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Resilience and Growth of Small Enterprises in Post-Conflict Economy

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Candidate Declaration

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to contribute insights into the resilience and growth of small enterprises (SEs) by exploring the experiences of SE founders/owner-managers within a post-conflict context. The findings aim to inform the strategies to become resilient and to grow despite a turbulent environment. This builds on the existent small enterprise resilience and growth literature where it has been recognized that there are a various types of growth strategies for SE owner-managers to become resilient and grow. Yet, little empirical attention has been paid to understanding the resilience and growth of SE founders/owner-managers operating in turbulent post-conflict environments.

This study explores the crises faced by SE founders/owner-managers, the effect on these crises on them and the way SE founders/owner-managers perceive their personal resilience to affect their organisational resilience and growth in Sri Lanka, a South Asian emerging economy, a nation of geopolitical importance despite its relatively small size, where, strategically positioned near key maritime sea lanes that transit the Indian Ocean and link Asia with Europe and Africa (the silk route). Although Ceylon gained its independence from Britain, Sri Lanka's political, social, and economic development was constrained by various crises. This never ending, crises attracting economy, was the context to this study.

A qualitative approach was used to gather empirical data through in-depth semi-structured interviews with Small Enterprise owners and Informal Conversations with employees/managers at 15 SEs. A maximum variance sampling data technique, snowball sampling techniques and general analytical induction approach were used for data collection and analysis, respectively. The analysis of the data produced three main themes: Micro, Meso and Macro level Crises, Relationships and Networking and The Agentic Role of the Entrepreneur in developing resilience.

The main output from the present research is a novel framework of Multi-level Analysis of Crises and SE owner-manager Resilience and growth in post-conflict context. The framework includes elements which can help SE owner-managers to become resilient and grow in a turbulent post-conflict economy. Findings demonstrate the importance of family and relatives, customers, employee, and business relationships in building resilience. Moreover, the Agentic role of the entrepreneur through new process and new soft innovation combined with becoming an achiever, planner and controller is revealed as a strategy to build resilience and grow.

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It has been a long journey. But I was not alone. I was surrounded by people who made this journey an enjoyable one. There are lot of people that I am grateful to.

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I dedicate this thesis to my husband, Tharindu, - thank you for being you.

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Glossary

Term	Definition
Small Enterprises (SEs)	**An organisation which has less than 100 permanent employees.**
A Crisis	**low-probability, high impact situation that is perceived by critical stakeholders to threaten the viability of a firm**
Turbulence	**a situation that is subject to continuous and substantial changes which are uncertain and unpredictable**
Growth	**Growth is considered as a method improve and protect the income of the SE founders/owner-managers**
Post-conflict	**A period after a conflict and usually it is the immediate 10 years after the conflict (Nkurunziza, 2010).**
Entrepreneur/personal Resilience	**The ability to maintain relatively stable, healthy levels of psychological and emotional functioning over time after experiencing trauma or serious loss**
Organisational Resilience	**The capacity for an enterprise to survive, adapt, and grow in the face of turbulence**

List of Abbreviations

EU (European Union)

GDP (Gross Domestic Product)

NIE (New Institutional Economics

OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development)

SEs (Small Enterprises)

SME (Small/Medium Enterprise)

USA (United States of America)

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Weligodapola, M. (2019). *Using a general analytical inductive qualitative research case to explore on growth of small enterprises.* London: SAGE Publications Ltd. doi:10.4135/9781526487599 https://methods.sagepub.com/case/using-analytical-inductive-qual-research-case-growth-of-small-enterprises

Weligodapola, M. & Darabi, F. (2018). The road to resilience: Lessons from Sri Lankan entrepreneurs in dealing with crisis situations. Paper presented at the *European Academy of Management Conference 2018*, University of Iceland, Reykjavik

Weligodapola, M., & Darabi, F. (2018, July). Developing General Analytical Inductive Qualitative Research Strategy to Explore Small Enterprise Growth in Turbulent Economies. In European Conference on Research Methodology for Business and Management Studies, Conference Proceeding (pp. 482-XVI). Academic Conferences International Limited. Retrieved from https://search.proquest.com/docview/2088044380

Chapter 01: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This chapter begins by examining the importance of the research context, which followed by an overview and justification of the research. The research questions and objectives are presented with an explanation on the deviation of this study from previous studies conducted. Moreover, the contribution to knowledge and the context are highlighted. Finally, the chapter concludes with an outline of the remaining chapters of the thesis.

The principal aim of this thesis is to contribute insights into the resilience and growth of small enterprises (SEs) by exploring the experiences of SE founders/owner-managers within a post-conflict context. This study investigates on how SE founders/owner-managers perceive their personal resilience to affect the organisational resilience and growth, particularly in a turbulent post-conflict context. In doing so, the thesis contributes to the discourse on developing resilience, particularly with respect to SE founders/owner-managers operating in emerging economies with turbulent environments. Hence, the main question this thesis tried to answer was, "How did SE founders/owner-managers develop their personal resilience to affect their organisational resilience and growth within a post-conflict turbulent environment?".

A growing body of literature on SEs indicates that the definition of SE varies widely across countries, which had led to a nonconcrete definition of SE (Storey, 2016; Djip, 2014; Estrin & Mickiewicz, 2011; Bridge, O'Neill, & Cromie, 2003). SEs and entrepreneurship are closely related (Djip, 2014). SEs provide the most conducive environment for entrepreneurship and innovation, they are closely related to economic development, and governments generally see them as the creators of economic activity (Ribeiro-Soriano, 2017). In 2019, in European Union, 99% of importing enterprises in total trade (intra-EU and extra-EU) were small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), while exporting enterprises comprised 98% (Key figures on Europe, 2019), whereas there are 30.7 million SEs in the U.S. which account for 99.9 percent of all U.S. businesses (Small Business Administration (SBA), 2019). A strong entrepreneurship is recognized as a sign of economic development for both developed and emerging economies due to various reasons such

as job creation, regional and national development, and ability to repair markets and industries. Consequently, research on SE and entrepreneurship has become increasingly popular.

Most of the research focused on western entrepreneurship (eg: Wedawatta & Ingirige, 2016; Williams & Vorley, 2015; Williams & Vorley, 2014) demonstrated a resemblance in the data, whereas, in emerging economies, which vary in economic and political stability a divergence of data is visible (Brown, Langer, & Stewart, 2011). Interestingly, these countries seem to also differ in the cultural and social heritage that shapes cognitive thinking and behavior of entrepreneurs, which, in turn, gives rise to inconsistency in data on entrepreneurship levels and on growth of SEs (Bongomin, Munene, Ntayi, & Malinga, 2018; Kusago, 2005).

However, due to the complexity of the emerging economies, research in this area poses several challenges. The situation is even more complex when the emerging economies are also recovering from conflict. Post-conflict entrepreneurship is burdened not only by infrastructural issues, but also political issues, making it difficult for SEs to thrive and for researchers to study (Bruck, Naudé, & Verwimp, 2013). Hence there is a lacuna of research when it comes to turbulent emerging economies with post-conflict backdrop (Aldairany, Omar, & Quoquab, 2018). Post-conflict is the period after a conflict and usually it is the immediate 10 years after the conflict (Nkurunziza, 2010). "Immediately after conflict, markets tend to be dominated by unproductive entrepreneurship and opportunistic behavior that further suppress overall economic development. A recent example of this is the area of Western Balkans, which went to war immediately after the collapse of the socialist regime in Yugoslavia, with the worst effects in Bosnia and Herzegovina" (Efendic, Mickiewicz, & Rebmann, 2015).

With this background, the researcher was interested in exploring the developing resilience and growth of SE founders/owner-managers to understand 'what is happening', 'how things take shape' within turbulent context and how the notion of resilience and growth take place. In particular, the purpose of this thesis is to contribute to the understanding of how SEs develop resilience and grow despite turbulence concentrating on SE founders/owner-managers ambitions and perceptions of growth. This approach paved the way to conceptualise resilience and growth and develop insights on what resilience and growth means in the context of SE

founders/owner-managers. The thesis suggests a framework of developing resilience and generates insights for developing resilience. Three specific research objectives were considered in order to achieve the overall research aim. They were:

1. To explore the crises faced by SE founders/owner-managers in a turbulent emerging economy with a post-conflict context.

2. To explore on the way these crises affect SE founders/owner-managers resilience in a post-conflict turbulent environment.

3. To explore on the way SE founders/owner-managers perceive their personal resilience to affect their organisational resilience and growth in a post-conflict turbulent environment.

The selection of this study area is not accidental. The researcher was fond of starting her own business and was curious on operations of SE founders/owner-managers and their organisations. She also had experience in preparing financial accounts of the businesses of some of her relatives and friends. Some of the businesses were successful during the post-conflict period and some others were facing myriad issues and challenges. She was curious to know why some of these SE founders/owner-managers were resilient and growing and how they develop resilience despite all the challenges they faced. Hence this research topic was close to the researcher's background as it deals with a subject that she is passionate about and is motivated to study further. The author accepts the view that researchers should select topics which are closer to their hearts (Marecek, Fine, & Kidder, 1997), and thus she selected this topic which she had the interest to study further.

1.2 Research Background and Rationale

Extensive literature, over the last two decades, constantly shown that the contribution of SE founders/owner-managers and their organisations in terms of driving economic prosperity through creation of new businesses (McKeever, Jack, & Anderson, 2015). Both the developed and emerging economies are reliant on SE founders/owner-managers and their organisations to build their economies given their capacity to create new jobs. There were 5.94 million SEs which

represented 99.3% of the total business population in UK (UK Government, 2020), whereas in USA there were 31.7 million SEs, which is 99.9% of the total business population in USA (SBA, 2019). On the other hand, in India SEs contribute around 6.11% of the manufacturing GDP, 24.63% of the GDP from service activities and 33.4% of India's manufacturing output (Ministry of Finance, 2020). In Brazil, SMEs account for 62% of national employment and for 50% of national value added (OECD, 2020), whereas within Dubai, SMEs contribute to 95% of companies and employ 42% of the workforce, contributing to 40% of Dubai's GDP (Dubai Chamber, 2020). SEs employ between 50 and 60 percent of South Africa's work force and contribute around 34 percent of GDP (International Finance Corporation, 2018). In China, SMEs represent more than 90 percent of the enterprises in the country (Statista, 2020). The facts given above clearly demonstrate the significance of SE founders/owner-managers and their organisations throughout the world economies, irrespective of whether they are developed or developing (emerging economies) where it had attracted past researchers' attention. These SE founders/owner-managers and their organisations transform and develop economies by enriching the entrepreneurial capabilities. "Entrepreneurs create ways to connect resources and growth across cultures, policy contexts, economic conditions and political situations that differ from a region to another" (Carrasco-Monteagudo & Buendía-Martínez, 2013). Hence studying on the growth of SE founders/owner-managers and their organisations presents an opportunity and a timely requirement for countries to develop their human and non-human resources.

The definition of growth is subjective. This was visible in the past research. According to Penrose & Penrose (2009), growth is the product of an internal process in the development of an enterprise and an increase in quality. Whereas growth is defined as a "change in size during a determined time span" by Dobbs & Hamilton (2007, p. 313). *In this research growth is considered as a method to improve and protect the income of the SE founders/owner-managers.* More information on the growth is presented in the Literature Review chapter as it is an important phenomenon to SE owner-managers. Their survival solely depends on their ability to compete with the other large companies. Growth decreases the possibility of closing SEs (Rauch & Rijsdijk, 2013). The growth phenomenon of SE founders/owner-managers and their organisations had been widely analyzed within entrepreneurship literature (Mawson & Brown, 2017; Brush, Ceru,

& Blackburn, 2009; Altinay & Altinay, 2008; Barringer, Jones, & Neubaum, 2005). Most newly established SEs do not go beyond their inception point (Headd & Kirchhoff, 2009), other than "gazelles", that is fast growing young enterprises (Sims & O'Regan, 2006). Some SE founders/owner-managers simply do not like to grow, refrain from growth or they prefer low growth (Brush et al., 2009; Doern, 2009). Most of the SE founders/owner-managers fail to expand the business during their life span (Davidsson, Achtenhagen, & Naldi, 2005). Achtenhagen, Naldi, & Melin (2010) reviewed studies on growth published between 1997 and 2008 and identified 56 articles and found that most of which endeavored to explain why enterprises grow. Explications on growth or no growth decisions, contextual dimensions, the role of entrepreneurship are still lacking (Wright & Stigliani, 2013). Therefore, the growth of SE founders/owner-managers and their organisations requires further research in terms of the contextual dimensions, explications on growth and the role of entrepreneurship in the process.

Studying about SE founders/owner-managers and their organisations through the lens of turbulent emerging economies bridge this gap in literature on contextual dimensions. This study develops insights into the growth of SE founders/owner-managers and their organisations, and it adds a novel aspect by focusing on the crises and employed strategies of SE founders/owner-managers to become resilient in turbulent post-conflict context.

Although the impact of the environment on growth of firms has been extensively explored, there were only a limited number of relevant studies exploring SE founders/owner-managers and their organisations growth in post conflict economies (Efendic et al., 2015; Njanja, Ogutu, & Pellisier, 2012; Aterido, Hallward-Driemeier, & Pages, 2009; Nichter & Goldmark, 2009). In terms of looking at SE as an organisation in a post war context, African countries have been used by researchers to examine SEs in emerging markets; (Ongoro, Kiragu, & Simwa, 2013; Babajide, 2012; Njanja et al., 2012; Fumo & Jabbour, 2011; Ishengoma & Kappel, 2011; Aworemi, Abdul-azeez, & Popoola, 2010; Robson, Haugh, & Obeng, 2009; Bekele & Worku, 2008; Okpara & Wynn, 2007). Moreover, Efendic et al., (2015) had studied on the importance of multi-level social relations in post-conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, research on developing resilience of SE founders/owner-managers with the backdrop of post-conflict situations is not visible.

The literature on the challenges faced by SE founders/owner-managers and their organisations in a post-conflict economy seems to be very rare. However, all these studies focus on the challenges of operating in such economies in general, and it is observed that they were not specific to the context of SEs and SE founders/owner-managers.

When it comes to SE founders/owner-managers who achieve a high growth in adverse conditions, the picture becomes rather more doubtful. Only a handful of studies have considered the role of both environment and internal factors (Covin & Slevin, 2008; Doole, 2008; Delmar, Davidsson, & Gartner, 2003; Covin, Slevin, & Covin, 1990). Since 'the evidence suggests that firm growth is to a certain extent externally determined' (Davidsson & Wiklund, 2007) and the growth cannot be viewed in isolation. It is important to know how firms and entrepreneurs bounce back from an external shock and develop resilience which can ultimately impact on their growth.

Hitherto, the agreed-upon meaning of the resilience concept remains vague in business literature (Williams & Vorley, 2017). The core factors contributing to this fragmented understanding of the concept are the discipline, research context, nature of disruptions, and companies' size. The concept of resilience was used and followed by researchers in different disciplines using different conceptualizations. Lack of common understanding of resilience across subjects, such as ecology, engineering, and social psychology is visible (Dahlberg & Guay, 2015). According to Williams, Vorley, & Ketikidis (2013), the idea of resilience in entrepreneurship up to now is often used to label firms' economic performance and responsiveness considering specific shocks, such as financial crisis and recession (see Williams et al., 2013, pp: 399). Past research restricts the meaning of resilience to the ability of firms to bounce back from such a specific "disruption" rather than on the recurrent and complex nature of disruptions.

In general, the SEs in emerging economies face challenging conditions compared to the SEs operating in developed economies (Dahles & Susilowati, 2015), where the environment is harsher and vulnerable leading to higher failure rate (Page & Söderbom, 2015). These disruptions are varied from context to context which threatens the SE's resilience (Littlewood & Holt, 2018; Abebrese, 2015). These disruptions are ranging from natural disasters (Linnenluecke, 2017; Runyan, 2006), political turmoil (Branzei & Abdelnour, 2010), economic crisis, market access

challenges (Tukamuhabwa, Stevenson, Busby & Zorzini, 2015), institutional failures (Dahles & Susilowati, 2015) and to infrastructural obstacles (Abebrese, 2015). Hence, research on the resilience of SE founders/owner-managers in this turbulent setting is more desirable as it advances the theoretical and practical understanding of the concept in the SE's field and emerging economies seem to offer a suitable setting for this purpose (Littlewood & Holt, 2018).

Ates & Bititci (2011) pointed out that, "there has been an implied assumption that organisational theories, processes, and conceptual frameworks developed through researching large organisations, are relevant and directly applicable to SEs". However, Sullivan-Taylor & Branicki (2011) found significant differences in the way that SEs and SE founders operate and how their vulnerabilities differ compare to those of larger enterprises. Becoming resilient is more crucial for SEs as they are vulnerable to challenges such as accessing finance compared to large organisations (Branzei & Abdelnour ,2010). Small firms are more susceptible to external shocks due to their limited internal resources, narrower customer bases and product line (Smallbone, Deakins, Battisti, & Kitching, 2012).

Resilience has further been categorized (Korber & McNaughton, 2018) in such a way that it could be fostered at national (macro), community/industry (meso), and individual (micro) levels of analysis. The extant literature is focused on the micro level, i.e., small firms. Meso level studies are notably absent, as are multi-level ones and thus cover more than one spatial scale. Entrepreneurship and resilience remain under-researched (Korber & McNaughton, 2018). In the research done in area of entrepreneurship in conflict areas have many gaps remain, despite the growing interests. There is a need for more involvement in collecting data directly from the area under conflict instead of the heavy dependency on secondary data (Aldairany et al., 2018). In addition, it was revealed that destructive business and conflict consequences have promising research issues to be discovered more in single places or collectively for broader comprehensiveness (Aldairany et al., 2018). Hence Sri Lanka is an ideal location to study as a single place and the selection for this context is justified in chapter 03. Relatively few studies of entrepreneurship in sectors facing disturbance, e.g., tourism (crucial for Sri Lanka's economy), consider the role of relationships, such as shifting 'relationships between the stakeholders of the

destination and the tourists' (Russell & Faulkner, 2004). Relationships are vital for women who generally have more limited access to information and business contacts through various memberships such as trade associations and business clubs (Surangi, 2018). However, scholars still know relatively little about how relationships support resilience – i.e., 'relationship-based resilience' – at various spatial levels of analysis in a post-conflict context. Bullough, Renko, & Myatt (2014) found that SEs in Afghanistan were 'relationship-based' by relying on their relationships and 'referrals', though this study had focused more on self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intent. Nonetheless, the notion that resilience can be 'relationship-based' is implied by prior research. However, it is not clear how various relationships support the achievement of resilience in a post-conflict context, which is defined as being constantly exposed to disturbances during and after the conflict, in a case like that of Sri Lanka.

As discussed, the factors; discipline, research context, nature of disruptions, and companies' size are fundamentals to inconsistent use of the resilience concept meaning in the past literature, indicating the need to find common ground to build the theory in business and SE literature. While literature on SEs and emerging economies is widely observed and discussed, the resilience and growth of SE founders/owner-managers in a turbulent post-conflict economy is less understood, and it is still insubstantial and unknown. Therefore, this study is undertaken to fill this gap in the knowledge.

After reviewing the literature, the researcher formed the following research questions.

1. What crises are faced by SE founders/owner-managers in a turbulent emerging economy with a post-conflict context?

2. How do these crises affect SE founders/owner-managers resilience in a post-conflict turbulent environment?

3. How do SE founders/owner-managers perceive their personal resilience to affect their organisational resilience and growth in a post-conflict turbulent environment?

The specificity and complexity of the political and the economic history of emerging economies suggests a single-country study. In addition, it was revealed that destructive business and conflict consequences have promising research issues to be discovered more in single places for broader comprehensiveness (Aldairany et al., 2018). Hence Sri Lanka is an ideal location to study as a single place and this research will focus on Sri Lanka Being both an emerging, and a post-conflict, country, it represents a unique example of complexity of entrepreneurship development and help to understand the interconnectedness of different factors that affect entrepreneurship development in such extreme environments. This is further elaborated in the chapter 03.

This thesis includes eight chapters. Chapter 01 is the Introduction chapter, where the aim and objectives of the study are outlined and afterwards an overview and justification of the research are provided. Then the conceptual and methodological foundations which thesis is based were provided. Finally, the chapter concludes with an outline of the remaining chapters in the thesis. Chapter 02 is the Literature Review chapter, which critically reviews relevant literature on crises faced by SE founders/owner-managers and their organisations, strategies used to overcome the crises faced and personal & organisational resilience and growth of SE founders/owner-managers, and post-conflict situations. A thorough critical analysis of the literature against the developed research questions is presented highlighting the gaps in extant knowledge. Whereas chapter 03 critically appraise the Sri Lankan context in terms of post-conflict scenario, culture of Sri Lanka and on its business environment. The Sri Lankan post-conflict economy was the context, and the selection was justified in this chapter. Chapter 04 depicts the philosophical stance of the researcher, and it elucidates the research approach, research strategy, research design, data collection and data analysis techniques.

Thereafter, the chapter 05 details the empirical findings highlighting the themes generated. Then comes the chapter 06, which is the discussion chapter, where the findings from chapter 05 are discussed and contextualised. This chapter provides the quotations of participants' comments supported by the literature to develop the arguments and discusses the findings.

Chapter 07, the Conclusions chapter, pulls together the themes of the research study, draws conclusions and seeks to make a theoretical contribution to the understanding of the nature of

SE founders/owner-managers and their organisations that effectively compete on a turbulent post-conflict economy. It then goes on to assess the implications of the findings for the policy debate as to how SE founders/owner-managers and their organisations should be supported and examines the implications for further research. Limitations of the study are highlighted, and the chapter concludes with a series of suggestions for future research.

Chapter 02: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 01 identified the rationale for and the importance of studying on resilience and growth of SE founders/owner-managers with the background of post-conflict in turbulent environment. It is necessary, nevertheless, to explore the previous research that has contributed to the understanding of the factors affecting the resilience and growth of SE founders/owner-managers. Moreover, these SE founders/owner-managers are studied in the context of their organisations as the two concepts; SE and SE founder/owner-managers are interrelated and interconnected. Hence this chapter is to explore the theoretical corpus on which this thesis builds.

This chapter is structured in three parts. In the first part, the post-conflict context is reviewed by explaining the underpinning concepts, theories and methods related to the post-conflict context. Then the notion of entrepreneur/SE founder/owner-manager is highlighted. End of this part, the challenges and obstacles faced by SE founders/owner-managers related to turbulent contexts explored by justifying the development of the first research question of this study.

The next part of the literature review provides detailed and comprehensive information on the effect of vivid crises/obstacles on the SE founder/owner-manager when operating in a post-conflict turbulent environment, by justifying the formulation of the second research question.

The third part elaborate the ambitions and perceptions of growth of SE founders/owner-managers by explaining how the entrepreneurs view the concept of growth. Thereafter, the concepts of organisational resilience, entrepreneurial/personal resilience, SEs, relationship-based resilience, and the linkage between these concepts were clearly articulated.

At the end of the literature review, a conceptual framework is presented by locating all the debates and concepts highlighted by the past researchers related to this study.

2.2 Crises faced by SE founders/owner-mangers in a turbulent emerging economy with a post-conflict context

This section critically discusses theoretical framings and conceptualisations of what a post-conflict context is and what it means in the context of this research. The underpinning concepts, theories and methods related to past studies on entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-managers generally as well as related to post-conflict contexts are explored. Notion of the entrepreneur/SE founder/owner-manager in the context of post-conflict explained. Finally, the challenges, obstacles and impediments faced by entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-managers are highlighted within the backdrop of post-conflict context.

There is ample amount of research carried out on challenges faced by companies. When it comes to crises and their impact on business, a considerable amount of research is visible. This section elaborates on these vivid crises, and on the context of these crises.

Business failures or when the things go wrong, there are no shortage of terms like accident, adverse event, catastrophe, crisis, critical event, disaster, error, failure, misconduct, mistake, near miss, never event, serious incident. In the current research, "crisis" is used as a blanket term to identify all these types. Crises including disasters, business interruptions, catastrophes, emergencies or contingencies (Herbane, 2010) are generally defined in general business and management, organisational and entrepreneurship research (Doern, 2016; Herbane, 2010), and specifically by Pearson & Clair (1998) as a "low-probability, high impact situation that is perceived by critical stakeholders to threaten … viability" of a firm, and they also emphasize the importance of partner selection, i.e., relationships. Crises are, therefore, conceptualized as processes that over time disrupt the normal functioning of individuals, firms, and/or communities (Williams & Vorley, 2017). With the current business environment, crises are becoming an integral part of the business activity, and responses to a crisis can mean the difference between survival or failure of a business (Doern, 2016). SEs differ from large companies, and in that they are directly and indirectly affected by crises. Yet they possess fewer resources to respond and retain resilience (Wedawatta & Ingirige, 2016). The role played by the SE founders/owner-managers is vital due to their interconnectedness with the SE. With this background, it is vital to discover and understand the vivid crises faced by SE founders/owner-managers. These crises may differ as per

different contexts, and in a highly turbulent business environment like post-conflict situation, it may present new and vivid crises. The entrepreneur/SE founder/owner-manager has a pivotal role to play when it comes to SEs, and it is vital to study on the crises and their impact on the SE founders/owner-managers.

SE founders/owner-managers' role has been historically crucial for economic recovery and growth through their contribution to job creation and social progression (Elmore, 2009). A growing number of studies in the field have begun to examine questions relating to crises and entrepreneurship. These range from the role played by the entrepreneur/SE founder/owner-manager in crisis recovery (Williams & Vorley, 2015; Galbraith & Stiles, 2006), the way SE founders/owner-managers respond to a crisis (Doern, 2016; Lai, Saridakis, Blackburn, & Johnstone, 2016), challenges and barriers in business recovery after a crisis (Runyan, 2006; Irvine & Anderson, 2004) and the characteristics of small firms during a crisis (Dahlhamer & Tierney, 1998). Crises and entrepreneurship literature tend to focus on large complex organisations, mass/group responses to crises, industrial crises and the greater macro- and socio-economic effects of crises on households or communities than the impact on SEs (e.g. Buchanan & Denyer, 2013; McEntire, Fuller, Johnston, & Weber, 2002; Quarantelli, 1988). The SE founders/owner-managers and the business are inseparable. Whatever the decisions taken by the SE founder/owner-manager affect the business, and characteristics of the SE founders/owner-managers directly affect the business. To be resilient in a post conflict situation, with the crises faced, SE founders/owner-managers may need to comprise of a special set of characteristics. This has almost been neglected by the past researchers; little work on crisis and SE founders/owner-managers appears in the extant literature, and there is even less dealing with their characteristics in a post-conflict turbulent situation.

2.2.1 Post-conflict contexts

In today's borderless world, businesses operate in a highly competitive environment. When it comes to SEs the environment plays a huge role in shaping and deciding whether the entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-managers are going to succeed or fail (Friesenbichler, 2013; Rocha, 2012; Njanja, L., 2009). Entrepreneurial activity cannot be understood without consideration of the context within which it occurs (Krasniqi, 2014; Aidis, Estrin, & Mickiewicz,

2012; Tonoyan, Strohmeyer, Habib, & Perlitz, 2010). Bibu, Petru, & Sala (2009) in their study on 1000 SEs in Romania have confirmed this by finding that the complex and unstable external factors have their greatest impact on the SE founders/owner-managers. Kraja & Osmani (2015) have further proved this by finding that there is a positive correlation between external business environment and internal business environment. Moreover, external environment affects performance by affecting the management strategies the SE founders/owner-managers undertake (Njanja et al., 2012). This leads to the view of the improvement in the business environment may contribute to economic growth because it sets the conditions for any economic unit to thrive, especially the SEs (Rocha, 2012). One can state that the business environment is complex or turbulent or dynamic or vibrant. But what complexity or turbulence means is a problem to be resolved.

Several researchers have defined the term "turbulence". Stigter (2002) after analyzing many definitions and features that characterize a turbulent environment defined it as a situation that is subject to *continuous and substantial changes which are uncertain and unpredictable.*" **Based on all these notions, the author uses Stigter's (2002) definition of a turbulent environment, i.e. "*a situation that is subject to continuous and substantial changes which are uncertain and unpredictable*" throughout the research**.

A post-conflict situation is not a period bounded by a single specific event, instead it is a process that involves the achievement of a range of peace milestones (Brown et al., 2011). Post-conflict economies are especially information-poor, even compared to other developing countries (Garriga & Phillips, 2014). Post-conflict is the period after a conflict and usually it is the immediate 10 years after the conflict (Nkurunziza, 2010). Countries that are in a post-conflict stage of development differ in many important aspects – in their economic state and potential, their political system, their bureaucratic capacities, and the state of security in the country itself (Brown et al., 2011). Entrepreneurs could provide people with sufficient sustenance in decreasing the possibility of re-engagement in conflict (Kusago, 2005), hence the entrepreneurship is important in fragile contexts. However, the empirical work is still understated, with some traces of work identifying the lack in studying entrepreneurship issues in conflict and post-conflict

regions (Williams & Vorley, 2017; Bozzoli, Brück, & Wald, 2013; Brück et al., 2012; Desai, 2011) related to stable contexts. There is a lacuna of research focusing on turbulent post-conflict economies, which vary in economic as well as political stability. Interestingly, these countries seem to also differ in the cultural and social heritage that shapes the behavior of entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-managers, which, in turn, gives rise to inconsistency in data on resilience and growth of entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-managers. It is timely to explore the dynamics of SE founders/owner-managers resilience and growth in fragile and turbulent contexts while identifying whether there are differences in the way entrepreneurs act and react in comparison to strong and stable environments. In doing so, understanding the elements of a post-conflict context is pivotal to examine on the relevance of the context for this research.

2.2.2. Underpinning concepts, theories and methods related to studies on entrepreneur/SE founder/owner-manager in post-conflict contexts

There are vivid concepts, theories, and methods in past literature, related to studies on entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-managers in post conflict contexts. Welter (2011) argued that thoughtful examination of context, including the cultural and institutional aspects that exist within certain contexts, are fundamental to capturing differences in entrepreneurial behaviors and outcomes. Entrepreneurship has many benefits such as job creation, regional and national economic improvement, and it can revamp markets and entire industries, and can contribute to the creation of the knowledge-based economy (Djip, 2014). For these reasons, research on entrepreneurship, especially in transition countries, has become increasingly popular (Djip, 2014; Effendic et al., 2015; Tonoyan et al., 2010; Doern, 2009) and challenging due to the complexity of transitional economies. The situation is even more complex in post-conflict economies since post-conflict entrepreneurship is troubled and not only by infrastructural issues, but also shaped by formal and informal institutions, making it challenging for SE founders/owner-managers to thrive. While the literature on institutions and entrepreneurship in transition economies is well established, institutional development in newborn and post-conflict states is under researched (Williams, & Vorley, 2017).

Specially, in emerging economies' institutions differ significantly from those in developed economies, and it had attracted researchers is increasing appreciation of the formal and informal

institutions, which significantly shape the strategy and performance of entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-managers in post -conflict contexts.

2.2.2.1 Formal and informal institutions

The New Institutional Economics (NIE) based on North (1990) has brought the discussion of institutions and their impact on entrepreneurship and growth to the forefront of academic debate. Institutional Economics, proposes that the incentives of value-adding behaviour in an economy depend on the quality of its institutions (North, 1990). It made a clear distinction between informal and formal institutions the way they influence a society's incentive system and an individual's behaviour. Formal institutions are constitutions and laws, economic rules, property rights and contracts. Informal institutions are embodied in the social lives of society as a whole – its values, norms, sanctions, taboos, customs, traditions, and codes of conduct (Krasniqi, & Branch, 2018). Informal institutions might also include corruption (Estrin, Korosteleva, & Mickiewicz, 2013) and the unstructured practices of doing business. Formal institutions provide the rules of the game, and the sanctioning mechanisms to enforce them whereas, informal institutions have a similar, but more hidden, normalising effect on individual behaviour. The design and operation of formal institutions is directly under the influence of the state, which can also indirectly influence the values, attitudes, and norms of a society through its pronouncements and actions and those of its officials (Welter, & Smallbone, 2011). In many transition economies, formal institutions have not been effective in fostering productive entrepreneurship (Williams, & Vorley, 2017). The freedom of business entry and start-up had contributed to the improvement in the overall framework for entrepreneurship (Futo, Hoggett, & Kallay, 1997). Therefore, where formal institutions are not reformed, entrepreneurs/ SE founders/owner-managers may turn to substitutive and informal practices, such as leveraging connections or engaging in corrupt activity, to overcome barriers and circumvent the rules of the game (Aidis, & Adachi, 2007).

NIEs also views entrepreneurs as the main agents of change. Entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-managers adapt their activities in response to formal and informal institutions. Indeed, this "institutional framework" can change the entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-managers incentives, and subsequently misallocate entrepreneurial talent, because a society's reward

system will lead to productive, unproductive, or destructive entrepreneurship (Baumol, 1990). Economic entities such as SEs are embedded in the local communities where they do business. In post-conflict economies, it is acknowledged that the environment for doing business can be adverse and is typically characterized by weak formal institutions and poor enforcement of laws, regulations, and property rights (Hoxha, 2009; Estrin, & Prevezer, 2011; Welter, & Smallbone, 2011). In countries in which formal institutions are inefficient or inadequate, trust in formal institutions is correspondingly low or absent. Interpersonal relationships, therefore, begin to dominate, serving as substitutes for institutional trust (Welter, & Smallbone, 2011). Unsurprisingly, entrepreneurs often develop relationships with public officials which exist in a "grey area" (Kalantaridis, 2007). These relationships with government officials have been shown to help entrepreneurs in transnational countries to achieve their desired results (Peng, & Luo, 2000), and have led to improved firm performance (Guo, Xu, & Jacobs, 2014). These relationships inevitably lead to the growth of corruption, and, with low levels of government oversight and accountability, they become the social norm.

As a summary, the existence and functioning of informal institutions do not always constrain entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-managers. On the contrary, there is evidence to suggest that entrepreneurs in transitional countries learn to cope with their corrupt business environments, and to use their informal ties to grow their firms (Xheneti, & Bartlett, 2012). Other studies, however, suggest that a turbulent and corrupt institutional framework is detrimental to the growth of firms because it stimulates a short-termism, informal networking, and opportunism (Manolova, & Yan, 2002). This situation may or may not be similar in post-conflict contexts.

2.2.2.2. Theories related to entrepreneur/SE founder/owner-manager in post-conflict contexts
As interest in entrepreneurship as a domain of research has intensified, so several new theoretical perspectives have emerged to explain the actions and logic that underlie entrepreneurial behavior. The traditional model of entrepreneurship draws largely on economic thinking to describe how an individual or firm takes entrepreneurial action by searching for areas where the demand for a product/service exceeds supply (Casson, 1982; Kihlstrom & Laffont, 1979).

Quite many articles that discuss destructive entrepreneurship use **institutional theory** (Rettberg, Leiteritz, & Nasi, 2011; Muhammad, Ullah, & Warren, 2016) to explain the entrepreneur behaviour. Institutional theory suggests that entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-managers must either conform or avoid significant deviations from the local community's acceptable way of doing things, including norms, social conventions, and other unwritten rules of conduct to gain legitimacy (Willmott, 2015). These norms, ethics, customs, and ideologies from the unofficial rules of the society, learned through the socialization process is the inherited view of the world from the older generations (Daatland, Herlofson, & Lima, 2011). The requirement to behave in a desirable manner within a socially constructed system constrain the range of strategic options a firm can pursue since these informal institutions determines the process which firms gain legitimacy from the local community to increase their survival and growth within the context (Berrone et al., 2020).

Similarly, **Effectuation theory/approach** continues to gain research attention from entrepreneurship scholars. Sarasvathy (2001, 2009) advanced the understanding of the entrepreneurial process by describing two distinct approaches to new venture creation: causation and effectuation. While causation is consistent with planned strategy approaches, effectuation processes are consistent with emergent strategy and include a selection of alternatives based on loss affordability, flexibility, and experimentation.

In the effectuation approach, the task of the entrepreneur/ SE founder/owner-manager is to develop the opportunity by experimenting and changing direction as new information becomes available. Under conditions of uncertainty, like post-conflict contexts, there is no feasible way to calculate an expected return for a given course of action. Thus, instead of analyzing alternatives and selecting the one with the highest expected return, the entrepreneur selects alternatives based on loss affordability. The entrepreneur/SE founder/owner-manager maintains flexibility, utilizes experimentation, and seeks to exert control over the future by making alliances with, and getting pre-commitments from, potential suppliers, competitors, and customers (Chandler, DeTienne, McKelvie, & Mumford, 2011). Instead of focusing on goals, the entrepreneur exerts control over the available set of things over which the entrepreneur has control (Sarasvathy,

2001). At the individual level, this includes personal knowledge, skills, and social networks. At the firm level, means physical, human, and organisational resources. In the effectuation theory there are mainly four principles that is noteworthy (1) a focus on short-term experiments to identify business opportunities in an unpredictable future, (2) a focus on projects where the loss in a worst-case scenario is affordable, (3) an emphasis on pre-commitments and strategic alliances to control an unpredictable future, and (4) exploitation of environmental contingencies by remaining flexible. One meta-analysis suggests that most of the core effectuation behaviors are positively related to venture performance (Read, Song & Smit, 2009).

Effectuation is relevant in dynamic, nonlinear, and ecological environments (Sarasvathy, 2001) where the future is unknowable and, therefore, not measurable. The theory of effectuation assumes that entrepreneurial opportunities are subjective, socially constructed, and created by entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-managers through a process of enactment. Effectuation (Sarasvathy, 2001) and entrepreneurial bricolage (Baker & Nelson, 2005) suggest that under uncertain conditions, entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-managers take a different route to identifying and exploiting opportunities.

Bricolage theory is another theory which is mainly focused on explaining how entrepreneurship emerges in economically depressed/resource-poor areas. The term "bricolage" can be defined as "making do by applying combinations of resources at hand to new problems and opportunities" (Baker & Nelson, 2005, p. 33). The concept of making something out of nothing is the core behind this theory, which means that the under-utilized resources can be converted into productive resources. Entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-managers that make use of resources at hand are viewed as individuals that refuse to accept the limitations of their environments.

Baker & Nelson (2005) inductively derived the foundations of a theory of entrepreneurial bricolage. They proposed that when entrepreneurs are confronted with penurious environments, (environments that present new challenges without providing new resources) they have three options: (1) to seek resources from domains external to the firm; (2) to avoid new challenges by remaining inert, downsizing, or disbanding; or (3) to enact bricolage by making do by applying combinations of the resources at hand to new problems and opportunities (Fisher, & Low, 2012).

Those who adopt the third approach have the choice to enact bricolage in five domains: (1) physical inputs—imbuing forgotten, discarded, worn, or presumed single-application materials with new use-value; (2) labor inputs—involving customers, suppliers, and hangers-on in providing work on projects; (3) skills inputs— permitting and encouraging the use of amateur and self-taught skills that would otherwise go unapplied; (4) customers/markets—providing products or services that would otherwise be unavailable; and (5) institutional and regulatory environment—refusing to enact limitations with regard to many "standards" and regulations, and by actively trying things in a variety of areas in which entrepreneurs either do not know the rules or do not see them as constraining (Fisher & Low, 2012).

The theory of entrepreneurial bricolage rests on the concept of the social construction of resources. The resource environment is unique to the uses firms make of it. This leads to differences in how entrepreneurs interpret their environment and in the ability of their firms to survive and prosper given apparently similar resource constraints. Resource environments are therefore socially constructed, which allows for specific social and organisation mechanisms to facilitate the creation of something from nothing (Baker & Nelson, 2005). The conceptualization of entrepreneurial bricolage provides a good approach for analysing the relationship between resources and entrepreneurial opportunities in resource constrained environments (Fisher, & Low, 2012). This theory is, therefore, most relevant to entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-managers operating in penurious environments such as post-conflict contexts.

As a summary at this point, it is somehow clear to say that a mixture of entrepreneurship and institutional theories are there which try to add value of studying the conflict and post contexts themselves, through analysing the role of entrepreneur/SE founder/owner-manager.

2.2.2.3. Methods used to study entrepreneur/SE founder/owner-manager in post-conflict contexts

Majority of the past researchers had depended on qualitative methods (case studies and interviews) rather than quantitative ones with small and non-random samples in some cases. Getting information from a large population despite the turbulence may have resulted to choose these research methodologies. Due to the complexity of the post-conflict context, a survey would

not serve the purpose and will not be able to capture the real situation of these contexts. In their systematic review, Aldairany, et.al. (2018) concluded, after reviewing 57 articles related to entrepreneurship in conflict and post-conflict contexts, that more involvement in collecting primary data is required, without depending on the published households' surveys, which are a kind of secondary data. However, qualitative methods could play a substantial role in intensely and directly studying the uniqueness of regions through interviews or detailed case studies. Ultimately, researchers could still explore the frontiers of fresh methodologies to advance further understanding of these entrepreneurial issues (Aldairany, et.al, 2018).

2.2.3. Notion of Entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-managers in post-conflict context

SEs and entrepreneur/SE founder/owner-manager are closely related, and governments perceive them as the creators of economic activity. The concept of entrepreneurship in post-conflict differs than one in a stable environment.

Post-conflict societies experience population reduction, poor security, ineffective regulation, capital flight, widespread corruption, and a degraded infrastructure, all of which hinder commercial prospects and entrepreneurship development rates (Djip, 2014). The war destroys established commercial patterns and causes extensive damage to a country's political, economic, and social structure. Hence, entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-managers in post-conflict economies must develop without any previous institutional foundation. Moreover, some people make profits through illegal activities such as smuggling and black-market activities. Consequently, entrepreneurship in such extreme environments is impeded, and usually happens through opportunistic behavior and unproductive entrepreneurial activity detrimental to overall economic recovery. These unproductive entrepreneurial activities continue even after the war has ended, through illegal networks (Bray, 2009). Thus, the concept of a **"grey economy"** becomes an important and quite common characteristic of post-conflict societies.

2.2.4. Challenges and obstacles faced by entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-managers in post-conflict context

There is collusive amount of past research conducted in developed countries on challenges faced by SEs and entrepreneurs. A study conducted among the best managed 50 Canadian small companies revealed that all these successful companies were largely homogeneous with respect to their key challenges which were customer management and marketing, managing business growth, financial management, leadership, human resources management and external environment (Chan, Bhargava, & Street, 2006). This might be true as Canada is a developed country with equal and fair distribution of resources to all its small companies. These key challenges will not be applicable for the post-conflict context due to its unique construction.

The owner's lack of willingness to grow was the most cited growth barrier among the SEs and SE founders (Hamelin, 2013; Storey, 2011; Gundry & Welsch, 2001) where financial barriers, competitive barriers, market challenges, regulatory issues, lack of training, lack of provision of public services, economic conditions were the other barriers for growth revealed by the past researchers (Magambo, 2015; Kazungu, Ndiege, & Matolo, 2013; Coad & Tamvad, 2012; Gill & Biger, 2012; Fumo & Jabbour, 2011; Ishengoma & Kappel, 2011; Johnson & Nino-Zarazua, 2011; Franco & Haase, 2010; Robson & Obeng, 2008; Moktan, 2007; Okpara & Wynn, 2007; Okurut & Bategeka, 2006; Bartlett & Bukvič, 2001; Obwona & Mugume, 2001; Reinikka & Svensson, 2001). As pointed out, several growth barriers have been identified in the literature that impede the growth of SEs and entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-managers, and they can be summarized mainly into two broad categories as internal growth barriers and external growth barriers (Table 2.1).

