are the narratives the women pop-up owners used to describe their experience. This is a key contribution of the study in that the qualitative methods within the PAR cycles have given a voice to these women, thus 'acknowledging the significance' of the individual identifications of women pop-up owners (Foss 2010, p.89).

7.3 What are the success factors of women micro-retail pop-up owners?

It is acknowledged that the findings support existing research on the success factors of women-owned business start-ups and their management by way of finance, business management knowledge and skills. What is salient is that these women who had previous business management experience were able to take advantage of the opportunities of micro-retail pop-up events. The support received from friends and family at the initial stage was a key factor in the success of their businesses along with being able to manage their child and family caring responsibilities (Salaff, 2003; Foster and Brindley, 2018).

By defining the concept of 'pop-up', previous researchers highlight the characteristics of impermanence and irregularity of pop-up. The study findings revealed that those characteristics provide opportunity for women to start and operate their retail businesses with low cost. As a success factor, it is recognised that pop-ups offer greater opportunity for women to start and run a retail business. It is evident that sometimes there are high numbers of retail units sitting empty in town centres across the UK (Bedford Borough Empty Shop Strategy 2014-2016; Empty Shops, 2011) and there is also plenty of space for short-term lease opportunities for

women to operate their retail pop-ups. However, these findings tend to contradict previous studies in women entrepreneurship. A possible explanation for this is that established women entrepreneurs tend to operate their businesses in permanent retail stores where the rent is higher and there is a requirement to pay a deposit in advance. For example, according to CBRE's latest Prime Rent and Yield Monitor (2019), UK prime commercial property rental values continued to increase.

Further exploration of the women pop-up owners' narratives finds that there are also some additional factors which affect their business success. In changing economic climates women entrepreneurs encounter various challenges.

7.4 What are the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners?

The researcher has identified challenges encountered by women entrepreneurs in general (Roomi *et al.*, 2008). However, there was still a need to identify the challenges specifically encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners. By addressing this gap, Research Question 4 has now been answered. The satisfying of this requirement may now be viewed as an original contribution of the study. Semi structured interview findings revealed that women micro-retail pop-up owners encounter challenges differently from women entrepreneurs in general. A majority of participants mentioned that they have to face a higher level of competition from established retailers. They also felt that they have less access to networking because such events are usually expensive so they thought that it was difficult to justify the expense due to the micro-size of the business. Study findings revealed that they encounter challenges in accessing finance. They considered that the lack of childcare facilities and family caring responsibilities hindered their full entrepreneurial potential.

7.4.1 Development of a strategic framework – the Pop-up Pathway specifically designed to facilitate women to match the characteristics of their pop-up businesses

This study is not limited to the identification of the success factors and the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners. It provides further suggestions of how strategic management tools can be adapted to support them to overcome the challenges they encounter (Jolovic, 2019; Sovick, 2017; Kraus & Kauranen, 2009; Brush *et al.*, 1999).

It has made a further step forward by developing a strategic framework to address the challenges encountered by these women pop-up owners and contributes a practical tool which they can utilise in developing their businesses.

There are existing strategic frameworks to support women entrepreneurs in the UK such as Supporting Women's Enterprise in the UK (2018), Vista Print (2016), which have focused more on policy issues in relation to women entrepreneurs in general. Existing strategic frameworks for women entrepreneurs in the UK have mostly aimed 'to provide a broad context and rationale' to 'explain the policy context' (DTI, 2011, p.4) with the objective of 'increasing significantly the number of women starting and growing businesses in the UK' (DTI, 2011, p.4). These frameworks have not focused on tailoring support to meet the specific needs of women micro-retail pop-up owners. There is a definite need of a strategic framework for such owners.

The results of this study reveal that the majority of these investigated UK women micro-retail pop-up owners are definitely intending to develop their businesses. However, from the semi-structured interview findings it is evident that they cannot deal with the complexities of the strategic management tools. They do not have the capacity and resources to deal with the complexity and they need a more flexible tool. By addressing this requirement, the study has

developed a strategic framework, namely, the Pop-up Pathway which can be viewed as an original contribution to the field of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups.

The starting point for the development of the tools comes from the researcher's experiences and also ideas gained from the thematic literature review (Ahl, 2006). The researcher did the background research prior to developing the Pop-up Pathway (Chapter 2 and Chapter 3).

With this in view and due to their limited business management knowledge and skills, these women micro-retail pop-up owners did not need to conduct background research about the environment in which they operate. The Pop-up Pathway presents that environment to them through the thematic literature review findings such as 'environment scanning' adapting the theory of strategic management, and primary data findings (Jolovi, 2019, p.53). In developing the Pop-up Pathway, the researcher has developed action-learning activities and adapted strategic management tools, complemented by a specifically designed action-based training (Mertler, 2017; McKernan, 1998).

The Pop-up Pathway has been developed by following a flexible model/framework based on the philosophy of Participatory Action Research (PAR) through a spiral of idea-generating, action-learning and evaluation (Cotton, 1995; Wootton & Horne, 2000). The Pop-up Pathway has two components for the benefit of women pop-up owners. The Resource Guide of the Pop-up Pathway facilitates and guides them on how to conduct the activities of the Playbook and provides pointers to the action-learning activities/tasks (Mertler, 2017; McKernan, 1998; Cotton, 1995).

As discussed in Chapter 6, the Playbook and the Resource Guide were presented to the participants to build a background and understanding through an action-learning training

model. The Playbook of the Pop-up Pathway acts as a decision support tool and helps them to build their background knowledge and to identify clear future directions and emergency needs of customers in the retail market.

The action learning-activities have been developed to address the needs and meet the characteristics of women micro-retail pop-up owners.

7.4.2 Action learning activities

The narratives of the participants used to describe their experiences about how the action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway have helped them are interesting. From the focus groups and individual short interviews findings it is clear that the women pop-up owners found the collaborative and participatory nature of the action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway to be helpful and very useful for the development and enrichment of their business management knowledge and skills (Haider & Mariotti, 2016; Bodker, Dindler & Iversen, 2017). The participatory nature of the action-learning activities was given consideration by having researcher and participants come together in implementing the action-learning activities (Saad-Sulonen *et al.*, 2018). Increased activation by women pop-up owners participating in this study corroborates earlier findings in women's entrepreneurship (Jayawarna *et al.*, 2015).

The narratives of the participants in the focus groups and individual short interviews showed that they found the action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway to be very helpful for women pop-up owners, not only to identify their strengths in many different areas (see Chapter 5), but also to utilise and build on those strengths within a group dynamic to enable the generation of better business ideas, the cultivation of knowledge and the creative transformation of their products into socially and environmentally usable products.

All participants added that the action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway were useful and easy for them to understand and apply in their own individual pop-up businesses. All participants (fifteen out of fifteen) stated that the action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway contributed to enriching and developing their further understanding on how to manage their pop-up businesses effectively by providing clear direction for the implementation of future business activities.

The action-learning activities enabled participants to set directions to identify and develop vision and mission statements for their pop-up businesses. Findings of the focus group discussions and follow up short interviews revealed that creating a vision statement helped participants to define what their pop-up business is going to be or look like in three to five years time. Participants had the opportunity to discuss in the group why their pop-up business exists and how their customers benefit from it. This understanding was built through the action-learning activity which assisted them to set a clear vision and mission for their pop-up businesses. The study findings revealed that the activity helped them to define what their pop-up business is going to be in three to five years' time. It also helped them to articulate what they value and what their businesses create. Participants had the opportunity to discuss in a group why their pop-up business exists and how their customers benefit from it. This process helped them set very clear short-term and long-term goals for their pop-up businesses. Even though previous strategic frameworks in women entrepreneurship have highlighted the importance of the identification of a vision, mission and goals for women's businesses they have not provided clear guidance on how to do it.

Environment analysis of the Pop-up Pathway assists women micro-retail pop-up owners to rapidly analyse the constantly changing internal and external environments through which they operate their pop-up businesses. The action-learning activities related to environment analysis

was considered “as a process of concepts that outlines the activities as a single set of concepts” (Mintzber, 2000, p.36). For this purpose, Henry Mintzberg’s Design School Model (Mintzberg, 2000) was adopted as the strategic planning model to provide a strong theoretical foundation. The strategic management tools of SWOT analysis and TOWS matrix were adapted to be the most suitable tools in support of women micro-retail pop-up owners when analysing their internal and external business environments (Lynch, 2018; David and David, 2015).

7.5 How SWOT analysis and TOWS matrix has been adapted and utilised to support women to successfully implement their micro-retail pop-ups.

SWOT analysis, adapted in the Pop-up Pathway, assists women pop-up owners to monitor and forecast changes and trends in the retail market environment as well as to gain a view of market threats and the competitive position of their pop-up before making decisions. The study findings reveal that SWOT analysis related action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway helped women pop-up owners to address business issues using limited time. The researcher noted that not conducting such activities could turn the possibility of survival into a higher risk of failure (Pickton and Wright, 1998).

Conducting an Action Based Training (ABT) method with SWOT analysis is aimed at assisting women pop-up owners to learn to (a) value themselves and share their experiences with others (b) build an effective relationship with other women pop-up owners (c) define what they want to do (d) experience how business environment analysis and regular business planning can assist them to promote their pop-up business (e) take proper control of their temporary retail pop-ups which ultimately leads to supporting their children, family, society and the economy.

The implementation of the Pop-up Pathway involves four stages, providing direction to women micro-retail pop-up owners to further improve their pop-up businesses in four areas: the first area is the identification of their strengths and building on those strengths; the second area is by recognising their weaknesses and taking action to deal with those weaknesses; thirdly, the identification of threats and strengths with opportunity driven strategies; the fourth way of helping them was to develop collaboration among the pop-up owners themselves through facilitation (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014; Chevalier & Buckles, 2013). The development of the above four stages will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

7.5.1 Identification of strengths, building business management knowledge and skills.

The first area of the implementation of the Pop-up Pathway is based on the identification of women micro-retail pop-up owners' strengths and recognising ways to utilise those strengths to build their pop-up businesses. For this purpose, the strategic management tools needed to be adapted. Before designing the action-learning activities, the researcher identified women entrepreneurs' specific strengths from the theories (see Chapter 3), the literature review (see Chapter 2) and the semi-structured interviews (see Chapter 5). The investigated UK women micro-retail pop-up owners found the action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway particularly helpful in identifying their strengths⁵⁰ and building their pop-up businesses on those identified strengths.

⁵⁰ This study has identified the success factors of women entrepreneurs in general (see Chapter 3) and women micro-retail pop-up owners in particular (see Chapter 5). On the other hand, the study found that such characteristics are not usually well-developed in women micro-retail pop-up owners. From the study findings, it is apparent that some women pop-up owners may have developed their skills to some extent whilst working in the informal sector and this result matches those observed in earlier studies in women entrepreneurship. Others must acquire these skills, especially those who have worked previously as employees in the corporate world and who are not used to generating business and customers for themselves. A possible explanation for this might be that women pop-up owners tend to open their own business due to their desire to run a business, even without training or previous experience in managing a business.

Focus group findings provided the largest set of a significant cluster of strengths specific to the women-owned micro-retail pop-ups. During this activity the women pop-up owners were able to identify women specific strengths. Some of the strengths that participants mentioned were, being unwilling to fail, being a person with good ideas and attitudes, having special perspectives, seeking to make a social contribution, and ensuring the quality of the products and service they offer. This finding confirmed earlier research findings where scholars identified that women seek to make a social contribution and want to ensure their quality as women.

