CULTURE AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN FIJI’S SMALL TOURISM BUSINESS SECTOR

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VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA
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DEDICATION

To Cecilia, Neil and Aman with love
STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Dorasammy R. Rao, declare that I am the sole author of this dissertation and that no other person’s work has been used without acknowledgement, nor has any of the material been submitted wholly or partly for another academic award in any other tertiary or educational institution.

I confirm that this thesis does not exceed 100,000 words (excluding the bibliography).

Dorasammy R. Rao

Date…..15 th August 2004.........................
The roles of culture and entrepreneurial disposition in entrepreneurship have been widely researched. Some researchers have concluded that an individualist culture fosters entrepreneurial disposition and entrepreneurship while a collectivist culture retards them. Others have argued that collectivism does not have much bearing on these two factors. The present research explored entrepreneurship in Fiji’s small tourism business sector by focusing on the roles of cultural values and entrepreneurial disposition displayed by the three ethnic groupings. The question of whether successful Fijian entrepreneurship could develop by a fusion of collectivism and entrepreneurial principles was also explored. Ninety-nine respondents from the private, public and semi-public organisations participated in the qualitative survey and a further sixty-two people participated in the quantitative survey. One hundred and twenty-three students took part in the quantitative component of the research. The results of the qualitative data showed that individualism contributed to the entrepreneurial disposition of entrepreneurs belonging to the Indo-Fijian and Others categories, but the quantitative data produced mixed results. Other significant factors that have influenced entrepreneurship amongst these groups include exposure to good educational facilities, risk-taking skills, hard work and perseverance, sound financial management, ability to raise capital, values of materialism and capitalism, prudent business planning, skills of savings and investment, good management skills, and building investment capital. It was found that Fijian entrepreneurship was considerably impeded by collectivism and associated behaviour, and they showed more success in collective capitalism. Other factors that have stifled Fijian entrepreneurship include poor education, lack of hard work and commitment, poor financial management, absence of material culture, inability to raise venture capital, short term planning perspective, and a lack of ability to save funds for future investment. Students from the three ethnic groupings were found to exhibit different degrees of entrepreneurial disposition, but generally displayed similar values of individualism and collectivism. Based on these findings, a reconceptualised model of entrepreneurship was proposed, which shows the interaction of various specifiable contextual variables which influence entrepreneurship.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation could not have been completed without the assistance provided by a number of individuals and organisations. The author would like to express particular appreciation to the following individuals for their encouragement and suggestions: Ms Tigarea Ifagamalu, Head of Commerce, Fiji Institute of Technology; Mr Sirisena Tennakoon, Lecturer in Management, University of the South Pacific; Mr Sakiusa Bainivalu, Chief Planning Officer, Ministry of National Planning; Mr Ben Waqailiti, Lecturer in Management, University of the South Pacific; Mr Timoci Waqaisavou, Lecturer in Tourism Studies, University of the South Pacific; Dr Ropate Qalo, Head of the School of Social and Economic Development, University of the South Pacific; Ms Sesenieli Tuberi, Head, School of Tourism and Catering Studies, Fiji Institute of Technology; Mr Ilaitia Vuki, Manager, Fiji National Training Council, Nadi Campus; Ms Cathy Guiterrez and Ms Georgette Karagiozis, Administrative Officers, School of Hospitality, Tourism and Marketing, Victoria University.

The researcher wishes to extend his sincere thanks to Professor Bhaskara Rao and Mr Gyaneshwar Rao of the Department of Economics, University of the South Pacific, for providing assistance in analysing quantitative data; to Professors Brian King and Leo Jago, my Principal supervisor and Co-supervisor respectively, who have been a source of profound inspiration, and deserve credit for their patience and meticulous supervision.

The researcher owes a deep gratitude to his wife, Cecilia, for undertaking the arduous task of transcribing the interviews and proof-reading the drafts, and to his son Neil for editing the final draft of this dissertation.

The researcher also would like to thank the management of the University of the South Pacific, Fiji, for granting study leave, as well as all the respondents who took direct part in this research.

