Tourism, Indigenous women and empowerment: A case study of Taveuni, Fiji

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Southern Cross University

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Tourism, Indigenous Women and Empowerment: A Case Study of Taveuni, Fiji

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business

School of Business and Tourism
Southern Cross University

May 2017
Thesis Declaration

I certify that the work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original, except as acknowledged in the text, and that the material has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other university.

I acknowledge that I have read and understood the University’s rules, requirements, procedures and policy relating to my higher degree research award and to my thesis. I certify that I have complied with the rules, requirements, procedures and policy of the University (as they may be from time to time).

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Date: May, 2017
Abstract

Tourism is the economic driver for many less developed countries (LDCs) and small island developing states, such as those in the South Pacific. For Fiji, tourism is the largest contributor to gross domestic product and foreign exchange, as well as a catalyst for the development of iTaukei (Indigenous Fijian) communities. In the context of Fiji, few studies have explored how tourism impacts the lives of those who work in the tourism industry. Moreover, studies on the impacts of tourism and gender—and particularly on Indigenous women—in Fiji and other small island developing states are also limited.

The aim of this research is to explore the ways in which tourism employment has impacted the lives of iTaukei women on Taveuni, Fiji. There is a specific focus on whether these women have experienced empowerment as a result of their work in tourism. The study takes a qualitative, interpretive approach, heavily influenced by an Indigenist framework—namely, the Fijian Vanua Research Framework (FVRF). Scheyvens’ (1999) framework of economic, social, psychological and political empowerment is adopted to explore and assess the empowerment of women on Taveuni. Primary research consisted of talanoa sessions guided by semi-structured interview questions. In the Indigenous Fijian language talanoa means to chat or have a conversation with others, and is a recognised culturally appropriate methodology amongst Pacific Island academics working with indigenous communities.

This study examined the economic, social, political and psychological situations of the iTaukei women to determine whether their work in tourism facilitated their empowerment. The talanoa sessions revealed that the women have benefited significantly from tourism employment, which has in turn enabled them to build comfortable livelihoods for themselves and their families. More importantly, through their work, they have attained numerous levels of economic, social, political and psychological empowerment. The impact of such attainment has had positive influences, especially on their children, with a slow and steady impact to the overall development of their communities.

In exploring this key aspect of tourism employment impact on the iTaukei women on Taveuni, the study contributes to the gap in literature in two areas: one, gender and women in tourism in the South Pacific; and, two, on the role of women’s empowerment in tourism in a Fijian context.
Dedication

To Mum and Dad—Ana and Patrick Bibi

For all the struggles and unwavering support throughout the years so I can have the best and be the best I can be. I am indebted to you both. Sa ‘alevu na noqu va’avinana’a ena nomudrau veisusu ‘ei na veituberi lagilagi. This thesis is a testament to your steadfast belief in me.

To the female participants of Taveuni

For being the pillars of strength in your families and communities.

To my daughter, Juliana—Noqu Senijiale

Returning to complete my studies without you has been Nana’s biggest sacrifice. I hope you will one day understand why Nana had to be away from you for a while.

Vina’a sara va’alevu.
Acknowledgements

My first and foremost acknowledgment is to my source of strength, My Almighty God, for His guidance in my life. “I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever” (Psalm 145:1).

This thesis has been made possible by a community of wonderful people. I cannot thank you all enough for the tremendous support and encouragement throughout my research writing journey.

To the Government of Australia through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), vina’a va’alevu for awarding me the Australia Awards Scholarship to fulfil a lifetime goal. I am humbled and privileged to be a recipient of this prestigious award. This study opportunity has equipped me with the skills and knowledge to effectively and positively contribute to the development of my home country, Fiji. To you, I am endlessly grateful.

To my supportive supervisors, Associate Professor Erica Wilson and Dr Kay Dimmock, vina’a va’alevu for all the wisdom, patience and guidance offered to me throughout my candidature. I have learnt and developed immense writing and analytical thinking skills under your leadership and guidance and for that I will be forever grateful.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the participants of my study, especially to the Taveuni women, your spouses and community members. This study would not have been possible without your acceptance to my invitation. Vina’a sara va’alevu. To the two representatives of the government departments, thank you for making the time to meet with me.

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To my matavuva of Bracken Ridge, Brisbane, thank you. Thank you Theresa for always having a room available to me whenever I needed a break. See you in Fiji!

To Kai (Apisalome Movono), a dear friend and former colleague, I will be forever grateful for those phone calls of encouragement and guidance when I needed them most, especially those ‘Bula yane, Miss Lismore!’ chats. These were always very enlightening and no doubt ‘always va’aciriloloma’ catch ups. Vina’a va’alevu Kai.

To my family and friends who always took time just to say ‘Bula, how’s it going?’ on social media, thank you all very much for the kind gesture, you will never know how these always lightened and brightened my long days.

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I also extend my gratitude to my family members who took exceptional care of Juliana in my absence. To the Vere Crew—Mum, Marie and Tiare—thank you for looking after Lewa for me. To Use Hing, I am indebted to you for the wonderful tender, loving care you have given Juliana. To the Salacakaus of KK Drive, thank you for your show of support towards Juliana.

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## Abbreviations

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANZ</td>
<td>Australia New Zealand Banking Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBEM</td>
<td>Community-based Ecotourism Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBT</td>
<td>Community-based tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DoT</td>
<td>Department of Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DoW</td>
<td>Department of Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FBoS</td>
<td>Fiji Bureau of Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FVRF</td>
<td>Fijian Vanua Research Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IVS</td>
<td>International Visitor Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LDCs</td>
<td>Less Developed Countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDF</td>
<td>Market Development Facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MITT</td>
<td>Ministry of Industry Trade and Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCA</td>
<td>Nagorongoro Conservation Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIDS</td>
<td>Small Islands Development States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TDP</td>
<td>Tourism Development Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNWTO</td>
<td>United Nations World Tourism Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VRF</td>
<td>Vanua Research Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Tourism Organisation</td>
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## Glossary of Indigenous Fijian Terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dalo</strong></td>
<td><em>Colocasia esculenta</em>; a staple starchy root crop of the <em>iTaukei</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>iTaukei</strong></td>
<td>Indigenous Fijians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lotu</strong></td>
<td>Religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Matanitu</strong></td>
<td>Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sevusevu</strong></td>
<td>Ceremonial offering of <em>yagona</em> by the host to the guest, or the guest to his host and done in respect of recognition and acceptance of each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Talanoa</strong></td>
<td>(To have) a conversation, chat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Turaga ni koro</strong></td>
<td>Elected or appointed village headman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vanua</strong></td>
<td>Land, people and custom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yaqona</strong></td>
<td><em>Piper methysticum</em>; roots of the plant which are prepared and consumed by <em>iTaukei</em> as a ceremonial and social drink. Also known as kava.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 1 - Introduction

The impacts of tourism in the developed, developing and less developed worlds is significant. As ever, less developed economies have invested in tourism to drive socio-economic growth through the creation of employment and enterprises, export revenues and infrastructure development (World Tourism Organisation, 2016). For many developing and less developed countries (LDCs), tourism is becoming increasingly important, if not a key economic driver replacing traditional or declining export sectors, such as agriculture (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004; Britton, 1983; Harrison, 1992, 2001, 2003; Narayan, Narayan, Prasad, & Prasad, 2010; Pratt & Harrison, 2015; Sharpley & Telfer, 2015). Additionally, for many of these countries, tourism offers an alternative for development and can be a form of poverty alleviation in rural communities (Mowforth & Munt, 2009; Scheyvens, 2002; Scheyvens & Russell, 2012; Telfer & Sharpley, 2008).

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, tourism’s contribution to economies in 2014 was 37% of the overall gross domestic product (GDP) and 33.4% of employment (World Tourism Organisation, 2015). The United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) indicates that in 2015, international tourism represented 7% of the world’s exports in goods, an increase of 1% from 2014 (World Tourism Organisation, 2016). For tourism-dependent economies, this contribution has enabled the development of infrastructure, with the building of more roads, bridges, medical facilities and schools. For rural areas, such infrastructure has improved the accessibility to basic necessities (Harrison, 2001). Additionally, with the growth of small tourism operations in rural villages, these villagers are able access a better share of the tourist dollar. Studies have shown the benefits of having tourism operations in rural communities as villagers have the opportunity to be either directly or indirectly involved through community-based tourism (CBT) (Forsyth, 1995; Gentry, 2007; Gibson, 2015; King & Milman, 1993; López-Guzmán, Sánchez-Cañizares, & Pavón, 2011; Movono, Pratt, & Harrison, 2015; Scheyvens & Russell, 2010).

The direct benefits of employment opportunity are widely known and thus acknowledged by community members as a source of income for their families (D Gibson, 2015; Kado, 2007; Movono, 2012; Scheyvens, 2002). In many developing regions women make up almost 50% or more of the employees in the tourism sector (World Tourism Organization, 2011). Although women are highly represented in the tourism industry, they are still at the bottom of
the tourism employment pyramid (Richter, 1995). This means that most of the roles held by women are found at the entry levels of the tourism workforce. This has not deterred women from such employment opportunities; on the contrary, there have been success stories where women have moved up the pyramid by becoming business owners. This is evident in Central America, where, for example, women produce clothing and crafts for sale to tourists in Guatemala (Ferguson, 2010), and in Nepal, women set up tea houses for hiking tourists (McMillan, O’Gorman, & MacLaren, 2011). In Fiji, women have established small hair-braiding and handicraft stalls to cater for tourists who are accommodated in hotels close to villages (Movono et al., 2015).

The many studies conducted on rural communities involved in tourism show that members have benefited economically, which has improved their livelihoods as a whole based on the benefits and effects of tourism (Ampumuza et al., 2008; Burns & Harrison, 2003; Çiçek, Zencir, & Kozak, 2017; Cukier, 2002; Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1994; Flacke-Neudorfer, 2007; Fletcher, Pforr, & Brueckner, 2016; Gibson, 2015; King & Milman, 1993; Movono et al., 2015; Nyaupane, Morais, & Dowler, 2006; Petzselka, Kranich, Brehm, & Trentelman, 2005; Sofield, 2003). Some scholars, on the other hand, have presented findings where hosts, in this case the local communities, have negative perceptions of tourism due to reasons such as the lack or no participation of the local communities during planning and other decision-making stages; seasonality of tourism employment; disruption to community livelihoods, and a range of social changes (Jurowski & Gursoy, 2004; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2012; Tosun, 2000; Weaver & Lawton, 2010).

In recent years, there has been a focus on women’s contribution and participation in tourism in regions of: Africa (Moswete & Lacey, 2015; Nwosu, 2014; Tucker & Boonabaana, 2012); South East Asia (Cole, 2006; Cukier & Norris, 1996; Flacke-Neudorfer, 2007; Tran & Walter, 2014; Yahaya & Yahaya, 2014); Central and South America (Duffy, Mowatt, Cnacellor, & Cardenas, 2012; Ferguson, 2010; Gentry, 2007); the Caribbean (Duffy, Kline, Mowatt, & Chancellor, 2015; Levy & Lerch, 1991); the South Pacific (Bern & Jones, 2001; Movono & Dahles, 2017); China (Ruliang, Yaping, Hsiang-te, & Yijun, 2014); and Muslim women in the Middle East, North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula (Al Mazro’ei & Shaw, 2014; Alsawafi, 2016; Cave & Kilic, 2010; Tucker & Boonabaana, 2012). Each of these studies has shed light on women leaving their traditional, domestic gender roles and exploring new employment opportunities brought by tourism (Duffy et al., 2015).
Indeed, women are an important part of tourism. Various studies have looked at women’s roles in the industry, including the economic and socio-cultural impacts these roles play in their lives (Apostolopoulos & Sonmez, 2001; Gibson, 2001). However, only a select few have taken an empowerment lens to closely examine the impacts of tourism employment on women (Annes & Wright, 2015; Dunn, 2007; Ferguson, 2011; Knight & Cottrell, 2016; McMillan et al., 2011; Movono & Dahles, 2017; Nwosu, 2014; Peeters & Ateljevic, 2009; Pleno, 2006; Scheyvens, 2000).

This thesis directly addresses this gap in the study of tourism and gender in the South Pacific. The purpose of this study is to explore if and how iTaukei (Indigenous Fijian) women on Taveuni island, Fiji, are empowered as a result of their employment in the tourism industry. It should be made known that throughout this thesis, the term Indigenous is capitalised when referring to a specific Indigenous group and lower case when talking about indigenous peoples or concepts in general.

1.1 Tourism in Less Developed Countries
Less developed countries (LDCs), often referred to as least developed countries, are categorised as “low-income developing countries suffering from severe structural impediments to sustainable development … indicators of such impediments are a high vulnerability to economic and environmental shocks and a low level of human assets” (United Nations, 2015a). It is acknowledged that LDCs rely heavily on tourism to drive and develop their ailing economies, attract foreign investors, create employment opportunities, reduce poverty and develop communities through CBT initiatives (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004; Britton, 1983; Farrelly, 2011; Harrison, 1992, 2001; López-Guzmán et al., 2011; Mowforth & Munt, 1998; Scheyvens, 2002; Sofield, 2003; Telfer & Sharpley, 2008). Moreover, in recent years, women’s participation in tourism in LCDs has become a focus of study for academics (Cukier & Norris, 1996; Ferguson, 2011; Flacke-Neudorfer, 2007; Lama, 1998; Moswete & Lacey, 2015; Scheyvens, 2000; Swain & Smith, 1989; Wilkinson & Pratiwi, 1995).

Sharpley (2009) provides another perspective, citing that for many LDCs, development by tourism is heavily measured through its economic growth, in terms of significant employment opportunities, income generation, foreign exchange earnings and government revenues. Harrison (2001) further remarks that tourism developments in such regions are scarce, with a few hindrances; such as the state lacking proficiency in carrying out policies regardless of how
well planned the developments may be, poor infrastructure, poorly developed markets and a lack of training and education for locals for management and other roles in tourism. Britton’s (1982) earlier works reveal that the industries of many LDCs are dominated by large-scale multinational corporations, in which the foreign and local elites reap the rewards. On the other hand, the local ‘gains’ are only through wage paid labour employment and ‘small, petty retail artisan enterprises’ (p. 354). With these small enterprises, the income-generating prospective can be limited.

However, there is promise in many areas in the Pacific Islands region, where economies rely on tourism to drive them through; although these islands receive a much lower percentage of international tourists than the global overall numbers, their economies do show evidence of opportunity and growth (Pratt & Harrison, 2015).

1.2 Tourism in Fiji
Fiji initially developed as a tourist destination when it became an important stop-over for visitors in the early twentieth century (Britton, 1983). During this period, Fiji served as a key transhipment port for passengers who would disembark and change ships off of the Australasian and United States shipping lines. As the popularity of Fiji ports grew, the Suva Tourist Bureau was formed, with its main purpose of providing information on Fiji. From the 1960s, Fiji experienced its ‘tourism boom’ as a result of the increase of tourist activity from Australia and New Zealand and this boom continued well into the 1970s (Britton, 1983). Visitor numbers for Fiji have continued to rise since the days of the steam ship route, with recent figures showing a total of 792,320 visitor arrivals Fiji in 2016 (Fiji Bureau of Statistics, 2017).

Like many developing countries and small islands developing states (SIDS), Fiji’s dependence on tourism increased after the decline of the agricultural sector (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004; Harrison, 1992; Lea, 1988; Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Telfer & Sharpley, 2008). The tourism industry is now a significant contributor to the Fijian economy, generating approximately 23% of the nation’s GDP and employing an estimated 40,000 people (Harrison & Prasad, 2013). In 2013 a total of FJD847.1 million was earned by hotels and tourist accommodation alone, employing 12,046 people in the accommodation sector (Valemei, 2014).
Fiji’s tourism industry remains resilient, despite some years of political instability (Valemei, 2016a). Fiji’s economy has been crippled by three coups in the past three decades (Harrison & Pratt, 2010; Harrison & Prasad, 2012). The coups of 1987, 2000 and 2006 saw visitor arrivals plunge and a slow growth in the following years. In 1987 visitor arrivals totalled 189,866, with earnings of FJD145.7 million; 1988 saw numbers at 208,155, earning FJD186.5 million. The coup of 2000 saw numbers fall by 28%, from 409,995 in 1999 to 294,070; earnings also fell from FJD553.6 million to FJD397 million (Harrison & Pratt, 2010). A total of 545,168 visitors arrived in 2006 and dropped to 539,255 in 2007, with earnings of FJD822.5 million and FJD784.2 million respectively (Harrison & Pratt, 2010).

Since the last coup in 2006, the tourism industry has received considerable attention from the government, with an increased budget allocation to the marketing arm of the government’s tourism ministry, Tourism Fiji (Tora, 2015). This may be due to the fact that tourism is the only industry that has recovered from the 2006 political instability event (Harrison & Prasad, 2013). From the figures highlighted above, the importance of tourism to Fiji’s economy is evident. Employment creation and earnings have continued to increase, and this has enabled infrastructure development in the areas of health, education, roads and electricity (Harrison & Prasad, 2013).

The majority of tourism enterprises in Fiji, including the accommodation sector, planned tours and tourist transportation, are dominated by foreign investors, as well as the local Europeans and Indians; with Indigenous Fijians involvement and tourism ownership in the mid1980s (Plange, 1997). The tourism regions in Fiji are divided into three main sectors: the western region, the central-eastern region and the northern region (Tourism, 2007). Fiji’s tourism capital remains in the western region, where integrated resort developments have taken place in addition to island resorts. It is also in this region that Nadi International Airport is located, the gateway into the Fiji Islands. The central division includes Fiji’s capital, Suva, and neighbouring islands which have boutique and dive resorts. Suva, being the capital, is home to Fiji’s Government ministries and headquarters to the diplomatic corps, including embassies and regional organisations. The central region therefore caters mainly for corporate travellers. The northern region of Fiji includes Vanua Levu and Taveuni.
Taveuni (the focus of the current study) is the third largest island in the Fiji group and is a popular destination for divers and nature-based tourists (Department of Tourism, 2007a). Taveuni is commonly known as ‘the garden island’ of Fiji; the economic activity on the island is mainly agricultural, with cash crops of taro (Colocasia esculenta) and yaqona or kava (Piper methysticum) (Lin, 2012). Tourism contributes a small percentage to the island’s economy through the sale of accommodation rooms, water sports activities, a handful of restaurants and bars, and park entry fees. There are currently 26 accommodation properties on the island (Department of Tourism, 2007a). The accommodation sector on Taveuni is assumed to be the largest tourism employer on the island.

1.3 Empowerment, Women and Tourism

‘Empowerment’ has become a popular and oft-used term in many disciplines, with each area providing its own meaning and interpretation of the concept. Bystydzienski (1992) defines empowerment as:

… a process by which oppressed persons gain some control over their lives by taking part with others in the development of activities and structures that allow people increased involvement in matters which affect them directly. (p. 3)

UNWTO offers the following definition: “both women and men can take control over their lives: set their own agendas, gain skills (or have their own skills and knowledge recognized), increase self-confidence, solve problems and develop self-reliance” (2011, p. 3).

While there are numerous empowerment definitions, its core essence is rooted in “a capacity by individuals or a group to determine their own affairs” (Sofield, 2003, p. 79). The concept of empowerment in the tourism industry has been associated with a hotel management context since the end of the twentieth century (Huyton & Baker, 1996, cited in Sofield, 2003). In his book, Empowerment for Sustainable Tourism Development, Sofield notes that empowerment in the hotel sector was “basically about pushing responsibility and decision-making down the organisation to those employees closest to the customer” (Jones & Davies, 1991, p. 213, as cited in Sofield, 2003, p. 96) and further states the lack of studies specifically focussing on empowerment and tourism development outside the business domain. In 1999, Schevyens devised an empowerment framework to define the effectiveness of ecotourism initiatives on local communities. Since then, researchers have used this framework to measure empowerment within communities involved in tourism (Boley, Ayscue, Maruyama, &
Recently, women’s empowerment through tourism has gained ground amongst a range of gender-focused scholars (Ampumuza et al., 2008; Ferguson, 2011; Gentry, 2007; McMillan et al., 2011; Moswete & Lacey, 2015; Movono & Dahles, 2017; Peeters & Ateljevic, 2009; Pleno, 2006). For example, in Nepal, the women who manage their own tea houses have gained increased respect from their communities, while the social status of women in their community has also risen (McMillan et al., 2011). Gentry’s (2007) study on Belizean women revealed they were free from depending on their husbands to support them financially, instead of staying at home, as traditional gender roles dictated. In Fiji, Indigenous Fijian women have become entrepreneurs; setting up massage parlours, hair-braiding salons, handicraft stalls and canteens as a result of being previously employed in a neighbouring hotel (Movono & Dahles, 2017).

The empowerment of women is essential to fostering economic development and enabling strong economies and stable societies (World Tourism Organization, 2011). In the context of LDCs, where women’s access to education may be constrained, tourism can provide a means to break the poverty cycle through formal and informal employment (Ferguson, 2011). For the purposes of this study, the term ‘empowerment’ draws on the definition and meaning provided by UNWTO, where women can have more control and decision-making over their lives, gain skills, increase self-confidence, solve problems and develop self-reliance (World Tourism Organization, 2011). It has been noted that the tourism industry has created new opportunities for women through generating independence and income, particularly in developing countries and rural communities (Annes & Wright, 2015; Knight & Cottrell, 2016; Levy & Lerch, 1991; Scheyvens, 2000; Telfer & Sharpley, 2008; Wilkinson & Pratiwi, 1995). Studies have also identified women as key agents of promoting sustainable tourism development because of their domestic, agriculture and cultural roles (Lama, 2000; Telfer & Sharpley, 2008). Additionally, women’s empowerment through tourism contributes positive changes and progress within individual communities, families and themselves (McMillan et al., 2011; Movono & Dahles, 2017; Peeters & Ateljevic, 2009; Scheyvens, 2002). Women are well represented in the formal tourism sector, which the International Labour Organisation (ILO) categorises as ‘decent work’ (World Tourism Organization [WTO], 2011). This translates to:

- It involves opportunities for work that is [sic] productive and delivers a fair income;
- provides security in the workplace and social protection for workers and their families;
offers better prospects for personal development and encourages social integration; gives people the freedom to express their concerns, to organise and to participate [sic] in decisions that affect their lives; guarantees equal opportunities and equal treatment for all. (International Labour Organization, 2010, p.1)

Yet the UNWTO reports that, despite this work status, some employment is “exploitative, underpaid and promote[s] stereotypical women’s work” (2011, p.17). Additionally, such imbalance is further extended when women are largely seen to be at the bottom of the tourism employment ‘pyramid’ because of their low-status jobs (Richter, 1995). These low-status jobs, filled by mostly women, see the women not getting paid as much as men (Apostolopoulos & Sonmez, 2001; Sinclair, 1997; World Tourism Organization, 2011). Several researchers have identified certain barriers for women to achieving higher-level positions. For example, Li and Leung (2001) found that women in Singapore identify job discrimination in the hotel sector, such as gender-role stereotyping, long hours and the difficulty of balancing family and pursuing higher positions at work. Additionally, their study found that women do not have much interaction with the top male managers who can provide mentorship. In Egypt, women are more likely to reach top-level management in smaller hotels than in five-star operations. The obstacles faced by women in addition to those faced in Singapore include a lack of advisers’ support and a lack of network access (Kattara, 2005).

Women’s participation in tourism is significant given that 60–70% of those employed by the tourism industry are women (WTO, 2011). These percentages represent both informal and formal tourism employment. The informal sector sees women working from their homes, such as selling handicrafts, providing hair-braiding services or massage parlours. Formal employment sees women working in the various departments of hotels, restaurants and also those who run their own operations, such as bed and breakfast, tours and travel agents. UNWTO (2010) add that while women in the formal sector have a regular income and benefit economically and socially, there looms exploitation, underpayment and, to some extent, elements that promote stereotypical ‘women’s work’. Overall, however, formal employment in tourism provides women real opportunities to enhance and improve the quality of their lives.

The attraction to work in the tourism industry by women in LDCs can be attributed to the country’s structure and the status of women in society. In many LDCs women are disadvantaged in accessing primary education, while pursuing higher education is almost impossible (United Nations, 2015b). Osirim (1992) reiterates this, commenting that the
blockage of women’s access to formal-sector employment has resulted from international divisions of labour, patriarchy and colonial legacy (cited in Cukier, 2002, p. 179). As a result of minimal formal education completion, entry-level employment in the tourism market is viewed as a great opportunity to earn a living and enjoy the other benefits such employment has to offer (WTO, 2011). The majority of the low-skilled and low-paying jobs are held by women (WTO, 2011).

Recent studies show that there is a shift in the role of women in such employment, from being at the bottom of the pyramid to where more women are becoming micro entrepreneurs (Cave & Kilic, 2010). Peeters and Ateljevic (2009) offer another reason for women to become entrepreneurs: the “barriers and constraints” they face as employees (p.78). Regardless of the nature of working conditions, overall, women employed in this sector enjoy the benefits of improved quality of life, independence, opportunities to learn new skills, training and education, and freedom (Annes & Wright, 2015; De Vita, Mari, & Poggesi, 2014; Movono & Dahles, 2017; Nwosu, 2014; Pleno, 2006).

1.3.1 Women in Fiji’s tourism industry

Based on the 2007 population census, the total population of females in Fiji was 410,111 (Fiji Bureau of Statistics [FBoS], 2014). This is 48.9% of Fiji’s total population of 837,271, and an increase of 1.4% from the count of 1996, where there were 381,146 females from a total population of 775,077. The proportion of women aged between 15 and 64 years for 2007 was 66.3%, whilst women who were 65 years and older made up 5.1% of the total female population. In this count, 39.2% of women were in the labour force compared to 29.1% in 1990, an increase of 10.1% (FBoS, 2014). For the same periods, the male rate of employment declined from 83.6% in 1990 to 78.8% in 2007.

A study conducted by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) revealed that employment opportunities for women in Fiji are concentrated in only a small part of the labour market (2006), where many women work in clerical, teaching, nursing, factory and sales positions (ADB, 2006). In most rural regions of the Fiji Islands, women were the major subsistence producers and small-scale marketers of food and handicrafts (ADB, 2006). Women’s employment in the private sector is concentrated in manufacturing, particularly in the fish processing and garment industries, and in hotel and related hospitality services. Furthermore, in this sector, women are likely to be on wages rather than salaries, in junior positions and are non-unionised (ADB, 2006). This study by the ADB highlights that women are generally
lower-paid, lower-ranked and less-often promoted. Although more women than men are employed in retail, wholesale trade, hotels and restaurants, these positions remain predominately low-wage.

The majority of Fiji’s tourism employees are women (Bola-Bari, 2015). A study in 2013 conducted by the Market Development Facility (MDF), an Australian private sector development programme, revealed that iTaukei (Indigenous Fijian) women dominated many entry-level positions, such as housekeeping and waitressing, in comparison to the Indo-Fijian (Fijians of Indian descent) women due to socio-cultural preferences. Indo-Fijian women were seen to be in positions which required more training and less public interaction, such as back-office staff in areas of reservations, accounts and the kitchen (Market Development Facility, 2013). It is forecast that employment will continue to grow in the tourism-related industries in the immediate future, with increased investment in the tourism sector (MDF, 2013). However, the numbers of iTaukei females in the tourism sector is increasing, having been able to secure entry-level jobs because of the connection between resorts and land ownership in specific geographic regions, such as the Yasawa Islands and the Coral Coast (MDF, 2013). The reason for this is that many of the resorts in these regions have been developed on native land leased from a mataqali (landowning unit), whereby entry-level jobs are typically offered to landowners. It is also for these reasons that iTaukei are well represented in the tourism sector.

Further findings from the study by MDF (2013) show that households with family members working in tourism are significantly better off than those households which rely on horticulture to earn a living. The findings conducted by MDF (2013) outline that there are more iTaukei women being employed in the sector compared to Indo-Fijians. Indo-Fijians make up the second largest ethnic group in Fiji, behind the iTaukei. Indo-Fijian women are not included as participants in this study as their lifestyles are entirely different from how iTaukei live, especially in rural settings. iTaukei live a communal life, while Indo-Fijians lead individual lives. Another reason for omitting them from this study is that growing up in a Fijian village setting, amongst iTaukei women working for the sector, I observed these women fulfilling their family and community obligations as well as their various tasks in the hotels where they were employed. These personal experiences have been the building blocks for my interest in iTaukei women working in the sector.
To bring about this childhood interest, this research is focused on iTaukei women only, as I believe there is much to uncover on how these women are successfully able to fulfil the various roles they play in different settings, which include their families, village communities, the church and as employees. I have come a long way from the little iTaukei girl growing up in the village. I have had the opportunity to further my secondary education in one of Fiji’s prominent schools and attain tertiary education. I have been fortunate enough to come and study overseas. Therefore, I feel morally obliged to be an agent so that these women’s voices can be heard and, more importantly, so their contributions to their families and communities can be appreciated. By hearing their stories I am enabling them to be agents of change in whatever roles they play.

1.4 Research Aim and Objectives

While many studies have explored the positive and negative impacts of tourism in Fiji and other South Pacific nations, very few have deliberately focused on issues involving gender and women’s role in tourism. More specifically, fewer studies have addressed women and their involvement in tourism in areas such as economic, socio-cultural and political impacts, barriers and constraints, and the overall benefits of working in the industry. The overall aim of this research is to explore the ways in which tourism employment has impacted the lives of iTaukei women on Taveuni, Fiji, with a specific focus on whether these women have experienced empowerment as a result of their work. Taveuni has been chosen as the focus of this study because, besides having grown up and lived on the island, very little tourism research has been conducted there. The study aims to target the gap in knowledge of women’s involvement in the tourism sector and their empowerment in the Fijian context.
This research therefore explores these aspects with the following objectives:

1. To identify the ways Indigenous Fijian women participate and are involved in tourism on Taveuni;
2. To explore the positive and negative impacts of these women’s involvement in tourism;
3. To understand the forms of empowerment and/or disempowerment these women have experienced through their work in tourism; and
4. To explore how stakeholders and the community have assisted or constrained women’s empowerment through the tourism industry.

1.5 Significance of this Research

This study will help to fill the current gap in our understanding of the relationship among tourism, gender and the empowerment of women. This will be achieved through a combination of qualitative interpretative research and traditional indigenous methods. Similar studies have taken this combined approach when studying indigenous communities (Addinsall et al., 2016; Holmes, Grimwood, & King, 2016; Otsuka, 2005).

As previously mentioned, very few studies have focused specifically on women who work in the Fijian tourism sector. Through this empirical research this thesis aims to bring to light those ways in which women are involved, benefits gained from tourism employment—socially, economically, politically and psychologically—and also highlight probable developments within their communities, families and themselves. This research acknowledges the contribution of the iTaukei women who work in the tourism industry in Taveuni; no such studies have yet been carried out on the island in this capacity, where women are the main participants.
Chapter 2 - Literature Review

In an effort to conceptually and theoretically ground the study, this chapter offers a review of the body of knowledge on tourism in LDCs followed by tourism in the South Pacific’s SIDS. The section also explores the key literature on gender and empowerment of women, particularly from the perspective of the ‘host’ in tourism. This literature review takes a specific focus on these topics in the context of the South Pacific and Fiji in particular.

2.1 Tourism in Least Developed Countries

LDCs are defined as low-income developing countries suffering from severe structural impediments to sustainable development. They are further characterised as having high vulnerability levels to economic and environmental shocks and a low level of human assets (United Nations, 2015a). The term ‘less developed countries’ is often interchanged with terms such as ‘Third World’ or ‘The South’ (Telfer & Sharpley, 2008). Post-colonial critiques in the development studies literature have problematised the terminology around such terms (Harrison, 1992). For instance, the use of the term ‘Third World’ is now deemed unsuitable because of the “heterogeneous yet hierarchical and non-egalitarian structure of capitalist states … with increasingly polarised internal class divisions” (Harrison, 1992, p.1). Mowforth and Munt (2009) posit that “no one term will suit all audiences” (p. 5) since there are rapid changes of economic factors in countries, which would mean a country that was classified ‘least developed’ a decade ago could have improved and is no longer at the lower end of the ‘Human Development Index’ classification, which combines wealth distribution and standards of living as developed by the World Trade Organisation.

‘Least developed’ terminology emerged in the history of development studies to represent and group countries according to their wealth and social wellbeing (Mowforth & Munt, 2009). Mowforth and Munt (2009) further comment that “[the word] development is avoided, because it implies that there is an end state to the process of development and that all countries will reach a developed state” (p. 5). Telfer and Sharpley (2008) comment that no single definition exists to establish a country as ‘developed’, but some criteria used include advancement in technology and economies, “relatively high standard of living, modern social and political structures and institutions” (p. 4). Taking on board these debates and fully understanding the complexities and political implications of such divisions and boundaries, for the purposes of
this study ‘LDCs’ is adopted and refers to countries that do not have high-income economies and rely heavily on tourism.

Development in the tourism context remains a much-discussed subject, as development depends on who is defining the term (Harrison, 1992). Oppermann and Chon (1997) view development in the context of nations and societies “commonly associated with economic situation … frequently used indicators have been gross national product (GNP) or gross domestic product (GDP) per capita” (p. 3). Like Oppermann and Chon, the World Trade Organisation use GDP and Total Disposable Income. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) takes another approach, categorising a country using the Human Development Index (United Nations, 2005).

Development theories and tourism have progressed in a parallel direction since the Second World War, whereby their association is defined by scholars as a process of economic and social transformation in countries (Sharma, Kumar, & Aggarwal, 2014; Sharpley, 2002). This is evident in poorer regions of South East Asia, where local communities are involved in tourism for economic reasons (Telfer & Sharpley, 2008). Fiji also attests to the transformation of its economy and social structures as a result of tourism development (Gibson, 2015; Harrison & Prasad, 2013; Movono, Pratt, & Harrison, 2015). In the same vein, Scheyvens (2002) offers another perspective, that development within LDCs is seen as “embracing values of self-sufficiency, self-determination and empowerment, as well as improving lives” (p. 3). Sharpley (2000) debates that improvement of quality of life for ‘all’ people is restricted by the unequal levels of tourism development (p. 11). He adds that attitudes of communities that are directly involved in tourism are in favour of tourism as a development tool, whereas those who are not so dependent “tend to be ambivalent, if not openly antagonistic, towards tourism” (p. 11). Four main “development paradigms that evolved after the Second World War [are]: modernisation, dependency, economic neoliberalism and alternative development” (Harrison, 2001, p.5). For the purposes of this thesis, the first two development paradigms are used to relate directly to LDCs.