The most interesting finding was that participants emphasised that they are more concerned about the quality of their products and they recognise this as one of their strengths. Just as with these present results, previous studies have highlighted the increasingly emerging use of temporary retail pop-ups in selling ‘eco-friendly’ and ‘green fashion’ products within the ‘eco-sustainable trend’ (Pomodoro, 2013, p.349; Shaw *et al.*, 2006; Niinimaki, 2010). These results corroborate the ideas of Buttle (2009) and Resnick *et al.* (2014) who refer to the importance of customer perception. This finding, while preliminary, suggests that women micro-retail pop-up owners desire and indeed intend to make a difference to customers’ experiences This is considered to be one of their strengths.

Further exploration of the women pop-up owners’ narratives also found some of the women-specific characteristics to be their strengths (see Chapter 2, Chapter 3 and Chapter 5). Such characteristics are: being team players, a willingness to serve and sacrifice for others, a wonderful sense of humour and general enjoyment in conducting a pop-up business. The current study found that women micro-retail pop-up owners insist on never being a burden to others, regardless of how much they must sacrifice to build their pop-up business while fulfilling their family caring responsibilities. This result corroborates the findings of a great

deal of the previous work in women entrepreneurship, and is consistent with that of Roomi and Harrison (2008) who stated that women entrepreneurs “generate enough income to support themselves and their families and achieve enough balance between work, family responsibilities and other interests” (Roomi & Harrison, 2012, p.6).

The brainstorming activity of the Pop-up Pathway assisted participants to realise that they are a loving, organised, strong, intelligent and wise influence on their peers’ lives, and that they value relationships over other things.

Findings also revealed women pop-up owner’s language competence and communication skills to be strengths. This finding is confirmed by previous research into women businesses where Li and Ding (2015, p. 211) highlighted that ‘it has been shown that women tend to have stronger expressive language skills’. They further explained that women are often ‘more adept at communicating with people as they speak fluently and clearly with a tactful tone and appropriate wording’.

Supporting existing research, focus group discussions assisted women micro-retail pop-up owners to identify that they are good at communicating with others and have the ability to listen and offer sound advice as their strengths. These results reflect those of Roomi *et al.* (2009) who also found that communication and sharing information are business success factors of women entrepreneurs. It is evident from the findings of the focus groups and follow-up interviews that the action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway support women micro-retail pop-up owners to identify (or recognise) ways to utilise their communication skills to build their pop-up businesses. Participants stated that they were able to identify ways to utilise their communication skills to get to know their customers’ likes and dislikes and to identify what

they need to be able to provide the most suitable products and services and implement a strong, long-term customer relationship (or customer focus strategy, Baines *et al.*, 2012; Lynch, 2018). Participants were also able to identify how to utilise their communication skills to improve their social interactions and access different support mechanisms to gain the necessary support to build their pop-up businesses. This study's findings confirm that strengths of language competence play an important role in promoting communication and women-owned micro-retail pop-up development.

It is interesting to note that all participants in the semi-structured interviews viewed the temporary nature of the pop-up business as one of their strengths. A possible explanation for this result is that the temporary nature as a strength assists them to conduct some part of the business from home or from their place of residence or town. Another possible explanation for this is that the temporary nature assists them to achieve a work-life balance. The temporary nature may also permit them to stop or hold their business activities for a season without losing money and they can then easily operate again when they are ready. They may well have the option to temporarily stop pop-up business activities during a pregnancy, during a maternity leave period, or due to a lack of childcare facilities.

The findings revealed that the temporary nature assists them to follow a flexible business operation pattern while fulfilling their family caring responsibilities. This outcome runs contrary to women entrepreneurs in general. Kamberidou (2020, p.25) found that 'Women entrepreneurs continue to face the *multitasking whirlpool*, the work-life conflict...'. Brainstorming activities helped participants to interact effectively and constructively as a group and encouraged them not only to fulfill their family caring responsibilities but also to identify ways to utilise their strengths, multitasking to improve management knowledge and skills and

to build temporary retail pop-ups effectively. Such results as these have not been previously described.

Rich empirical data gathered through the focus groups provide evidence that most of the women micro-retail pop-up owners thought that confidence was one of their strengths. A woman's strength can also manifest itself through compassion for others, a deep and abiding intuition, and the desire to do something likeable backed by the effort to see it through to satisfaction.

The study found that the women pop-up owners have innovative business ideas and they have a creative mind for the products and services they are providing. It is acknowledged that some of these identified strengths support existing research on women entrepreneurship just as highlighted by Aggarwal and Jain (2014), that women "are confident, creative, innovative and are capable of achieving self-economic independence individually and jointly" (p.837). The majority of the women pop-up owners who participated in this study demonstrated their capability to achieve economic independence.

Most of the participants in the follow-up interviews (fourteen out of fifteen) stated that they have the strength to generate direct and indirect employment opportunities for others through initiating, establishing, and running pop-up businesses, and that they can help many needy women to take home a well-earned salary. This finding corroborates earlier findings in women entrepreneurship research. Aggarwal and Jain (2014) suggest that women "can generate employment opportunities for others by initiating, establishing and running an enterprise" (p.837). But, realistically, the temporary nature of the pop-up business usually limits the number of employees engaged in the pop-up business.

As suggested by Cotton (1995) and Mertler (2017), the study found that the guided (or facilitated) method of action-learning activities, the promising group approach and powerful open-ended questions, (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Yin, 2018), of the Pop-up Pathway⁵¹ all assisted participants to identify/discover their inner strengths⁵².

Drawing on ideas suggested by Lynch (2018) and David (2013), the strengths-based action-learning activity –‘brainstorming’, (Cotton, 1995, p.70; Wootton & Horne, 2000), - a technique of the Pop-up Pathway, and the collaborative, active-learning environment supported by peer-to-peer group activities, facilitated the women pop-up owners individually as well as collectively: (a) to raise awareness of their inner strengths, (b) to identify and create new ideas and make decisions on how to utilise identified inner strengths (strengths-based approach) to improve their business management knowledge and skills; and (c) to build their temporary retail pop-ups throughout the lifetime of their business [as discussed in Chapter four, by the application of business strategies, Persard *et al.* (2016)]. These study findings definitely lend support to previous studies in women-owned business development such as those that highlighted the gaining of support from family, friends and subordinate people in developing women-owned business (Alakaleek, 2014; Foster & Brindley, 2017; Parmar, 2018).

7.5.2 Identification of weaknesses and strengths driven strategies

The study findings revealed that the action-learning-activities and the collaborative group dynamic nature of the Pop-up Pathway effectively assisted participants to identify their weaknesses.

⁵¹ The simplified version of strategic management tools.

⁵² Someone who had been a scribe before for brainstorming sessions helped to write down the phrases.

One of the weaknesses, expressed by seven participants out of fifteen, was that sometimes it is difficult for them to communicate with customers. One of the reasons for this was that they feel a lack of confidence in comparison with their competitors. For example, they found it difficult to declare the price of the product because they wondered what customers might think. Unfocused communication or overly detailed oriented communication has been identified as a weakness. This finding is supported by previous studies and Li and Ding (2015, p. 212) highlighted that ‘under some circumstances women are too talkative.

Limited available time due to mothering role and caring responsibilities was also expressed as a weakness. This finding corroborates previous study findings as Aggarwal and Jain (2014, p.837) highlight, “women’s family obligations also bar them from becoming successful entrepreneurs in both developed and developing nations”. However, these latest findings reveal that women pop-up owners have the desire to build their businesses while fulfilling their family caring responsibilities. This view receives support from the view of Li and Ding (2015, p. 212) who highlight that “women prefer to work from their own residence. Difficulty in getting suitable jobs and a desire for social recognition motivates them to be self-employed”.

Inadequate or lack of skills in decision making was identified as another weakness. As researchers highlight, one reason for this can be women make decisions differently and need more time. Less willing to undertake risks, less task oriented, being overly sensitive, less confident, having limited resources, have all been identified as the weaknesses of women pop-up owners. According to Aggarwal and Jain (2014, p. 837) one reason for this can be that “female folk lack achievement motivation” and “the greatest obstacle for women entrepreneurs is that they are women”.

Some other reported identified weaknesses were: family consideration (business takes second place to home), less confidence, limited resources and finance, lack of engaging in networks, working hard but making little profit, concern about social and cultural expectations. A majority of participants revealed that most people believe that women are entrusted to fulfil domestic tasks and caring responsibilities. With this in mind, further weaknesses were added: a lack of in-depth knowledge in managing a business, more detail-oriented, mothering role and caring responsibilities, overly sensitive and fewer skills in idea-generation.

It is noted that some of the identified women-specific weaknesses are related to the challenges they encountered (see Chapter five – challenges).

The final list of strengths and weaknesses was given priority for reflection in preparation for the strategies of the Pop-up Pathway. From the beginning of these activities, it was noticed that there were a few participants who were quiet and under-involved. Throughout the idea generation session, they were given encouragement so that later they had the ability to participate in the process effectively. There were just a few dominant ones or “overly vocal participants” who, although still present in discussions, became less obtrusive as time went on. Drawing on ideas suggested by Cotton (1995), Wootton and Horne (2000), and McKernan (1998), the brainstorming sessions of the Pop-up Pathway assisted the pop-up owners to build their mindset to gain a deeper understanding of how they can utilise their strengths to build their temporary retail pop-ups, contextualised to survival in the retail market in the long term.

Overall survival narratives were positive. That is, the women micro-retail pop-up owners who participated in the focus groups expressed in positive terms how the action-learning activities helped them to become aware of how to utilise their strengths to overcome their weaknesses and the challenges they encounter. Further, they found action-learning activities to be exciting

collaborations and they demonstrated their enthusiasm for, and commitment to, engaging in Pop-up Pathway activities as a group and in the future.

Strengths driven strategies-based action learning activities helped the pop-up owners to look at their strengths and apply them to boost their self-confidence, add superior value to their temporary retail pop-ups and manage them effectively in entrepreneurial ways (Kamberidou, 2020, p.26).

The findings of the focus groups and the follow-up interview findings revealed that participants had identified that they can utilise consumer interest and positive ‘attitude’ and ‘emotional experience’ towards pop-up retail stores (Wood & Moreau, 2006; Kim, 2010) to build a strong positive customer relationship as a way to overcome their weaknesses by utilising their strengths. These results corroborate the findings of a great deal of previous work in retail (Kim *et al.*, 2010, p.147; Wood & Moreau, 2006).

7.5.3 Identification of threats and, strengths and opportunity driven strategies

Action learning activities assisted the women to identify their threats. Following aggressive competition from established retailers, future business could be a lot different from now (e.g., uncertain future with the Brexit outcome). Also, financial institutions and guarantors often evaluate women as poor risk for finance. This was considered by the women pop-up owners to be a threat. The Pop-up Pathway includes some group activities which involve group members themselves in conducting a detailed analysis of their environment in order to gather missing information and identify opportunities in the market.

Some of the opportunities they identified were preparation/development opportunities (e.g., identify sustainable products), develop business management knowledge (e.g., it will help them

to prepare strongly for future threats). The ability to identify strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities also relates to the ability to identify the components of the Pop-up Pathway and their impact on the future success of the pop-up business. These findings corroborate earlier findings in strategic management (David, 2013; Lynch, 2018).