Factor	Main barriers highlighted
Internal growth barriers	*Lack of willingness, Lack of innovation, Lack of management competence on the part of the owner; Lack of skilled labor, Marketing, Technology, Lack of starting capital, Lack of training, Inadequate bookkeeping and recordkeeping, Insufficient profits, Low demand for products or services, Lack of access to raw materials, Lack of knowledge of the business, High business-running-cost, Low education level of the owner, Inadequate staff, Little effort on research & development, Withdrawing too much cash, Lack of market research*
External growth barriers	*Competition, Economic crises, Consumer behavior, Government policies, Access to finance, Geographical location, Corruption, Regularity issues, Infrastructure facilities, Lack of information about financing options, Lack of financial expertise, High collateral requirements, Bureaucratic procedures, Tax burden, Unfair competition, Poverty, Lack of purchasing capacity of the consumers, Economic conditions*

Table 2.1 – Internal and external growth barriers

What about the situation for a post-conflict turbulent emerging economy? Although it has been found that different factors create barriers for the growth of SEs/SE founders, they may not have the same impact on them in every country of the world because of context differences (Gill, Biger, Mand, & Shah, 2012). Moreover, there is very limited research on how to overcome barriers (Franco, & Haase, 2010; Bartlett, & Bukvič, 2001). On the other hand, the literature on the challenges faced by SE founders/owner-managers in a post-conflict economy seems to be very rare. They face major challenges of different nature. There were several studies which focused on the challenges of operating in post-conflict economies related to the well-established companies. Lack of infrastructure and services, pervasive corruption, skewed economic structures, shifting and often dubious relationships with politicians and local elites, contract violation compounded by unreliable legal systems, reputational risk from interaction with illegal regimes and the high cost of finance based on the perception of risk among financial institutions are some of the challenges highlighted in the previous research (Games & Rendi, 2019; Aghedo, 2013; Collier, & Duponchel, 2013). However, in all these studies, the focus has been on large companies and their challenges of operating in post-conflict economies, and they are not specific

to the context of SEs and SE founders/owner-managers. It is evident that past researchers have neglected the context of SE founders/owner-managers. In this context, it would be highly appropriate to examine the barriers faced by SE founders/owner-managers and how they overcome such barriers especially in a post-conflict situation.

2.2.4.1. Obstacles and barriers in turbulent contexts

In difficult conditions, entrepreneurs may seek to sustain themselves. While in post-conflict, entrepreneurs may tend to act more carefully. In Iraq, for instance, entrepreneurs chose the "waiting and watching policy" (Desai, 2011). Literature points out three main challenges generally encountered by businesses in post-conflict contexts: financial obstacles, institutional support, and human capital. According to Lemmon, access to markets and finance, gender bias against female and approaching networks and training are some of the obstacles that are faced by businesses (Lemmon, 2012). Infrastructure, regulation, finance and foreign investment, and the human resources are the four main factors revealed as essential for the private sector in war-torn countries in research done in Cambodia, Mozambique, El Salvador, and Eritrea (Kusago, 2005). In this research, Kusago (2005) conducted a small sample survey with 20 participants and found that lack of governmental support, deficiency of access to funds and a shortage of skilled worker were the primary worries that face the private sector. The same barriers were discovered in a study conducted in the Philippines related to both the conflict and post-conflict contexts (Cañares, 2011).

Financial obstacles had received most attention among the challenges, in which, it substantially discourage or encourage entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-managers to do business. A study done on Balkan countries (Bosnia & Herzegovina), financial sector reforms was revealed as a priority for microfinance organisations (Demirgüc-Kunt, Klapper, & Panos, 2009). In Congo, the micro-finance sector faced tremendous challenges in lending micro, small and medium enterprises with a lack of collateral, high risk, limited human capital risk and damaged financial sector (Santos, 2003). Likewise, the probability of owning a business in Chittagong region in Bangladesh is 11% lower than other areas of the country due to the substantial capital requirement (Chowdhury, Van Mele, & Hauser, 2011). These findings reveal the finance obstacle faced by SE founders/owner-managers in expanding their businesses in post-conflict contexts.

The second most attention grabbed obstacle in the past literature is the **deficiency in human capital and experience** of the entrepreneur. The lack of experience of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-managers aggravates the difficulty in assessing funds and establishing relationships with the banks (Demirgüç-Kunt et al., 2009). Djip (2014), confirmed this by highlighting the fact that even though Bosnia and Herzegovina seemed to be flourished in opportunity, low human capital skills affect the possibility to move into self-employment.

The **institutional support** was the next prominent obstacle visible in the literature. A study on two cities in Iraq (Najaf and Amara) revealed several challenges imposed by both formal and informal institutions for the entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-managers as widespread corruption, lacking in legal protections, informal self-government, poor infrastructure, deficient transportation, weak banking system and laws as well as low levels of skilled human capital challenges (Desai, 2011). Similarly, the post-conflict context of Bosnia and Herzegovina comprised with lack of legal frameworks, weak environmental practices, and business conflicts which hinders the entrepreneur propensity (Djip, 2014). Another post-conflict study in Kosovo shows that corruption is the only institutional variable that negatively influences business growth (Krasniqi, & Mustafa, 2016). Moreover, Palestine SE founders/owner-managers are challenged due to lack of formal institutions, namely, the legal and legitimate framework (Bayyoud, & Sayyad, 2016).

Analysis of the past literature made clear the point that entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-managers face myriad challenges in post-conflict contexts. These challenges vary in each individual country or context and, therefore, in those different locations and contexts they have their specific issues. At the same time, these challenges can become a crisis for entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-managers operating in a post-conflict context due to their low profile. In common terms, financial constraints, poor infrastructures and institutions, and low skilled human capital seem to be the most prominent obstacles which may turn to be the determining factors on the resilience and growth of SE founders/owner-managers, who are operating in turbulent situations. Will these crises/constraints be same, and faced by SE founders/owner-managers in a

turbulent post-conflict emerging economy like Sri Lanka? Hence it is timely to find out the crises faced by SE founders/owner-managers in a turbulent post-conflict situation. Thus, the first research question was posed as: ***'What crises are faced by SE founders/owner-managers in a turbulent emerging economy with a post-conflict context?'***

2.3 Crises effect on SE founders/owner-managers' resilience in a post-conflict turbulent environment

Crises are vivid and as explained in the section 2.2, SE founders/owner-managers are facing myriad crises and in fact it is their day today business. A crisis can be described as having a small probability of occurrence but when it does the effects are immediately known. A crisis represents both an opportunity and threat depending on how it is perceived (Doern, 2016). Previous studies have shown the dynamic relationship between labour market shocks and entrepreneurship. For instance, there is evidence that the lack of employment opportunities generates incentives to start some type of entrepreneurial activity (Audretsch, 2012; Faria, Cuestas, & Mourelle, 2010). In a crisis context, a gloomy outlook for employment opportunities and wage improvements encourages people to see self-employment as an alternative for generating income (Zissimopoulos, & Karoly, 2010). Nevertheless, crises have negative impacts in most of the cases. As a threat, it can substantially change existing structures necessitating spending on new resources (Eggers, 2020), and can be a danger and cause distress to entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-managers. A crisis can take a variety of different forms from health, political, financial, technological, organisational and natural (Ratten, 2020). A crisis affects entrepreneurs as citizens but also as business owners (Liu, Shankar, & Yun, 2017). These crises put SE owners/owner-managers to test where they are expected to be proactive despite the uncertainty inherited in a crisis. New approaches are needed regardless of rational and normal approaches due to ambiguity of the situation, where SE founders need to make out with the resources at their disposal. These crises encounter vivid effects on the SE founders/owner-managers related to both individual/entrepreneurial level and organisational level.

The **business level effects** concern the financial impact of the crisis on the sales, costs, and earnings of the business. These impacts can be direct, as an example through changes in

demand. Likewise, they can be indirect, such as through government subsidies introduced to assist firms to cope with the crisis.

The crisis has the potential to jeopardise the long-term survival of firms in the market (Amann, & Jaussaud, 2012). Most recently, the global COVID-19 pandemic has had a catastrophic impact on the global economy and has exerted significant influence on many, entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-managers in a myriad of ways. It led to a multitude of issues including reduced business activity, temporary business closures, staffing issues and supply chain interruptions (Belitski, M., Caiazza, R., & Lehmann, E. E. 2021). In the Covid 19 scenario, in the case of female entrepreneurs, recent empirical evidence of developing countries suggests that they have been mainly affected in terms of sales, household income, lifestyle and mental health, which, in turn, has led many of them to close their businesses (Mustafa, Khursheed, Fatima, & Rao, 2021). Other recent studies have shown that lack of financial resources during COVID-19 has been particularly problematic for SE founders/owner-managers because the crisis has dramatically reduced the availability of early-stage seed investments (Brown & Rocha, 2020), and because start-ups, to a large extent, have been excluded from policy measures and support programs (Kuckertz, Brandle, Gaudig, 2020).

The business-level effects of the crisis translate into effects at the level of the entrepreneur. These effects encompass not only financial but also psychological and social effects. The **entrepreneur-level financial effects** of the crisis concern the change in the wealth and income of the entrepreneur. These entrepreneur-level financial effects are typically highly correlated with the business-level effects (Hamilton, 2000). Most of the scenarios, private income of the SE founder is a representative of the business income, as the business is fully owned by the entrepreneur/SE founder.

The **psychological effects** of the crisis include emotions, motivation, and wellbeing. A crisis may alter the context in which an entrepreneur/SE founder/owner-manager operates and consequently can influence the way in which personality affects business outcomes and psychological well-being (Salmony, Kanbach, & Stubner, 2021). For example, some personality types that may have thrived entrepreneurially in general situations may begin to struggle when

the context shifts toward crisis. Facing adverse business outcomes likely affected the individual psychological well-being (Bliese, Edwards, & Sonnentag, 2017) of many entrepreneurs. The effects of psychological well-being on health are so severe, and this is critical for SE founders/owner-managers, for whom psychological well-being is a central motivator in their work (Stephan, 2018). Previous reviews have emphasized the importance of considering the contextual factors influencing entrepreneurs' psychological well-being (Stephan, 2018).

While we live in a time of ongoing crises related to climate disruptions and other world events, some crises occur more on a random and surprising basis. These crises are a stressful experience as it requires a new way of thinking and behaviour. Economic stress, due to job-related insecurity, can evoke emotions of helplessness, hopelessness, and desperation (Hellgren, & Sverke, 2003) as entrepreneurs strive to maintain and grow their business, keep employees working, and avoid bankruptcy (Egan, & Tosanguan; 2009; Latham, 2009). Another research conducted by Patel & Rietveld (2020) found that during the COVID-19 pandemic, entrepreneurs/SE founders have experienced greater psychological distress than employees due to financial insecurity. In addition, the crisis may also have strong impact on the motivations of the entrepreneur. Depending on the situation faced by the entrepreneur, and their personality characteristics, the crisis may cause some to feel energised and motivated to respond effectively to the crisis but may lead others to lose their entrepreneurial motivation.

There is another set of effects which can be highlighted as **social effects**. These are the entrepreneur's/SE founder's private and professional relationships with the contacts in his/her social network. These effects can be either positive or negative depending on the situation. The crisis may lead to greater connectedness between entrepreneurs and their stakeholders or unity among groups of entrepreneurs, helping each other out to survive the crisis by enhancing stronger embeddedness in the social network. However, some SE founders/owner-managers may lose relationships with customers, employees, family members and relatives which may result in social isolation (Torrès, Benzari, & Fisch, 2021).

As highlighted above, each entrepreneur/SE founder/owner-manager interprets the crisis against the backdrop of their own situation, that is, 'what does the crisis mean for me and my

work', and under consideration of their business. Depending on how the effects of a crisis are interpreted cognitively, the entrepreneur may react differently to the crisis, or not react at all. As pointed out throughout this section, the reaction of the entrepreneur/SE founder/owner-manager towards a crisis decides whether he/she is going to stay in entrepreneurship or exit. Studying the perceptions and viewpoints of the SE founders/owner-managers in a post-conflict context can expand the knowledge in this area and can shed light to the understanding on their perceptions on crisis and the effect of vivid crises on them in the personal level as well as how it effects the personal and organisational resilience. Hence the second research question was designed as: **"How do these crises affect SE founders/owner-managers resilience in a post-conflict turbulent environment?".**

2.4 SE founders/owner-managers personal resilience and its effect on their organisational resilience and growth in a post-conflict turbulent environment

Section 2.2 elaborates on the various types of crises and section 2.3 explained the effects of crises on the SE founders/owner-managers. These crises and their impact mold the SE founders/owner-managers behaviour which impact the resilience of the SE founder and determine whether the SE is going develop resilience and grow.

Growth is the most attention grabbed concept in the economics literature. Business growth is vital and significant to the field of SEs and entrepreneurship as the business growth is considered as a key indicator of entrepreneurial success (Baron, 2007; Delmar et al., 2003), for small firms (Davidsson, Delmar, & Wiklund, 2017). There is no unique method to measure the growth of a firm throughout a given period (Delmar et al., 2003). The literature on firm growth is vast and most of the researchers have focused on its importance for creation of jobs and economic development (Moreno, & Casillas, 2007; Barringer et al., 2005; Delmar et al., 2003).

2.4.1. Entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-managers ambitions and perceptions of growth

Entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-managers play a significant role in developing the economy of a nation in terms of sustainable growth, employment creation, development of entrepreneurship and contribution to export earnings (Khan, Ju, & Hassan, 2018; Yue & Martín, 2015). Yue & Martín (2015) have claimed that the SEs are sometimes more productive businesses compared to micro-businesses and large businesses, as they are known to drive employment and competition. SEs have offered economic stability to owners by providing a steady source of income, and they have created more employment and have contributed tremendously towards the economy (Page & Söderbom, 2015; Wanjiru & Gongera, 2015; Mason & Brown, 2013). Further, while growth offers the opportunity for financial gain, it also increases a firm's chance for survival (Davidsson & Delmar, 1997). Hence growth is seen as a method to improve and to protect the income of the owners, and it is worthwhile studying. In this research study, ***growth is defined as a method improve and protect the income of the SE founders/owner-managers.*** However, what exactly growth means for SE founders/owner-managers, is a point to investigate.

2.4.1.1. Conceptual Issues relating to growth

While there is little consensus on how to measure business growth in entrepreneurship studies, there seems to be a general agreement on the usefulness of such growth measures (Achtenhagen et al., 2010). As of now, no study has so far been conducted to systematically explore and validate what success/growth really means to entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-managers, despite evidence pointing to the importance of having clear and accurate measure of growth (Murphy, Trailer, & Hill, 1996; Watson, Newby, & Woodliff, 2000). Achtenhagen et. al (2010) emphasis in their study that all researchers and policy makers need to rethink and make explicit what they mean by "business growth," as one cannot just assume that they are all talking about the same thing. Understanding growth/success from the perspective of the entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-managers important for SEs due to their dominant role in determining the firm's direction and performance (Masurel, & Van Montfort, 2006).

Past researchers have a lack of agreement over what constitutes the best measure of growth when it comes to SE founders/owner-managers. There are mainly two schools of thoughts; 1)

strict use of financial indicators to measure success/growth, which continues to dominate the entrepreneurship field, and 2) using nonfinancial indicators to measure success/growth.

The former use traditional financial measures of growth, such as profitability, sales turnover, and return on investment to decide on the SE's success. Nevertheless, all SE founders/owner-managers do not aim for growth as for some of them, success means survival and sustaining the business (Beaver, 2002). For those SE founders/owner-managers also, this group asserts that survival in business also requires a firm to be financially viable. Researchers following this path have perhaps been influenced by the notion that "businesses are only viable if they are financially solvent" (Marlow & Strange, 1994, p. 179).

In contrast, the latter group stresses the importance of nonfinancial measures of success (Hoque, 2004; O'Regan & Ghobadian, 2004). This group highlights the idea that SE founders/owner-managers growth/success is the attainment of personal objectives such as satisfaction with one's own personal involvement, autonomy, and work–life balance, rather than financial outcome (Ahmad, Wilson, & Kummerow, 2011). For many entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-managers, money is not a prime motivator but rather a pleasant by-product of having the freedom to take charge of their own future (Beaver, 2002).

This one-dimensional approach of looking at the indicators of success has attracted some criticism for its poor reflection of reality. Accordingly, Walker & Brown (2004) suggested that financial and nonfinancial measures complement each other and provide a richer description of actual performance. A study based on Malaysia, revealed that both financial and nonfinancial measures were used by SE founders/owner-mangers when defining growth/success (Ahmad & Seet, 2009) where profitability, business growth, sales indicator, low debt levels and market share were the financial indicators mentioned by the SE founders/owner-managers and personal satisfaction, balanced and value of life, able to control own business, survival in business, healthy and happy life, balance between work and family, creating more jobs for local community, gain customer trust and confidence, have satisfied customers and career progress are the non-financial indicators revealed in this study. It was evident that the SE founders/owner-managers

view the concept of "growth" in vivid ways, and it is unique and subjective from context to context, firm to firm and SE owner to owner.

2.4.2. The concept of Organisational resilience

The notion of resilience has become increasingly important in the field of entrepreneurship. Although there is a growing number of studies using the resilience concept in organisation and management research, the notion of resilience is relatively new in entrepreneurship research (Duchek, 2018). This is particularly surprising as previous research suggests that the resilience of entrepreneurs could be a key factor for entrepreneurial success (Markman, & Baron, 2003; Ayala, & Manzano, 2010; Ayala, & Manzano, 2014). Entrepreneurs are frequently confronted with unexpected events that potentially threaten business survival; events such as financial crises, technological innovations, or new competitors in the field. Consequently, failure and setbacks are daily business for entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-managers. It is noteworthy to explore how organisational resilience is developed in the context of SEs and the role of entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-managers in shaping the resilience of the organisation.

The term 'Resilience' is defined variably in different contexts, including engineering (Hollnagel, 2006); ecology (Pearce, 2009); psychology (Schwarz, 2018); sociology (Adger, 2000); disaster management (Manyena, 2006), and business administration (Vogus & Sutcliffe, 2007). Resilience has been defined vividly by various authors; resilience as the resistance and flexibility capacity of a system in order to attain sustainability (Kantur, 2015); resilience as the ability to dynamically reinvent business ideas and approaches as situations change (Koronis & Ponis, 2018); resilience as the capacity of a business to self-renew over time through innovation (Reinmoeller & van Baardwijk, 2005); resilience as the ability to sustainably adapt to changes and shocks that challenge stability (Leichenko, 2011); resilience as the maintenance of positive adjustment under challenging conditions such that the organisation emerges from those conditions strengthened and more resourceful (Vogus & Sutcliffe, 2007); resilience as the inherent characteristics of those organisations that are able to respond more quickly, recover faster or develop more unusual ways of doing business under duress than others (Linnenluecke, 2017); resilience as a search for understanding different responses to exogenous changes and shocks that push towards

innovations (Williams & Vorley, 2014). Herbane, Elliott, & Swartz (2004, p. 437) conceptualize organisational resilience as an on-going capability "that underpins organisational development in complex environments." Weick and Sutcliffe (2011) suggest that resourcefulness, technical, organisational, and rapidity capabilities are necessary for resilience in high reliability organisations. Contradictory to the given definitions, 'resilience' sometimes refers to an organisation's inability or unwillingness to change owing to a deeply entrenched organisational culture (Limnios, Mazzarol, Ghadouani, & Schilizzi, 2014; Thomas & Davies, 2005). However, the term more commonly refers to the organisational and employee strength, perseverance and recovery when encountering adversity. In a business context, resilience addresses the 'capacity for an enterprise to survive, adapt, and grow in the face of turbulence' (Fiksel, 2007).

There are several established theories when it comes to studying the resilience concept. Adopting established theories facilitate our understanding of resilience (Tukamuhabwa et al., 2015). Established theories support to build the relationship between variables by enabling comparison between research results undertaken in different contexts (Foy et al., 2011). Following this argument, the theories related to resilience were studied and scrutinized. Among the others, theories related to crisis and disaster management have been found as the highly used theories on research related to resilience (Halkos, Skouloudis, Malesios, & Evangelinos, 2018; Harries, McEwen, & Wragg, 2018; Mendoza, Lau, & Castillejos, 2018; Parker & Ameen, 2018; Torres-Alruiz, Pilquimán & Henríquez-Zúñiga, 2018; Doern, 2016; Orchiston, Prayag, & Brown, 2016; Wedawatta & Ingirige, 2016; Dahles & Susilowati, 2015; Huggins & Thompson, 2015; Akgün & Keskin, 2014). This result is consistent with Kantur (2015), stating that crisis and disaster theories have dominated the organisational resilience research in the business and management stream. In contrast, Tukamuhabwa et al., (2015) found Resource Based View (RBV) the most applied theory in literature related to resilience. As per the proponents of the RBV theory, possessing unique, rare, and inimitable resources is desirable to advance companies' competitive advantage and thus resilience especially in resource-scarce environments (Acquaah, Amoako-Gyampah, & Jayaram, 2011). Research on large organisations has emphasized that relative resource abundance is a significant driver of resilience and that resources of various kinds (financial

resources, stock, inventory, raw materials, etc.) can contribute significantly to resilience if significant shocks or challenges are experienced (Branicki, Sullivan-Taylor, & Livschitz, 2017).

2.4.3. What is a Small Enterprise?

The small enterprises literature falls mainly under the umbrella of the Small and Medium Enterprises. It is very difficult to distinguish between the SMEs and SEs. Some countries simply use SME to identify all so-called small ventures. They do not have a clear demarcation between the small and medium concepts.

When it comes to the SME literature, a universal definition for SMEs cannot be found. Even countries in the same region are not in an agreement on the definition of SME. Enormous number of researchers and decision-making bodies have defined SMEs. There are quite a diverse definitions, criteria and meanings have been put forwarded by these stakeholders. Darren & Conrad (2009) mentioned that this is mainly due to their global diversity and characteristics. Darren & Conrad (2009) in their book clearly explains that to reflect the industry, country, size, and employment differences accurately, the SME definition varies from industry to industry; country to country; size to size and number of employees to number of employees. The most popular criteria among the researchers are annual turnover, production assets and number of employees, and activity. Alarape (2009) defines a small enterprise as "an enterprise with a labour size of 11-100 employees. According to Darren & Conrad (2009), the medium enterprises are the businesses that employ up to 249 employees in UK, in European Union, they employ up to 250 employees, in Australia, they employ up to 200 employees while in U.S.A, they accommodate up to 500 employees.

Ayyagari, Beck, & Demirguc-Kunt (2007) in their research which used 76 countries across the globe and came up with a definition for manufacturing SMEs as the companies which have less than 250 employees as SMEs. In developing countries number of employees and size of asset or turnover for SMEs tend to be much smaller compared with their counterparts in developed countries due to their relative size of their business entities and economies (Ganbold, 2008). Within Sri Lankan context there are a variety of definitions given to identify a SME and there is

no clear definition to identify a SME (Gamage 2003, Hewaliyanage 2001, Central Bank of Sri Lanka, Department of Small Industries, Export Development Board).

Tom Gibson (2008) in his report on Defining SMEs: A Less Imperfect Way of Defining Small and Medium Enterprises in Developing Countries to the Brookings Global Economy and Development come up with a very valid contribution. He argues that it is not practical to distinguish the small and medium enterprises. *If small businesses are provided the same benefits as medium businesses and studies of SMEs make no distinction between the two, we see little reason to continue to use such distinctions. We therefore think it is time to make the de facto merger of "Small and Medium" a de jure recognition of "SME" as a single size group, or "development asset class"* (Gibson, & Van der Vaart, 2008). After going through most of the countries' definition on SEs the researcher also believes that this to be true. In this research the number of employees was used to select the sample of small enterprises for the research. ***If the number of permanent employees is less than 100 it was qualified to fall under the Small Enterprises category and if they are information rich, the SE founders/owner-managers was selected as the sample***.

2.4.4. Small Enterprises and Resilience

When it comes to a crisis, SEs are highly vulnerable due to the problems and constraints related to human and financial resources. Resilience and SES have been in the limelight of the academics and policy makers in recent years (Alberti et al., 2018). Moreover, it was subject to scientific and policy debate (Linnenluecke, 2017; Williams & Vorley, 2017). This scientific and policy interest had encouraged the extension of the relevant body of knowledge. However, studying the resilience of SEs has been labelled as challenging (Tognazzo, Gubitta, & Favaron, 2016; Dahlberg & Guay, 2015) and the reason being the inconclusiveness. This inconclusiveness was due to multi facets like not having an agreed-upon definition and measurement of SME's resilience, and influencing variables (Tognazzo et al., 2016; Dahlberg & Guay, 2015). It would be worthy to understand whether the SE resilience triggered by specific disruption or multifaceted disruptions and the nature of disruptions may not only be specific but can also be frequent and a day-to-day phenomenon and may vary from context to context. Hence, the SE's vulnerability to disruptions may contextually differ (Linnenluecke, 2017). Prior research on resilience has associated the

concept to only specific disruptions, e.g., the impact of London 2011 riots on SEs (Doern, 2016); the impact pf financial crisis on SEs (Lai et al., 2016); the impact of Hurricane Katrina on SEs (Runyan, 2006). However, SEs operating in emerging countries like Sri Lanka, face unfolding and multifaceted disruptions (Linnenluecke, 2017; Tengeh, 2016) relate to their external environment due to post-conflict period, poorly function markets, lack of developed infrastructure, natural disasters, and institutional deficiencies. How these SE founders manage to develop resilience after facing these chaotic situations may vary (Branzei & Abdelnour, 2010) and to understand how SE founders/owner-managers overcome these turbulent business environments, the emerging markets seem to offer a suitable setting (Littlewood & Holt, 2018).

Becoming resilient may even be more critical for SE founders/owner-managers because they are more vulnerable due to various challenges, which are unique to them compared to large firms. SMEs usually face weaker cash flow and less equity reserves, and they lack resources and the necessary skills to pursue long term strategies to drive resilience (Ates & Bititci, 2011; Thun & Hoenig, 2011). Past researchers have found that SMEs generally lack resources and capabilities (Herbane, 2010; Vossen, 1998), hence they attempt to build resilience through strategic and operational readiness (Sharifi, Ismail, Qiu, & Najafi, 2013; Sullivan-Taylor & Branicki, 2011; Sheffi, 2007), positive adjustments (Weick & Quinn, 1999) or knowledge creation. They need flexible work force, strategic thinking, and top management support to retain knowledge (Levy, Alvesson, & Willmott, 2003). They must balance their soft and hard assets (Beer & Nohria, 2000) to develop win-win situations (Gunasekaran, Rai, & Griffin, 2011). Contrary to all these arguments, Williams & Vorley (2014) have pointed out that SEs are particularly responsive to exogenous shocks as they are more flexible, adaptable, and innovative than large companies. This research has been carried out in Sheffield, UK extensively through in-depth interviews with officials in Sheffield City Region. Another research conducted in the UK using data collected from 268 SMEs revealed that locational attributes are positively associated with organisational resilience (Herbane, 2020). Most of the above-mentioned past research have been carried out in stable economies with less turbulence. Thus, it is necessary to study whether the situation in turbulent emerging economies with post-conflict backdrop, like Sri Lanka, is the same or different.

What would happen if a SE faced a crisis? Would they become resilient? Is there a connectivity between individual/entrepreneurial resilience of SE founders/owner-managers in achieving organisational resilience? This would be interesting to investigate.

2.4.5. Entrepreneurial/personal resilience

What is entrepreneurial resilience? Researchers have defined resilience in vivid ways. Most of these definitions encompass psychological and emotional aspects of the SE founders/owner-managers. Resilience was defined as an ability to maintain relatively stable, healthy levels of psychological and emotional functioning over time after experiencing trauma or serious loss (Bonanno, 2004, 2005; Eicher, Matzka, & Dubey, 2015; Leipold, & Greve, 2009).

Researchers have analysed resilience dimensions, imported from health and psychology research, in the context of entrepreneurship (see Bullough, & Renko, 2013; Manzano, & Ayala, 2013; De Vries, & Shields, 2006). These studies are predominantly quantitative (Ayala, & Manzano, 2014; Bullough, & Renko, 2013; Manzano, & Ayala, 2013) and employ samples of entrepreneurs facing challenging circumstances, such as living in war zones (Bullough et al., 2014) and overcoming cultural restrictions regarding gender (Loh, & Dahesihsari, 2013). Existing research also focuses on exploring relationships between resilience and concepts of importance for entrepreneurship such as entrepreneurial decisions (Bullough et al., 2014) and entrepreneurial intentions (Bullough, & Renko, 2013).

Moreover, well-established survival instincts are a feature among the successful entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-managers. Positive attitude towards risks (Hedner, Abouzeedan, & Klofsten, 2011), being positive when confronted with setbacks (Baron, & Markman, 2000), and sometimes accepting failures as an opportunity to renew and rebuild (Hayward, Forster, Sarasvathy, & Fredrickson, 2010) are discussed by the past researchers. Furthermore, need for achievement, generalized self-efficacy, innovativeness, stress tolerance, need for autonomy, and proactive personality (Rauch, & Frese, 2007), Comfort with failure (Baron, & Markman, 2000; Hayward et al. 2010), Comfort with risk and uncertainty (Hedner, Abouzeedan, & Klofsten, 2011), Opportunity-seeking (Bullough, & Renko, 2013; Bullough et al. 2014) are other features exhibited by the SE founders/owner-managers. All these factors are **Individual traits and qualities** which are related to the entrepreneurial resilience which directly

influence the organisational resilience. Therefore, the strength of SEs may depend on the entrepreneurial mindset of the SE founders/owner-managers which enables the SEs to be flexible, adaptive, and innovative (Vossen, 1998). As De Vries & Shields (2006) argue, if the resilience is a key trait of the entrepreneur/SE founder/owner-manager, it is important to understand both the basis for an entrepreneur's resilience and how resilient entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-managers might contribute to SE resilience.

There are a quite a collection of past literature on SE founders/owner-managers **demographic characteristics** and their relationship and impact on the SE's success. Barringer & Jones (2004) came up with two main reasons to highlight the relationship between owner characteristics and firm growth; firstly, the founder of the company places a lasting stamp on their businesses that influence the culture and behaviors of their firms, and secondly launching a new firm is a challenging process.

Several previous studies have found that demographic characteristics such as age, gender, education, and former work experience had an impact on entrepreneurial intention, entrepreneurial orientation, and entrepreneurial readiness. A study in India by Sinha (1996) disclosed that successful entrepreneurs/SE founders were relatively younger in age. This was confirmed by Reynolds (2001), by finding that individuals ranging from 25 to 44 years were the most entrepreneurially active. Kristiansen, Furuholt, & Wahid (2003) added to the same debate by finding a significant correlation between age of the entrepreneur and business success in their study on Internet café entrepreneurs in Indonesia. In their research, the older (>25 years old) entrepreneurs were more successful than the younger ones.

The other most researched demographic characteristic was the gender. The gendered view of entrepreneurship strongly commented that male entrepreneurs are the "ideal" type of entrepreneurs (Jones, 2014; Ahl & Marlow, 2012). Mazzarol, Volery, Doss, & Thein (1999) found that a female was generally less likely to be a founder of a new business than a male. Women-owned businesses are often portrayed as less successful when compared to men's (Henry, Foss, & Ahl, 2016; Blackburn, Hart, & Wainwright, 2013; Marlow & McAdam, 2013; Marlow, Henry, & Carter, 2009). The debate had continued by adding that women-owned businesses are smaller

than men's in terms of sales (Loscocco & Bird, 2012), assets (Coleman, 2007), and employees (Coleman, 2007; Heilbrunn, 2004). Moreover, past research shed light by finding that barriers differ by gender (Brixiová & Kangoye, 2016), where women are often more afraid of failure than men, and men are more likely to say they have knowledge and skills to start a new business (Brush, Ali, Kelley, & Greene, 2017). This previous gender comparative research have been heavily quantitative and focused on looking for differences between female and male entrepreneurs.

Kolvereid (1996) found that individuals with prior entrepreneurial experience had significantly higher entrepreneurial intentions than those without such experience. Conversely, Mazzarol et al., (1999) have found that respondents with previous government employment experience were less likely to be successful founders of SEs. Research conducted in Kerowa, Kenya using 45 registered hotels as a sample has found that managerial experience has a strong, positive, and significant influence on the growth of micro and SEs (Ongoro, 2014).

Another widely researched demographic factor is the higher education (Nichter & Goldmark, 2009; Barringer & Jones, 2004; Watson, Stewart, & BarNir, 2003; Smallbone & Wyer, 2000; Sapienza & Grimm, 1997; McPherson & Schapiro, 1994). Results of 150 SEs in Nigeria revealed that literacy level of the SE founder/owner-manager tends to influence the general performance notably in small-scale enterprises (Aworemi et al., 2010), where education positively influences on success in business. In contrast to the view that higher education is a factor for business growth, Papadaki, Chami, & Branch, (2002) have found that higher education is not a factor for business growth.

Moreover, characteristics like professional network (Anderson & Eshima, 2013; Ongoro et al., 2013; Hansen & Hamilton, 2011; Bekele & Worku, 2008; Hansen, 1995), positive attitude (Anderson & Eshima, 2013; Ongoro et al., 2013; Papadaki et al., 2002) and motivation (Wiklund et al, 2003; Hamilton & Lawrence, 2001; Smallbone & Wyer, 2000) were the other characteristics of entrepreneurs which effect success in business. Past literature shows that there is a direct or indirect impact of demographic characteristics of the SE founders/owner-managers in developing the personal resilience.

Similarly, a considerable amount of literature had provided insights into the **resilience process**. Based on a case study analysis, Powell & Baker (2012) describe entrepreneurial resilience as the capacity for positive adaptation under adverse conditions. In their research they developed a process model of entrepreneurial identity and resilience which explains how different types of entrepreneurial identity relate to three forms of resilience: maintaining, transforming, and conforming. Furthermore, Bullough & Renko (2013) found three ways to enhance the entrepreneurial resilience of entrepreneurs/SE founders after conducting a survey on more than 500 entrepreneurs. According to them SE founders' resilience can be enhanced by 1) engaging in business development training, (2) participating in networking events, lectures, and mentoring opportunities, and (3) by seeking objective, critical, and encouraging feedback.

Entrepreneurial resilience is often presented as synonymous with individual resilience (see, Adnan, Jaafar, Nasir, & Mohtar, 2016; Bullough, & Renko, 2013). Consideration of individual resilience alone offers only a partial explanation of entrepreneurial resilience because entrepreneurial resilience crosses over individual resilience and organisational resilience without falling neatly into either category (Branicki, Sullivan-Taylor, & Livschitz, 2017). Individual resilience and entrepreneurial resilience are adjacent and potentially complementary concepts rather than synonyms. It was revealed that individual resilience is supporting to predict entrepreneurial success and was vital in determining organisational outcomes for SEs (Ayala, & Manzano, 2014). Therefore, a critical component of entrepreneurial resilience is the impact the entrepreneurs'/SE founders'/owner-managers' resilience, or non-resilience, has on the SE and wider economic system (Huggins, & Thompson, 2015).

2.4.6. Linkage between entrepreneurial resilience and organisational resilience

There are several advantages possess by the SEs that promote their resilience. Less concerned with formal systems (Storey, 1994), display an informality to the working environment (Storey, & Sykes, 1996), demonstrate a higher tolerance for ambiguity and adaptation (De Vries and Shields, 2006). These inherited characteristics can speed up the response times when a crisis unfold. Moreover, SE founders/owner-managers inherently cope with sustained high levels of stress and uncertainty in their environment, where they "invent solutions in order to survive" (Zahra, Sapienza, & Davidsson, 2006, p. 932).

The SEs ability to adapt to an uncertain, and potentially hostile future increases the requirement for resilience (Ates, & Bititci, 2011). Resource scarcity is a key issue for SEs seeking to be resilient. However, Baker & Nelson (2005, p. 359) argue that entrepreneurs are not constrained by resources to the degree that the resource-orientated school would suggest and that entrepreneurs are particularly well suited to "making do with what is at hand" (i.e., concept of bricolage). They define "entrepreneurial bricolage" as "the pursuit of opportunity through close regard to the resources at hand," and they emphasize that entrepreneurs can be "alert to resources" in the same way that they are alert to opportunity (Baker, & Nelson, 2005, p. 359). Hence SE founders/owner-managers personal resilience directly influence the organisational resilience. Vivid engagements with the stakeholders were another strategy used by SE founders/owner-managers to build resilience which result in organisational resilience.

2.4.7. Relationship-based resilience

Networks of stakeholders can offer SE founders/owner-managers a substantial source of knowledge and **social capital** useful for resistance in adverse conditions. Similarly, the presence of extensive and deep ties with heterogeneous stakeholders can provide entrepreneurs/SE founders with support for building resilience through learning and experience (Folke et al., 2010; Vogus & Sutcliffe, 2007), which in turn can increase the likelihood of success. Westlund & Bolton (2003) claim that entrepreneurship is both a creator and the outcome of social capital. Westlund & Nilsson (2005, pp 1086) assert that "a small enterprise owner with spatially personal relationships has considerable incentives to build a strong social capital with the local environment". Social capital facilitated through business ties is a driving force of entrepreneurship.

The impact of individual resilience on organisational resilience is often attributed to the importance of social connections (Van Der Vegt, Essens, Wahlström, & George, 2015), social capital (Santarelli, & Tran, 2013; Lengnick-Hall, Beck, & Lengnick-Hall, 2011; Smith & Lohrke, 2008), and relational reserves (Powley, 2009; Gittell, Cameron, Lim, & Rivas, 2006). SE founders/owner-managers may also be able to access further sources of resilience, via team-based organisational structures (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011), and accessing broad resource through extended networks (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011; Van Der Vegt et al., 2015). Chiang (2006)

states that SE founders/owner-managers should consider strategic alliances more, especially given the increasing internationalization, and he states that strategic alliances can expand SEs external development rapidly. Moreover, strategies such as innovation, strategic alliances, strategic planning, creation of appropriate infrastructure and training centers have been suggested to help the growth of Spanish small companies (Papaoikonomou, Segarra, & Li, 2012). Engaging in internationalization and developing business collaborations provides both opportunity for growth and an indication of SE's growth (Dobbs & Hamilton, 2007). Collaborative relationships such as joint ventures, networks, alliances, and trade associations provide quick access to industry related information, the opportunity to network with industry peers (Robson & Obeng, 2008; Dobbs & Hamilton, 2007; Barringer & Jones, 2004) and to identify new business opportunities, obtain resources at costs that are below market price, and increase legitimacy through external stakeholders (Stam, Arzlanian, & Elfring, 2014).

Researchers has examined the role of individual behavior in promoting organisational resilience, where a direct link has been identified between the individual resilience of leaders and employees and organisational resilience (Van Der Vegt et al., 2015; Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011). It is also found that SE founders/owner-managers play an important role in building the resilience of employees (Sommer, Howell, & Hadley, 2016). Consequently, entrepreneurs with resilient capabilities can act in times of adversity and have a higher propensity to act than non-resilient individuals, who are easily discouraged by challenges and dangerous environments (Gorgievski, & Stephan, 2016). Resilience can therefore be thought of as a resource that individuals are able to mobilize in a time of stress (Hobfoll et al., 2007). In a time of stress, becoming aware on the risk and adversity influences a person's beliefs and abilities where, it will influence the beliefs of the people working with the SE founder/owner-manager. Hence, resilient SE founders/owner-managers can spread beliefs and feelings. Thus, individual resilience and organisational resilience are strongly correlated, and in the case of SEs, entrepreneurial resilience can strongly influence organisational resilience, in turn fostering business growth and overall business success.

At the same time, other research finds that organisational resilience is not simply the sum of individual capabilities (Alliger, Cerasoli, Tannenbaum, & Vessey, 2015). The relationship between

individual and organisational resilience is complex (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011), and even though the possible interdependencies across levels of analysis have been considered, Jaaron & Backhouse (2014) argue that a gap in the literature persists. The researcher found a dearth of knowledge on how SE founders/owner-managers perceive their personal/entrepreneurial resilience and its effect on the organisational resilience and growth in post-conflict economies. This study answers the call in the entrepreneurship literature for research on resilience (Hayward et al., 2010; Shepherd & Patzelt, 2015; Yamakawa, Peng, & Deeds, 2015). Therefore, the third research question was designed as: **"How do SE founders/owner-managers perceive their personal resilience to affect their organisational resilience and growth in a post-conflict turbulent environment?**

2.5 Conceptual Framework

Having elaborated the relevant concepts, theories, and threads from the literature review on entrepreneurial resilience, organisational resilience and post-conflict context as understood by SE founders/owner-managers and an integrating framework is proposed in the form of Figure 2.1. There are some obstacles within the post-conflict context related to the Institutional context; poor formal institutions, which had paved the way of creating a grey area within the economy and this had acted as a crisis for the SE founders/owner-managers. Moreover, informal institutions, which mainly related to cultural and social context; sometimes values, norms, sanctions, taboos, customs, traditions, codes of conduct and corruption has acted as a barrier to the SE founder/owner-manager resilience and growth. Literature analysis shed light on various other crises; personal/entrepreneur level crises, business level and societal level crises. All these crises and post-conflict barriers impact both the entrepreneurial and organisational resilience. Will these crises similar in Sri Lankan post-conflict economy? And what would be the impact of these crises on SE founders/owner-managers? These concerns formulated the first and the second research question; *What crises are faced by SE founders/owner-managers in a turbulent emerging economy with a post-conflict context? And How do these crises affect SE founders/owner-managers resilience in a post-conflict turbulent environment?*

This sensitizing framework articulate how entrepreneurial behaviors might contribute to generating resilient SEs and contrasting this with the view of entrepreneurial and organisational resilience.