Modernisation theory is based on the philosophy of an “evolution of traditional society to modern society, a shift from agriculture to industry and from rural to urban” (Telfer, 2002, p.40). It also sees foreigners, usually from developed countries, investing in LDCs to build up and expand tourism (Sharma et al., 2014). In the 1960s, dependency theory gained a reputation
as a critique of modernisation (Sharpley, 2002). Harrison (1992) comments that development occurs at the expense of the other, where the centre or core exploits the peripheries. In terms of tourism development, “mass tourist flow is generated from core countries into peripheries, with tourism products highly dominated and controlled by the former” (Sharma et al., 2014, p. 203). This is evident in many LDCs, where the accommodation sector is dominated by multinational corporations.

Regardless of development theories and the debates which continue to surround what is ‘development’, the identification of tourism as the panacea for these ailing economies has continued to be widely recognised and promulgated (Harrison & Prasad, 2013; Oppermann & Chon, 1997; Tosun, 2000). As the traditional agricultural sector has continued to decline since the 1970s, many LDCs have turned to tourism to save and boost their economies in the confidence that it will foster growth and development (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004; Tosun, 2000).

Table 2.1 lists data for the top 20 LDCs that have tourism as the largest contributor to GDP timeframe. Of these 20, only three are not island states, with another three having populations over a million. It is also interesting to note that in some of the countries the numbers of tourists are twice or three or more times in excess of their total population. These include Aruba, St Lucia, Bahamas and Barbados. Interestingly, of the four countries mentioned, only accounted for an estimated 12.5 million visitors of the 800 million world visitor arrivals for the year 2005 (World Tourism Organisation, 2006). This clearly shows how important tourism is to these respective LDCs, despite having a very small share of the world arrivals.
Table 2.1: Tourism expenditure of the top 20 LDCs in 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>% of GDP</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>HDI Status</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Tourists</th>
<th>T/P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aruba</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>101,000</td>
<td>723,514</td>
<td>716%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Lucia</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>166,000</td>
<td>371,939</td>
<td>192%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seychelles</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>86,000</td>
<td>128,654</td>
<td>149%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antigua and Barbuda</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>84,000</td>
<td>238,804</td>
<td>284%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maldives</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>337,000</td>
<td>395,320</td>
<td>117%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahamas</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>327,000</td>
<td>1,608,153</td>
<td>492%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbados</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>270,000</td>
<td>547,534</td>
<td>203%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>215,000</td>
<td>62,082</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>900,000</td>
<td>1,139,524</td>
<td>127%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Vincent &amp; Grenadines</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>120,000</td>
<td>95,506</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sao Tome &amp; Principe</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>160,000</td>
<td>10,518</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>853,000</td>
<td>549,911</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Kitts &amp; Nevis</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>48,000</td>
<td>67,531 (2002)</td>
<td>140%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>4,000,000</td>
<td>3,743,874</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominica</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>72,000</td>
<td>79,257</td>
<td>110%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>186,000</td>
<td>101,807</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belize</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>297,000</td>
<td>236,573</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>3,000,000</td>
<td>1,478,663</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>1,253,000</td>
<td>761,063</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Verde</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>518,000</td>
<td>197,844</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Since a good proportion of tourism development in LDCs takes place in rural areas, for these communities, tourism is widely perceived as an economic diversity (Perdue, Long, & Allen, 1990). Studies from Indonesia, rural areas of the United States of America (USA) and Australia have found that residents in these countries are able to satisfy their economic and social status, as well as improve the quality of their community’s wellbeing because of the economic distribution of tourism (Dyer, Aberdeen, & Schuler, 2003; Perdue et al., 1990). The studies also show that locals’ involvement in tourism has supplemented or, in the case of Indonesia, doubled their income obtained from traditional agriculture (Schellhorn, 2010).

The participation of communities in tourism is also key to the success of development in areas where tourism activities are concerned (Flacke-Neudorfer, 2007; Scheyvens, 2002). Participation varies and can include dialogue and involvement in initial planning before development and in decision-making. It is also acknowledged that early participation in decision-making, while not necessarily bringing significant benefits, can increase access to benefits that are available (Iorio & Wall, 2012).
The empowerment experienced by these communities as a result of their involvement and participation in tourism cannot be overlooked. Scheyvens (1999) developed a conceptual framework which identifies four dimensions of empowerment, namely economic, psychological, social and political. To be economically empowered the economic benefits must be lasting, employment is sustainable and cash flow is regular. For a community to be psychologically empowered it will develop and gain self-esteem, obtain access to employment, increase its overall income and enhance its status within the region. Social empowerment is reflected in communal unity and strong bonds between various social groups (Scheyvens, 1999). When a community is politically empowered by tourism, members’ voices and concerns are heard and considered in the development of tourism projects from the initial stages until their implementation (Scheyvens 2002).

While tourism in communities can have many positive impacts the negative influences that accompany the good need to be recognised. Some of these include changes in traditional cultures, where some practices are either destroyed or not practiced at all (Sharpley, 2000). Well over thirty years ago, Mathieson and Wall (1982) commented that host communities’ lives are vulnerable as a result of working in the tourism industry and this situation remains today. They further added that impact on the younger generation, who are lured by the tourism dollar, may lead to social ills like alcoholism and migration from their homes to employment centres.

From the discussions above, it is clear that tourism enables LDCs to achieve some of the key tourism development goals, such as employment, income generation, an increase in foreign exchange and tax earnings, and a decrease of rural–urban drift (Oppermann & Chon, 1997). It is therefore important to understand the development of tourism in LDCs and its significant benefits to communities.

2.2 Tourism in the South Pacific
The islands of the South Pacific, at least to many foreigners even today, stir up images of ‘paradise’ (Berno & Douglas, 1998; Harrison, 2003; Treloar & Hall, 2005). In reality, tourism in the South Pacific is perplexing, is heavily dominated by foreign investors and outside influences, and has received mixed views by the islanders themselves (Harrison, 2003).
The South Pacific Island nations are divided into the categories of developing and least developed countries based on their GDP by the World Bank (Shareef, Hoti, & McAleer, 2008). This is also evident in tables produced by UNWTO showing the top 20 countries with the highest percentage of tourism expenditure (see Table 2.1). In other contexts, the South Pacific islands are also referred to as SIDS. This is due to characteristics which include the nature of being islands, small economy sizes and, in the context of tourism, a heavy reliance on the industry (Shareef et al., 2008).

Tourism activities began for many South Pacific islands in the 1900s when trading and taking Trans-Atlantic cruise trips were popular (Britton, 1983; Harrison, 2003). Although ocean cruise travel was the trend then, the introduction and improvement of air travel gained popularity as travellers found this to be faster, enabling them to travel further, and was more economical. This saw a surge of travellers during and after the Second World War (Britton, 1983; Milne, 1990). Many of the islands were either colonies or territories of Britain, France, the USA or New Zealand, so in the event of independence, which for many occurred from the mid-twentieth century, many of these SIDS’ economies were barely surviving on the declining agricultural sector. By the end of the twentieth century tourism had become the major industry for many of the islands, and for some tourism became a priority (Harrison, 2003). For many of the South Pacific islands the highest numbers of visitor arrivals continue to come from Australia and New Zealand (Harrison, 2003; Narayan, Narayan, Prasad, & Prasad, 2010).

For Pacific countries, the tourism sector is a major component of national GDP, the major source of foreign exchange earnings and also provides substantial employment. It has also been noted that tourism has been the only economic sector in the Pacific to grow consistently across the region over the last five years (South Pacific Tourism Organisation, 2014). The region’s tourism body, the South Pacific Tourism Organisation, notes the following trends in its recent regional tourism strategy for 2015–2019 draft report:

- Increased tourism arrivals by 3.5% on average per annum for the past five years (2008–2012) despite the global financial crisis.
- In 2012, the number of visitors to arrive on Pacific shores reached 1.77 million, a steady growth for the years 2008–2012. Despite these steady visitor arrival growths the region only receives 1.6% of global arrivals.
- The cruise industry is increasingly becoming a substantial sub-sector of Pacific tourism, with passenger arrivals estimated at 650,000 for the seven main cruise
destinations in 2012. New Caledonia and Vanuatu are the two main cruise
destinations.

(South Pacific Tourism Organisation, 2014).

Milne (1990) comments that the economies of these island states survive on the MIRAB
economic structure; this means they are characterised by migration (MI), dependent on high-
level remittances (R), aid (A) and in most cases a heavy reliance on bureaucracy (B), in other
words, they rely on the government for job creation (Rao, 2002). Economic policies for the
South Pacific region in the late 1980s, “has been decisively away from import substitution and
agriculture to urban-based manufacturing and service sectors” (Narayan, et al., 2010, p. 169).
Such measures have been taken in the hope of injecting an increase into their GDP. Table 2.2
illustrates the industry’s GDP and employment contribution to the region.

Table 2.2: South Pacific tourism GDP and employment contributions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>2002 Tourism GDP %</th>
<th>2011 Tourism GDP %</th>
<th>2002 Tourism Employment %</th>
<th>2011 Tourism Employment %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Samoa</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook Islands</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Polynesia</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiribati</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marshall Islands</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nauru</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Caledonia</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niue</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palau</td>
<td>49.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNG</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuvalu</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (South Pacific Tourism Organisation, 2014)

Table 2.2 lists seventeen countries that are members of the South Pacific Tourism
Organisation. The tourism contributions to GDP and employment across the regions vary
between 3% and 50%. In six of these countries (Cook Islands, Fiji, Niue, Palau, Samoa and
Vanuatu) tourism is seen to have contributed to the GDP of their economies in excess of over
20%.
In 2011 the percentage of employment generated by tourism was very high for Palau and Vanuatu, with Palau seeing 50% of its population working in the industry.

Despite variability in growth rates and forms of development, the significance of tourism to SIDS cannot be overemphasised, as some countries note that more than half of their annual GDP is from tourism receipts. Furthermore, some of the SIDS’ governments view tourism as a means of reducing dependence on uncertain aid income (Treloar & Hall, 2005). As Scheyvens (2002) succinctly states, the creation of employment and an increase in foreign exchange earnings are two of the main economic benefits for the South Pacific.

The economic benefits of tourism to host communities are the most valuable, as highlighted in Table 2.2. To island states of the Pacific, the benefits have included improving the local economy (Berno, 2003; Milne, 1990; Narayan et al., 2010; Scheyvens & Russell, 2010, 2012). It also contributes to income and the standard of living (King & Milman, 1993). Recent studies carried out in the South Pacific region saw members of communities employed in tourism: being able to afford better health services, accessing improved indoor plumbing; and spending discretionary funds on clothing and luxury items, such as stereo sets, videos, DVD players and mobile phones (Gibson, 2015; Movono et al., 2015).

New opportunities have opened up for women in terms of independence and entrepreneurship (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1994; Gibson, 2013; Movono, 2012; Russell & Stabile, 2003). Examples of these include women of Samoa selling tie-dyed sarongs with tapa designs. In the Solomon Islands women engage in ecotourism ventures, in which some are guides, some cook, weave handicraft souvenirs and often perform cultural dances and sing songs to the guests. In Fiji, women work in many guest encountering areas; in some cases, they have their own massage, hair-braiding, handicraft and souvenir shops and stalls.

Some impacts from tourism have been viewed by locals as negative, with concerns voiced by community elders and religious leaders (Milne, 1990; Scheyvens & Russell, 2012). Some of these impacts include the so-called demonstration effect. The demonstration effect results from the interaction between host communities and guests or tourists, whereby the hosts emulate the behaviour and habits of tourists (Moore, 1995). One author defines the demonstration effect as:
...the process by which traditional societies, especially those which are particularly susceptible to outside influence such as youths, will ‘voluntarily’ seek to adopt certain behaviours (and accumulate material goods) on the basis that possession of them will lead to the achievement of the leisured, hedonistic lifestyle demonstrated by the tourists.
(Burns, 1999, p. 101)

Scheyvens’ (2012) study in Fiji recorded some elders finding young community members overly influenced by tourists in the way they dress and wear their hair and makeup. The elders raised their concerns that young Fijian women were no longer wearing their hair in traditional Fijian style, where it is short and styled in a certain way, and were instead growing their hair long and dyeing it. Another community involved in CBT saw an increase in alcohol consumption amongst its youth, in addition to not attending church services on Sundays (Gibson, 2015). In the Cook Islands tourism is noted to aggravate the younger Rarotongans’ lack of cultural identity, compared with that of their elders and those out in the islands (Berno, 2003). While not all these impacts are negative, tourism also helps in ensuring the continuation of traditional arts and production techniques. In Tonga, for instance, the government built the Tongan Cultural Centre, where the young can learn and develop their skills from the local craftspeople (Milne, 1990).

In the South Pacific the Indigenous people and their communities are the main participants and employees of tourism and hospitality, although, in many cases, their employers are foreigners (Harrison, 2003; Sofield, 2003). As outlined earlier in this section, the economic impacts are the greatest and most favourably considered because of paid work and the potential for people to become entrepreneurs. It is also noted that the increasing participation of indigenous people not only fosters better understanding between indigenous and non-indigenous people but also empowers indigenous community members and ensures they are driving and leading decisions and their own lives (Hinch & Butler, 1996; Scheyvens, 2002). Through such participation, indigenous communities are supportive and willing to work with outsiders who see the potential of a tourism operation within the community’s vicinity (Scheyvens, 2002). However, such involvement can also be a threat to indigenous people, with the influences of external factors, such as globalisation, over which they have little control or, for some, the ignorance of non-indigenous people to indigenous people’s cultural and traditional ways of doing things (Hinch & Butler, 2007). In the case of a resort development in the Solomon Islands, conflict from a dispute between the foreign investor and the customary land owners resulted in the complete tearing down of the resort and repossess of the island...
by the local community (Sofield, 1996). This is an example of where foreigners have not been involved in, or held proper consultations with, the local communities.

The participation of indigenous community members is increasing and the majority of these members are women. The following sections discuss women’s role in tourism, including the positive impacts of being involved in this industry.

2.3 Gender and Tourism

The role of gender in tourism is gradually gaining interest as an academic concept. This concept perhaps became prominent when edited early works from Kinnaird and Hall (1994), Swain (1995) and Sinclair (1997) were published. In their discussions, these academics highlighted the significant work carried out and the role played by women as producers in the industry. As a result, the actions of women as producers have also led them to become tourism consumers (Sinclair, 1997).

Swain (1995) notes that there is a misconception that the study of gender in tourism focuses only on women. Swain’s wider-ranging definition of gender is “a system of culturally constructed identities, expressed in ideologies of masculinity and femininity, interacting with socially structured relationships in the divisions of labour and leisure, sexuality and power” (1995, p. 258). Wilkinson and Pratiwi (1995) further add that though there have been papers written about gender, more literature needs to address the relationship of gender and tourism in the developing world. Some writers, however, continue to place important emphasis on women and their role and involvement in tourism, using a mix of feminist and gender perspectives (Aitchison, 2005; Ireland, 1993). Cukier and Norris (1996) clearly make the distinction between the term sex and gender; for them, “sex refers to biological attributes whereas gender refers to relationships between people of different sexes ... sex is fixed whereas the concept of gender is more dynamic, varying with changing interpersonal relationship[s]” (p. 249). Nevertheless, on the whole, some scholars’ views of gender and tourism are more skewed towards women and their role in tourism (Ferguson, 2011; Flacke-Neudorfer, 2007; Ireland, 1993; Scheyvens, 2002; Tran & Walter, 2014; Tucker & Boonabaana, 2012).

Theories of gender and its relationship to tourism have been drawn from a variety of disciplines, including: development, “gender studies, feminist studies, cultural geography and women in management studies” (Gibson, 2001, p. 21). Kinnaird and Hall (1996) provide a gender-aware framework to understand tourism processes. This discussion focuses on three...
principal conceptual issues considered to be crucial in establishing a gendered framework. First, the societies of the host and guests are gender-based and shape the activities and processes involved within the tourism system. Second, “gender relations both inform, and are informed by the practices of all societies” (p. 97). Third, characteristics of power—that is control, influence or cohesion—are often conflated within discussions of gender and gender relations.

Research about women, gender leisure and tourism has seen a consistent growth in the past three decades (Henderson & Gibson, 2013). This has been a result of the ‘cultural turn’ from the two parent disciplines of geography and sociology (Aitchison, 2005). Aitchison further notes that in the late 1970s there was an emergence of feminist research in the field of leisure studies, which grew significantly. In the 1980s initial research then began to uncover the participation and constraints of women in tourism. Nevertheless, the 1990s saw tourism studies engage with feminist epistemology exploring women as tourism producers and consumers (Apostolopoulos & Sonmez, 2001; Kinnaird & Hall, 1994; Swain, 1995). Since then, there has been an increase in complex studies of gender identities, roles and relationships in tourism development (Tran & Walter, 2014).

Tran and Walter (2014, p. 117) also express that the complexities have increased in recent years, with increasingly pressing issues, such as “hegemonic tourism discourses, cultural practices and power inequities, gender identity construction, host and tourist subjectivities, embodiment, sexuality and symbolic representation”. In a bid to understand elements of the complexities identified above, the present study undertakes a study of the empowerment of women through tourism in Taveuni, Fiji.

As consumers, women travel for both for leisure and business, representing half of both categories (Harris & Wilson, 2007). Additionally, studies in this area are focused on women’s behaviour and experiences, with literature looking into their motivation and constraints while travelling (Gibson, 2001). As producers, work opportunities for women in tourism are often tied to or imbued with their supposed ‘traditional’ social and domestic roles (Kinnaird & Hall, 1994; Levy & Lerch, 1991). As such, women are still largely seen to be maids, food and beverage servers, and nannies in hotel kids’ clubs. Quite often the employment of women in tourism is compared to a ‘pyramid’, where many jobs at the bottom are infiltrated with women whose work is seasonal, part-time, lower-skilled and lower-paying, whilst a few acquire well-
paid, skilled and managerial positions at the top (Jordan 1997; Ritcher, 1994 as cited in Apostolopoulos & Sonmez, 2001, p. 6). As in many LDCs and SIDS, positions held by women in the sector are usually not well paid and have a low status (Berno & Jones, 2001). This current study focuses on women as producers of tourism.

Tourism development in a country has also been identified as having an influence on women’s role in the industry (Norris & Wall, 1994). Norris and Wall (1994) explain that in cases where there is mass tourism development, job opportunities for women are highly likely to be low paid and in the service sector positions. On the other hand, in small-scale tourism developments, women are likely to be entrepreneurs, running their own guest accommodation or handicraft production (Peeters & Ateljevic, 2009). The employment prospects which tourism provide for women are vast when one considers the formal and informal work opportunities.

The accepted terminology used in the literature amongst those who study women, their lives, rights and overall wellbeing is ‘gender’. UNWTO (2010) suggests gender involves “the array of socially constructed roles and relationships, personality traits, attitudes, behaviours, values, relative power and influence that society ascribes to the two sexes on a differential level” (p. 2). The movement of recognising women’s rights and place in society has come a long way (UNWTO, 2010). Table 2.3 provides a chronology of some of the United Nations’ (UN’s) significant achievements in their achievements in relation to women’s rights.
Table 2.3: Women’s rights movements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Achievement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>The establishment of Commission of the Status of Women, whose task was to formulate “a single, comprehensive and internationally binding instrument to eliminate discrimination against women” (UNWTO, 2011 p. 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>The Universal Declaration of Human Rights document, Article 2 declared “Everyone is entitled to all rights and freedom set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status” (United Nations, 1948, p. 72).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>The formation of the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women. This action plan was later drawn up in Beijing in 1995 under The Beijing Platform of Action and later reaffirmed as Beijing +15 in 2010, New York (UNWTO, 2011).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>In its continuous recognition of women’s role in society, the UN identified the promotion of gender quality and the empowerment of women as its third Millennium Development Goal (MDG), to be achieved globally by 2015 (UNWTO, 2011).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Launching of the UN Global Compact/UNIFEM Women’s Empowerment Principles: Equality Means Business. The aim of these principles was to propose guidance on how to empower women in the workplace, market and community through to business (UNWTO, 2011).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), 2011)

Swain and Smith (1989) note that, generally, men and women are unequally impacted by tourism. For instance, men are seen to be at the top of the career ladder as managers, while women are found in low-entry level positions. Bolles (1997) views women’s importance in the industry as quite often being reduced to, or seen largely in terms of, sex work, a finding resulting from her studies of Jamaican women in tourism employment. Experiences in LDCs see women’s empowerment promoted through their involvement in areas such as ecotourism (Flacke-Neudorfer, 2007; Scheyvens, 2000; Tran & Walter, 2014). Tran and Walter (2014) present a case where women in Giao Xuan, northern Vietnam, took on tour guiding roles, which did not generate social disapproval; on the contrary, these initiatives gained support from their husbands. In fact, in some cases their husbands took on new roles caring for children and other domestic chores normally carried out by their wives.

2.3.1 Gender and tourism in LDCs

In LDCs women are disadvantaged (United Nations, 2015b). This inequality persists and women continue to face discrimination in access to education, work and health services (United Nations, 2015b). In these regions this access is very minimal if not impossible.
In an effort to contest this major obstacle for development the UN, through one of its millennium development goals (MDGs) at the beginning of the new millennium, 2000, aimed to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment (UN, 2005). Fifteen years since those goals were established some progress has been made. In the area of paid employment, this has continued to grow over the last 25 years. The percentage of women in paid employment outside of the agriculture sector has increased from 35% in 1990 to 41% in 2015 (UN, 2015b). It is without a doubt that tourism is one of the key employers.

In Nepal, Lama (2000) revealed that women who were engaged in guiding and providing accommodation and food to visitors opened an opportunity for women to communicate and express their views. In his view, through this interaction, women who have long been restricted to domestic household chores and minding children were empowered psychologically by learning English. Tucker and Boonabaana (2012), in their study of two communities of Goreme, Central Turkey, and Mukono, a parish in south-western Uganda, found that women involved in tourism employment were both paid and unpaid to some extent. In addition to their roles as employees in the tourism sector, the women of Goreme and Mukono had to perform their household roles. The employment of women in these communities included selling snacks in their own small shops, producing and selling handicrafts and souvenirs, working in lodges and providing cooking classes for tourists. In Mukono the contribution of women’s involvement in tourism was significant. Their income was spent on children’s education, clothing for their families and household items. They also helped out their relations and neighbours and so this had a positive effect on their little earnings. These examples show the trickle effect of the tourism dollar in their respective communities. In Goreme, while men were still predominately the main income earners, women were considered to have greater possibilities of participating in tourism and earning income than was previously the case. Similar findings are reported by Wilkinson and Pratiwi (1995) from a study carried out in Indonesia. Women in the lower-class families of Pangandaran were involved in fruit and food selling, especially in peak tourism seasons. With their income they had more control over economic decisions in their families.
In his case study of Bohol province in the Philippines, Pleno (2006) found an increase in social interaction and development of ‘people skills’ between the women groups and through their regular contact with guests. The women were able to exchange and share ideas and experiences, including dealing with money, especially with other women in the group. Consequently, incidences of misunderstanding between members occurred, especially when some members took up another member’s schedule to entertain visitors. These did not escalate into major conflicts as the women managed to resolve these in due course. In Central America, many female workers in the tourism sector indicated being empowered personally and economically. They felt their participation and involvement in various tourism activities reduces male control over household income. Some women also talked about enjoying interacting with people from around the world, and particularly meeting women travelling alone (Ferguson, 2011).

According to the Global Report on Women in Tourism, a report by UNWTO in 2010, women occupy 49% of all jobs in the hotel and restaurant sector. Furthermore, the report adds that in these sectors women are closer to achieving pay parity with men than in other industries, often running their own tourism businesses or being self-employed in their homes (UNWTO, 2010). To highlight the above discussion by UNWTO, Table 2.4 illustrates women’s roles as employees and employers in developing countries by region. The South Pacific island states are represented in Oceania, of which Fiji is a part. It must be noted that Australia and New Zealand are included in the Oceania region which could bias the results considerably.

Table 2.4: Summary of regional average female employees and employers (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Regional average of employees who are women in H&amp;R sector</th>
<th>Average women as employers in H&amp;R sector</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>58.5</td>
<td>51.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>32.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>46.8</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asia</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>29.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>48.62</td>
<td>36.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Global Report on Women in Tourism 2010.
Table 2.4 clearly shows that few women operate their own businesses when compared to those who are employees. The Oceania region has no records of female employers as UNWTO did not have 10% of the data for women in the tourism business of the countries from this region. Latin America has a high percentage of female employers. The reasons for these high percentages could be the availability of resources such as capital. The low percentages in the other regions could be associated with women encountering barriers, such as financial support and or no family support to look after their children while they leave their homes to sell goods or take tours.

### 2.4 iTaukei Women and their Role in Fiji’s Tourism Industry

#### 2.4.1 Position of iTaukei women, status and traditional roles

In iTaukei villages, the way of life is centred on three pillars or institutions: the *vanua* (land), *lotu* (religion) and *matanitu* (government). *Vanua*, literally, means land, but can also be identified as cultural practices, including those where chiefly rules prevail. *Lotu* is the Christian religion which replaced the traditional Fijian way of worship to the gods and has since been synced with the *vanua*. *Matanitu* means traditional and state government. Traditional government has a stronger influence with the iTaukei and is associated with Fiji’s three confederacies of Kubuna, Burebasaga and Tovata (Durutalo, 2006).

Generally, the iTaukei society is a patrilineal one, with descent being traced through the male line; the family’s name, land and properties are inherited through the male line. Additionally, iTaukei women usually have a lower social status than the men and, as a result, they were traditionally unheard, unless a woman of high social ranking was involved. A woman’s role is ascribed according to social rank, which sees women being heads of villages, provinces and confederacies or, collectively, head of the *vanua*. Women of high ranking have a more privileged role and status than those who are of lower ranks; these women carry out the menial tasks. The work carried out by a woman differs according to her province’s cultural practices and values. For example, in some parts of Viti Levu, agricultural work is done by women; however, in the eastern and northern regions of Fiji they do not, except to gather vegetables occasionally (Bolabola, 1986). Generally, iTaukei women were traditionally involved in activities like healing/massage, medicine-making, weeding food crops, lagoon fishing, weaving (mats, vans), pottery tap (Tuivaga, 1988). Previously, men were the decision-makers at the community and village levels in traditional Fijian society, but this has since changed (Tuivaga, 1988). Currently, in villages the village forums encourage everyone in attendance—men and women—to have a say in the upkeep of their village (Personal observation).
For the iTaukei women, their roles are divided into taking care of their families (nuclear and external) and the obligations from the vanua, lotu and matanitu. These roles are continued and extended to their husband’s kin network when they are married. For instance, if there is a gathering in the village women are required to play hosts—cook and serve meals. In carrying out lotu obligations, women are expected to assist by paying levies, looking after the church buildings and serve during church functions. As practised in the vanua and lotu obligations, for any matanitu functions, such as provincial meetings or the death of a high chief, women are required to provide gift items such as mats in addition to catering for all visitors. Yabaki (2006) added another institution with which iTaukei village women now engage in; that is, in education or the school. They are generally more visible in these school gatherings than their male counterparts.

It is believed that the traditional roles and skills of iTaukei women shifted under the influence of colonial women, whose lifestyle iTaukei women later adopted (Tuivaga, 1988). Moreover, the arrival of the missionaries in 1835 greatly shaped the lifestyle of the Indigenous population. Early works by Schoeffel and Kikau (1980 cited in Tuivaga, 1988) recorded that the role model of women introduced by the Protestant missionaries in the nineteenth century to the locals, “was based on the ideal state of their social superiors—the privileged class and not on the realities of the lives of the majority of English women” (p. 5). These missionaries were from England and came from lower middle-class backgrounds, heralding a shift in the traditional roles of women from subsistence roles of agricultural and fishing to sewing and other domestic skills.

Traditionally of a lower social class, unless one was of chiefly ranking, women were very rarely involved in decision-making at any level outside the domestic arena. As a result of these structures, iTaukei women were primarily engaged in activities ‘inside the house’, while the men’s role was outside. This resulted in women’s exclusion from any influence in economic or political decisions (Burns & Harrison, 2003). However, this has changed for the better, as more women have made progress in achieving positions of decision-making within their communities (Leckie, 1997). The right to vote and stand for election in Fiji was open to women and men at the same time in 1963, with the first woman in Parliament sworn in seven years later in 1970 (Yabaki, 2006). Since then, women have continued to stand for elections, become ministers and also serve as opposition members. Currently, there are four women serving in...
Fiji’s Government of the day: two ministers and two assistant ministers. The current Speaker of the House is a former female minister. The House of Opposition is led by a woman, with three female associates. The general participation of women in vital public decision-making bodies remains minimal despite the Fiji Government’s intentions to promote gender equality in development processes. For example, the composition of the Fijian Parliament consists of 45 male members and only eight females.

Many of the traditional roles women held have changed since Fiji’s tourism boom over the past four decades. More women have since engaged in formal and informal employment sectors, as education has become more accessible for everyone in Fiji, particularly in the rural areas. In the year 2000, 97.5% of females were enrolled in primary education, while 97.6% were males (Market Development Facility, 2013). The female labour force participation increased from 29.1% in 1990 to 39.2% in 2007; for the same periods, male participation declined from 83.6% in 1990 to 78.8% in 2007 (Market Development Facility, 2013). This gender gap narrowed due to the increase in formal education for women. The exact number of women working in the tourism industry is complex: the Fiji Bureau of Statistics (FBoS) has an ‘Accommodation and Food Service activities’ classification in its ‘Paid Employment by Major Industry Group’ table, showing females account for 65,151 for the year 2011 and 6,399 for 2014 (FBoS, 2015). The current author argues women account for more than the numbers identified by FBoS. This argument is based on regular field trips to major hotels and tourism regions during her undergraduate study years and as a tutor at the tourism and hospitality school for the University of the South Pacific. Nevertheless, women still largely occupy roles such as receptionists, food and beverage attendants, housemaids, spa therapists and child minders to list a few.

There is also a growing number of women participating in the areas of handicraft production, tour guiding, retail outlets in duty free and tourist souvenir shops, and food outlets in Fiji. Like communities in Goreme, Mukono, Pangadaran and Central America, women in Fiji benefit economically and socially from paid employment. Recent studies carried out in rural communities have noted high participation of iTaukei women through hotel employment and, through this, they were found to be able to meet family financial commitments, such as paying their children’s school fees, paying village and church levies and being able to afford luxury items such as electrical appliances (Gibson, 2015; Movono & Dahles, 2017; Movono et al., 2015). In some cases, women have gone on to open and operate small businesses in their own
villages, including massage parlours, hair-braiding and beauty salons, and small canteens (Movono & Dahles, 2017).

Berno and Jones (2001) indicate that in the South Pacific the importance of women in tourism is rarely acknowledged, nor is there much literature available. Bolabola and Slatter (1984) perhaps conducted the first study which solely focused on women in the tourism industry of Fiji. Their study provided basic information on the number of tourism employees at that time, including the roles which women were involved in. Recent studies by Gibson (2015) and Movono et al. (2015) identify iTaukei women’s involvement in CBT. The most recent study carried out by Movono and Dahles (2017) again focused on iTaukei women’s involvement in tourism and how such involvement has enabled them to become successful business operators. It is therefore imperative to conduct research to examine and understand women’s roles, and more so iTaukei women’s roles, as employees and the impacts such involvement and participation have on themselves and their fellow community members. Furthermore, this study also aims to comprehend and highlight an area which has had very little reporting, especially in the South Pacific: that of women being empowered through tourism. This has now set the stage for the methods to be used in this research.

2.5 Women and Empowerment in an LDC Context
Empowerment has become a widespread concept, progressing over the decades in many academic fields of study and social discourse. In recent times, empowerment has gained considerable reporting within the development, education, psychology and planning disciplines (Boley & McGehee, 2014; Said-Allsopp & Tallontire, 2015). Perkins and Zimmerman (1995) report that it has become “highly popular and mainstream” in many fields of study (p. 571). Advocated as a potential remedy for social inequality, empowerment has “become a vital construct for understanding the development of individuals, organisations and communities” (Perkins & Zimmerman, 1995 p. 571).

Boserup (1970) and Friedmann (1992) were amongst the first few authors who established the empowerment concept as a vital tool for development. In her early works, Boserup (1970) built the foundation for academic studies of women’s economic and social empowerment in academia. She pointed out that in developing countries, although women made up over half of the adult population, they generally were undereducated, with the majority of them limited to low-paid, unskilled and semi-skilled jobs (Moswete & Lacey, 2015). Friedmann (1992) went on to advocate that this was an alternative development; “a process that seeks the
empowerment of households and their individual members through their involvement in socially and politically relevant actions” (p. 33).

There is no universal definition for empowerment because it is multifaceted, taking different forms for diverse people and contexts. Nevertheless, one such scholar refers to empowerment as the capability of “people, organizations, and communities to gain mastery over their affairs” (Rappaport, 1987, p. 122). In the same way, Sadan (1997) describes empowerment as “a process of transition from a state of powerlessness to a state of relative control over one’s life, destiny and environment” (as cited in Boley & McGehee, 2014, p. 86). It is therefore evident the common theme, is that people, organisations and communities have ‘mastership’ or authority over their affairs. The current study has adapted the definition compiled by UNWTO in its Global Report on Women in Tourism 2010, defined in Section 1.6 of the previous chapter.

Some scholars are of the view that empowerment is a compelling process that does not have an end (Annes & Wright, 2015; Mosedale, 2005; Nwosu, 2014). According to development theorists, empowerment is theoretically conceptualised from four different kinds of power; ‘power over’ being the most common, where power is given (Rowlands, 1995). Rowlands (1997) further explains, “power to is decision making power; power with is collective power; and power within being personal power” (p. 13). Literature on women’s empowerment has identified traits which seem to have been generally established in such discourse, because “different people use empowerment to mean different things” (Mosedale, 2005, p. 244).

According to Mosedale (2005) there are four aspects of women’s empowerment. First, one must have been disempowered to be empowered. For example, in most cases women are disempowered compared to men, because they are economically dependent on men. Second, those who become empowered must own it, for it cannot be rendered by an intermediary. By this, she means that, “development agencies cannot therefore empower women—the most they can achieve is to facilitate women empowering themselves” (p. 244). In the same vein, Rowlands (1995) indicates that outsiders cannot impose this, although they can foster and encourage it. Third, empowerment processes—“reflection, analysis and action” (p. 244)—are comprised in this mechanism which may happen at an individual or a collective level. Fourth, empowerment is “an ongoing process rather than a product” (p. 244). This means that in some previous period one was either empowered or disempowered by others or themselves.
Much of the empowerment research specific to tourism development has focused on sustainable tourism development (Boley & McGehee, 2014; Cole, 2007; Scheyvens, 2002; Simons & de Groot, 2015; Sofield, 2003). Moreover, ecotourism has been the yardstick employed to measure the positive and negative outcomes of empowerment (Knight & Cottrell, 2016; Manyisa Ahebwa & van der Duim, 2013; Scheyvens, 1999, 2000; Tran & Walter, 2014).