Although a number of individuals provided assistance and guidance, this researcher takes personal responsibility for any errors of interpretations or conclusions.
Fiji has been in the world news since May 1987 when the military overthrew the newly elected coalition government headed by an indigenous Prime Minister. Because the majority of members in the government were of Indo-Fijian origin (19 Indo-Fijians, seven Fijians and two Others), political opponents began to unfairly brand this government as being dominated by Indo-Fijians. Under the 1970 Constitution Fiji’s Parliament could only have twenty-two Fijians, twenty-two Indo-Fijians and eight General Electors (people who did not fit into the other two categories), though they may belong to different political parties. In this sense, any threat of domination of the Parliament by Indo-Fijians was not true. In any case, the new government immediately confronted extreme forms of indigenous nationalism. For example, Mr. Apisai Tora, the Fijian nationalist leader advocated civil disobedience campaigns and changes to the 1970 Fiji Constitution to ensure chiefly leadership (Lal, 1990). Tora fulminated against Indo-Fijians:

They ... have tried to blackmail us with economic power. It is becoming Fiji for Fijians now. We took in the Indians which Britain brought us, let them live in peace and harmony and let them make money from our generosity. There has been no single act of reciprocity. They won't learn our language, our customs, join our political parties. It is time for them to pack up and go (quoted in Lal, 1990, p. 188).

In May 2000 when things seemed to be stabilising a ‘civilian coup’ was staged, which led to another military intervention. Since then Fiji has been struggling to achieve constitutional propriety and economic and social stability.

Fiji in 1987 fitted J. S. Furnivall’s meaning of a plural society as ‘comprising two or more elements or social orders which live side by side, yet without mingling, in one political unit’ (quoted in Lal, 1990, p. 1). However, since 1987 there has been greater narrowing of social distance between ‘elements’ in this plural society.

A major cause of Fiji's instability has been inequality of development between the country’s three distinct ethnic groupings. The entrepreneurial achievements of the
immigrant Indo-Fijian community over the past hundred years seem to have bred resentment and jealousy within the Fijian community, even though only 10% of the Indo-Fijians may be classified as rich (Niranjan, personal interview, May 2001). Though Fijians collectively own 87.9% of the total landmass (Daily Post, 7 September 2002), Fijian entrepreneurship is at an 'infant' stage of development. Of the 11,000 registered businesses in Fiji, only 100 are owned by Fijians (Daily Post, 18 December 2001). The economic disparity between Fijians and non-Fijians appeared to be a major contributing factor in the toppling of the two civilian governments.

Indians were brought to Fiji in 1879 to meet labour shortages. Upon completion of 'girmit', many 'coolies' stayed in Fiji, worked hard, acquired property, educated their families and, albeit to varying degrees, prospered. The Fijian chiefs and the colonial authorities viewed the future of Fijians as being best served in a traditional environment. This was incompatible with the development of individual entrepreneurship.

Many researchers attribute the low incidence of Fijian entrepreneurship to their collectivist culture. Opposing this view, other research has suggested that collectivism is not a major barrier to economic achievement and has pointed to economically successful collectivist societies as Japan and China. Admittedly, the Japanese and the Chinese have passed through centuries of commercial orientation, while the Fijian foray into entrepreneurship began only after independence.

The prevailing political and social forces dictate that the Fijians should intensify their engagement with entrepreneurial activities and that affirmative action policies may facilitate in the achievement of this objective. This is however unlikely unless drastic and urgent attitudinal changes occur. Fijian social and economic development will be dependent on the extent to which culture and modernity can be aligned.

Although this study is based on Fiji’s three major ethnic groupings there will be greater discussion on the indigenous Fijians because their share of entrepreneurship is disproportionately low. This needs considerable explanation.
This thesis is divided into eight chapters. Chapter One introduces the research problem and traces the evolution of tourism in Fiji. Chapter Two provides background information on the research problem. Chapters Three and Four provide a review of the literature on entrepreneurship and the development of entrepreneurship in Fiji, as well as the influence of culture on entrepreneurship. Chapter Five is devoted to the methodology. Data analysis is carried out in Chapter Six. Chapter Seven is devoted to the interpretation and discussion of the results, and limitations of the survey. The final chapter is a conclusion and shows directions to future researchers.