The Organisational resilience named box in Figure 2.1 considers the traditional sources of organisational resilience established in the literature and the relationship between organisational resilience and Entrepreneur/personal resilience. Literature points out that entrepreneurial resilience and organisational resilience has a reciprocal relationship. With both entrepreneurial and organisational resilience, resilient SEs can be developed. Will this be same for the Sri Lankan economy which has a turbulent post-conflict context? This curiosity formulated the third and the final research question of this study; ***How do SE founders/owner-managers perceive their personal resilience to affect their organisational resilience and growth in a post-conflict turbulent environment?***

Figure 2.1 also explores linkages between the resilience of entrepreneurs and that of the SEs that are the contexts in which they practice their entrepreneurship. Despite some limited research (e.g. Ayala & Manzano, 2014; Huggins & Thompson, 2015) identifying linkages between entrepreneurial resilience and resilience at higher units of analysis (e.g. the SE within the post-conflict context), there remains a limited understanding of both how it is presented in practice and the nature of the inter-relationship between levels of analysis.
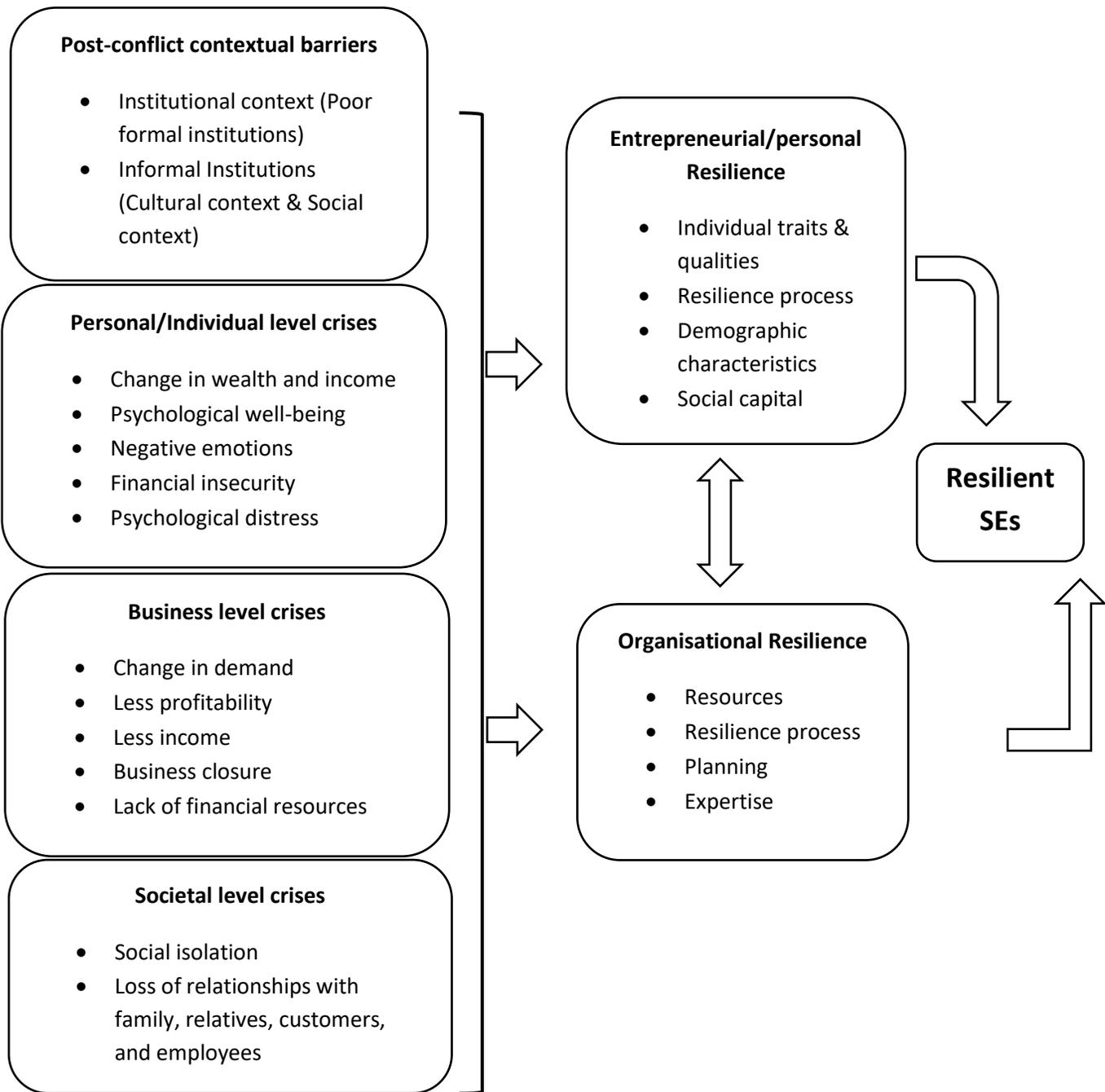
Figure 2.1 – Conceptual Framework

2.6. Summary

This chapter provided the reader with a pre-understanding of the main area within which this thesis is positioned by reviewing the relevant previous literature, and the literature review helped to identify three main issues that this thesis intends to investigate further.

The literature review integrated and identified all the important concepts related to the research, namely, SEs, growth perceptions of SE founder/owner-managers, resilience, and post-conflict context. The origin of resilience and growth concepts were studied in detail by reviewing how growth was viewed by entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-managers. The entrepreneurial resilience and organisational resilience were distinguished, and the linkage was elaborated by pointing the importance and relevance of post-conflict economies and putting more emphasis on methodological stands of previous researchers in SE research. All the factors mentioned above have been discussed in a general context. However, there is a dearth of knowledge and research in developing insights into SE founders/owner-managers resilience and growth in post-conflict emerging economies. Hence this thesis attempts to explore the resilience and growth of SE founders/owner-managers further with the backdrop of the post-conflict, turbulent, and emerging economy of Sri Lanka.

In addition to that, this literature review enabled the author to establish the gaps in existent knowledge to which the thesis set out to contribute. Most of the existing literature is focused on the crises faced by large companies in developed economies and on their resilience, while this thesis intends to go beyond that scope to examine the crises faced by SE founders/owner-managers in turbulent post-conflict contexts. Moreover, a lack of research was found on the resilience of SE founders/owner-managers, and consequently, it requires further exploration as well.

A further gap in knowledge was discovered related to the growth of SE founders/owner-managers in post-conflict, turbulent, and emerging economies. Moreover, Sri Lanka was identified as the most suitable scenario for this purpose due to its prevailing conditions, which will be explained in Chapter 03. The SE founders'/owner-managers' behavior within a turbulent post-conflict emerging economy therefore needs to be addressed. Previous research had focused

on challenges faced in environments and economies where the conditions were stable and on factors affecting growth and growth strategies, neglecting the exploration of the behavior of SE founders/owner-managers within a turbulent environment. Empirical work on small firms and entrepreneurs has often focused on developed countries. The little work that does exist on developing countries is all too often based on small samples taken from ad hoc questionnaires (Coad & Tamvada, 2012). This study addresses the call for future research which should distinguish between different types of threats faced by entrepreneurial firms and entrepreneurs, their different effects on the firm, and the different resilient responses required (Korber & McNaughton (2018). In short, entrepreneurial resilience should be "better understood within its historical, temporal, institutional, spatial, and social contexts, as these contexts provide individuals with opportunities and set boundaries for their actions" (Welter, 2011, p. 165).

In relation to the methodologies utilized by the past researchers, it was clear that, most popular approach was qualitative approach. The research which utilized qualitative approach had utilized SEs as the unit of analysis than the SE founders/owner-managers. It was therefore considered important to develop insights using the qualitative research approach to elaborate on individual experiences of SE founders/owner-managers due to the inseparable nature of SEs and SE founders/owner-managers and the involvement of these owners in decision making to thrive the SEs during turbulent times.

Consequently, this doctoral research was pitched in this research lacuna, where it focused on how SE founders/owner-managers developed resilience and grew in a post-conflict economy like Sri Lanka. Hence, the literature review illustrated the emergence of the following questions that could be asked.

1. What crises are faced by SE founders/owner-managers in a turbulent emerging economy with a post-conflict context?

2. How do these crises affect SE founders/owner-managers resilience in a post-conflict turbulent environment?

3. How do SE founders/owner-managers perceive their personal resilience to affect their organisational resilience and growth in a post-conflict turbulent environment?

This thesis contributes to knowledge and practice in three ways. Firstly, it contributes to the extent of literature on resilience and growth of SE founders/owner-managers. In addition, it contributes in terms of the context because most of the existing literature on resilience and growth of SEs and entrepreneurs is in the context of stable economies, while this thesis contributes to the resilience and growth of SE founders/owner-managers on post-conflict economies.

The second contribution is in terms of the methodological approach. Most of the recent research have investigated SE growth through questionnaires, quantitative surveys, and testing hypothesis through a survey, while this thesis explores resilience and growth with a qualitative research design approach by conducting semi-structured in-depth interviews and informal conversations.

The third contribution lies in the rich insights it provides regarding the entrepreneurial environment of post-conflict Sri Lanka, and thus it motivates future research that can apply across different contextualized post-conflict contexts.

Chapter 03 – Sri Lankan Context

3.1 Introduction: General Overview of Sri Lanka

This thesis makes a contextual contribution in the unique turbulent, emerging, post-conflict context of Sri Lanka. This chapter presents the justification for selection of the respective context by highlighting the historical, cultural, social, and economic aspects of Sri Lanka. After a general overview, the conflict and post conflict scenarios will be discussed. Afterwards the unique Sri Lankan culture will be highlighted. Next the business environment and its vivid factors will be presented by highlighting their impact on the SE founders/owner-managers. Finally, the chapter concludes by exhibiting the influential factors in the business environment and introducing the chapter 04.

Sri Lanka is an island located in the Indian Ocean south of India that is formally known as Ceylon. Currently, Sri Lanka is suffering its worst economic crisis since its independence from Britain in 1948. COVID-19 pandemic that affected the tourism sector, ill-timed tax cuts, weak government finances and skyrocketing inflation, impacting foreign remittances are some of the main factors behind Sri Lanka's present economic crisis.

Nevertheless, the rich literature on Sri Lankan economic development highlights the sense of optimism at the time of independence in 1948 (Jennings 1948; World Bank 1953; Hicks 1958; Wriggins 1960; De Silva 1981). Like in other south Asian countries, Sri Lanka is ethnically diverse, complex, and significantly divided between Sinhalese and Tamils. The consists of different ethnic and religious communities, which worked together in the past to gain independence from British Colonial rulers despite the difference such as multi-religious, multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, multicultural, and customs present. The country appeared to possess the essential ingredients for rapid economic development, which is a necessity for becoming an emerging economy, which distinguish Sri Lanka from other Asian countries, an attention-grabbing location in the Indian Ocean, open economy with a vibrant export sector, high rate of literacy level and a comparatively well-developed physical infrastructure. In contrast, a greater degree of political instability, lower capacity of the government to provide foundations for the functioning of markets, underdeveloped accountable rule enforcement mechanisms and an

unclear regulatory framework (Amorós, Poblete, & Mandakovic, 2019) are visible in Sri Lanka, which are common features of emerging economies.

Even at present, Sri Lanka is haunted by memories of the island's decades-long civil war, which began in 1979 and ended in 2009. The war was mainly a clash between the Sinhalese-dominated Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) insurgent group, the latter of which had hoped to establish a separate state for the Tamil minority. During the war, collusive amount of physical and human resources was destroyed. The 30-year long war had conversely nourished entrepreneurship (Bozzoli, Brück, & Wald, 2013; Brück, Naudé, & Verwimp, 2011). The war was a crisis. After the conflict, the post-conflict period bought SE founders/owner-managers severe challenges. The post-conflict period challenged the SE founders/owner-managers in terms of lack of both safety and governmental institutions along with outspread depravity and deficiency in infrastructure (Dierkes ,2010). Understanding details on both the conflict and post-conflict Sri Lanka is a vital requirement for this study.

3.2 Conflict and Post-conflict Sri Lanka

The armed conflict in Sri Lanka was one of the world's most protracted conflicts, lasted for 30 years. The fact that the conflict has been driven by grievances along ethnic lines makes Sri Lanka a rather typical example of a contemporary armed conflict in the global South (Lindberg, & Orjuela, 2011). Yet, unlike many other civil wars it did not revolve around highly valuable and plunderable natural resources, where the conflict's cause was the failure of the state to cater to minority aspirations. The war between the Sri Lankan government and the Tamil separatists broke out in full scale after anti-Tamil riots in 1983 and subsequent Indian support to Tamil militant groups, including the LTTE. Tamil nationalists saw the war as a liberation struggle against a Sinhalese-dominated state which discriminated against Tamils. The state, and Sinhalese nationalists, on the other hand, conceptualised it as 'a terrorist problem' caused by LTTE power hunger in the otherwise harmonically multi-ethnic Sri Lanka (Fonseka, & Raheem, 2010). In the 2000s, the competition over influence in the Indian Ocean has increased Indian, Chinese and US interests in Sri Lanka (Nazemroaya, 2009). Past research on conflict conditions had highlighted vivid stressful social and material conditions caused and worsened by the armed conflicts. Poverty, malnutrition, displacement into overcrowded and impoverished refugee camps, strife

and divisions within communities, the destruction of social networks and the resulting loss of social and material support, and the ostracism and struggle for survival of groups such as former child soldiers, widows, sexual assault survivors, orphans, and people with war-related disabilities (Boothby, Strang, & Wessells, 2006; Miller & Rasco, 2004) are some of them. Past research in Sri Lanka also noted the deterioration of health, education, and livelihoods experience in the Northern and Eastern provinces of the country throughout the course the civil war (Jayasuriya, 2014; Husain, Anderson, & Cardozo at el. 2011; Fernando, Miller, & Berger, 2010). There is a massive cost involved in the war. More importantly, expenditures in war activities have a high opportunity cost as they crowd-out investment in other areas such as education, health, and infrastructure (Bigdon, 2006). Further, ongoing war activities not only crowd out investment in other areas but also hamper foreign direct investment by which many developing countries, can find an easy path to improve economic performance.

Over the years, several attempts were made to find a negotiated end to the war. In 2002 a military stalemate paved the way for a ceasefire and peace negotiation between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE with Norwegian mediation (Lindberg, & Orjuela, 2011). Many blamed the LTTE for the breakdown of talks and numerous ceasefire violations. After that, the Sri Lankan government sharply increased the military budget, rejected political compromises, escalated the military campaign, and supported and assisted by the Western powers, neighboring India, and Pakistan, as well as, importantly China, decisively crushed the LTTE in 2009 (Jabbar, & Sajeetha, 2014).

3.2.1. Post-conflict era

The war victory was widely welcomed by the majority of the Sri Lankan population and the international community despite unease about the conduct of the military during the conflict. The end of the war generated a surge of optimism about the economic prospects for Sri Lanka, with widespread expectations of a peace dividend that would enable Sri Lanka to embark on a period of sustained economic growth (Athukorala, & Jayasuriya, 2013). The immediate post-conflict developments appeared to validate that optimism. With the post-conflict development and construction there were various consequences such as economic, environmental, social, and political within the Sri Lankan context.

With renewed investor confidence in the country, Sri Lanka experienced a substantial economic recovery. GDP growth in 2010 reached 8 percent, up from 3.5 percent in 2009, inflation came down from 22.6 percent in 2008 to 6 percent in 2010, unemployment fell from 5.7 percent in 2009 to 4.9 percent in 2010, the fiscal deficit narrowed, foreign reserves went up, and the Colombo stock market, having nearly doubled in value in 2010, was the second-best performer among global markets for two years running (International Finance Corporation, 2010). However, as the large and rapidly growing literature on post-conflict recovery has shown, although a resurgence of growth in the immediate aftermath of an end to a violent conflict is often observed, there is no guarantee that such a recovery will be maintained over the medium to long term (World Bank, 2011). In Sri Lankas's case this was visible in 2012. In early 2012, a sharp deterioration of the current account and rapidly declining foreign reserves, were visible and the authorities were compelled to undertake a substantial devaluation of the currency and unpopular measures to curb public expenditures, and to increase their reliance on short-term commercial borrowings in international capital markets (Athukorala, & Jayasuriya, 2015). Thus, three years after the end of the war, Sri Lanka faced a volatile global economic environment with a weakened economy, policy instability, low reserves, and a historically unprecedented level of commercial debt. Its attempt to pursue a path of nationalist populist economic policies has led the country into a situation different to what was anticipated by the government and its policy advisers. After showing remarkable resilience during decades of war and conflict the Sri Lankan economy has failed to capitalize on the window of opportunity presented by the end of the military conflict.

Infrastructure reconstruction improves access to resources and creates links between different markets and economies. For Sri Lanka, a large-scale reconstruction effort with public sector involvement was clearly necessary after a quarter century of destruction, neglect, and decay of essential physical resources (Ekanayake, 2011). According to Chandra & Thompson (2000), certain industries grow because of improved infrastructure, whereas others shrink as economic activity relocates. Highways affect the spatial allocation of economic activity. They raise the level of economic activity in the regions that they pass directly through but draw activity away from adjacent counties. Such an approach to development could increase the inequality that already

exists in post conflict societies and have a negative impact on extremely poor rural societies, which was visible in Sri Lanka.

The people, who suffered from shattered identity, especially during protracted ethnic conflict, can further experience inequality of resource distribution among different communities after the conflict (Stewart, 2016), which was evident in the Sri Lankan society (Jabbar, & Sajeetha, 2014). Post-conflict construction can be used in building and promoting social capital, and as a tool of distributing peace dividends through community-based participation (Handrahan, 2004). Nevertheless, in Sri Lanka, lack of community-based participation was seen as a missed opportunity to build trust between state and affected people (Höglund & Orjuela, 2011).

The economic, environmental, social, and political damage inflicted upon by wars can affect communities in the long term. The survivors of conflict who experienced loss and trauma, are faced with challenges of rebuilding their lives while maintaining a greater level of resilience. Research conducted in Jaffna District of Sri Lanka on war-related mental conditions had found that the lack of a husband/partner, lack of livelihood, loss of social structure, gender-associated stressors linked to displacement event and other gender-specific factors had contributed to the higher risk of mental disorder in women (Husain, Anderson, & Cardozo et al., 2011). War had created a large-scale damage on Sri Lankan health and education sector (Duncan, & Cardozo, 2017; Johnson, 2017; Somasundaram, 2007).

Few of the main features highlighted in previous literature as post conflict characteristics are visible in the Sri Lankan post-conflict economy; presence of military forces, negative peace (Serkan, 2019; Wiedemeier, 2017), vulnerable communities (Guruge, Ford-Gilboe, & Varcoe, 2017; Somasundaram, & Sivayokan, 2013), corruption (Orjuela, Herath, & Lindberg, 2016; Lindberg, & Orjuela, 2011), corroded institutions (Sakalasuriya, Haigh, & Amaratunga, 2018; Ramesh, Ijhas, & Dickwella, 2013), shifting from war economies and resistance to legal means of living , and risk of returning to conflict (Neumann, & Fahmy, 2012).

Many judicial courts were established newly in war affected areas and police was given the authority to handle the civil issues. Most of the development projects were targeted to develop

the economy to decrease the unemployment rate, where foreign investment increased. The tourism industry rose through the ashes which grabbed the international community's attention. The cultural sites were renovated, and rural areas were developed to attract tourists. As highlighted, there are vivid features in both conflict and post-conflict Sri Lankan economy and figure 3.1. summarises these factors. With around 1.5 billion people affected by conflicts all-over the world (World Bank, 2011), how entrepreneurship was affected by the disorder and moderate the post-conflict situation is an inquiry which has yet to be empirically studied during such uncommon circumstances (Aldairany et al., 2018), where studying on Sri Lankan SE founders/owner-managers would be the best option to fill this void.
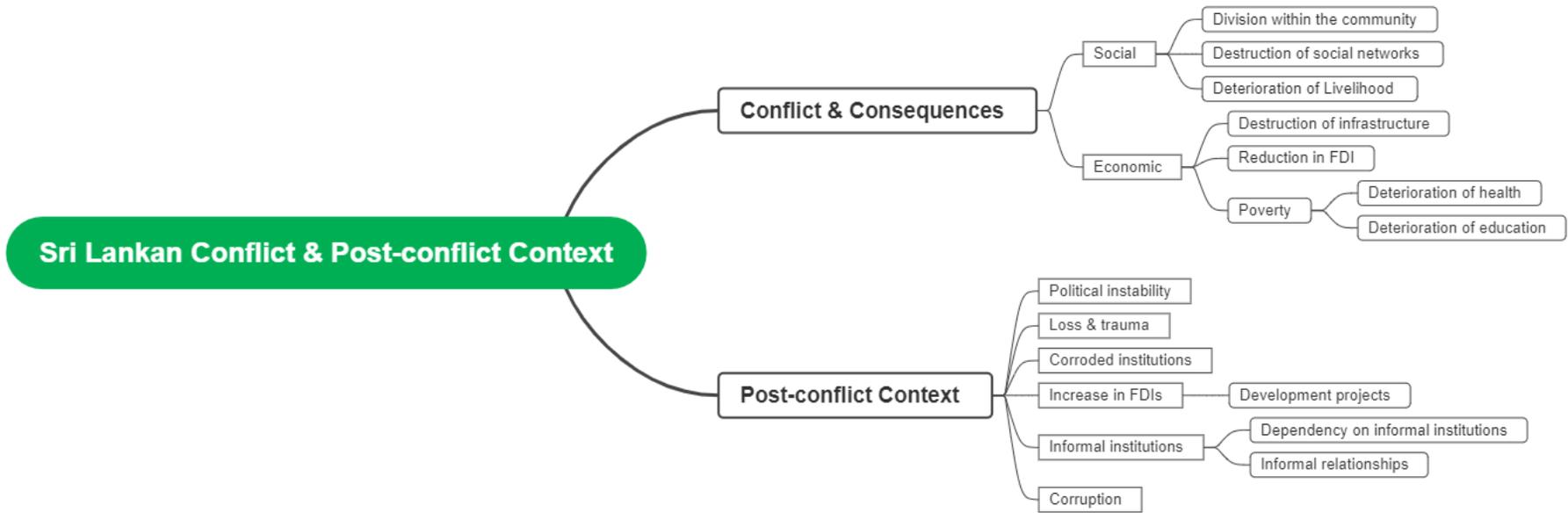
Figure 3.1 Sri Lankan conflict and post-conflict context (author's illustration)

3.3 Culture and Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka has a rich historical and cultural heritage covering more than 2500 years, which is recorded in ancient legends and chronicles. According to the Mahavamsa (the great chronicle, which is the meticulously kept historical chronicle of Sri Lanka written in the style of an epic poem written in the Pali language), the main religion, Buddhism evolved with royal patronage as the highest ethical and philosophical expression of Sinhalese traditional culture and civilization (Daskon, & Binns, 2010). After three centuries of colonial rule by the Portuguese, Dutch and British, the country gained independence in February 1948. The country's population has a diverse ethnic composition, with 74.9 percent Sinhalese, 11.2 percent Sri Lankan Tamils, 9.3 percent Sri Lankan Moors, 4.1 percent Indian Tamils and 0.5 percent Burghers, Malay, and others (Department of Census & Statistics, 2012).

There is a connectivity between livelihoods and the local cultural context, since livelihoods are strongly influenced by established systems of traditional knowledge, skills, beliefs, norms, values, and customs. When it comes to understanding the national culture, Hofstede's (1980) seminal work on the national culture and relational dimensions is prominent. This was the outcome of an employee attitude survey conducted in 1970 among the IBM employees. He came across five independent dimensions when defining national culture namely, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism – collectivism, masculinity – femineity and long-term orientation – short-term orientation, which will be used to understand the attributes of the Sri Lankan culture in this study.

The first dimension, **power distance** means the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organisations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally (Hofstede, 1980, 45). As for the Hofstede's power distance index values, Sri Lanka has a slightly high score of 80 (Hofstede Insights, 2022), which means Sri Lanka is a relatively hierarchical society. This means people accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place, and which needs no further justification. Centralization, politicization of administration, corruption, broad salary range between the top and bottom of most of the organisations, tall organisation pyramids (especially government organisation), and power is based on tradition or

family are the key characteristics of high-power distance in Sri Lanka administration/organisation (Irfan, 2016). Moreover, according to a past research conducted by Damayanthi (2011), 84% of the respondents in North-Center Province and Southern Province in Sri Lanka were not satisfied with land service delivery and 20% and 36% of the respondents in North-Center Province and Southern Province faced negative bureaucratic attitudes (Damayanthi 2011), such as asking for bribe, favoritism/nepotism of the officials, scolding citizens, not providing customer orient service, asking to come again repeatedly, making delays, and hiding documents. Thus, it is visible that organisational performance is very low/criticized badly due to strong hierarchy, top-down approach in organisation, and centralization.

The second dimension, **uncertainty avoidance**, has to do with the way that a society deals with the fact that the future can never be known: should someone try to control the future or just let it happen? This ambiguity brings anxiety with it, and different cultures have learnt to deal with this anxiety in different ways. The extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations and have created beliefs and institutions that try to avoid these is reflected in the score on uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 1980, 45). The relatively intermediate score of 45 (Hofstede Insights, 2022), indicates that Sri Lanka does not indicate a strong preference. Sri Lanka is a culture with moderately low uncertainty avoidance and low stress levels and low nervousness because Sri Lankans are more tolerant to uncertainty and ambiguity (Irfan, 2016). According to Hofstede Sri Lankan is considered "uncertainty accepting". Which means that, Sri Lankans have a fair degree of acceptance for new ideas, willingness to try something new or different, innovative products, modern technology, business practices. Sri Lankans tend to be more tolerant of ideas or opinions from anyone and allow the freedom of expression. At the same time, Sri Lanka do not require a lot of rules and less emotionally expressive than strong uncertainty avoidance countries.

The third dimension addresses the degree of interdependence a society maintains among its members. It has to do with whether people´s self-image is defined in terms of "I" or "We". In Individualist societies people are supposed to look after themselves and their direct family only. In **Collectivist** societies people belong to 'in groups' that take care of them in exchange for loyalty.

A low score of 35 (Hofstede Insights, 2022) in this dimension means that Sri Lanka is considered a collectivistic society. This is evident in a close, long-term commitment to the member 'group', be that a family, extended family, or extended relationships. Loyalty in a collectivist culture is paramount and overrides most other societal rules and regulations. The society fosters strong relationships where everyone takes responsibility for fellow members of their group. In collectivist societies: offence leads to shame and the loss of face, employer/employee relationships are perceived in moral terms, hiring and promotion decisions take account of the employee's in-group and management is the management of groups. Sri Lankan culture exhibits collectivism dimension and research done on cultural perceptions of online learning among Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Mauritius had proved this (Jayatilleke, & Gunawardena, 2016). Moreover, a study on 181 Sri Lankan employees who belong to four ethnic groups had found that collectivism with group loyalty as a dominant factor for successful business deals as well as to keep longtime business relationships with business partners (Rathnayaka, 2014).

The fundamental issue in the fourth cultural dimension is what motivates people, wanting to be the best (Masculine) or liking what they do (Feminine). "Measurements in terms of this dimension express the extent to which the dominant values in society are "masculine", that is assertiveness, the acquisition of money and things, and not caring for others, the quality of life, or people" (Hofstede, 1980, 45). Hofstede (2001) suggests that in a masculine society the prime motivator is achievement and competition, whereas, in **a feminine** society the quality of life and caring for others are considered as signals of success. Sri Lanka, with a very low score of 10 (Hofstede Insights, 2022), is thus considered a feminine society, where conflicts are resolved by compromise and negotiation and Incentives such as free time and flexibility are favoured. It is a marginally low score than South Asian counties: India-56, Bangladesh-55, Pakistan-50 Nepal-40, and Bhutan32 (Hofstede Insights, 2022). The low score feminine societies focus on gender balance, solidarity, and quality in their working lives, flexibility, and so on. In Sri Lanka, every man and women have specific and different roles in life because they belong with religion and ethnicity. This masculinity-femininity dimension largest big difference between among the religions. In the past, women in Sri Lankan society had a lower status, where before married, women should submit themselves to her father; after being married, to her husband, if widowed,

to her sons. In brief, in a patriarchal setting, important family decisions are made by males in Sri Lanka. As a women role in family, in the home, most of the women are responsible for household activities such as: cooking, washing, childcare, care of the elderly, hospitality for relatives, and so on. At present, this thinking had been challenged and women equally contribute to the economic activities and participate in decision making. Mrs. Srimavo Bandaranaike was elected as the prime minister in 1960. She was elected three times as Prime Minister of Sri Lanka: 1960-1965, 1970-1977, and 1994-2000. She was the first female Prime Minister in the world history of parliamentary democracy. The constitution of Sri Lanka (1978) has provided a formal assurance for women political rights in national level (Parliament) to village level, legislative bodies, and political institutions without any barrier (Yusoff, Sarjoon, & Othman 2016). Sri Lankan women are educated, and participate in the labour market more actively, than most of their regional counterparts.

The final cultural dimension **long-term & short-term orientation** describes how every society has to maintain some links with its own past while dealing with the challenges of the present and future, and societies prioritise these two existential goals differently. The societies which score low on this dimension, prefer to maintain time-honoured traditions and norms while viewing societal change with suspicion. Those with a culture which scores high, on the other hand, take a more pragmatic approach: they encourage thrift and efforts in modern education to prepare for the future. With an intermediate score of 45 (Hofstede Insights, 2022), Sri Lanka does not indicate a strong preference in this dimension.

3.4 The business environment of Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka relies on the income generated through clothing, tourism, cinnamon, and Ceylon Tea businesses with 8.18 million employees of whom 47.1% are employed in services, 25.3% in agriculture, and 27.6% in manufacturing (IFC report, 2019). Out of them, more than 75% of businesses are engaged in the SMEs, represent 52% in the GDP and it provides a more than 45% employment to the labor force, which helps in improving the standard of living of the citizens (IFC report, 2019). As pointed out, SMEs contribution for economic development is very high in Sri Lanka (Rajapakshe, 2018). SE founders/owner-managers do not exist in a vacuum. To survive

and grow, SE founders/owner-managers must inevitably interact with their external environment; they influence and are influenced by the environment in which they exist. Sri Lanka, as a post-conflict setting, has a business environment that is more turbulent and disturbed than in the past. For example, constant disturbances (e.g., the Tsunami, the civil war, the Easter Sunday attacks on churches and hotels in 2019, and the recent COVID-19 pandemic which are a combination of natural and man-made disasters) put Sri Lanka's business environment into constant turbulence and vulnerability in which its SE founders/owner-managers have been challenged.

In Sri Lanka, there are vivid macro environmental factors which impact the business environment where the SE founders/owner-managers operate; Political, Economic, Socio-cultural, Technological, and Legal factors are some of them. Even though SE founders/owner-managers play a major role in Sri Lankan economy, they are facing greater challenges in the modern business world due to intense competition, rapidly changing new technologies and globalization of products and services (Kanagasingam, 2012). These macro environmental factors make the Sri Lankan business environment turbulent.

There are several **technological factors** and barriers identified by the past researchers applicable for the Sri Lankan SE founders. Lack of awareness of the Information usage, uncertainty about the benefits of electronic commerce, concerns about lack of human resources and skills, set-up costs and pricing issues, and concerns about security are seen as the most significant barriers to e-commerce for SMEs (Kapurubandara & Lawson, 2006). Under-development of IT infrastructure facilities, lack of electricity supply, lack of financial resources, lack of government support, poor service from internet service providers, and lack of support from banks is visible (Athapaththu, & Nishantha, 2018). Moreover, Amaradiwakara & Gunatilake (2016) mentioned that poor business performance of Sri Lankan SMEs due to financial inefficiency, lack of access to new knowledge and technological literacy and education. Hence, even though there is a considerable amount of service providers and IT resources available, technology act as an external factor which influence the business environment of the SE founders/owner-managers.

One of the fundamental voids that was identified as hindering entrepreneurial development was the lack of promotion, funding, and governmental support for business ventures (de Silva, 2015). Moreover, the level of corruption in the formal government institutions were visible in Sri Lanka and this indeed impact the business environment of the SE founders/owner-managers. Corruption takes vivid forms and it include politicians and bureaucrats taking bribes or using state resources for personal gain, wastefulness and extravagances paid by public funds, clientelism in the awarding of jobs or political positions, nepotism, and irregularities in the granting of contracts, and the use of state resources in election campaigns. Due to these reasons the legal system, rules and regulations are always challenged and compromised. Hence, these **legal and political factors** stimulate the SE founders/owner-managers business environment in both positively and negatively.

On the other hand, another aspect which stimulate the business environment is the **socio-cultural factors**. As explained in the previous section Sri Lankan rich culture plays a vital role in finetuning the business decision making related to the human capital and in the organisation hierarchy. This was explained in the section 3.3.

The tsunami of 2004 was the largest natural disaster ever recorded in Sri Lanka, with more than 35,000 dead, 20,000 injured and several hundred thousand people displaced (Ruddock, Amaratunga, Wanigaratne, & Palliyaguru, 2010). Economic opportunities were lost, and SE owners struggled. Another main incidence which impacted the Sri Lankan economy was the 2019 Easter attacks. The tourism industry, one which brings enormous income to the country was disturbed as the industry is especially vulnerable to crises and conflicts, particularly those linked to terrorism attacks (Biggs, Hall, & Stoeckl, 2012; Ghaderi, Matsom, & Henderson, 2012). Tourists have been the victims in the mass-killing (Korstanje & Clayton, 2012) and due to the inability to guarantee tourists' personal safety (Novelli, Morgan, & Nibigira, 2012) the industry was badly affected and many of the SE founders who connected to the industry was negatively affected. Priyanath & Premarathne (2014), as well as Priyanath & Buthsala (2017), confirmed that the SEs of Sri Lanka face high transaction cost which makes barriers on the growth of SEs. All these

economic factors impact the business environment to a greater extent. With all these man-made and natural disasters Sri Lankan economy was in its peak of turbulence.

Almost ten years after the end of its civil war, Sri Lanka was recognized as the best country in the world to visit in 2019 by the Lonely Planet (Kularatne, Wilson, Månsson, Hoang, & Lee, 2019). Despite the disastrous events and at the end of the civil war in 2009, the Sri Lankan tourism industry recorded a two-digit growth rate for both international tourists' arrivals and tourism revenues (Samarathunga, Cheng, & Weerathunga, 2020). Even after the Easter Sunday Attack on 2019, the Sri Lankan tourism grew by 1.9 million tourists by the end of 2019 despite the unfortunate security breach (Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA), 2019). Even with many dark experiences over past few decades, Sri Lanka has demonstrated its physical and psychological resilience and the nation's strength to way forward as an emerging economy exhibiting significant milestones despite all the crises faced. By investigating on this feature will shed light to understand the details on the strategies utilized by SE founders/owner-managers to develop resilience in a turbulent post-conflict economy.

Scholars, such as Zahra, Wright, & Abdelgawad (2014) and Welter (2011), argue that there are three contextual factors (i.e. historical, institutional, and social) that influence research on entrepreneurship. Sri Lanka was colonized in 1796 and was a British colony for 152 years. This had influenced the development of its economy, political and legal institutions, governance, and its education. This temporal aspect is intertwined with the institutional context. Much use has been made of institutional analysis as control variables, but the cultural and historical foundations of these institutions are often overlooked. This omission is particularly evident within the literature on entrepreneurship in emerging economies (Zahra et al., 2014). Sri Lanka is an emerging economy, with 3.3% growth (IFC Report, 2019). The culture of Sri Lankan people is to build relationships with their local people to protect Sri Lankan businesses and become more independent as a nation. Using contextualization, therefore, enables this study to situate the phenomena, research questions, theories, and findings in their natural setting (Zahra et al., 2014).

How SE founders/owner-managers deal, for example, with market and economic pressures and instability, after conflict, and how relationships (i.e., social, and cultural contexts) support them to overcome challenges and achieve resilience is overlooked. Zahra et al., (2014) specifically suggest that a refined categorization of context encompassing the temporal, industry, and market; spatial, social, and organisational; ownership and governance dimensions of context could be used to help understand entrepreneurial behavior. As pointed out, Sri Lanka faced more socio-economic hardships and uncertainties, compared to its neighboring countries in South Asia, during the two world wars, and it has experienced various forms of socio-political, economic, and environmental disruptions and disasters including the 2004 Tsunami and a prolonged ethnic conflict (Jayasuriya & Mccawley, 2008) as explained previously. Hence the turbulence is common within Sri Lankan context, and it is not due to a single event but due to multiple continuous events.

As pointed out through this chapter, Sri Lanka is undertaking a rapid transformation process involving post-conflict reconstruction, rehabilitation, and resettlement (Perera, 2014), and historically it has had a strategic value in the region since 1802 when the British moved into the country. Hence, Sri Lanka offers an attractive turbulent post-conflict context to study how SE founders/owner-managers overcome crises, achieve resilience, and grow in a context which constantly creates uncertainty in the operation of SE founders/owner-managers. The figure 3.2. summarises vital components in the business environment on which the SE founders/owner-managers do their business, explained in the previous sections.
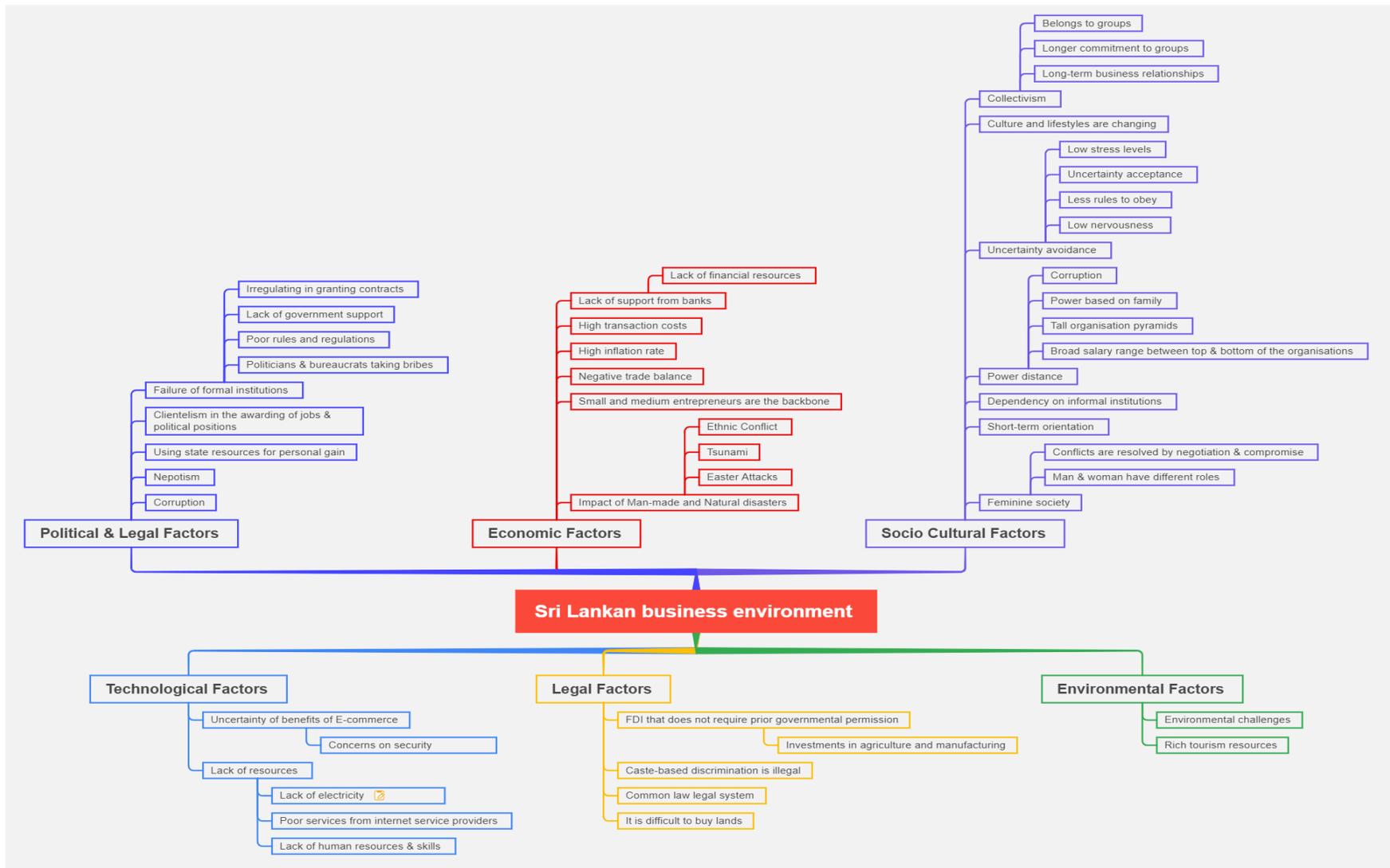
Figure 3.2. Vital Components of the Sri Lankan Business Environment (Author's illustration)

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented the details on the empirical context of Sri Lanka by critically appraising the key components of Sri Lanka in which this study was based. The chapter started by giving a general overview on the Sri Lankan economy highlighting the evaluation of Sri Lankan context up to the present situation. Afterwards the conflict and post-conflict Sri Lanka was briefed. End of the discussion on conflict and post-conflict scenario, the main components were exhibited in the figure 3.1 giving a snapshot to the reader to get a clear idea on the components related to conflict and post-conflict situations. Subsequently, the Sri Lankan culture was explained using the Hofstede's cultural dimensions. Each cultural dimension was explained by highlighting past literature and its applicability in the Sri Lankan context. Then the business environment of Sri Lanka was discussed by conceptualizing and highlighting the relevant threads of literature. An environment analysis on the Sri Lankan business environment was carried out by highlighting the Political, Economic, Socio-Cultural, Technological, Legal and Environmental factors (PESTLE analysis) specially concentrating on the environment which SE founders/owner-managers operate. The finding of this analysis was summarised finally in the figure 3.2 to give a broad idea to the reader. Next chapter will present the research methodology used in this study to develop insights on resilience and growth of SE founders/owner-managers operating in Sri Lankan post-conflict context.

Chapter 04: Research Methodology and Methods

4.1 Introduction

The Chapter 03, 'Sri Lankan context' demonstrated the importance of empirical context of Sri Lanka and significance of studying the SE founders/owner-managers resilience and growth in the Sri Lankan post-conflict situation. This thesis was intended to contribute to an understanding of the resilience and growth of SE founders/owner-managers in post-conflict situations. The research questions were developed as

- What crises are faced by SE founders/owner-managers in a turbulent emerging economy with a post-conflict context?

- How do these crises affect SE founders/owner-managers resilience in a post-conflict turbulent environment?

- How do SE founders/owner-managers perceive their personal resilience to affect their organisational resilience and growth in a post-conflict turbulent environment?

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the research methodology and methods for this qualitative study. This approach allowed for a deeper understanding of SE founders/owner-managers in turbulent post-conflict economy and provided a way to suggest a framework from the data to understand what makes SE founders/owner-managers resilient within post-conflict context. The research plan, including the methodology, study participants, procedures, analysis method, and ethical concerns are also primary components of this chapter.

4.2 Philosophical Foundation

Different world views and philosophical underpinnings can affect the way research is conducted. For this study, various research paradigms were reviewed to determine the methodology, which will be discussed in this section. Any research has an appropriate research paradigm, according to the traditions it follows. Paradigms in the humanities and social sciences help us to understand phenomena (Creswell, 2014). Different types of paradigms have been described by others in many ways as the constructivist approach, the interpretivist approach, the post-positivist approach, or the postmodern paradigm

(Brown, 1999; Carson & Coviello, 1996; Smith, 1989; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Burrell & Morgan (1979) pointed out four types of assumptions, i.e., ontological, epistemological, axiological, and methodological assumptions, which shape up research methodology. Whereas Creswell (2014) and Guba (1990) argue that most of the research paradigms share three fundamental elements: ontology, epistemology, and methodology.