2.5.1 Women’s empowerment through tourism

Women’s empowerment has been analysed and researched across disciplines. In the mainstream development discourse it is one of the UN’s eight MDGs. Gender equality and women’s empowerment is the third goal. The indicators associated with this gender equality and women’s empowerment goals are: education, employment and political participation. Generally, the wide-ranging indicators for the goal include:

- closing the gender gap in education at all levels;
- increasing women’s share of wage employment in the non-agricultural sector; and
- increasing the proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments (United Nations, 2015b).

The MDGs had a time frame of 15 years, which concluded at the end of 2015. In its MDG report 2015, the UN indicated that many more girls are in school compared with 15 years ago. As a whole, the developing regions have achieved the target to eliminate gender disparity at all levels. At present, the global percentage of paid workers outside of agriculture sits at 41%, which is an increase from 35% in 1990 (United Nations, 2015b). Although this has shown an expansion, it remains low in the regions of Northern Africa, Southern Asia and Western Asia (United Nations, 2015b). Moreover, women’s political representation has increased; growing from 11% in 1995 to 22% in January of 2015, but equality remains a distant goal (United Nations, 2015b).

Women’s empowerment through tourism research is widespread, with special areas in tourism hospitality education; however, empowerment through employment opportunities remains the dominant attention (Annes & Wright, 2015; Dunn, 2007; Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1994; Lama, 2000; McMillan, O'Gorman, & MacLaren, 2011; Movono et al., 2015; Nwosu, 2014; Pleno, 2006).
Fairbairn-Dunlop (1994) presents the case of how Samoan women came up with the substitute to print tapa designs on fabric and sarongs which were tie dyed as an alternative to selling large pieces of tapa. In its original form, these crafts took too long to produce. There was also fear amongst the women that the tourists would not appreciate the cultural value of the tapas. This case shows how women were able to negotiate their way through tourism, be innovative and become economically, psychologically and socially empowered through tourism.

The study of women in rural settings as participants in the various aspects of tourism activities is a well-covered area of study. These activities include managing and owning tea houses, bed and breakfast and small businesses, like handicraft sales. In her study of the women in the Leeled community in Thailand, Dunn (2007) found that women experienced increased feelings of self-esteem and status within their communities. In Botswana, Moswete and Lacey’s findings show that tourism-related employment “freed them [from] the economic, social and psychological burdens of dependency on a matriarchal family, government support programs and begging” (2007, p. 614). The women were confident to pursue vocational training to become self-sufficient.

Scheyvens (2000) comments that women are still at a disadvantage in many regions for they are restricted to opportunities because of social customs. McMillan et al. (2011), however, reveal that, despite the challenges of being members of the marginalised population, high levels of economic, social and psychological empowerment are displayed by women who own tea houses in a Nepal mountain region.

In the developing world, empowerment of women is often elusive and progress is challenged due to socio-cultural contexts (Ali, 2014; Gholipour, Rahimian, Mirzamani, & Zehtabi, 2010). For example, women who operated and managed their own businesses in Bangladesh and Botswana still had their spouses have the final say in any of their decisions (Kabeer, 2003; Mbaia & Stronza, 2010; Scheyvens, 2000). However, studies in southern region of Botswana, men, in some instances, have been supportive of women’s pursuit in the tourism business. The study revealed that one woman was introduced to her female business mentor by a man, with another forming business partnership between her uncle and son (Moswete & Lacey, 2015). Despite this inequality of power, women in culturally embedded communities, through their participation in tourism activities, collectively foster empowerment determinations (Ali, 2014; Dunn, 2007; Moswete & Lacey, 2015; Pleno, 2006; Schellhorn,
Annes and Wright (2015) portray women’s empowerment as ‘a room of one’s own’, where women are able to seek their personal interest without interference from family and community members. In doing so, women now have ‘power to’ in being able to make decisions and exercise creativity, ‘power with’ by collectively working together in order to reach and achieve targets and, lastly, have ‘power within’ by having personal self-esteem and being a change agent to alleviate challenges. Other investigations into empowerment reveal the nexus between entrepreneurship and empowerment (Peeters & Ateljevic, 2009). In their study, Peeters and Ateljevic (2009) point out that women turn into entrepreneurs because of the barriers and constraints they face while being tourism employees. For example, having to find someone to look after the children when both parents work.

2.5.2 An empowerment framework
Scheyvens (1999), in her early works of empowerment and its link to CBT projects, developed a framework “to provide a mechanism with which the effectiveness of ecotourism initiatives, in terms of their impacts on local communities, can be determined” (p. 247). The mechanism has four levels of empowerment: social, political, psychological and economic. Since its inception, this framework has been embraced by other researchers who have employed these indicators to measure the effectiveness of empowerment with respect to rural communities. Dunn’s (2007) study of the rural local community of Leeled, Thailand, looked at women participating in a CBT project. Manuel Pleno’s (2006) case study looked at women in ecotourism in Bohol, Philippines. McMillan et al. (2011) employed this model to assess women in the tea house business in Nepal. Tran and Walter (2014) investigated women’s participation in an ecotourism community-based project in northern Vietnam. The current study applies this framework in the context of rural Indigenous women, employed in the tourism sector on the island of Taveuni, Fiji. It should be pointed out that this framework was not particularly developed for women, but rather is a mechanism to ‘measure’ the effectiveness of ecotourism initiatives in terms of their impacts on local communities (Scheyvens, 1999). The four levels of empowerment—economic, social, psychological and political—are presented in the following sections.

2.5.2.1 Economic empowerment
In her early work, Boserup (1970) pointed out that women, while making up more than half the adult population in developing countries, were commonly found to be undereducated and lacked skills training. As a result, the majority were limited to low-semi skilled jobs and low pay. As development progressed, women were driven into the workforce with the need for specific training.
Just like the buzzword ‘empowerment’, economic empowerment has many definitions in different contexts. One such definition explains women’s economic empowerment as “the process which increases women’s real power over economic decisions that influence their lives and priorities in society” (Tornqvist & Schmitz, 2009, p. 9). Scheyvens (2000) illustrates that women are empowered economically by having control over their income, as in the case of the Maasai women. Other studies have revealed that by getting paid, women are able to contribute to their families and purchase personal effects. In Mexico, for example, women had a greater independence in household decision-making. For young women in Turkey, having paid employment in the clothing industry meant they could get away from the strict confinements of their relatives; it meant freedom to move about during lunch breaks and, for some, a chance to meet up with friends and boyfriends (Kabeer, 2005). However, some studies reveal that women continue to be the majority of workers in exploitative conditions (Kabeer, 2012). Additionally, in male-dominant societies, as in the case of the Dominican Republic, men control their spouses’ wages; women have no say in how these are spent. Furthermore, Dominican Republic women’s participation in paid employment is sometimes a factor of domestic dispute, because the men develop feelings of jealousy that their women are away from the home and interacting with different kinds of people and possibly other men (Duffy et al., 2015).

### 2.5.2.2 Social empowerment

Social empowerment literature indicates a combination of social standing, including: opportunities to interact with others, which used to be denied to women; the choice to marriage equality and reproduction; freedom to join and develop social groups, which enable women to make decisions in the communities; a feeling of personal development and self-fulfilment; and access to educational opportunities (Jütting, Luci, & Morrison, 2010; Moswete & Lacey, 2015; Scheyvens, 1999).

Access to education stands out as a factor to social empowerment—if not an overlap with economic and psychological empowerment (Ampumuza et al., 2008; Kabeer, 2003; Moswete & Lacey, 2015). With the different levels of educational background women have, through skills training, they are able to upskill themselves, such as: enabling them to speak a different language; acquire a new skill, such as hospitality skills; and being able to engage in entrepreneurial ventures to list a few (Ampumuza et al., 2008; Nwosu, 2014). In the case of Nigerians in hospitality, the increased access to training and tertiary education for women has
enabled these females to acquire a stable job which then translates to economic empowerment. On the other hand, Kabeer (2005) notes education limits empowerment, especially in societies conditioned by traditional and cultural practices. She provides an example of where women’s role is purely to produce offspring; their access to education is therefore diminished by various cultural practices.

At the community level, Scheyvens (2000) indicates community unity is strengthened by tourism activities. Pleno (2006) identified cases of women in the Bohol province, Philippines, whose involvement in ecotourism activities created a social space. In such spaces, women were able to socialise with each other, exchange business ideas and even discuss domestic affairs. This activity also enabled them to leave their homes and be in ‘their own space’.

2.5.2.3 Political empowerment

In the tourism context, political empowerment is the outcome of community members being reasonably represented and where avenues are available to enable concerns to be shared about the tourism development (Scheyvens, 1999). Scheyvens (1999) further articulates that “their voices and their concerns should guide the development of any … project from the feasibility stage through to its implementation” (p. 248). Boley and McGehee (2014) further endorse Scheyvens’ point, indicating this level of empowerment “should focus on residents’ perceptions of being included in the tourism process ... a voice in tourism development decisions, and having outlets to share their concerns” (p. 87).

In Fiji, a study by Sofield (2003) on an island community, saw community members headed by the community leader being part of the development process of an island resort on their island, Mana. The collaboration between resort developers and community members took place around the negotiation of lease payment, employment and establishment of informal businesses for locals. As a result, the resort owners and community members developed a good relationship, and the land owners would freely approach the developers whenever they saw that actions and conditions of the agreement were not met. Furthermore, in the rural Loeled community of Thailand women became strong female role models as a result of their involvement in the CBT project (Dunn, 2007). Their involvement in the CBT project exposed these women to various training, which in turn improved their skills in politics, providing them with better persuasion and reasoning abilities. Moreover, the Loeled CBT female members were included in all stages of decision-making, from implementation to monitoring and evaluation. Through their participation in the CBT project they stimulated the interest of more
women to become involved in the project. For example, in a community in northern Vietnam, a CBT project attracted female participants. Their involvement in the project saw two women elected as leaders of the cooperative. With the two women in influential positions they were able to attract the attention of local authorities, which was a positive highlight of the project (Tran & Walter, 2014).

On the other hand, tourism programmes involving communities, political empowerment can be a challenge. For the Maasai community, for instance, the decision-making between the community and Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA) had been an ongoing issue since its inception in the late 1950s. The NCA was formed with no legal binding to have Maasai members be part of the decision-making team. As a result, this created a great deal of tension and resistance by the Maasai people (Charnley, 2005).

For women in tourism, cultural factors are viewed as barriers. In the case of Nepal, the political empowerment of women was demonstrated in two ways: “away from home” and “within the home” (McMillan et al., 2011, p. 199). In the “away from home” politics, women had low representation at local-level political structures. The women stated that the male dominance in these structures was the reason they stayed away. The “within the home” political empowerment fixated on non-economic decisions which saw their children making their own life decisions.

Political disempowerment also occurs within the community. In Farrelly’s (2011) study on community-based ecotourism management (CBEM) in a heritage park in Fiji, members were unable to make fully informed decisions for the CBEM initiatives as a result of a lack of formal education and weak leadership from residents.

2.5.2.4 Psychological empowerment

Psychological empowerment in the context of tourism means that the community is hopeful about its future, has faith in the capabilities of its members, is self-reliant and takes pride in its cultures and traditions (Scheyvens, 2000). For small-scale tourism projects, members take pride in sharing their local arts and traditions with visitors. It is also a way of preserving aspects of cultures and fosters increased levels of self-respect and self-esteem (Scheyvens, 2002).
Tran and Walter's (2014) study of the Giao Xuan community indicates women responded to having greater self-confidence, a voice in activities concerning the community and holding leadership roles in their local political arena. Some of the women pointed out that they were able to convince their husbands to share in the division of labour at home. One of the women mentioned that this stemmed from a shift in the gender roles within her family. The Cuzco communities in Peru also revealed that women involved in turismo rural comunitario (rural community based tourism), were no longer timid and were open to working outside the comfort of their homes with others (Knight & Cottrell, 2016). Other female members of the turismo rural comunitario alluded to being happier, more confident, and were being respected by their husbands.

Despite the overwhelming evidence that women are empowered through tourism it is acknowledged they also experienced disempowerment impacts. One of the main reasons for disempowerment is the cultural and social structures which dictate the place of a woman in her home and community (Scheyvens, 2000), for example women not engaged in guiding roles in the Himalayan region and Indonesia because of socio-cultural norms. In the Philippines some women in Bohol experience domestic conflicts as a result of working in CBT because their husbands see them smiling a lot at outsiders (Pleno, 2006).

The above discussions have highlighted women’s empowerment in the regions of Asia and Africa extensively, with just one example from Fiji. This indicates the scarce nature of studies conducted in Fiji on women in tourism. Studies in Fiji broadly give an overview of tourism empowerment in local communities, while others focus on hotel workers and the impacts of tourism employment (Movono et al., 2015; Prasad, 2014). This thesis aims to offer empirical insight regarding the empowerment of iTaukei women employed in tourism in Fiji.
Chapter 3 - Taveuni: The Study Area

This chapter provides background understanding of Taveuni, the main case study location. The chapter begins with a brief outline of the geographical features of Fiji’s tourism areas. This is followed by a summary of Taveuni’s geographical, demographic, economic and tourism features. It concludes with short descriptions of the villages which are the location case studies.

The archipelago of the Fiji Islands is made up of 332 islands. Its population of approximately 870,000 inhabits 150 islands, where the majority are settled in the two main islands of Viti Levu and Vanua Levu (see Figure 3.1) (Fiji Bureau of Statistics, 2007). Viti Levu, the biggest and most developed island in the group, is home to Suva, the nation’s capital. Lautoka, Fiji’s second city, and the towns of Nadi and Ba, are on the western side of Viti Levu. Neighbouring smaller islands of the Yasawa and the Mamanuca group, which are just off the shores of Nadi, are well-established tourism regions. Taveuni is Fiji’s third largest island and is located to the east of Vanua Levu. Kadavu, on the far south of Suva, is the fourth largest island. Koro, Gau and Ovalau islands are in the ‘centre’, while the Lau Group are to the east of Viti Levu.
As discussed in Chapter 1, tourism has contributed substantially to Fiji’s economy for the past three decades, and it continues to do so. It has been the largest revenue earner and employer, surpassing the ailing sugar industry which, until 1987, was Fiji’s top export and earner (Prasad, 2014).

As a way to map out the potential of tourism growth and development, an extensive Tourism Development Plan (TDP) was composed by Belt, Collins and Associates for Fiji in 1973. In this comprehensive report the authors attested the huge economic potential tourism could bring to the country. In addition, the report identified possible tourism regions throughout the Fiji group, stretching from the western side of Viti Levu to the eastern side of the Lau islands. It foresaw the potential this industry could bring to the various regions of Fiji. A few more TDPs followed this initial Belt report, with the current TDP 2007–2016 near expiration. The TDP 2007–2016 contains a thorough chapter, ‘Regional Prosperity’ (p. 81), highlighting the tourism potential of various regions. These four regions are: Vanua Levu/Taveuni (north end of the Fiji group), Sun Coast (northern tip of Viti Levu), Yasawa Islands (west of Viti Levu) and the Nadi Corridor.

The vast majority of tourism occurs in the western side of Viti Levu and its surrounding islands. The regions of the Nadi Corridor and Yasawa Islands continue to have the highest number of visitors, recording above-average visitors (Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism, 2016). These two regions are home to Denarau, the Coral Coast, Nadi, Mamanuca Islands and Yasawa Islands and are the top five most visited areas in Fiji. These top five destinations also lie in Ba and Nadroga/Navosa province. Additionally, the regions of the Nadi Corridor, Yasawa Islands and the Mamanuca Islands are the ‘tourism capitals’ of Fiji. These regions are in close proximity to Nadi International Airport, which is the main gateway into Fiji. Furthermore, the region has well established tourism facilities, making it very attractive and conducive to conduct tourism business. Visitors on cruise ships or yachts can also access these regions through tender services to Denarau Marina or Vuda Marina, or dock at the Queens Wharf in Lautoka. Lautoka, Fiji’s second largest city is approximately 21 kilometres north of Nadi Airport, with a travel time of 30 minutes.
Figure 3.2 Visitors to Fiji, 2014

Figure 3.2 shows the most visited tourism areas for 2014 recently published in the International Visitors Survey (IVS) by the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism (MITT) for 2014 (MITT, 2016). The neighbouring Sun Coast region, lying northeast of Nadi, is linked through the Queens Highway. In the IVS 2014 report, visitors to the Sun Coast region recorded only 1% of the total number of visitors.

The region of Vanua Levu/Taveuni is accessed by domestic air transfers from Nadi International Airport or via domestic roll-on roll-off ferries. Savusavu is the tourist destination of Vanua Levu and is known as the ‘Hidden Paradise’ of Fiji. It is also the second largest municipality after Labasa. Savusavu has its own airport and jetty. Furthermore, the Transinsular Highway connects Savusavu and Labasa, offering visitors additional access to Savusavu. The Savusavu airport is smaller in comparison to Labasa. The Labasa airport is serviced by ATR 42 aircrafts daily, with maximum capacity of up to 48 passengers, while twin otters, with a maximum capacity of 19 passengers fly to Savusavu. Labasa is the main centre of government administration in the northern division.

While this centre is not overflowing with visitors in comparison to Nadi, over the years numbers have continued to grow. It has developed its own niche, with marinas and reefs as the two main attractions (Department of Tourism (DoT), 2007b). Savusavu and its off-shore islands (see Figure 3.2) receive a small margin of the visitors to Fiji, recording a total of 1% in the 2014 IVS report (MITT, 2016).
Figure 3.3 Map of Vanua Levu
3.1 **Taveuni Geography and Early Settlers**

Taveuni is 42 kilometres long and 10km wide, situated approximately 9km from the southeast of Vanua Levu. It is Fiji’s third largest volcanic island and famously known as the ‘Garden Island’ of Fiji. This tag name was formed as a result of its rich fertile volcanic soils, its dense and fertile rainforest, together with a colourful flora and fauna. A prominent feature of the island is the International Date Line of the 180° Meridian, which runs through the island. A sign board has been erected where the coordinates lie, showing the east and west longitudes. However, the island is not physically time-divided between yesterday and today, but follows the Fiji standard time which is 12 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT +12).

Taveuni was settled predominantly by Indigenous Fijians until the late 1830s, when the first European residents set foot on the island. They were Wesleyan missionaries (Lin, 2012). From then on, as a result of Fiji’s colonial era, pre-1970, large blocks of land were sold to European planters by the high chief of the island, freehold. Word of the availability of such lucrative land quickly became known. In addition, the price of cotton increased as a result of the American Civil War, which further heightened the demand for land. This rush for land saw many European settlers sail to Taveuni to purchase land and institute their large plantations and estates (Lin, 2012). A very small number of the early white descendants still operate on the island today and actively continue their family routine on their estates.

The first Indo-Fijian population to settle in Taveuni came as labourers to the cotton and copra estates. This movement occurred towards the end of 1800s (Lin, 2012). Over the decades, original estate owners subdivided their land and sold or leased these to their labourers. Since then, generations of Indo-Fijians have cultivated these lands with new crops of taro (*Colocasia esculenta*) and kava (*Piper methysticum*) (Murray, 2000). Today, a small number of North Americans are growing and have acquired retirement properties and set up accommodation establishments on their land (Personal Observation, 2015). These could be likened to be second homes, where owners have their primary dwelling elsewhere (Tombaugh, 1970). Many second homes today are increasingly being used all year round (Casado-Diaz, 1999). Additionally, Williams, King and Warnes (2004) report that second homes have multiple purposes, with the most common purposes being for recreational use and income generation. On Taveuni, the descriptions provided by the said authors are associated with some owners, whereas others have built tourism accommodation businesses together with their second homes.
The population of Taveuni currently stands at 16,193 and is still inhabited predominately by Indigenous Fijians or iTaukei who dwell in villages and settlements (Acting Subdivisional Medical Officer, personal conversation, December 5, 2016). The majority of these dwellings are built along the coast. Indo-Fijians are the second largest population on Taveuni, the third ethnic population accounting for a small minority are part-Europeans, who are descendants of early Europeans planters. There are four tikina (districts) under which villages in Taveuni are traditionally governed: Cakaudrove-i-Wai, Wainikeli, Laucala and Vuna. There are 23 registered villages, nine primary schools and four high schools within these districts.

The government station at Waiyevo houses Taveuni’s hospital, police station and the district administrator’s office, court house, correctional facility, post office and the agricultural station. Other government infrastructure includes coastal roads running from the south to the north ends of the island, health centres based on the north and south ends of the island, a jetty and an airport. Other amenities on the island include standard telecommunication receptions and internet connectivity. Transportation around the island includes public buses, mini-vans, pick-up trucks, carriers and cars.

Accessibility to and from Taveuni is through the island’s airstrip, located at the northern point of the island, Matei. There are direct Nadi–Taveuni–Nadi daily flights which make travelling for visitors who have entered Fiji through Nadi simple. There are also direct weekly flights on the Suva–Taveuni–Suva route. Roll-on, roll-off ferries make two weekly calls into the Salia jetty from Suva. The Salia Jetty is located at the centre of the island. Another small landing jetty connects Taveuni to Vanua Levu. Labasa is the northern division’s main business and government administration centre.

3.2 Economy
The attractiveness of Taveuni’s fertile soil attracted European settlers to set up large cotton and copra estates in the 1870s (Lin, 2012). It is recorded that perhaps the earliest economy was established from cotton (Brookfield, 1978, p. 46 as cited in Lin, 2012). This was a result of a high world price due to the American Civil War; however, the cotton boom ended in 1871. Around the 1870s the first township of Taveuni was established in Vuna, the southern west end of island. This resulted from the high copra prices and, more so, the location of a large copra estate owned by the Tarte family (Lin, 2012). There was a shop and a small hotel. After the collapse of the cotton industry some farmers ventured into coffee and sugar cane. These too were short-lived (Lin, 2012). By the 1920s, well established, large, general merchant
company owners such as Morris Hedstrom, Burns Philip and Malcom Forbes took advantage of the sale of large blocks of land from the European settlers. They saw this as an opportune strategy to diversify their business and introduced new crops including copra, coffee beans and vanilla (Brookfield, 1978, p. 46 as cited in Lin, 2012). The 1940s saw cattle farming common in some of the larger estates on the southern end of the island (Tarte, 2015). To this day, one European cattle farmer’s fifth generation descendants continue to supply beef on the island. Copra prices continued to rise, sustaining economic activity on the island well into the 1970s. Tarte (2015) believes that the best years of copra were in the 1950s.

The collapse of the copra industry and the successful dominance of the large general merchants’ store chains on the island, particularly Burns Philip and Morris Hedstrom, saw the shift of commercial activity from the south more towards the centre of the island when the first jetty was built in the early 1970s. These two general merchant stores were located at the centre of Taveuni. The 1970s also saw the advent of two new cash crops enter the Fijian agricultural market—taro (or *dalo* in Fijian) and kava (or *yaqona* in Fijian)—when their high demand was realised (Bayliss-Smith, Bedford, Brookfield, & Latham, 1987). This also transformed Taveuni’s rural economy. Besides villages, dispersed settlements immersed themselves in planting *yaqona*. The newfound *yaqona* economy boomed in Taveuni from the 1970s, placing it as the major source of income for the island in 1983 (Bayliss-Smith et al., 1987). This thrive reached its peak towards the end of 1998, when there was a high demand in the domestic and international markets (Murray, 2000). To take advantage of such opportunity, farmers hastened to supply the demands in unsustainable ways. These included uprooting plants which had not reached maturity, and the selling of yaqona plantations at a far lower price than the full price should have been had it been ‘processed’ (Murray, 2000, p. 369). This boom was short-lived after Taveuni’s reputation was tarnished internationally due to shady practices by the suppliers in regards to the ‘processed’ end product.

Today, Naqara is the new township and is set about 5 kilometres from the new and current jetty of Salia. It is home to a commercial bank, hardware shops, a hire purchase chain store, automotive repair shops, small vegetable market, the bus station and depot, and small retail shops. Other little retail enterprises are based across the islands. Canteens and cooperative stores are mainly found in the villages. Commercial activity on Taveuni is dominated by Indo-Fijians who operate many of the retails shops around Taveuni’s mini townships. They also monopolise the taxi operation on the island. Some of these business owners were sugar cane
farmers before relocating to Taveuni as a result of the massive expiration of sugar cane land leases between 1997 and 2001 (Naidu & Reddy, 2002).

The production of taro in Taveuni soared after the taro leaf blight which devastated Samoa’s production from mid-1993 (Hunter, Pouono, & Semisi, 1998). Taro is known to the Fijian farmers as a ‘quick’ crop because it is ready for harvest in just 7 months. This enables farmers to use an intercropping method, as returns from taro are much quicker when compared to yaqona. Today, Taveuni continues to be Fiji’s largest exporter of taro internationally (Lal, 2013; Sundar, 2016). The recent category five tropical cyclone Winston, which rampaged through Fiji in February 2016, caused extensive damages on Taveuni. This natural disaster crippled the island’s agricultural cash crops, since the highest producers of these crops lay directly in line of Winston’s path (Personal observation, 2016). This natural disaster has crippled the island’s economy. The farmers have returned to re-establish their farms; however, returns from this crop harvesting period will take a while. It takes up to 7 months before taro is ready for harvest, while kava takes between three to six years. As a result, it could be assumed the island will need to rely on tourism to temporarily sustain Taveuni’s economy. Nevertheless, agriculture still remains Taveuni’s main economic driver.

### 3.3 Tourism on Taveuni

It is not confirmed when the first tourism activities began on Taveuni; however, plans for it becoming a possible revenue-generator were incepted in the early 1970s (Lin, 2012). Since its inception four decades ago, tourism certainly has stimulated economic activity on the island, even though it continues to receive low tourist numbers—the IVS 2014 reports Taveuni and its off-shore islands receiving only 2% of visitors (MITT, 2016). Tourism activities on Taveuni remain underdeveloped. Such figures could elicit mixed feelings from stakeholders, with the producers and locals hoping for more visitors, whilst the visitors enjoy the relatively undisturbed environment.
Figure 3.4 Map of Taveuni

Figure 3.4 shows Taveuni’s location in the Fiji group including one of its main attractions, the 180° Meridian International Dateline. The most popular activities are diving, snorkelling, bird watching and hiking. The waters off Taveuni are home to some of the world’s most renowned diving sites, including world-renowned sites of soft coral. Being the Garden Island, features of waterfalls, natural water slides, rainforest hiking, trekking and birdwatching are amongst the popular activities available.

Taveuni caters for various types of tourists. The luxury and midrange accommodation is mostly owned by foreigners who live onsite. These range from private villas, as well as deluxe and standard hotel rooms. The most recent recording of the total number of properties in Taveuni was in 2006, with 35 properties, accounting for 194 rooms. At that time there was a prediction that, by the year 2016, the island would provide a total of 298 rooms in 40 properties (TDP, 2006). Updated properties and room numbers are currently unavailable as a new TDP for 2015-2020 is currently in its final drafting stages (Valemei, 2016b). The Garden Island Resort is considered to be the oldest hotel on the island, having been built in 1971.
The availability of resources such as land, waterfalls, beach, reefs and forests at their disposal, sparked the interests of Indigenous Fijians to establish their own small-scale tourism initiatives. These range from community-based ecotourism initiatives, lodges, guest houses, backpacker rooms, camping grounds, restaurants, handicraft stalls, cultural tours, trekking, water activities, horse riding and bird watching to name a few. With the assistance from the government of the day and foreign government aid, these locals were equipped with basic business start-ups and management skills through collaborative workshops.

The CBEM venture is the Bouma National Heritage Park. This initiative was made possible through New Zealand Government-funded aid, provided when the community approached them for development assistance back in 1988. The national park was established in 1990 with initiatives from the four clans, who then set up four different establishments in the four villages. These four enterprises include: Tavoro Waterfalls, the Waitabu Marine Park, Vidawa Rainforest Hike and Lavena Coastal Walk and Lodge (S. Qeteqete, personal communication, April 23, 2015). Of these initiatives, the two popular ventures are the Tavoro Waterfalls and Lavena Coastal Walk and Lodge. The CBEM venture is fully managed by the clan members themselves. At the initial stages of set up, workshops were conducted as a joint task by departments of the New Zealand Government, under its NZAID (the New Zealand Aid Programme) arm. These workshops equipped the community members with skills such as bookkeeping, project management, customer service and housekeeping. Another workshop for small business set up was provided by the Fiji Development Bank, a statutory body whose operations are controlled by the Minister of Finance through its board members.

Matei is the main visitor gateway into Taveuni, for the island’s airport is based here. It can also be said that it is the ‘tourist hub’ of the island, since it is quite densely populated with accommodation properties and tourist amenities. These properties offer luxury through to backpacker categories of lodging. An estimated total of 15 accommodation establishments alone assemble on this strip. It must be mentioned that these establishments are mainly cottages and villas including a camp ground. Apart from lodging, other amenities in this location include: cycling and water sports hiring equipment, restaurants and bars, spa facilities, a pearl farming day tour operation, a small handicraft business and three supermarkets.

In recent times, with the gradual growth of tourism in Taveuni, this industry has provided an alternative opportunity to its youth, especially those who have dropped out of school, to find
employment and contribute to the betterment of their families and communities. It has also been observed and can be foreseen that such new-found employment will influence socio-cultural shifts in their various communities (Personal Observation, 2015). This could make a great study area.

3.4 Research Areas

The following section provides short descriptions of the villages which have been selected for this research. A total of seven villages and two settlements were part of this case study. In the Fijian context, a village or *koro* consists of a number of “people who are sub-divided into various social groups according to blood and other kinship ties residing in a defined physical territory” (Ravuvu, 1983, p. 76). A settlement, on the other hand, is normally located on the periphery of a village and does not necessarily have as formal a structure as the village. Village populations have the tendency to be more than a hundred villagers, whereas a settlement usually has less than a hundred members. All these villages are located in close proximity to the hotels and tourism operations where local residents are employed.

3.4.1 Lavena, Korovou and Waitabu Villagers

These three villages are part of the four villages whose members belong to different *mataqali* (clan), and are landowners of the Bouma Heritage Park. The villages are located at the northern end of Taveuni.

Lavena sits on the coastline of north-eastern Taveuni. It is the last village on the north end and is home to 85 households, with an approximate population of 400. The villagers are generally subsistence farmers, with small-scale commercial farming of taro and kava as income for their families. The village has a school which provides education from kindergarten to Year 8 level. While the men toil the land, the women are domestic housewives, and are often engaged with village, school and church obligations when the need arises. There are three licensed canteens that sell basic food items, such as crackers, cooking oil, sugar, rice, canned food, onions, cigarettes and sweets. Furthermore, many take the public bus to Naqara and Waiyevo to buy groceries, carry out other commercial activities and for medical purposes. Six women from the village are employed in the Lodge; however, only one of them agreed to be part of the interviews, the others were not available or were at work.

Lavena was also one of the severely damaged villages when tropical cyclone Winston struck the Fiji group in late February of 2016. This resulted in extensive damage to plantations, houses and schooling infrastructure, the Lodge and roads. With housing and other assistance
from the Fiji Government and donors, the villagers are slowly rebuilding their homes, classrooms and plantations. The Lavena Coastal Walk and Lodge are situated on the periphery of the village; this means that the villagers employed by the business conveniently walk to their workplace and back home.

Korovou village is home to the Tavoro Waterfalls Park, the most popular tourist site on Taveuni. Apart from the waterfall pools, the Park has tracks to trek up its three waterfalls. Like Lavena, the villagers are farmers who farm for subsistence and sell their produce to bring in family revenue. There are 68 households in the village, with an estimated total of 360 villagers. There is a school, two churches and three canteens in the village and a health centre on the periphery of the village boundaries. This health centre serves the villages from Waitabu to Lavena and all the settlements in between. The two female employees who attend to the reception area at the entry of the Tavoro Waterfalls Park are members of Korovou village.

Waitabu village, like Lavena, lies on the coast of the north-eastern end of Taveuni. The village is smaller compared to Lavena and Korovou, with only 21 households and an approximate population size of 120 people. Some of the homes have become vacant as their occupants have moved to other parts of Taveuni and Fiji in pursuit of education and employment opportunities. The remaining villagers carry out daily routines, with women performing domestic duties and men attending to their plantations and, in some cases, both men and women perform tasks for the village, school and church.

The Waitabu Marine Reserve is popular for day trips, with activities including snorkelling, swimming and kayaking. The reception office, administered by a single female employee, is located at the beach end of the village dwelling boundaries. Villagers catch the public bus if they need to get to the hospital, the wharf or business centre.
3.4.2 Naselesele Village
This village has an estimated 58 households, accounting for about 300 people on the north coast of Taveuni. It has its own primary school and a church. The villagers plant taro and kava as the main source of, or to supplement, their income. Their close proximity to the sea enables them to rely on this resource as an important producer in their food chain. This is in addition to the produce from their gardens. Some of the villagers, both men and women, are employed by the tourism businesses nearby, in the areas of accommodation, dive shops, restaurants and the airport. Only three women accepted the invitation to be part of this study. The majority of men and women are stay-at-home parents and carry out domestic routine tasks. Naselesele village is within walking distance to the island’s airport, Matei. They are also close to the supermarkets and to Taveuni’s ‘tourist hub’. The tar sealed road stretch on Taveuni’s coastal road also ends at Naselesele. This has allowed the villagers fast and easy access to the hospital, post office, three of the four high schools on the island, Naqara Township and the island’s jetty.

3.4.3 Lovonivonu Village
Lovonivonu is located on the central part of the island and is within close distance to Waiyevo, the government station. The village has 70 households with a population estimation of 450. Due to the village’s locality to Waiyevo and Naqara, a few of the villagers have managed to find casual employment at the government station, the shops in Naqara and also at a nearby resort. Even though there are over ten hotel employees in this village, only one agreed to be part of the story. The others did not provide an indication as to whether they agreed or not. The foreshore of Lovonivonu is the locality of the small landing jetty, which connects Taveuni to Vanua Levu. The village also sits on the bottom of the only government-owned high school on the island. Similar to other villages the island, the youth and adult male villagers practise small-scale cash crop taro and yaqona farming, in addition to traditional subsistence farming.

3.4.4 Tavuki Village
Tavuki village is situated on a hill, in the central section of Taveuni. There are 70 households, with an estimated 350 people. Its convenient location has enabled some Tavuki villagers work opportunities in the two hotels located in this area of Taveuni, the shops and the government station. The remaining villagers plant taro and yaqona to support their families, apart from the normal subsistence farming. Four of the five women who worked in the hotels were part of this study.
Beneath Tavuki village is the Roman Catholic mission compound, Wairiki. It is home to the Catholic Church, which owns a kindergarten, a primary and secondary school. This is where the majority of Tavuki’s children attend school. Another small township (Wairiki), the island’s main jetty (Salia Jetty) and two tourist accommodation establishments and the island’s post office assemble on this Wairiki shoreline strip. This then connects to the road that heads to Waiyevo, the government station base.