All spellings in this dissertation are consistent with British English, except in passages quoted from the works of researchers and writers who have used the American versions.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location of Fiji in the South Pacific</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map of Fiji</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of authorship</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table of contents</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of tables</td>
<td>xv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of figures</td>
<td>xvii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossary</td>
<td>xviii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviations</td>
<td>xxi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of important variables</td>
<td>xxiii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER ONE: THE RESEARCH PROBLEM</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 The research problem</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 The economic impact of tourism in Fiji</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 The evolution of participation in the tourism sector</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 The research aims</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 Null and alternative hypotheses</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 Research purpose</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7 Significance</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8 Chapter summary</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER TWO: BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM</strong></td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Background to the research problem</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Chapter summary</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER THREE: ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT ........................................... 43

3.1 Introduction ...................................................................................................... 44
3.2 The definitional challenge ................................................................................ 45
3.3 The role of entrepreneurship in national development ..................................... 50
3.4 Affirmative action plans and entrepreneurship ............................................... 53
3.5 The nature and evolution of entrepreneurship ............................................... 57
3.6 Entrepreneurship in the Fijian society ............................................................ 63
3.7 Colonialism and Fijian entrepreneurship ....................................................... 74
3.8 The definition and nature of small business in Fiji ......................................... 81
3.9 The motivations and personality traits of entrepreneurs ................................ 86
  3.9.1 Introduction .......................................................................................... 86
  3.9.2 Typologies of entrepreneurship ............................................................ 89
3.10 Research on entrepreneurship ....................................................................... 92
  3.10.1 Need for achievement motivation ........................................................ 93
  3.10.2 Propensity for risk-taking .................................................................... 96
3.11 Demographic factors in entrepreneurship .................................................... 97
3.12 Assessment of entrepreneurial behaviour ..................................................... 98
  3.12.1 Introduction ........................................................................................ 98
3.13 Theory building and testing ......................................................................... 100
3.14 Chapter summary ......................................................................................... 102

CHAPTER FOUR: CULTURE AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP .............................. 104

4.1 Culture in the international context ............................................................... 105
  4.1.1 What is culture? .................................................................................. 110
  4.1.2 National cultures and cultural values .................................................... 115
4.2 The relationship between cultural values and entrepreneurship ..................... 118
4.3 Individualistic and collectivist values ........................................................... 124
4.4 Chapter summary .......................................................................................... 137
CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .................................................................................................................. 138

5.1 A model of entrepreneurship ......................................................................................................................................... 139
5.2 Reconceptualised Timmons model of entrepreneurship ....................................................................................... 148
5.3 Data collection and methodology .................................................................................................................................. 152
  5.3.1 Sampling – entrepreneurs and students ..................................................................................................................... 152
  5.3.2 Data collection .......................................................................................................................................................... 154
  5.3.3 Qualitative and quantitative data ............................................................................................................................. 158
  5.3.4 Respondent profile (entrepreneurs) ......................................................................................................................... 164
  5.3.5 Respondent profile (students) .................................................................................................................................. 167
  5.3.6 Choice of instruments ............................................................................................................................................... 168
  5.3.7 Questionnaire development and piloting ................................................................................................................ 175
  5.3.8 The application of Western-oriented scales ......................................................................................................... 176
  5.3.9 Validity and reliability of the instruments ........................................................................................................... 177
5.4 Chapter summary ..................................................................................................................................................... 178

CHAPTER SIX: DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS ........................................................................................................ 179

6.1 Introduction ................................................................................................................................................................. 180
6.2 The measurement of variables ...................................................................................................................................... 180
  6.2.1 Entrepreneurial disposition ........................................................................................................................................ 180
  6.2.2 Individualism and collectivism ............................................................................................................................... 181
  6.2.3 Modernity ............................................................................................................................................................... 181
6.3 Hypothesis One: qualitative data .................................................................................................................................. 182
  6.3.1 Entrepreneurial disposition ........................................................................................................................................ 182
  6.3.2 Analysis of the qualitative data .............................................................................................................................. 188
6.4 Quantitative data ............................................................................................................................................................ 190
  6.4.1 Measurement of individualism using the ICS ........................................................................................................... 193
  6.4.2 Measurement of entrepreneurial disposition using the SDS .............................................................................. 194
6.5 Hypothesis Two ............................................................................................................................................................ 196
  6.5.1 Measurement of Fijian collectivism (qualitative data) .......................................................................................... 196
  6.5.2 Measurement of Fijian collectivism (quantitative data) ....................................................................................... 200
  6.5.3 Hypothesis Three .................................................................................................................................................... 201
6.6 Student survey ................................................................................................205
  6.6.1 Hypothesis Four: Analysis of the SDS data...........................................205
  6.6.2 Hypothesis Four: Analysis of the ICS data to assess individualism..206
  6.6.3 Hypothesis Five: analysis of the ICS data to assess collectivism......207
  6.6.4 Summary of results ............................................................................208
6.7 Summary ........................................................................................................209

CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION.................................................................................210
7.1 Introduction ....................................................................................................211
  7.1.1 Discussion of Hypotheses One and Two ...........................................211
  7.1.2 Discussion of Hypothesis Three ........................................................216
  7.1.3 Discussion of Hypotheses Four and Five...........................................218
7.2 Implications of the research............................................................................219
7.3 Limitations......................................................................................................227
7.4 Chapter summary............................................................................................229

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR
FURTHER RESEARCH.................................................................230

REFERENCES. .......................................................................................................237
APPENDIX 1: Questionnaire cover sheet............................................................265
APPENDIX 2: General Questionnaire (for students only)....................................266
APPENDIX 3: General Questionnaire (for entrepreneurs only).........................267
APPENDIX 4: Self-Directed Search................................................................268
APPENDIX 5: Individualism-Collectivism Scale.................................................280
APPENDIX 6: Amalgamation of words and phrases............................................282
APPENDIX 7: Formula for calculating the z value ...............................................288
APPENDIX 8: Z test to assess individualism between Indo-Fijians/Others and
Fijians in the ICS: entrepreneurs .................................................................289
APPENDIX 9: Z test on the SDS scores to assess entrepreneurial disposition....290
APPENDIX 10: Z test to assess collectivism in the ICS: entrepreneurs............291
APPENDIX 11: Z test on MRA scores in the SDS to assess an entrepreneurial
disposition: students ......................................................................................292
APPENDIX 12: Z test to assess individualism in the ICS: students ....................293
APPENDIX 13: Z test to assess collectivism in the ICS: students....................293
APPENDIX 14. List of survey respondents ..........................................................294
APPENDIX 15. Impact of culture on Indo-Fijian and Fijian entrepreneurship.....299
LIST OF TABLES

1.1 Fiji’s changing population by ethnicity..................................................4
1.2 Population of Fiji in 1996 by ethnic group...........................................5
1.3 Classification of land ownership...............................................................6
1.4 Native leases by use and ethnicity............................................................7
1.5 Stages of economic development............................................................9
1.6 Foreign exchange earning in Fiji: tourism and sugar (in Fiji dollars)......15
1.7 Major export earnings from Fiji (in Fiji dollars)......................................17
1.8 Tourist arrivals to Fiji: 1992 to 2003.........................................................17
1.9 Ethnic distribution of employees in Fiji’s tourism industry in 1972..........21
1.10 Relationship between employment and ethnicity (percentage
     of total in each department) -1972.........................................................22
2.1 Number of professional people in Fiji in 1958........................................39
3.1 Contributors to the theory of entrepreneurship......................................58
3.2 Classification of Fijian capital formation.................................................70
3.3 Fijian Holdings Ltd – details of investment............................................71
3.4 Definition of small business in Australia.................................................82
3.5 A typology of small business enterprise................................................84
4.1 Definitions of culture..............................................................................112
4.2 Religious affiliation of Lebanese entrepreneurs......................................121
4.3 Scores on Hall’s and Hofstede’s dimensions of cultural variability for
     selected countries....................................................................................132
4.4 The richest countries per capita in 1870 and 1988..................................135
5.1 Interviews of entrepreneurs: by location and ethnic classification.........165
5.2 A profile of the entrepreneur respondents..............................................166
5.3 Education data on students....................................................................167
5.4 Holland’s SDS matching people and occupation.....................................170
6.1 Entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial disposition – summary by themes......188
6.2 Factors impeding Fijian entrepreneurial disposition and entrepreneurship ...189
6.3 MRA scores on individualism on the ICS scale: entrepreneurs...............193
6.4 MRA scores after aggregation: between Indo-Fijians/Others and Fijians .....194
6.5 MRA scores: Holland’s SDS........................................................................195
6.6 Aggregation of the scores: Indo-Fijians and Others in the SDS ..........196
6.7 Major factors affecting Fijian entrepreneurship: by themes..................199
6.8 MRA response on the ICS: collectivism..............................................200
6.9 Can Fijian entrepreneurship develop in the context of their present cultural values? ...........................................................202
6.10 Does Fijian culture need to be reformed in order to be entrepreneurial? .....203
6.11 Multiple response analysis of student scores: SDS.................................206
6.12 Multiple response analysis on ICS data to assess individualism:
    students....................................................................................................207
6.13 Multiple response analysis on the ICS data to assess collectivism:
    students....................................................................................................207
6.14 Summary of qualitative and quantitative results.....................................208
# LIST OF FIGURES