Ontology is the way people view their world or the nature and the form of knowledge in the physical world; that is what they see as reality. The participants of the SEs were the source of knowledge for this study. Everybody in this world, including the people reading this thesis view the world differently according to his/her own paradigm. Multiple realities exist in any given situation and the reality is constructed by the individuals who are involved in a situation, and it can be changed. The researcher/author was an ontological interpretivist. Therefore, she utilized an approach which embraced the notion of multiple realities and accepted that each individual constructs his/her own reality as he/she interprets and perceives the world. The ontological position taken in the thesis was that reality is fluid as opposed to fixed and independent of those experiencing it, with reality being multiple and socially constructed by SE founders/owner-managers. The thesis assumed reality to be subjective to those experiencing it, being actively constructed, and understood through multiple, intangible mental constructions dependent on the individual or group holding the construction (Ritchie, Lewis, Ormston, & Nicholls, 2013; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Berger & Luckmann, 1991). The author considered this to align with the gap in extant knowledge, as identified in Chapter 02 and chapter 03 with regards to the need to explore the turbulent emerging economic context within which SE founders/owner-managers develop resilience and grow.

Epistemology is known as what counts as knowledge and how knowledge claims are justified. The way that the researcher had access to the knowledge was through interviewing the participants (Alvesson, 2011). **Epistemological assumptions** in conducting qualitative research means that the researcher tries to get close to the participant. In this study, the researcher tried her best to lessen the distance between herself and the SE founders/owner-managers being studied (Lincoln & Guba, 1988) by keeping in mind the five phases put forward by Pitts & Miller-Day (2007). During the first phase, researchers emphasized their concerns meeting the needs of participants with respect to the research and helping them to feel comfortable as research participants

(Pitts & Miller-Day, 2007). In this research, the first phase is typically the only phase evident where this research was conducted over a short duration involving few interactions with participants. The researcher was mindful of the need to rectify the issue of being biased by not proceeding to the second phase, where researcher and participants began to consider their partnerships in the research and their interrelationships with each other. The researcher relied on quotes given by the participants as evidence and spent time in the field with participants and became an insider. People behave based on their perceptions and interpretations which are constructed through their subjective abilities which influence how they make choices on their behavioral patterns (Gill et al., 2012). Being a social research, the present study's main question was to know how SE founders/owner-managers develop resilience and grow despite multiple crises. The researcher aimed to get a deeper understanding on the SE founders/owner-managers in terms of facing crises and overcoming the myriad crises, where focus was to understand SE founders'/owner-managers' behaviour. Gill & Johnson (2010) argued that the aim of interpretivist approaches is to understand (verstehen) how people make sense of their worlds. In this study, the researcher attempted to interpret the SE participants interpretation of responses, where the SE owners interpret the crises faced and the way they develop resilience differently based on their own beliefs and values which lead them to behave in a certain way. Due to this rationale, the positivist approach was rejected as it did not match with the purpose of the study, while the interpretivist approach was selected, where it assumes that people create and associate their own subjective meanings as they interact with the world around them.

All researchers bring values to a study, but qualitative researchers make their values known in a study. This is the **axiological assumption** that characterizes qualitative research. Hence, this thesis being qualitative in nature, the researcher makes her values known throughout the thesis. The researcher admits the value-laden nature of the study and actively report her values and biases as well as the value-laden nature of information gathered from the SE founders/owner-managers. The researcher actively position herself in the study. As pointed out the researcher became an insider and work and associate closely with the research participants. A reader who reads this thesis will understand the researcher's presence in the text. The researcher admits that the stories voiced represent an interpretation and presentation of the researcher as much as the SE founders/owner-

managers in this study (Denzin, 1989). The last section on reflections of this chapter will further elaborate on the axiological assumptions taken by the researcher.

There are several **methodological assumptions** utilized in research, and a methodological assumption focuses on the analysis of the methods used for gathering data (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2008). An interpretive paradigm tends to use qualitative methods. As a result, the findings can be open to many interpretations. The researcher used interviews and informal conversations to gather data and did an in-depth investigation as an interpretivist. She worked closely with the subjects of the study and jointly created knowledge with the help of SE founders/owner-managers.

After taking research questions, objectives and the main aim into consideration, the researcher selected the interpretivist paradigm. Although SE research is traditionally dominated by studies in the positivist paradigm, the researcher positioned herself under the umbrella of interpretivism, the justification of which is discussed in this section shortly. Interpretivism has a subjectivist epistemology (Johnson & Duberley, 2011) and thus the recognition that one can only access the "real world" through one's own imperfect interpretation. Accordingly, interpretive researchers assume that access to reality is only through social constructions such as language, consciousness, shared meanings, and instruments. Hence, the researcher focused upon the details of characteristics, crises and strategies used by SE founders/owner-managers, the reality behind these details and the subjective meanings of each stakeholder selected as her research participants. If the researcher followed the positivist paradigm, she would have been independent of what is being observed, which would demand the utilization of a quantitative research strategy to develop and test hypotheses (Wilson, 2010). The researcher considered that such strategy would not be in accordance with the purpose, and it would not help this research to contribute to the intended area of literature. The positivist approach with its exploration of facts pays only little attention to individual experiences (Welman & Kruger, 2002). Thus, it has its limitations in studies like this where the research aim is to explore how SE founders/owner-managers become resilient and grow in a turbulent emerging economy. It was necessary, therefore, to step away from traditions of positivism to gain understanding on the crises faced by SE founders/owner-managers, the crises effect on their resilience and the way they perceive their personal resilience to affect their organisational resilience and growth in a turbulent environment.

As pointed out, interpretivism was the guided philosophy throughout this thesis, which was compatible with the research aim, questions, and objectives. As the researcher was interested in developing insights into the growth and resilience of SE founders/owner-managers in a turbulent emerging economy, she took "human interpretation as the starting point for developing knowledge about the social world" (Prasad, 2005).

An **exploratory approach** was used for this study. Exploratory research intends merely to explore the research questions and does not intend to offer final and conclusive solutions to existing problems (Dudovskiy, 2018). An exploratory design works better when it is needed to develop rich insights into a phenomenon (Malhotra, Nunan, & Birks, 2017; Burns, Bush, & Sinha, 2014; Maxwell, 2013). Limitations to the exploratory research design are associated with the generalizability and conclusiveness (Stebbins, 2001). However, this study intended to develop research insights on SE founders/owner-managers, rather than measuring causal relationships. Hence the exploratory design was compatible with this thesis, and all the other designs (such as action research design, case study design, causal design, cohort design, cross-section design, descriptive design, experimental design, and mixed-method design) were rejected by the author considering their incompatibility with the aim and objectives of the thesis, along with the research questions, and the philosophical position of interpretivism.

Given the limited evidence in the extant scholarly literature on various levels of crises, their disparate impact and how they may have been mitigated in post-conflict contexts, this research study adopted an **inductive research type** (Saunders, Thornhill, & Lewis, 2019). Inductive research involves moving from a position of observing the empirical world to the construction of explanation and theories of what has been observed (Gill & Johnson, 2010), and it seeks to allow theories to emerge from the analysis of the data collected, rather than fitting the data collected into existing theories and concepts (Doole, 2008).

This thesis attempted to explore the way SE founders/owner-managers become resilient and grow in a turbulent environment, an exercise which is not compatible with the deductive approach where theory is tested. Hence, the researcher decided not to utilize the deductive approach even though it is dominant in research on the growth of SE (Worku, 2016; Lee, 2014; Stam, 2010; Jones, 2004; Smallbone, Leig, & North, 1995; McPherson & Schapiro, 1994). To achieve the objectives of the study, this thesis needed

to generate knowledge from the data on the crises faced by SE founders/owner-managers, the impact of crises on resilience and growth and the way they perceive their personal resilience to affect their organisational resilience and growth. An inductive approach to theory development was adopted to generate theory and to gain a more holistic understanding of the research phenomenon (Wilson, 2010). Hence this study tried to understand the subjective experience of SE owners and gain insights into the way they develop resilience in a turbulent emerging economy.

This research used **qualitative research method** to develop insights into SE founders/owner-managers. Qualitative research methods help researchers to capture detailed and complex form of data enabling an in-depth examination of a social phenomenon that requires an understanding of human social behaviors (Sarantakos, 2005). Qualitative research methods are especially useful in discovering the meaning that people give to events they experience (Stake, 2010; Denzin, Lincoln, & Giardina, 2006; Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). In other words, the nature of the social world must be "discovered", and this can only be achieved by firsthand observation and participation in "natural settings" (Sharpe, 2018). As outlined by Creswell (2014), a quantitative research method is appropriate when a researcher seeks to understand relationships between variables. Whereas the purpose of this study was to examine the experience and perceptions of SE founders/owner-managers in post-conflict situation, and hence, a qualitative method was the most appropriate choice. Secondly, the type of research questions posed in this research can be answered through qualitative methods which seek to explain 'why', 'how' and 'what' questions (Patton, 2002).

4.3 Research Design

The research design explored how a sample of SE founders/owner-managers face vivid crises and develop resilience and grow in Sri Lankan post-conflict economy. In following the traditions of the interpretivism paradigm, it was the SE founders'/owner-managers' experience and interpretation in relation to the post-conflict context that was of interest, not the ability of the participants to provide perfect and factual recollection of past events, which would align more to the positivist paradigm. The next section presents details on the methods (interviews and informal conversations) population, sampling technique, and sample selection.

4.3.1 Methods (Research Instruments)

The research methods needed to be compatible to the methodological approach as laid out thus far, and to allow for sufficient data to be collected to achieve the aim and objectives of the thesis. The data collected therefore needed to provide a rich insight into the crises faced by the SE founders/owner-managers and on how they develop resilience and growth. Qualitative research can utilize numerous methods of data collection; unstructured interviews, informal conversations, semi-structured interviews, group interviews, observations, online resources, videos, photographs, documents, maps, diaries, letters (Morse & Richards, 2013).

The study population was the Sri Lankan SE founders/owner-managers. The epistemological assumption is that SE founders/owner-managers operating in Sri Lankan economy are important to study and that Sri Lanka is a turbulent post-conflict economy with prospects. Sri Lanka being in a unique position, as pointed out in chapter 02 and chapter 03, the researcher considered it to be one of the most suitable cases of study as a post-conflict economy full of turbulence.

Initially to contact the SE owners an email survey was used. Researcher assumed that this was the most suitable method to build the first contact point as the population under study is distributed across a large geographic region (Selm & Jankowski, 2006) and online surveys are best suited for studies among non-probability samples (Wright, 2005). This was sent to all the 687 SEs found in the sme.lk website, but only 2 replies returned. The researcher wanted to build the first contact point with the SE founders/owner-managers through this online method, but it was not successful. Afterwards phone calls and emails were used to find suitable SE founders/owner-managers for the study. The research study utilized two data collection methods. Firstly, the SE founders/owner-managers were interviewed using Semi-Structured In-depth Interviews (SIIs). Furthermore, Informal Conversations (ICs) were conducted with the employees of the company.

4.3.1.1 Semi-Structured In-depth Interviews

Semi-structured in-depth interview (SII) is a popular data collection method due to its versatility and flexibility (Bell, Bryman, & Harley, 2018). Smallbone et al., (2012) has also highlighted that, face-to-face surveys are more suitable and reliable for collecting quantitative data while in-depth interviews are a useful way to capture qualitative data. Hence, SIIs were used to explore details of the respondents' own perceptions and

accounts. Since the SE founders/owner-managers under the study are little known, it was important to gain an in-depth understanding about them using these interviews.

Interviews must be conducted carefully to ensure a reliable set of data. The researcher understood the owners of the SEs as the gatekeepers and decided to interview them to ensure the richness of the data. There were two reasons for selecting SE owners for the interviews; first they knew everything on the company and secondly their support was essential especially in getting access to the company and opportunities for informal conversations with other stakeholders, which were crucial for the success of the study.

There were four main reasons to use interviews as the main source of data collection. First the researcher wanted to access the perspective of the SE owner. Interviews will allow the researcher to enter the other person's perspective (Patton, 1990). Secondly, she needed to find out what was in SE owner's minds. "We interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe" (Patton, 1990). Thirdly, qualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowledgeable, and able to be explicit (Patton, 1990). Finally, interviews would end up with thick description and triangulation with other sources (Yin, 2009; Merriam, 2003; Stake, 1995; Patton, 1990). In total, 40 SIIs were conducted for this research (see Table 4.1)

These key informants' knowledge and insights were important to understand their journeys (Patton, 1990) in terms of multi-level crises and of becoming resilient in the post-conflict context. These participants were interviewed throughout a span of one and a half years, from November 2016 to May 2018. After obtaining consent, the interviews were conducted. As Polkinghorne (2005) advocated 'engagement with participants in more than a one shot, 1-hr session', two or three interviews were undertaken with each participant, leading to rich data, and has suggested that a sequence of three interviews with a participant is more likely to produce accounts of sufficient depth and breadth. This approach was taken because, for example, the participants in these Sri Lankan SEs lacked experience in participating in a research project, some interviewees provided more detail in the first interview session and new insights emerged during the first set of interviews. The owner of Company E provided a plethora of information within the first interview as she was talkative and loved to share all her details. On the other hand, some had other

engagements and had to leave the meeting. Company A owner was the best example, as the researcher had to interview him thrice due to his busy schedule. Owners of Company I, J, E and M also had to be re-interviewed to obtain additional information that could not be gathered in the first interview. In other cases, after reviewing the interview transcripts, the researcher sought clarification by re-interviewing those participants (Owners of Company L and O). Between the first and the second interview, the researcher reviewed the transcript of the previous interview/s and asked follow-up questions to fill in the gaps and to clarify the account, and the participants added newly remembered information. No interview was conducted without confirming the informed consent of the participants both written and verbal.

The interviews lasted for 1 hour to 3 hours in length. The researcher carried out all interviews face to face in their respective companies, for consistency. Nine interviews were conducted in cafés, exhibitions, and owner's house due to their busy schedules. All the interviews were conducted in familiar environments for the participants with less disturbances. This was in accordance with the argument put forwarded by Polkinghorne (2005) that researchers need to demonstrate to the participant that it is safe to be open and revealing of deeply personal feelings and information.

In the first set of interviews, a topic guide which had a list of the key questions was used, and it maintained the consistency across all the interviews and helped to cover all the main points (Appendix 02). These questions were drafted incorporating the initial literature survey conducted on the initial topic, which was "the growth and development of SEs in turbulent emerging economy". Through the first phase of the literature review various characteristics related to firm, entrepreneur and environment were revealed as the factors associated with growth and development hence emerging with three main themes for the topic guide as entrepreneur characteristics, firm characteristics, and environment as displayed in the appendix 02 (interview guide). Moreover, barriers and challenges faced, strategies utilized to overcome the barriers and opinions on growth emerged as the rest of the interview guide themes. Hence the questions in the interview guide were aligned with the findings in the past literature. Questions were created to understand and develop insights on the entrepreneur characteristics, firm characteristics, environment characteristics. This interview guide was translated to Sinhala language as well, as several interviews were conducted in Sinhala language and further details will be

provided in the 4.5. section. With the exposure from the field and associating with the SE founders/owner-managers, the author realized that resilience is a worthy concept to explore related to these SE founders/owner-managers. With these insights the topic slightly changed to the current topic which is "Resilience and growth of SEs in post-conflict economy". Accordingly, when conducting the subsequent set of interviews mainly three new key questions were raised, 'What are the crises that you have faced so far in your life as an entrepreneur?', 'What was the impact of those crises on you and your business?', and 'How did you deal with those crises?'. These key questions were developed based on the literature review carried out for the study. The mapping of the past literature with the key questions developed in the interview guide is presented in the Appendix 03.

Most of the questions were open ended, and it allowed the participants to talk freely. Laddering or following up questions were used if the idea was not clear to the researcher or if she needed more clarification (Creswell, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The researcher knew very well on the power of silence, and she was cautious not to ask supplementary questions soon after a participant provided an answer. This was practiced throughout the interview process, which gave participants more time to reflect on the topic being discussed. Silverman (2010) agrees with this technique, stating that in the use of interviews it is important to listen and reflect on the meanings and significance of what people say about their lives and to provide the participants sufficient time to reflect.

With the permission of the participants all the interviews were tape recorded using an Olympus WS-803 voice recorder. Simultaneously, the researcher took handwritten notes during each interview, which enabled her to track key points, gesticulations made by the participants, and to highlight interesting and important ideas (Moorlock, Ives, Bramhall, & Draper, 2016). All verbatim transcripts of the interviews were shown to the relevant participants, and they were asked to verify the accuracy of the transcripts. This principle of checking the findings and their interpretation with the respondents after each interview continued throughout the study. During the data collection phase, a field log was maintained for keeping a detailed account of planning the time to be spent with the SE founders/owner-managers, setting aside time for transcription and analysis (Hill & McGowan, 1999).

4.3.1.2. Informal Conversations

Other than the SIIs, eighteen informal conversations were also carried out with some managers/employees in the relevant organisations. This allowed the researcher to get a holistic view when completing the records. These unspecified series of informal conversations were noted down, and ideas generated, and points revealed were recorded in the field log. During the analysis process, these were also coded and included in the theme generation, which will be explained further in the coming sections.

Documents were also reviewed to enhance the strength of the data. Company website information, employee records, meeting records, notices on notice boards etc. were the main documents reviewed. These documents were mainly used for two purposes; first to clarify or substantiate participants' statements (Glaser & Strauss, 2012) and secondly to provide thick descriptions of the cases (Merriam, 2003; Esterberg, 2002). These became beneficial when developing insights into the characteristics of these resilient SE founders/owner-managers. Through documentation and field notes, the data were thickened. Multiple sources of data allowed the researcher to develop the story on participants' views and on how they interpret them.

The researcher rejected the probability sampling techniques which are dominant among positivist researchers (Remenyi, Williams, Money, & Swartz, 1998; Hoepfl, 1997). The purpose of probability sampling is subsequent generalization of the research findings to the population. However, in this exploratory research design, it was not required for the sample to be representative of the population. Non-probability sampling technique of purposive sampling was the technique used for this study. In a qualitative study, a relatively small and purposively selected sample may be employed (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2018), with the aim of increasing the depth of understanding (Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan, & Hoagwood, 2013). Purposive sampling is 'used to select respondents that are most likely to yield appropriate and useful information' (Bourgeault, Dingwall, & De Vries, 2010: p.317) and is a way of identifying and selecting cases that will use limited research resources effectively (Palinkas et al., 2013).

Saunders et al., (2019) have defined purposive sampling as a "non-probability sampling procedure in which the judgement of the researcher is used to select the cases that make up the sample. The sample being studied was not representative of the population, but for researchers pursuing qualitative research designs, this is not considered to be a

weakness. Rather, it is a choice, the purpose of which varies depending on the type of purposive sampling technique that is used. Patton (1990) identified 16 types of purposive sampling and the researcher selected the **maximum variation sampling technique** for this research. The basic principle behind maximum variation sampling is to gain greater insights into a phenomenon by looking at it from all angles, which often help the researcher to identify common themes that are evident across the sample. For small samples, a great deal of heterogeneity can be a problem because individual cases are different from one another and using this sampling strategy and by applying the following logic, this apparent weakness can be turned into a strength: Any common patterns that emerge from great variation are of particular interest and value in capturing the core experiences and central, shared aspects or impacts of a program (Patton, 1990). The main limitation of purposive sampling is the generalizability of findings (Wilson, 2010). The generalizability of findings was not considered to be an issue in the context of this research study, as considered earlier in relation to the selection of a qualitative research strategy.

When it comes to sample selection number of concerns were to be addressed; what is the criteria to be utilized to select the sample, how to get the full access to the SEs and what the deciding factors in selecting the SE founders/owner-managers for further study are. The researcher faced a problem in getting a list of SE founders/owner-managers in Sri Lanka, due to the unavailability of a formal institution and a database related to SEs in Sri Lanka. List (2004) stated that there are two main occasions to use maximum variation sampling; when the sample size is too small or when no population information is available. Hence due to the non-availability of population information, the maximum variation sampling technique was the best option available for the researcher.

The researcher found 687 SEs in a website named **www.sme.lk** when she was browsing the web on 18th December 2014. All the names in the database, which was the only source available, were checked. Those firms which no longer existed or were unreachable were removed, and there were 322 firms for which contact details were available. These firms were pre-screened using two inclusion criteria: (1) being established before 2008, thus more likely to have existed during the post-conflict period in Sri Lanka; and (2) having fewer than 100 permanent employees. This process resulted in 160 small firms that were

The researcher found 687 SEs in a website named **www.sme.lk** when she was browsing the web on 18th December 2014.

then sent an initial mail survey, yielding only two responses, and they were followed up by mail and telephone. As a result, 26 firms expressed their willingness to participate.

Of these firms, 6 subsequently declined interviews because of their own time constraints. Hence, an initial sample of 20 contrasting cases covering a breadth of industries was then selected. Subsequently, 4 were excluded due to language issues – since the interviewer was not comfortable speaking the Tamil language and it was not possible to recruit a translator who could be trusted to maintain data authenticity. The choice of language selection will be discussed further in the section 4.5 on reflection. Then, further 4 declined as they were no longer interested in participating. 5 more companies were removed due to the lack of support and less contribution from the owner. Finally, 7 information rich cases were selected as the final sample (see figure 4.1). "These are cases from which one can learn a great deal about matters of importance. They are cases worthy of in-depth study" (Patton, 1990). In the interpretive research it was accepted to select the most suitable sample for the research purpose after considering the boundaries of the research (Creswell, 2014; Silverman, 2010). Before going to the field, the researcher explained the purpose of the research and a consent form (Appendix 01) was given at the initial interviews.

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┌─────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐
│   687 SEs in    │      │  365 SEs were   │      │                 │
│  www.sme.lk     │ ──►  │  omitted due to │ ──►  │    322 SEs      │
│    website      │      │ non-availability│      │    selected     │
│                 │      │   of contact    │      │                 │
│                 │      │     details     │      │                 │
└─────────────────┘      └─────────────────┘      └─────────────────┘
                                                            │
┌─────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐
│ followed up by  │      │                 │      │                 │
│    mail and     │      │  Resulted in 160│      │   Applied an    │
│ telephone and   │ ◄──  │  SEs and sent an│ ◄──  │   inclusion     │
│  26 SE owners   │      │   email survey  │      │   criterion     │
│ gave the consent│      │                 │      │                 │
└─────────────────┘      └─────────────────┘      └─────────────────┘
         │
┌─────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐
│   6 declined    │      │ 4 excluded due to│      │ 7 Information   │
│ interviews due  │      │ language issue + 9│     │ rich cases      │
│    to time      │ ──►  │ excluded due to  │ ──► │ selected, and   │
│   constraint    │      │ lack of support  │      │ 21 interviews   │
│                 │      │                  │      │ were conducted  │
└─────────────────┘      └─────────────────┘      └─────────────────┘
                                                            │
┌─────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐      ┌─────────────────┐
│Another 19       │      │                 │      │ 8 SEs were added│
│interviews were  │      │                 │      │ through Snowball│
│conducted with   │      │    Final        │      │ sampling to     │
│the 15 SE Owners │ ◄──  │  sample was     │ ◄──  │ increase the    │
│(total 40        │      │    15 SEs       │      │ sample since the│
│interviews) and  │      │                 │      │ data saturation │
│18 informal      │      │                 │      │ didn't occur    │
│conversations    │      │                 │      │                 │
│with employees to│      │                 │      │                 │
│triangulate data │      │                 │      │                 │
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Figure 4.1: The Sample Selection Procedure

4.3.2 Sample Size

The sample size requirement for quantitative studies is clearly stated by many researchers (Diaconu, Hackenberg, Stangler, Kahle, & Spiecker, 2017). The situation is not clear when it comes to qualitative studies. There are many past researchers who have provided lists of factors to consider when selecting samples (Flick, 2018; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2018; Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Patton, 2002; Morse, 2000), but only very few have provided guidelines for actual sample sizes. The main characteristic of the

sample size of qualitative studies is that they are in most cases smaller than those of quantitative studies. Contributions from 14 prominent qualitative methodologists and five 'early career reflections' had answered 'it depends' when the question of how many interviews are needed for qualitative research was asked (Baker & Edwards, 2018). *"There are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry. Sample size depends on what you want to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what's at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility, and what can be done with available time and resources"* (Patton, 1990, 184). If the topic being studied is obvious and clear, and the information is easily obtained in the interviews, then fewer participants are needed (Morse, 2000). Berteaux (1981) argued that fifteen is the smallest acceptable sample size in qualitative research. Creswell's recommendations were different (Creswell, 1999). He recommended between five and twenty-five interviews for a phenomenological study and twenty-thirty for a grounded theory study. Initially, the study conducted 21 interviews, which complies with maximum variation sampling strategy. Similarly, this complies with the findings of Crouch & McKenzie (2006), where it is stated that sampling in interview-based qualitative research, a sample of less than 20 participants enhances the validity of the research, allowing for closer association with participants and more in-depth inquiry. However, this was later changed.

The researcher managed to present and publish in their proceedings her work in two conferences and through that experience she learned that the research community is interested in including more cases on the study. Moreover, the data saturation didn't occur after collecting and analysing data from 7 SE founders/owner-managers. As explained previously, there was no place to get the contacts of SE founders/owner-managers and majority of the SE founders/owner-managers were inactive when it comes to replying to emails. Hence the researcher used **Snowball sampling method** to identify potential SE founders. To successfully identify and reach out to potential participants, the help of key informants was used. In this study, the 8 SE founders/owner-managers already interviewed were the key informants who live and work in their local community, who have a social role, and who therefore know the local context as well as the people about whom information is being sought was used to identify potential SE founders/owner-managers. As explained in chapter 03, being a collectivism culture Sri Lankan SE founders/owner-managers were having informal networks and this feature

was used by the researcher to add new participants to the study. Through snowball sampling method, eight (company H to O) more companies were added, which increased the sample size to 15 and the total number of interviews to 40. The Companies H to O are added with the snowball sampling method and in the participant table 4.1. it is indicated using an * sign.

By including 8 of these SEs, researcher managed to accommodate all most all the ideas put forwarded by qualitative researchers on the requirements related to sample size (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006; Creswell, 1999; Kuzel, 1992; Berteaux, 1981) and on the number of qualitative interviews as well (Saunders & Townsend, 2016). Hence, the final number of participants was 15 SE founders/owner-managers, as determined by saturation, which lead to 40 interviews. Moreover 18 informal conversations were conducted with other stakeholders like employees and business partners to triangulate data.

No	Name	Industry	Whom interviewed/ duration/ how many interviews conducted			Language conducted	Location	Informal conversations with whom		
			Whom	Duration	No	Language		Whom	Duration	Language
1	Company A	Customised Ceramic Manufacturing	Owner	2 hours each	3	English	2 in the company site/ 1 in an exhibition	Manager

One Employee | 30 minutes

15 minutes | English

Sinhala |
| 2 | Company B | Catering & Hotel Industry | Owner | 1.5 hours | 3 | English | 2 in the company site/ 1 at owner's home | Manager | 45 minutes | Sinhala |
| 3 | Company C | Tourism Industry | Owner | 2 hours each | 3 | English | Company site | Manager

One employee | 30 minutes

15 minutes | Sinhala |
| 4 | Company D | Transport & Distribution Industry | Owner | 2hours each | 3 | Sinhala | Company site | Manager

Manager | 30 minutes

30 minutes | Sinhala

Sinhala |

No	Name	Industry	Whom interviewed/ duration/ how many interviews conducted				Location	Informal conversations with whom		
			Whom	Duration	No	Language		Whom	Duration	Language
5	Company E	Infant Food Industry	Owner	2 hours each	3	English	2 in the company site/ 1 in an exhibition			
6	Company F	Logistics Industry	Owner	1.5 hours each	3	English	2 in the Company site/ 1 in a cafe	Manager	30 minutes	English
7	Company G	Adventure and sport travel	Owners	2 hours each	3	English	Company site	Manager One employee	30 minutes 15 minutes	English Sinhala
8	*Company H	Construction	Owner	1.5 hours each	3	Sinhala	2 in Company site/ 1 in Owners house	Finance manager	45 minutes	Sinhala
9	*Company I	Food	Owner	2.5 hours each	2	Sinhala	Factory site	Export manager One employee	30 minutes 15 minutes	English Sinhala

No	Name	Industry	Whom interviewed/ duration/ how many interviews conducted				Location	Informal conversations with whom		
			Whom	Duration	No	Language		Whom	Duration	Language
10	*Company J	Cosmetics	Owner	2 hours each	2	English	Company Outlet	Customer relations manager	30 minutes	English
11	*Company K	Real state	Owners	2.5 hours each	3	English	Owners' house	Business Development manager	30 minutes	English
12	*Company L	Tea	Owner	2 hours each	2	English	Company site	Export Manager	15 minutes	English
13	*Company M	IT	Owner	2 hours each	2	English	Company office			
14	*Company N	Manufacturing	Owner	2hours each	3	Sinhala	2 in the Factory and 1 in owner's house	Manager	30 minutes	Sinhala
15	*Company O	Textile	Owner	2.5 hours each	2	English	Company site	Manager	30 minutes	Sinhala

Table 4.1 – Details of the interviews and Informal Conversations

4.3.3. Data Preparation

As analysis in qualitative research should be concurrent with data collection (Miles et al., 2018; Stake, 2008; Tobin & Begley, 2004), the researcher commenced the data analysis with the first interview itself. All the observations and experiences with the participants were recorded as field notes, and field notes were maintained to enhance data and to provide a rich context for analysis. A record of the observation activities was undertaken while interviews were progressing, and the thought waves in the researcher's mind related to the data and all the memos related to the participants were recorded. As mentioned, the researcher was able to visit all the SE founders/owner-managers and their sites, and these visits were organized by the owners of the SEs. This gave an opportunity for the author to witness company activities after conducting the interviews. During these visits and data gathering activities, there emerged ideas about possible analyses and findings through the witnessed activities, which were also recorded as field notes and were elaborated in the field log.

Through those activities, the researcher ensured the comprehensiveness of all the interview and field data. All the interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim by the researcher herself as they provided essential raw data for qualitative analysis (Patton, 1990). Further, it has been pointed out that transcribing data is interactive and that it engages the reader in the process of deep listening, analysis, and interpretation (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). Thus, through her personal engagement in the activity, the researcher was able to recall the things that happened during the interviews and to be more engaged with the data. Further, own transcribing and field note writing facilitated the researcher for "getting inside" the data much easily (Morse & Richards, 2013), and it made the process of data analysis more effective and efficient. Anyone who has good typing skills and can listen to the recordings, can transcribe the data.

All the interview transcripts and the field notes were read several times. After the transcribing process, the transcriptions were double-checked by listening to the recordings again. Next, each interview transcript was shown to the participants for their consent and confirmation on the content to assure the credibility of the study. The interviews of four out of fifteen SEs were conducted in the mother tongue of the participants (Sinhala). So, there were twelve interviews in the Sinhala language, and they were translated into English by carefully listening to the Sinhala recordings. The English

scripts were retranslated to Sinhala with the assistance of a colleague of the researcher, and this process rectified translation errors and ensured accuracy. The reflection of the language choices is presented in the section 4.5.

The task of converting field notes and observations about issues and concerns into systematic categories is a difficult one and there is no infallible procedure exists for performing it (Guba, 1978). So, the researcher made an extra effort in this regard. Field notes were expanded into full write-ups soon after the field visits when the researcher's memory was fresh, and it ensured that none of the important pieces of information was missed. As Patton (1990) suggested, the researcher checked out the quality of the data by filling up the missed gaps soon after the field visits. All the interview transcriptions and field notes were organized in the chronological order by each case, date, time, and place. Multiple copies of completed data were maintained and one master copy was kept for safekeeping before analysis stage.

4.4. Data Analysis

This session presents the procedures applied in data analysis throughout the research. It also presents the multiple sources of evidence gathered to develop insights on resilience and growth of SE founders/owner-managers in a turbulent post-conflict economy and their findings. First, the procedure of analysis and the process of developing themes are presented, where it is shown, through a cross-case analysis, how the data lead to the three main themes, i.e., *Micro, Meso and Macro Level Crises; Relationships and Networking; The Agentic Role of the Entrepreneur.*

4.4.1. Data Analysis Procedure

Analysing text and multiple sources of data presents a challenging task for qualitative researchers (Creswell, 2014). Most qualitative researchers have confessed that there is no 'right way' for qualitative data analysis, and most of them suggest ways rather than pointing out that one method is superior to the others (Miles et al., 2018; Denzin, Lincoln, & Giardina, 2006; Willis, Jost, & Nilakanta, 2007). Qualitative research can be conducted in dozens of ways. Saldaña (2016) described that there are more than 20 different genres available for qualitative research such as ethnography (Bernard, 2012; Fetterman, 2009); grounded theory (Juliet, & Corbin, 2015; Charmaz, 2014; Birks & Mills, 2011); phenomenology (Bayne, 2014; Flowers, Davis, Larkin, Church, & Marriott, 2011); case

study (Yin, 2009; Stake, 2008; Denzin, 2001) and narrative analysis (Clandinin, Caine, & Lessard, 2018; Gubrium & Holstein, 2012). Each qualitative study is unique, and hence the data analysis procedures used will also be unique (Patton, 1990). Most of the qualitative researchers have accepted that analysis of qualitative data is a creative process, and the creativity depends on the researcher, hence, there is no 'right way' to organize, analyze and interpret qualitative data (Smith, 2014; Miles et al., 2014; Creswell, 2014; Dacin, Munir, & Tracey, 2010; Stake, 2008; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006; Patton, 1990).

The researcher followed the General Inductive Approach (GIA) identified in the past decade as a systematic procedure for analyzing qualitative data in which analysis is guided by specific evaluation objectives (Maxwell, 2013; Silverman, 2010; Thomas, 2006) and which was later adapted by several researchers as their data analysis procedure (Hootz, Mykota, & Fauchoux, 2016; Maramwidze-Merrison, 2016; Darabi & Clark, 2013; Nasr, 2013). In this study, the strategy of inductive analysis (Thomas, 2006) was adopted. This strategy has five steps: initial reading of text data, identification of specific text segments related to the objectives, labelling the segments of the text to create categories, reducing overlap and redundancy among the categories, and creating a model incorporating most important categories.

4.4.1.1. Special features of GIA

GIA is not guided by any established qualitative methodologies, such as the grounded theory, phenomenology, ethnography, narrative research, or case study (Creswell, 2014). The main feature of the GIA is methodological flexibility (Liu, 2016). To guarantee the quality of this approach, factors such as the motivation of the researcher, sufficient description of research methods, clear strategies to establish rigor, and the researcher's role in data analysis need to be considered (Caelli, Ray, & Mill, 2003). These factors have laid the foundation of GIA, and later, Thomas (2006) came up with a brief, non-technical set of data analytical procedures. The GIA aims to provide a conceptual approach to action and changes in real life situations (Glaser, 1992). However, the GIA limits its findings to the presentation and description of the most important themes. Furthermore, in the GIA, the completion of data collection is based on data saturation instead of theoretical saturation, which means, in GIA data collection should end when no new insights could be added from the data. The researcher followed Thomas (2006) with the

aim of reducing the massive amount of data guided by evaluation objectives to develop insights on crises faced, their impact on SE founders and strategies utilized by SE founders/owner-managers to develop resilience in the turbulent emerging economy, through coding and developing categories into themes. Similarly, Darabi (2016) reported the GIA as a systematic procedure which can be used to develop clear links between research objectives and findings while ensuring that these links were both transparent and defensible. In the same vein, Weligodapola (2019) reported on GIA as a more flexible approach in theoretical support than other qualitative approaches and highlighted that it develops clear connections between research objectives and research findings. Figure 4.2 illustrates the data analysis procedure adopted in the study.

To obtain a deeper understanding on the resilience and growth of SE founders/owner-managers, information rich companies were selected representing various sectors of the economy, and a lot of explanatory characteristics of the SE founders/owner-managers were revealed during the data collection and data analysis stage. Participant profiles emerged from semi-structured in-depth interviews (SII), informal conversations (IC) and field notes. These profiles comprise demographic details, their origin, and their status. A summary of SE founders'/owner-managers' characteristics and further details are provided in participant profiles (Appendix 04). To protect their real identity, the companies were identified by fictitious names. The case and its components were systematically converted from their real identities to fictitious ones to maintain the flow and effectiveness, and a considerable effort was made to keep track of the conversions (Yin, 2014). The profiles of the SE founders/owner-managers were presented as a guide to the data analysis and findings. The data reduction procedure followed in this study is given in the following section. Once the data preparation was over, the data reduction was started.
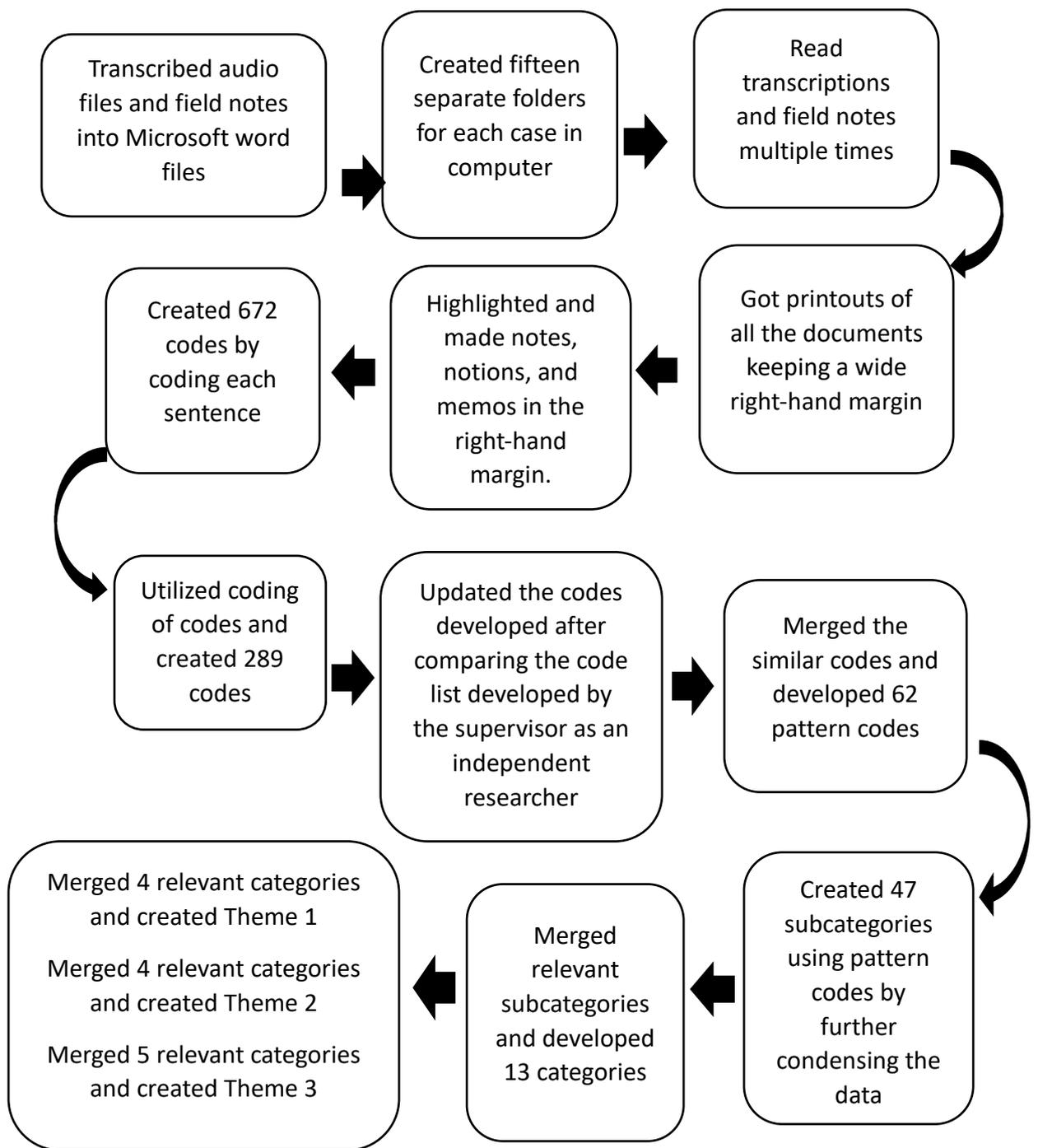
Figure 4.2. – Steps in Data Analysis Procedure

4.4.2. Data Reduction

The researcher had two options for managing data: electronic or manual. The researcher first tried to analyze data electronically as software tools of analyzing qualitative data were popular during the past decade and as she had a fair level of computer literacy as well. Qualitative researchers often "learn by doing" data analysis (Dey, 2003). Hence, the researcher underwent a training on NVivo software, and all the transcriptions were imported to NVivo, and the codes were assigned. This software is a very good method for 'playing with' the data; making matrices of categories, putting information into different arrays, creating data displays, tabulating the frequency of different events, and putting information in chronological order (Miles et al., 2014). Nevertheless, the researcher realized that she was not close enough to the data when she worked with the software. She needed to touch and feel the data.

The central part of this study contains the words expressed by the participants and their verbal records, and it has a large collection of data, and the researcher also has a story to tell like in all other empirical research studies (Yin, 2014). Hence, it was found that computerized functions were not very helpful in this research. Each of the stories mentioned had a clear beginning, a middle and an end, where she needed a clear analytical strategy to craft the story. Therefore, the researcher decided to manage the data analysis manually.

All the transcriptions and field notes were read for several times. The data analysis was started with individual case analyses as suggested by Patton (1990), as the most appropriate way to begin data analysis before doing the cross-case analysis. Various thoughts and comments on how these data can be interpreted and used in data analysis were written on the margins. There were multiple meanings, and they were noted down. In the subsequent interviews, the participants were asked to verify the researcher's interpretations on earlier interviews. Through these stakeholder checks, the consistency of coding was checked (Thomas, 2006). After being familiarized with the data, the coding process started.

As Thomas (2006) suggested, inductive coding begins with close readings of text and consideration of the multiple meanings that are inherent in the text. Miles et al., (2014)

stated that coding is deep reflection about and, thus, deep analysis and interpretation of the data's meanings. When it comes to coding, the Miles et al., (2014) method was followed, where, by beginning the first cycle of coding, which resulted in 672 codes. Then through coding the codes (Saldaña, 2016) the number reduced to 289 and after that the second cycle of coding further compressed the codes and finally derived more general themes.

While doing this exercise, the researcher thought about the data more extensively. Printouts were taken with double spaced lines on the left and with wide margins on the right. Then the important points were highlighted, and the ideas generated were written in the form of memos in the margins, which became helpful during the process of analysis. Subsequently, the researcher began the first cycle of coding.

Coding is a heuristic, an exploratory problem-solving technique without specific formulas or algorithms to follow (Saldaña, 2016). Coding is not simply labeling the data; it is also a way of linking the data. As Morse & Richards (2013) mentioned, it leads the researcher from the data to the idea and from the idea to all the data pertaining to that idea. Charmaz (2014) affirms the significance of coding through a beautiful metaphor, where she states that "coding generates the bones of researcher's analysis…. integration will assemble these bones into a working skeleton". As Strauss (1987) states, the excellence of a research rests in large part on the excellence of the coding. In summary, by referring to a variety of sources on coding the researcher became aware that "*all coding is a judgmental call, since we bring our subjectivities, our personalities, our predispositions and our quirks to the process*" (Sipe, 2004, 482). Thus, coding assumes an integral place in this study.

During the coding process, a reflective journal was maintained to keep track of interpretations, thought waves, ideas about participants and ideas generated. A code book was also maintained to keep record of emergent codes.