3.4.5 Narusa Settlement

Narusa can be best described as Tavuki’s satellite settlement. Although it sits within the Tavuki village land its boundaries are separated by a stream and garden cultivation land. The villagers from both dwellings have very close family ties. This settlement has 28 households, with an estimated 140 members. The sole female tourism employee was part of this study.

Similar to the ‘main village’ of Tavuki, the children attend the Wairiki schools. Moreover, at least one member from each family is engaged in some form of paid employment, such as being civil servants, hotel workers, dive instructors, nannies, shop assistants and employees in the Wairiki Catholic mission. This characteristic is rare compared to the other previously described villages and for the whole island. Nevertheless, all of the households engage in small-scale taro and yqona cultivation to further supplement their incomes.

3.4.6 Soqulu Estate Settlement

Soqulu is the home of Taveuni Estates, an integrated tourism and residential development. It is about 5km to the south of Wairiki. The majority of the lot owners are internationally-based and have yet to develop their properties. About 30% of the lots have been developed, primarily serving as holiday homes. The remaining pieces of land are either undeveloped or still on the market for sale. Land purchased in Taveuni Estates is freehold. Furthermore, a few of these home owners have moved to Fiji and made Soqulu their permanent home.

Three distinct features of the estate are its nine-hole golf course—the only one on the island—a bowling lawn and tennis courts. There is also a club house with a bar and swimming pool, which is for members only (who are the lot owners in Soqulu). There is also a dive resort and restaurant on the estate belonging to one of the property owners.

Soqulu Estate settlement was developed to house the labourers and their families of Taveuni Estate. The Estate built barrack-type homes ‘in lines’ that had single rooms and a detached
kitchen. The labourers are mainly tasked to work on the estate’s development, clearing land for development, plumbing works, assisting in the building of homes and the general upkeep of homes whose owners are not on site. The settlement is home to 16 families, accounting for about 100 people. There is a kindergarten on the Estate, whereas the primary and secondary school-level children attend either Wairiki or the other schools towards the north-eastern side of the island.

The majority of the men work on the Estate’s properties; however, some have managed to find work at the dive resort and restaurant located on site. Most of the women stay home, while a few are casually employed in the homes of the residents and also at the dive resort and restaurant. Three women who work in the dive resort and restaurant agreed to be part of this study.

3.4.7 Vuna

Vuna village is located in the southern end of Taveuni. Vuna is also the name of the district in this region of Taveuni. This village, believed to be one of the largest on the island, has 150 households, with an estimation of 500 villagers.

The village has a kindergarten and primary-level school. For secondary education the children either travel to a recently built high school, about 10 minutes bus ride away. Their other option is to be a boarder at the high schools in Wairiki or Lovonivou. A nursing station and a shop are in the neighbouring areas. Vuna and its surrounding areas are also home to large-scale commercial farmers of taro and yaqona for Taveuni. Interestingly, the majority of these large-scale commercial farmers are Indo-Fijians, who are either on freehold or leased land.

There are three tourism accommodation properties on this southern end of the island. One lodge is owned by an Indigenous Fijian woman, who is part of this study. She is a native of Vuna. Her small operation sits on the land which she has leased from her family unit. The second is owned by the descendants of one of the first European settlers of Taveuni, the Tarte family. This family lodge sits on their massive coconut estate. An Australian couple owns the third property, which is of deluxe standard and has a dive shop. This southern end is also popular with sightseers for its natural blowholes.

The southern end of Taveuni was one of the worst hit places in Fiji when tropical cyclone Winston struck. As already mentioned, this caused major adaptations and adjustments to these families’ incomes and daily routines.
Even though Taveuni is primarily agricultural-based, economic activity on the island has been prosperous. A previous bank manager on the island once commented, “the amount of money circulating on this island, one would think it was one of the busy towns on Viti Levu” (Bank Manager, personal communication, June 20, 2010). A good number of students leave the island, for both high school and tertiary education, to the urban centres of Viti Levu and Vanua Levu. A hydroelectric power plant has also been recently completed which will provide electricity to the main centre of the island as its first phase initiative. This provision will boost economic activity for the island and could possibly attract more investors (Silaitoga, 2016).

Tourism, though a very small industry on the island, has become one of the main sources of employment. It also has the potential to grow. Although the residents of Taveuni are challenged with limited employment opportunities, this has not been a deterrent; many look for other avenues, besides farming, to support their families and communities.
Chapter 4 - Methodology

The overall aim of this thesis is to explore if and how tourism has enabled the empowerment of Indigenous Fijian women in rural communities. The study has a focus on women living on the island of Taveuni, Fiji. The study also aims to address the gap in knowledge between women’s empowerment through their involvement in the tourism sector in the Fijian context.

Exploring the impacts of tourism on indigenous communities is complex. It therefore needs the most suitable method to enable true recordings and reporting from the participants. Hence, the method chosen to bring out participants’ voices and rich experiences is the qualitative interpretive approach grounded in the principles of Indigenist research. To begin with, this chapter addresses the research problem, followed by the overall aim and objectives and, finally, the detailed methods which were used to collect the data.

4.1 Research Problem
Women make up over half of the employees in Fiji’s tourism sector (Rawalai, 2016). In spite of this, very few researchers have carried out studies to show the impact of their employment and participation in this sector (Bolabola & Slatter, 1984; Gibson, 2013; Movono, 2012). It is generally acknowledged, however, that the economic benefits tourism employment provides for women and their families are significant (Cone, 1995; Gentry, 2007; Gibson, 2013; Movono & Dahles, 2017). Moreover, while there has been some research on other aspects, such as socio-cultural impacts and empowerment indicators, this also remains relatively low (McMillan, O’Gorman, & MacLaren, 2011; Pleno, 2006; Scheyvens, 2000; Tran & Walter, 2014). In particular, specific reporting on Indigenous Fijian women living in rural dwellings who are involved in tourism is very limited. As women’s contribution to the industry and their communities is substantial, the extent of its impacts and influences must be acknowledged and valued, especially in Fiji.

4.2 Research Paradigm
The research paradigm is “a set of beliefs that guide action” by the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p.183). These ontological, epistemological and methodological beliefs are held by the researcher and influence a range of research decisions—about how the social world is, about how research is conducted and how things come to be ‘known’ (Ponterotto, 2005). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) refer to positivism / post-positivism, constructivist-interpretivism, critical studies, and feminist post-structuralism as the four major paradigms guiding qualitative
Based on Denzin and Lincoln’s (2005) constructivist-interpretive paradigm, Jennings (2010a) simplifies their ‘complex in nature’ explanation and asserts that the (constructivist-)interpretive social sciences paradigm allows for “multiple explanations to explain a phenomenon [sic] and the research process should be subjective rather than objective” (p. 40).

Although this study is based on the constructive-interpretive paradigm it has used the Fijian Vanua Research Framework (FVRF), or Vanua Research Framework (VRF) in short. This Indigenist framework was developed by Nabobo-Baba (2006) specifically for those who wish to carry out research with Indigenous Fijians. Carson and Koster (2012) have a collaborating view that Western and Indigenist paradigms can enhance understanding of the topic while remaining culturally sensitive. In this Indigenist framework, my participation is one of an ‘insider-outsider’. As an insider and an Indigenous Fijian woman myself, I have prior intimate familiarity with the community and its members (Merton, 1972). Merton (1972) further explains that being an insider as an ‘insighter’ means the researcher is “one endowed with special insight into matters necessarily obscure to others, thus possessed of penetrating discernment” (p. 15).

In this study, I identify as one of the Fijian women, being iTaukei and having grown up and lived in Taveuni until my mid-teen years, roughly 22 years ago. Even though I do not reside in Taveuni now, I make trips back to the island during school holidays and work breaks. As an outsider, I was not part of many of the participants’ social settings, which in turn provided me with the scope “to stand back and abstract material from the research experience” (Burgess, 1984, p. 23 as cited in Hellawell, 2006, p. 485). The approach of being an insider-outsider is summed up well by Merton as, “one must not only be one in order to understand one; one must be one in order to understand what is most worth understanding” (1972, p. 16-17). Bonner and Tolhurst (2002) further assert that being part of the social group which researchers intend to study is progressively becoming common in qualitative studies.

The constructivist-interpretive paradigm is well suited for this study because it enables the researcher and the participants to co-construct the research process and its ‘findings’ through interactive engagement and dialogue (Ponterotto, 2005). Additionally, adopting this paradigm enables the participants and the researcher to relate and interact “in an effort to come to understand their experiences and the meaning they ascribe to them” (Giddings & Grant, 2009,
Neuman (2011) identifies this paradigm as interpretive social science, adding the researcher as wanting to learn meaningful and relevant everyday life experiences from their participants. As an indigenous researcher, whose participants are members of indigenous communities, I felt much more comfortable with an approach that respects the principles of their (and my) systems of knowledge and understandings. As Nabobo-Baba (2008) succinctly asserts:

> By situating indigenous people at the centre of the research act and using their systems of knowledge and understandings as the basis for inquiry and investigation, we open the possibility of dramatically extending the knowledge base of indigenous people and transforming their understanding of the social cultural world. (p. 141)

The VRF, conceived by Nabobo-Baba (2006), was constructed out of the similar idea of decolonising research and its methodologies (Smith, 1999; Hau’ofa, 1993; Thaman, 2003; Baba, Mahina, Williams & Nabobo-Baba, 2004). Maori researcher Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) championed early moves to decolonise research and its methodologies after critiquing the domination of traditional Western paradigms and, in doing so, she brought about a new agenda for indigenous research. This decolonisation set out guidelines for non-indigenous researchers to improve their practices involving indigenous communities, especially her own Māori communities. This saw the birth of Kaupapa Māori research and principles which guided research that involved Māori communities. This was an innovative framework responding to the need in the Pacific and her work encouraged other Pacific Islands scholars to create frameworks befitting their various indigenous communities (Nabobo-Baba, 2008; Vaioleti, 2006). In her work, Nabobo-Baba (2008) expressed the need for researchers, whether indigenous or not, to use culturally appropriate framings and methodologies that recognise the Pacific ontologies, cultural knowledge and epistemologies that ground the research while still maintaining methodological principles. For the purpose of this study, the Fijian culturally appropriate framings and methodologies are netted in the VRF.

The VRF is an indigenous theoretical approach “embedded in indigenous Fijian world views, knowledge systems, lived experience, representations, cultures and values and giving power and recognition to things Fijian” (Nabobo-Baba, 2008, p.143). The word Vanua means land, Ravuvu further elaborates its deeper significance to the iTaukei people:
… it also refers to the social and cultural aspects of the physical environment identified with a social group. On the social plane it includes the people and how they are socially structured and related to one another. On the cultural plane it embodies the values, beliefs and the common ways of doing things. (1983, p. 76)

For any Fijian, the *vanua* is the reason for their existence; it is the soul of being Fijian (Ravuvu, 1983). In the VRF, *Vanua* refers to a broader sense that is inclusive of a chief, the relationship between their people, their land, spiritualties, knowledge systems, cultures and values. The philosophy that underlines the VRF is one of the “interconnectedness of people to their land, environment, cultures, relationships, spirit world, beliefs, knowledge systems, values and God(s)” (Nabobo-Baba, 2008, p.143). The VRF is developed from a Fijian context and authenticates Fijian way of doing things. The VRF, like Kaupapa Māori theorising, aims to have a life-changing manner, in that it contributes to the enhancement and positive transformation of the lives of Fijians. Furthermore, like Kaupapa Māori research, Vanua Research ensures that Indigenous Fijians will not only remain passive participants of research, but adorn an active role—from the research designs and implementation through to the dissemination process (Nabobo-Baba, 2008).

Below are the eight principles of the VRF which were observed and carried out during the visits to the villages and settlements.

1. “*Research that is carried out on Fijians needs to benefit people, especially the researched community*” (Nabobo-Baba, 2008, p. 144).

The research problem, aims and objectives have been clearly established in sections 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 respectively. Also, Chapter 2 indicated the lack of studies of women and their contribution to their families and communities in Fiji. This study then aims to close that gap and add to the body of knowledge of indigenous research, but more so to highlight the significant contributions these women in tourism have accomplished for their families and communities. The research also provides a platform to raise awareness with relative government departments of the need for assistance the women have voiced and to foster self-sufficiency.
2. “It should focus on indigenous peoples’ needs and must take into account indigenous cultural values, protocols, knowledge processes and philosophies, especially those related to knowledge access, legitimation, processes of ethics, indigenous Fijian sanctions and clan ‘limits or boundary’, all of which influence knowledge and related issues” (Nabobo-Baba, 2008, p.144).

With the research aim in mind, I anticipated the participants would bring to light some of their needs as employees to be addressed with relevant authorities. For them, I was the agent who could communicate these needs to higher administration. More discussion on this issue is presented later in the Discussions chapter (Chapter 6).

When visiting a vanua (this could be a home, village or community), iTaukei protocol dictates the customary process of the i sevusevu (presentation of the yaqona-piper methysticum) is performed by the individual or group who is visiting. This custom is followed as a way of requesting entry into that particular vanua and is always conducted by a male. This is a ceremonial offering of yaqona by the host to the guest, or guest to the host, which is done in respect of recognition and acceptance of one another (Ravuvu, 1983). This solemn presentation involves a speech, first by the representative requesting entry, who introduces the guest, explains their background, where they are from and the reason for their presence and request for entry. The chief or village headman, to whom the presentation is being made, reciprocates with a speech of their own, indicating acknowledgment of the request and often giving their blessing to the visitor.

For this study, once I arrived at a village or home, the i sevusevu was performed to the village chief if I was in the village, or to the village headman, if the village chief was unavailable, or for those who lived on the outskirts of the village to the woman’s husband if he was available. In the villages I would ask one of my male relatives from the village to perform my i sevusevu. On the occasion of visiting homes I would present my yaqona, not as formal as the i sevusevu ceremony, but in a few words asked for permission from the head of the household, the husbands, an explained my intentions for the visit and requested to have a talanoa with the wife or with the both of them. For most of these home visits, the husband always reciprocated in reply that I did not need to go to such an extent of presenting yaqona but that I was coming ‘home’. Nevertheless, they were always thankful for the consideration and for upholding traditional practices on my part.
At the end of the formal presentation, conversations commenced freely, with the village chief or headman generally asking what my research was about. Sometimes they would ask where I was from and, once they knew of my background, they would then ask about my parents. For example, some of the village chiefs knew who my parents were and commented that my mother taught their children. Another one fondly remembers my paternal grandfather and said they used to be ‘yaqona drinking mates’ back in the day.

Although it is highly sought after and respected to present a bundle of yaqona roots, in the event where this is impossible to acquire, pounded yaqona, sold in packs is acceptable. For all my visits, I purchased these root bundles or packs of yaqona from the villagers themselves as a gesture of supporting their micro businesses. Once all the small talk was completed, I excused myself and proceeded with my interaction with the participants in their homes or wherever they felt comfortable.

To take account of cultural values, protocols and processes I intuitively followed these steps in the focus group discussions. I would first begin by thanking them for agreeing to be part of my research and making time to sit and talanoa with me. This was followed by the reason I was there. I knew most of the participants, so did not have to give them a background about who I was, instead I filled them in on my current status—where I was studying and what I was studying.

The emphasis placed on the importance of confidentiality during discussions was relayed to them and formalised with the process of obtaining the women’s individual signed informed consent. This covered the ethics processes.
3. “Researcher fluency in the Fijian Language and or dialect of the researched community. This recognises the importance of language in understanding, critiquing and verifying indigenous concepts, and in documenting aspects of their lives appropriately” (Nabobo-Baba, 2008, p. 144).

There are numerous dialects in the *iTaukei* language. The *Bau* dialect is the base of the standard *iTaukei* language and is understood by the majority of Indigenous Fijians. Each of the 13 provinces in Fiji has its own distinct dialect. Even within each province there are subsets of the main provincial dialect. For example, the island of Taveuni is in the Cakaudrove province. Within Cakaudrove and Taveuni there are numerous dialects according to geographical location. All the villages and settlements where this study took place had variations of the Taveuni dialect; however, the standard Taveuni dialect was understood by all and was used in this study. The researcher is fluent in the standard *Bau* dialect and in the Taveuni dialect. In some instances, it was difficult to find a term in the Taveuni dialect or *Bau* dialect, so the researcher used the English term, which was well understood by the participant.

4. “The use of indigenous persons in the research team as principal researcher(s) in team research situations. On the role of insider native/indigenous researchers Swisher, (1996, p.9 as cited in, Nabobo-Baba, 2008) had noted that they should be given the principal role in research that focuses on native peoples and their issues. He further points out that ‘insider’ views enhance passion and commitment as well as asking new and different questions” (Nabobo-Baba, 2008, p. 144).

I am an Indigenous Fijian, I did not employ any other indigenous persons as I was capable of carrying out this research personally. The fact that I was from the researched island gave me an added advantage, having insight into and about the research location, the communities themselves and the women I wanted to interview.
5. “Respect and reciprocity: researchers need to acknowledge and affirm existing elders and Vanua structures and protocols. In terms of reciprocity, researchers must ensure there is sufficient means to show appreciation to people so that people’s love, support, time, resources and knowledge freely given are duly reciprocated. Fijian gifting is appropriate here” (Nabobo-Baba, 2008, p. 144-145).

As discussed in point 2, I presented the sevusevu to the village chief/headman or husband to seek permission to enter the village and conduct my studies. Additionally, I respected the time and space of my participants, which was why I contacted them to arrange a convenient time to pay them a visit. Before the start of our sessions I would thank them sincerely for agreeing to my humble request and for allowing me their time and space to meet and collect my data. For most of the households I visited, I would purchase some food items, such as bread, butter, sugar and sweets for their children, as a token of thanks. This was in addition to little bottles of perfume oil for the women themselves. For those households which did not have children I would purchase a few packets of yaqona to be consumed with the participants while the talanoa was taking place. Such gestures were often met with surprise and hesitancy to accept them. As the researcher, I explained it was a small token of my appreciation for their time and efforts in participating in the talanoa, and that their stories provided a huge body of knowledge for the research. In the iTaukei culture generosity and giving without expecting anything in return is an important part of our way of living; it is considered a plus if the other party gives something in return.

6. “Researchers need to ensure as far as possible that local people in the research setting are co-opted as members of the research team. This is a means of building local capacity and ensures benefits in multiple ways to the research community” (Nabobo-Baba, 2008, p. 145).

This was done by holding a session together with more than one participant. When such sessions were held the participants assisted each other when some questions were difficult for others to understand. In some instances, the participants themselves took charge of the flow of conversations.
7. “Researchers need to build accountability into their research procedures through meaningful reporting and meaningful feedback to the relevant people and community” (Nabobo-Baba, 2008, p. 145).

It is my intention to visit these women again and present to them the findings of the research in another talanoa session upon returning to Fiji on the completion of my studies. Simpler versions of the results will be made available to the Department of Tourism (DoT), which could provide the department with current themes and issues faced by employees in isolated regions. It is also hoped that such findings will be able to influence some of their strategic plans; that is, to resume some programmes which have lapsed over the years. For example, conducting training and refresher courses on tourism- and hospitality-related needs.

8. “Vanua chiefs, as well as village chiefs and elders at all levels, must give permission to all ‘researches’ (research) done in the Vanua” (Nabobo-Baba, 2008, p.145).

I ensured that proper protocols were followed to seek permission from the village chiefs and elders to conduct my research in their respective villages and settlements. I also ensured proper protocols of departure were carried out.

According to Nabobo-Baba (2008), Vanua research is a culturally-appropriate exercise that encompasses knowledge-gathering, acquisition, gifting, reporting and writing or presentation. It is saturated by values of reciprocity, respect for the knowledge givers, loloma (love) and appreciation for the researched people’s welfare. She further elaborates that Vanua values of veidokai (respect) and veivakarokorokotaki (mutual respect) are also paramount criterion expected of the researcher (knowledge seeker) towards that of the giver.

Although this study is centrally focused on women, I have not overtly labelled this study a ‘feminist’ or ‘action-based’ project. To explain, while I am primarily interested in how tourism empowers women, I am not necessarily taking an action/outcome-based approach where the research will directly lead to changes in the women’s lives. This is essentially an exploratory study and not one where I, the researcher, necessarily act as a spokesperson for the women, or the direction their lives are taking or will take. The
feminist approach sees researchers as gendered beings, whose gender shapes how they conduct research (Neuman, 2011). Jennings (2010a) also explains that the overall theme of the feminist approach is men have power and, in such a study, women are being heard.

While I do recognise the subordination and structural barriers faced by women in many societies, including Indigenous Fijian communities, this study focuses on exploring and interpreting the work of women in the tourism industry and the impact this has had on their lives. Since this is one of the first studies of its kind to be conducted in Fiji, perhaps future studies of the same nature will fully employ the feminist approach.

4.3 Conceptual Framework
This study conceptually applied the empowerment framework developed by Regina Scheyvens (1999) in her study of the impacts of ecotourism on local communities (this framework was briefly discussed in the Literature Review chapter). In Scheyvens’ view, the empowerment framework is a mechanism with which effectiveness of ecotourism initiatives can be determined for local communities. Longwe’s Empowerment Framework (2002, as cited in Tran & Walter, 2014) is similar to Scheyvens’ (1999) model, which was designed to understand how women’s participation in ecotourism projects, as development projects, may or may not promote levels of empowerment for women, ranging from welfare, access and the opportunity to participate and control.

Scheyvens’ (1999) framework has not only been used on ecotourism initiatives; some scholars have employed the framework to analyse the nature and extent of empowerment among women in Nepal (McMillan et al., 2011). Scheyvens (2002) further argued that the “same framework could be applied to analysis of the involvement of women, or other groups (indigenous people or local communities) in mainstream tourism initiatives as well” (p. 130). As shown in Table 4.1, Scheyvens (1999) outlines that there are four levels of empowerment on which the framework is built: economic, social, psychological and political. For each of these levels there is a series of indicators which help to determine whether empowerment is being encouraged or developed. Following this table, each of these levels of empowerment for women will be discussed in turn.
Table 4.1: Scheyvens’ levels of women’s empowerment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of empowerment</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Economic empowerment | • Lasting economic gains  
|                      | • Visible signs of livelihood improvements  
|                      | • Permanent housing  
|                      | • Smaller workloads  
|                      | • Children attending school  
|                      | • Control over income  
|                      | • Access to assets  
| Political empowerment | • Women are able/have the opportunity to exercise control over tourism/hospitality initiatives of village  
|                      | • Women are represented in political structures  
|                      | • Decision-making at household level  
| Social empowerment   | • Community cohesion—respect for women  
|                      | • Community groups—e.g. women’s groups  
|                      | • Women contribute to the betterment of community—fundraising  
| Psychological empowerment | • Education and training  
|                      | • Skill development  
|                      | • Gaining respect within community  
|                      | • Self-esteem and self-respect  
|                      | • Confidence  


4.3.1 Social empowerment

Scheyvens (1999) refers to social empowerment as, “a situation in which a community’s sense of cohesion and integrity has been confirmed or strengthened by an activity such as ecotourism” (p. 248). Furthermore, social disempowerment can occur if tourist activity causes negative consequences to host communities such as, “[an increase] in crime, begging, displacement from traditional lands, loss of authenticity or prostitution” (Scheyvens, 1999, p.248). From a women’s empowerment perspective, this can be measured if women are involved in social groups, for example women’s groups and how this group has assisted in the development of their communities (McMillan et al., 2011).

4.3.2 Psychological empowerment

Psychological empowerment is concerned with how community members feel about themselves as an employee or entrepreneur, with associated terms such as self-esteem, self-respect and the gaining from their families and communities (McMillan et al., 2011; Scheyvens, 1999). In the context of tourism, another example of this empowerment sees women gaining confidence as a result of their employment. The women of a rural Thailand community, for instance, returned to school to attain high school diplomas as a result of participation in their CBT venture (Dunn, 2007).
4.3.3 Political empowerment
Some elements in this empowerment framework look at the political structure in the community and assess if the community members’ needs and interests are fairly represented. It also considers whether special interest groups such as women’s groups or youths are provided the opportunity to be represented in the decision-making process on matters pertaining to the communities (Scheyvens, 1999). In studies involving women, this is measured as how women are represented, or given the opportunity in their community’s political structure (Knight & Cottrell, 2016).

4.3.4 Economic empowerment
Economic empowerment reflects improvement in the livelihoods of families or communities as a result of cash earnings (Scheyvens, 1999). Some signs which can indicate these are better and more secure housing, having saving accounts, purchasing household goods such as beds and refrigerators, to name a few. The four empowerment elements discussed above formed the basis of the research strategy and the guiding interview questions for the *talanoa* sessions. These questions can be found in Appendix 1. The research strategy involved in this research is a case study approach.

4.4 Research Strategy: A Qualitative, Case Study Approach
A qualitative case study approach has been adopted to guide the aim and objectives of this study. It is also a research strategy that sits well with me, and suits the type of approach and method I wanted to employ in talking to my local communities. Veal (1997) points out that with qualitative research, “a great deal of ‘rich’ information about relatively few people is gathered rather than more limited information about a large number of people” (p. 129). Furthermore, qualitative research enables the researcher to use multiple methods, or triangulation providing an in-depth insight into the research question and allowing the participants to express their experiences, emotions and stories in their own way and words (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Veal, 1997). Jennings (2010b) validates the use of qualitative methods for social science research as it “represents a slice of life of the social setting under study” (p. 166). Furthermore, the inductive approach of qualitative research enables the research problem to be uncovered through data collection methods such as participation observation, focus groups and in-depth interviews. The inductive approach is most appropriate for this exploration as it required capturing ‘rich’ information from the community members. The perplexing nature of indigenous communities is best studied through interacting, in-depth interviews and observations (Nabobo-Baba, 2006).
Qualitative case study research allows researchers to “focus on a ‘case’ and retain a holistic and real-world perspective—such as studying individual life cycles [and] small group behaviour” (Yin, 2014, p.4). This approach also allows the researcher to explore comprehensively a particular element of interest in the community (Singh, Milne, & Hull, 2012). Others comment that qualitative case studies are used when “the goal of the inquiry is to get as close as possible to the actual experiences of people” (Pryzwansky & Noblit, 1990, p.297). Neuman (2011) highlights a number of strengths of the case-study approach: it clarifies the researcher’s thinking and allows for linking abstract ideas in specific ways with the sound specifics of cases examined in detail. Furthermore, it allows calibration of the researcher’s own sets of beliefs to actual lived experiences and widely accepted standards of evidence.

This study is exploratory and seeks to interpret the study participants’ social reality through their own words. Case study research provides the flexibility for this to occur as it allows the researcher to adapt methods to suit the context in which the study is taking place (Singh et al., 2012). It can highlight complexities at many levels, therefore investigating the ‘how’ and ‘why’, using the case study approach is deemed appropriate (Daymon & Holloway, 2002; Gillham, 2000; Yin, 1994). The qualitative case study method, according to Stake (1995), is a “palette of methods” used to study and understand a single case in its unique circumstances (p. xi-xii). Moreover, the use of case studies enables the researchers to capture people, circumstances and experiences in their social and historical setting (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Neuman, 2006; Veal, 2006).

For this research, the case study approach has been engaged to explore and gain a better understanding of the relationship between tourism employment and empowerment of the iTaukei women living in villages and settlements on Taveuni. Having uncovered the characteristics of qualitative research as explained above, including what a case study approach can bring out, makes it appropriate to apply these strategies to fully captivate and report on the community members of this study. Furthermore, the case study approach has also been used for previous studies conducted on social impacts of tourism in Fiji (Gibson, 2013; Kado, 2007; King & Milman, 1993; Movono, 2012).

4.5 Research Methods
Research methods are the ‘tools’ employed to collect data, and interpret and analyse them (Jennings, 2010a). In this study, data were collected using multiple methods, including a
literature review, participant observation and *talanoa* (converse/conversation in the *iTaukei* language, in a social setting). *Talanoa* and its significance as an Indigenist research method are explained later in this section. Empirical data collected for this study were predominately qualitative, achieved through the use of informal, semi-structured interviews using the *talanoa* method.

Growing up in my settlement on Taveuni, members of my community were employed at the Garden Island Resort and dive shop. It was not until the completion of my undergraduate level of tertiary studies, majoring in tourism, did it occur to me to explore the impacts tourism employment has on its employees. Additionally, the number of women working in the industry from my community outnumbered the men at that point in time. This factor further confirmed my interest, particularly to research women and the impacts of their employment in the tourism workforce. This familiarity in my settlement and knowing that some of my school friends were engaged in tourism employment, established the grounds for this research problem, together with its aims and objectives.

### 4.5.1 The case study approach

Neuman (2006) points out that the case study approach enables the researcher to “connect the micro level, or the actions of individual people” (p. 41). The best way to capture these is immersing into the daily routine of my participants in their familiar settings—in their homes. To further substantiate this approach, Neuman (2006) states that inductive theory enables the researcher to fully understand the research problem only after making observations on the ground, or from an insider’s lens.

Henceforth, an inductive approach is the most suitable for this study of *iTaukei* women and the impacts of tourism on them and their communities. To study these Indigenous women required careful exploration and interpretation, for their stature is complex on various levels, for example the patriarchal structures within which they live. Therefore, the best method of capturing their stories is through interacting by way of *talanoa*. 
Some of Veal’s (2011) merits of the case study method provided below validate the use of such a mechanism for this study as it has:

- the ability to place people, organisations, events and experiences in their social and historical context;
- multiple methods—triangulation—are implicit and seen as a strength;
- the single, or limited number of, cases offers a manageable data collection task when resources are limited;
- flexibility in the data collection strategy allows researchers to adapt their research strategy as the research proceeds (p. 346).

4.5.2 Sampling

The key participants for this research comprised of internal and external informants. The internal informants included the iTaukei women who worked directly in the tourism establishment in Taveuni. These women’s roles include receptionists, board members of the CBEM venture, waitresses, housemaids, dive shop assistants, duty managers, supervisors, bar attendants and kitchen hands.

A few male community members were also part of the internal informants. They included three spouses, a village headman and a CBEM coordinator. It was vital to learn of their perceptions of women’s involvement in tourism, as well as to find out if the women’s traditional roles within their families and communities have changed. This was also carried out to provide a balance in reporting, for these members would be directly impacted as a result of the women’s employment.

My choice of Taveuni, as mentioned earlier in Section 1.6, is guided by Patton’s concept of ‘purposeful sampling’, where “cases for study are selected because they are information rich and illuminative [as] they offer useful manifestations of the phenomenon of interest” (2002, p. 40). These internal informants were known to the researcher. A few live in and around the community where the researcher grew up in; some were school friends and a few were family members. Such acquaintances enabled easy access to getting in contact prior to commencing the fieldwork and remaining in touch after the information-gathering phase.
These participants—separate groups of women and men—were divided into smaller discussion groups. A set of guided interview questions from the empowerment framework developed by Scheyvens (1999) was used to guide free-flowing conversations between the participants and the researcher. These discussion clusters formed the **talanoa** groups. The interviews with the women and men were conducted in the Fijian vernacular and in their dialect, in which the researcher is fluent. In some instances English language was used, for it was easier to understand when trying to translate a term or idea that was impossible or difficult to achieve in the Fijian vernacular. After all of the recordings were done, the conversations were first transcribed and then translated into English. In the instances where certain quotes were in the vernacular language, permission was sought from the groups for these to be used in the thesis.

Before the commencement of the **talanoa** sessions proper, the researcher needed to contact the would-be participants, inviting them to participate in the study. This was quite a task, as the researcher was neither in Taveuni nor in Fiji but based in Australia. To rely on telephone communication would have been expensive, especially for overseas calling. Fortunately, the majority of the participants or those related to would-be participants were ‘Friends’ of the researcher on Facebook, a popular social media platform. The use of social media in research has become an effective tool, providing an easier alternative to what would have been a time-consuming task (Priem, Piwowar, & Hemminger, 2012). A few commentators remark that social media has “found serious application at all points of the research lifecycle, from identifying research opportunities to disseminating findings at the end” (Rowlands, Nicholas, Russell, Canty, & Watkinson, 2011). In this research, the use of Facebook became a vital communication tool for setting up meetings, verifying statements and, in some cases, obtaining other relevant information which may have been left out during the initial contact sessions. This was also the fastest and cheapest means of keeping in touch and, on some occasions, replies from the participants were instant.

Women who did not have any access to emails and internet were contacted via telephone once the researcher arrived in Fiji. Contact was made to set up meeting times, always at the interviewees’ convenience. Once the women agreed to take part, the research information sheets and consent forms were presented and explained upon meeting. Before the **talanoa** sessions took place, I asked one of the ladies from each village to be the liaison person between the researcher and other research participants in her village. This was a very convenient way
for the researcher and participants to communicate. This liaison person was chosen based on
the ease of contact with her once the researcher left the island and country. The main criteria
were that the individual had mobile telephone contact and/or easy access to the internet, in
addition to being my ‘Friend’ on Facebook and being a regular user.

A total of 18 women and four men from seven villages and two settlements participated in this
research. The female participants were working in establishments close to their homes. The
men in this research included two husbands, a village headman and a CBEM coordinator.

A second group of participants, the external informants, were stakeholders from government
departments. The two female informants held key roles in different levels of government. DoT
and the Department of Women (DoW) were approached and agreed to be part of this study as
external informants. Participants in the study remain anonymous with the use of pseudonyms
in the text of the thesis.

4.5.3 Semi-structured interviews
Semi-structured interviews are regarded as one of the most effective methods for gaining in-
depth data in case study research, as they enable the participant to elaborate on their
experiences and in their own words (Jennings, 2010a). Clark (1998) notes that such a method
prepares the researcher to expect a turn of direction in the flow of conversations as important
areas surface, even though they have a clear picture of the topics that need to be addressed.
This style of interview also allows the researcher to probe deeply into a topic with the
participants in a relaxed atmosphere (Jennings, 2010a). Furthermore, participants have the
liberty to analyse their own thoughts more profoundly or conduct more control over the
interview if they intend to, this simply means that their reactions could either be instant and
straightforward to the questions or they could spend time pondering on their answers and
expressing their ideas slowly (Daymon & Holloway, 2002). Table 4.2 lists some advantages
and disadvantage of the semi-structured interview method complied by Jennings (2010b).
Table 4.2: Advantages and disadvantages of semi-structured interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• multiple realities can be determined since the semi-structured interview</td>
<td>• time consuming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>does not constrain the participant to following the researcher’s prior</td>
<td>• the researcher needs good interviewing skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reasoning</td>
<td>so that the lead-ons by the participants do not stray too far away from the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• useful in gathering empirical materials on complex issues and sensitive</td>
<td>topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>issues, as the researcher can take time to establish rapport and move</td>
<td>• the participants lead the interaction and the researcher follows, rather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>towards the examination of the issues</td>
<td>than vice-versa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• the questions are not objectively predetermined and presented, so the</td>
<td>• possibility of manipulation or bias analyses by the researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>researcher is able to ask for further clarification and detail and pursue</td>
<td>• takes time for the participant and researcher to get acquainted before</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>these issues without negatively affecting the quality of the empirical</td>
<td>the session begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>materials collected</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• interview probes can be altered to follow the path the participant is</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>focused on pursuing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• queries can be clarified</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• verbal and non-verbal cues can be recorded and included in the analysis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• follow-up questions can be framed to further extend responses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• the semi-structured schedule provides a more relaxed interview setting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• interview probes can be altered to follow the path the participant is</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>focused on pursuing</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>• follow-up questions can be framed to further extend responses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• the semi-structured schedule provides a more relaxed interview setting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Adapted from Jennings, 2010b, p. 175-176).