The action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway assist the participant to discuss running a micro-retail pop-up by keeping pace with personal, family or social life.

They were able to recognise how to adjust well to their personal/family and social life while operating the pop-up business. Most of the participants identified that they were determined to use their time and social events wisely to communicate and share the information about their businesses with others. Whenever they went to events with their children, they found the opportunity to share information about their pop-up business. They have effectively used these opportunities and occasions wisely to talk about their pop-up businesses, spreading the word about their products with the inevitable result of an increased number of customers.

As highlighted by Grimsey (2013), the long history of a UK retail market environment provides opportunities for women pop-up owners to build on their strengths and provide part of the heart of a local community' (Resnick *et al.*, 2014, p.842). In the identification of the strengths, the current study found that the micro-size and temporary nature of women-owned pop-ups offered personal, 'superior' and unforgettable 'customer experiences' by generating buzz and urgency in the market as they offer products during a specific period or a few days at the same location. These results corroborate the findings of a great deal of previous studies about UK high street retail experiences (Verhoef *et al.*, 2009, p.31; Resnick *et al.*, 2013, p.853; Chang & Horng, 2010). The results of this study indicate that women micro-retail pop-up owners are phenomenal. Even though they encounter many challenges and risks due to the temporary

nature and micro-size of the pop-up business, they demonstrate their competitive skills, strengths and willingness to learn, their hard work, as well as their adaptability and persistence to develop their temporary retail pop-ups. This finding is consistent with that of Hisrich and Brush (1987) who found that the two most important goals for women entrepreneurs to establish their businesses were: “generate enough income to support themselves and their families and achieve enough balance between work, family responsibilities and other interests” (Roomi & Harrison, 2012, p.6).

Constant analysis of the business environment helped participants to evaluate the positives (e.g., internal strengths and external opportunities) and the negatives (e.g., internal weaknesses and external threats) of their pop-up business. The pop-up pathway assists women pop-up owners to identify not only the ways that they can turn their weaknesses into strengths, but also how they can turn their threats into opportunities. It is revealed that the strengths driven action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway can help women pop-up owners to understand their business better by making a comprehensive examination of their internal environment to identify and take advantage of their strengths in addressing their weaknesses.

Action-learning activities encourage women pop-up owners to develop their lateral thinking patterns and attitude conducive to entrepreneurship and they assist them to detect threats in the external business environment and to assess the most promising opportunities. They also help them to identify ways to use their strengths to take advantage of opportunities while minimising threats and weaknesses. External environment analysis related activities assist them to identify their threats and take necessary actions to reduce their effect by capitalising on their opportunities (Gregory, 2018). The Pop-up Pathway assists women pop-up owners to keep a watch on their overall business environment and to recognise/explore new opportunities faster

than their competitors. It also helps them to identify their threats and determine possible ways to overcome them. The action-learning activities assist women pop-up owners to explore further opportunities to join networking events. Continued mind-mapping assists them to seek out opportunities to promote their products and service and expand the market and customer base. It will also help them to improve to position their pop-up business in a better place in the retail market without the cost of an external consultant or business adviser (Business Queensland, 2018).

The study illustrated that action-based training assists women micro-retail pop-up owners to acquire new knowledge and develop their existing business management knowledge and skills.

7.6 Facilitation and collaboration

The results of this study indicate that the team and group approach (or working in groups with other women pop-up owners) assisted participants to generate previously unrecognised ideas, different views, inspirations and role models. Action learning activities blended with a collaborative group dynamic/environment have been identified as useful in supporting women pop-up owners to generate and implement creative, innovative ideas and find solutions for the challenges they encounter. The study findings show that every individual woman micro-retail pop-up owner has hidden or uncovered abilities to develop their business, but they need support to bring these ideas to reality.

7.6.1 Facilitation

This study makes several original contributions which differ from previous research in women entrepreneurship, (Roomi *et al.*, 2009; Vista Print, 2016, DTI, 2009). These contributions facilitate and support women pop-up owners to recognise their strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities. The result of this research disclosed that the Pop-up Pathway has a

significant direct impact on women entrepreneurs who conduct their businesses in temporary micro-retail pop-ups. This study supports the notion that women pop-up owners cannot, or are less likely to manage the action-learning activities by themselves. In focus groups, the researcher facilitated participants to (a) engage in effective group discussions, (b) foster participation and move forward through the action-learning activities, (c) identify their strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities in a manner that encourages participation, thinking and creativity to come up with ideas, thoughts and perspectives to add value to their businesses, (d) refresh their existing business management knowledge to develop new knowledge and skills and add value to their pop-up businesses within a group dynamic.

The adaption of the tools is therefore realised, not only in the action-learning activities, but also in the action-learning plus the facilitation. That is precisely why, in adapting the strategic management tools, the researcher placed particular importance on facilitation. The tested and validated Pop-up Pathway aimed to contextualise the action-learning activities into facilitator-led action-based training. Therefore, unlike the semi-structured interviews, during the focus group discussions the researcher took a peripheral rather than a centre-stage role, (Hohenthal *et al.*, 2015; Nyumb *et al.*, 2018), in facilitating the strategic management process. Then, in adaptation of the tool, the researcher shifted role from ‘facilitator’ to ‘moderator’ (Nyumb *et al.*, 2018, p.2). In bringing strategic management knowledge to the action-based training, the researcher facilitated participants individually and collectively.

Participants were induced and sometimes entranced by the facilitation and the peer-to-peer support of the action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway. Roomi and Harrion (2008) highlight that the lack of business management training facilities is a major challenge encountered by women business owners. This study responded to that paucity with action-

learning activities placing particular emphasis on supporting women pop-up owners to identify their weaknesses and recognise ways to overcome those weaknesses. Moreover, it helped them to raise awareness of their strong personalities and apply the strengths-based approach in embarking on their pop-up retail journey of self-reflection and building up their business endeavours.

During the identification of strengths, the researcher was catalytic in facilitating the participants to recognise their strengths and focus on those strengths to empower their pop-up business improvement. It became evident that strengths-based action-learning activity provided a leading-edge approach and helped participants to generate positive thoughts as an evolutionary experience, where all were able to identify some of their strengths. This can be identified as one of the key contributions of this study in that the PAR methodology has facilitated listening to women micro-retail pop-up owners' voices. Also interesting are: the narratives that the women micro-retail pop-up owners used to express their strengths; how they utilise their strengths to overcome their weaknesses and identify ways to take the next effective steps that follow a clear path (De Reuver *et al.*, 2013) to build a pop-up business.

The focus group findings helped the researcher to understand what might work and what might not work for the participants. Further, the findings revealed that most women micro-retail pop-up owners might not be able to use the Pop-up Pathway themselves without having it introduced to them. The findings confirmed that, at least from the beginning, a facilitator needs to be involved and guide and support the pop-up owners to familiarise themselves with the tools and materials of the Pop-up Pathway. More importantly, the facilitator needed to help the pop-up owners step-by-step to understand how to use the materials, when they can use them, and how to complete the action-learning activities individually and collectively to develop their

pop-up business. Focus groups and the follow-up short interviews findings show that the action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway plus the facilitation assisted participants to start in building/creating an appropriate knowledge structure to accommodate spatial and temporal learning. The study findings confirmed that the group dynamic with its collaborative nature is an important and effective factor role within the strategic management process in supporting women pop-up owners (Coleman & Robb, 2015; Jayawarna *et al.*, 2015).

7.6.2 Collaboration

The study has also addressed a wider call for further research relating to ‘how micro and small businesses can benefit from collaboration’. A most interesting finding was that action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway, which were implemented and validated within a collaborative supportive environment, assisted women pop-up owners to develop their knowledge and skills in developing their businesses towards a state of survival in the UK retail market. The strategic management tool was not entirely intentional, but as a consequence of discussions there was the beginning of a sense of community and collaboration between the women micro-retail pop-up owners who participated in the study⁵³.

The action-learning activities employed within a collaborative and supportive learning environment assisted them to realise and reflect collectively and individually on identified weaknesses. Also, they were able to identify ways of dealing with those weaknesses by utilising their strengths and opportunities and finding ways to overcome them, putting propositions forward for their business development. This specific finding makes theoretical, practical and

⁵³ From the beginning of these activities, it was noticed that there were a few participants who were quiet and participated less. Through the idea-generation session, they were encouraged and later they had the ability to participate more effectively in the process. There were a few “dominators” or “overly vocal participants” though the discussions were equalised, but not eliminated. During the identification of strengths and weaknesses, participants’ responses were prioritised.

methodological contributions different from previous strategic frameworks for general women entrepreneurs in the UK. These were more focused on policy-related recommendations and implementations rather than focusing directly on working with women entrepreneurs to make a direct impact on them. Two examples come immediately to mind, (a) the DTI Small Business Services 'Strategic Framework for women's Enterprise' 'made a number of recommendations to assist the development of women's enterprises'; (b) 'Regional Business Support for Women The SBS Strategic Framework' specifies that the key effective support for women's enterprise will be to positively influence the quality of mainstream support services (Carter, 2005, p.32). The study findings confirmed that the collaborative nature of the Pop-up Pathway opens avenues for women pop-up owners to identify ways, and access support, to overcome the areas of weakness which hinder their full entrepreneurial potential.

The narratives of the focus groups and individual follow-up interviews findings revealed that the action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway helped women pop-up owners to collectively put their propositions/suggestions forward to build their leadership skills, competence and courage and also helped them to become more effective and stronger with the support of other women pop-up owners⁵⁴ and ultimately overcome their weaknesses.

One interesting finding is that during the focus groups, all participants recognised mostly similar strengths and similar weaknesses. The group discussion and the collaborative nature of the validated and well-established Pop-up Pathway offered the richest outcomes by laying

⁵⁴ Most of the participants were able to identify the strengths they needed to develop in order to compete successfully in the market in the future as well as available resources to develop their business management skills. They also got to know how to access support to manage finance as well as ways to develop products and information systems (using social media networks such as Facebook) to build a strong relationship with customers and commit to achieving higher business performance. They also learnt how to strategically develop their businesses with collaboration, gathering unrecognised ideas, different views, inspiration and role models from others.

strong theoretical perspectives from the work of Mintzberg (1998), Cotton (1995), Mertler (2017), McKernang (1998), Lynch (2018) and Davide (2013). Additionally, the identified success factors of the women pop-up owners, (see Chapter 5.1), assisted the researcher to design effective brainstorming sessions to support the women pop-up owners. The collaborative nature of the focus group discussions effectively led to connecting and bonding individual women pop-up owners.

The action-learning activities of the tool, centred and focused on achieving the balance between internal ‘strengths’ (e.g., motivation, intention), ‘capabilities’ and ‘resources’; and external ‘opportunities’ (favourable) to identify ways to overcome internal weaknesses and external ‘threats’ (harmful) (Feurer & Chanharbaghi, 1995, p.39; Damke *et al.*, 2018), and to predict the future, anticipate it and shape it.