1.1 Core-periphery model .......................................................................................... 14
3.1 Approaches to an understanding of entrepreneurship ..................................... 62
3.2 Yearly work programme for able bodied Fijians ............................................. 65
3.3 Tendencies towards non entrepreneurial or entrepreneurial activities .......... 91
4.1 Three levels of uniqueness in human mental programming ....................... 114
4.2 Relationship between cultures and subcultures ............................................ 117
4.3 Asian cultures versus Western cultures .................................................. 131
5.1 Model of entrepreneurial potential ............................................................ 141
5.2 Timmons model of entrepreneurship .................................................. 143
5.3 A reconceptualised model of the entrepreneurship process ..................... 149
5.4 Data analysis: the constant comparative method ........................................ 162
5.5 Explanation of the six types in the SDS .................................................. 171
6.1 A Letter to the Editor explaining why a Fijian has failed in business ........... 186
6.2 Problems of Fijian education .............................................................. 191
6.3 Cultural obligations affect Fijian education ............................................. 192
7.1 Entrepreneurial disposition and entrepreneurship index ............................ 216
7.2 The entrepreneurship wheel ........................................................................ 224
**GLOSSARY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bumiputera</td>
<td>Affirmative action policies in favour of indigenous Malays.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blueprint</td>
<td>Affirmative action policies targeted at Fijians.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brahmins</td>
<td>The highest caste in India.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bubuti</td>
<td>(in Kiribati) request or borrow something from another person.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buli</td>
<td>A salaried Fijian official who worked for the Fijian Administration at the district level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coolie</td>
<td>Lowest grade of worker; a dog. Used pejoratively to describe Indo-Fijians.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinau</td>
<td>Debt. It can be debt in the form of money or any other form. Also, refers to borrowing with an intention to return tomorrow, which seldom happens. Generally, refers to borrowing of money.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dou veilomani</td>
<td>Be kind to each other; love one another; be at peace with one another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fua Kavenga</td>
<td>Obligatory contributions to meet traditional requirements. Similar to kerekere.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girmit</td>
<td>Contract under which descendants of Indo-Fijians were recruited from India to work in sugar cane plantations in Fiji in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grog</td>
<td>See kava and yaqona. Kava is the national drink of Fiji. When taken in excess, body becomes slightly numb and may cause laziness.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gujerati</td>
<td>Also spelt as Gujarati. A distinct sub-group amongst Indo-Fijians. According to Gillion (1962), the first Gujerati arrived in Fiji in 1906. Large numbers followed as free migrants following the abolition of ‘girmit’ in January 1920. Gujeratis dominate entrepreneurship in Fiji.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kai Dia</td>
<td>The Fijian term to describe Indo-Fijians.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Kava  Also known as yaqona. Piper methysticum; plant and drink used for ceremonial and social purposes in the Pacific.

Kerekere  To incur indebtedness and is predicated on notions of reciprocity.

Koro  A collection of houses, a village.

Lome Convention  A group made up of the seventy-one African, Caribbean and the Pacific countries that are signatories to the special trade and aid agreement with the European Union (EU) referred to as the EU-ACP Lome Convention. It was succeeded by the Cotonou Convention in 2000.

Mamagi  Thrifty

Mana  Supernatural powers

Matai  Chiefly social structure in Western Samoa

Mataqali  Sometimes spelt as mataquali. A clan.

Meke  Fijian dance

Yaqona  See Kava.

Qoliqoli  Traditional fishing rights

Reguregu  Formal presentation of cash, kava, etc.

Roko Tui  Head of the Provincial administration

Rotumans  People of Polynesian extraction originating from the island of Rotuma, which is located in Fiji.

Soli  To give (during fundraising)

Soli ni vanua  Raise capital for the community

Sulu  A skirt worn by male Fijians.