The above-mentioned semi-structured interview attributes show the relevance for using *talanoa* in this study.

The guiding questions were based on the empowerment framework, which was discussed earlier in section 4.5. The guiding interview questions can be found in Appendix 1. All these semi-structured interviews were conducted by way of *talanoa*, and recorded on an audio tape recorder.

### 4.5.4 Talanoa

*Talanoa* is a conversation between two or more people regardless if it is formal or informal. It is the medium of communication for the Pacific, especially for Indigenous Fijians, Samoans and Tongans, and other Polynesian cultures. Even though *talanoa* is about conversing, there is a sense of deep interpersonal connection: “the kind of relationship on which the basis of which most Pacific activities are carried out” (Morrison, Vaiioleti, & Vermeulen, 2002, as cited in Otsuka, 2005, p. 3). From the *iTaukei* context, Nabobo-Baba (2008) translates *tala* as ‘to offload’ and *noa*, often used with a prefix ‘*na noa*’ as yesterday; hence, *talanoa* plainly means...
“offloading stories of recent events” (Meo-Sewabu, 2014, p. 347). *Talanoa* is deeply rooted in the *iTaukei* way of life, being a culture of oral traditions, thus making it an effective tool for data collection and analyses. Moreover, *talanoa* is not only the appropriate mechanism for indigenous research amongst the *iTaukei* people, but it “is guided by rules of relationship and kinship, shared ways of knowing and knowledge and world views” (Nabobo-Baba, 2008, p. 149).

*Talanoa* takes place in both informal and formal settings. Formal *talanoa* may be conducted with the *yaqona* drink being served. The informal sessions are usually more light-hearted, with participants sharing jokes and often talking about nothing in particular. To the *iTaukei* people, the custom of *talanoa* being engaged with *yaqona* drinking or in social gatherings, strengthens their sense of “sharing and caring” amongst themselves (Otsuka, 2005, p. 3).

Pacific islands academics, such as Nabobo-Baba (2008) and Vaioleti (2006) amongst others, have discussed *talanoa* as a methodology. It is now perhaps the leading research methodology applied across the Pacific and used most commonly in education research (Nabobo-Baba, Naisilisili, Bogitini, Baba, & Lingam, 2012; Otsuka, 2005; Vaioleti, 2006). A growing number of Pacific scholars also emphasise that it is “subjective for it gives meaning to whatever is being discussed” (Meo-Sewabu, 2014, p. 347). There is more to *talanoa* than having verbalised communication; it also embodies the body language and unspoken words. Nabobo-Baba (2006, p.94) expresses that silence is also an indication of knowing; “there is eloquence in silence … a pedagogy of deep engagement between participants”.

Furthermore, this method of research is undertaken with the understanding that the mutual exchange between the researcher and participants is culturally and emotionally grounded. To illustrate this distinctly, a Japanese researcher used the *talanoa* method when conducting his study in Fiji with Indigenous Fijian communities. During the course of his interview with a participant a sudden event in the village interrupted the interview. For a brief moment, they talked about the incident, laughed together about it and continued with the interview. The researcher concluded that the incident not only gave them a short break, but both parties shared emotions which in turn reinforced the rapport (Otsuka, 2005). Additionally, the distance between researchers and participants is discarded, enabling human face-to-face interaction, adding more value to such engagement. Suffice it to say, the significance of *talanoa* supports the concept of relationships in Western social research, whereby “a face-to-face interaction
assist in the establishment of rapport and higher level of motivation among respondents” (Burns, 1990, p. 302, cited in Otsuka, 2005, p. 2). Accordingly, Otsuka raises awareness levels of non-Pacific, non-Fijian researchers of the importance of being culturally sensitive to protocols. In his research, for example, he used surveys which included culturally insensitive questions regarding Indigenous Fijian students in a multi ethic (iTaukei and Indo-Fijians) school. His results showed inconsistency in their replies, which led to unreliable results. In a different situation, he discovered ‘white lies’ being told to him by the participants in a bid to ‘please’ visitors, such as him. Perhaps one of the most compelling incidents demonstrating this consequence took place in Samoa, when young female Samoan participants intentionally misinformed a Western researcher because of how insensitive her questions were and intruded into their lives (Freeman, 1983, as cited in Otsuka, 2005). Otsuka therefore stresses that a researcher ought to prioritise establishing a “culturally-appropriate interpersonal relationship and rapport with ethnic Fijian participants, prior to conducting the talanoa research in their community” (Otsuka, 2005, p. 10). This point also relates to any researcher, whether indigenous or not, and for any community for that matter.

It is for the above-mentioned reasons that I pursued my research using talanoa. On a personal level, I for one am innately rooted to my Indigenous Fijian traditions and cultures, so by practicing such norms I am being respectful to my vanua and participants. I also firmly believe that by intuitively paying attention to iTaukei values, protocols and processes, I was being humble and, through that, was welcomed into their homes and communities and gained the respect and trust of my participants—a vital element for this study.

As an Indigenous Fijian woman I have used the talanoa method whilst carrying out a small research project in one Fijian village as part of a post-graduate unit. The unit was TS401: Special Course in Tourism Studies at the University of the South Pacific. This approach worked well, with the ten families I worked with showing positive responses to the method and the questions. Indeed, they shared more than was anticipated. I feel that this success was a result of the participants being comfortable in the home environment but, more importantly, they were familiar with the method of discussion used. The talanoa sessions were informal; this enabled them to be at ease during the interview process. Furthermore, former colleagues and friends in other professions have used such a method, which was always a success, and this was a topic of discussion amongst us whenever we got together. Currently, similar methods have been approved at Southern Cross University. For example, another PhD student
in Tourism is also carrying out research with Pacific Island Indigenous communities and is using this approach. A similar technique called ‘yarning’ was first used by Gabrielle Russell-Mundine in her study with Indigenous communities in north-eastern Australia (2010, p. 20). This technique enabled in-depth findings about the Jagun Aboriginal Corporation in northern New South Wales.

For this study, I conducted my *talanoa* sessions in an informal discussion with my participants. Having chosen this, all social standings within the iTaukei society were set aside, including age differences. These enabled the participants to be at ease—enhancing a sense of likeness, enabling a sincere discussion of their experiences. These *talanoa* included stories, jokes, metaphors and explanations, allowing other participants to agree, disagree or tell their stories in relation to the guiding questions. As the facilitator of the *talanoa*, my main role was to ensure that the conversations covered the open topic questions I had prepared. Whilst the stories flowed, I had a clear idea of which ‘bits’ were related to what I was looking at and which were not. I also asked participants to elaborate on some cues which I felt needed further unpacking.

These *talanoa* sessions were often shared light-heartedly, filled with laughter and jokes often shared over a cup of tea, a meal or *yaqona* in the participants’ homes. These sharing moments fostered trust and strengthened friendships, which reflects the philosophy of the VRF principles as one of interconnectedness of people relationships. There were instances when the stories took a serious turn; experiences were told to me in confidence and these would be discussed thoroughly. Once the participants felt ‘lighter’, laughter would fill the sessions again. During the progression of each *talanoa* session I felt a sense of trust had developed; this was especially evident with the female participants; they were able to share openly and kept reminding me to contact them if I needed to, for clarification or any other enquires. At the end of the *talanoa* it felt like we were just exchanging stories but, in truth, the purpose of the study had been accomplished.
4.5.5 Focus groups

Focus groups are used when the facilitator believes that ‘richness’ of material will be achieved when group members interact amongst themselves (Jennings, 2010b). In this way, the facilitator enables the members to question, clarify and challenge their view points. Furthermore, detailed empirical materials can be gathered by the researcher who guides the participants’ interactions. Table 4.3 outlines some advantages and disadvantages linked with the use of focus groups as a qualitative research method.

Table 4.3: Advantages and disadvantages of focus groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus groups enable:</td>
<td>These are primarily a result of the facilitator’s lack of skill, leading to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• participants to interact with others in order to clarify individual positions</td>
<td>• domination of strong personalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• flexibility to follow unexpected trends or issues</td>
<td>• drift of focus from the main topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• multiple surety by participants</td>
<td>• biased perspective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• a subjective interaction between facilitator and participants that establishes rapport and results in the development of ‘rich’ empirical materials.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from (Jennings, 2010b, p. 182).

Criteria of the focus groups in Taveuni were that they had to be iTaukei women and men, aged 18 and above, who worked in either a tourism or hospitality establishment. There was total of eight groups of women, with group size ranging between two and five participants. The groups were organised according to the population size of the village or settlement. In traditional iTaukei settings members are more comfortable when talking in smaller groups, because these are usually more ‘light-heartening’ (Nabobo-Baba, 2008, p. 149). Furthermore, women are expected to be silent, especially when the whole village congregates, but by no means does this show their lack of power or relative lack of strength (Nabobo-Baba et al., 2012). A saying in one of the Fijian villages on women’s silence is, “it is the strong hands or will of the woman that serves the tribe life and puts it in good stead” (Nabobo-Baba et al., 2012, p. 100).

I know having small groups of women for a talanoa session can be very effective as a lot of discussion can be drawn out in such settings. Neuman (2006) comments that group discussion settings allow participants to express themselves freely and open up more than in larger group settings. Additionally, it was convenient to group the women according to the villages they lived in due to time and resource limitations. A total of 15 talanoa sessions were conducted in
participants’ homes for those in the villages and these usually took place in the evenings, after returning from work and attending to their respective families. On the other hand, three *talanoa* sessions with women were carried out in the women’s workplaces, as there were no distractions from family and also business during that period was slow. It was also the only time they were free as the evenings were tied up carrying out village obligations. These scenarios reflect the ‘flexibility’ of this approach, indicated by Veal (2006), when a case study approach is used in community settings.

One of the participants was receiving visitors over in the evening and the only available time was during the morning. In one village, the village headman and some of the women’s spouses joined the session with the women. Upon enquiring with the women about how they felt about this, they did not object but welcomed the idea. The men were more of a company, because at times, whilst the women and I were engaged in our *talanoa*, they held their own *talanoa* amongst themselves discussing events of the day, sports and plantation updates. When they ‘decided’ to listen in to the *talanoa* sessions they were respectful, often nodding at some point, perhaps in agreement with what the women were sharing. They only spoke when I opened up the discussion to them by generally asking how they felt about the women working. The men’s contributions are also presented in Chapter 6.

One-on-one, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the external participants who were the government departments. These interviews were conducted in English and audio recorded, with each session lasting an hour. The only challenge encountered with the government departments was when they kept changing the meeting dates and times. This resulted in an expensive delayed return to Australia by two weeks, as I had to pay for change-in-flight-date fees.
4.5.6 Problems

The Indigenous Fijian culture is complex, and is one which is defined by strong alliances and social order (Yabaki, 2006). As a result, there can be instances during the talanoa when the respondents will not ‘talk straight’, especially if it concerns the sentiments or views regarding their families and communities. During such times, I could feel that a few of the women held back or just gave a one-word reply. However, these instances were rare and after reassuring them of confidentiality, they lightened up and continued without any strains. For example, one of the women’s husbands is a member of the mataqali (clan land owning unit) who owns the community-based ecotourism business for that village. The mataqali is the sole decision-maker for the park. At some point during the talanoa she was shy to share how her husband reacted whenever she (my participant) informed him of ideas to increase revenue for the nature park. I let her know that if she did not wish to answer that she was free to do so, and I also mentioned that whatever was discussed during the talanoa was just between her and me. Having said that, I felt she lightened up and proceeded to answer the question.

4.5.7 Data analysis

Qualitative data are analysed in many ways, either systematically or logically. Neuman (2006) adds that:

A qualitative researcher analyses data by organising it into categories on the basis of themes, concepts, or similar features. He or she develops new concepts, formulates conceptual definitions, and examines the relationships among concepts. (2006, p. 460)

A total of 14 talanos were audio tape recorded, these included 12 from the Taveuni participants and two from the government departments. These were all transcribed in iTaukei vernacular as this was the main language used. Once these were transcribed, the transcripts were then translated into English by the researcher. The transcripts and translations were then emailed to a colleague back in Fiji to confirm the reliability of the translation. There were a few grammatical corrections, which indicated that the initial translation was legitimate.

I wish to emphasise at this point that, at the beginning of the talanoa, a copy of the consent form was provided to the participants and it was also mentioned that I would be sending the transcribed talanoa for them to check its truthfulness. They unanimously told me that there was no need for that, as they trusted me, and that I would not alter their stories to suit my research intentions. Additionally, the participants added this process would be time consuming.
for both parties, considering the time needed to email these, the availability of the liaison individual to get all members to read, check and correct if need be, and finally to send them back. Despite my request attempts, the women assured me there was no need to cross-check with them again. This trust bestowed upon me by the participants created a tremendous feeling of responsibility in fulfilling their wish to relay their stories in a truthful and honest manner.

A thematic approach was applied to identify the major themes in the early stages of the analysis. ‘Thematic analysis’ is a process of encoding qualitative information (Boyatzis, 1998). Attride-Stirling (2001) states that thematic analysis reveals striking and similar themes in a text at numerous levels. In such theme revelations, with text broken up “into clearly defined clusters of themes, the researcher is able to unravel the mass of textual data and make sense of others’ sense-making, using more than intuition” (2001, p. 402).

This first step of analysis was to be embedded in the data. Since I conducted the focus groups, as well as transcribed and translated the transcripts, becoming entrenched in the data was effortless. If these activities were handled by a different person it would have been a laborious task to connect myself with the data. The transcripts were then read thoroughly to explore emerging themes and find meaning in the women’s stories.

Coding was then undertaken. These codes consisted of phrases, words or a sentence that best described an emerging and recurring idea or concept. The text was then broken into clusters according to identified codes. The codes were then counted, grouped by order of prevalence and consolidated into bigger themes. Relationships were also identified within the different themes. The texts’ consensus, contradictions and exceptions were marked. At the end of the coding process the themes were then grouped according to the four main research objectives. A total of 16 themes emerged from the four levels of empowerment. These themes are presented and discussed in detail in Chapter 6.
4.6 Reliability and Validity
Reliability in qualitative research means that similar results should show if the process is repeated at a later date or with a different sample. Validity refers to the extent to which research truthfully portrays what it is envisioned to portray. Veal (2011) also indicates an emergence of the term, ‘trustworthiness’, now being referenced by researchers when deliberating qualitative methods (p. 251). ‘Trustworthiness’ refers to the assessments made from qualitative methods because such methods cannot provide the same accurate tests of validity and reliability as seen with quantitative methods; instead the issues with qualitative methods, are addressed and assessed to give an assessment.

In the special cases of studying indigenous communities, even though similar data collection methods are used, variances in responses to the questions asked will occur largely due to the relationship between the researcher and participants. For example, if the researcher does not portray genuine interest in the community members, by way of engaging in social gatherings, or daily routine activities, they will most likely collect responses made just to ‘please’ them, without any depth or true meaning. In one of the villages a fundraising drive took place on the evening of a talanoa session, the female participants then invited me to join them after our talanoa, which I gladly accepted and attended. I also contributed financially to this event.

As articulated in section 4.5.4 on talanoa, to attain the community’s trust opens up a world of underlying knowledge to what the researcher is seeking and more. This element of trust has been the golden key to unlocking, accessing and discovering the community members’ rich knowledge in this study.

4.7 Ethical Considerations
This study was approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) of the Southern Cross University, which observes the National Statement on ethical conduct on Human Research as outlined by the Australian Government in 2007. The approval number is ECN-14-247. This research is considered of low or negligible risk to its participants as it shows no probable harm or discomfort to the participants. All of my participants were 18 years old and over, classifying them as adults.
At the beginning of every talanoa session informed consent was sought from the participants, which we read through together and discussed and clarified with them. These two forms, the Research Information sheet and the Consent Letter, were both in English. This was not deemed to be a difficult task because all of the participants have a high school education level, where the English language was the medium of learning. Furthermore, many of the women have been employed in the tourism industry for a good number of years. Some of the participants worked in other sectors before joining tourism, so their proficiency of the English language was adequate. Therefore, they had a good understanding of the type of information required as a result of reading the Research Information sheet and the Informed Consent letter.

I also emphasised the confidentiality of the information gathered from the groups. One of the items on the Consent letter stated that if participants wanted to end the talanoa discussions at any time then they were free to do so by notifying me. Also, if they have questions or concerns, I would be available to answer and clarify these. No names have been used in writing this thesis; instead the participants are indicated using a mixture of alphabetical and numerical codes. I am solely responsible for the safe keeping of all the research analyses instruments, which include: the audio recordings, transcripts and the participants’ signed consent letters. These will be destroyed after seven years, in line with Southern Cross University research principles as outlined in the HREC form.

A copy of the thesis will be made available to all interested participants, in particular to the National Archives of Fiji who have made a special request for a copy to add to Fiji’s pool of knowledge. A summary of the research findings will also be made available to the participants and their communities, as well as to the Department of Tourism who have made a request for a copy of the findings. This will also fulfil the obligation that the researcher has in providing “meaningful feedback to the relevant people and community” as specified in the VRF (Nabobo-Baba, 2008, p.145).
4.8 Summary
This chapter has outlined the research methods applied during the collection of data for this thesis. It has highlighted the events and experiences encountered. The employment of the VRF, case study and focus groups were relevant to suit the background of my participants and the study objectives. The research methods used enabled the participants and researcher to interact on a personal level without feelings of shyness, which often leads to holding back. *Talanoa* was the appropriate approach for data collection as this form is the usual way Indigenous Fijians communicate and search for information. Thematic analyses provided a straightforward way of handling the data collected as it enabled identifying and clustering themes which were aligned with the research objectives.
Chapter 5 - Results

This chapter outlines the findings from the Taveuni Island case study. The analysis that follows is based on two sets of different participants. The first sets of analyses are of the *talanoa* sessions with the iTaukei women working in the tourism and hospitality industry, as well as of my own observations and field notes. The second group of participants are government departments and women-based organisations. As indicated in the previous methodology chapter, thematic analysis of these interviews and observations revealed four key themes.

The Taveuni participants’ profiles are presented first, which cover demographic aspects, their involvement and roles in tourism on Taveuni. The analysis following the profiles includes positive and negative impacts of the women’s involvement in tourism. Accordingly, understanding the dimensions of empowerment experienced by the female participants in their workplaces, home and communities follow. These have been interpreted and presented using Scheyvens’ (1999) empowerment framework dimensions, which are: economic, political, social and psychological empowerment. Finally, exploring stakeholders’ positions with regard to women’s access or constraints to empowerment are presented.

These themes have also been utilised to further support the overall objectives of this research. This conceptual framework has only been used on the participants on Taveuni through the design of the leading questions in the *talanoa* sessions. A different approach was used for participants in the government departments; their questions focused on their roles with women in tourism and the empowerment mechanisms they had in place, if any, to foster women’s empowerment in general and particularly for those in indigenous communities.

At the beginning of each *talanoa* session the women were asked to give a brief introductory narration of themselves. They were also asked to discuss their areas of involvement in the tourism and hospitality sector in Taveuni and whether such involvement was direct or indirect, areas of the industry they worked in, duration of employment in the industry and the different roles they have held.

This section starts with a summary of the Taveuni participants’ profiles of the 19 women and four male participants who accepted the invitation. This is followed by a tabulated summary.
of the women’s responses to each of the empowerment themes. Subsequently, for each theme, a cluster of sub-themes is developed which is added to these sections. Moreover, instances where women found themselves disempowered are brought to light. Finally, the responses by the government departments will conclude this chapter.

5.1 Taveuni Participants’ Profiles
A total of 18 iTaukei women agreed to participate in this study, coming from seven villages and two settlements; all but one were directly involved with tourism. Their average age was 35 years, with the eldest being 63 years old. The total average number of working years was 11 and a half, with the longest serving a total of 47 years and the most recent has been in the industry for three months. All but three of the women are married; all have children, with the majority in high schools and primary schools. The areas of involvement for these women include hotels, working in the front and back of house, such as: housekeeping, restaurant and bar, kitchen, chef, reception, boutique, meet and greet personnel, laundry, tour desk, dive shop, lodge owner, assistant manager, spa, lodge supervisor, board member of the CBEM venture and marine park guide. Their involvement still largely remains in the ‘traditional’ designated areas for women in any tourism- or hospitality-based establishment. Additionally, around 70% of the women who have had over 5 years’ experience in the industry have remained in the same hotel. They have identified the convenience of being close to work and home as their main reason for the low turnover.

The demographic profiles of the 18 participants are presented in Table 5.1. The women are predominantly 30–40 years old, married and have three or more dependants. This shows the extent to which the lives and contribution of these women impact on a wider scope.
Table 5.1: Taveuni female participants’ demographic profiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant (P)</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th># of children</th>
<th>Areas of involvement</th>
<th>Work period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>1; adult</td>
<td>Kitchen hand, Chef</td>
<td>47 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>8; 18yrs and under</td>
<td>Restaurant &amp; bar, laundry, housekeeping, spa</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>18yrs &amp; under</td>
<td>Housekeeping</td>
<td>6 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>2; 8yrs &amp; under</td>
<td>Laundry</td>
<td>3 mths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>4; 15yrs &amp; under</td>
<td>Housekeeping</td>
<td>3 mths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2; 5yrs &amp; under</td>
<td>All areas at front of the house</td>
<td>15 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>2; 10yrs &amp; under</td>
<td>Human resources clerk &amp; dive shop attendant</td>
<td>6 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>4; 11yrs &amp; under</td>
<td>Housekeeping</td>
<td>2 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>De-facto relationship</td>
<td>2; 16yrs &amp; under</td>
<td>Nanny, housekeeping, waitressing, kitchen hand</td>
<td>7 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>1; adult</td>
<td>Lodge owner</td>
<td>18 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2; 17yrs &amp; under</td>
<td>Front-of-house areas, including admin work</td>
<td>13yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>3; 17yrs &amp; under</td>
<td>Housekeeping, bar, reception and laundry</td>
<td>15yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>4; 14yrs &amp; under</td>
<td>Reception, waitressing, kitchen hand</td>
<td>13 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>3; 19yrs &amp; under</td>
<td>Waitressing, bar, reception</td>
<td>12 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>5; 3 adults, 2 are 18yrs &amp; under</td>
<td>Board member of the CBEM &amp; assistant manager of the lodge</td>
<td>20 yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>8; 3 adults, rest are 17yrs &amp; under</td>
<td>Reception at CBEM park</td>
<td>13.5yrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2; 4yrs &amp; under</td>
<td>Reception at CBEM park</td>
<td>4 mths</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>6; 15yrs and under</td>
<td>Reception at Marine park</td>
<td>13 yrs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The four men involved in this study were Indigenous Fijians from two separate villages. One of the men is the coordinator of the CBEM park, overseeing the running of the four different ecotourism projects in the four villages under the umbrella of the national heritage park on the island. The remaining three are members of one village; one is the village headman, a spouse and the other a family member. These three men do not have formal paid employment, instead they are subsistence farmers with low levels of *dalo* and *yaqona* cash crop farming. On some occasions they find themselves in casual employment either in construction or working for more established cash crop farmers.

The following sections present the findings from the *talanoa* with the women. They have been organised according to the four broad themes covering the women’s empowerment and...
disempowerment. For each of the broad themes, consistent experiences emerged and, from these, sub-themes have been developed for each empowerment level.

5.2 Positive Impacts of Tourism Involvement
The positive impacts of the women’s involvement in the tourism industry have been significant and life changing. All the women agreed that being in the industry has helped them: earn money for their family; improve their standard of living; save money; keep their children in school; improve their English speaking, writing and comprehension; make informed decisions in regards to family affairs, both nuclear and extended; gain self-confidence; learn new skills; and become role models to other women. All these positive indicators make up the sub-themes for each level of the empowerment framework. These are discussed further in the next section.

To be able to determine the level of economic well-being for each of the participants, observations were made on the overall outlook of their household and infrastructure. All the women lived in their own homes; all roofs are made from corrugated iron and 70% of these houses have wooden walls, other dwellings were made of corrugated iron and concrete homes. It was evident that every home had some form of luxury item, such as a flat screen television (TV), 2–4-burner cook tops with ovens powered by gas cylinders, dining tables, settee lounging sets, washing machines, refrigerators, generators, beds and stereo sets. It was also noticeable that the women wore some form of accessories, such as wrist watches, earrings and gold necklaces. There was at least one mobile phone in each household; 90% of the women owned their own mobile phones. For those who did not own one it was shared between the woman and her husband. Most of these items were purchased through hire purchases, which the women pay in fortnightly or monthly instalments. A few of the women revealed that they have taken loans out from the bank to purchase generators and to pay for labourers on their farm. These observations indicate that the standard of living for these women is relatively high and ‘comfortable’.
Below are some responses given by the women regarding how they spend their earnings:

I buy our basic household needs first, like food, pay for my daughter’s school fees when she was still in school. After she finished her school years, I was able to save money and buy an outboard boat. (P1, 2015)

I have a lot of children, so I divide this to meet our household needs, for their education and to pay for labourers on our farm. I have also managed to buy beddings and vinyl floor covering for our house. (P2, 2015)

When I was living away from home, I paid rent, water and electricity bills and bus fare for my two children who catch the bus to school. I extended my house, also bought a generator, TV screen, study tables for my two children, beds for the family [double bunk and a double-sized bed] and gas stove oven. I also took out a loan to help fund my yaqona and dalo farm, in terms of labourers. At the moment, this loan payment is almost completed. (P9, 2015)

As mentioned earlier, all of the women have children who are attending school. All of the women commented that the two priority areas which their wages cover are household needs, which basically relates to food, and the second being for their children’s welfare. Some responses that attest to this follow:

My pay mostly takes care of my family needs first, which include food, children’s school needs, ‘soli’ [monetary contribution] for the schools, church or village. Once that is taken off, then I am able to spend it on other things like, I bought a TV screen and I also pay for labourers to work on my farm. (P8, 2015)

With my wages, I take care of all my family’s needs first; this includes anything to do with the children. I ensure that their school fees are always paid and they have uniforms, stationery, sandals and whatever else is asked from school. (P11, 2015)

After all my family needs are taken of—food, children’s school needs and ‘soli’, I then buy luxury items for my home. I have a subscription for pay television. (P13, 2015)
Another notable payment being taken care of by the women is ‘soli’. Soli is also a form of fundraising for the three institutions—schools, church or village. In the event of any family obligation, whether it be for a death, wedding, birthday or for any other matter, members are asked to contribute through soli.

The enhancement and realisation of personal development for the women and their families was also identified by the women as another positive impact of working in the industry. As the excerpts below reflect, areas of development include: improved standards of living, better English comprehension, interaction with a variety of people of different cultural backgrounds, tips on bringing up children, gaining new skills, being self-sufficient, confidence and enhanced pride in themselves.

The ability to improve their English skills was widely acknowledged by the women and this enables them to achieve other family goals, especially for their children. One of the female participants commented:

> With regular guest contact and interaction, my confidence and English speaking has improved and confidence, I am not shy to ask for assistance in areas when I have no clear understanding or knowledge of. For example, putting my children through tertiary education, I went out of my way to find out about scholarships available and assisted my children to put in applications to institutions and scholarship providers. When there were school projects, I assisted them or asked around to others for help. This is [a] big growth for me. (P15, 2015)

Some areas of growth for the women were ideas they gathered through their interaction with guests who had children. Two of the women revealed that observing the guests’ parenting styles encouraged them to carry out the same with their own: “I have young children, so I always paid close attention to how parents dealt with their own. One of my observations was how the parents encouraged their children in everything they did. So now at home, instead of discouraging my kids when they want to try out something new, I encourage them” (P2, 2015). Another shared, “I have learnt a lot of parental skills which I see from the guests and I am now teaching these to my nephews who stay with me, one of this is reading to and with them, the two boys enjoy this very much and so do I” (P6, 2015).
Gaining self-confidence has also been one of the common results of working in the tourism industry for the Taveuni women. The following was voiced by one woman, “My confidence has grown tremendously, whether it be speaking to foreigners or in public, my English skills have also developed over the years. I am no longer shy to have a conversation with anyone” (P9, 2015). In another account one woman commented, “You see I am a shy person, because I am regularly in contact with my colleagues, managers and guests, I am able to confidently make conversations. Before I worked, I would hardly talk to just anybody” (P8, 2015).

Two women explained that the skills learnt from work were also tried out at home and in the roles they held outside of work. One woman described that she would apply new skills she learnt from work at home. When she carried these out in her home, her family members found these exciting and were always appreciative of them:

I am currently in [the] housekeeping department and I try out my new skills at home. For example, folding towels into fancy designs, flower arrangements. At times, I usually help out at in the kitchen when it is busy and short staffed, so I try at out some simple cooking techniques too at home. My family members are always very happy when I do these at home. I am also happy because I am learning new skills and ideas. (P8, 2015)

Another mentioned the knowledge of accounting from work has helped her to carry out her treasurer role efficiently:

The skills I have managed to gather has [sic] helped me in other roles which I hold outside of work. I am currently the treasurer of the school management committee, so some concepts of bookkeeping, organising records and other financial transactions I use to compile my Treasurer reports. My confidence in public speaking has also been boosted. (P11, 2015)

Overall, the stories above show how the women’s work in tourism and hospitality has impacted their lives positively and contributed to their independence. Moreover, the areas of positive impacts identified by the women fall into the four main themes of the empowerment framework (Scheyvens, 1999). These statements are analysed further later in the chapter to provide a deeper understanding of the various levels of empowerment the women have gained.

5.3 Negative Impacts
There were two distinct responses raised by the women on how working in this industry has negatively impacted them. These were spending less time with family members, especially
their children, and arguments because of working hours and unattended or neglected assigned household chores.

5.3.1 **Less family time**
The women revealed the nature of tourism work took family time away from them and their families. All of the women were mothers and wives, which meant they did not have enough time to be always present around their children and husbands. The experiences of these women and how these affect their children are presented below:

I get home very tired and when it’s prep [study] time for the kids, I know I am supposed to be assisting them, but I find myself sleeping. (P2, 2015)

I don’t spend enough time with my daughters, because I do shift work. My younger daughter especially, it’s very difficult to get her to follow a programme consistently, because I am not around often to supervise her. I am only able to get her to stick to her programme on my days off, which is two days a week. (P9, 2015)

The revelations above by the female participants who are mothers show how concerned they are about their children’s welfare, both mother and children miss out on spending time together because of work. Another of the women expressed how sometimes her husband raises concerns about her missing out on the time with her children: “On some occasions, my husband tells me that I am too focused on my work and have little time for them, especially in regards to my younger children. I think he says that when he is tired” (P18, 2015).

These responses indicate that, in some ways, women are still expected to take on their traditional roles as mothers when they return home from work, thus doubling their workload.
5.3.2 Arguments
As the women explained, arguments sometimes occur when they return late from work because of unscheduled extended working hours and also when domestic chores or errands are not carried out:

Sometimes, there is misunderstanding with my husband if I am unexpectedly required to work late. I usually call him to inform of my delayed return, but if he does not receive the call, then he sometimes gets angry because he had made plans to, for example, attend a village social gathering or to go and drink *yaqona* with friends, as a result, and we get into little arguments. (P11, 2015)

The usual reason my partner and I get into an argument is when he does not carry out household tasks which I ask him to do. For example, when he is on his days off, I sometimes ask him to do some house chores or prepare dinner. If I have had one of those long days at work and get home to find out that whatever I asked him to do has not been done, I get into a very bad mood and start uttering harsh words. In some instances, I take it out on my two children, which I know is not right. Once words are said, I cool down and then apologise especially to my children. (P9, 2015)

The misunderstandings explained by the women are not related to trust, but more about miscommunication. As expressed by two of the women, when such incidents happen it is usually that their spouses had made plans to attend social gatherings and these are delayed or do not eventuate because the women return from work late. While another woman got into arguments with her partner because he did not carry out household tasks asked of him.

5.4 Empowerment Levels
This section describes indicators of the levels of empowerment the women have gained through their work in the tourism and hospitality industry, utilising Scheyvens' (1999) framework as an organising framework. For each level of empowerment, sub-themes emerged which provide further in-depth understanding of each empowerment indicator.
5.4.1 Economic empowerment

One of the objectives of this study was to specifically understand whether the women made sustainable economic gains indicated by: improved living standards, having control over their earnings and having access to possessions such as businesses. The mentioned indicators were key findings from this level of empowerment and provided the sub-themes which are individually presented in the sections below.

5.4.2 Economic gains

Table 5.2 illustrates the impacts of economic gains for each of the individual female participants. It also shows how this gain has enabled their empowerment and disempowerment. From the analysis of the data, four sub-themes emerged and each one is separately disclosed.

Table 5.2: Economic gains and its indicators of empowerment and disempowerment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Signs of empowerment</th>
<th>Signs of disempowerment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>Control over money.</td>
<td>Women make most of the financial decisions in their household.</td>
<td>Occasional disapproval from spouses on unplanned purchase of luxury goods or personal items for the women themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Standard of living</td>
<td>Their family’s daily needs are met.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>improvement.</td>
<td>Children attending school</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Better budget</td>
<td>Good housing structure with basic amenities including home items.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>management.</td>
<td>Better skilled in capital handling as a result of their control over money.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Entrepreneurship-minded.</td>
<td>Women operating micro-businesses, whilst the rest hope to do so when the opportunity arises.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These stories reveal that all of the women hold permanent positions in the various establishments they work for, including during low seasons when they form part of the skeleton staff. As a result of this, they are regular income earners in their respective households, which in turn enables them to control and manage their income. Even in households that had double incomes, where spouses and partners worked, the majority of the
women still had complete control of their own income and, in some cases, both incomes (see Table 5.3).

Table 5.3: Control over income and family financial decisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes (%)</th>
<th>Both (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control over own income</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family financial decision</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.3 highlights the responses from the women when asked if they had control over their own income and also who made financial decisions in their homes. The data reveal that over half of the women control their own income, even when their spouses and partners work too. The others reported that both partners have a say in the income whether it is an individual’s or a combined income, or if both are working or not. When it comes to making family financial decisions, again, the men give this responsibility to their wives, as illustrated in the comments below:

I control the money I get, however, my husband and I both discuss financial decisions. There are times when he lets me make all the decisions, but he always asks me to ensure that all priority areas are looked after first—that there are no debts owed to anyone. (P8, 2015)

Interestingly, for those families where both have a say in the family financial decision, the women reported that, in the end, their husbands agree to whatever suggestions they give during financial discussions, for example:

We both work, so we both make decisions on our family’s financial needs. Sometimes he just lets me handle it, but he always tells me to make sure the family needs are met first. There are times when he doesn’t agree to how I spend money, usually when I buy luxury items which are not budgeted for at that time, like shoes or clothes. (P6, 2015)

One of the participants commented that even though she is the sole breadwinner, she never feels superior to her husband, but respects him as head of the household. She added, “I don’t see myself trying to be over my husband just because I am bringing income into the family. I discuss things with him and he fully supports any financial decisions I make” (P15, 2015).