4.4.2.1. First Cycle Codes and Coding

Saldaña (2016) had come up with 25 different approaches of coding, and Miles et al., (2014) affirmed that there is no harm in mixing these methods as needed. In this study, the researcher mainly used descriptive coding, In Vivo coding, process coding, values coding, attribute coding and versus coding (see table 4.2).

	Type of coding	Meaning	Examples of coding from data
1	Descriptive coding	A descriptive code assigns labels to data to summarise in a word or short phrase – most often a noun – the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data.	Niche strategy, New markets, Agreements with customers
2	In Vivo coding	In In Vivo coding uses words or short phrases from the participant's own language in the data record as codes.	"Zero government support", "Never get bored", "Gut feeling on business"
3	Process coding	This coding method uses gerunds ("ing" words) exclusively to connate observable and conceptual action in the data.	Understanding the competitors' position, Evaluating the potential markets, Accepting employee mistakes
4	Values coding	This is the application of three different types of related codes onto qualitative data that reflect a participant's values, attitudes, and beliefs, representing his or her perspectives or world view.	Government is hopeless, Ignore the rules, Family attachment
5	Attribute coding	This method is the notion of basic descriptive information such as the fieldwork setting, participant characteristics or demographics, data format, and other variables of interest for qualitative and some applications of quantitative analysis.	Age, Number of years in operation, Case
6	Versus coding		Father Vs Son, Micro-management Vs Macro management, international market Vs. local market

Table 4.2 Different types of coding with examples of coding from data

The inductive coding was mainly used allowing codes to emerge progressively during the data collection. This method is better than deductive coding, where the coding list comes from the conceptual framework and research questions (Miles et al., 2014; Boyatzis, 1998). Inductive coding is better grounded empirically, and it was visible that the researcher was open to what the field had for her.

In the first cycle of coding, every sentence and phrase were coded based on the researcher's interpretation of the raw data. Words and ideas repeated in several places, important things that happened in participants' lives, things which directly connected with the study objectives, things which surprised the researcher and whatever her inner voice thought as important were coded. This was done separately for each interview conducted.

Since the researcher was new to coding, the supervisor's support was obtained to learn and understand the coding exercise properly. Some of the transcriptions were sent to the supervisor for coding. This process was like independent parallel coding, where an initial coder carries out an analysis and develops set of codes that constitute preliminary findings. Where in this study researcher being the initial coder, developed set of codes and categories after studying the transcripts. Afterwards a second coder (in this study, the second coder was the supervisor) is given the evaluation objectives and some raw text (2 interview transcripts) to develop initial categories. She created second set of categories from the raw text. After that supervisor send those categories and it was compared by the researcher with the first set of categories, she developed to establish the extent of overlap. Unlike in independent parallel coding, the two sets of categories were not merged into a combined set in this research. Hence the codes and categories developed by the supervisor was used as a learning exercise to further understand about the heuristic nature of coding. This step (independent coding by the supervisor) was taken by the researcher to make sure that she is on the correct track when it comes to coding her data. The codes and categories developed by the supervisor were compared and discussed. For instance, the researcher had coded employee benefits given by one of the companies separately by giving three different codes as field trips, annual get together, year-end celebrations. The supervisor had coded all of them as employee benefits. Important insights emerged from the different ways in which the researcher and the supervisor looked at the same set of data, a form of analytical triangulation (Patton,

1990), which helped immensely the researcher, to carry out the coding process vigilantly and accurately throughout the research.

This process itself became a kind of data condensation task, which provided an opportunity to retrieve the most meaningful material and to assemble chunks of data that go together. After the first level of coding, 672 codes emerged. There were instances where same thing had been coded in various synonymous terms such as employee satisfaction, motivation to work, reasons to work, reasons to stay, and employee benefits. Then by coding the codes, the initial number of codes were reduced to 289. As Saldaña (2016) suggested, through coding the codes, the data were condensed through lump codes, which Thomas (2006) had referred to as overlapping coding.

Afterwards all the codes were taken out from the transcriptions with their relevant phases, and separate tables were developed under different cases with relevant quotes from the participants. A numbering system was used for the participant quotes. For example, if a quote from the 1st interview of the owner of the Company A was taken out, it was named as AO1 and if it is from the 2nd interview of the Owner of the Company C, the number assigned was CO2.

This separation was helpful when it came to cross-case analysis. This enabled to distinguish the quotes among the cases as well as within the cases with ease. With this exercise the first level of coding was completed.

4.4.2.2. Second Cycle Coding
The researcher entered the phase of the second cycle of coding to develop pattern codes. Pattern coding is a way of grouping the summaries of the first cycle codes into a smaller number of categories, themes, or constructs (Miles et al., 2014) by combining massive junks of data to form more meaningful units of analysis. All the tables developed with the codes were read carefully again. After that, the codes were printed, and they were cut into 3*3 data cards. Next, all the data cards were scrutinized by placing them on the floor. Similar topics were highlighted using the same color in all the cases. Then similar codes were taken together separately, and an excel workbook was maintained allocating separate sheet per pattern code developed through this process (See figure 4.3). Next the best fitting name was assigned for each cluster of codes.

		COMPETITIVE EDGE
A	Competitive edge	It is our quality. We maintain quality throughout the process. From the customer placing an order to dispatching. We value quality not the quantity. In the old days we complete with price but no more. Now we compete with quality not the quantity.
	Under the Glaze	Most of the reputed brands are doing on the glaze; such as Noritake which is easier. Midaya is doing under the glaze and it is difficult but much better compared to doing on the glaze. The most valued customer of Midaya, Susie Watson was attracted to Midaya purely due to this reason.
B	Competitive edge	Our food is **quality food**. We follow all the **SIS standards** and comply with all the requirements put forwarded by the Consumer Protection Authority. Guests are commenting on the quantity also. Our **prices are reasonable** and worth to spend. My whole family eats from the restaurant every day. So the food cannot be bad and low quality isn't it. I had hired very **good chefs. The food is tasty** and our restaurant is **clean and tidy.** Whoever comes to eat from us is coming back for the second time also. **(repeated purchases)**
C	shaded beach	And our resort we have a major plus point. Can you see there….. The large tree right in front of our beach restaurant provides shade if you fancy reading a good book zipping a good smoothie from our restaurant. Shaded beach is a highlight in our resort.
	Near to the airport	We are located just 2 ½ hours drive from Colombo International Airport. All these factors may be attracting foreigners more.
	water sports	One can experience water sports such as day & night fishing, diving, snorkeling, sea kayaking and sailing with neighboring water sports centers located on Unawatuna Beach.
	services	So foreigners are so fond of it and on their request we are arranging airport pick up, drops, excursions and trips in Galle city and to other popular tourist attractions. We provide a free Galle city tour for the guests who are staying over 5 nights with us.

Demographics | Competition | Customers | **Competitive Edge** | Ethical Concerns | Crises | ...

Figure 4.3 – Excel sheet of pattern codes

Afterwards a table was developed to summarize participants' concerns related to each category that was developed from the data (see table 4.3). This was written in the form of an analytical memo to elaborate the significance of the pattern code. This process helped to keep track of the emergent category and to get cross case and higher level of analytic energy flowing as Miles et al., (2014) clearly pointed out.

Category	Meaning
Founder characteristics	There are both positive and negative characteristics according to their own words. **Positive characteristics (according to them)** Most of them believe that due to the positive characteristics they had gain lot. When going through their stories it is visible that these positive characteristics were the drivers for their success. Never give up is a common characteristic among all the founders in all the cases. Accepting challenges, learning new things and desire to upgrade own skills are the other common positive attributes they considered. Commitment, dedication, work life balance, stubborn, organized, persistent. **Positive attributes (researcher found)** Family attachment, convincing skills, mistakes as learning points, creating new things, skills developed through being alone, practical, and liberal parents, pride on doing what they do, respect for education, eager to learn new things, delegation skills, grabbing opportunities, risk taking, keeping the word, studying the market, able to filter things, switch on and switch off mode, love for business world. **Negative characteristics** Even though some of them were discussing and confirming on delegation, they were not really delegating things. Keeping the ownership without giving the full authority and involve in everything were some weaknesses which had caused them negative impact in the past. Poor time management, lack of delegation, trusting people too much and lose of temper are some of the negative attributes.

Table 4.3. – Summary of participants' concerns related to pattern codes

The substantial number of categories developed through data reduction was a challenge for the researcher in selecting the most relevant categories. According to the GIA, the upper-level or more general categories are likely to be derived from the evaluation aims, and Thomas (2006) maintains that, for the findings to be useable and acceptable, the researcher has to decide what is most significant and less significant in terms of the objectives. Hence the methodological challenge of selecting the most appropriate data was resolved by concentrating and focusing on the objectives of the research. Accordingly, the relevant categories were selected from among the 62 pattern codes that emerged by referring to the objectives of the study. In doing so, some of the categories needed to be combined, some were simply discarded due to their inapplicability and incomparability with the objectives of the study, and some were left behind. When data saturation was achieved, it ended up with three main themes, i.e., Micro, Meso and Macro Level Crises; Relationships and Networking; and Agentic Role of the Entrepreneur (see Figure 4.4.). The Chapters 5 presents details on the development on the main themes and the rest of the findings reached through the data condensation process.

Categories that emerged	Themes that emerged
• Personal Crises • Organisational Crises • Industrial Crises • Societal Crises	**Micro, Meso and Macro Level Crises**
• Relationships with family and relatives • Business Networking • Customer Relationships • Employee Relationships	**Relationships and Networking**
• New Process Innovation • New Soft Innovation • Entrepreneur as an Achiever • Entrepreneur as a Planner • Entrepreneur as a Controller	**Agentic Role of the Entrepreneur**

Figure 4.4. – Themes developed

4.4.2.3. Outcome of the coding process

As shown in the previous sections, the researcher began with case analysis first and then moved on to cross-case analysis by grouping together answers from different people to common questions and analyzing different perspectives on common issues. In terms of the GIA, Thomas (2006) argues that the data analysis procedure is to develop categories into a framework or a model. As already pointed out, three themes have emerged, and the following sections elaborate on the steps on the evolvement of these themes, and Chapters 05 and 06 are devoted for a detailed presentation and discussion of the same. The development of the themes was achieved through the voices of the participants of this study and the thick descriptions of their experiences and opinions on resilience and growth in a post-conflict economy.

4.4.2.3.1 Theme 01 – Micro, Meso and Macro Level Crises

The researcher tried to find out the crises faced by the SE founders/owner-managers in their journey, which was one of the main research questions raised in this study. When the interviews were in progress, it was revealed that these SE founders/owner-managers had faced various types of crises, divorce, loss of life partner, entrance of Chinese products, breakwater barrier, Tsunami, corruption etc. There is a clear difference between a crisis and a challenge. The term crisis can be distinguished through the state of abnormality which it induces at the individual level, as well as in the life of an organisation. Past researchers have likened it to a set of internal and external problems which threaten the integrity, reputation, or existence of an individual or an organisation (Regester & Larkin, 2008). This study considered a crisis as an event which has a low probability of occurrence, and which has a severe impact on the SE founder/owner-manager, and such crises had made a major impact on the SE founders/owner-managers, and they were turning points on their business voyages.

Axial coding was undertaken to compare the lower-level categories (i.e., where there were similarities) by comparing transcripts within and across categories (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). This iterative process resulted in 14 higher-level categories that conveyed the essence of the lower levels. Finally, the 14 higher-level categories were grouped into three superordinate categories comprising: (1) micro-level (individual and firm); (2) meso-level (industry), small firms from multiple sectors; and (3) macro-level (societal, i.e., Sri Lankan) crises (Figure 4.5), which made up the first theme – Micro, Meso and Macro

Level Crises. The findings were thus analyzed to focus on the crises at the: (i) individual and firm levels (micro level); (ii) industry (meso level); and (iii) societal (macro) level. In Chapter 5, the process of developing lower-level categories, evolving of high-level categories, and finally emerging of superordinate categories will be presented in an extensive manner.

Example of Low-level categories   **High-level Categories**   **Superordinate categories**

Obesity, stress, alcohol related illnesses

Parent issues, family issues, spouse issues, child issues

less time for the family, less attention, take work home, breaking promises

procrastination, lack of delegation skills, perfectionism, Anthropophobia, lack of communication skills

Health Issues

Relationship Issues

Work-life Balance Issues

Personality Issues

Crisis at Individual level (Entrepreneur)

too dependent, cannot work under pressure, lack of commitment & engagement, demanding too much

Too dependent on the prevailing customers, Rigidness of the customers, extensive power of the customers

Disorganized books, profit problems, cash flow forecasting problems, bad debts, not having the proper know- how

Conflict of management philosophies, growing too fast, Lack of marketing

People Impediments

Customer Impediments

Cash-flow issues

Manager Impediments

Crisis at Organizational level (SE)

Threats from substitutes, lengthy procedures, lack of knowledge on the market, high insurance costs, lack of recognition, high government taxes, disputes between governments

Rival products, easy entry & exit, lack of rules and procedures, multinational companies, corruption

Geographical and International Trade barriers

Competition

Crisis at Industry level (Multiple sector)

Figure 4.5: Development of Theme 01

Mothers' vs daughters, social taboos, directive style vs participative style	→	Generation gap
Extended family pressure, discouraging comments	→	Relative pressures
Negative people, negative energy	→	Mind set of People
Ill-treatment for women, cultural and social hurdles, restricted access	→	Attitude on Women
Increasing levels of rules and regulations, frequent changes in the tax policy, lack of support, weak policies, nepotism	→	Government Red tape

Crisis at Societal level (Sri Lanka)

Figure 4.5: Development of Theme 01 *Contd….*

4.4.2.3.2. Theme 02 – Relationships and Networking

Relationships and networking had helped the SE founders/owner-managers to become resilient in the turbulent environment. In emerging economies, personal relationships and networks are often seen as an effective substitution for well-established institutions (Ahlstrom & Bruton, 2006; Katherine & Jone, 1996). This was revealed in chapter 03 in past literature and empirically the interviews and informal conversations proved that the resilience and growth of SE founders/owner-managers in the turbulent emerging economy highly depended upon solid relationships and business networks (Figure 4.6). Networks had become a vehicle to gain access to resources, information, and support from other parties (Hoang & Antoncic, 2003). Chapter 5 presents more detailed information on this theme.
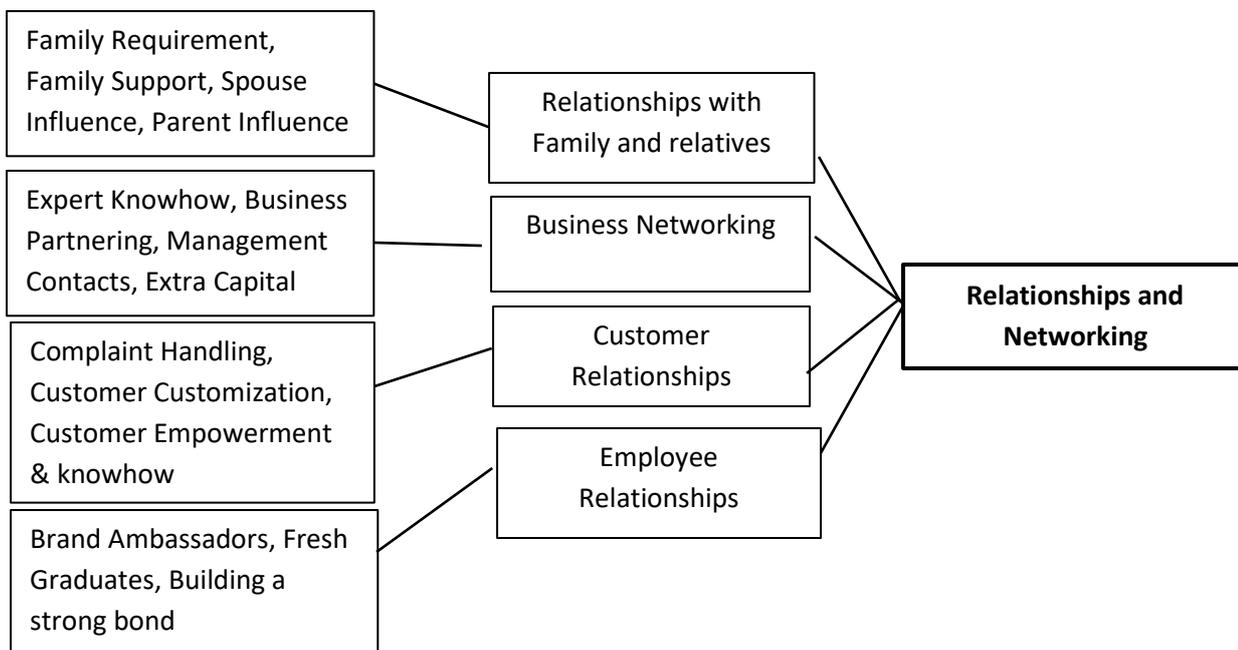
Figure 4.6: Development of Theme 02

4.4.2.3.3. Theme 03 – The Agentic Role of Entrepreneur

The Agentic role of entrepreneur emerged as a main theme, which was one of the strategies used by the SE founders/owner-managers to overcome the micro and macro crises they faced and to become resilient. The innovative marketing techniques used and the changes in the ways in which products and services are delivered resulted in a category; New process innovation and Innovative HR practices, Innovative organisational practices, Work happiness and Innovative administrative practices resulted in the New soft innovation category (see figure 4.7). Moreover, the entrepreneurial competencies of the SE founder/owner-manager had become a main reason behind the SE founder/owner-managers' resilience. These SE owners had become successful entrepreneurs by being achievers, effective planners, and controllers. All these five main categories ended up with the theme, Agentic role of entrepreneur, which will be explained in detail in Chapter 5.

Development of Theme 03

Example of Low-level categories

High-level Categories

Superordinate categories

New product development, Innovative marketing techniques

New Process Innovation

Innovative HR practices, Innovative organisational practices, work Happiness, - Innovative administrative practices

New Soft Innovation

Opportunity seeking and initiative, commitment until the end, personal sacrifice, risk taking and demand for efficiency, ability to persuade others, having a strong confidence in oneself and the ability to complete a difficult task

Achiever

Agentic Role of Entrepreneur

Information seeker and systematic planner

Planner

Ability to persuade and influence others and having a strong belief/confidence in oneself and the ability to complete a difficult task/challenge

Controller

Figure 4.7   Development of theme 3

–

4.4.3 Developing a Framework

Drawing upon the empirical data as illustrated by Figure 4.4, crises were analyzed as three broad superordinate categories or themes: (i) the micro-level of analysis: including people's and managers' impediments, customer relationship management (CRM), and cash flow. This theme highlights the impact of crises on the entrepreneur and consequently on the small firm which are influential in the way the crises have been dealt with; (ii) the meso-level of analysis: geographical and international trade barrier competition; this theme emphasizes the importance of entrepreneurs' awareness and knowledge of the external environment such as policies which can be directly affecting entrepreneurs in making the right decision in dealing with a specific crisis; and (iii) the macro-level of analysis: for example, the generation gap, natural disasters and conflicts, man-made barriers, cultural norms and corruption, and attitude to women, which stress the factors that affect entrepreneurs and the small firms' organisational culture in coping with external disturbances.

Understanding these crises led to the emergence of the second and third themes – Relationships and Networking and The Agentic Role of the Entrepreneur – which enabled small firms to achieve resilience, through building proper relationships and networks and through organisational innovation and the agentic role played by entrepreneurs therein, as exemplified by the study's novel framework.

4.4.4. Trustworthiness of Results

In quantitative research, reliability and validity are the key indicators to measure their success. Qualitative researchers often reject them (Morse & Richards, 2013; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Due to the existence of multiple realities and the absence of a fixed objective reality, ensuring of reliability of a research in interpretivism paradigm is problematic (Moorlock et al., 2016). Qualitative research can be evaluated based on their trustworthiness, which represents several constructs including: (a) credibility, (b) transferability, (c) dependability, and (d) confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher employed different strategies proposed by renowned qualitative researchers to ensure them and these strategies are presented in this section (see table 4.4).

	Constructs	Strategies followed in this study
1	Credibility	Triangulation of data (Miles et al., 2014; Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2009; Merriam, 2003; Patton, 2002; Stake, 1995)
		Member checks (Merriam, 2003; Patton, 1990)
		Peer review (Miles et al., 2014; Merriam, 2003; Patton, 1990)
2	Transferability	Provided thick description (Miles et al., 2014; Merriam, 2003; Patton, 1990)
3	Dependability	Consultation with a peer as a reviewer (Miles et al., 2014)
4	Confirmability	All the data were retained and available for reanalysis by others (Miles et al., 2014) Record of all the procedures and methods were kept in a detailed manner even for an outsider to audit (Miles et al., 2014)

Table 4.4 – Strategies utilized to ensure trustworthiness

4.4.4.1. Credibility

In this study, the use of multiple methods SIIs and ICs fosters the use of multiple sources of data. This, in turn, facilitates the validation of data through triangulation. Positivistic criteria for triangulation, for example, internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity, are inappropriate for evaluating research generated through the qualitative paradigm (Hill & McGowan, 1999). Lincoln & Guba (1985) endorsed the use of member checks to provide credibility. Member checking is where, "data, analytic categories, interpretations, and conclusions are tested with members of those stake holding groups from whom the data were originally collected" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This strategy was recommended by Lincoln & Guba (1985) as "the single most critical technique for establishing credibility". It offers opportunity to correct errors and misinterpretations occurring during data collection, which may otherwise impact the credibility of findings. Two to three interviews were conducted with each owner of the SE, and this provided the researcher the opportunity to conduct member checks by verifying the interpretations given when she visited the SEs consecutively. Some interpretations were sent to the participants through email.

Peer examination and expert advice were taken on the research methodology specially with topic guides, sampling procedures and analytical procedures. An expert with experience in qualitative research was given the access to data and to interview transcriptions and was asked to check the coding. Later, at the theme generation stage, she was consulted, and she ensured that the researcher had analysed the data properly and adequately in code and theme generation. Through this process, several versions of themes emerged, and the suggestions given by the expert were accepted by the researcher since they helped to refine the themes to accurately reflect the original data collected from SE founders/owner-managers.

4.4.4.2. Transferability

The researcher had doubts about the credibility of whether the findings would be applicable to other contexts since this study employed a small sample of Sri Lankan SE founders/owner-managers. However, Lincoln & Guba (1985) and Firestone (1993) have claimed that it is the responsibility of the researcher to provide enough details to enable the reader to assess the transferability of the finding to another situation. Qualitative researchers have suggested that to contextualize and demonstrate transferability, the researcher should provide information on the participants, restrictions placed on the participants recruited, the sample size, the data collection methods, the number and length of data collection methods and time period over which the data were collected (Moorlock et al., 2016; Crouch & McKenzie, 2006; Creswell & Miller, 2000). This information was provided throughout this chapter to facilitate the reader in the contextualization of the findings and their applicability to other situations. Through this the researcher assured the transferability.

4.4.4.3. Dependability

Dependability is very similar to reliability, which is compatible with positivist paradigms. Lincoln & Guba (1988) claimed that there is a close tie between the concepts of credibility and dependability. That means if research demonstrates credibility, it ensures dependability too. They proposed a method to ensure dependability; by employing overlapping research methods. This was achieved in this study by employing SIIs and ICs. Member checking and expert opinions were also used for further verification of the dependability.

4.4.4.4. Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the researcher's ability to demonstrate that the data represent the participants' responses and not the researcher's biases or viewpoints (Cope, 2014). The importance of being neutral and impartial throughout the data collection, data preparation, data condensation and interpretation and developing conclusions phases were understood. To achieve this purpose, a reflective journal was maintained, which recorded all the decisions taken throughout the process. Cope (2014) claimed that in reporting qualitative research, confirmability can be exhibited by providing rich quotes from the participants that depict each emerging theme, which was fulfilled when

presenting finding and elaborating on the development of themes. Miles et al., (2014) presented some useful points in dealing with confirmability; to describe general methods and procedures explicitly and in a detailed manner and to keep the study's data and make them available for reanalysis by others. Lincoln & Guba (1988) added to this by mentioning that the researcher should keep a record of the study methods and procedures, detailed enough to be audited by an outsider. The researcher agreed with all these suggestions and complied with them, by retaining all the documents related to the study and keeping detailed records on the procedures applied. Hence the confirmability of this study was assured.

4.5. Conducting research in Sri Lanka – A reflection

Reflexivity is focusing on a critical self-evaluation of one's position as the researcher and is prominent and vital in qualitative research (Lees, Walters, & Godbold, 2022). Reflexivity provides an opportunity to reflect and evaluate on all aspects of the research process. Hence this section presents a reflection on this study in managing the research process within the Sri Lankan context. Reflexivity is a 'continual internal dialogue' (Berger, 2015, 220) where it presents the reflexive decisions on who to recruit, how to collect data and how to disseminate findings reflect a process underpinned by the researcher's values, biases, and context, requiring their immersion in the research process (Carpenter, 2018). This reflexivity process enhanced the ethical nature of this research. There are two ethical dimensions within the research process; procedural ethics and ethics in practice (Guillemin & Gillam 2004), where the author looked into both. Procedural ethics is related to getting approval from an institutional ethics review body, where in this research, as the first step the research was scrutinized by the Research Ethics Committee (FREC) of the Sheffield Hallam University and Ethical approval was taken to conduct this research. Given that reflexivity results in researchers considering their potential impact on the research, including the participants, there is a close synergy between reflexivity and institutional ethics review aims, particularly respecting persons and minimizing the risk of harm (Gillam & Guillemin, 2018). On the other hand, ethics in practice reflects the ongoing presence of ethical issues beyond the point of approval, thus providing a rationale for sustained reflexivity throughout the project's lifetime (Lees, Walters, & Godbold 2022). At the heart of this process is the researcher's internal dialogue,

underpinned by her ethical values, determining the ethically preferred course of action (Takeda, 2022).

As explained in the sampling section, the researcher first tried to access the potential participants who were in the sme.lk website through emails which was failed miserably. Most of the Sri Lankan SE founders/owner-managers were not using emails as a formal channel of communication at that time. Even though this was the situation back in 2016, this had changed currently due to Covid 19 impact, where SE founders/owner-managers had understood the importance and use of ecommerce for their businesses. The external pressure from the market, support from external parties such as Government, communities or even other businesses are some of the significant factors which influenced the e-commerce adoption by SEs (Rahayu & Day, 2015). Hence if a researcher is planning to conduct research in Sri Lanka emails can be used as a channel of communication. On the contrary, Sri Lankans are warm and friendly, and love to talk with people, hence they prefer talking rather emails. Hence phone call or physically meeting them will give an opportunity to collect more data for study.

From the first point of contact, all the participants were clearly briefed on the research study, and they were given assurance on the confidentiality and anonymity of their identities. Informed consent was taken via emails from all the participants before starting the first interview. Each participant was given a consent form and was briefed on the content using a participant information sheet and on their rights prior to the interview. They were assured on their right to exit from the study at any given point and were allowed to ask questions related to the study. Permission was taken to record the interviews, and transcribed interview records were shown to them in the consecutive interviews or were mailed to them for their information. They were briefed on the potential uses of the data which they provided, and the freedom was given to abstain from responding to any questions that they were not comfortable with.

To protect the confidentiality of the data, all the tape-recorded data, transcribed interview and informal conversation records were stored in password encrypted folders. Pseudonyms were used for each SE and participants. For example, the SEs were named using the Alphabet (Company A, Company B, Company C etc.) as indicated in the table 4.1. When conducting the interviews both the English and Sinhala languages (the first language of Sri Lanka) were used and Tamil language (another language used by some Sri

Lankan Tamils) was avoided. A brief discussion on the reflection on language choices will be presented next in order to give a clear picture to the reader.

The language biography, translation experience of the translator and understanding the organisation structure and the respective culture (Moser-Mercer, Kherbiche, & Class, 2014; Salama-Carr, 2018; Xian, 2008) is vital and depend on the overall quality of the translation process. First, the researcher likes to give a brief introduction to her language biography because Temple (2006) suggested that being bilingual is not same for the everyone, and that translation is often tied to a researcher's language background. The researcher as a young child, spoke only Sinhala language where her mother tongue is Sinhala and she started learning Sinhala formally at the age of 5 when she started schooling. Simultaneously she started learning English as a foreign language and studied her first degree in English medium. Later the master's degree also in English language. Hence, she is conversant in both Sinhala and English languages after using it effectively for more than 30 years, it was helpful in conducting this research.

Language is a cultural source and the researcher as a translator had an active role in constructing social and cultural meanings of the source culture (Sri Lankan) for the target culture (people who are reading the thesis who do not belong to Sri Lankan culture). The target culture could not fully understand without consideration of the social and historical context within which they function, and the researcher took the responsibility in identifying the cultural and knowledge gap and in providing vivid materials to miminise the gap between SE founders/owner-managers and potential readers. This was achieved through chapter 03, by providing the background information to understand on the Sri Lankan culture, society, and the general context. Researcher's experience in living and associating different ethnic groups gave the advantage in understanding and bridging the knowledge gap between source culture and target culture. By playing the dual role of the researcher and the translator offered the author, the opportunity to pay a closer attention to cultural meanings of vivid ethnic groups (Sinhalese, Tamils, and Muslims). This close attention resulted in eliminating the Tamil speaking SE founders/owner-managers from the research study. Every language has unsayable "silences", that is there are things in one language which have no counterpart in another (Xian, 2008). The task of the translator is to not to forget these silences and iron out the unevenness between the languages and this was not possible due to the author's lack of knowledge on Tamil

language. Hence Tamil speaking SE founders/owner-managers were exempted from the study. There is a possibility that the Tamil speaking SE founders could have theoretically provided a comparative insight on how they develop resilience and grow in the Sri Lankan collectivist society. This could be explored in future research. If a future researcher would like to interview and gather information from Tamil speaking population, it is always advised to study the Tamil language properly, or to utlise the services of a fluent Tamil speaker. Whereas in this research, the researcher was not in a position to use an external Tamil speaking translator due to the privacy of the SE founders/owner-managers of this study.

Translating qualitative data involve a degree of data analysis (Xian, 2008) and researcher's observations and notes from the field gave the advantage of translating the contextual meaning rather than literal meanings of the words of the participants. As the translator, the researcher, played an integrated part of knowledge production process and she was seen as a co producer of knowledge. This is justifiable as in social research, recognizing personal involvement in the data need not be construed as bad practice or bias but as a source of data (James & Vinnicombe, 2002, 89). The researcher followed a more reflexive and interpretative approach in translation as suggested by Xian (2008) where she paid more attention to the way that different kinds of linguistic, social, political, and cultural elements are woven together in the process of knowledge development, during which data are constructed, interpreted, translated, and written in another language. Some of the participants were comfortable in talking in Sinhala simply because of the familiarity of the language and being a Sri Lankan supported the researcher to collect in depth information as the participants accepted the researcher as an insider. There have been studies showing that Spanish speakers disclose more to fellow Spanish speakers than in English (Lee, 2001) and African Americans disclose more about their political opinions to black than to white Americans (Davis, 1997).

All the interviews were conducted using an interview guide as explained in the beginning of this chapter. The interview guide was first developed in English and then translated into Sinhala. Afterwards the Sinhala version was again translated into English. This Back translation method was used as a quality assurance method, where the researcher translated the original interview guide in English into the Sinhala version. Then the researcher translated the localized string back into the source language, which is English

literally to convey the meaning of the translation. This process was again carried out with an independent researcher (who is a colleague of the researcher) to double check the accuracy and confirmability of the two versions of the interview guides. This back translation method ensured the equivalency between the source and the target text (see Chidlow, Plakoyiannaki, & Welch, 2014). This process was carried out for the interview transcripts also, after conducting all the interviews. Even though the equivalency was achieved through the back translation method, the researcher understood that translation was not about finding similarities; rather, the translator has an ethical and political responsibility to respect and voice the other (Chidlow, Plakoyiannaki, & Welch, 2014). This was achieved by borrowing words from the Sinhala language, retaining syntactical and stylistic features of the original text even if they deviate from target-language conventions, and preserving culturally specific references even though they are alien to the target audience (Van Poucke, 2012). In order to learn from the SE founders/owner-managers the researcher had to delve deeply into the context and pay more attention to the underlying cultural assumptions, values, and logics rather than the literal meanings. Without deep contextualization, there is a risk that the researcher may run into the risk of interpreting indigenous concepts and values through the lens of her own perspectives and reactions (Van de Ven, Meyer, & Jing, 2018). Consequent meetings with the SE founders/owner-managers helped the researcher to understand the context properly and to eliminate this risk.

4.6. Conclusion

This chapter depicted the philosophical stance of the researcher which guided the research approach, research strategy, research design, data collection and data analysis techniques. The researcher based herself in the interpretative paradigm which involved an inductive process with a view of providing interpretative understanding of resilience and growth of SE founders/owner-managers within the Sri Lankan post-conflict economy. Through this way she created new knowledge. This research was primarily an exploratory study which explored new insights on resilience of SE founders/owner-managers in a turbulent emerging economy.

A qualitative research design was utilized. SIIs and ICs were the main data collection methods to get rich and detailed data. Then the maximum variation purposive sampling strategy was used to access the sample, since no population information was available on SE founders/owner-managers in Sri Lanka. Later snowball sampling techniques was utilized to attain the data saturation. In total 40 SIIs with SE owners and 18 ICs with company stakeholders were conducted. All the details of the SE founders/owner-managers selected were given including their characteristics and details. These participants were interviewed throughout a span of one and a half years. The path to access the participants, ethical considerations of the study, issues and dilemmas faced, and the choices made by the researcher to rectify them were presented with justifications.

After that an overview on the data analysis process and procedures involved and on the process of data reduction and emergent of themes was provided by justifying the selection for every decision and procedure. Thomas's (2006), General Inductive Analysis procedure was used to analyse the data from interviews and ICs. Further the Miles et al., (2014) methods sourcebook was used during the analysis stage. Afterwards, clear, and extensive profiles of the 15 SE founders/owner-managers were presented emphasizing their industry, context, origin, employees, and current context. After detailing the process of data preparation, data reduction, data interpretation and developing conclusion were clearly documented.

The main three themes; Micro, Meso and Macro Level Crises, Relationships and Networking and The Agentic Role of the Entrepreneur were introduced, and their connected lower-level categories and higher-level categories were revealed expecting a

further in-depth and detailed discussion on these themes to be given in the next chapter. Finally, a practical model on crises and their impact on SE founders/owner-managers resilience and growth were developed with the occurrence of the main three themes. The empirical findings in this study provide a new understanding of resilience and growth of SE founders/owner-managers operating in post-conflict turbulent economy. The next chapter will present the findings of each of these themes in detail by highlighting the empirical data came across in the thesis.

Chapter 05 – Findings

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed the data methodology and methods of this thesis, and it presented the emergence of main three themes: Micro, Meso, and Macro Level Crises, Relationships & Networking and The Agentic Role of the Entrepreneur. This chapter aims to present the empirical data revealed from the research. Consequently, this chapter will be structured with presentation of low-level, high-level and superordinate categories relevant to these themes based on the research questions.

5.2. Crises faced by SE founders/owner-managers and their effect on SE founders/owner-managers' resilience

This section presents the finding related to research questions one and two. SE founders/owner-managers are not isolated, and they have to mingle and engage with the environment, which they are a part of. Environment is either internal or external. Basically, the internal environment of an enterprise comprises factors which can be controlled by the owner of the company, and they include firm's inner strengths and weaknesses. External factors comprise of the factors which cannot be controlled by the owner of the company. This section mainly concentrates on the negative consequences faced by SE founders/owner-managers due to weaknesses in internal and external environments. Through this research, two main inner weaknesses emerged, i.e., personal crises and organisational crises. These were taken under the Micro-level Crises. On the other hand, industrial crises, and societal crises emerged as external factors which occurred in the external environment. Industrial crises and Societal crises were discussed under the Meso-level and Macro-level Crises, respectively.
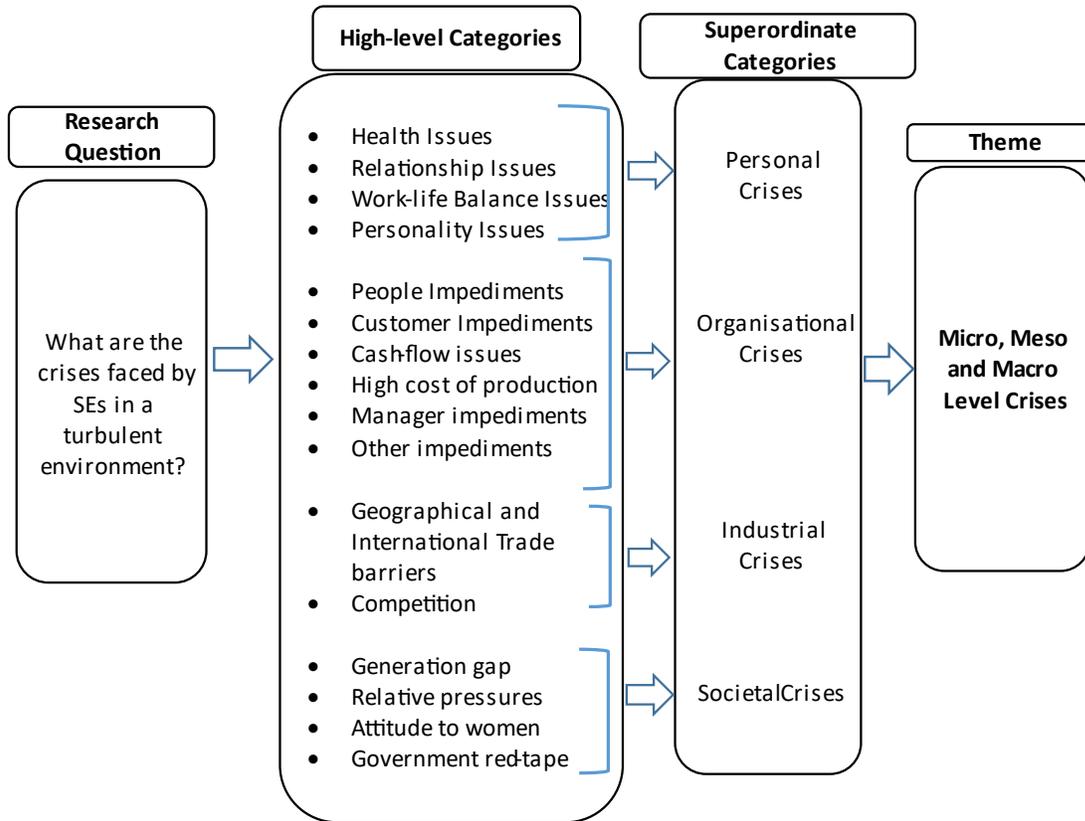
Figure 5.1: Micro, Meso and Macro Crises theme development

As figure 5.1 displays, the crises revealed through participants can easily be placed under four main categories, i.e., personal, organisational, industrial, and societal. Each of the empirical findings related to these categories and subcategories relevant to Micro, Meso and Macro Level Crises will be explained and presented below.

5.2.1 Micro Level Crises

These were the controllable, day-today crises, faced by the SE owners, which emerged in the internal environment. Under micro crises, personal crises and organisational crises are discussed.

5.2.1.1. Personal Crises (PC)

Most of the SE owners in the study accepted that crises are part of their life (Table 5.1). The findings of the interviews revealed that there are mainly four types of PCs, i.e., Health issues, Relationship issues, Work-life balance issues and Personality issues.

Quote	Company
'…there were quite a lot of problems that we face in day today life…	A
'Crises hmm… my journey is full of crises.'	B
'Well… if you are an entrepreneur, crises are inevitable. Isn't It?'	C
'If you are not a risk taker, you will not be an entrepreneur. And if you are an entrepreneur crises follows you wherever you go. Simple like that.'	E
'I would say crises and an entrepreneur is like married partners. You go together wherever you go….'	D
'If you want to be successful in your life, you have to embrace challenges'	F
'I always like to have crises in day today life. Coz it gives me stress and by facing the crisis I can understand my true potential'	J
'In the morning when I wake up, I always be prepare for some kind of challenge. I am not allowing a crisis to taken myself by a complete surprise'	L

Table 5.1 –Examples of Quotes on Crises

In most of the SE owners in this study had sacrificed their personal heath for the betterment of their company as they have to look into every aspect of the company. It was the case for companies A, B and G.

'I never pay attention to headaches, colds and cough. I cannot waste my time at home for these little issues. If I go to work, orders will come. Otherwise, I can rest at home forever'. (Company A - Owner)

'There is a slight pain in my neck from couple of months back. But still, I did not get time to visit a doctor. 3 times I put appointments but could not go. I was so busy with renovating the Piliyandala (a town in Sri Lanka) restaurant'. (Company B - Owner)

'Last week I had high fever. But believe me, I could not at least stay at home for one day. There were several clients from Canada visited to discuss on a business deal. So, I have to be there to entertain them. You cannot tell you are sick, and you could not make it. Then they will move to another supplier'. (Company G- Owner)

All the fifteen SE owners are suffering from various **health issues**; obesity, a surgery undergone, stress, diabetes, and alcohol related illnesses (Table 5.2). It was revealed that these health issues had become a challenge for the growth and survival of these SE owners. In some cases, it had become a crisis for these SE owners.

Company	Obesity	Undergone a surgery	Stressed	Diabetes	Alcohol related illnesses
A	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO
B	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
C	NO	YES	YES	NO	NO
D	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO
E	YES	NO	NO	YES	NO
F	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES
G	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
H	YES	YES	YES	YES	NO
I	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES
J	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
K	YES	NO	YES	YES	NO
L	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES
M	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
N	NO	YES	NO	NO	YES
O	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES

Table 5.2 – Health issues faced by the SE owners.

Seven owners out of fifteen are suffering from obesity, and the Managing Director of Company A is suffering from obesity, and he believes the company is the main reason for it.

> *'I always find excuses not to exercise because of work. When I was in the States, I used to have a routine and thrice a week we used to exercise or play tennis or do something. So, I was much fitter, but after I came here everything went out of hand….'*
> *(Company A- Owner)*

Most of the owners are suffering from obesity and have various opinions and attitudes on obesity and its impact on the company.

'I always travel by car. Never walk and use public transport. You know about the public transport right… I do not have time to waste on it. So, lack of exercises and workout.'. (Company L- Owner)

'I have lost the art of eating well. I try to gulp the breakfast while driving or checking mails. Most of the case it is full of flour or sugar. No wonder I have diabetes.' (Company O-Owner)

'Everybody thinks that you are stupid and not caring about yourself. Oh, look at her...she is huge… oh poor thing…. If they know the struggle that I am going through to make my company flourish, they will feel bad about themselves.' (Company K- Owner)

Obesity had become a challenge for these SE owners when it comes to the operation of their businesses.

The owner of Company L had undergone a bypass surgery in 2017 and his business had suffered due to his absence.

'I can remember, I had to rest for three months. At that moment I did not have anybody to leave my company with. My wife rarely knows about my business. During that period, we lost 20% of the Russian sales, due to lack of attention paid. Profits went down and sales reduced.' (Company L - Owner)

The owner of Company F elaborated on a personal crisis that had influenced him and his business enormously. A worker had died accidentally due to his mistake. The owner had switched on a cement mixer without knowing that there was a worker inside cleaning the tank. The person had died on the spot. The Owner had undergone a trauma and suffered a lot, mentally and physically. This disturbing event, which took place in his life, makes him emotionally disturbed and mentally ill.