The identified success factors, (see Chapter 3), women-specific characteristics, (see Chapter 5.1), and strengths, (see chapter 6), of the women micro-retail pop-up owners of this study were brought to light in designing and empirically validating the Pop-up Pathway, including action-learning activities. Thirteen of the fifteen focus group participants stated that due to their collaborative nature, they would like to continue engaging in action-learning activities weekly. Further, they stated that the Pop-up Pathway provided them with strategic directions in creating the proper behaviour in managing their pop-up business so as to achieve a higher level of performance over a long term.

The following section presents the theoretical and practical contributions that this study makes to the field of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups. The section also presents recommendations for advancement from potential future research.

7.7 Contributions of the study

The aim of the present research was to explore the success factors and the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners and develop a strategic framework which would assist them to develop their temporary micro-retail pop-ups to enable survival in the UK retail market beyond five years. As highlighted in Chapter one, to achieve the research aim, the study set out four objectives and four research questions. In this section, the researcher will present each of the four objectives and the four research questions and highlight the main results and conclusion. The study adopted the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach (Mertler, 2017) which included action-based training, and it was designed and implemented in four cycles by following an abductive reasoning approach (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The study contributes to increasing to the furthering of advancement in the field of women-owned micro-retail pop-up studies and in women entrepreneurship research in general through the adoption of a participatory action research approach to gain more demographic insights and further explore relevant real-life experiences. Therefore, the researcher conducted a thorough literature review in pop-up retail and women entrepreneurship in general.

Objective one and research question one: The literature review findings assisted the researcher to define the meaning of ‘pop-up’ through a phenomenological perspective. Moreover, the study has identified the characteristics of the pop-up. A working definition of a women-owned micro-retail pop-up was given as an addition to theoretical knowledge in the field of retail pop-ups. This was considered to be necessary as no universally recognised definition for a pop-up store was then in existence. By rectifying this deficiency the first part of the research question namely, ‘what are the characteristics of a retail pop-up store?’ was answered. In the first PAR cycle, the literature review helped to lay a strong theoretical foundation to develop the study. The 5M framework was identified and adopted as one of the most suitable frameworks to

conduct a study into women-owned micro-retail pop-ups (Brush *et al.*, 2009). The 5M framework and the literature review findings in women entrepreneurship in general enabled the development of the study conceptual framework of this study. The findings from cycle one and the 5M theoretical framework contributed to the design of the PAR second cycle which adopts a qualitative approach to the collection of primary data by relying on a semi-structured interview guideline to rectify the current inadequacy. To answer the second part of research question one (RQ1), ‘why do women entrepreneurs open their businesses in temporary retail pop-ups?’ the study adopted a qualitative, (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), multiple method and conducted sixty-nine semi-structured face-to-face interviews with women micro-retail pop-up owners in the three cities of Birmingham, Manchester and Nottingham in the UK. As discussed in detail in Chapter 5, based on the findings of the qualitative data thematic analysis, (Bazeley, 2013), this study has identified a number of reasons for women to open and conduct their business in temporary retail pop-ups in the UK retail market: the study findings confirmed that the temporary nature, micro-size, and lower start-up and running cost were the main reasons.

Objective two and research question two: The semi-structured interview findings helped to identify the success factors and the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners. As a result, the study was able to answer research question two of the study, which is ‘what are the success factors and the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners in the UK? To meet objective two, the study identified success factors of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups in five categories, namely money, market, management, motherhood and meso-macro environment. The study found that (a) operating in a micro-retail pop-up (b) the temporary nature (c) experiential marketing format which gained public interest and (d) creating a sense of urgency and generating a buzz effect were all success factors for women-

owned micro-retail pop-ups. The research has also shown networking, accessing and managing finance to be additional success factors (see Chapter 5).

Objective three and research question three: The third objective of this study was ‘to identify the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners and show how those factors affect their survival in the UK retail market’. The study meets objective three by answering research question four (RQ4) which is ‘what are the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners?’ The results of the semi-structured interviews showed that mothering role and all act as barriers to the success of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups (see Chapter 5).

The majority of the women micro-retail pop-up owners who participated in the semi-structured interviews revealed that previously they had not been able to follow formal business management training. The results of this study indicate that most of the women pop-up owners had not been able to follow a strategic management process to develop their temporary micro-retail pop-ups precisely because the challenges they encountered acted as a hinderance to the in development of their pop-up businesses. Additionally, the literature review findings of this study revealed that the previous strategic frameworks in the field have been designed for women entrepreneurs in general. The evidence of this study suggests that existing strategic frameworks have not been able to directly address the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners because they encountered challenges different to those of women entrepreneurs in general. These findings suggest that in general there is a significant need for a strategic framework which is specifically designed to address the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners in the UK retail market and support them.

Objective four and research question four: This unsatisfactory situation gave rise to objective four of this study which is ‘to develop a strategic framework incorporating strategic planning tools involving SWOT analysis and TOWS matrix to enable women to fit the characteristics of micro-retail pop-ups to ensure their survival in the UK retail market’. The study meets objective four by answering research question four (RQ4), which is ‘how can SWOT analysis and TOWS matrix be adapted and utilised to support women to implement their micro-retail pop-ups?’ Therefore, cycle four is for the designing of the new strategic framework, namely the Pop-up Pathway, includes the Resource Guide the activities for women pop-up owners by adopting the strategic management tools of SWOT analysis and TOWS matrix which are designed specifically for larger organisations, (Lynch, 2018; David & David, 2013), and have been adopted here but through designing an action-based training and providing facilitation within a collaborative peer-to-peer supportive environment. Overall, this study strengthens the idea that action-learning activities, facilitation and collaboration assist in addressing the needs of women micro-retail pop-up owners (see Chapter 6). Qualitative data suggest that simplification of the strategic management tools can be achieved through an action-based training which includes facilitation and peer-to-peer support.

In cycle four, the participatory action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway have been tested in three focus groups by following a deductive process. The researcher conducted a further fifteen follow-up short interviews with participants to validate the framework, get their impression and gain more insight into their experiences about the Pop-up Pathway (see Chapter 6). Taken together, the focus groups and the follow-up short interview results suggest that the action-learning activities, facilitation and the collaborative nature of the Pop-up Pathway helped and supported them to overcome the challenges they encountered. Those activities also

helped towards the development of their temporary retail pop-ups, which ultimately should enable them to survive more easily in the UK retail market and beyond five years.

7.7.1 Theoretical contribution

This study makes several theoretical contributions to the field of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups in women entrepreneurship. As Christensen and Carlil (2009) noted, first, the study contributes to the theory at the descriptive (or inductive) stage where the researcher presents the valuable empirical evidence in relation to the pop-up phenomenon.

Previous strategic frameworks on women's entrepreneurship, (DTI, 2008; Vistaprint, 2016), have not specifically identified and addressed the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners. This lack has tended to hinder the success in the field of women entrepreneurship. This was a shortcoming extensively highlighted and widely reported in previous studies by several researchers operating within and addressing problems in the declining British High Street market (Portas Review, 2011). By informing a more robust theoretical foundation, the study has identified possible success factors of women micro-retail pop-up owners (see Chapter 5). This is the first study to explore the women-owned micro-retail pop-up phenomenon. It has also developed a definition of a micro-retail pop-up (see Chapter 1). In addition, it contributes to our understanding of the challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners within the context of the UK retail market (see Chapter 5). These findings appear in five categories (money, market, management, motherhood, meso-macro environment factors) after the adoption of the best suited theoretical framework, namely the 5M framework (Brush *et al.*, 2009). Prior to this study, evidence of the success factors and challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners was purely anecdotal. In accordance with the researcher's understanding, this study can be identified as the first

comprehensive investigation of women entrepreneurs who are conducting their micro-size retail businesses in the form of temporary retail pop-ups.

Previous researchers have discussed adaption of the strategic management tools in micro, small and medium businesses. However, there are inadequate studies on how to adapt strategic management tools in developing strategic frameworks in the women-owned micro-retail pop-up business context. This work contributes to existing knowledge about the adaptation of the strategic management tools of SWOT analysis and TOWS matrix to accommodate micro-size retail businesses which are operated by women on a temporary basis.

The thesis makes a unique contribution to knowledge in the field of women entrepreneurship by conceptualising (formulating), developing (implementing), fostering and promoting a reliable and much-needed strategic framework, the Pop-up Pathway for women micro-retail pop-up owners. As discussed previously, the action-based training activities of the Pop-up Pathway have been specifically designed to match the characteristics of women pop-up owners and to develop their business management knowledge and skills within a collaborative/supportive learning environment. This thesis contributes to recent historiographical debates concerning the adaptation of participatory action research in women-owned businesses and micro and small size businesses by offering a more powerful research design based on a qualitative multiple method which supports strategic management tools within the micro-retail pop-up context. The insights gained from this study may be of assistance in adopting strategic management tools in micro and small size women-owned businesses in the UK and other economies.

This thesis is purportedly the first such academic study to carry out the development of an action-based training support for women who conduct their retail business in temporary, micro-

retail pop-ups in the UK retail market, and is also the first study to explore the success factors and the challenges encountered by such women. These findings contribute in several ways to our understanding of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups and provide the basis for the PAR. This study, therefore, contributes to existing debates on starting and managing a women-owned micro-retail pop-up, suggesting that studying, supporting, participation and women's engagement in developing women-owned micro-retail pop-ups should be defined, designed and operationalised as a different concept to that of women's entrepreneurship in general. Ultimately, this thesis contributes to advancing the development of women-owned micro-retail pop-ups within the field of theoretical, academic knowledge and also in the real business world. The utilised participatory approach will prove useful in expanding our understanding of how to employ participatory action research with a qualitative methodology to make a real practical contribution to the academic field and to the real society where empirical studies were conducted.

7.7.2 Practical contributions

One of the main contributions of this study is the newly developed, tested and validated 'Pop-up Pathway'. This should be thought of as one of the best strategic frameworks specifically tailored and built by and for women who operate their temporary micro-retail pop-ups in the UK retail market. In addition to theoretical implications, the facilitation of the action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway has important practical implications, especially in developing women-owned micro-retail pop-ups beyond five years. The first and most obvious implication involves government and non-government business support organisations.

Supporting women micro-retail pop-up owners with necessary funding (on a local and regional level) to gain access to the Pop-up Pathway will help them to develop their temporary retail

business and survive in the UK retail market beyond five years, and it will also help those women who have a desire and are planning to start a micro-retail pop-ups to achieve their dreams. There has been the application of a group-based collaborative action-learning approach which utilises peer-to-peer support within a group dynamic to develop women pop-up owners' business management knowledge and skills. A distinctive feature of the Pop-up Pathway is that women micro-retail pop-up owners can apply the Pop-up Pathway at any stage between 0 and 5 years during their pop-up business.

The evidence shows that the Pop-up Pathway assists women pop-up owners to explore and embrace new ideas and put them into practice, utilising their intellectual capital and untapped potential to gain the power to successfully survive in the UK retail market. It is evident from the focus groups and short interviews findings that the Pop-up Pathway assists women pop-up owners to strategically plan their business activities and make flexible and practical business decisions in the short and long term, all while fulfilling their family caring responsibilities. The overall effectiveness will depend on the level of support that women receive from government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) because they cannot do it alone.