Overall, the women mentioned that, regardless of whether their spouse has a large or small say in financial decisions, their main concern is that the family’s needs are considered first.
For the single mothers who live with their parents, their parents have some control over their income, yet their parents want the women to prioritise their children’s needs first; that is, food and education before anything else. Out of all the 18 women, all but three have their own bank accounts. These three have just been employed and are working towards opening their personal accounts. One of these three women has a money box in which she puts a minimum amount of $10FJD a week ($6.25 AUD). All of the women have superannuation savings which are deducted from their wages. With the consistent flow of income into the family the women are able to afford a few luxury items for their families and improve the standard of their livelihoods.

5.4.3 Improved standard of living

As mentioned in section 5.2, and again emphasised by the women’s spouses in section 5.4.1, the priority for the women’s income is to take care of the family needs first, with savings and spending on luxury items afterwards. All of the women responded that they have managed to buy luxury items for their homes on hire purchases, a few have acquired loans from banks to help finance extensions to their homes and to pay for labourers to work on their farms.

The women also indicated that the tips they receive from guests greatly supplement their income, enabling them to ‘splash out’ occasionally, especially by treating their children. As one respondent said, “On one occasion with my tips, I was able to buy my two sons a bicycle each” (P14, 2015). Another commented that she bought her two daughters’ Girl Guides uniform. Another stated that all tips go towards the Staff Christmas fund which is distributed at the end of the year. With this money she buys household items, and whatever her son and husband want. The same respondent revealed that when she gets tips from her massage clients she uses them on herself. A few others mentioned that their tips would usually go into savings. Moreover, all of the women confirmed they have become better at budgeting and are able to sustain their households when they face financial difficulties. The statement below by one participant sums up the sentiments of the other women:

I have been able to really budget, unlike before, I used to be careless with the use of money. Now, I ensure that after all the deductions, I still have some to sustain us till the next pay. There are times when our finances fall short, but I have learnt to stretch it out. (P2, 2015)
5.4.4 Access to possessions

With their household and family taken care of and small savings, a few of the women have used their talents to create additional income streams by way of micro-business enterprises. While only four of the women have a form of micro-business existing, the remaining 15 members stated they would take up the opportunity to own and run their own businesses. Some of the businesses which the four women were involved in included: fish selling, piggery, cake and pastry, food packs, sewing bags and skirts, and a small canteen selling basic food items. For those who are not in business yet, they plan to base their products on the roles they currently hold at work. As one woman remarked, “I would like to own my own spa business someday. I know I can manage because I work in the spa and am very familiar with how this business operates. Things will also be easy to handle because it will be small operation”.

Table 5.4 lists the types of micro-businesses in operation.

Table 5.4: Micro-businesses—past and current

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Micro-business type</th>
<th>Period of existence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fish selling</td>
<td>10 yrs—no longer operating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piggery</td>
<td>10 yrs—no longer operating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cakes &amp; pastries</td>
<td>20 years and still operating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewing bags, skirts and dresses</td>
<td>3 years and still operating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food packs—these were sold at the national park</td>
<td>12 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canteen with basic food items</td>
<td>1 month</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.4 illustrates the four women’s various business enterprises. All women have been employed in the industry for over ten years. The businesses of fish selling, piggery and cakes have all been undertaken by the longest-serving participant. Her first business was fish selling before venturing into piggery. Once her only child completed school she discontinued both businesses as they were too demanding. She added it was an additional task for her and her husband because they both worked at that time. She then decided to try out baking because this was one of her roles in the various kitchen restaurants she worked in and a personal passion. Furthermore, operating such a business was convenient as she would work from home, baking orders after work or on her days off.

The sewing business idea came about because the participant enjoyed sewing. She added that orders were slow at times, but remains optimistic because demands for bags continue to trickle through. The third business opportunity to sell food packs resulted from demands made by
visitors who visited the national park. These visitors usually did not bring lunch or snack packs whenever they visited the park, so she supplied food to meet this demand. The last entrepreneur managed to acquire her canteen through a development scheme introduced into the village specifically for women. Overall, the data reveal that, through their work in the industry, the women have increased their monetary independence and provided a comfortable and improved quality lifestyle for their families and themselves.

5.5 Social Empowerment

Talanoa on social empowerment focused on the open-ended questions relating to the interrelations between the women and their community, in addition to whether women belonged to some sort of social community groups. Table 5.5 provides themes emerging from the data, together with signs of empowerment and disempowerment for this level of empowerment.

**Table 5.5: Social indicators of empowerment and disempowerment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Signs of empowerment</th>
<th>Signs of disempowerment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Actively participates and contributes effectively in the various groups the women belong to.</td>
<td>The majority of the women were members of at least two social groups in the village: Sogosoqo Vakamarama Group (SVG) and Mothers’ Club. A few of the women find themselves being counsellors to other women in their own communities. Making lifelong friends. Learning new cultures and ideas.</td>
<td>Disengagement from some social groups as there is stagnation—no positive growth within the social groups and conflict of interest. The feeling that one is too young to be a member of the SVG, although there are no age restrictions. Jealousy amongst co-workers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Role models especially to other women.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interaction with others of different cultural backgrounds.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.5.1 Women’s social groups

All the women responded that they were members of at least two women’s social groups. In the first social group, all women over the age of 16 in a Fijian village automatically become a member of the Sogosoqo Vakamarama Group (SVG). The main focus of this women’s group at its inception was to foster women’s craft in villages. Today, the organisation’s focus has broadened and now includes areas of public health, home-making skills and entrepreneurship.
These focus areas are usually carried out in workshops and seminars through partnerships between the government, the various provincial councils and village headmen. The SVG is also an important association at the provincial level, because it takes a leading role in hosting and catering events and gatherings called for by the provincial councils.

In the second group the women are members of their children’s school Mothers’ Club. In every school, the Mothers’ Club is a pillar of support, especially for fundraising drives or, simply, when teachers need support in extracurricular activities. Church-based groups are another group the women indicated they were members of. Table 5.6 lists the groups which the women have indicated they are members of, including whether they are active members or not.

**Table 5.6: Women’s social groups**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Group</th>
<th>Active</th>
<th>Non-active</th>
<th>Not a member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soqosoqo Vakamarama</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mothers’ Club</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church Group</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even though the majority of women indicated they are active member of the SVG, only a minority actually attend meetings, workshops or seminars. They attribute absence from such gatherings to the fact that these are usually held during working hours. Nevertheless, they actively participate through paying *soli* or attend gatherings when they are not working. Two of the women reported leaving their groups; one believed the group had stagnated despite its long-running, while the other indicated a conflict of interest between those in leadership:

> I saw there was no growth in the Club after years of being part of it. Those who ran our village’s SVG would not take into account some of the ideas I would put forth. For example, I suggested that the village canteen be run by SVG, but they did not support the idea. That was the last straw for me. (P15, 2015)

Another participant believed she was too young to be part of the SVG. Although she was married with kids, the members in her village were much older than her, thus the loss of interest. A few of the women spoke out regarding traits of jealousy from their co-workers. Two felt that the reason behind such behaviour was because they were holding supervisory roles even though some of their subordinates were older than them and had worked longer. The comment below relates to such an account:
Sometimes I know that my co-workers are a bit of jealous of me, they will not carry out what I ask of them. Maybe because they know my pay rate is higher than theirs even though they have been working longer than I. But I don’t treat them differently; I just make sure I do my best at work. (P9, 2015)

The 16 active members of the Mothers’ Club also identified as paying members, although they do not physically attend many meetings or functions. The same reason presented earlier was given—due to work commitments which keep them away from gatherings. The two women who were not members of this club all have grown-up children. Yet again, work commitment had been the main reason identified for stopping women from being active members. Nevertheless, when there was a soli request for the group all the women contributed towards this. The five active members in the church group also held leadership positions in this group.

Besides networking with other women in these social settings, the women in this study disclosed that fellow members look up to them as role models and approach them whenever they need advice or leadership. Some of the talanoa excerpts on this topic are presented in the next section.

5.5.2 Role models to other women
A few of the women in this study described how their involvement in the social groups has an impact on other women because they are approached for counsel and leadership roles. “I found that my interaction with the different types of people from all over the world has enabled me to help my fellow women” (P16, 2015). This woman relayed that, during her tenure as vice president of the Mothers’ Club in the village school her children were attending, she was also like a counsellor for other mothers. Many of the members of the Mothers’ Club looked up to her as a role model because of the many ideas she would suggest during meetings on how to achieve targets for projects. Moreover, the women found her to be empathetic and care. The participant attributed these qualities to her work in the industry; in particular, that interacting with a wide variety of personalities and cultures has influenced her way of thinking and personality greatly. Moreover, some of those interactions with guests have left her with lasting impressions, especially when these conversations related to family or life in general. This advice is what she uses to motivate and console a woman in need. She also concluded that the women who receive her advice and motivation are always very grateful for the time she spends with them.
Another participant commented that she held a leadership role in all the social groups she was part of. One of the most recent roles was president of the Catholic Women’s League in her church parish. She attributed most of the knowledge and skills as being from her work in carrying out her responsibilities successfully, “I used a lot of my expertise from work, especially in the areas of catering, budgeting, menu planning and food presentation when we were asked by the parish priest to host occasions” (P1, 2015). The participant further added that these women appreciated and learnt a great deal from her too.

The participants also explained there were times when their suggestions and ideas were challenged. Some attributed this to jealousy from the other women, which was the main reason for their withdrawal from the group. Nevertheless, the general consensus was that, through their work in tourism, the women are able to meet the financial obligations of their groups in addition to providing positive suggestions and ideas for developing their social groups.

5.5.3 Interaction with different cultural backgrounds

All the women in this study said another reason they enjoy working in the tourism industry is meeting a lot of people from different backgrounds. In these interactions the women and the guests exchange stories on cultural and traditional norms, general knowledge and, in some cases, the guests pass on life lessons and skills. One of the women commented:

I have learnt a lot of this lady friend who once came to the marine park. She is a marine biologist. Through our interactions, we have become very good friends and she has taught me and the villagers more about the living organisms in the marine park and how to take better care of the park. (P18, 2015)

Another shared how she learnt more about snow, as one of the guests was relating to her how cold his country was at that point in time:

One of the guests told me today how cold his country is at the moment and about the snow and how it can be quite destructive, for example cause road accidents. I was excited hearing this, because we only learn of the snow in the movies. When I got home, I shared this story to my children. (P3, 2015)

The rest of the women shared similar experiences with guests and, in the same way, the guests often ask the women about Fijian culture and norms. Such knowledge exchanges benefit both parties and, for the women, this is then shared with their children.
5.6 Political Empowerment

The guiding questions for this level of empowerment were centred on two main areas. The first being on whether the women participated in village and school meetings. The second enquired if they held any roles in social groups they were members of. Table 5.7 provides two themes resonating from the findings, including signs of empowerment and disempowerment, for this level of empowerment.

Table 5.7: Political signs of empowerment and disempowerment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Signs of empowerment</th>
<th>Signs of disempowerment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>Active participation in village meetings.</td>
<td>Women being encouraged to actively participate in village and family meetings.</td>
<td>Women feeling that such meetings are only for men, since it is mainly attended by them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hold decision-making and leadership roles.</td>
<td>Many ideas and suggestions provided by women in village forums are fully supported by the village members, which in turn is implemented in the village.</td>
<td>The occasional rejection of suggestions put forward by women by fellow community members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Some of the women are elected into positions serving the greater community (e.g. on school management committees and CBEM boards).</td>
<td>The lack of forums in which workers can discuss grievances in their work places with their employers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.6.1 Active participation in village meetings

All of the women responded that they attend and participate in most village meetings because these take place in the evenings, when they are home from work. A lesser number do not attend the village meetings but visit clan meetings instead. The women also indicated that, in these forums, they are able to provide purposeful suggestions which are taken on board and actioned. A few commented that during times when they are not present, their ideas and suggestions are either passed to their spouses or fellow women to bring up in the next meeting.

One of the men strongly supported women’s participation in village meeting forums, adding “their participation and support in village initiatives contributes a great deal to the overall development of this village”. One of the female participants in the same village as the quoted man informed the researcher of how some of her ideas and suggestions in the village meetings were implemented. For instance, she proposed in one meeting that they ought to take more
A woman from another village commented on how she shares new information from the guests at village meetings or CBEM board meetings:

It has been a privilege working in this area, because I usually go and share what I have learnt from some of the visitors. For instance, I once informed members during a sitting [of] some new policies, acts and laws from government officials who came to the Park. I break these down to their level of understanding for which they are always thankful. (P16, 2015)

Nevertheless, the same participant encountered rejections to some of her suggestions and ideas by her fellow villagers and clan members. According to her, this was hurtful, especially when the villagers talk about her behind her back; after reflection, she concluded that they respond in a pessimistic manner because “they have not been exposed enough outside the confinements of our village and their level of understanding, being narrow, is not the same as mine” (P16, 2015). Just one of the women revealed she did not attend any village meetings for she felt that it was mainly for the men due to their dominant attendance.

5.6.2 Decision-making and leadership roles

Eight of the women indicated they are current members of their school management committee and heads of departments in their respective workplaces. Table 5.8 illustrates the various areas where they hold decision-making roles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Number of women</th>
<th>Female team members</th>
<th>Male team members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School committee</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board member of CBEM</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of kitchen, housekeeping</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For the women on school management committees, they were nominated into these positions and have attributed their knowledge and work background as a boost in confidence to taking up these roles. The roles include being school treasurer and the assistant and secretary of a school house. The assignments are not new to them, for these are similar tasks to those in their workplaces, and create feelings of content when the women carry out the roles.

Those women who were heads of various departments at work, expressed that, through their role, they: learnt more of the type of work they did, it allowed for transfer and exchange of knowledge and ideas between subordinates and helped make decisions which they believed were appropriate at that moment in time. This was clearly explained by one of the women:

As manager of the Lodge, I usually make requests to the male assistants, who are tour guides and boat captains. I find when I make requests; they accept it and do as I ask. I always ask for their opinions on some of the requests, because I believe they know more than I in their area of work. For instance, when taking a group of guests on a boat trip, the men will suggest a better route and I will go with whatever they recommend. (P15, 2015)

Often being in decision-making roles brings about challenges for the women in such positions. The women usually resolve these by having one-on-one sessions with the particular person, using a gentle tone when making requests or ‘cooling it off’ for a few days after heated exchanges and before reconciliation takes place and work continues. These processes work out well for the heads of departments and their teams, which are a mix of males and females. Some stories shared by the women in decision-making roles include:

During my time as head of housekeeping, sometimes, I could feel this unspoken tension. To me, I think they feel that way because they have more experience than I, and deserve such a position. However, when I needed the men’s help, I would just kindly ask them and they would always do what I ask. (P9, 2015)

I head the kitchen department in my workplace. I don’t have any male team members. I encounter differences with my crew where some usually talk back when I ask for something to be done. When such situations happen, I always have a one-to-one session with my team member and discuss what had happened and the reason I need things done a certain way. In this way, I find all misunderstandings are resolved. (P12, 2015)
5.7 Psychological Empowerment

The common traits of psychological empowerment encompass abilities of a sense of self-esteem and wellbeing. In this study the iTaukei women were asked if increased self-esteem resulted from a few factors. These factors were skill development and training, and receiving respect from their families and communities. Table 5.9 demonstrates the psychological impacts the women have experienced since working in the tourism and hospitality industry.

Table 5.9: Personal development and signs of empowerment and disempowerment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Signs of empowerment</th>
<th>Signs of disempowerment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychological</td>
<td>Self-esteem/confidence/pride enhanced.</td>
<td>The women are no longer shy or embarrassed to speak their minds.</td>
<td>In some working environments, there are no forums where the women and other staff members are able to bring up grievances in relation to working conditions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improved English communication skills.</td>
<td>Level of English competency has significantly improved. Women use these skills and share this knowledge at home and in the community.</td>
<td>Some women face difficulties working with immediate managers, because these managers will not hear them out—the manager’s way is the only way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>More skilful and knowledgeable.</td>
<td>The majority of the spouses do not have full-time work, they take on the role to look after the children, carry out household chores in addition to looking after their farm.</td>
<td>The lack of/no ongoing training for employees, in order to be up to date with current industry practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Entrepreneurship-minded.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive life experiences for the children.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supportive spouses and family members.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Attend training and workshops.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the talanoa sittings, the first response from all the women was the increase in self-confidence, and that this confidence developed and increased over time. This has had positive impacts, as the women have stepped out of their comfort zones and ventured into areas such as entrepreneurship and leadership roles, which is something they would not have been able to do had they not been in the industry.
5.7.1 **Self-esteem/confidence/pride**

Self-esteem, confidence and pride were the first responses expressed by all the women upon asking how they felt about themselves as a result of working in tourism: “Through my confidence, I am able to find out more things for my own personal development and especially for my children’s education. I know, if I wasn’t working in this industry, I wouldn’t have been able to achieve all these things” (P15, 2015). Similar statements were common for all the women in the *talanoa* groups. A few admitted to having a shy personality. However, over the years, through constant interaction with guests and fellow workers they have slowly overcome this. Moreover, such self-development has greatly helped in their family lives and service to the general community, through confidence in speaking up when the opportunity is given. The women have become more open to family members and address issues which they do not feel are fair on them or others.

As previously highlighted, having self-esteem and confidence has enabled the women to pursue more areas of interest with a special emphasis on their children’s education. Two women, who are mothers of high school students, shared how they went about finding out more about high schools ‘off island’, as well as tertiary institution options and scholarships with very little input from their respective schools. They both accredited this to being confident, which enabled them to enquire at these institutions. One of the women detailed how she enrolled one of her sons at a prominent all-boys school in Suva, the capital of Fiji:

> My son wanted to attend Marist Brothers High, but I didn’t know anyone who was associated with the school to inform me beforehand of the school’s registration or enrolment requirements. I was not discouraged; I called up the school, got the particulars and submitted my son’s application for a place in the school and its boarding facilities. When he got accepted, we travelled together to Suva, and I settled him in. He is very shy just like his father, so I did all the talking and arrangements. (P16, 2015)
Others remarked that their increased self-esteem and pride have allowed them to have a broader view of the world and their communities. Two of the women shared that they were asked by their managers to be mentors to fellow co-workers: “I always feel good when my boss approaches me to train or mentor my co-workers … [it] makes me feel like I know a lot of things and it is a big growth for me too” (P9, 2015).

One mentioned how the manager would approach her to teach her fellow workers how to budget, as they would always ask for loans before pay days. Another remarked how she would provide introductory training to new employees from serving guests to bar services. Both explained they felt valued, knowing that they are good at what they do to be asked to help their co-workers, and that it created a happy and fulfilling feeling.

5.7.2 Improved English communication skills

Table 5.10 shows the various levels of education achieved by the women, revealing the majority only went as far as high school level. For these women who reached high school level, 85% of them did not enter into the workforce at once, instead finding employment a few years after being at home.

Table 5.10: Education level attainment of the women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education level</th>
<th>Primary school Year 1-8</th>
<th>High school Year 9-13</th>
<th>Tertiary - technical colleges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the four women who went on to technical colleges, two specialised in hotel management, while the other two majored in business administration. After being home for a few years, although basic English competency was not lost, the women were reluctant to fully interact with guests, for worry of embarrassing themselves with broken English in addition to not understanding instructions fully. Nevertheless, as their time at work progressed, so did this proficiency.
One participant commented:

You know, after finishing off high school and being home for a few years, going back to work and having to speak in English the whole time was a little scary for me. I was embarrassed that I would speak broken English. But as time went by, I am no longer scared; I have greatly improved my English speaking and understanding skills. (P3, 2015)

Now with an increased level of English, the women are able to learn more about foreign places, cultures and practices, and assist their children with school work as they confidently have conversations with guests on a daily basis. One of the women shared how sometimes she continues speaking in English at home to her family members as a result of speaking it throughout the day. This has further helped her son, who is at kindergarten, to speak and understand the English language to impressive form.

5.7.3 More skilful
All the women reported having gained new skills from work. They further added trying some of these new skills in their homes and social groups:

Most of the time now at home, I fold the towels like how I do at work, make the bed and also prepare simple meals like how they do in the hotel kitchen. Before I started working, I didn’t know many of these things, but now I have learnt a great deal and am happy I can do this at home too. (P8, 2015)

All the women echoed similar responses to the above remark. Being exposed to many areas of hospitality operations has enabled them to be more skilful in areas such as food and beverage preparation and presentation, relating to people from different cultures and ethnicity, bookkeeping and business management. Moreover, as each woman interacts with a vast range of people from different cultures, beliefs, social status and employment background, each one learns a new idea, way of living, fact about a country/society which they could relate to and adapt in some way or other. Such knowledge is then used in their families and in their communities as the women see fit. One of the women had this to share:
Some of my guests at the spa tell me how they raise their children; I am always interested because I have a lot of children. They tell me that they schedule routines for their children, when to play, eat, sleep and do homework. This has been very eye opening for me, and now I am trying it with my children. It is quite a challenge, since we live in the village where children tend to follow other children. But I am trying very hard, but it’s slowly coming through. (P2, 2015)

For the women who work in the kitchen, they have at least tried two simple recipes in their home kitchens which have been thoroughly enjoyed by their family members. Some of these simple recipes include French toast, pizza and pasta. They also add this is usually a treat because the ingredients are costly on the island. These new-found skills have further stirred up the drive to business mindedness and the will to become entrepreneurs.

### 5.7.4 Entrepreneurially-minded

Section 5.4.3 highlighted how four of the women are operating micro-businesses from their homes. The remaining 14 have also indicated that, given the opportunity, they would gladly own and operate a business too. Table 5.11 indicates the types of businesses the women are confident of engaging in.

#### Table 5.11: Dream businesses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business type</th>
<th>Interested participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canteen—basic food items and confectionary</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massage parlour</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Café</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yaqona selling</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish selling</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above business types are the hopes of the other 14 women who will take hold of the opportunity if it presents itself. As indicated early in one of the women’s quotes, they have confidence in entering the business world as they have a fair knowledge of how a business operates. More importantly, their areas of business interest lie within the range of their current roles. The women also identified two barriers which make this dream impossible at the moment. First is the lack of start-up capital and, second, is the limited knowledge on acquiring a business licence and other processes associated with business registration.
5.7.5  Positive life experiences for the children

As outlined in the profile of these women at the beginning of this chapter, all the women at least have two children; hence, the unanimous response from the women that they are able to better provide for their children by being able to afford their education, meet their basic needs and adapt new values learnt from guests they have met at work. One of the women detailed how her children were close to her former hotel employer, who was a foreigner, and would spend a considerable amount of time with the employer and her family. From such interactions her daughter was able to speak, read and understand the English language very well. This was also reflected in her exam results, where she would score high in English. Her daughter spent most of her free time reading. The mother further added that her family members would comment on how well her daughter spoke English, and her manners also mirrored such contacts. For example, if her daughter wanted to interrupt the mother whenever she was speaking, she would excuse herself and ask her mother if she could say something. This gesture, her mother added, was not very common with children in the village.

Other women pointed out how they have encouraged their children into the habit of reading, as a result of seeing children of guests with this habit. One of the women explained that she tried to buy a newspaper at the end of each day to take home, where she would sit with her children and tell them to read a passage to her and then discuss the news item. She summed up the experience as difficult at first, but it is now slowly becoming a routine in their household. Another related how she helped her nephew in a high school science project, where she emailed her friends overseas, who were former guests at her previous workplaces, for their assistance. The friends assisted by sending pieces which made up a model of a hydro system. It was a learning experience for both of them as they assembled the pieces of the model together, which enabled them to understand fully how hydro systems work. She went on to say that the teachers were also ‘amazed’ at the model. A few also explained they have instilled in their children the need to speak out if they do not agree with something being told to them and not be scared, especially to adults. This is a common trait for the iTaukei people as a sign of respect for their elders. However, they added that, if the children need to speak up, then to do so with respect.
Supportive spouses and family members

Only five of the 18 women’s spouses have full-time paid employment and the two single women live with their parents who are retired. The other spouses are full-time farmers and have occasional casual employment. Such details have not discouraged the unemployed spouse to be negative about the situation. On the contrary, all the women described how supportive their husbands and partners are. One of the women reported the following:

Many times when I get home and it is close to dinner time, my husband welcomes me with a very affectionate tone, asks about how my day went and tells me to relax as I have had a long day and then serves me with dinner or a hot cuppa … I am usually very touched and happy when he does this. (P8, 2015)

Another woman revealed that her husband encouraged her to stay on with the employer, even though the financial returns were very low. His reasons were attributed to the benefits of these friends, met through his wife’s employment, who have assisted their family and especially their children in many ways, such as education. One of the women whose husband is also employed commented that:

I am fortunate that my husband and I work alternative shifts, so one of us is with the children all the time. Not only that, if I have to start early, he gets to prepare the children’s lunch and see them off to school and does the laundry. I do whatever needs to be done when I finish off in the afternoon. So it works out fine for me. (P13, 2015)

In one of the talanoa sessions, the researcher experienced the support of an unemployed husband. The talanoa session was held in the participant’s office, as she was working on that day. As lunch time drew near, one of their children was sent by their father to inform us that lunch was ready, which he had prepared. The researcher asked the participant if this was the norm or was it because of the researcher; she laughed it off and replied that he did that every time she was at work. When the talanoa party arrived at their home, the kids were almost done with lunch and two plates had been served up ready for us.

The two women who lived with their parents experienced similar situations, where their children are looked after by their grandparents and their respective mothers take over once they get home. A number of the women have teen-aged children who help their father look after their younger siblings or carry out household chores when their mothers are at work.
5.7.7 Offering support

Besides supporting their own families, the talanoa also revealed that the women support their siblings and communities in counsel, financially and in knowledge. One of the women contributed this statement when asked if she supported her extended family:

Often times my younger siblings ask for my advice regarding work. For example, my sister is thinking of joining the tourism industry and has asked me [about] the nature of tourism work and things she will need to do secure employment. When my brother started working at the airport, he asked me basic guest relations practices—the do’s and don’ts. I was very happy to share my experiences with them and I’ve witnessed that it has helped them a lot. A feeling of fulfilment always overcomes me when I offer these advices. (P13, 2015)

This is an example of how all the women feel when family members come and seek help or advice from them. It must be noted that, during the talanoa with this particular participant (P13), she answered a phone call from another younger brother who studies in Suva. During the call she told her brother that she was going to send him some ‘pocket money’ over the weekend. The women believe the feeling of satisfaction and achievement works both ways. One of the respondents claimed her work in the industry has allowed her to share her knowledge of marine ecosystems and preservation, not only with her family but the community too, and the rewards have been reciprocal, “I feel that the more I share, especially relating to my work, the more I receive. Like now some of my fellow women villagers are showing me how to weave mats, I never knew of such skill before” (P18, 2015).

5.7.8 Training and workshops

Ten of the eighteen women had attended some form of training or workshop since beginning their tourism and hospitality working careers. The remaining eight have had to learn while ‘on the job’. For the women who have attended professional training this was a one-off and further training has not been provided. Table 5.12 lists the various areas in which the women have attended training and workshops and new areas of interest in which to upskill.
Table 5.12: Training and workshops areas and new areas of interest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous areas of training and workshops</th>
<th>New areas of interest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pastry baking</td>
<td>Basic marketing skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spa treatment</td>
<td>Computer skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General front-of-house hotel operations</td>
<td>Office work skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer care</td>
<td>Internet browsing, searching and general use skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food handling</td>
<td>Bar service skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book keeping and accounts</td>
<td>Current tourism and tourist trends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project management</td>
<td>Refresher training on:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small business operations</td>
<td>• food handling, preparation and sanitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guest relations and contacts</td>
<td>• guest relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marine-based projects</td>
<td>• pastry baking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housekeeping</td>
<td>• small business operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tour guiding</td>
<td>• overall front-of-house hotel operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• housekeeping and laundry practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• tour guiding and interpretation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the women who attended previous training and workshops these were conducted in-house with visiting chefs and through joint collaboration mainly by government departments and donor agencies. They also noted that such training and workshops would occur at least once a year with the previous government, which dated back at least a decade. With the new administration, even though requests have been put forward at the provincial level, nothing has eventuated. For those who have never had any form of training since being in the workforce, the women highlighted areas in which they would like to receive proper training, as itemised in Table 5.12. All of the women agree that changes in the industry are rapid and they are willing to learn these, in addition to also being upskilled in their areas of interest.

While being appreciative of the new skills they have developed and been exposed to, the women highlighted two aspects where they feel they are being disadvantaged and deprived. The first is that there are no forums where they are able to meet with their managers and owners to address any grievances they have. If they have a problem, this is discussed amongst themselves and the most confident member would then approach higher management to discuss such issues. Sometimes management will listen and address these issues, other times they will not. The second is that the women highlighted that some managers will just not have it any other way but theirs, and speak down to the women and other employees. Some exchanges between the employers (who are also owners) and the employees can become bitter, personal and often times demoralising. Here is one of the women’s explanations: “sometimes
I argue with the manager, she will not consider what I have to say, she will say, ‘Shut up [name]!’ When she does that, it hinders my work and makes me stressed out. Sometimes I cry because it’s just too much to handle” (P3, 2015). Such attitudes from managers cause a lot of frustration, as well as result in the women feeling upset and offended. The women admitted that when such incidents happen the feeling of resigning comes over them, but the support from their husbands and partners always reassures them.

5.8 Stakeholders’ Position on Women’s Access and Constraints to Empowerment

The stakeholders identified for this study, as indicated in Chapter 3, include four men who are spouses and village heads of two villages and a representative each from two government departments—DoW and DoT. The responses to their support, assistance and action plans on Indigenous women in the tourism industry are explained in the following paragraphs.

5.8.1 The men’s views

This section presents the views of the men who participated in this study. These men were husbands, a turaga ni koro (village headman) and coordinator of the village’s CBEM:

With the support I give my working wife, I see the overall development and wellbeing of the family … I have no problems when she goes to work, I do whatever needs to be done in our home and balance this with my time working in our plantation. We also discuss what needs to be done and distribute the load, we have an understanding that I will do whatever I can and when she is on her days off, she does her share. (H1, 2015)

This sentiment by one of the women’s spouses demonstrates the value he places on his partner as a working wife and mother. He further mentions, “in instances where one disagrees to [sic] an idea regarding the family or village, we will discuss it at length until [we] arrive to [sic] the same conclusion” (SP1, 2015). He also expresses having a teenage daughter is of great help too with household chores and looking after her younger siblings.
The village headman provided the following statement when asked of the contributions of the women in his village:

As the current turaga ni koro, I have found when there is lack of support from the women regarding village welfare, there is weakness in the whole village development structure. I always ensure there is at least a woman in every committee regarding village matters. The ideas they put forth whether in the village meetings or over drinking yaqona, are always filled with positivity and new ideas which makes my task as headman easier. I usually have yaqona drinking sessions with these women who work in the hotels, and they always point out my weak points or areas in the village I need to work on and I really value these as they make me a better leader. (T1, 2015)

The village headman also highlighted some initiatives the women have requested him to make on their behalf to the government, and he makes it a priority for he knows these initiatives will benefit the families and village as a whole.

The male coordinator of the CBEM initiative in one of the villages shared similar thoughts, in saying “women are the driving force of the development of the village welfare”. He further noted suggestions from the women were significant because of the holistic approach considered. For example, on one occasion, the women suggested a village beautification project. In this suggestion, the women informed the forum that this project had two intentions. Its first intention was for the general cleanliness of the village and prevention of diseases carried out by mosquitoes and flies. Their second reason was to enhance the selling point of the Lodge because it was within the village boundaries. The coordinator concluded that whatever the women put forward was always for the betterment of everyone in the village.

5.8.2 Government ministries
The two government departments which took part in this study were DoW, from the Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation and DoT, from the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism. The female representative from DoW articulated, “The department is more focused on women in the confines of their homes who have no source of income or are unemployed, because we feel those already in employment, like tourism workers have jobs and earn money” (DoW, personal communication, May 8, 2015). Furthermore, the department does not provide training or grants specifically for indigenous women in rural areas or women in tourism for that matter. However, these are available for women in rural areas in general, irrespective of ethnic background. One of the main areas of focus for DoW is to enable rural
women to be self-sufficient and be economically empowered through income-generating projects. Some of these projects include: providing sewing machines and conducting sewing lessons; setting up small chicken farms; and training, such as financial literacy and business basics in partnership with two commercial banks, Westpac and ANZ. Personnel of DoW also assist rural women to write up business plans to enable them to get grants from DoW.

Furthermore, according to DoW, there has been a recent drive in their involvement with rural women and tourism through handicraft expo shows held when cruise ships berth into the capital city of Suva. Prior to these expos each division held its own competition and winners were then provided extra training to refine their products. This is to ensure quality products before a ‘Fiji Made’ seal is stamped on these handicrafts and ready for sale to cruise ship visitors. The department also offers support to rural women through its five action plans, which include: formal sector and livelihoods; women in equal participation in decision-making; eliminating violence against women; access to services, in particular health and education; and women and the law. There are also partnerships between DoW and international agencies, such the United Nations (UN) and its various agencies to raise awareness, especially in the scope of reproductive health and governance.

Like DoW, the assistance provided by DoT is not only specific to Indigenous women in rural areas, but any local who is operating, or hopes to operate, a tourism business. The current work of DoT is assisting potential tourism operators—micro- or medium-sized—by providing checklists of how to obtain a business licence, through to directing them to relevant government departments or agencies that would provide further assistance in these business start-up processes.

The programs implemented by DoT vary according to the goals set by the government of the day for the department. For example, from 2000–2008, an ecotourism grant was available and a few Indigenous women applied and secured funding. Two women who established accommodation businesses from the grant are still operating successfully at present. The changes in government administration have resulted in the withdrawal of some previous initiatives, such as training, community awareness programs and ecotourism grants. As DoT personnel reported, “Many of these initiatives were implemented because there was a budgetary allocation but because there’s no more grants, these programs had to be discontinued” (DoT, personal communication, May 10, 2015). However, the lack of resources
to conduct monitoring programs has been the major drawback in finding out reasons why there were failures with grant programs. There has been some recent training in partnership with a regional tourism organisation in the areas of e-marketing for small and medium enterprises in specific tourism regions, but nothing is available nationally. The DoT representative further reported that the department is currently working to hold more training sessions in other tourism regions in partnership with public and private sector agencies in order to include a wider spectrum of tourism operations.