'I was so upset. I had nightmares. I rarely got any sleep. I was so scared to sleep even. It is such a shock, and I couldn't make up my mind.' (Company F – Owner)

His profits had reduced drastically, and he was not able to concentrate on the business as the past shadows were continuously disturbing his sleep and emotions.

Another health issue exposed was stress. Majority of the participants confessed that, they are always under a stressful experience due to many obstacles and demands, uncertainty in outcomes, intense competition, lack of resources and sometimes lack of support from colleagues. Most of them are in a sense of personal responsibility for company success, and they bear the

cost of their mistakes and those of their employees. The owner of Company A pointed out that, he always takes up the unfinished businesses of his employees and there were several occasions that he had to re-do things due to employees' mismanagement. He added.

> 'When I come to work in the morning, I come by 8 o clock…usually till about 4.30 it is all factory related work...in the sense … production issues, quality issues, things like that… Only after everyone goes home, I get time to sit down and go through my emails to write to my clients, answer my clients, and all that.... So sometimes I end up being in the factory till about 8 in the evening sometimes even 10' o clock in the evening depending on how much emails I have to finish' (Company A – Owner)

The owner of Company A mentioned that he had to make promises to his children, and in most cases, he was compelled to break them due to work commitments.

The words the participants used to describe these types of incidents were scared, upset, having nightmares, decisive, cannot sleep and stressed out. All these affected their mental health. It was clear that the health issues had acted as a main challenge for these SE owners and some cases, they had acted as day-to-day crises and for others they had become barriers on their path towards growth.

Relationship issues were another micro level crisis faced by the SE founders/owner-managers. All the SE owner-managers under this study are greatly impacted due to relationship issues. These relationship issues are in various forms, i.e., parent issues, family issues, spouse issues, child issues etc. Most of the words the participants used to describe these types of incidents were feeling down, stressed, lonely, and could not make up my mind, sleep. All these affected their day today activities, concentration capacity and their businesses.

The owner of Company B had faced several crises and she mentioned that her life is full of crises. The first crisis was that she had lost her father unexpectedly. Then she had to sacrifice her studies to look after the family members as a young adult. It is a Sri Lankan cultural norm that the eldest in the family has the responsibility to look after the family members in the absence of the parents. With the loss of her father, she faced the first crisis in her life.

> '…at that time [after father's death] I was compelled to put a full stop to my studies. Being the eldest in the family I had to take this decision.' (Company B - Owner)

The divorce was the next crisis she faced in her life. Divorce has both immediate and long-term consequences for the divorcees, extended family, and children involved.

> 'My husband wanted a divorce. It was a thing that I never expected. You know…. In our country when you say divorce, it sounds not that good.' (Company B - Owner)

She was unsecured and miserable. She had many things to think about. After the court case, she was given the custody of her daughter. However, looking after the daughter and providing her a good education, and other related issues emerged as a crisis in her life. To make things worse, most of the deals, contracts, and vehicles were owned by her husband. She had to let go a lot of things as they did not belong to her legally, even though she had bought them.

> 'After the divorce, I was back to the zero level. I had employees, whom I could not pay their salary. I had to compensate them also. My situation became worse. I had to look after my daughter and on the other hand there was a loss-making restaurant…. and you know…. when it comes to restaurant business, it has lot of people. The industry is so competitive…. Once you lose your customers, it is very difficult to attract them and even more difficult to get new ones'. (Company B - Owner)

The relationship issues with her husband directly and indirectly influenced badly on her business.

In another case, the owner of Company C had lost his wife. She died of a heart attack unexpectedly. This incidence was very personal but had impacted him and his business severely.

> '…….. my wife passed away in 2015. And that was a period in which I underwent a lot of stress. During that period, I got a lot of bad comments from the customers. We have a logbook kind of a thing for guests to comment about their stay before they leave. During that period, the comments were terrible.' (Company C - Owner)

This quote demonstrates that his mental health was challenged due to the crisis he went through. Loss of an immediate family member was a big shock to him. Hence these relationship issues affect the mental and physical health of the SE owners. Moreover, to maintain a balance between the work commitments and family had always been a challenge for these SE owners.

These SE owners always struggle to balance the work and life as he/she has to look after all the matters related to his/her personal life and work life. They can hardly distinguish their personal life and work life. Data in this thesis conveys that **work life balance** is one of the main personal

challenges faced by almost all the SE owners. This subcategory, work life balance, emerged with several key words such as *cannot cope up both, less time for the family, they expect more than I give, less attention, take work home, and breaking promises*. For some SE owners, it had become a crisis. Several participants mentioned that they could not manage their businesses properly due to calamities in their personal lives.

> *'With her loss, I couldn't concentrate on my business. It is like you do not have a hope kind of feeling...' (Company C - Owner)*

> *'As a woman, I also felt the same. Unsecured…miserable……divorce was something I never expected. I was confused and broken hearted. Could not concentrate on my business. I failed to pay my employees and lost a lot of my customers ' (Company B - Owner)*

These quotes show that the impact of personal life calamities was severe and affected their business. These participants admitted that they were unable to concentrate and take good decisions, and some of them had even forgotten to fulfil the regular commitments in their businesses.

> *'There is a loan which I took. I forgot to pay the installment continuously for couple of months. The bank was about to acquire my hotel to sell.' (Company C - Owner)*

> *'I had to look after my daughter and on the other hand there is a loss-making restaurant.' (Company B)*

These quotes reconfirm that the work life balance was affected due to these crises. All of them confessed on their ill treatment to their families due to lack of time devoted to them. They try to upgrade and develop their businesses while sacrificing family time.

> *'Even when my children have school holidays, I cannot plan a vacation out with them as I have important meetings scheduled throughout the year. Sometimes as a family we couldn't go out on a single trip during their vacation.' (Company F - Owner)*

> *'It has been months since I sat with my wife and had dinner together…those days she was up till I came home. But now she goes to sleep before I come home. I cannot expect her to stay up till I come home. Sometimes it is 11 in the night. Sometimes closer to mid night.' (Company J - Owner)*

> *'Parenting is really challenging especially if you are a working woman. I sometimes go back home really tired and show my frustration on my children for no fault of them'. (Company E - Owner)*

Moreover, the data of this thesis revealed that sometimes some of the personality attributes of the owner's act as barriers for them to grow. *Poor time management skills, procrastination, lack of delegation skills, perfectionism, Anthropophobia, lack of communication skills, language skills, addiction to alcohol, losing temper, mismanagement of money and bossiness* are some of the issues these SE owners had. All these key terms were given a subcategory called personality issues. The interviews with SE owners, revealed that all of them were suffering from various personality issues and they had impacted company growth negatively.

The owner of Company A is having an issue related to **time management**. He mentioned that the 24 hours are not enough for him to finish the work. He was struggling to have a happy family life and allocate time for his kids.

> *'...if it is a new order for a client, or finishing my work in the factory, so it is little this thing... as the children get older, it gets harder because they need you now. So, they will call you and ask, are you still in the factory, what time you will be coming, so you must make promises, and sometimes you have to break promises, so they also get used to it but then I do not want them to get too used to it.' (Company A - Owner)*

The factory owner mentioned that he was continuously disturbed by his employees to get advice from him, even for minor matters, which consumes his time needed for visionary planning for more daily chores. He inspects every decision in the company. Sometimes even to purchase a small item, his approval is needed. He sometimes gets out from the factory to avoid employees.

> *'These days I am stuck... like… right now I am stuck with about 45 emails that I have to reply, I have to do something to get it done quickly, what I do is sometimes, I just come to the factory in the morning, stay a couple of hours, and go to Colombo [the commercial capital of Sri Lanka], and I sit down in a café and I finish all my emails, because there is no one to disturb me there. Otherwise, there is always every 5 minutes someone comes and says, can you help with this? what is your opinion on this? You can't say no to that also'. (Company A - Owner)*

The researcher learned that Company A owner is not willing to decentralize his workload. He is a sceptic, who does not trust people. He is afraid that the work will not be done on the given time and given quality as he expected. This was confirmed by the General Manager of Company A, during the Informal conversation conducted.

> *'He controls everything. He does not like to give power to us. When we buy a broom even, we have to tell him. He is not trusting anyone. And he wanted us to consult him for minor matters also.' (Company A – General Manager)*

The owner of Company C is having the same issue. He is very poor in time management. He confessed that due to his lack of time management skills, he had suffered a lot in various ways. He admitted his issue with managing time.

> *'I am regularly late for my appointments, even for doctor's appointments…and completing all the tasks. I can tell you … this is not due to that I am accepting too many tasks at once. This is purely because I cannot motivate myself to get up off my back side and do the things that I am supposed to do.' (Company C - Owner)*

In the past, he had not been like this. With the loss of his wife, he had lost his interest in the business. Nonetheless, he wanted to keep on doing this as a respect to his deceased wife. His punctuality issue was mentioned by the General Manager during the discussions.

> *'He is not paying attention to time at all. Never respects the time. When I prepare the daily accounts and keep them on his desk, he takes ages to go through them. Whenever new customers visit us, he is never there to welcome them. Now I simply ignore him and look into those things as no point in asking him to be there.' (Company C – General Manager)*

The owner of Company F is also suffering from **procrastination.** He confessed that he was addicted to Facebook and whenever he logs into Facebook, he simply forgets everything. He is a person who procrastinates lot.

> *'I know exactly what need to be done. But I keep putting it off…when I decided to attend to it later, the deadline is so near, and I am under pressure to complete the task in time. Then whoever comes to my vicinity gets scolded by me.' (Company F – Owner)*

Time management and procrastination had impacted all these companies in a great manner.

The owner of Company E has a different kind of personality issue related to time. She is a **perfectionist**. She wanted everything to be in order. She insisted that she is not recruiting people because none of them are good enough for her. She had interviewed various people but was not satisfied with them.

> *'I wanted everything to be perfect. No mistakes or errors are welcome. I have my rules and whoever comes in my way have to deal with them'. (Company E – Owner)*

She had suffered lot due to this characteristic. She cannot recruit new people and due to that she cannot expand her business. At the end of the 3rd interview, it was revealed that she was visiting a psychiatric to overcome this trait.

Anthropophobia is the issue faced by the owner of Company G. She is afraid of dealing with people. Even the researcher took a considerable time to convince her to agree with the interview process for this study. She had discovered that this was a barrier for the growth of her business. She is struggling to get out of it.

> *'I don't know why... I simply cannot deal with new people. It is so difficult. Most of my client meetings are handled by Keven. He is good in dealing with people. But I know if I can avoid this fear, I can bring a lot of clients to my business.' (Company G – Owner)*

When the researcher conducted an Informal Conversation with the Logistics Manager, this was confirmed.

> *'She simply does not like to meet our clients. I do not know why. She had visited lot of countries and had done her higher studies in Canada. But she is lacking the PR skills. I can remember when she interviewed me also, I felt so comfortable coz it was like I was interviewing her. I never felt anxiety or nervous. She was the one who went through all those things I guess…She never looked at my eyes. But she is a good boss.' (Company G – Logistics Manager)*

The fear for people had caused several repercussions to the owner of Company G and to the growth of her company. Logistics manager mentioned that the company had missed an opportunity to connect with a famous multinational company operating in Sri Lanka due to this attribute. She had not properly mingled with the representatives, and they had turned down their decision to partner with Company G and had moved with another competitor.

Language barrier was another prominent issue among these SE owners. The owners of Companies H, I and N had felt uneasy, uncomfortable, and tongue-tied in English. All of them had faced many issues due to their lack of English language handling capability.

> *'When I meet some businesspeople in conferences and other gatherings, they speak fluent English, and I don't understand their language. If you speak to them in Sinhala, they can ignore you. Or they simply will not talk with you. It is bad for my business.' (Company N – Owner)*

'You know without proper command of English you are powerless…. Not only English in my business, I need Tamil too…. Especially when it comes to making contacts with others and having connections, English is a must. I feel helpless when people talk in English with me.' (Company H – Owner)

'When I have to meet new clients or suppliers, I recruit an interpreter' (Company I – Owner)

Hence, language barrier had impacted most of these SE owners. During the interviews, some SE owners confessed on several other personality issues and bad habits which had impacted severely on their businesses.

The owner of Company I is an alcoholic. He confessed that his **addiction to alcohol** had severely influenced his business and his personal life.

'My wife left me because of my addiction to alcohol. Those days when I was young, I did not have limits and I was out of control once I consume alcohol…. when I got drunk, I screamed, went crazy, got all out of hand. One kind of behavior did not fit my wife…. That is the main reason for my divorce. Alcohol ruined me financially and morally, broke my heart and the hearts of too many others. Even though it did this to me and it almost killed me… still I have the bad habit'. (Company I – Owner)

Co-founder of Company K has another issue which affects her greatly. She does not trust anybody. Due to this, she is very selective, and most of the time she fails to recruit new people and she has lot of issues with employees. Company K has a high rate of labor turnover, and she believes this is due to her attitude on her employees.

'I do not believe them…. I am not sure whether they will fulfil the tasks I assigned to them. Sometimes we are struggling with deadlines and contracts, if we do not have good horses who can run fast, we will lose this game. So, I simply do not like to recruit weak people and lose'. (Company K – Owner)

'Most of my staff continuously make excuses to get leave. Not supporting our values and always gossip. They always try to get away from work. So, I really don't like to have more people'. (Company K – Owner)

Contrary to her view, her partner believes that she is overthinking.

'She is overthinking, and she never trusts the employees. I always tell her to calm down. But she gets mad when an employee does some mistake. You can't be like that with the employees.' (Company K – Owner 2)

The owner of Company L owner also has a major issue with his temper. He accepts that he has a **bad temper**. Due to bad temper, he had lost some of the potential and existing customers.

> *'I know it is very bad to lose your temper…. but Mano, when I lose it, I cannot find it anywhere… I am really pissed off when people are not genuine. I do not mind minor mistakes or errors. But if they try to hide them and try to make me a fool, I am furious.' (Company L – Owner)*

On the other hand, the owner of Company M has another major issue in handling money. He confessed that due to his **mismanagement** he is forgoing some of the investment opportunities.

> *'I spend all of my money trying to look important, and to maintain my social image. I am a social person. I have lot of friends. When it comes to socializing, I do not have a discipline. I can even spend a million within one day. That is my weakness. I am not keeping record of my money spending.' (Company M - Owner)*

The owner of Company O has a different personality issue. He thinks he is bossy, and he had lost many orders and deals due to his **bossiness**.

> *'I always control others. I know some of my employees call me Hitler… I want everything as I want. I do not like to lose. 'No' is a word which I hate. If someone says no, I will somehow get the yes. That's me.' (Company O – Owner)*

As pointed out through the data It was evident that these PCs affected SE owner-managers businesses, and they were acting as a barrier in their progression towards growth. The next section presents the organisational crises, the other type of Micro Crises faced by these SE founders/owner-managers and their impact on the SEs.

5.2.1.2. Organisational Crises (OCs)

During the study, the researcher found that the SE founders/owner-managers are facing vivid crises. Among them the crises faced in the organisational level emerged as one of the main categories. People impediments, Customer impediments, Cash flow issues, High cost of production, Manager impediments and other impediments, were the high-level categories, and this section presents these OCs in a detailed manner.

All the SE owners accept employees as an asset to their companies, and they help them to grow. However, most of them had faced issues with employees. They found that most of them are too

dependent, less committed, less engaged, and too demanding, and that they cannot work under pressure.

> *'Ideal employee for me is somebody who can challenge me. Right… because, for me when I hire somebody, I hire my weakness. I am not going to hire my strength. So, I want that person to tell me, "Hey you know you are wrong, you should not be doing in this way." That is the only way you can make the company grow. But sadly, that sort of people did not come across during the interviews I conducted.' (Company E – Owner)*

> *'I have a lot of people who say, that is not my job. They only consider about themselves. Sometimes, when we get quick orders, they are supposed to work during weekends also. But they are not ready to do it. And with that attitude I cannot go further.' (Company O – Owner)*

> *'They always need a pay rise. They think whenever we sell more, I can increase their salaries. Keep on asking more and more but not doing their job. Really disappointing to see that they cannot realize my struggles' (Company J – Owner)*

> *'People come and go. You give them a training. They take it and disappear.' (Company F – Human Resources Manager)*

The owner of Company I was struggling to attract new employees to his company. He mentioned that due to the poor economic conditions and less attraction in the Cinnamon industry, a lot of potential employees look for other job opportunities and deviate from their inherited talents.

> *'Our peelers give us an edge over other countries in the cinnamon trade. You can plant and grow cinnamon anywhere that has our climate, but that matters little, since they do not have our peelers, who have learnt their art through generations, to produce quills. The issue is new generation is moving away from their ancestors' profession and we are facing a shortage of workers'. (Company I – Owner)*

Lack of appropriate labor in the country due to brain drain, difficulty in finding and retaining good staff, lack of management resources, lack of new ideas was highlighted by several SE owners as impediments for growth.

Attracting and keeping customers is a hard job for the small companies. There were several customers related issued highlighted by the owners. Too much dependent on the prevailing customers is the point highlighted by most of the SE owners and their managers. This was as these SE owners are not able to attract new customers always. One reason is the presence of multinational companies, and it is costly to attract new customers. They believe it is always

significantly easier and cheaper to retain existing customers than to find new ones. Company A, G, I, M and O are too dependent on their customers. Client dependence is the main issue they face with customers. Due to this they have to fulfil most of the client requirements and sometimes even unfair claims raised by the customers.

> *'Some clients, whom I know are very difficult, I handle myself. They have so many demands and requests. You cannot say no. If I lose one customer, it affects lot.' (Company A – Owner)*

> *'The consumer's voice is louder than ever now. We have several big companies as our clients and simply we do not want to lose them even their requirements are unbearable sometimes.' (Company G – Logistics Manager)*

> *'I have some Indian customers and they always have very strict and unfair demands. If I say no, there are plenty of service providers to take over my business'. (Company M – Owner)*

Companies C and F believe that present day customers are super smart and informative enough to take their decisions, and they cannot be fooled easily. They were troubled due to the technology improvements and customers' freedom to comment on their service. They consider this trend as a challenge for them to overcome.

> *'They can compare room rates, check our hotel's ratings and reviews, and make a purchase decision based on the experiences of other guests just by a click. When it's so easy for our guests to share a positive or negative experience— via social media, TripAdvisor, or other sites—we have to be very careful. And just imagine a negative comment comes in, all our ratings go down. They have an immense power, and we have to be very careful in handling them.' (Company F – Marketing Manager)*

> *'I always make sure that our employees are treated very well. What I have understood so far is that poor experience decreases loyalty drastically. If guests have a negative experience with us, they will never stay with us again. That is not the worst case. They will never recommend our hotel for their friends. So, we will not have repeat customers' (Company C – General Manager)*

The owner of Company M has a different issue related to the customers. According to him, most of the customers do not explain their needs properly, and due to that, the solutions that they provide do not match the customer requirement. At the end of the day, the customer is not happy.

'Customers sometimes are unable to explain their problem clearly to our developing team. Because of this our product or service is not as per their expectations and this has led them to be disappointed. Then what happens is they are complaining and not recommending us for other potential customers. Ultimately, we are getting blamed for what we have not done.' (Company M – Owner)

As highlighted above, these SE founders/owner-managers are struggling to meet various needs and wants of their customers to retain them. Rigidness of the customers, accessibility of information and their extensive power had made the SE founders'/owner-managers' position challenging, and the customer impediment category emerged due to this fact.

Cash flow is money flowing in and out of a business. Almost all the companies in this study had faced cash flow issues. During the SII and ICs, several cash related issues were revealed, and the researcher combined all those issues and developed a subcategory called cash flow issues.

Lots of SE owners do not give sufficient attention to their bookkeeping due the massive workload of setting up a business and managing it. This had caused problems for Companies B, D, H and N.

'Sometimes people come and meet me to get data for their research. But I do not have data as I don't keep a record on them.' (Company N – Owner)

'I started to fall behind with my bills and received a number of red letters. I spent time reconciling my invoices and realized significant sums of money had never been received. I had failed to record some invoices.' (Company H – Owner)

'First, I thought I have a really good memory. But later understood I forget things. When I double checked with the books, I discovered that I had not recorded what the customers paid, what I should have received, and I had an inconsistent invoice numbering, which caused a huge loss.' (Company D – Owner)

This improper maintenance of books had resulted in bad debts. These debts were never recovered by the SE owners.

'There were lot of bad debts in the past. When I took over the manager position, it was surprising to see so many people had not paid us. If you take altogether, it was around 300,000 Rupees. Imagine you are not getting back them at all.' (Company D – Manager)

An accurate cash-flow forecast allows a company to stay in business. Cash flow forecasts are crucial and during the interviews it was discovered that most of the companies were not making an adequate effort to prepare cash flow forecasts.

'According to what I learnt I know that with a cash flow forecast, you'll be able to get a pretty good idea of how much cash your business is going to require over the next year to survive. I implemented it after convincing………. (The owner's name). He was so sceptic about maintaining accounts and forecasts, but I somehow convinced him, and now we are having cash flow forecasts.' (Company C – General Manager)

'I am not preparing cash flow forecast. I do not understand why you need them. For me profit and loss account is more than enough. It gives me what I want to see. What is happening now is there. So why should I need any more time taking documents.' (Company M – Owner)

Disorganized books, profit problems, cash flow forecasting problems, high cost of production, bad debts and not having the proper know-how had resulted in chaos related to cash flow and this had made these SE founders/owner-managers to suffer certain losses. Hence the cash-flow issues had become one of the organisational crises.

High cost of production is another main issue faced by the SE owners. Employee theft, not having proper accounts, too much overhead costs, unseen costs, frequent changes in government taxes and unplanned recruitments are some of the reasons for the high cost.

The reasons for high cost in Companies B and C are very similar as both these companies fall into hotel industry. They incur a huge cost due to employee theft, unprofitable menus, wastage of food and inconsistent portions served.

'My staff wastes food a lot…you know…the vegetable scraps and chicken bones can make a good stock for you. But these idiots just throw them out. I have to recruit a quality chef you know. That is lacking here. Coz an experienced chef knows how to use all these parts and minimize the wastage.' (Company C – Owner)

'Most of the chefs I recruited are terrible. They continuously burn the food. So have to do it again. I badly need a good one. But with the money I pay I cannot recruit a good one.' (Company B – Owner)

Both owners are facing issues with their employees. Some of them steal from the company, so employee theft has become a serious issue.

'I have caught some people who take things home, specially the food items. Some of them eat while cooking and serving food.' (Company C – General Manager)

'Previously we allowed employees to take home whatever the food left after 11 p.m. But you know what they did. They purposely prepare food without customer orders closer to

11 p.m. and then take everything home. After knowing that I immediately asked my boss to stop giving remaining food to the employees. Through that we saved lot of food items later.' (Company B – Manager)

Both the companies believe that their menu is not profitable. They think they need to balance their menus to keep the food cost low.

'In my hotel I have lot of sea food stuff. We need lot of cheese and other expensive sauce types to prepare the food. But my manager is always telling that we need to balance our menus. He is suggesting including cheap plates like pasta, macaroni, and pizza also among the high-priced plates like sea food.' (Company C – Owner)

The owner of Company K has another issue. He had built an office and he is facing a considerable amount of overhead cost now.

'I have to incur a huge cost to maintain this office. Only 3 people are working here but there is lot of space.' (Company K – Owner)

He had overestimated his need and had built an office, which can accommodate around 30 people. Due to this unnecessary expenditure, he had created a hole too deep to dig out of. On the other hand, the owner of Company O has another issue. He spends too much on electricity and telephone.

'There is a huge cost we incur for electricity and telephone. Whatever said and done I don't know how to control it.' (Company O – Owner)

Due to the economic conditions and government tax changes several SE owners face issues related to cost of production.

'Government is increasing the taxes day by day. For each and everything we must pay a tax. Sometimes some taxes were not properly communicated and for that we must pay a fine. The cost is rising like a rocket. As a small entity it is so difficult for me to look after all the overheads.' (Company L – Owner)

'The cost of labor, raw materials, packaging, shipping, and quality control is often more expensive than anticipated. The cost is soaring due to intermediate expenses too. Like sometimes you must recruit new people to finish sudden orders. It is very difficult to monitor the costs.' (Company G – Owner)

These small companies have taken heavy loans to develop their businesses. Paying a considerable amount as a loan settlement monthly is another main reason for the increase of costs. They have

failed several times to pay back the loan interest within the given time, and hence they have faced fines and have paid more than required at the end of the day. Lack of support by the government has been highlighted by most of the SE owner-managers and they were in the belief that if the government can increase the financial support to them, they can perform well. Hence, high cost of production was another organisational challenge of SE owners that was identified by the researcher.

Another subcategory which emerged from the data is manager impediments. This category summarizes all the manager and owner related issues and crises which hinder the growth of the company.

In Company A, there is a conflict in management philosophies. Even though the current owner handles the company activities, still his father, the founder is engaged with the dealings of the company. The current owner and the founder represent two different generations. While the current owner is a risk taker, the founder is a slow mover in his dealings. They always conflict with each other on their management style and dealings. The current owner loves to expand the business by diversifying the business. He wanted to add a clay manufacturing plant to his business so that he could reduce the cost of purchasing clay from outside. However, the founder has disapproved it.

This clearly showcases that the company's growth is stagnated, and it does not operate to its maximum capacity. According to the current owner, he is a macro manager, where as his father is more towards micromanagement. Hence the current owner is struggling with controlling and dealing with the employees.

> *'The thing is they are used to be micromanaged, so they try to get your opinion in every issue. I am slowly trying to get them out of it. But as long as my father runs the business, it is going to be tough because they are two management philosophies'. (Company A – Owner)*

Even though the current owner was so adamant on his view of not being involved in everything, a contradictory view emerged from his employees, as pointed out under the personality challenges.

'He controls everything. He does not like to give power to us. When we buy a broom even, we have to tell him. He is not trusting anyone. And he wanted us to consult him for minor matters also.' (Company A – General Manager)

'He is a control freak. Tries to get involved in everything. Even though we have immediate supervisors, no point. Whatever we ask they are asking us to ask from the boss.' (Company A – Factory worker)

During the interviews, the researcher found that this is true; it was quite evident, with the telephone calls he received and the people who came to meet him, that he needs to know everything, and he loves to jump into all the activities in the company.

Due to the lack of risk taking, the founder is not willing to borrow money. On the contrary, the current owner desperately needs his business to grow. He needs money, and he is willing to borrow money. The company expansion is restricted due to lack of capital, and even though there are ways to borrow, it is not happening due to conflict of management philosophies.

Growing too fast was another management issue that came up during the data collection. Most people want their business to grow, but sometimes growing too quickly can cause cash flow issues that can hurt the business. Several owners confessed that they had been too early for diversification and opening up new branches.

For example, the owner of Company M, had got a prominent client who wanted a large project completed within 12 months. In order to fulfill this request, he needed a staff with 4 extra members to deliver the project on time. He had immediately recruited the extra staff members he needed. When it came to the payday, however, he could not cover their wages, as he had not yet received his first payment from the new client. He had struggled and finally had taken a loan and paid these employees. Similarly, the owner of Company E had also suffered due to early diversification. She had started a stationery line and a houseware line along with her food business. Somehow, in the face of the fierce competition in the market, she has had to close the stationery line.

The owner of Company B had also faced a similar situation, when she expanded her business from one outlet to 3 outlets. She was not able to manage all the three with her other work and there were continuous complaints from customers on the food and service.

Lack of knowledge on the market and on the business is another manager impediment identified in the study. Several SE owners in this study wanted to expand and develop their businesses. However due to lack of knowledge they were stagnated. For an example, there was a huge demand for cinnamon products, but the owner did not feel that he had sufficient knowledge on how to approach the relevant markets directly, which has led them to stick to the safe option of partnering with another organisation with expertise in the area. The export manager of Company I stressed that if they had decided to move ahead, there would have been many opportunities and untapped markets.

Lack of marketing is another issue faced by the SE owners under this research. Even though marketing has a positive impact on sales, SE owner-managers fail to maximize their potential. All of the SE owner-managers in this study understand that their businesses need to remain visible to their target audience. However, there are more pressing priorities that demand their attention. Their time is spent on operational issues, and they struggle to find the time to do any marketing at all until they realize that sales are dependent on creating visibility and generating demand for their product and services.

> *'I have resource constraints. Whenever I go to exhibitions, I can see people spending huge amounts of money. But I cannot do that. We normally lack people, rarely have a huge budget and there are only 24 hours in a day…. Lack of time to do all these requirements. (Company F – Marketing Manager)*

> *'We developed the product, and it is in our shop right now. But I haven't put a lot of effort into marketing it and putting it to other shops.' (Company A – Owner)*

> *'I had no clue who to market my services to and that decreased my income. I accepted everyone as a client. Anyone with a budget was perfect for me.' (Company G – Owner)*

Company E, on the other hand cannot legally market their products. The owner of Company E mentioned that there is a rule in Sri Lanka that you cannot market baby food items.

> *'The thing is that with marketing activities with infant food, if it is a product focused on a child less than 2 years, you can't do any marketing.' (Company E – Owner)*

However, she thinks that due to this, in a way she is safe, as the multinationals also cannot market their products. Otherwise, with the fierce competition by multinationals, she would have vanished from the market by now.

Conflict of management philosophies, growing too fast, lack of knowledge on the market and lack of marketing are the main manager impediments that emerged during the data collection and analysis. Other than the given challenges, several other impediments emerged in the in-depth interviews. These impediments were unique, and some cases applied only for one or two companies.

Company C runs a small boutique mainly targeting the tourists who visit the neighboring water sports centers located along Unawatuna Beach to experience water sports such as day & night fishing, diving, snorkeling, sea kayaking and sailing. The company is currently facing a crisis due to a breakwater barrier. The Coast Conversation Department had put a breakwater barrier that expands nearly one kilometer into the ocean to stop sea erosion. However, it has worsened the sea erosion and has hindered the natural pattern of sea waves. Due to the new construction, normal sand deposit has been disturbed and three fourth of the sea beach has completely disappeared. Due to this barrier the hotels operating around the Unawatuna Beach have been affected. The owner of Company C was furious on the decision taken by the government, and he expressed his sentiments in very strong terms.

> 'When the Unawatuna beach became the world's best beach in 2004, there was an increment of tourist arrivals. And our profits skyrocketed. Later, the Coast Conservation Department constructed this useless breakwater barrier to create an artificial pool. With that, there was unexpected sea erosion, which highly affected us during even seasons. We got so many complaints from guests that the sea is not safe, and the sand gets heated due to artificial sand pumped by Coast Conservation Department. I am struggling now to be in the business. I could not pay the bonuses for my employees in 2017, thanks to this unwanted barrier. I have loans to be paid. Several hotels closed down their operations. As I said, the whole industry is affected. And nobody cares. I wrote to all the official parties. But nothing is happening. If possible, please put this in the newspaper or I don't mind even if you showed this to the President' (Company C – Owner)

The General Manager also pointed out that the breakwater barrier had become a huge impediment for the whole tourism industry. So, it was apparent that this breakwater barrier had adversely influenced Company C's profits, revenue, and harmony.

Even though the majority of research had found that finding extra capital is a challenge for SEs, in this research, only one participant out of 15 acknowledged it as a challenge.

> *'Another challenge was the capital, the finance. That is actually one of the biggest challenges because I have so much that I wanted to do but I am restrained by the capital. Because if I had all the money, my company would have already gone international by now. It is just that those things are limiting due to lack of finance.' (Company E – Owner)*

She also believes that the government should grant more financial benefits for SEs like hers.

> *'I wish that there were like more, let us say, financial benefits, in terms of may be lower interest rates loans or grants, or you know things like that. That will help… because lot of the problems that we have is obviously monetary, right…. Because everything is so expensive in Sri Lanka. So that is the part that attention is needed.' (Company E – Owner)*

The owner of Company E is not happy with the government's support to develop her business. Company J also has the same view. They had faced challenges from other countries due to the politically unsupportive environment. On the other hand, weaker social relationship levels of the Sri Lankan government with countries related to cosmetics industry has made it further difficult to introduce Company J's products. The weak image and viewpoint on Sri Lanka due to certain incidents that took place in the recent past and due to the unstable political situation, it has become rather difficult for company J to enter into the market with confidence as they were not sure how certain foreign parties may react. On the other hand, significant and continuous fluctuations of the US dollar made it difficult for the company to do proper forecasting and to make informed decisions. Though continuous depreciation of the Sri Lankan rupee is good for exporting business, Company J still has to import several types of materials from other countries, and thus the continuous depreciation of the rupee has made these imports rather costly for the company.

Company A is facing another organisational challenge due to the materials they use. Since they use natural resources, they are not fully sure on the finished product. The General Manager elaborated this point as follows:

> *"We are using all-natural ingredients. Until it comes out of final finishing you never know. That is the risk in ceramics."* (Company A – General Manager)

Company E complained about the issues the company faced due to non-availability of a proper Institution which deals with SEs. The owner of Company E had faced several issues when she wanted to register her business and when assistance was needed on the process. She believes that if there is a proper place to deal with SEs, the development of the SEs would be much advanced and faster.

Moreover, the devastative **Tsunami** in 2004 had greatly impacted Company F and the owner had lost his whole business due to Tsunami waves. He had lost his property and employees. He had to start from the zero and had lost almost all the belongings he had. These various other impediments had acted as crises or as challenges for these small companies.

The results of this section found Health issues, Relationship issues, Work-life balance issues and Personality issues as the main personal crises that emerged, and they had impacted the resilience and growth of the SE founders/owner-managers in different magnitudes even though they were controllable. Other than the personal level crises, the particular industries they operate in also had created various challenges for these SE owner-managers. These Meso level crises faced due to industry impediments and turbulence in the industry as well as societal crises that had acted as an impediment for the operation of these SE owner-managers are presented in the next section.

5.2.2. Meso Level Crises

Meso level crises are identified as the Industrial crises which are beyond the control of the SE founders/owner-managers. The following presents the findings related to the meso level crises.

Exporting is the common way to internationalize, and these SE owners-managers were no exception. In the process of exporting and dealing with other nations and boarders, SE owners

had encountered various crises. Threats from substitutes, lengthy procedures, expectations of high-quality standards, lack of knowledge on the market, high insurance costs, lack of recognition, high government taxes and disputes between governments are some of the crises coming under this category and will be elaborated further.

Company I is dealing with mainly four geographical markets: the USA, UK, Europe, and UAE. At the time the company started exporting cinnamon to the USA, cassia, a substitute for cinnamon, which is much cheaper than Ceylon cinnamon, was leading in the market. Thus, another barrier they came across was competing with cassia, specifically in terms of prices. This barrier was eased only in July 2002, when the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) between Sri Lanka and the USA enabled the exporting to the USA without tariff, thus they were able to reduce the prices which made it easier to compete with cassia. Requirement to go through lengthy procedures when initiating trading activities is another barrier to face when dealing with the USA. All food related products including cinnamon exported to the USA are reviewed by the Food & Drug Administration (FDA), and they need to be registered under this body. Similarly, Europe has established strict food safety legislation with regard to hygiene, traceability and quality control of food related items imported to European Union nations. The United Kingdom, being one of the giants in the union, thoroughly practices these laws. The "General Food Law" and "Quality Minima Document" are responsible for regulating aforesaid matters, thus affecting cinnamon products too. Moreover, such products from the Asian region are strictly tested for quality assurance. Further, with UK's decision to leave the European Union, the company is now concerned that they will have more barriers to face in their long-term goals to expand their exports to more European countries, especially because their outlet is set up in London and exports take place to other European countries like France from there. On the other hand, when dealing with UAE, the challenges were different, and cultural barriers and lack of knowledge on the market are the main issues faced by Company I in dealing with UAE.

Another challenge currently faced by Company I is the insurance costs. Previously the insurance companies covered for goods up to importer's destination. Due to hijacking issues in Mexico, insurance companies refuse to pay claims for lost goods, and the company faced a major conflict

with the insurance company when claiming for lost goods. Afterwards insurance companies refuse to cover the cost from importer's port to destination of the importer. As a result, Company I must again insure the goods from port to importer's destination. With this, the insurance cost records a high amount.

In the case of Company J, they faced many barriers when introducing their products to the international market, the biggest one being the lack of recognition for the local cosmetic industry.

> *'Unlike for tea, Sri Lanka is not known for its cosmetics and not much faith is put on our products by foreign customers. Building their trust and gaining market share against the immense competition by the best-known brands in the world was the biggest barrier we faced when introducing our products especially to UAE.'*
> *(Company J – International Relations Manager)*

On the other hand, the company had faced many laws and regulations, strict quality assurance standards on cosmetic manufacturing and packaging when entering to new soils. Different countries and regions demand abiding by different laws and regulations and ingredient requirements forcing the company to develop product ranges specifically designed for certain regions.

> *'They have different rules and regulations. Whether you like or not you have to deal with them…now…, if we take EU member states, EU Cosmetic Regulation dictates selection of ingredients. It lays all the rules and regulations required for product and safety assessments. They have even mentioned all the substances that should not be used, such as coloring agents, preservatives, and UV filters due to their toxicity. You have to abide by them. Otherwise, you are not getting permission to enter their territories.'* *(Company J – Owner)*

Furthermore, certain strict requirements must be met to enter the market; all labels should be in English, and they should include durability information, country of origin, precautions to be observed when using, list of ingredients, batch codes, name, and address of a responsible person. These requirements have given rise to many issues for the company operational-wise. When export quantities are less, they have had to bear unjustifiable costs in modifying them to comply with regional laws and regulations. Especially when considering the high cost for keeping up with new packaging trends to suit international markets, the revenue generated from those countries and regions is not commensurate with the costs.

Company L is facing another issue, and they consider it as a crisis for them to excel in foreign markets. That is the government taxations imposed on international business. With the high taxes, they find it difficult to enter international markets and continue their business internationally.

> *'We love to do business with India. Most of the Indian people like to consume tea and it has a huge market for teas. But the issue is India charge 11% of taxes on tea exports. With high taxes we can't reach India.' (Company L – Owner)*

Company L is facing a crisis at present. Russia is the main market of this company. Recently Russia has rejected the Sri Lankan tea due to a disagreement between the Russian and Sri Lankan governments. Due to this, the company is struggling to manage the business.

> *'Do you know, as per the records, Russia has imported about 30 million kilograms of tea from Sri Lanka for the last 10 months. I am talking about $2915 million worth of 23 million kilograms. Basically, it is 12% of total exports from Sri Lanka. And it has suddenly been banned from December 2017. Whole industry is suffering'. (Company L– Export Manager)*

As presented, these companies had faced with various geographical impediments related to their businesses.

All businesses have competitors, and when it comes to SEs, the industry competition is fierce, and they must fight for potential customers. Due to this reason, most of the SE owner-managers have a negative view towards competition. Company A operates in the ceramics industry and due to the cheap Chinese products, it has been difficult to make profits. The owner mentioned that after China came to the picture most of the ceramic companies had closed down their businesses. Chinese companies are producing at a very low cost and due to that their products are cheaper.

Around the year 2000, Company A had expanded to the global market and 90% of the US market was acquired by them. With the advent of China into the market, the picture became different. China produced ceramics for half the price of Company A's products and had taken over 50% of the US customers. The company began to make heavy losses, and workers were idling. The owner had visited 20 ceramic companies in China and realized that he cannot compete with China. The

Chinese companies were getting substantial government support, i.e., export pay backs, infrastructure facilities, companies built by the government and rented free for 4 to 10 years etc. With this discovery, he thought of attaining 100% quality and of targeting the European market. In his own words, "USA has the disposable mentality and Europe has much history for ceramics than USA". The fierce competition had changed the company's target market. The General Manager also confirmed that the industry is suffering due to the influx of Chinese ceramic products.

> *'Chinese ceramic is a virus. It alters, it damages the industry and is slowly eating up the whole industry. I do not know why the government cannot look into this matter. They are destroying the ceramic market. Most of our local competitors have vanished due to these Chinese companies'. (Company A – General Manager)*

The competition in the ceramics industry has influenced Company A's profitability and growth.

Company B falls into the catering and hotel industry, which has an enormous competition due to the easy entry and exit. She noted that there was a huge boom in this industry due to the change in the lifestyle of the people. Lot of households do not prepare their meals during weekends, and instead they prefer to eat out. Due to this reason, there are lot of suppliers in this market to exploit this booming industry.

She pointed out that there are many unprofessional and unethical businesses freely operating in the industry due to lack of rules and procedures. Due to these businesses, some people have lost their confidence in catering businesses. Nevertheless, the owner and the manager believe that this is temporary, and people will always know the good players in the market.

Similarly, Company E that belongs to the food industry has also been affected by the competition due to international brands and multinational companies. Company E is not having any competition from the local brands as there are no local substitutes in the market. The 'global brands' are the main challenge they face.

> *'My competitors are currently all international brands. The ...., they are all.........., and the thing is that those competitors, well renowned brands, which have been there for like decades, and decades of time right.... And the people who*

*exported to SL have that monetary strength, have that ability to bury me if they
want to. You have to be very careful and play fair.' (Company E – Owner)*

Company M is also not an exception when it comes to competition. They are facing a significant competition from Indian service providers. There is a continuous threat and insecurity when it comes to getting and maintaining orders.

*'The Indian diaspora is very powerful and competent. You know they have a good
brand name for IT. They are willing to do jobs for very cheap price.' (Company M –
Owner)*

Hence the company has to look for new customers and try to sustain the prevailing customer base.

Company E had another issue to elaborate. All manufacturers need to provide nutritional information on all pre-packaged foods and drinks found in the market. Sugar label gives the information on the amount of sugar percentage contained in the product. The owner of Company E stated that the 'sugar label' is a crisis for her business. She elaborated that, for some products, it gives a clear indication, and it is good for the consumers, especially in the case of fizzy drinks and cola drinks which have a high percentage of sugar. Nevertheless, in her case, she uses fruits, which contain a natural sugar and her product is going as a red label. This gives an indication that her products contain a high level of sugar. She added that the method of assigning the sugar label is unfair and the authorities should look into it.

*'You know the sugar label. For certain products, it is perfect. But the problem with
our product is fruits have natural sugar in it, right… You can't put a red label on a
baby food and say that the sugar content is this when it is natural food, and you
don't add any sugar. It is zero level of sugar. But your sugar level will be still high
because of the fruit. Here what they should do is, just like the other countries, have
to show the added sugar level. It is so pathetic to see ……………... (A famous Cola
drink) is having yellow label and my products are having a red label. Where I am
not adding sugar at all, and they add a hell of a lot of sugar.' (Company E – Owner)*

Company G deals with providing logistics. They are based on a niche market, which is liquid bulk transportation. Participants of the company revealed that bribing is frequent in this industry, and it had become an impediment for the development of this industry. All stakeholders are used to

giving and taking bribes, and the owner pointed out that it is a normal tradition to give bribes and take bribes and nobody feels that it is an unethical thing to do.