This study contributes to developing women micro-retail pop-up owners' (untapped) full entrepreneurial potential. It also leads to a greater understanding of the collaborative competition approach in addressing women-owned micro-retail pop-up business management and the challenges they encounter. The Pop-up Pathway assists women pop-up owners to collaborate as a group of women in order to reach business success at a greater level. The objective for the Pop-up Pathway is to assist women pop-up owners to survive in the UK market beyond five years; to boosts job creation for women pop-up owners themselves; to creates

hundreds of thousands of new jobs for others by contributing to the total employment in the UK; to help their children and families to uplift their lifestyle and in so doing contribute to the gross domestic product (GDP) and the gross value added (GVA) of the UK economy.

This framework would be beneficial to the UK government when implementing policy commitments to women-owned pop-ups through all micro and small business programmes. The study's findings also inform future policy direction for women-owned micro business development in the UK.

The analysis and components of the Pop-up Pathway and the lessons learnt during the process of developing the Pop-up Pathway are also suitable for use in women-owned micro and small business development.

7.7.3 Limitations

Practically all studies have limitations. Given that the Pop-up Pathway for women-owned micro-retail pop-up has now been created, implemented and validated after going through a stage of development, more focus should be given to ways which it can now support the improvement of strategies and business management skills that promote a positive and effective change in the level of contributions made to the UK economy by women-owned micro-retail pop-ups. A limitation of this study is that even though the Pop-up Pathway has been tested and validated in the three different UK cities of Birmingham, Manchester and Nottingham, it has yet to be validated in other UK cities. Increasing or adding a further number of cases would provide more specific insight into how different challenges can hinder progress of women-owned pop-ups and the validation of results would thus be strengthened.

7.8 Recommendations for future research

The present thesis offers some fruitful insight and directions for future research. The findings of this study reveal the success factors and challenges encountered by women micro-retail pop-up owners. Geographical locations imposed a degree of limitation on the general application of the results obtained from three UK cities. The data derived from the input of sixty-nine women micro-retail pop-up owners from these cities, all acting in the role of research participant, show that further research along the lines of a cross-national UK study involving alternative geographical locations could be even more revealing towards a further enhancement of the Pop-up Pathway.

Study findings were validated in two cycles due to the limited time factor but further validation of the newly developed framework could be obtained by way of involving different time periods during the pop-up business development process. Further studies could provide for an assessment of the long-term effects of the Pop-up Pathway. This would allow stakeholders such as government, NGOs, policy-makers and business development support organisations to gain a deeper understanding with more insight into the context of women micro-retail pop-up owners at both national and regional levels. Additional supportive policies could be enacted, revealed needs being satisfied through the implementation of effective strategies.

The researcher would also recommend expanding this study internationally, perhaps to different economies or developing countries, to explore the socio-economic and cultural aspects of women temporary retail business owners and accordingly adapt the Pop-up Pathway to different contexts. This could be a fruitful area for further research. It could give support to women micro-retail business owners who operate their retail businesses on a temporary basis with more difficulties due to economic constraints and could contribute to uplifting hundreds

of thousands of women, children and families to meet their basic needs, adding new employment opportunities to increase the gross domestic product of an economy.

One unexpected finding of this study was the need for a ‘contingency and intervention support tool’. There is plenty of room for future progress in the adding of clear, useable tools which will determine how to support women micro-retail pop-up owners to gain physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing while developing their temporary retail pop-up businesses. The collaborative nature of the sense of community developed in this study can be further developed in future research. As discussed above, the findings of this study have a number of important implications for future research and practice.

It is intended for the newly developed Pop-up Pathway to provide a model to conduct future research in the field of women-owned business. The Pop-up Pathway assists women micro-retail pop-up owners in the UK to use robust business management knowledge and skills and to continue to achieve success along the entrepreneurial journey while fulfilling family caring responsibilities and achieving a work-life balance.

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Yin, R.K. (1994), *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (2nd Ed.), Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Appendix i

Summary of the literature search results.

PHASES	DESCRIPTION	TOTAL
1	All articles containing at least one of the 3 primary key words (“women” and “retail” and “pop-up”) in their abstracts.	13,000
2	All articles containing at least one of 3 additional key words (challenges, success, internal, external, strategies) in their abstracts	6,290
3	All the articles whose abstracts are substantively relevant	137
4	All the articles whose text is effectively relevant	113

Source: elaboration on the dataset.

The advantage of the peer-review process is that reviewers provide feedback to editors and writers regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the manuscript, which enhances the credibility and quality of the research that is published.

Appendix ii

Overview of the corpus of research literature reviewed.

Category of research literature		Country	Nature of research foci
Journal Articles	113	UK	Conceptual 67
Textbooks	12		Empirical 40
Book chapters	17		
Reports	12		
Conference proceedings	26		

Interview Schedule Questions

SECTION 1: DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following is your age group?
 18-24 25-34 35-44 Over 44

2. Your Gender:
Male Female

3. Marital status:
Married:..... Unmarried:

4. Number of children you have:

5. Which of the following best gives your education level?
..... Primary Level
..... Secondary Level
..... Diploma
..... Technical qualifications
..... Bachelor Degree
..... Master Degree
..... Above Masters
..... . No Formal Education

SECTION 2: BUSINESS INFORMATION

6. What industry / sector did your pop-up business operate in?
..... Food and Drink
..... Manufacturing (e.g. textiles)
..... Creative design (e.g. Jewellery)

7. How long was the pop-up business in operation?

... 2-3 years ... 4-5 years ... 6-7 years ... 8-9 years ... More than 10 years

SECTION 3: BUSINESS SUCCESS FACTORS

8. In your opinion, would you say these factors challenged to the success or growth of your business?

Factor		Yes	No
i. Financial	Insufficient capital		
	Lack of finance		
	Access of capital		
	Lack of alternative source of finance		
ii. Education	Lack of basic formal education		
	Level of education		
	Lack of training		
	Lack of women only training		
	Lack of management training		
iii. Regulatory	Government policies		
	Legal and Regulatory		
	Tax		
	Licence and registration		
	Transition from benefit		
iv. Business Management	Lack of planning		

	Lack of technological skills		
	Lack of experience		
	Competition		
	Lack of networking		
	Lack of marketing knowledge and skills		
v. Culture	Norms and values		
	Gender discriminations		
	Carding responsibilities		
	Motherhood		

SECTION 4: SUCCESS FACTORS

9. In your opinion, how would rate these factors contributed to the success of your pop-up retail business? (1 less contributed – 10 extremely contributed)

Success Factor	Rate									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
i. Finance										
ii. Networking										
iii. Family support										
iv. Business support programmes										
v. Government support										

SECTION 5: OTHER FACTORS

10. Do you have any other success factors which assist to grow your business?

11. Do you have any other barriers or challenges face within your business?

12. Do you any anything else to discuss in relation to your pop-up business?

Appendix iv : Questions for the focus groups

1. Identifying a clear vision and mission for a retail pop-up assist to plan future business activities. what do you think about identifying a vision and mission for your pop-up?
2. Strengths of micro-retail pop-ups are temporary nature and can move to different markets. How do you perceive these?
3. Identifying your strengths and opportunities would assist you to overcome from the weaknesses and threats you encountered. Do you agree with this statement?
4. Do you like to network face-to-face or virtually (e.g., social media – messenger, Skype meetings)?
5. Engaging in networking event helps to develop confident and compete collaboratively. How do you find time to engage in the networking?

Appendix v

Follow up short interview questions

1. 1. What do you think of the Pop-up Pathway?
2. Do you think that the Pop-up Pathway helps you to develop your pop-up business?
3. What do you like best about the proposed Pop-up Pathway?
4. How did you feel about the introduction to the Pop-up Pathway?

Appendix vi

Ethical Clearance Approval Letter - Semi-structured interviews

From: Cali, Annabel <annabel.cali@ntu.ac.uk>

Sent: 09 July 2018 09:14

To: Gallellalage, Ramani 2015 (PGR) <ramani.gallellalage2015@my.ntu.ac.uk>

Subject: APPROVED: GALLELLALAGE 2017/227: Request for ethical review

Message sent on behalf of the Chair of the College Research Ethics Committee

Dear Ramani

Thank you for the resubmission of your application (No. 2017/227) to the College Research Ethics Committee (CREC) on 07 December 2017 requesting ethical clearance for the project entitled:

"Women-owned pop-up stores: starting, managing and acting as a bridge to a permanent retail presence in the UK retail market".

We are pleased to inform you that the Committee were happy to confirm that in its judgement there were no further outstanding ethical concerns that required further discussion or exploration prior to data collection and the reviewers are satisfied that your resubmission now meets with their ethical approval.

The Committee would like to wish you well in the completion of your project.

Sent on behalf of K Wheat
Chair CREC

Annabel Cali

Research and REF Administrator

Research Office

Nottingham Trent University

Arkwright Room B113

Tel: +44 115 848 8157

E-mail: annabel.cali@ntu.ac.uk

Appendix vii: Ethical clearance approval letter

Focus groups and follow up short interviews

From: Cali, Annabel <annabel.cali@ntu.ac.uk>
Sent: 16 December 2019 09:49
To: Gallellalage, Ramani 2015 (PGR) <ramani.gallellalage2015@my.ntu.ac.uk>
Cc: Galanakis, Kostas <kostas.galanakis@ntu.ac.uk>; Armannsdottir, Guja <guja.armannsdottir@ntu.ac.uk>; Oxborrow, Lynn <lynn.oxborrow@ntu.ac.uk>
Subject: APPROVED: Gallellalage 2019/269 request for ethical review

Message sent on behalf of the College Research Ethics Committee (CREC)

Dear Ramani

Thank you for the recent resubmission of your application (no. 2019/269) to the College Research Ethics Committee (CREC) on 13 December 2019 requesting ethical clearance for the project entitled: *Women-owned micro-retail pop-up stores: starting, managing and acting as a bridge to survive in the UK retail market.*

We are pleased to inform you that the reviewers were happy to confirm that in their judgement there were no further outstanding ethical concerns that required further discussion or exploration prior to data collection and they are satisfied that your resubmission now meets with their ethical approval.

We would like to wish you well in the completion of your project.

Sent on behalf of
CREC

Annabel Cali
Research and REF Administrator
Research Office
Nottingham Trent University
Arkwright Room B113
Tel: +44 115 848 8157
E-mail: annabel.cali@ntu.ac.uk

Login to **Worktribe** to get a costing, expert advice, formal approvals and more. Access support information, latest news and training dates on the Worktribe **NOW Learning Room**

Appendix viii: Participants information sheet and consent form

Semi-structured interviews

Participant Information Sheet

My name is Ramani Priyadarshani Gallellalage. I am a PhD student at Nottingham Business School, Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham, UK. I am conducting a research project, in women-owned micro, retail pop-up to develop a strategic framework to assist and support women retail pop-up owners to develop their retail pop-up in to a sustainable, permanent retail presence in the UK retail market. You are invited to take part in this study. If you are interested in the project's participation, please read the below information which makes you understand the participant involvement.

What is the purpose of this project?

The purpose is to develop a strategic framework to assist and support women who owned a micro, retail pop-up to develop their temporary retail pop into a sustainable, permanent retail presence in the UK retail market.

Why have you been invited to take part?

The basic idea behind this interview is to purposefully select participants that will best help to understand the challenges (problems), and in this case, the challenges faced by women micro, retail pop-up owners and to answer the research questions. Accordingly, twenty-four women retail pop-up owners in the UK retail market (Nottingham, Birmingham and Manchester) are required for this project, so you are one of these women retail pop-up owners who are over eighteen years old, and conducting a retail pop-up in the UK retail market.