Tabua ni burua  Tabua is whale’s tooth. The tabua is presented to the people at the burial ceremony to tell them that slaughtered cattle and pigs are to be distributed in the form of a feast. The meat is uncooked

Talatala  Ordained Christian Church minister

Taukei  Reference to the indigenous Fijian.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tera bhar</td>
<td>Racist stereotyping implying abiding mental and behavioural traits that characterise people with curly/fuzzy hair.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thakurs</td>
<td>A social class in India.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third World</td>
<td>Used interchangeably with ‘undeveloped’ and ‘less developing’ countries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokotoka</td>
<td>A further division of mataqali (clan).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tu na galala</td>
<td>An independent farmer (in the Fijian language).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turaga ni Koro</td>
<td>Representative of the Fijian Affairs Board in the village.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanua</td>
<td>A reference to basis of life on earth. It also means the connection between people and a place. It also refers to one’s piece of land for gardening.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulagis</td>
<td>Visitors. Sometimes Fijians describe Indo-Fijians as vulagis.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wantok</td>
<td>A clan, basically meaning someone who speaks the same language.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yaqona</td>
<td>Also known as kava and grog. Plant and drink used for ceremonial and social purposes in the Pacific.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yasana</td>
<td>A province</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vakataraisulu</td>
<td>The end of the mourning period after the death of a relative</td>
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</table>
ABBREVIATIONS

FAB  Fijian Affairs Board  
FDB  Fiji Development Bank  
FHC  Fijian Holdings Company  
FIT  Fiji Institute of Technology  
FNTC  Fiji National Training Council  
FVB  Fiji Visitors Bureau  
GCC  Great Council of Chiefs  
GDP  Gross Domestic Product  
Germany (D. R.)  Democratic Republic of Germany  
Germany (F. R.)  Federal Republic of Germany  
IBRD  International Bank for Reconstruction and Development  
LDCs  Less developed countries  
MDCs  More developed countries  
MRA  Multiple Response Analysis  
NLTB  Native Land Trust Board  
OECD  Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development  
OPEC  Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries  
PATA  Pacific Asia Travel Association  
PERS.COMM  Personal communication  
PPS  Proactive Personality Scale  
PRC  People's Republic of China  
SDS  Self-Directed Search  
SPARTECA  South Pacific Regional Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement  
SPTO  South Pacific Tourism Organisation  
TCSP  Formerly, Tourism Council of the South Pacific; currently known as the South Pacific Tourist Organisation (SPTO)
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UAE</td>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
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<tr>
<td>UAR</td>
<td>United Arab Republic</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USP</td>
<td>University of the South Pacific</td>
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</tbody>
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DEFINITION OF IMPORTANT VARIABLES

Although these definitions appear in the relevant chapters, they are restated here for ease of reference.

Collectivism. The behaviour and habits of a society to conform to group goals rather than focusing on individual achievements.

Culture. Pattern of values, traits, or behaviours shared by the people within a region (Herbig and Dunphy, 1998).

Entrepreneurism. ‘Entrepreneurism is an ideology based on the individual’s need to create and/or innovate, and transform creativity and innovative desire into wealth creation and value adding undertakings for the individual’s benefit and common good’. [Kao, R. W. Y. (1997). An Entrepreneurial Approach to Corporate Management. Singapore: Prentice Hall. Quoted in the inside front cover of the Journal of Enterprising Culture, March 2003, 11 (1)]

Enterprising culture. Enterprising culture is ‘a commitment of the individual to the continuing pursuit of opportunities and developing an entrepreneurial endeavour to its growth potentials for the purpose of creating wealth for the individual and adding value to society’. [Kao, R. W. W, 1993, Singapore. Quoted in the inside front cover of the Journal of Enterprising Culture, March 2003, 11 (1)]

Entrepreneurial disposition. State of creativity and mental readiness (psychological) to experiment with entrepreneurship. Without entrepreneurial disposition there cannot be any entrepreneurship (Tiessen, 1997).

Entrepreneur. A person who shows practical creativity, combining resources and opportunities to benefit the individual, the family, and the community in general.
Entrepreneurship. Possession of skills and creativity to combine resources and opportunities in a competitive environment for the benefit of the individual, the family, and the community in general.

Individualism. Social pattern of loosely linked individuals who view themselves as independent, primarily motivated by their own preferences, needs, rights and who prioritise personal goals over the goals of others.

Modernity. Signifies departure from tradition and religion towards individualism, rational or scientific organisation of society, and egalitarianism. A society in a state of modernity is called a modern society.

Modernisation. The process of a society becoming a modern society is called modernisation.

Small tourism business. A new venture offering a new tourist service and product, or an existing business offering a new or an existing tourist service and product; has less than 100 employees and is managed by an individual or a family.

Tourism business. Entities involved in satisfying the needs of visitors travelling for either business or pleasure and who spend less than 24 hours and less than a year at a destination.

To avoid repetition, the words ‘entrepreneurism’, ‘entrepreneurial disposition’ and ‘entrepreneurship’ will be used interchangeably. There are however some differences between these words and a distinction will be made wherever required.