> *'In the beginning for me it is like disgusting to even give bribes (laughing...), but as I told you from the starting point, I was compelled to pay bribes.... So, I took it as a normal process.... Because I tried a different way, but I realized the easiest and the most comfortable way of dealing with it to pay the bribe. Now when we even discuss a deal or go for a new order we openly discuss with the authorities about their price, and we calculate it when taking the profit figure.' (Company G – Owner)*

When Company G's owner started the business, she was 25 years old and was not aware about the procedures and other requirements. There were many bureaucratic burdens. She had applied to register her business, but it had almost taken 8 months. Then she had spoken to the authorities and inquired on what to be done to get the registration done, and in response, they had indirectly asked for a bribe. Hence in order to accelerate the paperwork for her registration she had to pay a bribe. After that, within a week, she had got the registration. She recalled their justification in asking a bribe. They had mentioned, "*don't think this is the only application we are processing. There is a huge pile of applications. In order to give priority to your one we need to do extra. That is why you are supposed to pay this amount.*" She pointed out that from top to bottom, all the parties were asking for money, and she was helpless. During the ICs, the Logistics Manager further added to this by explaining the corrupted process extensively.

> *'When there are less policies, I mean weak policies and corruption, our planning and activities are affected. Corruption is an everyday aspect in our business. To get orders, to release goods, to verify goods... you name it.... everywhere .... You are supposed to bribe them.' (Company G – Logistics Manager)*

Furthermore, the owner explained that this bribing had become a crisis and it affects the whole industry.

> *'Some large companies are paying huge bribes, where they will grab all the orders, and we are left with nothing. That is why I say this whole corruption is a crisis. The officials are giving the orders to their friends, and their relations... if you are not their friend, then, only bribes will protect you. We always think that by having strict rules and policies will be fair for all the parties. But I will tell you...higher the strictness of the rules... higher will be corruption... because you are bribing to bend these rules.' (Company G – Owner)*

Due to lack of clear policies and lack of monitoring in this industry, SE owner-managers are suffering. The competition created for getting orders and bribing different parties had provoked more negative developments in the industry. Sabotage is one of the main unhealthy business practices faced by Company G. There have been several sabotage activities related to deals and operations, which the owner indicated to have discouraged her from developing the business.

> *'I can remember in order to expand my business I applied for liquid transport. I mean liquid bulk cargos…. At that time, I paid around 10 Lakhs to get the thing approved. And there was another sabotage that took place in my business. I got a big order from Iran and one of the competing companies had bribed the officials and they had lost my documents. To save that contract, I paid a quite [a big] amount of money. When these things happen, you feel like not to grow.' (Company G – Owner)*

This clearly proves that entrepreneurs lose their motivation to develop their businesses further. It is clearly exposed that bribing has become a crisis in this industry, and it has discouraged the entrepreneurs in growing.

As explained above, these SE founders/owner-managers face vivid industrial crises in the Meso level. Some are common to all the industries, i.e., geographical, and international trade barriers, competition and lack of good practices and regulations. On the other hand, there were some industry specific crises and barriers such as sabotage activities, bureaucratic barriers, taking and giving bribes, sugar label and breakwater barrier. All these meso level barriers had influenced SE owners in their business dealings within and outside the industry. The next section presents the societal crises faced by the SE owners in this study.

5.2.3. Macro Level Crises

Macro level crises are identified as the societal crises which are beyond the control of the SE owners. The following section presents the findings related to the macro level crises.

Society keeps on changing and these changing societal factors have a toll on businesses. These changes can have either positive or negative impacts. This section elaborates on the negative side of these factors and demonstrates the macro level crises faced by these SE owner-managers.

There were several crises faced by the SE owner-managers due to society's beliefs, customs, practices, and behaviors. Hence all these crises were given a blanket term as SCs.

Among them, **generation gap** is an interesting subcategory which emerged from the SIIs. The generation gap is a difference of opinions between one generation and another regarding beliefs, policies, or values. Several SE owners brought up this generation gap as a crisis.

Company E produces readymade baby food, and the owner was trying to break into a trade where, certain things have been done for generations. Most people still believe that a fresh product does not come in a bottle. She is struggling to change this social taboo, knowing that it is hard to do so against previous generation's input. She believes that she had to address two main generations, the mothers', and the daughters', where mothers represent the Baby boomers, who were born from 1946 to 1964. The mothers were suspicious on the food which comes in a bottle. Already one generation is against her, and she is targeting mainly daughters. As she commented.

> *'When you are with the extended families; with your moms, grandmothers saying, oh my goodness in a bottle, it is not fresh, you are trying to break into that trade. Because that generation, they were more laid back, whereas our generation, is little bit more westernized. You are banking on daughters who are stubborn and will not listen to your mom. Technically that's what it is.' (Company E – Owner)*

She is struggling to get her point across to a generation where they thought that this was not a necessity and she stated that it was one of the biggest challenges. Trying to tell people all bottled products are not poisoned, and they are fresh was a challenge. She commented.

> *'They just don't understand it... the technology, the preservation, adding any preservatives, was a challenge. Because they could not understand… they always question "so if you don't add preservatives how do you preserve it" duh… through technology, through heat, stuff like that... right… so trying to get them to understand and that was a little hard'. (Company E – Owner)*

The same generation gap was a crisis for the Company A's owner. He confessed that most of his decisions had to be held back due to his father's hesitance. His father, the founder of the company, represents the silent generation born in or before 1945 whereas the owner represents the Generation X born from 1965 to 1976. There was a continuous clash between the son and

the father in decision making, which represents the generation gap. The founder is more authoritative in decision making whereas the owner prefers more participative decision making. This difference is visible in this father and the son.

The owner of Company G was another victim of the generation gap. This was the main reason for her to start her own business. She started her business with her father and later moved away and started her own as she wanted to expand her business.

> *'I like to take challenges. Where he was so comfortable with the Asian market only. Where I am not and expanded my roots to whole world. He was afraid to take loans…. Afraid to expand, where in my case love the expansion. That is the main reason why I wanted to start my own business.' (Company G – Owner)*

Relative pressure is another subcategory that emerged from the data. Most of the Sri Lankans are living with their extended families. For some of the SE owners' relatives have become a crisis.

The owner of Company B had faced problems due to her relatives. With her divorce, all the relatives have further aggravated her problems by asking questions and advising her on what to do and what not to do. She commented.

> *'Relations were questioning…. Even some of our relations who never wanted to see how we were doing when my father passed away were there… some of the friends wanted to know what happened and how it happened. They wanted to know the details.' (Company B – Owner)*

She was stressed out and could not concentrate on her business and her future. For a couple of weeks, she was inside her house and was scared to face the world as her relatives were troubling her.

Similarly, the owner of Company E had encountered issues with relatives. She stated that there were many relatives who looked at her adversely and discouraged her in pursuing as an entrepreneur. Lot of uncles and aunts had advised her to not to start her business. They had commented, 'don't go there dear. You are a woman. You will face lot of problems. And we are so sure that no body in the right mind will invent a baby food in their mind. It is a risky business.' These comments had discouraged her at one point, but she had managed to face them with right

will and attitude. This Relative pressure is a subcategory which combines all these relative and extended family crises.

Attitude to women is the next subcategory that emerged**.** Among the 15 SE owner-managers in this research, 3 companies are owned by women: Companies B, E and G. All these ladies had faced difficulties purely due to being women. When the researcher questioned whether being a woman has been a challenge for them, the owner of Company E detailed it as follows.

> '*It has. Because you are trying to come up in a man's world. When I first had to go to the Health Ministry to get approval, my uncles were like "why are you going? The peon is there, send him." I said, "No. I am going because I want to get the proper information." You know stuff like that. Everybody is like, "oh my God! You are a woman. Why are you here?" You get what I mean…. You get that feeling… you get that look. It's a man's world.*' (Company E – Owner)

The owner of Company G also confirmed this view and added to the topic.

> ' *You know about our culture, isn't it? How people treat when they see a woman. Whistling and hooting and all the drama… now it has been reduced compared to early days. But when I go to these government places, it is so pathetic how people look at you and talk to you. Most of the cases, I send my managers to get things done.*' (Company G – Owner)

She further elaborated that when a woman is dealing with government officials, there are other issues coming up. Instead of bribes in money they request sex as a bribe. She had never gone to that extent. She always pays money and gets out of the situation. Due to this reason, she stated that she would never go to the port to get her consignments cleared. Always a male, one of her managers is sent to clear the stuff.

On the other hand, there are two women owners in this study who had not encountered this sort of unpleasant scenarios. The owners of Company J and Company K are the co-owners of the respective companies. When the researcher further inquired on the matter, it was revealed that both women do not deal with these matters as their co-owners, who are males, look after these concerns.

It was exposed that **government red tape** act as a barrier for most of the industries under this study. These SE owners are struggling due to government interventions, and it is challenging the whole community and has become a crisis.

Increasing levels of rules and regulations in the industry were perceived as a crisis by most of the SE owners. Ad hoc decisions to increase taxes and frequent changes in the tax policy were highlighted repeatedly by the SE owners and managers.

> *'The industry is overloaded with rules and regulations. They keep on changing day by day. Once you start to process an order and adhere by the rules, once the order is reaching the customer, the rules have changed, and you have to pay fines.'*
> *(Company G – Logistics Manager)*

Government support was very less as per the participants, and the owner of Company A mentioned that the government support and the help was zero. In his own words, *"it would be much easier than the government exist"*. According to him, the value addition of most of the companies, especially of government assisted ones, is very low, whereas in Company A, the cost of raw material is 10/= per kg and when it comes to the export status its selling value is 5000/= per kg. Out of the raw materials used by the company, 85% are local contents. The owner was disappointed with the taxes imposed by the government and its encouragement of SEs.

> *'Government is hopeless. Day by day they discourage us'* (Company A – Owner)

He further added; *'Whatever government comes to power; we simply do not care. We are on our own. So far in the history, none of the governments value what we are doing for the economy'*. He confirmed that most of the manufacturers in the ceramics industry are not happy with the government and frequent changes in the tax policy and the requirements are distressing the industry.

The owner of Company D elaborated that Value Added Tax (VAT) problems, ad hoc decisions by the government, change of procedures of the tax policies without giving proper notice and an adequate time period to adjust are the main concerns in his business. He stated, 'I don't mind increasing the taxes as long as they are simple and easy to understand'. He found it difficult to understand the requirements and procedures in tax policies. Similarly, the owner of Company E

stated that the government is making her time miserable by taking a long time to do things and due to that she had suffered with a lot of issues.

Some of the SE owners had lost their trust on the government. They are under the impression that the government does not expect them to flourish and that they wanted the big companies to further develop and take off all the small-scale companies from the industry.

> 'They are not supporting us. They wanted us to vanish from the industry. They simply do not want us to be in the business. They wanted to protect only the large hotels not us. (Company C – Owner)

> 'We have to look our back. They will not help us. They will increase the taxes; change the policies and they are expecting us to be adaptable to whatever they experiment with us. When you mention about the government, my blood start boiling'. (Company F – Owner)

> 'We will not talk about it. No point in talking and we are just wasting our words and time. Have to throw all these idiots from the parliament and then every one of us can sleep well.' (Company N – Owner)

Weak policies in the government were criticized by many SE owners. They emphasized that when there were weak policies all their planning activities were affected. Nepotism was another issue brought out by the participants. Due to nepotism, they were compelled to give bribes.

> 'The officials are giving the orders to their friends, and their relations… if you are not their friend, then only bribes will protect you'. (Company G – Owner)

Due to these malpractices of government officials, some of the company owners did not comply with rules and regulations. Sometimes they had purposely ignored the prevailing rules because they had realized that if they always work according to the rule book, it will make their life miserable and end up giving more and more bribes. Due to the tax imposing procedure, and bribing process, these SE owners have found ways to minimize the damage to their businesses.

> 'It can badly impact my business. As I told you, I allocate the bribing amounts also into my accounts…and through that I can show a less profit figure. And I pay less taxes… why should I pay taxes… if I am not getting the benefit of it… and I had paid lot of money for the officials through bribes…so I think as a citizen I have done my part'. (Company I – Owner)

It was clear that due to the unfavorable environment created by the government, SE founders/owner-managers are suffering, and they are struggling to grow.

SCs like generation gap, relative pressure, mind set of people, attitude on women and government red tape have been affecting these SE owners on their path to growth. As explained, in some cases, the impact was considerable, and in some scenarios, it was moderate. It was clear that both macro crises – industrial crises and societal crises had imposed impediments on the SE founder/owner-managers.

5.3. SE founder/owner-manager personal resilience and organisational resilience

As discussed in the previous section, with all those crises faced, the SE founders/owner-managers managed to bounce back from crises and grow. They had utilized various strategies and methods to overcome those challenges and crises and develop resilience and grow by converting most of them into opportunities and strengths. With the analysis of the interview data, it was revealed that they have utilized and used many contacts and much support from various stakeholders to face the crises and to ensure growth. Through data analysis, Relationships and Networking emerged as one of the main strategies utilized by the SE owners on their path to resilience, and therefore 'Relationships and Networking' was developed as a major theme by merging four main categories: relationship with family and relatives, employee relationships, customer relationships and Business Relationships. The rest of the section presents the evidence on the way these SE founders/owner-managers used relationships and networking to face the vivid crises faced during their operations and the way they became resilient by extensively discussing all the lower-level categories and high-level categories associated with the theme.

5.3.1. Relationships and networking

The support from the family and the better **relationship with the family and relatives** was one of the strategies that facilitated the SE owner-managers to head towards the path to resilience. In this study, it was revealed that the SE owners' relationship with their families and relatives had encouraged and motivated them to be strong and to develop perseverance. Moreover, the levels of relationship were vivid, where some were having a direct relationship, some were having

moderate relationship, some were having reverse relationship, and some were having no relationship at all.

The owner of Company H had undergone a tragic situation, as explained in previous section, where an employee had died due to his negligence. According to him, the credit for his recovery should go to his wife. He was out of his mind for a couple of months, and his wife had been so close to him and had looked after him without leaving him. She had consulted a psychiatrist and made sure that he visited the psychiatrist regularly. Also, she had accompanied him in all the visits.

> '*I am so lucky to have my wife by my side in the difficult time that I went through. She was my best friend. She protected me from outer world. Because of her only I am here'. (Company H – Owner)*

He mentioned that when he returned to work, the cement mixer which gave him horrifying memories was no more there. His wife had sold it. He mentioned that his wife's love, protection, and thoughtfulness made him recover fast from the trauma.

Similarly, the owner of Company C recalled the memories of his late wife. According to him, his wife was the reason for him to start the company. The owner and his wife had visited the location. She had been astonished by the beauty of the beach and had encouraged him to buy it. She wanted to develop a resort in the land. After investing all they had, another 3 million rupees were lacking, and the owner was reluctant to proceed with the decision. His wife had convinced him to sell another land they owned, and her strong influence had converted the land into the current resort. The owner confessed,

> '*I can tell you. If… (wife's name) was not there, there will not be (Company name). She was the main reason for my success. I am a lazy person, but with her I am energetic. She always makes me smile and do the correct thing. I miss her'. (Company C – Owner)*

The owner of Company C had succeeded due to his wife and her support, and the family bond had made him who he is today. Both the owners of Company C and H had become resilient and grown their businesses due to spouse's influence.

Almost all the participants in the study had utilized the family and relatives' bonds and relationships as a path to resilience. One participant mentioned that he became an entrepreneur due to his family requirement. The Owner of Company A was having a comfortable life in the USA as an American citizen. He had a permanent well-paid job, two cars, a fully equipped apartment, and a free life. He was asked to come back to Sri Lanka several times, yet he had turned it down. Suddenly when he had been asked to come back to Sri Lanka due to his father's health condition, he had to change his stance. In his own words, 'I heard a heart-breaking news from my mum…. She phoned and told me that my father got a heart attack and need to undergo a bypass. I was shocked. My inner voice was blaming me. Accusing me. That is the turning point in my life, I guess. Then I took the most difficult decision in my life to come back to Sri Lanka. At that moment, my father needed me more than anything else. So, I decided to come back to Sri Lanka. That is a moment which I hate to recall – a dilemma that I went through. A critical point'. It was understood that the family commitment and bond made him an entrepreneur. In Company A's case family relationships made the owner become a successful entrepreneur, and he stated that he was grateful to his mother for requesting him to take over the company.

In the same vein, the owner of Company B was dragged into entrepreneur arena by her family requirement. When she was 16 and getting ready to face the O/L exam, her father had passed away, and, as a result, she had been compelled to stop her studies, being the eldest in the family. She mentioned that at that time she had felt it as a crisis. Looking back, she was pleased with her decision to quit schooling and to start the business. Hence the family requirement had paved the way for her to become an entrepreneur.

On the other hand, the owner of Company E depends on her son to approve her products. Her son was the starting point of her business. She had lived in Canada and later returned to Sri Lanka with her 3-month-old son. After coming back, preparing food was one of the main daily activities and she was testing various recipes for her son. This preparation of food had ended up going commercial. She stated that,

> '…….my son has been the guinea pig for everything. What I wanted to do was as he grows up, I wanted to make the products according to his taste. Because I have somebody straight up and say hey you know what, this is wrong…. specially the mango, when we

first started, it was a perfect test product that I had. But it failed miserably when he ate it.' (Company E – Owner)

Hence the owner's son had acted as an approver and main contributor to the production process. Moreover, if there is a big order to be fulfilled immediately, she gets her whole family involved. She said that by doing this, she can make her family realize the stress which she undergoes. It also enables her to spend time with her family and the *vice versa*. Hence, family relationships had supported her in developing new tastes, making the company flourish, and facing challenges.

On the other hand, Company E owner's father is the role model of her life, and she believes her creativity came from him. She recalled her childhood memories and stated that her father was the main pillar of her success.

> *'I would say, from small days, my dad had lot of home conversations with me. He is the one who get involved me in this and the businesses. He is into soft drinks business. He is a very innovative person. And he is a person who is always out there, want to improve, the livelihood of everybody, I don't know… I would say he just imprinted on me'. (Company E – Owner)*

Similar to that, the owner of Company G viewed her father as the path finder in her business. She started the business with her father as a partner. At that time, her father was catering to Asian markets, and she was travelling with her father since 18 and was fascinated to be a businesswoman. She studied about markets and realized that there is a huge boom in the Russian market with the collapse of Soviet Union. She wanted to tap the Russian market and started doing her own with the financial back up from her father's business. In the year 2000, she had converted the business into a private company with stakes of her family; father, sister and mother were the shareholders. In the case of Company G's owner, the family relationships and bonds were the oxygen that fed her business. Moreover, she gives the full credit to her father for showing her the beauty of entrepreneurship. She added,

> *'My father is my hero, my role model, my pathfinder……. the love for business world was purely because of him. The never give up attitude was from him.' (Company G – Owner)*

On the same account, the co-owners of Company J had got the entrepreneurship skills and the desire to be entrepreneurs from their family and, the environment which they grew up had influenced them to enter the beauty and healthcare industry. Their mother was in the beauty

care business and both the children agree that their mother was a great influence on their business journey. They highlighted that they were proud of their mother and her business made them popular. The business networks which their mother had supported them to build the business further. Family relationships had made their life easy as entrepreneurs and had provided myriad benefits and exposure to the industry.

The table below is developed to summarise the magnitude of the relationship with the family and the relatives of the SE owners under this study.

	Relationships and Networking	
Relationship with family and relatives	*1. Direct* *Company A, B, C, D, E, G, H, J*	*2. Moderate* *Company F, M, N*
	3. Reverse *Company B and O*	*4. No effect* *Company I, K, L*

Table 5.3: Magnitude of the relationship with the family and the relatives

It was revealed that, 7 companies out of 15 had a direct relationship with their families, where the owners of these 7 SEs had been directly influenced by the family and relatives. Moreover, 3 companies had a moderate relationship. The Company B and O have an inverse relationship, and 3 companies were not having any effect of family relationships and networking.

Business Networking is another strategy utilized by most of the participants in this study to face the crises they came across. SE owner-managers in this study were under various business networking with suppliers, service providers, investors, and well-wishers. One of the participants gave full credit to correct and timely networking as the strategy which saved her during the disturbing time.

…and I can say at any place that finding the correct partner makes me to come back to the business. I realized that I am not big enough and having good network will benefit me to go to higher standards. So, I joined with trade organisations, registered with chamber of commerce. I strongly believe that networks help you lot and specially if you are small, you better have them'. (Company B – Owner)

One day, Company B's owner had met one of her school friends at the bank, and the friend was in the catering business. She was doing a successful business and invited the owner to join with her and help her as a service provider. With several failures, the owner was determined to develop her business at any cost, and she had accepted the offer. The catering business went well, and her friend is still one of her business partners. Through these networks she had been able to get a lot of new opportunities. Once a restaurant wanted to close down and sell their utensils. The restaurant owner had contacted and asked her whether she liked to have them. Then she had gone there and found that the condition of the utensils was good, and she had taken them and ultimately, he had given them free of charge. With those set of utensils she had started a new branch. In her own words, *'you can see networking does miracles….' (Company B – Owner).*

Similarly, during the crisis time due to the Chinese ceramics, business partnership had saved Company A from being bankrupt. The founder of Company A explained that they were about to bankrupt due to the Chinese low quality mass ceramics coming to the Sri Lankan market. Then his son, the current owner, had taken up the marketing function. He had gone to China, studied the situation and realised that it was impossible to compete with their ceramics. Then he had changed the target market and concentrated on the UK due to their mentality on ceramics. He explained the incidents in the way they took place.

'USA has the disposable mentality and Europe has much history for ceramics than USA. So, I thought to target Europe. At that era, I saw that almost all the companies were closed down in 'Stoke-upon-Trent' city in England. I thought to have a round trip. I visited several countries in Europe such as Poland, Portugal and found companies who are just about to shut down. I requested them to keep the marketing division open and allow …………… to do the production on behalf of them. Some companies agreed and we concentrated in high quality and without a single advertisement' (Company A – Owner)

These business partnerships aided the company to become a strong customized ceramic manufacturing company through building marketing opportunities, and they allowed the

company to tap foreign markets. Similarly, the owner had maintained good relationships with the Ceramics Association and Ceramics Council. Being a part of these organisations had immensely helped the company in terms of helping each other to get raw materials and technical knowledge. He further mentioned that he tried his best to keep the orders in the country. He added.

> *'I try always to keep the orders within the country. Like if I cannot do it, and the customer is looking for something that I know can be done in SL I would link them up with the factories that can do it.' (Company A – Owner)*

These collaborations help the owner and the other manufacturers in the industry to be mutually beneficial by securing orders within Sri Lanka and mutually exchanging them within the industry players whenever required. He stated that all the players in the ceramic industry collectively collaborate with one another for the betterment of the industry. Similarly, the owner of Company C also stated that they have a small association which comprises the small hotel owners. Once a month they gather and discuss their issues and these gatherings were mutually beneficial to sort out common threats. The owner mentioned that when the breakwater barrier was constructed by the government, they had signed a petition and had organized awareness sessions to reveal the repercussions of the breakwater barrier. He had gained lot by being in this business network.

The owner of Company E also had established various partnerships with other companies. As she gives the top-most priority for quality, which cannot be compromised at any rate, she gets contract manufacturing done through an ISO certified location, which is essential for baby food. Such business partnerships have enabled this company to survive by keeping only one employee. So, the company has overcome the crisis of recruiting suitable people through these partnerships.

Business partnering was not an exemption for Company I owner when developing their business. He had used partnering strategies in several stages in his operational timeline where he had partnered with an already established international business to win challenges posed in entering the markets of USA and UAE. Partnering with XYZ associate gave the business an idea about the USA market demand and the products they should offer. This partnership facilitated them in tapping this lucrative and gigantic market located on the other side of the world. This knowledge

that they gathered, facilitated them in forming trading relationships with LM food markets, which was a well-established supermarket chain. In 2012, they utilized the same approach when they sought to enter the UAE market to trade Cinnamon oil. They partnered with ABC brothers, who were one of the largest Cinnamon exporters in Sri Lanka. Since they have been exporting cinnamon worldwide for a long period of time, they possess extensive knowledge on the UAE markets. The challenge of tapping an unknown market was overcome by this partnership. Thus, with the expertise of ABC brothers, this partnering strategy facilitated Company I to enter and access the UAE market successfully.

Similarly, Company L had utilized partnerships in their path to growth. They had partnered with one of the biggest tea plantations in Sri Lanka to buy their tea. Through this partnership, the company managed to secure a strong position in the tea market. As per the owner, this partnership had given them lot of opportunities with easy access to market, convenience in marketability and assurance on the supply. He further added,

> *'I always think it is useful to have someone else to check your ideas and build them. In my case, partnering with Company EFG, made my workload lighten, lessened my financial burdens, and improved the overall quality of my products and gave a good reputation. Coz it knows lot of things and is full of information, which I was lacking at that time'. (Company L – Owner)*

Management contacts was a strategy used by Company M in building business networks. They had signed agreements with top professionals and business owners in the industry. The owner of Company M believes that strong business contacts had strengthened his organisation and had always paved the way to develop his business. He stated that he was able to gain higher profit through building a good trust and improving the quality of their services, which ultimately resulted in getting more projects with large investments. He added,

> *'I always try to build negotiable contacts with my competitors. So, it will turn them into my business partners. I do not know…. I am very good at convincing and influencing my competitors to become business partners. None of the initiatives had gone wasted. It is mutually beneficial anyway… So how can it go wrong?' (Company M – Owner)*

The owner had utilized these contacts to build not only his own business but also the whole industry. Sri Lankan IT industry had faced a threat from Indian IT companies. Sometimes when

there are big orders, he had utilized his contacts to get support to supply them. He never let orders to go out of the country. He stated that if he allowed it to go out, future orders would never come back, and it would be retained forever with other competitive countries. This view of the owner of Company M corresponds with the attitude of the owner of Company A of retaining orders within Sri Lanka.

Valuable partnerships and strong networking had been used by SE owners to find extra capital to develop their businesses. The owner of Company D was one of the SE owners who had been benefited massively from this strategy. He stated that he had never applied for loans from banks in his whole life as an entrepreneur, and he had always looked up to his business partners for extra capital. He added,

> *'I do not like to take loans from banks. Banks need so many documents, and if you can prove that you have all the money in the world only, they give you the loan. Do you get what I mean? If I can prove that I do not need money only they will give you money, ridiculous…If we have money, we will not apply for a loan in the first case….' (Company D – Owner)*

The owner of Company D is reluctant to get loans due to its cumbersome processes and time-consuming nature. He pointed out that he can trust his contacts than the bank and talked about myriad advantages of getting extra capital through networks.

> *'When it comes to my business, those closest to me believe in my vision. Not only that they know my ability to make my dream a reality. I had never disappointed them. You know, I always try to pay back whatever money I collected within the promised time period. And through these networks I was lucky enough to collect quite an amount of money to develop my business.' (Company D – Owner)*

Moreover, Company F, N and O are also strong believers in fulfilling their capital needs through their networks.

> *'I always say there are funds available somewhere and you should look for where it is. Several occasions, banks let me down. I would say in my case, business networks supported me to gather more capital. They trust me. After all, they are my friends'. (Company N – Owner)*

> *'I had a brilliant idea. But at that time, I didn't have enough money. So, I started it with one of my friends who had money. Both of us had something to bring to the table. She*

brought money I brought the idea. So, both of us gained and it was a win-win situation for us. (Company F – Owner)

'I had collected lot of money through my friends who were in the business. They like me and they know me. It is easy for me to approach them. Whenever I need extra money, I borrow from them. I have several partners like that whom I look for when I need something extra to pump.' (Company O – Owner)

Hence all these SE owners depend on their business partners and networks to find extra money if needed. The SE owners' most challenging task of finding extra capital had been achieved through proper business networking. The owner of Company D further added to the importance of networking,

'Yes. Very much. That's where you get all people. Because there are certain things… the thing is in business you can't do things by yourself. You will need other people at some point. Even to get a loan or to get into store, to sell your product, you need that network. You have to get yourself there.' (Company D – Owner)

It was clear that business networking had immensely supported the SE owner-managers to face the micro, meso, and macro crises, and these business networks had acted as one of the main strategies to be resilient. A table can be utilized to summarize the companies and their type of networking used during turbulence.

	Type of Business Networking	
Business Networking	*1. Developing Business* *Company A, B, E, I, L, M*	*2. Grabbing opportunities* *Company A, B, L, G*
	3. Understanding the market *Company A, B, E, L, M*	*4. Finding extra capital* *Company B, C, L, D, F, N, O*

Table 5.4: Type of Business Networking

Business networking had a direct influence and an impact on almost all the companies other than H, J and K, and it has helped to overcome the vivid crises faced by these SE owners. Business networking was one of the strategies utilized by these SE owners to be resilient.

Employees have been a great resource that had contributed immensely to the growth and development of SEs. Almost all the SE owners agreed that they utilized their **employee relationships** as a strategy to develop their businesses.

Company I use employees as their brand ambassadors. The owner had utilised the employee relationships positively and believes that a satisfied employee attracts new customers. He added,

> *'I always try to have good relationships with my employees. I invest more and more on good performing employees [and] allowing the rotten apples to go out. I am very particular in hiring them. You can't go wrong when it comes to recruiting and maintaining the workforce. It is the employees who made (Company name)'s success a reality' (Company I – Owner)*

The company's human resource strategies are ethnocentric. That is, they encourage recruiting all the positions from one specific nationality, which is Sri Lankan. The owner is in the view that they can be trusted best. Even their outlet in the UK employs three Sri Lankans. Managerial workers who have served more than 5 years in the Sri Lankan office are usually sent for overseas work on two-year working visa. The store manager of the London outlet is in charge of the recruitment and hiring processes for the store while the owner looks after the recruiting and hiring process in Sri Lanka. Only the temporary workers are hired from other nationalities. Even when they go to participate in international forums and exhibitions, they always try to hire Sri Lankans from those countries or take Sri Lankans with them. The barrier of uncertainty of newly recruited employees had been overcome by training local people and sending them abroad.

Company A is also on the same view about the employees. The owner of the company believes that employees are one of the core assets he has, and that they immensely help him to develop the business. When sudden orders pop up, the employees are ready to work and utilize extra time even sacrificing their weekends. The owner pays extra as an overtime payment to appreciate their contribution. He emphasizes that he always tries to recruit young blood to the company.

> *'I love the new generation. They are involved and motivated by the recent trends in technology. They can pick up new technology in a matter of minutes. They are innovative and they are with up-to-date'. (Company A – Owner)*

Company A recruits newly passed out graduates as management trainees to do innovations. These new recruits have done remarkable inventions during their tenure. They have developed a ceramic refrigerator which consumes only water as the power source. A ceramic air cooler which uses a very little electricity (9W battery) is another outstanding invention by the company. Hence it is clear that effective employee relationships have paved the way for Company A to excel in their business.

A similar scenario is visible in Company J. The owners are very particular when it comes to screening potential employees and their engagement. They maintain strong relationships with the employees, and they believe employees as the main pillar of their success. When they recruit employees, they look for mainly four things: their command in the English language, work experience, personality, and confidence level. They elaborated on these attributes as follows.

> *'They should be fluent in English and should have some work experience. It is a must in our business. And we have a limited budget and lot of barriers to overcome. So, we don't like to spend money to train them. We need people to add value to our company. They should have the basic skill set and the knowhow on the business' (Company J – Owner 1)*

> *'When I interview, I check for their confidence and the personality, especially these candidates will be selling cosmetics products. They should look smart and attractive as well as polite in order to give a good explanation to the customers. Isn't it?' (Company J – Owner 2)*

Employees of the Company J had bought a lot of repetitive sales, and customers were impressed on the employees, and they had commended on their fascinating service. Employees in this company are given cash and non-cash benefits. The owner commented that they have a very little labour turnover. Once the employees were recruited, they were exposed to development opportunities and most of them get a chance to visit other countries and market their products. They are given a proper training and development and are provided with a continuous floor of information on the products to build awareness. Both the owners were happy about their employee commitment, and they strongly believed that employees had supported them to develop their business.

The owner of Company F had developed strong relationships with his employees and these relationships had supported him when he struggled in the past. He recalled the most challenging

time of his business, which was the Tsunami in 2004. His whole business was washed away by the Tsunami waves and all of his employees were jobless. He was unable to pay the employees and the employees were idling. Working for a company that is going through financial hardships can have a severely negative impact on employee morale. Nevertheless, these employees had never left him during his trouble times. Somehow, he had managed to buy a land to grow various crops. His employees came and worked with him voluntary as the owner was not in a position to pay them. At the end of the first year, they were very successful and had got a good harvest. Their capsicum harvest was even enough to buy a car. And slowly he had developed and reached the current position. He still believes that his employees were the cause for his comeback. Without them, he would not succeed. Hence through effective relationship building, employees had become an invaluable resource to face the crises and to be resilient.

The customer is the foundation of any business. Effective **customer relationships** had been utilized as a strategy to face challenges and crises. Three dimensions; complaint handling, customer customization, and customer empowerment and knowhow emerged from the data (figure 5.2).
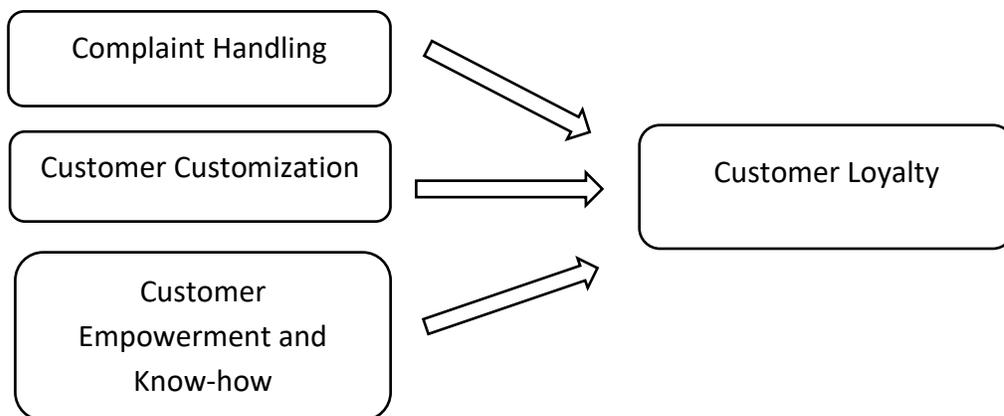

Figure 5.2 – Building Customer Relationships [Source: adapted from Bhat and Darzi (2016) and modified

As the figure 5.2 depicts, these SE owners have used three main strategies to monitor the customers and through these strategies the customer loyalty had enhanced, had resulted in

repetitive sales, and ultimately had developed a competitive edge. *Complaint handling* was effectively done by almost all the SE owner-managers in this study. The owner of Company J recalled an incidence where they had turned a crisis into an opportunity through proper complaint handling. There was a newly recruited employee and she had mistakenly pasted wrong addresses on deliveries to a couple of customers. Hence, they had received wrong packages and there were several complaints, and some of them were furious and had threatened them that they would spread the news. The owners had talked to them personally and had apologized. They had sent the correct order within 48 hours and had allowed them to keep the wrong package as well. This had made a huge impact on the customers. The owner added.

> *'Even though we did all these we were not sure. But fortunately, they continue to buy our products. And some of them even appreciated the way we reacted. You know sometimes a simple SORRY would save the day. What I have realized so far in my business, whenever an angry customer calls you, you have to apologize and say sorry. That itself calms them down.' (Company J – Owner)*

Similarly, owners of Company B and Company C were very precise on complaint handling. Whenever a customer complains about food, they take it seriously. Through customer complaints, Company C's owner had solved a major issue in the kitchen. There had been several complaints about the seafood dishes of the restaurant where customers complained about the prawns and cuttlefish quantity on the dish. The owner had charged less from the customers and had apologized them. Later, he had gone into details and had found that they had not changed anything, and the same qualities were maintained. Then he had dug more into the issue, and it had been revealed that the chef was hiding and selling out items to outsiders. He had immediately sacked him and controlled the situation. The owner stated.

> *'For me even small quantities matter… As a SE losing around 2-3 kilograms per week matters. Just imagine if he continued to steal what would have happened. Most probably I would have to close down the business.' (Company C – Owner)*

The customers who complained had become loyal customers, and they had given competitive advantage for Company C.

Customization was another subcategory that emerged from the data. Customer customization was used to attract customers for their products and services by the SE owners in this study. In

the process of developing their business, Company A had met several valuable customers through their business networks and through their business partners. Once an English Lord wanted to give a present, a set of cutleries to the Russian President Valdimir Putin. It comprised 24 pieces and one silversmith had done the job and they needed a person to do the ceramic handle and contacted the owner. This was only a one unit. Still, he had accepted the job. The English Lord was so happy with the work he had mentioned that Company A had exceeded his expectation and there were several jobs that came through him, and the owner cannot disclose the names of some of the protagonists. By fulfilling the customer requirement by exceeding the expectations, Company A had earned the lifetime satisfaction from that customer. Hence customer customization was a strategy used by this company owner to face the crisis of attracting new customers and retaining them.

On the other hand, Company A's most valuable customer, Teena (Who was a ceramic manufacturer in United Kingdom), during the difficult time had closed down her business. Before that she had tried several countries such as Thailand, India, and Bangladesh, but was not able to find the correct supplier. Finally, Teena had come across the owner and now she is the most valuable customer of Company A. She is a famous handmade designer for ceramics and other household items in UK. Through her recommendations, Company A had come across another famous porcelain item producer in UK, who had become a highly value-added customer in their business. Hence building and maintaining good customer relationships had allowed the company to develop their business. The owner was getting a considerable number of customized orders from his valuable customers.

Similarly, Company C is getting repetitive sales from their customers. Lot of customers who visited Company C come again and enjoy the stunning beach. The owner of Company C stated,

> *'There are lot of customers who visited us even for their 5th time. We have a breathtaking beach, and this is the best for surfing and relaxing. And we have lot of customers who come in purely due to the word of mouth. I invest very little in marketing.' (Company C – Owner)*

The owner is maintaining good relationships with the customers, and they always pay repetitive visits. He added.

> *'I always get more customers than my fellow hoteliers. Whenever they need something, I always provide. These foreigners have various needs you know. And the way they like their seafood is different to each other. We always make sure all their requirements are taken care of.' (Company C – Owner)*

Through this customization, the owner had gained loyal customers and competitive edge over others.

Customer empowerment was used by the SE founders/owner-managers under this study to develop long term relationships with their customers. These SE owners help customers to choose what they want, when they want it, on their own terms. Moreover, these companies had utilized processes to gather, manage and share customer's knowhow.

Company M is highly involved in empowering the customers. The owner of Company M highlighted their strategy as follows.

> *'I always go near to them. As I told you we have some customers in other countries. Even though it is expensive to go near to them, I always go. All these instances it had worked positively.' (Company M – Owner)*

He further mentioned that one of the components of their service is giving a free user guide, where the functionality of all the components were given in a detailed manner. The users were guided properly and trained before they release the product. The owner believes that it is his duty to make sure the product he sells is user-friendly as much as possible. He does not charge for this service, and it is not priced. On the other hand, visiting the customers and getting their requirements had given him the opportunity to develop new products and add features for prevailing products. Nevertheless, he stated that this had made his loyal customer base to increase, and he is having a competitive edge as none of the other IT service providers were doing this.

Like the owner of Company M, the owner of Company E always educates her customers through trade exhibitions. Being engaged in Baby food manufacturing, she believes that this is of paramount importance. She talks about her product and gives samples to taste. She develops a video clip for each and every product coming out of her company, and it is freely available on her face book page. Through these exhibitions, she gets a lot of information on customer

requirements. By looking at these comments, she continuously upgrades her products. Customer empowerment is the core of her business.

Similarly, she mentioned that most of her innovative products are a result of customer comments. She had got a lot of comments and feedback from the existing customers and potential customers on their likes and dislikes, and accordingly she had come up with innovative products. She talked favourably about her customers, and they had given her a great deal of insights when it comes to new product development.

> *'I launched my company in Pro food exhibition in 2009. Stuff where you can go and speak to the customer, and get them to taste the product, and stuff like that helps a lot. And I have the vegetable range, they all came from customers. I ask them what they want to see. That is why I say, my innovation comes through customers. So, it has to be more customer specific than actually industry specific.' (Company E – Owner)*

On the other hand, Company L engaged in real estate business is totally into customer empowerment through which they have developed a substantial set of loyal customers. According to the owner, whenever a customer visits them, they educate him/her on details about real estate. They somehow try to find a suitable plot of land for the customer. On top of it, if the customer needs financial assistance, they attend to that too. They have come to agreement with some banks for easy payment schemes, and the owner mentioned that this was an outcome of customer requirement. They try to improve the customer value by providing additional content, education, and financial assistance. To conclude, it was revealed that the SE founders/owner-managers under study were using complaint handling, customer customization and customer empowerment and knowhow to build strong and long-term customer relationships, which had worked as an effective strategy to face crises encountered on their path to resilience.

5.3.2. Agentic Role of the entrepreneur

The Agentic Role of the Entrepreneur was another strategy revealed through data to build personal resilience of the SE owners in this study. It provides an illumination on entrepreneurial competencies as a strategy in making the SE founders/owner-managers resilient in turbulent environments.

It was revealed that by being an innovator, an achiever, a planner and a controller, these SE owners had transformed their organisations and enhanced their adaptability. Due to their innovative methods, processes, products and ideas, these SE owner-managers were able to develop their personal resilience and compete strongly within the turbulent post-conflict Sri Lankan economy. These SE owner-managers had developed innovative ways to navigate their companies within intense competition, which paved to the organisational resilience. Their innovative nature is presented under two main sections: new process innovation and new soft innovation.

In this study, **New Process Innovation** refers to new product development, innovative marketing techniques used, and changes in the ways in which products and services are delivered.

New Product Development was a high risk and resource consuming activity for the SE owners under this study as they lack financial resources, technical capabilities, human resources, management competency and market information. These SE owners had used various innovative channels of marketing to expand their customer base. The rest of the section presents the evidence on these innovative techniques.

A manager with rich working experience and higher education would be more likely to adopt innovative activities, which was the case with Company J, a company which represents the highly competitive industry of cosmetics. Due to their innovative product range, they were able to keep up with the competitors and acquire a considerable market share. This company brings out the treasured natural formulae, rituals, and holistic healing practices of Ayurveda to purify, hydrate, treat, soothe, and clean the body mind and soul with the finest ingredients of Sri Lanka. Since Sri Lanka was famous for its spices and tea in the world from the past, using them in addition to Ayurveda herbs, certified organic essential oils, natural minerals, virgin coconut oil and rich ocean salts, adds more value to the product. Hence in an international market which is dominated by Indian products, Company J had gained some space due to their innovative product range. This was purely due to the owners' entrepreneurial exposure, work experience and higher education level. Modern consumers are more concerned about the value behind a product. Compared to local consumers, international consumers tend to purchase a product that has a value or a good

cause behind it apart from the quality and certifications obtained. The products are not tested on animals, and they are free from alcohol, paraffin, and paraben, which can be harmful to the human skin. These have led the company to win the hearts of international consumers specially the European consumer by adding more value to the product.