Do you have to take part?

Your participation is voluntary. You can withdraw from this project without any reason after it has taken place. If you wish to withdraw, you are free to withdraw at any time without any reason. During your participation, you are free to ask any questions for the focus group interview.

What will participants (women pop-up owners) do in this project?

The women micro retail pop-up owners will be participated in the semi-structured open ended face-to-face interview and share their experiences, especially the challenges they encountered in developing their pop-up retail to sustain in the retail market. The stakeholders who participate in the interviews will share their experiences in supporting women micro retail pop-up owners (e.g. support available for them and further support they needed).

You (participant) will be audio-recorded. You are free to share your challenges and experience, which you are not included within this interview guide. You will be interviewed again after developing the strategic framework.

Are anonymity and confidentiality guaranteed?

The participants' personal name and all the other details will be kept confidential for the duration of the study. The name of women pop-up owners and other stakeholders will be replaced by pseudonyms and coding. They will be used to protect individual's identity. Any extracts from what you say that are quoted in the thesis will be entirely anonymous and that no clues to your identity appear in the thesis. All data of these participants will be stored anonymously and safely during undertaking this project by password protection. Only my supervisory team (Director of Studies and Co-supervisor) and I will have access to the data. On completion of the dissertation, the data will be destroyed. However, the thesis may be read by future students on the course and study may be published in an academic journal.

How long will you take part?

Interviews with participants will last between 45 minutes to one hour.

What are advantages of the participation?

You will be able to access the outcome of this research study.

Contacts for further information

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at the following address:

Ms. Ramani Priyadarshani Gallellalage

Email: ramani.gallellalage@my.ntu.ac.uk

Nottingham Business School, Nottingham Trent University, Burton Street, Nottingham, NG1 4BU, UK.

Director of Studies: Dr. Kostas Galanakis

Please return this sheet at least until the last possible date of withdrawal.

Consent Form

Developing a strategic framework to support and assist women retail Pop-ups owners to develop their retail Pop-ups into the permanent retail presence in the UK retail market.

Please read and confirm your consent to be conducted for this research project by signing and dating this form

1. I confirm that I have read the Participant Information Sheet. The purpose and overview of the project have been explained, and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about this project.
2. I understand that I have been invited to take part because I am over eighteen years old, and I am a micro, small retail pop-up owner in the UK retail market.
3. I understand that my participation is purely voluntary, and I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without giving any reason.
4. I give permission for using audio-recording during focus group interview. The audio will be destroyed at the end of this project.
5. I understand that the confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed during undertaking the project. Only the researcher (Ms. Ramani Priyadarshani Gallellalage) and her supervisory team (Director of Studies and Co-supervisor) will have access the data. At the end of the project, all of my participant information will be destroyed.
6. I agree to participate in this project
7. My information will not effect on conducting and developing my retail Pop-up business. After six months from the end of the project all my information will completely destroy.

(.....)
Name of participant

(.....)
Date

(.....)
Signature

Two copies: One to be kept by the participant and one copy to be kept by the researcher.

Appendix 7: Participants information sheet and consent form

Focus groups and follow up short interviews

Participant Information Sheet

Please retain this sheet at least until the last possible day of withdrawal.

My name is Ramani Priyadarshani Gallellalage. I am a PhD student, 902, Management Department, Nottingham Business School, Nottingham Trent University, 50 Shakespeare Street, Nottingham, NG1 4FQ. I am conducting a research project, which relates to women-owned micro-retail pop-up by developing a strategic framework to assist and support women micro-retail pop-up owners to develop their retail pop-ups in order to survive in the UK retail market beyond five years. You are invited to take part in this study. If you are interested in the project's participation, please read the below information which makes you understand the participant involvement.

What is the purpose of this project?

The purpose is to develop a strategic framework to assist and support women who owned a micro-retail pop-up to develop their temporary retail pop-ups to survive in the UK retail market beyond five years.

Why have you been invited to participate?

The basic idea behind this focus groups / follow up interviews are to purposefully select participants that will best help to validate and improve the newly developed pop-up pathway and reach the research aims and objectives. Accordingly, fifteen women micro-retail pop-up owners in the UK retail market (Nottingham, Birmingham and Manchester) are required for the focus groups and follow up interviews. You were invited because you have participated in the individual semi-structure interviews; you are one of these women retail pop-up owners who are over eighteen years old and conducting a retail pop-up in the UK retail market.

Do you have to take part?

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You can withdraw from this project by informing the researcher via the following email and/ or telephone numbers before 15.02.2020 without giving any reason.

Ms. Ramani Priyadarshani Gallellalage

E-mail: ramani.gallellalage@ntu.ac.uk

Tel: 01158488235

Mobile: 07466661023

During your participation, you are free to ask any questions about the focus groups.

What will participants (women pop-up owners) do in this project?

From the beginning of the focus group interviews, we introduce the Pop-up Pathway to the women pop-up owners with collaboration of the resource persons. We will ask few questions about the pop-up pathway (e.g. how it is useful for you? Is there anything need to add or remove). Focus groups and follow up interviews will be audio-recorded. There are no right or wrong answers but differing point of view. Please feel free to share your ideas and views to improve the Pop-up Pathway.

Are anonymity and confidentiality guaranteed?

Anonymity is guaranteed in any presentation of the research. Collected data will be reported in both an aggregated form to indicate trends and individual verbatim form to illustrate key points. When verbatim quotes are used pseudonyms will be used to protect individual's identity. Any extracts from what you say that are quoted in the thesis. Comments made by participants involved in the research may be published but anonymity is guaranteed in any form of presentation on the research. This includes journal articles and presentations at conferences.

Confidentiality: Steps will be taken throughout the research process to try and protect identity and promote confidentiality. The participants' personal name and all the other details will be kept confidential for the duration of the study. The name of women pop-up owners and other stakeholders will be replaced pseudonyms and coding.

They will be used to protect individual's identity. They will be used to protect individual's identity. All data of these participants will be stored anonymously and safely during the period of study undertaking and password protected. The password will be changed every 12 weeks. Data will be password protected and will be kept in a secure place for the duration of the project and destroyed after one year from the date completion of the study. Only the researcher will have access to the data. Director of studies and co-supervisors will access the data where necessary.

How long will you take part?

Focus groups and follow-up interviews with participants will be conduct 45 minutes to one hour.

What are advantages of the participation?

The participants will be able to access the outcome of this research study. Moreover, women pop-up owners will be able to develop their micro-retail pop-ups in the long-term basis with the assistance of new strategic framework. Business supportive organisations will be able to improve their training programs in supporting women, temporary, retail business owners.

Contacts for further information

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at the following address:

Ms. Ramani Priyadarshani Gallellalage

E-mail: ramani.gallellalage@ntu.ac.uk

Tel: 01158488235

Mobile: 07466661023

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50 Shakespeare Street
Nottingham
NG1 4FQ

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Tel: 01158483833

Consent Form

Developing a strategic framework to support and assist women micro-retail pop-up owners to develop their retail pop-up survive in the UK retail market.

Please read and confirm your consent to be conducted for this research project by signing and dating this form

8. I confirm that I have read the Participant Information Sheet. The purpose and overview of the project have been explained, and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about this project.
9. I understand that I have been invited to take part because I am over eighteen years old; I am a micro, small retail pop-up owner in the UK retail market and I have participated in the semi-structured interviews.
10. I understand that my participation is purely voluntary; I am free to withdraw from the project before 15.02.2020 by informing the researcher via the following email and/ or telephone numbers without giving any reasons. Email: ramani.gallellalage@ntu.ac.uk and Tel: 01158488235 / mobile: 07466661023.
11. I give permission for using audio-recording during focus group interview. The audio will be destroyed at the end of this project.
12. I understand that the confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed during undertaking the project. Only the researcher (Ms. Ramani Priyadarshani Gallellalage) and her supervisory team (Director of Studies and Co-supervisor) will have access the data. At the end of the project, all my participant information will be destroyed.
13. I agree to participate in this project.
14. My information will not affect on conducting and developing my retail pop-up business. After one year from the end of the project, all my information will completely destroy.

(.....)
Name of participant

(.....)
Date

(.....)
Signature

Two copies: One to be kept by the participant and one copy to be kept by the researcher.

POP-UP PATHWAY 2020

Resource Guide

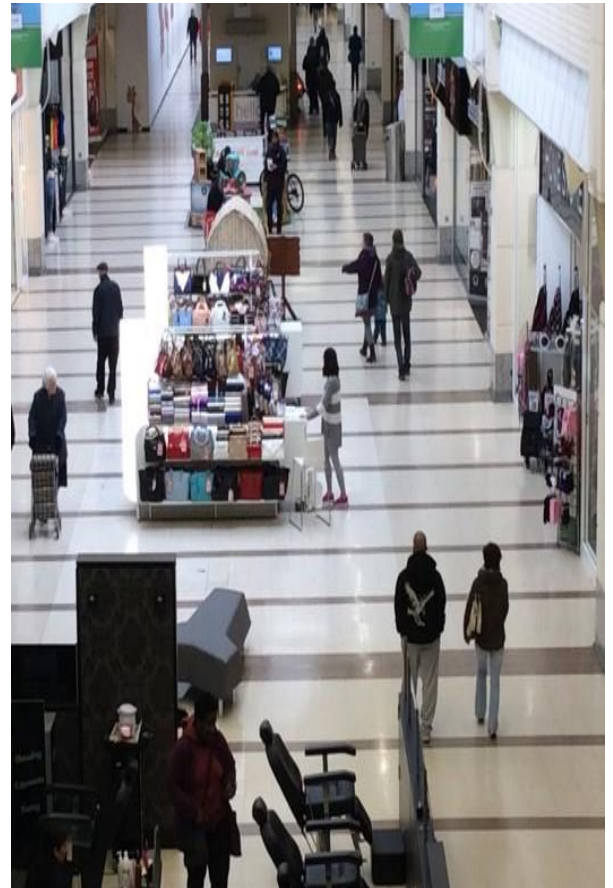
March 18

NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY

Authored by: Ramani Gallellalage,

Director of Studies: Dr Kostas Galanakis

Co-supervisors: Dr Lynn Oxborrow and Dr Guja
Armannsdottir



**NOTTINGHAM
BUSINESS SCHOOL**

NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY 

Forward

The researcher is very pleased to be able to introduce this Pop-up Pathway for the Women micro-retail pop-up owners in the UK. Women entrepreneurs play a significant role in the UK retail market. The UK government statistics show that more and more women are starting their retail businesses in micro-retail pop-ups and becoming self-employed.

However, until now, women micro-retail pop-up owners have not been able to benefit from the provision of a broad strategic framework and training to establish their temporary retail pop-ups. In this study I have developed a strategic framework namely, the Pop-up Pathway to assist the women micro-retail pop-up owners to survive in the UK retail market beyond five years. The Pop-up Pathway represents the first coordinated and collaborative effort by the Higher Education in partnership with the women pop-up owners to address the challenges they encountered which hindered their full entrepreneurial potential. The Pop-up Pathway assists them to utilise their capabilities and resources to overcome the challenges by working collaboratively with peers to help each other; ultimately to survive successfully in the UK retail market.