5.9 Summary
This chapter has presented key findings from the case study of iTaukei women working in the tourism industry on the island of Taveuni. The results were gathered from three different categories of participants, namely: the women, who were also the main subject of the study; men, who were spouses, a village headman a male coordinator of the CBEM; and the third were the government departments.

The responses from this study reveal tourism has created employment and empowerment opportunities for these women. These have been clearly demonstrated with most of the women being the sole bread winners in the family. Economically, the women make most of the financial decisions in their household, which has also enabled them to be better at budgeting. Their social empowerment has increased because they are able to create networks amongst other women in the different social groups they belong to. Additionally, their interaction with guests has created a sphere of cultural exchanges and learning, thus broadening their knowledge. The women feel politically empowered because they have a voice in decision-making in their homes and at the community level, with a few even in positions of ‘power’ as they hold influential roles in the various committees they are part of. All the women have experienced increased levels of confidence and self-esteem and these have encouraged them to try out new things, such as owning micro-businesses. Nevertheless, they still experience levels of disempowerment, mostly because of the traditional patriarchal systems and the village structures. This is evident at the community level, where a few do not attend village forums and others encounter resistance from male villagers or jealousy from fellow female members.

The men, who are husbands and community members, fully support the women working and assert that the contribution of these women to the development of their families and
communities is undeniably enriching and favourable. The government has provided mechanisms to enhance rural women’s advancement and empowerment through awareness programmes concerning women. However, some initiatives have not been implemented at present due to unavailable resources.
Chapter 6 - Discussion

This chapter discusses the ways in which the Indigenous Fijian women participate in and are empowered through tourism on Taveuni. The discussion links the findings from Chapter 5 to the literature and theory, and is structured around research objectives 2, 3 and 4, including: the positive and negative impacts of the women’s involvement in tourism; understanding the forms of empowerment they have or have not been able to achieve; and, lastly, exploring how stakeholders and their communities have assisted or constrained women’s empowerment involved in the tourism industry. Finally, this discussion chapter concludes with insights on the overall aims and implications of this study.

6.1 Tourism Employment Benefits

For the Indigenous Fijian women employed in the tourism sector of Taveuni, this employment opportunity has provided a sound foundation and wellbeing for themselves, their families and the different communities in which they live. For the most part, their ability to earn an income has enabled the women to make independent and informed decisions concerning the welfare of themselves and their immediate families. They have also acquired new skills, increased levels of self-confidence, together with the capacity to achieve personal aspirations such as owning and running micro-enterprises. The women stated proudly that operating their own enterprises is a life-long fulfilment and ingrains a sense of pride. Such achievements have been attained when the women feel the ‘power within’ themselves, enabling ‘power to’ make decisions, ‘power over’ to influence their families and communities and ‘power with’ the community members enabling positive results, measured in terms of the development of their villages (Rowlands, 1997). All these forms of ‘power’ frame the empowerment notion. Similar studies on rural-based indigenous women working in tourism show opportunities for increased independence, as well as a more developed sense of achievement and accomplishment being the two key common characteristics of their study findings (Dunn, 2007; McMillan, et al., 2011; Moswete & Lacey, 2015; Pleno, 2006).
The women’s voices, as shown in Chapter 5, reveal their perceptions of how tourism employment has impacted their lives in positive and negative ways. The women talked about the positive attributes from working in tourism, which can also be seen in other studies of women; that is, rural settings in LDCs. The work by Tucker and Boonabaana (2012) and Tran and Walter (2014) respectively in rural areas of Turkey, Uganda and Vietnam supports responses by the women I interviewed in Taveuni. In Turkey’s and Uganda’s rural communities, the women in tourism employment have been able to provide for the needs of their families and also expanded into micro-businesses, such as informal lending and borrowing institutions and investment into property (Tucker & Boonabaana, 2012). In Vietnam, the experiences of the women were similar to those identified from this study, in addition to gaining access to education, loans and credit for investment mainly in ecotourism-related enterprises. In another study by Pleno (2006) of Bohol, Philippines, the majority of participants in the ecotourism area are women and the positive impacts of their involvement in this sector surpass the negatives.

Similar difficulties by the women in this study, as highlighted Chapter 5, were narrowed down to two main themes: loss of time with family; and misunderstanding between spouses, usually relating to miscommunications or unattended household task requests resulting in arguments. Although many of the women were restrained in admitting this, to a certain extent, they still found themselves carrying out some form of domestic roles when they return from work. Comparable findings were recorded by researchers in Ecuador, Indonesia, Turkey and Uganda (Cukier & Norris, 1996; Duffy et al., 2012; Momsen, 2004; Tucker & Boonabaana, 2012; Wilkinson & Pratiwi, 1995). Nonetheless, this was often described by the women in this study as a ‘non-issue’, as it appeared that the majority of the domestic and caring work is being done by husbands or older children. Conflicts have been highlighted by Burns (1993) as a characteristic of tourism employment. Despite this negative discourse, the women still held a highly favourable regard for their work, as the gains were far more beneficial in comparison to the losses, which the women were able to solve themselves. The tasks carried by the women in their various workplaces, such as housekeeping, kitchen, laundry, food and beverage serving, are still an extension of their domestic roles, as other researchers have outlined in their previous work (Apostolopoulos & Sonmez, 2001; Cukier, 2002; Cukier & Norris, 1996; Kinnaird & Hall, 2000; Purcell, 1997; Scheyvens, 2002; World Tourism Organisation, 2013). This ‘triple role’ is a seminal feature of women’s roles in tourism employment in LDCs (Cukier, 2002; Kinnaird & Hall, 2000; Levy & Lerch, 1991); the roles being held by women
are the lowest level of the employment ladder and are attributed to the minimal entry level of qualifications such roles require—a feature which many rural women were suited for since the majority of them did not have specific skills, credentials or higher education levels.

The Taveuni iTaukei women’s empowerment *iri* framework, illustrated in Figure 6.1, outlines how Scheyvens’ (1999) conceptual empowerment framework has been adapted to the women participants of Taveuni. The *iri* is the iTaukei term for fan, and is a household item made by women from either the leaves of coconuts or pandanus palms. The *iri* can be used as an accessory, to keep one cool when feeling hot, or to fan away unwanted bugs (mosquitoes and flies). It can also be seen as bringing about winds of change, for example enables one to fan oneself from hot to cool.

![Figure 6.1 Taveuni iTaukei Women’s Empowerment Iri Framework](image-url)
The choice of the *iri* is appropriate to illustrate the empowerment of the Taveuni iTaukei women because of its various parts and functions. The handle, where one determines the momentum of how fast or slow the fan moves, and also the strongest part of the *iri*, is likened to support of the stakeholders and tourism employment. If there is a lack of or no support from the stakeholders, especially from spouses and communities, the women will not able to seek employment. Additionally, the support from government through its various departments enables the women to work and also provide assistance as highlighted in Chapter 5. The base of the *iri*, which is connected to the handle, is also a strong section. The placement of the economic empowerment in this area results from the findings, where it is seen to be the major of the four empowerment levels. Its impacts enable the women to achieve the other three levels. The social and political levels on the sides are built from the economic level. The psychological level, being at the top, indicates the many attributes the women have achieved through this empowerment. This Taveuni iTaukei women’s empowerment *iri* framework brings about changes to the women participants of this study as shown in Chapter 5 and to be further explained in the following sections.

6.2 Levels of Empowerment
The sections below discuss the different levels of empowerment achieved by the women, including the overlapping of some levels. These begin with perhaps the most profound level of empowerment: economic empowerment. In this level, its characteristics lead on to the other levels, beginning with women being able to earn an income to provide for the family, allowing for self-development which boosts self-confidence, which further stimulates progression into areas that enable the women to run their own businesses or aspire to have one.

6.2.1 Economic empowerment: Monetary access and independence
Through analysis of the interviews and *talanoa* groups, it seems that women had access to regular income. This empowered them in the sense that it enabled them to better provide for themselves and their families. Another aspect linking with monetary access was independence to make decisions for the family, and this then led the women to develop budget management skills. Providing for their family is a priority for the women; besides having food on the table, another significant concern is ensuring their children’s education needs are taken care of. When these priorities are taken care of, the women are able to take care of other ‘wants’, which include improving their house dwellings, making their homes more comfortable by buying luxury items and saving. These correspond with past studies on women in tourism employment and the general economic gains in the less developed worlds (Gibson, 2013;
Gibson (2013) and Movono (2012) studied well-developed tourism regions in Fiji and found the women involved in tourism employment were able to provide significant comforts for their families, sending their children off to prominent boarding schools. In the communities of Annapurna in Nepal and Northwest Yunnan in China, women’s tourism involvement and employment provided more opportunities for an increased income, affordability of diversified food and new clothing (Morais et al., 2005). In the current study it was also evident that all the women want to own and operate their own micro-businesses. This step away from their normal sphere of domestic duties and being an employee is a result of their budget and financial management knowledge, mainly due to the roles they hold in their workplaces. This enthusiasm to be a tourism employee-turned-entrepreneur remains a largely understudied area (Peeters & Ateljevic, 2009). An added benefit of becoming an entrepreneur in such settings is the ability to employ others, thus further expanding the tourism benefit (Peeters & Ateljevic, 2009). As stated by UN Women, “when more women work, economies grow” (2012, p.1). De Vita, Mari and Poggesi (2014) also discuss a social element in entrepreneurship, whereby it helps women explore the “emancipatory power” of doing business (p. 457). Although not entirely an entrepreneurial activity, some women in the current study identified hiring farm hands on a casual basis, thus more widely distributing the tourism dollar.

The feeling of confidence helped these women achieve other personal goals, and demonstrates the overlapping nature of the empowerment framework; here we see economic and psychological levels of empowerment interlinking. In discussions on the study of women’s empowerment in Nepal, McMillan et al., (2011) illustrate the interrelation and overlapping between the four levels of empowerment. Similar findings were noted by Dunn (2007) in her study of rural women in Leeled, Thailand. Thus, through the vehicle of tourism employment, women simultaneously experience empowerment of different levels. Overall, through their work, these Indigenous Fijian women have challenged long-prevailing social standings which suggest that their sphere is solely confined to the household (Scheyvens, 2002).
6.2.2 Social empowerment: Networking processes

The societal structure in which the women in this study live encompasses them to be part of numerous social groups. For these female participants, as highlighted in Section 5.5.1 and illustrated in Table 5.7, each woman is a member of at least two social groups. The two most common group memberships include an all-women’s association, the *Soqosoqo Vakamarama*, a common women’s club in Indigenous Fijian villages, whilst the other is a school-based Mothers’ Club. The women’s membership in these groups has provided a platform for their assistance to other female members. The findings reveal that the women not only share their financial benefits with members through contributions for village or school projects, but the other women look up to the women in this study for advice and counsel in personal and domestic affairs and issues. By sharing their skills, knowledge and experiences gained from tourist interactions, these women not only feel content that they have helped a friend or community member but are able to uplift the spirit of an individual and the association to new levels (Kabeer, 2003; Simons & de Groot, 2015).

Through such gestures, the women have also strengthened the harmony in their respective villages. This outcome was also found in the study of an ethnic tourism site in rural Zhijiang, China (Ruliang et al., 2014). Additionally, a few of the women were given leading roles in these associations. These self-worth qualities are again affiliated with psychological empowerment, and further reinforce the relationship between economic and social empowerments, as suggested by Boserup (1970). In another study regarding women involved with cultural tourism in Botswana, findings demonstrate that social and psychological empowerment overlap as the women engage in purposeful cross-cultural exchanges with customers and tourists (Moswete & Lacey, 2015).

Another aspect of social involvement reveals women forming lasting friendship connections with the guests from their workplaces. The friendships encountered by the women in this study often led to family friends, with frequent correspondence and return travels by the guests, gift exchanges and even assistance to the family. Similarly, Moswete and Lacey (2015) indicate such friendships in their study of women in Botswana, where one of the local women travelled to the USA on a paid for holiday by a befriended customer.
However, not all the women in the current study experienced positive interactions with their social club’s members. Two women detached themselves from one association because they believed the other members did not share their ideas to grow the association from its current position. The women indicated that many of their ideas for the growth of their group have been learnt through their interactions with the guests, who tend to shed light on their culture, ways of living and work. Having such dilemmas, the studied women assume such reactions from the others are plainly rooted in jealousy, since they are far more exposed to the confinements of the village boundaries. Pleno (2006) also discusses this in his findings of women working in ecotourism in the Philippines; Pleno relates such outcomes to being a ‘power play’. The participants on Taveuni, however, liken it to a ‘woman thing’, where there is often bickering and jealousy when some are doing better than others. Their solution to the problem was to completely remove themselves from any association so as not to inflict unnecessary strain on themselves. Burns (1997) associates such jealous reactions to social and cultural standings in cases between husbands and wives. Duffy et al., (2015) found that in the Dominican Republic, husbands were jealous of their wives working in the tourism industry because of the long, unpredictable hours of work and high levels of interactions with tourists in their workplaces. Apart from jealousy outside of work, the women in this study experienced this at work too. Those who had experienced such situations indicated the following reasons: being promoted to lead in areas even though some workmates had served longer than them, being paid a higher rate than others and just being efficient in whatever they had been tasked to do.

6.2.3 **Political empowerment: Active participation and decision-making roles**

Political empowerment for the women on Taveuni is heightened as a result of their employment. Two male participants in the current study included a village headman and the other a coordinator of the community-based ecotourism project. The two participants revealed that all village members, irrespective of gender and social status, are expected and encouraged to attend and participate in village meetings as required by the government. Some of the women in this study indicated that in this forum there was a good representation of women besides themselves. Moreover, when the women working in tourism made suggestions and ideas, the comments were nearly always influenced by what they learnt from their work. Some of these suggestions include improving sanitation methods and beautification of the village surroundings. In Honda Bay, Philippines, women were seen to be active participants in community meetings (Scheyvens, 2000).
As one of the village headmen in this study revealed, women play a significant role and are vital in village decision-making processes and, as such, he ensures there are female members for every village committee. This aligns with observations by Tosun (2000) in relation to LDCs, whereby there is a noted shift of power away from those who traditionally were the decision-makers. For women to be present, have the ability to raise their voice and induce influence in their village affairs are relatively unheard of in the indigenous cultures literature and Fiji is no exception (Cole, 2006; Sofield, 2003). McMillan et al. (2011) offer another perspective, where political empowerment also involves non-economic decisions made within the homes. In case of the Taveuni women, the majority mentioned that this was a joint process between the spouses; however, a few also stated that sometimes the final say is left to them. For the two unmarried women, they solely made decisions regarding the affairs of their children.

Another area currently not covered in the empowerment literature is the influence of cultural traditions in decision-making processes. This study had one of its participants being the daughter of a first born in her family clan. In traditional Indigenous Fijian custom, the first born holds great responsibility for their family, both nuclear and extended. One of the many responsibilities is ensuring that the family and clan unit is always united, takes a leadership role whenever there is an obligation and the daunting task to make amends if either the family and clan unit stability seems shaken. For this participant being in such a position, despite encouraging her family and clan members to give suggestions or make decisions in family meetings, her clan members would always let her make the final decision. She views this as a somewhat exhausting situation to be in.

The women’s involvement in social groups, as indicated in Section 5.5.1, has provided a platform where they are being elected into decision-making roles. Some researchers have associated this level of empowerment mainly with CBT project roles (Boley & McGehee, 2014; Dunn, 2007; Ramos & Prideaux, 2014; Scheyvens, 1999, 2000; Sofield, 1996, 2003). This study extends this empowerment to not only include those involved in CBT projects but decision-making roles in general. Interestingly, the women who were part of the CBT project felt that it took time for the male members to be receptive to their ideas and suggestions; often the women felt shut out when offering ideas and they had to work harder to make the male members agree with their point. Such disempowerment has also been discussed in South-East
Asian studies by Tran and Walter (2014) and Dunn (2007), where the cultural dominance of males in decision-making roles is still strong.

On the other hand, there were other women who held decision-making roles in their various women’s groups and mothers’ clubs who stated that even though the majority support their decisions, they still came across a few female members who were not employed, disagreeing with the points being raised. Nevertheless, they managed to solve these issues in their own ways. For those involved in school committees, their male associates were supportive and open to whatever the women had to offer. Many of the women in this study expressed that they only have good intentions for the growth and development of the clubs and committees they are members of. These circumstances demonstrate the overlapping of social, political and psychological empowerments between social and political scenarios (Friedmann, 1992). It was due to the women’s skills and work experience that they felt self-confident in agreeing to nominations and taking up school management committee and club presidency roles. With the ability to participate and make decisions in their homes and communities the women also demonstrate levels of psychological empowerment, as they motivate their family and community members and also “challenge oppressive gender norms, gain greater respect and foster changes in gender roles” (Tran & Walter, 2014, p. 128).

This study has revealed that religious, cultural and traditional values and structures will continue to greatly influence indigenous communities regardless of how the world perceives them. One of the women disclosed how she submits to these values in her family. Despite being the sole breadwinner and having great influence on the decision-making in their household, she has never felt superior to her husband, but respects him as the head of the household. In three other separate talanoa sessions, a husband and two female participants attributed their joint decision-making and respect for each other to the influence of the teachings and lessons of a religious-based social group for married couples, of which these three couples are members. These aspects clearly show how Western ideals on feminism might be both “unrealistic and irrelevant” within indigenous communities (Tucker & Boonabaana, 2012, p. 449). Hence, it is critical for outsiders to acknowledge and understand that indigenous communities’ ways of living are deeply rooted in religious, cultural and traditional values. Therefore, to foster harmony and active participation from the communities, proposed mechanisms must be employable and acceptable to its members. Similar sentiments have been echoed where it is realised that successful tourism development outcomes administer
“community-based” approaches (Milne & Ateljevic, 2001; Mowforth & Munt, 2008; Reggers, Grabowski, Wearing, Chatterton, & Schweinsberg, 2016; Sofield, 2003).

6.2.4 Psychological empowerment: Enhanced self-confidence and self-esteem through tourism

This level of empowerment generated the greatest amount of comments by the women. The participants shared that, through their new-found self-worth, boosted esteesms, confidence and pride, the impacts are advantageous for their family members, especially their children. A key source of these women’s self-confidence is their improved command and use of the English language. While English is the official language of teaching in Fiji’s education system, many of the women were ‘rusty’ in terms of speaking and understanding the language, as it had often been many years since leaving school. Nevertheless, being exposed to the language for the most part of their working day has increased their competency level. The determination to ensure their children were offered better educational opportunities than they themselves had been clear. The women claim they were no longer reluctant to find out about tertiary and scholarship applications and entry requirements from the providers. One of the pivotal components from the ‘power within’ the women developed was their courage and eagerness to undertake new things, which resonates with Pleno’s (2006) research findings from the Philippines. This courage and eagerness to try new things is demonstrated in their responses of being entrepreneurs. While a small percentage of the women (21%) operated micro-businesses, the remaining 79% were interested in opening their own if the opportunity presented itself; indeed, some women were establishing savings to open their ventures in the near future. Studies by Moswete and Lacey (2015), Peeters and Ateljevic (2009), and Çiçek, Zencir and Kozak (2017) mirror this discovery. Armed with this entrepreneurial enthusiasm, once these dreams become reality, the benefits are spread to other women and community members (Ferguson, 2010; World Bank, 2007).

As stated earlier, the opportunities realised for their children have also been identified by their mothers as a personal achievement. Some of the women’s children had close interactions with the women’s employers and this exposed the children to new world views. For example, the children would watch overseas news and educational programmes from paid television network channels which were not available in their own homes. Some of the women encouraged their children to read at home, a habit they found common amongst guests with children. Additionally, since some of the children actually spent weekends with their mothers’ employers, their English language competencies were greatly improved. This further
supports statements by other researchers who have similarly noted the widespread benefits of women working in tourism (Cukier, 2002; Cukier & Norris, 1996; Gibson, 2001; Pleno, 2006).

The feeling of being valued and respected by their husbands was highlighted by the women, as the men take on household chores and child care. Such actions demonstrate a shift in the traditional social and gender roles of these Taveuni men and women, which is also evident in previous studies of tourism and gender in developing societies (Çiçek et al., 2017; Duffy et al., 2012; Gibson, 2001; Kinnaird & Hall, 1996; Tran & Walter, 2014). These social changes in domestic roles taking place in Taveuni are not widely common in Fiji (Tuivaga, 1988). Additionally, the kind words of praise and simple gestures, such as being offered a cup of tea when they get home and having dinner prepared by their husbands, allude to promoting harmony in the home and transformation of the relationship between the spouses (Ruliang et al., 2014; Said-Allsopp & Tallontire, 2015).

The women find that their exposure to new skills through their work has also been one of the biggest positive impacts in their working experience. These new skills, which propel their self-development, are not only confined to the work space but are also carried out in their homes and wherever else the women see fit. For instance, in their various social groups or clubs they use their knowledge of bookkeeping, budgeting, menu planning, and food preparation and presentation when the need arises for a particular event or project. Another outcome perceived to enhance their self-esteem is supporting their extended family members by way of providing advice and assistance when these relatives approach the women. For the women, imparting knowledge and advice also fulfils their responsibilities to their siblings, in particular providing career advice and monetary assistance.

While only 56% of the women have gone through some form of training and or attended workshops, these have been very resourceful as they are also able to apply the skills learnt outside of work. For instance, small business operations, bookkeeping and accounts have been hailed as good grounding for personal entrepreneurial ambition. The remaining 44% of the participants hope that training or workshop opportunities are made available soon to enable upskilling and be in tuned with current tourism and tourist trends and practices. The women felt that not having any training to upskill is in some ways disempowering and to some extent discriminatory, which they face along with their male co-workers (Anafarta, Sarvan, & Yapici,
However, the responsibility for training and workshop initiatives falls on the employers and to the government to initiate such projects.

Even though the study indicates highly favourable outcomes in regards to psychological empowerment, some areas of concern have been articulated by the women. These concerns relate to the attitudes and restrictions their employers have towards them. Such instances involve no staff meetings to enable dialogue between the two parties and avoiding confrontations with the staff when they, the employers, are in the wrong. To the women, this was uncalled for, if not unprofessional. There is little exploration into this area of tourism, concerning the relationship between employers and employees in rural communities, especially when the employers are not only the owners but foreigners as well.

The discussions on the four levels of empowerment achieved by the women clearly indicate the overlapping of these levels and how they influence one another. Such overlap is especially prominent with the economic and psychological empowerments, in that, as a result of work, financial gains are achieved and, due to the nature of work, with the constant interaction between the women and guests, their knowledge is broadened and they are confident, skilful and happy. Through these empowerment outcomes the ‘trickle-down effect’ is significant, impacting on their homes, families, siblings and communities through active participation in decision-making processes, joining social groups and sharing knowledge and skills to uplift and grow individuals and members alike. The overlapping of empowerment levels found in this study are also consistent with the work by Gentry (2007), Knight and Cottrell (2016), Nyaupane et al., (2006), and Scheyvens (2000).

6.2.5 Stakeholders’ support for women involved in tourism

As noted by Hutchison and McGill, “it is very difficult for individuals to be involved in an empowerment process alone” (1995, p. 139). This was certainly evident in this study of women in tourism, where the researcher identified three different stakeholders to approach and explore how they assist or constrain the empowerment of the women working in the tourism industry. These stakeholders were the spouses of the women and other males who were in a position of power in the village structure and two government departments. The following discussions present what each stakeholder carried to either foster or hinder the empowerment of the women studied.
McGee, Menolascino, Hobbs and Menousek (1987) state, “people who are valued and nurtured by their family and friends have a better chance of becoming part of a process of empowerment” (cited in Hutchison & McGill, 1995, p. 139). The *talanoa* groups revealed this for the women who unanimously identified that the support from their husbands played a significant role in their determination to continue working and achieve the levels of empowerment. It was crucial to attain and learn about spouses’ views because of the traditional patrilineal structures Indigenous Fijians have. All the men’s responses in this study revealed how valuable the women’s contributions were in their homes, workplace and village community. Additionally, in traditional and general marriage structures, the men assume the role of being household heads and, as such, are the dominant decision-makers. Now that the women work and contribute substantially to the wellbeing of their families the decision-making process is shared between the two and, in a few cases, is now entirely done by the women themselves. Also, the fact that the men freely allow their wives to move away from their domestic space and look for work was also a common response from the women. This is in contrast with findings from rural Turkey and Uganda, where the women were not allowed by their husbands to even move freely in public (Tucker, 2007; Tucker & Boonabaana, 2012).

Another shift in the household domain experienced by the women involved their husbands taking on domestic duties, such as child rearing and cooking, which are traditionally viewed as ‘women’s work’. This was not only evident with households whose husbands were unemployed but with the employed spouses too. Since these husbands also worked in the industry, these duties were attended to when they were on their days off or before their shifts commenced. These societal shifts have also been well documented by researchers in their studies of communities in the Philippines, Botswana and Ecuador (Duffy et al., 2012; Moswete & Lacey, 2015; Pleno, 2006).

Singh (2007) further discusses that support for most women economically, socially and emotionally comes from the family. For the single mothers who live with their parents they too experience the same positive support, especially when it comes to the welfare of their children, similar to conclusions by Wilkinson and Pratiwi (1995) and Gibson (2001) where the grandparents mind the children while their mothers go to work. It was well expressed by the women that such shifts in traditional roles and family structure has not been adverse to the stability of the family (Cukier, 2002). This outcome is again another contradiction to some authors who have theorised that disharmony and instability of the family would occur as a
result of women being employed in tourism (Lerch & Levy, 1990; Mathieson & Wall, 1982; Monk & Alexander, 1986). Although there are minor arguments—as all married couples have—the spouses are able to solve these amongst themselves, with no major incidents that caused disharmony being reported. Another support pillar to the women is the extended family, usually involving grandparents, aunts and adult cousins who live around them and help with minding the children. This was quite common in instances where the husband had to attend to the farm or family and community obligations. The women related that this is not a major concern due to the family systems in Fiji, where family members look out for each other, similar to the case of Bali (Cukier & Norris, 1996).

The roles of the two government departments, DoW and DoT, outlined in Chapter 5, show their assistance is not only for the rural Indigenous women, but women in general and tourism assistance for all—men and women alike. One form of assistance from DoW is the income-generating projects, which is exclusive to rural women’s support groups. Such initiatives, according to the department, aim to enable women to be self-sustaining and this in turn provides economic empowerment for the women. Moreover, some of these projects involve equipping women with new skills, such as sewing and poultry farming. Another initiative by the department is in partnership with commercial banks to provide financial literacy for women who already have a micro-enterprise business or who are in the process of planning one. While this has been conducted in some parts of Fiji, the maritime areas of Fiji (which Taveuni falls in) have not been covered mainly because the banks have not reached out to these areas (DoW, personal communication, May 8, 2015). This is one downside to this financial literacy project by the department and banks. If this project is implemented throughout Fiji, it would greatly benefit many—especially those on Taveuni who already have micro-businesses or have plans to operate one. The knowledge of financial literacy will further enhance all levels of the women’s empowerment.

DoT provides assistance to anyone who approaches the department for assistance in tourism-based enterprises and meets all its guideline criteria. The majority are Indigenous Fijians as they have access to and have ownership of land and marine resources. The types of assistance provided currently are directing interested individuals to relevant government and private sector agencies with regards to resource use approvals, business registrations, financial and marketing assistance. From the years 2000–2008, the department gave out grants to Indigenous Fijians to help establish ecotourism projects in their communities. According to
the department representative, a good number of Indigenous Fijian women took advantage of this opportunity and developed accommodation and restaurants. To date, only a few of the female recipients’ tourism businesses established from the grant are still in operation, while the majority of the projects, including those of male recipients, have collapsed (DoT, personal communication, May 10, 2015). Currently, through partnerships with other government departments and agencies, DoT carries out small workshops which include marketing training in certain destination areas. While this action is positive, it still does not extend to areas like Taveuni, which is a drawback because usually the locations of these workshops require travelling away from the island and such costs are too much for interested individuals.

Another initiative which has been discontinued by the department, mainly due to the lack of resources, is the tourism community awareness programme. According to the department this was always a successful programme, as they reached out to all tourism areas in Fiji, and was favoured and well attended by the Indigenous communities. In such awareness programmes, presentations covered general aspects of tourism, from what it is all about, the positives and negatives, and how it can develop communities. Also in these outreach meetings, the communities were not only better informed about the nature of the industry and tourism-related businesses but they allowed the communities to raise concerns and issues such as training opportunities. Such forums, as suggested by Sofield (2003), are vital as they empower indigenous local communities to make informed decisions for the sustainability of their tourism businesses. Regardless of the current training available through DoT, the women and men involved in Taveuni tourism feel that they have been neglected, as no training takes place on the island now. In response to this urgency from Taveuni, the department admitted a lack of resources—manpower and funds—as the main limitation. The demand by the locals of Taveuni for government to provide training to upskill resonates with the philosophies of Scheyvens (2002) and Yahaya and Yahaya (2014), in which governments and their agencies can play a vital role in administering or arranging appropriate training. Some of the most sought-after training areas carried out by the department and identified by the women were micro-business start-up skills, management and marketing proficiencies. These training topics have also being identified by Scheyvens (2002) as the main areas governments can assist in.

6.3 Implications of the Study
The findings from this thesis will be useful to the study participants; the female participants, their spouses, the communities which they live in and to the stakeholders—especially the
government departments, but also to Fiji and other interested parties who work for the empowerment of women. This study, besides discovering the impacts of tourism on the lives of the women, their families and communities, has also uncovered how important the support of the family and community units is to fostering the empowerment of women. As the results indicate, the impact of an empowered woman brings about positive ripple effects in the society in which she lives. Furthermore, for a tourist destination which receives a mere 2% (Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism, 2016) of tourists to its shores, the large impacts created by this small percentage of tourists to the island on its people and their livelihoods are worth acknowledging. The destructive tropical cyclone Winston in February 2016, which caused massive devastation on Taveuni, further underlines the importance of tourism employment in providing an alternative source of family revenue to an otherwise agricultural-based economy.

The talanoas from the women on their involvement, including the positive and negative impacts, are relevant to previous studies done in other communities involved with tourism in Fiji (Gibson, 2013; King & Milman, 1993; Movono, 2012; Movono, Pratt, & Harrison, 2015). The unique feature of this study though, is how the involvement of women brings about empowerment, which currently lacks research attention in the context of Fiji and the South Pacific region generally. These findings then have the potential to provide a benchmark where stakeholders—government, communities, women, spouses, employers and possible investors—can examine these outcomes and design systems and processes to further reinforce and/or improve this outcome of tourism employment, including addressing disempowerment issues.

The support demonstrated by spouses, as explained by the women, is the motivating force in enabling them to enjoy their work. For a traditional society where men are dominant in every aspect of family and community units, the results showcase the shifting of roles and the minimal ‘destruction’ effects such shifts have on the various units the women are involved in. In order for other male spouses to mirror the support shown in this study it is critical that they have a well-informed understanding of the nature of tourism work and for couples to have a trusting relationship. Such efforts will need to involve other players, such as community leaders and government through community awareness programmes to negotiate and navigate these efforts. With this support system in place, not only will the families and communities be strengthened but, at a national level, women’s productivity will be hugely endorsed, resulting in maximum outputs for the industry as a whole. In the example of Fiji, its Attorney-
General raised concerns and stated that respect for women is the responsibility of everyone—especially when they are the largest group of employees in the tourism industry, which is Fiji’s largest economic revenue earner (Rawalai, 2016). Furthermore, when the respect for, and value of, women increases it helps to level the gender playing field, in terms of pay and position opportunities (Duffy et al., 2015; Duffy et al., 2012; Ferguson, 2011; World Tourism Organization, 2011).

Indigenous communities that are heavily engaged in tourism may find the results from this study useful in terms of the empowerment indicators, not only for the women but the communities as a whole. The outcomes experienced by the women can be used to compare and contrast against the community’s current practices and allow community members to either pay more attention to what may be actions of disempowerment or relook at current practices and explore ways to improve them. In paying attention to these indicators, communities can then identify weak links which need improvement and address areas which are being neglected. For instance, if women are not encouraged to speak at village meetings or if their suggestions are evaded the village headman, or whomever is chairing the meeting, can encourage women to speak out and, in the same way, appoint women to the various committees the village has. Through these exercises, both men and women are empowering each other and in turn have access to a wider scope of information and options which will effectively assist them in pursuing sustainable village development or tourism involvement (Scheyvens, 2002).

Many individuals and communities alike rely on the government for their involvement and assistance to help them in development projects. This study equips the relevant departments with recent findings on the impacts of women’s tourism employment; moreover, it informs them of the issues currently experienced by the women, which are highly likely to be similar in all communities involved in tourism.
The issues identified by the participants in this study are a good platform to establish groundwork for not-too-distant outreach and awareness programmes. Preliminary findings have been made known to the two government departments, as their interviews were conducted after the women’s; encouragingly, these were received with much enthusiasm for this work had updated them on pressing matters encountered by those in usually ‘neglected’ tourism areas. Furthermore, this also reduced pending research work, often never eventuating because of unavailable resources. With the knowledge of community needs, relevant authorities can propose legislation, grants and collaborations with other stakeholders to meet the identified needs. As highlighted by the women, their greatest need is training and upskilling, and if this issue is addressed at the earliest convenience the women will be well equipped to achieve high levels of productivity. It must be added that attention should be paid to the types of training which are relevant to the nature of work and tourism businesses at hand. For example, CBT operations require skills in marketing, e-marketing and general computer literacy as this adds value to their business. Women working in mainstream tourist operations will find upskilling in bar services, guest relations and housekeeping as examples more applicable to them. Once these are accomplished, the positive spin-off then converts to better services, satisfied guests, good publicity for Taveuni tourism, high occupancy rates for accommodation businesses, ongoing employment for the women and sustained livelihoods; in general, it is a win-win situation at the family, community and the national levels. The second concern at hand, although not experienced by all the women, is the attitude of the owners of the establishment they work in. As highlighted in Chapter 5, a few of the foreign owners create an uncomfortable and unpleasant work environment because of the harsh and unfriendly attitudes they express towards the staff. Such concerns can be addressed through the community awareness programmes, educating employees of the steps to follow should they have grievances against their employers which are within the boundaries of the law. The departments can also get in touch with relevant agencies that deal with employment grievances to address these matters which could be detrimental to an individual’s employment.