Efforts to assist vulnerable group of women who get into self-employment and set up a micro-retail pop-up businesses to increase their income earning potentials to reach a sustainable retail presence and enable them to get out of financial difficulties and become self-reliant being connected and supported by a peer-to-peer action-learning environment.

First, there will be a proper identification of economic potentials and opportunities based on a realistic assessment of the available resources and the opportunities in the UK retail market. The identification of the opportunities should be a through and participatory process, involving the intended target beneficiaries themselves as to build consensus and commitment and to help mobilise the necessary resources.

Secondly, the Pop-up Pathway assists to empower the women micro-retail pop-up owners to utilise their strengths and opportunities to develop their temporary retail pop-ups. Ultimately, it will assist them to improve the welfare of their families especially their children or the new generation.

Ramani Priyadarshani Gallellalage.

Introduction

Background

Action plays a central role in business development training. Based on action regulatory theory, the researcher has developed a participatory action-based training for the women micro-retail pop-up owners. This training puts a particular focus on action as the participants learned action principles and engaged in managing of a pop-up retail during the training. The researcher makes some propositions, or a set of action-regulatory factors that mediates the effect of the training on women pop-up entrepreneurial action.

How to use the Pop-up Pathway?

The Pop-up Pathway consists of two booklets

- 1. The Resource Guide*
- 2. The Play Book of the Pop-up Pathway*

Action Learning & Collaborative Environment

Resource Guideline

Playbook

The resource guide point to the action-learning activities of the Pop-up Pathway

Please ask for help from the facilitator where necessary

Play Book consists of action-learning activities and acts as a decision support tool

The Resource Guideline facilitates them in conducting the activities of the Play Book and pointers to the tasks and action-learning activities which assist the women micro-retail pop-up owners to refresh their existing knowledge and develop their business management knowledge and skills.

Group Activity 1 - Ice Breaker Activity

The aim of this activity is to provide introductory activity. The ice breaker activity will be used in the Pop-up Pathway at the beginning of the action-based training.

Why use Ice breaker

Ice breaker activity or discussion questions or activity will be used to help women micro-retail pop-up owners (participants) to relax and ease people into the group, meeting and learning situation as they are great for learning each other's names and personal/professional information.

Information

This group activity helps to introduce one another within the group. This activity is particularly helpful in learning names and important bits of information about the group. It is also good for providing information. This activity will be used at the start of the programme to help the group get to know each other well.

Unique Things

Group Size: 3-5

Resources: (tea/coffee/pen & paper)

Duration: 20 minutes



(Gallellalage, 2020)

There are several methods for starting off group work but the simplest and most effective for a new group meeting for the first time is to:

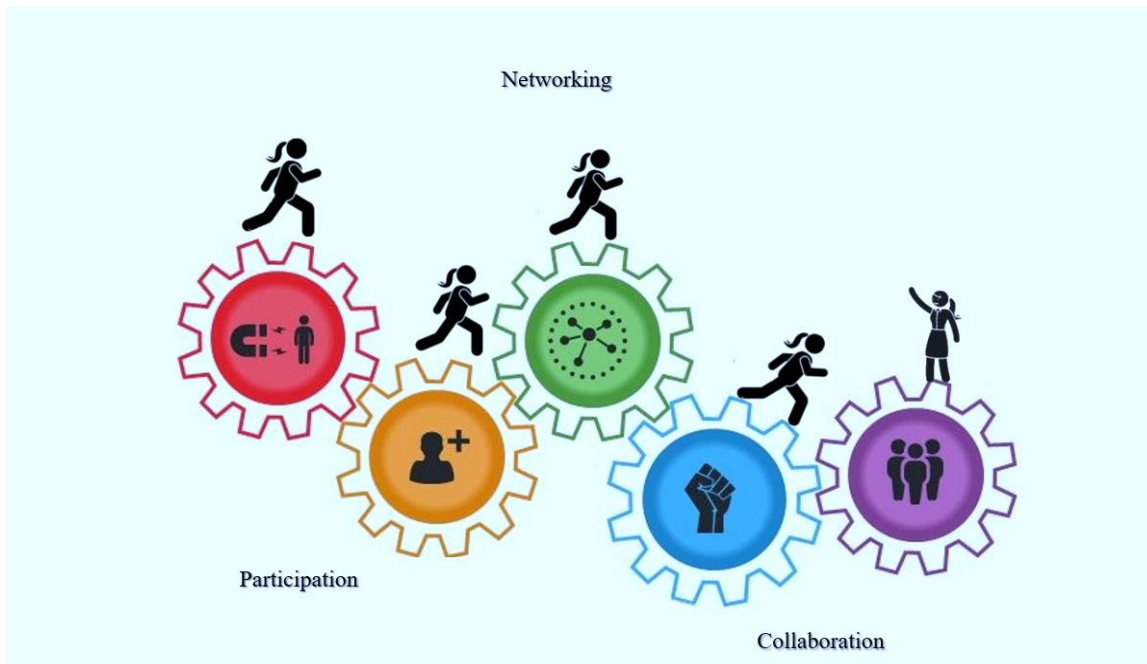
- Explain that you are going to ask everyone to introduce another person to the whole group rather than ask each person to make her introduction.
- Ask the group to split into pairs so that they can swap relevant information which will be needed to make the introduction
- Allow at least ten minutes for this information exchange as both members of the pair have to find out quite a number of personal details.
- Call the group into a circle so that the introductions can be made
- If there is an even number of people then you can introduce yourself, but if there is an odd number you can form a pair and be introduced by one of the new groups.

Each person has to introduce themselves and state one thing about them/ something they've done which they think is unique, if someone else has done it then they have to think of something else.

Variation

The facilitator can divide the group into pairs and give participants a few minutes to interview each other. Then, each participant should introduce their partners by name and share at least two unique characteristics about them.

The following action-learning activities will be conducted with collaboration and participation to empower the women micro-retail pop-up owners to make decisions about their business and about their future within a peer-to-peer support environment. Ultimately these activities will help them to set realistic short-term and long-term goals and achieve them.



(Gallellalge, 2020)

Group Activity 2
Where I want to be in the short-term & long-term (goals)
(Identification of Vision & Mission)

Information

Unique Things

Group Size: 6-8

Resources: (pen & paper)

Duration: 20 minutes

Task

Defining the vision of your pop-up business
 Create a mission statement to identify and evaluate
 Setting goals (short-term and long-term)

Outcome

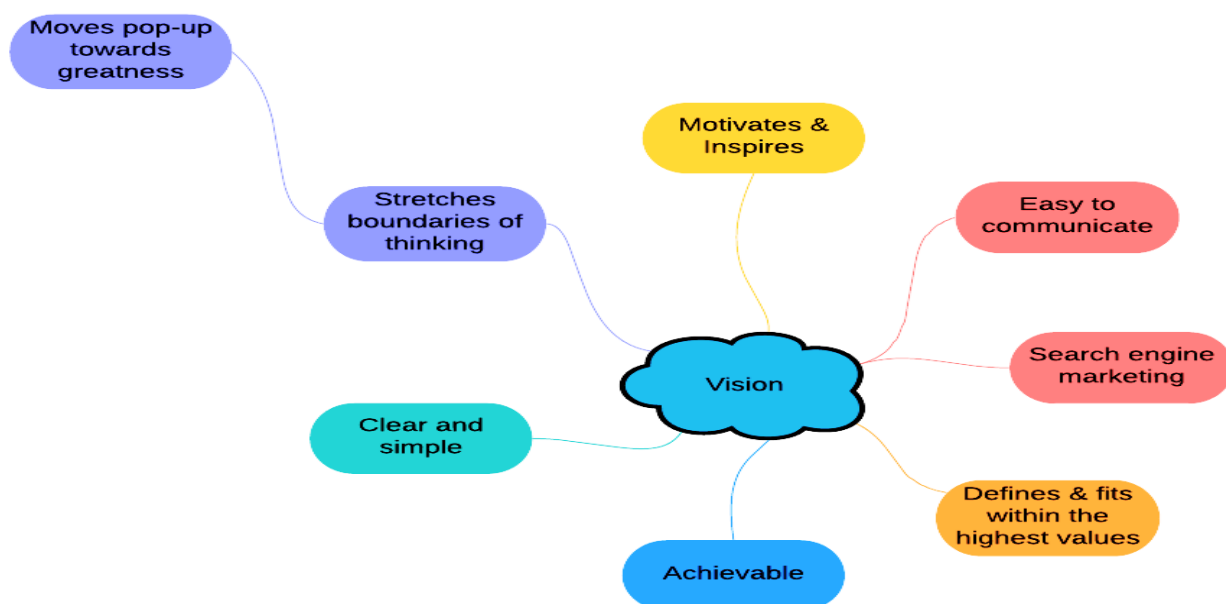
Identifying and defining the directions
 Guiding principles/future goals

What do I want to become?

Creating a vision and determining a direction: *What pop-up retail is about?*

This activity helps the women micro-retail pop-up owners to identify the vision of their pop-up business (its intended 'strategic direction'). This activity helps the participants to feel more confident and more 'empowered' to take decisions that consistent with the pop-up's overall purpose.

Qualities of your Pop-up vision



What are the elements of the vision of your pop-up?

A vision is a picture of a preferred future state, a description of where your pop-up retail will be in five to ten years from now.

It should be dynamic and achievable; it is therefore more than a dream or a hope.

Accordingly, the vision of the pop-up becomes the basis of commitments or covenants that planners make with one another.

The vision provides the context for designing and managing the changes necessary to attain selected goals and strategic objectives.

Vision should be rooted in reality even as you focus on the future of your retail pop-up.

Vision should express your desires and commitments. In creating a vision, you must be patient with one another (your colleagues).

The reason is different women pop-up owners have different goals and different perceptions about what is achievable. In defining your pop-up's vision, remember that all ideas are valid and are entitled to equal weight and respect.



Exercise: Creating a pop-up's vision of success.....

1. Ask women pop-up owners to relax and think creatively. They can work in small groups or plenary session to develop their five to seven priority ideas for the pop-up's future. To be feasible, the vision for the pop-up's future should not exceed 10 items and should be placed priority order by the entire group.
2. Women pop-up owners should focus on what they want to create and not how it will happen.
3. Women pop-up owners should avoid focusing on today's problems and what is not working.
4. Using newsprint or transparencies, participants needs to list their ideas about the pop-up's future. It is helpful for the pop-up owners to make their own list before group discussion. Below are some questions that may help women pop-up owners think about their pop-up's vision for the future.

Vision Statement Worksheet (see the Play Book)

DECIDING WHERE TO GO

(Seeking a Strategic Direction)

Your vision should be ambitious as it will thrive the pop-up business to be aggressive and push hard.

However, the vision statement should be realistic.

In articulating the vision of your pop-up business, identify how your business differentiates from your competitors.

In writing the vision statement of your pop-up business, please make sure to include a few critical words.

(You might see these as big ideas; however, they are clearly scoped why you do your pop-up business, the market that you are operating, how your retail pop-up business is different from your competitors. More importantly, you will be able to identify and clarify what you are working toward).

What is my pop-up business?

(Mission)

Firstly, try to answer the following questions with peer-to-peer support.

What do I sell or provide?

.....

Products? How many different types and ranges?

.....
.....
.....
.....

Services? Who could benefit from them and how?