Reflecting on the stories of some women in this study, who came across unfavourable experiences with their hotel managers: if employees are constantly suppressed and ‘bullied’ then the unhappiness encountered at work will be channelled to those at home, and thus will be a contributing factor to family disharmony. In the worst cases, employees resign or are terminated, which in turn puts strain on the family. Ultimately, a supportive management structure is key in economic empowerment (Said-Allsopp & Tallontire, 2015).
In addition, the overlapping of the four levels of empowerment, as encountered in this study, again puts into perspective the positive economic and social outcomes of tourism employment, which reinforces the need for stakeholders—especially government—to take notice of, as the impacts are widespread. The overlapping of empowerment experienced by the women in this study is reflected in the succinct statement expressed by Kabeer (2012):

…the conceptualisation of empowerment that informs this (research) touches on many different aspects of change in women’s lives, each important in themselves, but also in their inter-relationships with other aspects. It touches on women’s sense of self-worth and social identity; their willingness and ability to question their subordinate status and identity; their capacity to exercise strategic control over their own lives and renegotiate their relationships with others who matter to them; and their ability to participate on equal terms with men in reshaping the societies in which they live in ways that contribute to a more and just democratic distribution of power and possibilities. (Kabeer, 2008, cited in Kabeer, 2012, p. 8)

This research was conducted with the heavy influence of an Indigenist framework, the VRF, developed by an Indigenous Fijian academic (Nabobo-Baba, 2006), which was culturally appropriate for both the researcher and the participants. With me as an Indigenous community member of the study area, employing this framework gave power to the Indigenous participants to own their stories, often stressed by Indigenist researchers (Nabobo-Baba, 2008; Smith, 1999). It also alludes to the fact that studying indigenous communities, researchers—in particular Western researchers—must acknowledge and conform to the methods of attaining indigenous knowledge if they seek full participation and true deliberations from locals.

Suffice it to say, it is encouraging to find non-indigenous researchers employing indigenous-based ontologies and epistemologies while studying indigenous communities. For instance, Holmes, Grimwood and King (2016), who are white researchers, collaborated with the Lutsel K’è Dene First Nation communities in Canada’s northern territories. Otsuka (2005), a Japanese higher-degree research scholar adopted the Indigenous Fijian research method in his dissertation fieldwork when studying Indigenous Fijian high school students. Russell-Mundine (2010), another white researcher, in collaboration with the Indigenous Jubal community in Bundjalung Country in Northern New South Wales, used indigenous methods associated with Bundjalung Country to carry out her doctoral dissertation fieldwork. Addinsall et al. (2016), also white Australian researchers and academics, used participatory
research methods, such as community discussions and smaller group discussions or ‘storian’, like talanoa, with marginal groups of rural Vanuatu (p. 82). Additionally, Nielsen and Wilson (2012), both non-indigenous authors, are contributing to raising attention “to the continuing need for Indigenous voice and self-determination” in their critical typology of research in indigenous tourism discussion (p. 73). Russell-Mundine (2012) offers a reflection on the reflexivity of non-indigenous researchers and whether this contributes to the “decolonising and reframing of research” in the indigenous research context (p. 85).

This discussion chapter has revealed how vital tourism employment is for Taveuni, a destination that receives only a very small percentage of the national tourist numbers. Through tourism employment women contribute significantly to the positive welfare of their families, which further extends to the communities they live and serve in. Moreover, through their employment, another benefit they have gained is their empowerment, which has resulted in shifts in traditional and social roles. While many of these shifts have been supported by their families, especially their spouses, it remains a challenge at the community level for some women. This is due largely to the traditional structures in place and how the dominant gender—men—are responding to these changes, often resisting (Al Mazro‘ei & Shaw, 2014; Annes & Wright, 2015; Mosedale, 2005). Although the women acknowledged that their communities are steeped in traditional values, their main interest is to be given an opportunity to be heard. Their intentions are focused on the betterment of everyone in their village—not just their own livelihoods and families.

It is important to note that this study has not been heavily influenced by feminism theories, but intends to draw attention to the realities and experiences of women, particularly indigenous members, that every situation is different and has the tendency to be highly governed by their “sociocultural and socioeconomic statuses [and values]” (Duffy et al., 2012, p. 800), such as ethnicity, education level and religion, and that these need to be considered when conducting research.
Chapter 7 - Conclusions and Recommendations

This study has explored how tourism has impacted and empowered iTaukei women in rural settings—in this case, the island of Taveuni. The study has also understood how tourism has assisted in developing indigenous communities. For most developing and less developed countries, and particularly in Fiji, tourism is advocated for its economic benefits, and as an avenue whereby indigenous communities can progress and develop (Harrison, 1992, 2001; Rao, 2002; Scheyvens, 2002; Scheyvens & Russell, 2012). Although Taveuni receives an average of less than 10,000 tourists per annum, or 2% of Fiji’s total tourist numbers (MITT, 2016), tourism’s importance to the island’s economy cannot be overlooked. Tourism provides an alternative source of income for a heavily agricultural-based economy. This conclusion chapter revisits the overall aims and findings of the study, the limitations encountered during the study and, finally, ideas for future research and action.

7.1 Taveuni Women’s Tourism Employment Experience

The overall aim of this study was to explore the ways in which tourism employment has impacted the lives of iTaukei women on Taveuni, with an in-depth focus on whether the women have been empowered through this employment. As the results and discussion chapters have outlined, the women have benefited significantly and are appreciative of the opportunities tourism employment has presented to them. Some of the key benefits include: improved livelihoods through a steady flow of income; education support for their children; better-quality housing; improved competency in the English language; attaining new skills; meeting family, village and religious monetary obligations; and increased levels of self-esteem and confidence. While there have been many positive impacts attributed to tourism employment, the women also identified negative impacts.

7.2 Participation and Involvement in Tourism

This study shows how the iTaukei women on Taveuni have found significant employment in the hotels, dive shops and CBT initiatives. Additionally, there were more female than male employees in all the establishments these women worked in. This supports statements by UNWTO and the Fiji Government that women occupy the majority of the jobs in the tourism industry, particularly in the hotel and restaurant sectors (Bola-Bari, 2015; World Tourism Organization, 2011). However, in all cases, the women’s roles remain at the bottom of the ‘pyramid’, much in the same way as reported by researchers who have studied women’s tourism employment in developing countries (Apostolopoulos & Sonmez, 2001; Cukier, 2002;
Duffy et al., 2012; Ferguson, 2010; Wilkinson & Pratiwi, 1995). Similar to recent publications by the UN outlining women still facing inequalities in the labour market in terms of pay and positions (United Nations, 2015b), the findings from the Taveuni women provide evidence of such statements.

Although the average period of employment in tourism for the 18 women was 11.5 years, only two have held managerial and supervisory positions. One of the participants was manager for their CBT lodge for a year before taking on the position of treasurer. The second is currently a supervisor in the kitchen. Another was head of housekeeping, although very briefly, before resigning to relocate; presently she is in another property but is not officially a supervisor, even though the owners/managers rely quite extensively on her abilities. For those who have had more than five years of work, they felt that because the size of their hotel was ‘relatively small’ the owners took on the responsibility of overseeing every aspect of the hotel. Nevertheless, some of the women usually acted as mentors to new employees. It must be noted that this study did not include employers’ insights, presenting an area for future research.

7.2.1 Tourism benefits and issues

As indicated in Section 6.1, the overall responses on tourism employment benefits and issues for the women was similar for all who were part of this study. All the female respondents attributed their affordability of comfortable living standards, education, improved housing, and financial obligations to the family, village and church as being achieved through tourism employment. They expressed that securing tourism employment was a much better alternative to being unemployed or working in agriculture. Moreover, the women also acknowledged stronger social connections, economic independence and an increase in confidence and self-esteem, all resulting from their involvement with tourism. These new attained self-qualities have created positive ‘trickle down effects’, as they are able to reach out and assist other family members and their communities in general.

The negative impacts spoken of among the women were most notably the loss of family time and miscommunication with spouses. Both of these were associated with the nature of tourism and hospitality work, involving long hours and shift work. As a result, the women—who are also all mothers—do not spend enough time with their children and family. The negative impact between spouses was often related to miscommunication. This was mainly due to unscheduled, extended working hours or when tasks which had already been agreed upon were not carried out at home. The women also disclosed their spouses were not jealous of their
work, contrary to the works highlighted by some scholars (Burns, 1993; Chant, 2002; Duffy et al., 2012; Ferguson, 2010). For example, Burns (1993) notes men of a certain hotel in Fiji, developed jealous feelings of their wives because the women had been promoted into positions of power and responsibilities in the same hotel. Additionally, misunderstandings, miscommunication or disagreements related to work were usually solved by couples in their own way, but such incidents were never too major, never leading to abuse, constant quarrelling or family separation.

These findings go against the results recorded by Gibson (2013) in her study of Indigenous Fijian communities heavily involved in tourism in a popular tourist destination. Her findings showed that conflicts turned violent between spouses as a result of the changes in traditional roles. The women on Taveuni concluded that, like any other marital relations, disagreements were part of the nature of such relationships. These findings contradict study conclusions that the nature of tourism employment, which is shift work, causes high levels of disagreements which could further escalate to divorce (White & Keith, 1990).

7.2.2 Empowerment and disempowerment levels

The findings show high levels of economic, social, political and psychological empowerment experienced by the iTaukei women on Taveuni as a result of their tourism employment. In addition to the key positive impacts previously identified, the women added that, because of their tourism employment, their self-worth has been heightened through the following: economic independence; decision-making opportunities; increased social connections; being equipped with skills which are then transferred in their homes, communities and social groups; and an increased desire to become entrepreneurs through micro-business schemes. Moreover, the empowerment levels experienced by the Taveuni women participants also indicated overlapping aspects, which have been highlighted throughout Chapter 6. This is an aspect of empowerment that further contributes positive stance to women empowerment, as supported by Kabeer (2012).

As discussed in Section 6.2.1, having access to money has enabled the women to develop entrepreneurial ambitions. This is in addition to providing for their families and communities. A few of the women had already established their businesses, while others have a desire to become future entrepreneurs. The women who have their micro-businesses in operation, though not tourism-related, revealed that income from the business has supplemented their income and advanced their position within and outside of their domestic sphere, as indicated
by some scholars (Peeters & Ateljevic, 2009). A few of the women have also been able to employ family and community members, though on a casual basis, to work on their farms. By employing these individuals the women are further ‘trickling’ the tourism dollar effectively. The findings also show increased levels of economic empowerment have created a domino effect to being socially and psychologically empowered.

The ability to interact with other cultures and individuals, and exchange ideas and stories, is also a strong positive impact of tourism employment. The women felt that through these exchanges they are more in-tune with and have a broader, well-informed view of the world. Additionally, by joining social groups the female participants are able to share knowledge and skills from their work for the betterment of the clubs. For instance, sharing catering and budgeting skills, suggesting fundraising initiatives and being mentors for other women. Some of the women have gone on to hold leadership roles for the various clubs and led using ideas learnt from work. However, some of the women have come across hindrances to joining groups, citing incompatible ideas and principles from other club members as reasons for disassociating themselves from such groups.

The women also demonstrated political empowerment through their ability to attend and be vocal in family and village meetings; these include holding decision-making roles in their villages, CBT initiatives and at work. Moreover, most of the women relayed that most of the decisions regarding their family are shared, even though, most of the times, the final say falls on them. Through their participation in village meetings the women indicated that most of their suggestions are considered and even implemented and this has also contributed to heightened respect for them from the villagers. This involvement demonstrates changes and challenges to the social system norms and structures the women operate in, as mirrored by other researchers (Al Mazro'eI & Shaw, 2014; Annes & Wright, 2015; Çiçek, Zencir, & Kozak, 2017; Scheyvens, 2000; Swain, 1995; Tosun, 2000). Nevertheless, some women have experienced levels of disempowerment, particularly involving village and board meetings concerning CBT affairs. This occurs because most of these meetings are male-dominated. The women have faced many objections and are oppressed at times because the men are not open to their suggestions and reject them. The reactions from the male counterparts reflect and emphasise obstacles that traditional institutions have in decision-making processes in local communities (Farrelly, 2011; Sofield, 2003).
The key areas of psychological empowerment for the women are associated with increased levels of self-confidence, self-esteem and pride. These key features are the outcomes of factors including: improved English communication skills, acquiring new skills and knowledge through attending workshops and training, and supportive spouses and family members in the areas of domestic roles and child-rearing. Furthermore, the spill-over positive impacts ensure their children have progressive life opportunities that may not have otherwise been possible, such as attaining education levels surpassing their parents. The women have also developed the habit of sharing interesting stories learnt from their guests, especially cultural exchange stories. These outcomes are similar to those found in studies by Morais et al., (2005) of women in Yunnan Province, China, where women and children broadened their knowledge learning about different cultures through tourism work. Perhaps one profound spill-over benefit has been their courage to further expand into entrepreneurial activities. Such aspirations have also been highlighted by Peeters and Ateljevic (2009) in their study of female empowerment through entrepreneurship.

All of the Taveuni women experienced levels of disempowerment in the workplace, and all were linked to the work environments created by the owners/managers. For instance, many of the hotels do not have staff meetings or avenues where the employees can approach their employers to raise their grievances. Secondly, there is a noted lack of training opportunities available for the employees. Such issues and responsibilities rest not only on the employers but also with other stakeholders, namely the government, to provide these; moreover, the employers must take the initiative and raise the need for such training with the relevant authorities.

7.2.3 Taveuni women’s empowerment support system
The women of Taveuni in this study acknowledged their empowerment was accomplished through the support of their spouses, communities and other institutions such as religion. This supports statements made by scholars suggesting that women’s empowerment “does not exist in a vacuum but is conditioned by culture, religion and other social constructs within which it is sought” (Nwosu, 2014, p. 65). The heightening of empowerment through spousal support has also been identified in study areas of Ecuador and Botswana, where the men took on domestic chores while their wives were at work (Duffy et al., 2012; Moswete & Lacey, 2015). Additionally, village headmen and influential male figures in the communities revealed that contributions made by women are usually well thought out and propel community development. One of the turaga ni koro (village headman) commented that he has experienced
a weakening of the village systems when support from the women is lacking, further stating that women’s contributions are always valuable.

This study shows external support is vital for women’s empowerment. The two external support systems in this study were not specifically focused on iTaukei women in tourism employment in rural communities, but on the welfare of women in general. DoT, as of late, has not been ‘active’ in the studied area; however, the concerns raised by the women in this study have been made known to them. DoW is also not physically present in Taveuni. Nevertheless, its advocacy work in terms of creating awareness of women’s issues, such as access to health services, elimination of violence against women and women and the law are delivered to the women of the study areas through a local women’s support group.

Women’s empowerment and disempowerment levels identified in this study illustrate the significant role tourism employment has in achieving such milestones. Besides economic benefits, social changes are evident—especially in the decision-making processes of such a patrilineal society. While some of these changes have been met with some resistance, the women continue to challenge these existing norms to effectively improve not only their wellbeing, but that of those around them as well (Swain & Wallentin, 2008). The argument of whether these social changes are positive or negative rests entirely on the perspective of the onlooker.

Looking through various lenses will provide different aspects; for instance, through cultural lenses, these changes could be perceived as negative as they may go against the traditional status quo, whereas the development and gender lenses will regard these changes as development and a step in a positive direction. There are two sides to such a dilemma as illustrated in this study. First, the local communities must be well informed by stakeholders on the nature of tourism and its impacts on them in terms of employment, interactions, traditional settings and values. Once they fully understand this, they should be able to decide on rigid areas within their cultural norms which may need flexibility.

A good starting point is analysing the impacts these women have had on their communities since working in the industry. Instead of suppressing their ideas and their representation in committees, as this study has shown, women have made notable, well-intended suggestions which have been implemented and brought favourable progress for the communities. For the
overall prosperity of the communities, members (the men in particular) need to move away from the patrilineal system, which has been the iTaukei way, and encourage more women into such forums. Second, external systems, in this case stakeholders (such as the government, NGOs, foreign investors and researchers) ought to be mindful and respectful of local traditions, norms and values, and engage in thorough consultation so that locals are better informed, thus enhancing appropriate decision-making (Boley, Ayscue, Maruyama, & Woosnam, 2017; Boley et al., 2014; Holmes, Grimwood, & King, 2016; Scheyvens, 2002; Scheyvens & Momsen, 2008; Sofield, 2003; Wilkinson & Pratiwi, 1995).

7.3 Limitations to the Study
The findings from this study add recent perspectives to the understanding of women’s employment and empowerment in tourism in the context of Fiji. However, there are some limitations which must be made known.

Firstly, this study only explored perceptions of empowerment in relation to women of a particular ethnicity and place. The empowerment of men, women of other ethnicities in Fiji and women in more established tourism regions have not been considered. These unexplored variables most certainly might affect or help explain perceptions of empowerment across the various tourism regions of Fiji. Future studies could explore the complexities of how ethnicity, gender and tourism regions combine to provide better perceptions overall of women’s empowerment through tourism. Furthermore, the study focus was on a single developing country; thus, it would be of interest to carry out similar studies on other developing nations that share comparable features, such as neighbouring South Pacific island countries. This would affirm (or otherwise) previous literature investigating gender and empowerment within developing countries (Duffy et al., 2015; Ferguson & Alarcón, 2015; Ling, Wu, Park, Shu, & Morrison, 2013; Scheyvens, 2000; Tucker & Boonabaana, 2012).

Secondly, gender and empowerment variances are inevitably interconnected to race, ethnicity and class factors, in addition to traditional societal norms, rules and values (Gibson, 2001; Tosun, 2006). This current study has shown this interconnectedness through the women’s voices, highlighting their disempowerment as a result of traditional patriarchal customs.

7.4 Contribution to the Literature
The findings from this study have contributed to gaps in the literature on impacts of tourism in local communities in the context of small island developing states and in Fiji particularly.
More importantly, the study helps update and build literature on women’s contribution to their communities through tourism employment, in addition to how this industry fosters and assists the empowerment of Indigenous Fijian women in rural communities.

These findings have also strengthened previous work on empowerment through tourism in Fijian Indigenous communities, although empowerment was not the focus of their research (Gibson, 2013; Movono, 2012). Moreover, this study has demonstrated the overlapping of empowerment levels which exist in correlation to each other, as discussed in Chapter 6. These results have also re-emphasised preceding research findings that the empowerment of women is not achieved alone but through the support of external factors, which include spouses, community members, religious values, tourism employers, the government and NGOs (Hutchison & McGill, 1995; Pleno, 2006; Ramos & Prideaux, 2014; Said-Allsopp & Tallontire, 2015; Sofield, 2003). Finally, this study has further built on reports disclosed by other scholars who have recognised the relationship between tourism and the shifts in traditional and social roles (Al Mazro'ei & Shaw, 2014; Cukier & Norris, 1996; Flacke-Neudorfer, 2007; Gibson, 2001; Ruliang et al., 2014; Scheyvens, 2002; Simons & de Groot, 2015).

7.5 Recommendations for Future Research and Actions

Through this research I have come to realise and understand the passive and sometimes inadequate awareness of tourism impacts on indigenous communities and especially on women, who are the majority of employees in Fiji’s tourism industry (Rawalai, 2016). Furthermore, this study has also identified the need for more active and focused collaborations between stakeholders in destinations where local communities are vigorously engaged with tourism and who rely on the industry to sustain their livelihoods. In an effort to bridge this gap, a few ideas to provide the groundwork for future research are outlined below.

More studies need to be undertaken on both the positive and negative impacts of tourism; this is especially important in the context of indigenous communities, where their traditional, cultural and religious values have become tourism ‘products’ in themselves. Such studies would then highlight the weak areas and links which could then be addressed to minimise the negative impacts and maximise the benefits for Indigenous Fijian communities.

More ‘gender-aware research’ (Henderson & Gibson, 2013; Kinnaird & Hall, 2000; Moswete & Lacey, 2015; Swain, 1995) should focus on the empowerment of both Indigenous Fijian
men and women involved in tourism, or why women may feel more disempowered or are not able to reach their empowerment potential. It should then expand to other ethnic groups, such as Indo-Fijians, with the results of the different ethnic groups compared and contrasted to find out areas of empowerment and the causes of disempowerment. These findings can then enable various stakeholders to learn from each other. Similarly, studies as outlined in the previous points ought to be conducted throughout the South Pacific region. This will not only be helpful to each of the country’s various stakeholders but also strengthen the literature base of this under-studied region.

Finally, the government, through its various ministries and departments, must take on a more proactive role in its research departments and carry out the abovementioned research areas. In cases where this is impossible due to strained resources, collaboration with tertiary institutions in Fiji would be a strong opportunity. Aside from a better-informed government, the results from such studies will provide better policy recommendations and the institutions who carry out the studies will assist in developing the nation in addition to enhancing their research outputs.

However, for the successful implementation of the abovementioned recommendations, it is vital that Indigenous community members are a central part of these studies, being involved in the planning, development and implementing stages. This is to ensure that their concerns are heard and addressed, and cultural traditions, values, norms and protocols are respected and followed. As Sofield and Birtles (1996) elaborate in their ‘Indigenous Peoples’ Cultural Opportunity Spectrum for Tourism’, an approach needs to be designed to ensure:

…that indigenous communities have ownership of a database from which to reach an informed decision about … decision making for change, implementation of those planned changes, and subsequent management of the resources—or alternatively rejection of change. (p. 402)

In the context of Fiji, this will fulfil the sixth point of the VRF, which indicates that local people must be part of the research setting as a means to build local capacity and which will in turn benefit the research community in multiple ways (Nabobo-Baba, 2008). Furthermore, non-indigenous researchers suggest that using ‘community-based’ approaches is now becoming a “growing realisation that localised cooperation, trust and networking are essential ingredients in providing the right conditions for successful tourism development outcomes”
Additionally, non-indigenous researchers who have adopted ‘community-based’ methodology approaches when studying indigenous local communities affirm the receptiveness and cooperation to the studies by the communities (Addinsall et al., 2016; Hillmer-Pegram, 2016; Otsuka, 2005; Zeppel, 2006). These researchers in turn gravely support such an approach.

It is with genuine hope and optimism that, as a result of the abovementioned research findings, the government will respond positively to the recommendations suggested by this study and lead the progressive steps needed to assist local communities and enable the ‘tourism industry wealth’ of Fiji to be spread out across all the regions of the nation and not just across a select few. It is the government’s responsibility to its people to perform these duties, for it continues to brandish that tourism is the country’s largest revenue earner and employer.

From the results of this study, some ideas for action are presented. To begin with, through the Fijian Government’s tourism department, the immediate revitalisation of its tourism community awareness programmes is paramount. Engagement with the local communities on the nature of the tourism industry must be reinforced and include: its impacts on the local communities; the characteristics of tourism employment, together with its advantages and disadvantages; the shifts in social and traditional structures it may cause; and the indirect opportunities, which could be available as a result of government involvement. It must also be noted that there must be some degree of ‘flexibility’ with the approaches these external partners bring to the communities, for total removal of societal and social barriers is not an easy task; “since participatory capacity cannot be built like a road or dam; it must be developed” (Tosun, 2006, p. 503).

More importantly, the government must be patient and honest in answering the questions and needs of the communities. In these forums, government must also educate locals on the avenues available if they feel they are being unfairly treated by their employers and must assure them that taking their employers to task will not have major repercussions. As clearly shown from this study, many of the women were unfairly treated, such as being harshly spoken to and turned away if they wanted to sort out their grievances.

Secondly, the local communities who are already involved with tourism activities must be encouraged to have regular discussions amongst themselves about the benefits and negative
impacts tourism engagement has brought to their communities. In these forums they could list these and provide solutions on how to minimise the negative impacts, while still being able to respect their culture and traditional values.

Thirdly, the government must relook at its current policies and processes in relation to encouraging Indigenous communities, women in particular, to access financial and training support. This study has revealed how many of the women aspire to become micro-business entrepreneurs, yet face barriers due to a lack of capital and technical training assistance.

Finally, the government must establish policies or tighten up such policies (if they exist) to ensure mandatory ‘Introduction to Indigenous Fijian culture and people’ sessions to foreign business owners and employers, who will be engaging with locals on a daily basis. This will enable these foreign employers to better understand the iTaukei cultural norms and values, this in turn will minimise misunderstandings and misinterpretations of cultural norms, which lead to the harsh and negative actions highlighted in this study.

This thesis has contributed to a more nuanced understanding of the positive and negative impacts of tourism employment, and empowerment and disempowerment levels of iTaukei women involved in tourism in rural Taveuni communities. Through the voices of the women in Taveuni and members of their communities, the findings show that tourism has indeed been a vehicle for a magnitude of positive changes and empowerment for these women. The recommendations identified are in response to the challenges these women face; it is hoped that by bringing these to the attention of the concerned stakeholders achievable solutions and collaborations can be realised for a prosperous tourism future.
Reference List


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Scheyvens, R., & Russell, M. (2010). Sharing the riches of tourism summary report - Fiji. School of People, Environment and Planning: Massey University, NZ.


Appendix 1

Guiding questions for the *talanoa* with the women, community and the government departments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. To identify the ways Indigenous Fijian women are involved in tourism on Taveuni island, including the positive and negative impacts of such work.</th>
<th>Involvement in tourism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Which sector of the industry do you work in: accommodation, restaurant &amp; bar, tour guiding?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What role do you currently hold in tourism?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Have you worked in the tourism industry for long?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Have you worked in other areas of tourism?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. To explore and understand the forms of empowerment these women have achieved through their work in tourism.</th>
<th>Economic Empowerment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>From your employment in tourism, can you tell me:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The sorts of things your pay is used for?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Does work in tourism allow you to afford discretionary items?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Do you hold a personal bank account?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Can you make financial decisions which you couldn’t do before?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Who makes financial decisions in your family?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Do you have any control over the money you earn?</td>
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<th></th>
<th>Political Empowerment</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Do you attend extended families’/village meetings?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Are you given the opportunity to speak at meetings? Was this always the situation or has it been recent?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• If you speak at these meetings, are your suggestions given consideration or implemented?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Who makes financial decisions in your family?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Do you have any control over the money you earn?</td>
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<th></th>
<th>Social Empowerment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Are you a member of a group/club in your village?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What is the purpose of the group/club?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• How does the group/club help and/or contribute to the community?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Apart from the group/club, what roles do you have in your community?</td>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Psychological Empowerment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Have you received any training for your role in tourism?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• In what ways have you felt that you have developed personally as a result of your work in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
tourism? e.g. Are you more confident to speak to guests, comfortable to speak out in meetings, learnt about other cultures, improvement in your communications skills?
- Has your work helped you to developed new skills? Can you explain please?
- How are you feeling about the development of these new skills?
- Will these new skills help you outside of your work? In what ways?
- In what ways do your spouse and family members show their appreciation and respect for you since you’re now working?
- Do you hold a position of responsibility in the workplace such as a leadership/ supervisory role? Please explain.
- How do you feel about holding this role?
- Do you experience respect from your co-workers and employers in your work and role? Any criticism?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. To understand how stakeholders and the community have assisted or constrained Indigenous Fijian women’s empowerment through tourism.</th>
<th>Stakeholders’ Perception</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. <strong>Community members</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Do you support the women to work? Why or why not?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What roles do these women play in the village?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Do the women speak in village meetings?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• In what ways have the women contributed significantly to the village development? Please explain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. <strong>Government ministries</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What are your roles in the area of women in the tourism industry?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Are there any specific areas that are directed to Indigenous Fijian women?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What does your ministry do to enable the empowerment of women in general and Indigenous Fijian women working in the tourism industry?</td>
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Appendix 2

INFORMATION SHEET – The participants on Taveuni (internal participants)

My name is Patricia Bibi and I am currently a Masters by research student at Southern Cross University. Part of my research is to find out whether tourism has enabled the empowerment of Indigenous Fijian women. This study seeks to explore if and how women are empowered through working in the tourism industry on Taveuni. As you work in this industry, I am hoping you would agree to participate in this study by being interviewed.

Name of the Project
Tourism, Indigenous Women and Empowerment: A case study of Taveuni.

What does this research involve?
This research will involve in-depth interviews, which will occur for over an hour and at a time that suits you. You will be divided into small ‘talanoa’ groups of between 3-5 members. I hope to have these interviews in your home, or anywhere you find most comfortable. If you do not wish to be part of this talanoa group, you can let me know and I will separately interview you. The interviews will be conducted at an agreed time and will be audio recorded only after you give permission to do so. There will be a set of predetermined questions used to guide the interviews so that related data can be collected for the study. It is hoped that data from this study can provide valuable insight on the positive social impacts of tourism in the Fijian context. None of the information gathered during the interview will be publicly made available to identify you. Pseudonyms will be used to protect your identity.

Topics which may be covered in your interview:
1. The period of time and the various areas you have worked in the tourism industry.
2. The sorts of things you have been able to afford now since your work in the industry.
3. Some community roles which you are involved in within your village.
4. The different skills you have been able to develop as a result of working in the industry and how you feel about learning these new skills.
5. Your views on having your wife, sister or mother work in the tourism industry. If their employment has worked for the good or bad towards the welfare of the family and community.
My role as a researcher

1. I am required to follow the Australian Government National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and University policies and procedures, it is, therefore, my duty to safeguard and protect all information that will be collected from this study.

2. I will honour all agreements made between us regarding confidentiality and will respect your privacy during and after the interviews.

3. I assure you, that I will try to be of minimal distraction to your daily routine.

Your role as a participant

1. Your participation in this study will only proceed once you have read and understood your role outlined in the Consent letter.

2. If at any time during the interview you wish to cease your participation or will not answer a particular question, you may do so.

3. There will be note taking and audio recording during the interview sessions, if you are not comfortable with any recordings, this will be switched off.

Confidentiality

Please be assured that all data collected will be handled in a strictly confidential manner. No material will be published without consent of participants. The researcher will only use information in the final thesis that has been allowed by you. Handwritten notes, transcripts and tapes for interviews will be coded for identification purposes. Furthermore, all these records will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at Southern Cross University for 7 years. For all computer files containing participation information, these will be kept on a password-protected computer to which only the researcher has access.

Freedom of Consent

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you are entitled to withdraw at any time. Should you then wish to withdraw your participation, I would be grateful if you notify me as soon as possible. When you withdraw, all your contributions at the session will be removed from the transcript, and will not be used at all in the thesis or any associated research outputs.

Inquires

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask by contacting me or my research supervisor, and we will be happy to answer any questions you might have.
**Researcher**

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E: p.bibi.10@student.scu.edu.au

**Supervisor**

Dr Erica Wilson  
School of Tourism and Hospitality Management,  
Southern Cross University, NSW 2480  
Ph: +61 2 6620 3151  
E: erica.wilson @scu.edu.au

If you have concerns about the ethical conduct of this research or the researchers, the following procedure should occur.

Write to the following:

The Ethics Complaints Officer  
Southern Cross University  
PO Box 157  
Lismore NSW 2480  
Email: ethics.lismore@scu.edu.au

All complaints are investigated fully and according to due process under the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and this University. All information is confidential and will be handled as soon as possible.
INFORMATION SHEET – The government ministries organisation (external participants)

My name is Patricia Bibi and I am currently a Masters by research student at Southern Cross University. Part of my research is to find out whether tourism has enabled the empowerment of Indigenous Fijian women. This study seeks to explore if and how women are empowered through working in the tourism industry on Taveuni. As you work in this industry, I am hoping you would agree to participate in this study by being interviewed.

Name of the Project
Tourism, Indigenous women and Empowerment: A case study of Taveuni.

What does this research involve?
This research will involve in-depth interviews, which will occur for over an hour and at a time that suits you. The interviews will be conducted at an agreed time and will be audio recorded only after you give permission to do so. There will be a set of predetermined questions used to guide the interviews so that related data can be collected for the study. It is hoped that data from this study can provide valuable insight into the positive social impacts of tourism in the Fijian context. None of the information gathered during the interview will be publicly made available to identify you. Pseudonyms will be used to protect your identity.

Topics which may be covered in your interview

1. The roles your ministry/organisation takes to address the welfare of women working in the tourism industry. These could be in the areas of training and empowerment.

2. The types of assistance you provide for women in the rural areas.

3. Findings relevant to women’s empowerment, especially in Indigenous rural communities.

My role as a researcher

1. I am required to follow the Australian Government National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and University policies and procedures, it is, therefore, my duty to safeguard and protect all information that will be collected from this study.

2. I will honour all agreements made between us regarding confidentiality and will respect your privacy during and after the interviews

3. I assure you, that I will try to be of minimal distraction to your daily routine.
Your role as a participant

1. Your participation in this study will only proceed once you have read and understood your role outlined in the Consent letter.

2. If at any time during the interview, you wish to cease your participation or will not answer a particular question, you may do so.

3. There will be note taking and audio recording during the interview sessions, if you are not comfortable with any recordings, this will be switched off.

Confidentiality

Please be assured that all data collected will be handled in a strictly confidential manner. No material will be published without consent of participants. The researcher will only use information in the final thesis that has been allowed by you. Handwritten notes, transcripts and tapes for interviews will be coded for identification purposes. Furthermore, all these records will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at Southern Cross University for 7 years. For all computer files containing participation information, these will be kept on a password-protected computer to which only the researcher has access.

Freedom of Consent

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary and you are entitled to withdraw at any time. Should you then wish to withdraw your participation, I would be grateful if you notify me as soon as possible. When you withdraw, all your contributions from the session will be removed from the transcript, and not used at all in the thesis or any associate research outputs.

Inquires

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask by contacting me or my research supervisor, and we will be happy to answer any questions you might have.

Researcher

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If you have concerns about the ethical conduct of this research or the researchers, the following procedure should occur.

Write to the following:

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Southern Cross University  
PO Box 157  
Lismore NSW 2480  
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Appendix 3

Consent Form

Consent of Participants

(This consent form is based on the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (National Statement/NS)

NOTE: This consent form will remain with the Southern Cross University researcher for their records.

Title of research project: Tourism, Indigenous Women and Empowerment: A case of Taveuni.

Name of researcher: Patricia Bibi

Tick the box that applies, sign and date and return to the researcher

I agree to take part in the Southern Cross University research project specified above.
Yes ☐ No ☐

I understand the information about my participation in the research project, which has been provided to me by the researcher.
Yes ☐ No ☐

I agree to be interviewed by the researcher.
Yes ☐ No ☐

I agree to allow the interview to be recorded
Yes ☐ No ☐

I agree to make myself available for further interview if required.
Yes ☐ No ☐

I understand that my participation is voluntary and I understand that I can cease my participation at any time.
Yes ☐ No ☐

I understand that my participation in this research will be treated with confidentiality.
Yes ☐ No ☐

I understand that any information that may identify me will be de-identified at the time of analysis of any data.
Yes ☐ No ☐

I understand that no identifying information will be disclosed or published
Yes ☐ No ☐
I understand that all information gathered in this research will be kept confidentially for 7 years at the University. Yes ☐ No ☐

I am aware that I can contact the researchers at any time with any queries.

Their contact details are provided to me.
Yes ☐ No ☐

I understand that this research project has been approved by the SCU Human Research Ethics Committee ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐

Participant name: __________________________________________________________

Participant signature: ______________________________________________________

Date: ______________________

☐ Please tick this box and provide your email or mail address below if you wish to receive a summary of the results:

Email: ________________________________________________________________

Research questions related to the objectives