.....
.....
.....
.....

Why would people use my product or service rather others?

.....
.....
.....
.....

My customers are

Apart from the face-to-face pop-up shop - I reach my customers

My market – where do I sell my products?

Activity 3
Free group discussion
Identification of your internal strengths and weaknesses

Unique Things

Group Size: 3-5

Resources: (pen & paper; flip chart; sticky notes)

Duration: 20 minutes

Information

This activity helps the women micro-retail pop-up owners to achieve self-awareness and to encourage their willingness to receive and consider new ideas.

The facilitator provides one step from free discussion to therapy group work.

This activity helps the participants to build their collaboration and strengthen each other through peer-to-peer support.



Further this activity helps to identify the capabilities.

(Internal Environment Analysis)

What are the likely strengths and weaknesses that will impact on your retail pop-up business?

		Very good	Good
My skills	Strength		

(e.g. communication)	Weaknesses		

How do I do my pop-up business/ Motivations	Strength	Very good	Good
	Weaknesses		

Values of my products or brand (e.g. toys, hand crafts, food)	Strength	Very good	Good
	Weaknesses		

Customers like my products because...	Strength	Very good	Good
	Weaknesses		

My pop-up operates in the (e.g. Birmingham) Market	Strength	Very good	good
Because Resources	Weaknesses		

Other:

.....

.....

.....

**Activity 4
Brainstorming**

Identification of the threats and opportunities in the retail market

Unique Things

Group Size: 3-5

Resources: (pen & paper; flip chart; sticky notes)

Duration: 20 minutes

Information

This activity helps the women pop-up owners to identify the opportunities and the challenges they encountered in the retail market where they operate.

The participants might identify their challenges in (economy – accessing finance; social cultural environment – childcare and family caring responsibilities; political and government – transition from benefit to self-employment; technological – using online social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram).

The activity will also help them to identify local resources and competition in the market (for example, threats from the established, multinational retailers).

External Threats and Opportunities

It would be helpful to do some prior thinking about what might be changing in the retail market where your pop-up business operates (business environment)

My Temporary Retail Market(s) (External Environment Analysis)

What are the likely challenges and opportunities that will impact on your retail pop-up business?

		High	Low
Political	Challenges		
	Opportunities		

Technology	Challenges	High	Low
	Opportunities		

Economy	Challenges	High	Low
	Opportunities		

Market	Challenges	High	Low

	Opportunities		
--	---------------	--	--

	Challenges	High	Low
Policy related issues (e.g. transition from benefit to self-employment)	Opportunities		

Expectations of the Society & Culture (e.g. My family & friends are supportive/not supportive)	Challenges	High	Low
	Opportunities		

Activity 5
Brainstorming / group discussion
What should I do to overcome my weaknesses and threats in the market?

Unique Things

Group Size: 3-5

Resources: (pen & paper; flip chart; sticky notes)

Duration: 20 minutes

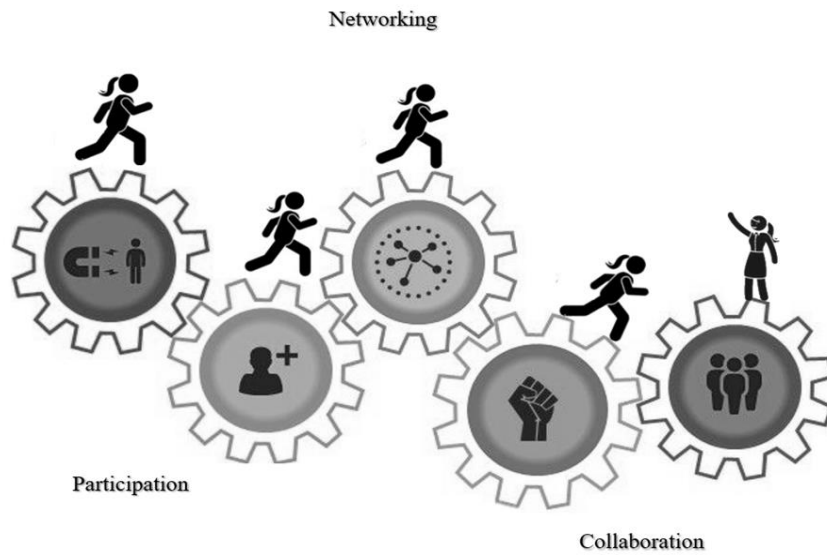
Information

This activity will help the women micro-retail pop-up owners to share ideas (with the peer to peer support) and find out how to overcome their weaknesses and threats in the retail market by utilizing their strengths, resources and capabilities and the opportunities in the market.

My weaknesses	Solutions			
	Think about the identified strengths, capabilities, resources and opportunities			
	1	2	3	4
*				
*				
*				

My challenges	Solutions			
	Think about the identified strengths, capabilities, resources and opportunities			
	1	2	3	4
*				
*				
*				

Think and agree (optional) how to meet in the future in the group (e.g. via Facebook, face-to-face)



*****Thank you*****

Appendix xi: Pop-up Pathway – Play Book

**WOMEN-OWNED
POP-UP PATHWAY
PLAYBOOK
2020**

A framework for supporting women micro-retail pop-up owners to sustain in the UK retail market



Ramani Gallellalage

Director of studies: Dr. Kostas Galanakis
Co-supervisors: Dr. Lynn Oxborrow & Dr. Guja
Armannsdottir

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

2. VISION

3. MY STRENGTHS, CAPABILITIES,
RESOURCES

4. MY WEAKNESSES

5. MY OPPORTUNITIES

6. THREATS

7. COLLABORATION – FUTURE
MEETINGS



*Please introduce to the group:
e.g.
Your name
Your pop-up business
Where do you come from
Where do you operate your pop-up business*



A



B



C



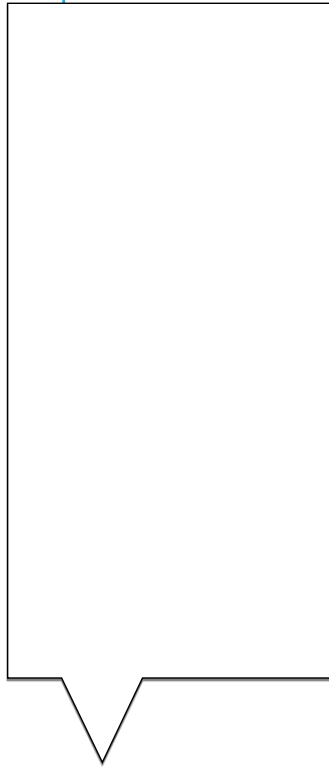
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E

CREATING A 'VISION' AND DETERMINING A 'DIRECTION'

Vision - Principles beliefs – What does the pop-up business stand for?



In five years time where do your pop-up retails wants to be?

How would we know we were there?

What kind of pop-up retail do you want to be?

How do we differentiate ourselves from our competitors?

What image, reputation or influence do we want?

What would be worth committing to over the next 5-10 years?

My
Strengths
Capabilities
Resources

My Skills	Motivations	Value of my product	My customers
My market	Other		

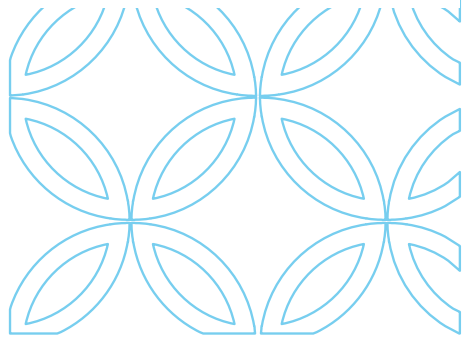
My Weaknesses

What do I need to improve?

My Skills	Motivations	Value of my product	My customers
My market	Other		



My Opportunities



Market	Economy	customers
Political	Technology	My family / people around me

Collaboration
Future meetings



Thank you
We wish you every success in your future

Appendix xiii: Profile of pop-ups

Participant	Pop-up Business	City	Age of Pop-up
PB1	Food and drink	Birmingham	6 months
PB2	Creative jewellery	Birmingham	1 year
PB3	Fashion cloths	Birmingham	2 year
PB4	Food and drink	Birmingham	1 year
PB5	Clothes (children)	Birmingham	4 years
PB6	Creative jewellery	Birmingham	2 years
PB7	Food and drink	Birmingham	3 years
PB8	Fashion cloths	Birmingham	1 year
PB9	Beauty products	Birmingham	8 months
PB10	Food and drink	Birmingham	2 years
PB11	Cloths	Birmingham	2 years
PB12	Natural beauty products	Birmingham	2 years
PB13	Creative jewellery	Birmingham	1 year
PB14	Street food	Birmingham	3 years
PB15	Beauty products	Birmingham	2 years
PB16	Fashion and design	Birmingham	1 year
PB17	Art and design	Birmingham	2 years
PB18	Fashion and design	Birmingham	3 years
PB19	Art and design	Birmingham	4 years
PB20	Beauty products	Birmingham	1 year
PB21	Art and design products	Birmingham	3 years
PB22	Food and drink	Birmingham	2years
PB23	Zero wate products	Birmingham	3 years
PM1	Food and drink	Manchester	4 years
PM2	Essential oil	Manchester	2 years
PM3	Art and design	Manchester	1 year
PM4	Creative art	Manchester	3 years
PM5	Street food	Manchester	2 years
PM6	Fashion clothes	Manchester	3 years
PM7	Toys	Manchester	2 years
PM8	Zero waste products	Manchester	2 years
PM9	Clothes (women)	Manchester	2 years
PM10	Food and drink	Manchester	1 year
PM11	Children clothes	Manchester	3 years
PM12	Healthy food	Manchester	2 years
PM13	Fashion and lifestyle products	Manchester	2 years
PM14	Beauty products	Manchester	2 years
PM15	Fashion and design	Manchester	3 years
PM16	Baby products	Manchester	2 years
PM17	Zero waste products	Manchester	3 years
PM18	Beauty products	Manchester	2 years
PM19	Street food	Manchester	2 years
PM20	Street food	Manchester	2 years
PM21	Healthy food	Manchester	3 years
PM22	Creative art	Manchester	2 years
PM23	Greeting cards	Manchester	2 years
PN1	Homemade food	Nottingham	3 years
PN2	Street food	Nottingham	2 years
PN3	Toys	Nottingham	1 year
PN4	Fashion and lifestyle products	Nottingham	2 years

PN5	Art and design	Nottingham	2 years
PN6	Baby hand and foot casting	Nottingham	3 years
PN7	Beauty products	Nottingham	2 years
PN8	Creative jewellery	Nottingham	1 year
PN9	Organic products and creative art	Nottingham	2 years
PN10	Fashion cloths	Nottingham	2 years
PN11	Unique products	Nottingham	2 years
PN12	Creative art	Nottingham	2 years
PN13	Healthy food (homemade)	Nottingham	3 years
PN14	Toys	Nottingham	3 years
PN15	Sugar free sweet	Nottingham	2 years
PN16	Food and drink	Nottingham	2 years
PN17	Baby products	Nottingham	3 years
PN18	Greeting cards	Nottingham	2 years
PN19	Design clothes	Nottingham	2 years
PN20	Art and design	Nottingham	3 years
PN21	Creative art	Nottingham	2 years
PN22	Zero waste products	Nottingham	2 years
PN23	Art and design	Nottingham	3 years