Company J's owner uses **innovative marketing techniques** to popularize their products. They use a theme colour as a marketing strategy. The International Relations Manager commented:

> *'Our theme colours are ……… for "…….." and ………… for "………" depicting a unique identity in every aspect of our company. All the shelves in every store are in ……. colour and the lighting is also dark with a touch of ……… The uniform of the employees as well as banners posters and advertisements also represent the theme colours. This has made us identical in every location of it among the other competing brands.' (Company J – International Relations Manager)*

Packages are designed in a unique manner depicting traditional arts, motifs, native scripts of old Ceylon to showcase the identity of Sri Lanka. The packaging has been done to leave a lasting memory in the minds of the customers, it has been created in a way that the customer does not feel like throwing it away. Distributing free samples is another strategy used by them to attract new customers and to introduce new products to the prevailing customers. To every order, 3 sample packets of 3 new products are delivered to the customer with the package. This strategy promotes their new products motivating the customer to order the new products. This has been a successful strategy where customers are compelled to order the new products, which they had experienced through samples. The owner explained their view on wrong order delivery also.

> *'If what is required by a customer is not delivered correctly to the customer, we let the customer enjoy the wrong package without returning it to us as a sense of apologizing to the mistake of delivering the wrong order. And the right order is delivered back to the customer free of charge. This we just did without thinking much. But it worked miracles. Customers were so positive on this strategy. This gives us more positives than a loss.' (Company J – Owner)*

On the other hand, Company I's cinnamon tea product is presented in a variety of ways, such as tea bags, loose powder, full-leaf tea, in different flavours, to target different segments of customers in the markets of the USA, the UK and Europe. The items are prepared and deliberately put through a stringent quality control process. The owner stated that the quality assurance

process paved the way for them to secure a good market and that the issues and chaos in the turbulent international market was always taken care of due to this rigorous process.

> 'We follow SLS 81:2010 procedures and rules regarding our business activities. There are four main standards we have to obey by; Constitution of the bale of quills, Cinnamon should be free from mould growth and insects, Odour and flavor and the Chemical requirements. Also, requirements related to the employees, like wearing masks, all the packed products should be stored on Pallets, all the work with the products should be done on a table and make sure there is no contact with the floor. So, we follow and fulfil all these requirements and our buyers know it.' (Company I – Owner)

They are quality conscious and quality oriented. They make sure that they come up with the best quality tea. When it comes to pricing, they use the Premium pricing strategy. They market their products as high quality and charge a high price in return. The cut cinnamon they offer is of Alba grade, which is the highest quality grade in the Cinnamon industry.

This company owner has succeeded by developing a strong international network in a novel way. The owner has written to a strong supermarket chain established in the USA, appreciating their work and their service. Later he has met the owner in a trade exhibition and has initiated discussions to collaborate. The owner of the supermarket chain is said to have been highly impressed on the letter he received from Company I owner long time back. This had made the things easy for this SE owner to step into the world. Moreover, couple of promotional strategies are used to promote the products; occasional discounts, offering free drinks to customers to get a first-hand experience of the products and participating in international trade fairs.

In Company A also high attention is paid for innovative products. One of the concepts they introduced were to approach the Sri Lankan market through ceramic story telling. This means, they painted famous folklores in ceramics and released them to the market. They had a huge demand for this product by schools and libraries. This innovative product was a novel concept. The owner added,

> 'I never thought this is going to be a hit. This was proposed by one of my interns. He is a good painter. He suggested to me this, and I rejected it. He convinced me to do only one tale. I did it as a test run. That is, it. It took me by surprise to see how the grandparents, parents and teachers demanded the product. It was a hit'. (Company A – Owner)

These innovative products had helped the company to face the competition caused by cheap Chinese Ceramics, and ultimately, they had overcome the crisis they underwent due to Chinese ceramics.

When it comes to Company M, they have a business to business (B2B) marketing strategy. They do not offer their product to the public. It is because they find customers through official contacts. As mentioned earlier their brand identity has been created on personal relationships, i.e., management contacts. Company M's owner had used his relationships and networks with enterprise suppliers, customers, contractors, and other competitors to grab orders. Moreover, the owner spends on IT product demonstration campaigns, IT conferences and online promotions for selected regions. Advertisements in IT magazines and online marketing (websites, promotional videos, YouTube videos) were also used.

SE owners had to face some barriers when it comes to internationalization and lack of knowledge has a considerable weight among them, where Company M's owner had overcome this challenge by partnering with a multinational company. Moreover, the owner uses another attractive and less risky strategy to develop his business. He is a dual citizenship holder, and he uses the contacts that he has already built to attract new projects to his business. He has participated in many business conferences, meetings and business discussions held in Australia. Through these meetings, he has built very strong business contacts with top level people in the business world. Through this strategy, he was able to overcome the issues due to lack of marketing knowledge and skills in accessing financial resources, technological equipment, and know-how. He emphasised that strong communication skills and the outgoing personality were the main strengths that he possesses to develop his business.

Owner of the Company O also do B2B and B2C business, and his main promotional strategy is to visit buyers. The owner directly deals with foreign buyers, and he enter direct conversations with these customers by travelling to their countries. Instead of formal relationships, he believes in having informal relationships with his buyers. He commented,

> *'Informal relationships is the best strategy to increase market through foreign buyers. Usually when I visit the buyers, I try to be familiar with them. Sometimes they invite me to*

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visit their homes. As a result of that, they become more familiar with our company. Sometimes they help to conduct training programmes too. I have got lot of opportunities like these by closely working with them. Because of this bond, they are not easily moving out of our company. And they retain with us and sometimes we are getting valuable insights from them.' (Company O – Owner)

When it comes to marketing, Company K's owners had identified the customer issues related with purchasing lands and investing on the properties. As per the owners, 75% of the Sri Lankans are moving towards a loan when it comes to investing on a property. They had made agreements and signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with commercial banks in Sri Lanka. When a customer comes to purchase a block of land, they provide the required service to contact the banks for financial needs. The customer's shoe leather cost is minimized, and they can buy the land they want with ease. This strategy had helped them to attract more customers towards the company. The customer Relations Officer commented on their strategy.

'....you know after introducing the banks, our sales had doubled. We distribute leaflets through newspapers. You know by putting them inside the weekend newspapers. There is no place in Sri Lanka, where they can get all these facilities as a package under one house. So people come to us.' (Company K – Customer Relationship Officer)

Another strategy used was a free of charge house cleaning service up to one year after the occupant takes over the property. According to the owner, they deep clean the house, attend to any repairs needed, and make the house smell good. She highlighted that this offer also had attracted lot of customers. As house cleaning is an expensive business and since it was free of charge for one year, customers had found it attractive. Hence these innovative methods of marketing utilized by the owners had attracted new customers towards the company and helped to develop organisational resilience.

On the other hand, Company B's owner uses a few strategies to market his restaurant. He offers courses in both full and half portions, with prices adjusted to suit. Some customers love this. Some plates can be shared by two persons. Initially when the small portion was introduced, sales had gone up. The actual Rupee sales had gone down in the beginning, but it had risen again since customers appreciated the new portions and came more frequently. Another attractive strategy is their signature dishes. The Manager added,

'Our signature dishes are highly demanded. We have tried several dishes and innovating various ways to cook and by changing the presentation of food. If you consider the orders for a day, around 15-20 orders are for our signature dishes. Customers love them.' (Company B – Manager)

The strategies like, smaller plates and signature dishes had worked out on their path to success by allowing them to face the vivid crises they faced.

Company C represents the hotel industry. They faced a crisis due to the breakwater barrier as explained in the section 5.2.1.2. Owner had utilized several strategies to promote his products.

'We reduced our room rates because there is no safety, no natural scenery view and golden sandy beach in this area now. So you simply cannot charge the same price you charged before. And we are encouraging more local customers now. We are giving discounts in long weekends and we have reduced the food and beverage prices also. Hmm…. And there are several new packages for honeymooners, birthdays, and anniversary celebrations. There is another new addition, where we organize night parties and for these parties, the entrance is free. Once they entered the food and beverages are available, and they have to purchase them. There are entertainments, pool table, music, karoki, magic shows like wise and they are free.' (Company C – General Manager)

Moreover, they advertise their hotel in Trip Advisor, and that has helped to attract a lot of customers to them. They have kept a guest review book and asked their guests to write a comment before they leave. In case due to some reason if the comments are bad, they offer 80% discount and invite them. This strategy has bought them lot of positives and repetitive customers. Customers who visit them again are offered a 50% discount. The customers have introduced new customers and appreciated their offer and changed from negative customers to a positive customer. These strategies effectively allowed them to face the crisis they faced due to the breakwater barrier.

Company E's owner has understood the growing demand for rusk and have catered the anxious mothers by changing their product variety and appearance. The rusks are less sugary and are in palate size. They have a huge demand due to these facts. The owner commented on her product.

'People like that little better than the others because it has less sugar. And you know how mums hate sugar… but also, they like it better because the rusks come in palate sizes. So, it teaches the child hand eye coordination and independence of eating by themselves. Biscuits get all soggy and it gets like a paste in your mouth, so the baby can easily choke

on it. That is the reason we made it in palate size. And it melts in their mouth. I wanted to make sure that it is something healthy and also something safe and nutritious.' (Company E – Owner)

She further mentioned that her experience in raising her son and looking after him had given her lot of insights and exposure to develop new products. The owner mainly uses two strategies to market her products: participating in exhibitions and attractive Facebook (FB) page. The owner tries to educate her customers through exhibitions. The other strategy, the attractive FB page has given her more sales. She maintains a FB page, and frequently introduces new promotion activities. She commented on this strategy as follows.

> *'Our FB page is happening. I give lot of offers through FB page. I gave a free parcel of goodies for the person who had given the maximum likes to our FB page. And for the Christmas, New Year and Children's Day, I gave discounts. Through these promotions, I have increased the sales considerably. I love you Marks Zuckerberg.' (Company E – Owner)*

Less costly and risky marketing tools have given the owner a competitive edge over others.

The owners under this study had used **new soft innovation** to build their personal resilience and which had supported to develop the organisational resilience. New soft innovation presents the various methods of innovation in terms of the administration procedures, new organisational practices, and human resource practices. All these SE owner-managers use numerous ways to recruit, promote and develop their staff. They believe their Human Resources (HR) strategies had helped them to successfully face the crises they faced. The rest of the section presents vivid innovative HR practices, administrative procedures and organisational practices utilized by these small job creators.

Innovative HR practices are used by the SE owners in this study to face the continuous and vivid crises. Company A's owner recruit newly passed out graduates to do innovations. He believes in young blood, and he gives full freedom and resources for these graduates to do innovations. The ceramic refrigerator, which consumes only water as the power source, and the ceramic cooler and the ceramic air cooler which use a very little electricity (9Ws battery) are some outstanding inventions by these young graduates. Moreover, the owner has implemented a strict and strong quality assurance method. 100% inspection is carried out before the 1st burn, and daily meetings

are held to analyse the reasons for rejection and repercussions that arise. For the 2nd time after the 1st burn, again a 100% check is carried out and a daily meeting is held. Normally, the rejection rate is 5%, and after the glazing, a 100% quality check is carried out again for the 3rd time, which is done by the owner himself. Elaborating Company A's difference compared to other competitors, he added:

> 'Most of the reputed brands are doing on the glaze; such as Noritake, which is easier. We are doing under the glaze and it is difficult but much better compared to doing on the glaze. The most valued customer of us, ……………. was attracted to Company A, purely due to this reason'. (Company A – owner)

Through these novel strategies, Company A confidently survives and performs well in the turbulent environment. When it comes to Company B, the owner uses several **innovative organisational practices** to motivate her employees. Explaining it, she said:

> 'For the waiters, I have introduced a new method, where if he or she brings in a new customer, from that bill he is getting 10%'. And there is another one, where the guests can comment on the service they got from the restaurant and from the waiter. Every month I am selecting the best rated waiter and publish his/her photo in front of the hotel for the guests to see and for his/her salary Rs. 5000 are added. And on every May 1st (Labour Day), we go on a trip to a luxury hotel and we spend the day there. On May 1st all our restaurants are closed. I have some of the employees, who are studying during the daytime and working in the night. We have a shift basis. So for those I give the preference in selecting the shift without disturbing their studies'. (Company B – owner)

The owner commented on her employees, and she believes that employees are the driving factor behind her business.

> 'I think one strategy is looking after my employees. I strongly believe that if you fulfil their wishes, they will fulfil my vision. Having the best set of employees working under me is my strength. So, my strategy is always recruiting the most suitable and well-suited employees for the restaurant'. (Company B – owner)

With these methods and strategies, she was able to attract new customers and treat her employees well. She stressed that the crises she faced can be overcome using these HR strategies. All the SE owners try their best to understand each employee and their talents and interests. It was revealed that SE owners used various strategies to know their employees well

and it had supported them to face numerous crises they faced in the path for growth. SE owner-managers had utilised vivid strategies to know their employees better.

Both the owners of the Company J have an open-door policy, where employees can meet them whenever they want. He believes this strategy had worked well as he can solve issues and concerns on the spot. Since there is a way for them to discuss their issues with the top management, they can get immediate feedback and solve their issues. The employees have the freedom to make decisions in their working capacity and have a peaceful working environment. Similarly, Company A, D, N and F have an open-door policy. Several SE owners commented on this policy as follows.

> *'Getting to know them well shows that you believe they are valuable and worth knowing. When you are close with them you can understand them clearly and I believe that is paramount in my business.' (Company D – Owner)*

> *'Allowing them to meet me allows me to know them better. And they will never come to meet me for minor things. And never come without looking at all the options. After all they are coming to their boss. For me open door policy had made my life easy as most of them come with a solution.' (Company N – Owner)*

> *'Whenever an employee comes to meet me, I get into their shoes. They feel secured by that. Just a pat on the back will motivate them. Sometimes issues which would have ended up by firing a couple of employees had been resolved without going for that far due to allowing people to meet me personally. I am getting information before things get worse. So, I love to keep my door open always' (Company F – Owner)*

Furthermore, these SE owner-managers have several interesting strategies when it comes to recruitment. Most of the SE owners pointed out that they conducted the first interview with the newcomers in a lengthy manner, to identify the new employees well and to check the adaptability of the persons. Companies N, O, F and B were using this strategy. They give attention to applicant perceptions of fit with the organisation by allocating more time for the initial interview.

> *'Knowing their likes and dislikes beforehand makes me to utilize their true potential. I usually allocate more than 30 minutes even for a temporary staff recruitment. Whenever new orders come in, they had never said no to me. We have a strong bond. I love my employees.' (Company N – Owner)*

Another strategy employed by these SE owners is the individual referencing method. They were in the view that an existing employee will never recommend a bad person, and when they joined, they were already aware a little bit on the culture of the organisation. Through this the phase between getting to know the employee and understanding him/her is minimal.

> *'Employees are recruited from the personal referencing method ONLY. I strongly believe that if I recruit people through a connection, the retention of the new employees will increase. 75% of the employees in the company have been serving the company for more than 15 years. (Company A – Owner)*
>
> *'The new employee is already familiar with the environment, and it won't take much time or effort on his behalf to absorb the culture of the company as he/she already knows someone from the company. It is always easy to retain this type.' (Company J – Owner)*

As for the SE owners, through this method, employee retention increases. One of the reasons behind this was that the initial screening had already been done by the current employees and as his reputation will be at stake, he will only be selecting the candidates who can deliver the promised.

On the other hand, monetary benefits had motivated the existing employees to recommend their friends/relatives to the company.

> *'I give them 10,000 Rupees as a perk if the recruited employee stays with the company for 1 year without any issue. People always bring good people. One is the monetary benefit and the other is their reputation.' (Company O – Owner)*
>
> *'It is working well here. I always acknowledge the good referrers and give them an allowance which is added to their bonus. It always encourages them to recommend only suitable people to our culture'. (Company M – Owner)*

Job rotation is another method utilised by these SE owners to make sure all the employees know each other well. Job rotation is a very popular HR strategy utilized by large companies, where employees were laterally transferred between different jobs in the same organisation without a change in the hierarchical rank or salary grade. SE owners pointed out that this method had helped them in understanding the employees and in allowing the employees to know their colleagues well.

'We have different sections in the factory. Sometimes one can come as a factory worker but having skills in painting. So, when we rotate them, they can work as a painter in the ceramics section. Then only we can know his talent. So, this rotating thing had allowed us to figure out very good employees with hidden talents'. (Company A – General Manager)

A factory worker commented positively on the job rotation, and she confirmed the manager's words.

'I joined as a tea maker to this company. One day, sir asked me to go to the molding section to help them for 2 weeks. Then I realized I am not meant to be a tea maker. I had more talents than that. Later, sir asked me to permanently shift to the molding section. I am doing well here.' (Company A – Factory worker)

Hence open-door policy, conducting lengthy recruitment interviews, using individual referencing method and Job rotation were the main strategies used by these SE owners to know their employees well. SE owners commented that this was mandatory as they have very few staff members and they need to think and act as a group, and otherwise the whole company is going to suffer. Through these strategies the SE owners were able to develop the organisational resilience.

Moreover, there were various **innovative administration procedures** used by the SE owners to be strong within the turbulent environment.

Companies A and O are having daily meetings targeting towards the day's proceedings, and employees are given 10 minutes to contribute. They can contribute towards decision making and uplifting the company, whereas Companies F, I and J have monthly meetings to get employee feedback, where the summary of their activities and the improvements made by them are presented.

'When you let employees help with decisions, it shows that you trust them. Even if you only let employees give input to assist you in making the final decision, you still show that you value their opinions. You have to come and witness our monthly meeting, where they can present new ideas to develop the company. You can see how motivated they are.' (Company F – HR manager)

According to the SE owners and managers, these regular meetings have boosted the motivation of their employees and made them feel part of the company.

Likewise, Company B's owner gets her employees involved in enhancing the appearance of her restaurant. She believes that employees are highly motivated to contribute to this cause and their creativity has contributed to attract new and present customers.

> 'In my restaurant, I have given full freedom for them to set up the things. They are the ones who do the display and change the tables and chairs. They are really good. I can concentrate more on main things.' (Company B – Owner)

Just like her, Companies A and E provide the freedom for their employees to prepare the outlets in the exhibitions they participate in.

> '3 years I used to set up the stall, and then allowed my employees to do it. I just train them to think in terms of the customer perspective. And now I do not go at all. So, they do it on their own and they probably do it better than I did it.' (Company A – Owner)

Involving employees to participate in decision making by letting them to organise things, had given positive outcomes for the SE owners.

Company I uses a suggestion box to get the employee suggestions and issues. The owner had got a lot of good suggestions and comments from his employees.

> 'We have a suggestion box in the factory. Anybody can put chits on anything related to management. Once I was struggling to figure out the root cause for increase in the cost of the packing section. One employee had put a chit in the box on the problem and had suggested what to do. So, I did it and that is it. It was solved.' (Company I – Owner)

The export manager, commented on this suggestion box in a positive manner.

> 'Actually, I implemented this suggestion box idea. It is in a place where anyone has access. And we regularly check it. Some employees are reluctant to talk in meetings. Not that they are not heard but they are shy. This method is for them.' (Company I – Export manager)

These SE owners had convinced employees to retain realistic expectations of how long it would take for some suggestions to be considered. At the same time, they had encouraged them to continue participating so that employee participation would become an integral part of their culture.

Moreover, the SE owners in this study had used strict deadlines and had worked according to them. They believed setting milestones was one of the main reasons for them to achieve their

targets. They were keeping contact with each other and continuously monitoring their progress. This had paved the way to achieve their targets and be a strong competitor in the market.

> *'We just worked together really well. We were communicating through emails almost every day and we were communicating with each other about where the project was, and everybody contributed to it a lot. It went really well.' (Company M – Owner)*

On the other hand, Company A practices another strategy to set milestones. At the beginning of every week, they have a team meeting where the employees are assigned their weekly targets and milestones. These meetings run for 30 to 40 minutes, and the owner considers them as an investment.

> *'As I told you we have weekly meetings. Work is never ending, and chances are you will have more than one task on your plate at any given time. Through the meetings my staff is getting a kind of exposure to select their priorities. Some are new employees, and they don't have the maturity to do this'. (Company A – Owner)*

As per him, instead of letting his employees do multi-tasks within their groups, which would lead to productivity loss and possibly to eventualities where no task would be fully completed, he makes use of weekly meetings to help his team members to pick out the tasks to focus on first. This strategy is popular and practiced by both Companies L and O.

> *'Weekly feedbacks are encouraging a culture of feedback in my company. We are creating a space for open dialog on their performance and remember this is not only a top to bottom feedback but also peer feedback.' (Company L – Owner)*

> *'For me these meetings are very important. It clears my doubts and misunderstandings. I can know all the rules and procedures. We feel like we have been heard and the company need us. We love these meetings.' (Company O – Manager)*

As both the companies mentioned, these weekly meetings had helped them to build team dynamics and to understand their team members better.

On the other hand, Companies J, N, and I have monthly meetings to set targets and to get feedback on their monthly dealings. Stakeholders of all these companies talked positively on these monthly meetings. They mentioned that these meetings give everyone the chance to hear the same messages at the same time and they give everyone a chance to participate. In Company I, the owner had rotated the responsibility of running the meeting and setting the agenda among

his staff. This gives employees a fair consideration and an opportunity to organize things. All three companies use these meeting to share their problems and to get insights from their colleagues. Through these meetings the progress of achieving the set deadlines and work in progress are checked. As per these companies, setting milestones is another novel strategy to face micro crises.

As evinced above, novel administrative procedures like ensuring employee participation through daily, weekly, and monthly meetings, introducing weekly time sheets, getting the support of employees to organize things, and implementing a suggestion box have facilitated and contributed to the development of resilience. It was clear that innovative HR strategies, organisational practices, and administrative procedures implemented by these SE owner-managers had allowed these SEs to be resilient in the turbulent environment.

5.3.2.1. Entrepreneur Competencies
It was evident that all the SE owners acted as entrepreneurs, and they had various entrepreneur competencies which had influenced their growth massively. These competencies had supported the SE owners to face the crises effectively and developed their personal resilience and indirectly and directly it had influenced the organisational resilience. This section elaborates the findings in relation to the SE owner's entrepreneurial competencies.

The agentic role of the entrepreneur played by the SE owner had maximised the chance of opportunities to improve being identified and successfully leveraged.

Vivid owner attributes were found through the interviews conducted. These characteristics had influenced the entrepreneurial mind-set of these SE owners, and due to the positive characteristics, they had gained lot. When going through their stories it was visible that these positive characteristics were the main drives for their success. The never-give-up attitude is a common characteristic among all the founders in all the cases. Accepting challenges, learning new things and desire to upgrade own skills are the other common positive attributes they considered. Commitment, dedication, work life balance, stubbornness, being organised and persistent, family attachment, convincing skills, mistakes as learning points, creating new things, skills developed through being alone, practical and liberal parents, pride on doing what they do,

respect for education, eagerness to learn new things, delegation skills, grabbing opportunities, risk taking, keeping the word, studying the market, ability to filter things, switch-on and switch-off mode, love for business world are these attributes that the researcher came across in them while associating them for almost three years. These attributes had paved the way for the companies to develop their entrepreneurial competencies, which was one of the main components of SE owners' resilience in the turbulent times.

In this study, the entrepreneurial hat worn by the SE owners had acted as a strategy to overcome the colossal number of crises and challenges they had faced. The rest of the section presents the evidence and nature of the agentic role played by the SE owner as an entrepreneur. The characteristics of the entrepreneurs revealed in this study are presented under three main clusters, namely, achievement cluster, planning cluster and power cluster.

5.3.2.1.1. Entrepreneur as an Achiever
Entrepreneurs have a high achievement orientation. This section elaborates on the details of the SE owners of this study who had become successful entrepreneurs being an achiever. Opportunity seeking and initiative, commitment till the end, personal sacrifice, risk taking and demand for efficiency will be discussed here.

Opportunity seeking and initiating ideas is a common feature among all the SE owners in this study. All of them had found a niche market and finding a niche market itself had allowed these SE founders/owner-managers to be resilient.

After coming back to Sri Lanka, the owner of Company E faced a crisis in finding baby food for her son and was surprised to find that there was no single baby food item in the market. She was the first entrepreneur to view this as an opportunity and start up a baby food business while thousands of mothers and fathers would have come across this issue. She converted this baby food lacuna into a business called 'Company E'. She took it as an opportunity and initiated the business idea, and at present, she is a successful entrepreneur. Similarly, the owner of Company C, visited down South in 2005 to witness the disaster caused by the Tsunami. There he saw a land and an antique house which was greatly damaged by the Tsunami waves. When everybody else was moving away thinking it would be bad luck to purchase these lands, he bought it. Now he is

operating a profit earning hotel which is visited by foreigners from all over the world. Currently, Company C caters to the whole world, and they are a successful small boutique hotel located in Unawatuna area.

The owner of Company F is a passionate wind surfer who loved water sports. His desire and the enthusiasm for water sports paved the way to build the company. With his passion for water sports, he started training people to surf. Once he planned to bring tourists, he got to know that without a travel agency license one cannot bring tourists to Sri Lanka. He applied for a license and received only a provisional license. This is mainly because, even the Sri Lankan government was not aware of this special category of recreation activities and licensing on this field during that time. Nevertheless, he was very enthusiastic and committed to making his dream a reality. Being a risk taker, he was brave enough to move into adventure tourism and to exploit a huge potential, where he found a niche market. His love for water sports and expertise gave him the competitive edge over his competitors. He commented,

> *'You can change any challenge in your life if you have mastered your relevant field. Everyone is a competitor. Any person who sees my growth can become a competitor to me. But since I know my field very well, I have a competitive edge.' (Company F – Owner)*

He mentioned that many people try to access the industry after seeing the profit margins, but they leave the industry in a very short time, due to lack of knowledge. He is an innovative person. His Human Resources Manager, commented on him.

> *'He is a dreamer. He dreams a lot. But realistic ones. Not like us. He started a travel arm which consists of rock climbing, canoe kayak, mountain biking and hiking as a new addition to the business. That was an area where nobody had stepped in at that time. It was a huge success. The best quality I admire in him is the perseverance. He never gives up and never loses hope.' (Company F - HRM)*

Similarly, the owner of Company G is a smart lady who is not afraid of challenges. In the beginning, she was helping her father to develop his business. With her passion for business, she wanted to start her own. She was a risk taker, and her father was the opposite. Hence starting her own business was implemented earlier than she thought. She recalled her memories as follows.

'I learnt a lot from my father. But he is not a risk taker. I expanded my roots to whole world. I saw so much potential in the other markets. Wanted to go there and see. But my father was reluctant. That is the point where we start to walk in two paths.' (Company G – Owner)

She saw a huge potential and a huge boom in the Russian market with the collapse of the Soviet Union. She wanted to tap this market and was proactive to move to the Russian market before the competitions would step in. With the knowledge she gained working closely with her father, who gave her the necessary skills to excel in the industry, she conquers the Russian market, and the market demand impelled the company into liquid bulk transportation. This was an area that was new to Sri Lankan shipping lines, and they lacked in experience and exposure. Yet, she took the challenge and moved to bulk liquid transportation.

On the other hand, owners of Company J had a huge challenge to popularise their product. Ayurveda was positioned in the minds of the people as a rustic, old aged, and traditional medicinal system with unpleasant odours and dark sticky oils. The challenge was to change this perception, and the owners took the challenge to move into this uncomfortable zone and the opportunity being identified, Company J was created as a Luxury Ayurveda brand delivered in an international level to apply to the modern consumer. There are many brands coming from India. Competing with them was a daunting task. However, they took the challenge and succeeded.

'It was a challenge. Even though we know lot about cosmetics, still there was lot to learn when it comes to international level. Specially being a very small company, only solution for us to find a niche market. We found it after doing so many trials and prototypes.' (Company J – Owner 1)

'I would say, the success of our business is the innovative way that we thought about the cosmetics. We turned ancient Ayurveda techniques and secrets into something applicable in the body. And we thought about the modern consumer, who always demands something which fits for their lifestyle. We created and supplied it...' (Company J – Owner 2)

The innovativeness, finding a niche market and risk taking made Company J a successful SE.

The owner of Company N earns a lot by trading coconut coir. Coir Fibre enjoys the unique properties of being the longest natural fibre as well as the strongest in terms of twist resistance. He had realized the opportunity prevailed in this industry and did a lot of experiments with them.

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He started producing geotextiles, which is a blanket made from coir fibre, widely used to prevent soil erosion on roads, railway sides, riverbanks, leisure grounds and in industrial areas. Now it has become a product that is highly demanded by the countries, South Korea, Netherlands, Germany, USA, and Spain. He catered to this niche market and developed Company N to a well-established level.

During the 1980s there was a drought in Sri Lanka and several areas were affected. The owner of Company D identified it as an opportunity. He seized this unusual opportunity to start a new business, obtained financing, equipment, land, workspace, and assistance, and developed Company D, that acted as a mover.

Proactive behaviour involves acting in advance of a future situation, by taking control and making things happen rather than just adjusting to a situation or waiting for something to happen. Almost all the SE owners of this study was proactive. They were full of innovativeness and were *risk takers*. Selection of a niche market accelerated their growth securing a solid position in the industry. *Demand for efficiency and quality* means being obsessed with the need to improve quality and to do things better than they used to be done. The rest of the section presents the evidence to support this claim.

Company A realised that they could not compete with the low-priced ceramics. They immediately made the proactive move of shifting from mass manufacturing to customized manufacturing taking a risk. They were without customers and were even aware whether they would be able to find customers for customised ceramic manufacturing towards which they changed their business direction. Explaining the huge risk taken, the owner said,

> *'At that moment, my only concern was how to face the low-priced Chinese ceramics. It was clear that there was a niche market for customised ceramics. At that time, I did not have the competency, but it did not matter. I only concentrated on increasing my sales.'*
> *(Company A – Owner)*

With this decision he had got to change lot of procedures in his business, but now he was so glad that he took the decision at that time to change his business direction. Due to his proactive behaviour and risk-taking mind-set, he had achieved a huge market share in customised ceramics

manufacturing. He is a firm believer in innovations and had done several innovations with the help of his employees. The innovativeness, proactive behaviour, risk taking and finding a niche market guaranteed the company a strong position in the industry.

The owner of Company C is another entrepreneur who loves to take risks. He started his business by quitting his permanent and well-paid job, and he invested all the money he had on the business. The beginning of Company C itself had been a risk. When he was growing, the breakwater barrier turned his peaceful life into a nightmare. However, he was determined not to give up. During the interview, when the researcher raised the question whether he was going to quit, he said:

> *'Well, I am not quitting. In my vocabulary quitting is not a word. I will not be able to live a single day without doing this hotel. I am in love with this hotel. Whenever quitting comes to mind I always think this is what I like most. I will never give up which I like most' (Company C – Owner)*

The owner of Company E is another risk taker, fearless entrepreneur, who had utilised various strategies to develop her business. She had started a houseware collection and stationery collection simultaneously, which were coming from unrelated industries. Unfortunately, her decision for diversification had severely failed. Nevertheless, she had utilized it as a learning opportunity and had returned to business. She commented,

> *'I believe through diversification you can minimise the risk. But for us it didn't work well. I stopped the stationery line and minimised the activities in house ware items. I wanted to concentrate on food items. To tell you frankly, the controlling and competing with all the brands coming under stationery and house ware was difficult to me. And I think it was too soon that I started to diversify. So thought to leave the idea for some time.' (Company E – Owner)*

She had utilised it as a learning opportunity and was currently planning to expand her business. She is an innovative and a creative person, and she stated,

> *'well, I think … finding a niche market where nobody had stepped on itself is innovative …don't you think? And I love designing and drawing new things. That is one of the main reasons why I wanted to start a craft and stationery. I love to write and cook. Cooking in my own recipes. I love to do new things and old things in new way. So that is why I call myself innovative.' (Company E – Owner)*

She always tries to keep coming out with new products. She believes that one cannot just do the same thing all the time and then expect people to be interested in one's products. She always tries to keep the customers curious and excited. The owner's innovativeness, proactive thinking, risk taking and finding a niche market allowed her to excel in the baby food industry.

One of the common characteristics among the SE owners of this study was that they always keep their promises. They always try to **fulfil whatever they promised**, how hard or no matter how great the **personal sacrifice** is. Working late hours, joining with employees to finish an urgent order, taking up extraordinary orders without turning them down, helping the production line, getting family support to meet the deadlines are some of the tactics they utilise to fulfil the commitments. There are number of examples and situations which reflect this quality on them.

The owner of Company A had gone out of his comfort zone to cater to some customers. As explained in section 5.3.1., fulfilling the English Lord's requirement on cutlery set making an extraordinary effort and completing it with a memorable end vouch for this quality.

> *'I would say this order is a turning point of my business. With this there were several orders from protagonists and diplomats, which cannot be disclosed due to their high profile. This English Lord was one of my valuable customers. Because of him I got the opportunity to associate and to know kind of high profiles which I would never dream to meet.' (Company A – Owner)*

He had missed lot of the family time due to his work commitments. His children always complain on his absence in their school events. He personally sacrifices the time with the family for the business. Similarly, the owner of Company B missed her daughter and had to allocate her personal time to the business. Going with a similar line, the owner of Company G contributed to the dialogue by mentioning that she missed socialising with her friends and rarely met her friends.

Company M is another company with a committed and hardworking leader. The owner works after hours and whenever there is a need to fulfil urgent orders, he stays with his employees. He arranges tea and other refreshments for his employees. He strongly believes that even just being with them without doing any work will motivate and emotionally encourage them to fulfil their

duties. He is a person who is committed to a task till the end. Moreover, he sacrifices his personal time by being in the company. He explained one incidence which made his life unbalanced.

> *'I have to travel frequently to bring orders. Once I went out of the country and planned to come back on my birthday. Somehow work did not finish, and I had to wait one more day. My wife had organised a surprise party for me. And all the visitors had come, and birthday boy was missing. She was so upset, and I put a hell of an effort to make her mind after I came back.' (Company M – Owner)*

Hence the work commitments are tedious, this SE owner had sacrificed and committed a lot of his personal time to develop the business. Similarly, the owner of Company N joins with the employees in the production line when they get urgent orders. The manager commented on his action as follows.

> *'……….is a remarkable leader. You know he joins with the factory workers when there are tight deadlines. I think he is using this time as an employee quality time. He knows everyone by name. Employees appreciate it a lot. He never leaves the employees alone when there are critical orders. He always stays behind.' (Company N – Manager)*

On the other hand, the owner of Company E makes sure that all her family members support her whenever there are urgent orders. She turned the urgency into an opportunity to be with the family. Pasting labels on the food jars is done by all the family members. She keeps awake till late night to complete the orders and to reply for order placements and inquiries. She sacrifices her free time to cater to the customer demands, which could otherwise be utilized for the family. The owner of the Company F is also on similar grounds. He works almost all the seven days of the week and finds no difference in weekday and weekends. Since his wife is also engaged with the business, it has not become an issue for him. He added:

> *'Both the kids are in the university, and they are by their own. My wife helps me in the business. She likes to be in the business than to be at home. For me working weekends is not an issue at all. Staying at home bored me anyway. But sometimes relations invite us for various events, and we miss them. That is one of the things we sacrifice for my business'. (Company F – Owner)*

The owners of Company K are also engaged in work on all 7 days. They explained that most of the customers visit them on weekends to look for houses and lands.

The next section presents these entrepreneurs' experience and the role being planners.

5.3.2.1.2. Entrepreneur as a Planner

Many entrepreneurs get extremely bored detailing business plans and financial projections, often seeing them as obligations imposed by banks or investors. Yet, in this study it was revealed that the SE owners had immensely gained by being effective planners. Planning had helped them to attract funding and to develop their skills as entrepreneurs, which gave them a better shot at success. Under this section, two main characteristics of these SE owners, i.e., information seeker and systematic planner are presented.

As *information seekers*, the SE owners were proactive, and when it comes to collecting information, they do not depend on secondary information; they always try to collect information on customers, suppliers, and competitors by themselves. When Company A faced a huge threat from the cheap Chinese ceramic products, the owner was so curious to know their secret. People were saying different things. To know the reality, he visited several factories in China and studied them and realized that the Chinese government was giving a tremendous support to their companies. He collected information on the competitors and was convinced on his difficulty in facing the cheap Chinese ceramics. Hence, he shifted his focus from general ceramics to customised ceramics after his personal research on the market. As an information seeker he found a new niche market to survive in the market.

Similarly, the owner of Company G started to cater to a new market because of her information seeking thirst. She had collected information from her customers and potential customers and investigated on the background. Due to the information that she collected from the market, currently she is making profits through bulk transportation. Moreover, Company J found a niche market after consulting their customers. Through the information, they realised that there was a demand and a positive attitude towards Ayurvedic products and their nature that could affect their demand. Through the market information the owners were in a mission to come up with a customer friendly Ayurvedic product. After conducting their personal research, they were able to brand the product as a luxury Ayurvedic brand.

Similarly, the owners of Company K had immensely benefited and developed their business by being information seekers. Being in the real estate industry, they always struggle to attract new

customers. Since the investment is large and due to the economic conditions of the country, people face various issues. They understood and further studied these difficulties by interviewing and getting information from the public. After getting this information, they introduced loan schemes, easy payment facilities, credit card payments, instalment payments and interest free loans to their potential customers, which had doubled their sales. Hence it was clear that these companies had personally searched information from customers, suppliers and competitors and had achieved their information requirement.

Another behaviour witnessed among these SE owners were that, as information seekers, they always try to do personal search on how to provide a product or service in a better way to retain the customers and to attract new customers. As small companies, it is very crucial for the owners to give the correct first impression on their product and to keep on satisfying the customer needs and wants through continuous improvements.

Company A uses decal printing in their production. The owner explained how he made money out of decals due to a personal search done by him.

> *'Company was spending considerable amount of money to print the decals outside. Due to the high cost we thought to build our own plant. But before that I wanted to figure out whether there is a market for decals……...through getting feedback I realised that it is better to set up in-house. So, we developed a separate plant in-house on decal designing and printing, artwork development and concept development. Now we are making money from the outside orders for decal print.' (Company A – Owner)*

Through this plant, the company had converted one of their expenses to a revenue stream by selling decals outside. Company E also try their best to satisfy the customers and their never-ending demands, and they try to achieve this through exhibitions as the owner is a strong believer in participating in exhibitions. Most of the vivid flavours in Baby Food were a result of these comments provided by customers.

Getting customer feedback is also utilised by Companies F, I, L and N. Whenever Company F conducts a training programme, they always get customer feedback as a strategy to improve their service in the future. Through these valuable comments they had started a new transit hotel near

the airport, which was one of the suggestions that came from a foreigner who participated in one of the outbound trainings organised by Company F.

Company I and L had come up with various products and flavours purely through customer feedback. The owner of Company I highly values customer feedback, and he does personal research on his customers and tries to get their contribution in designing new products. Once when he visited the USA, he had talked to several customers, and they had come up with the idea of drinkable cinnamon. That was the birth of Cinnamon tea which is a popular product in the USA.

> *'Being a small company, my main source of information is my customers. Most of my innovations are my customer requirements.' (Company I – Owner)*

On the other hand, the owner of Company N had added a vast range of products after identifying their customer demand and requirements. After participating in information sessions, trade exhibitions and other business gatherings, the owner of Company N had realized that there is a considerable demand from Spain, Germany, and South Korea for nature friendly soil erosion prevention method. Through a background check on customer demands, he had figured out the market potential for geotextiles. This niche market paved the way to earn massive amounts of money through coir.

The owners of Companies B and C also conduct their personal research on their customers and their satisfaction. When a customer finish dining in the restaurant, Company B gives a customer feedback sheet. Through this, the owner gets an idea and feedback on her service to the customers. Serving smaller dishes along with the main dishes and home delivery were initiated after comments given by several customers.

As information seekers, another strategy utilised by these SE owner-managers was consulting the experts or being close with the experts in the relevant industry. Almost all the companies had used this method to obtain information and to be steady in the market. The following table displays some of the evidence to support this claim.

Method of expert support	Company	Quote to support the claim
Participating in information sessions organized by the experts	Company B	'I participated in a session organized by the Sanasa Development Bank, to give guidance and support to develop businesses. There I got to know on various methods to get capital and how to develop my business. That is where lot of my doubts were cleared on money handling.'
	Company N	'Once I participated in a session organized by the Export Development Board, where they explained on how to promote the exports and they had organized some potential buyers of coir. There I learnt the new trends in coir industry and that is how I moved to geotextiles.'
Joining hands with experts	Company I	'I met Akeel Brothers in a trade forum organized in Colombo. There I had a chat with Akeel and we became business partners. Even today he is the buyer of my cinnamon oil for the UAE. He is a well-established exporter of cinnamon. Actually because of his request I started doing the cinnamon oil. Otherwise I was only doing cut cinnamon, cinnamon powder and cinnamon tea.'
	Company L	'As I mentioned you earlier, I was doing a good tea business. But the turning point in my business is getting know Universal tea plantations, who is an expert in tea research. Together we developed the first ethical tea in the world. From that point onwards my company is flourishing.'
	Company E	'I am a partner in some of the other companies. So I get contract manufacturing done through those companies where the employees are already there. I rent out the location, their location, because specially for the baby food I needed a location that is ISO certified, because that is the key thing for me. So want to make sure, that the quality is in the top most level, so we rent out the location and then we manufacture it there, using their employees.'
	Company M	'I am so fortunate to get a project from Unique Solutions, a multinational company operating in Sri Lanka. I performed well and did their job in an outstanding level and it opened up the door for lot of foreign projects. Unique Solutions are still with me and they continuously give the expert support I need to run my business.'

Table 5.5: Method and evidence of Expert Support

Almost all the SE owners in this study had acted as **systematic planners**. As systematic planners they were able to develop plans to ensure the progress of the business. These plans had helped them to carefully monitor his/her actual performance against the desired performance and they had acted as tools in monitoring and evaluating the progress of the business.

Some SE owner-managers under this study failed to keep records on their activities and found this as a challenge to succeed. Nevertheless, all of them were aware of accounting and benefits of keeping records. At present, all of them were keeping proper records on their activities, and some of the companies even had a position called Finance Manager, Accountant, and Finance

Executive to look after their accounts. Some SE founders/owner-managers are not good account keepers, but still, they are aware of their cash in and out. The following table 5.6 displays some of the statements given by the owners relating to their record keeping and accounting knowledge. They are having a sound accounting knowledge and competency in record keeping.

No	Company	Quote
1	Company A	'When I went through the records, I realized that we were spending a considerable amount in buying decal from outside. That's why I thought to build it in house. I think I took the correct decision now when I look at our profits. The cost had become a profit making unit now.' – SE owner
2	Company B	'Newly opened up branch did not have much capital expenses. When I got all the utensils from my friend who closed his business, it save a quite amount of money. I took a large refrigerator with the money I saved' SE owner
3	Company C	'Past couple of years was not that good. Sir was not concentrating that much on the business….maybe he told you on his wife's demise. He was kind of depressed. The records clearly show there were lot of dissatisfied customers and less profits.' General Manager
4	Company D	'We are making lot of profits from the 'Ann Productions'. They give us lot of orders and they are the most valuable customer of our company.' – Manager
5	Company E	'You have to make a certain amount of a Rupee value for you to get that Right… but that's not going to stand for long. Because it doesn't matter, if you pay VAT or not, the… disadvantage of that is that we have to give that VAT component, to let's say to the supermarket.' SE Owner
6	Company F	'I am not an economist. I am a businessman who understands Rupees and Cents. Lot of people try to come into the industry after seeing the profit margins but they have to leave the industry in a very short time, due to lack of knowledge.' – SE Owner
7	Company G	'From top to bottom, all the parties are asking for money. Even the very low level employees have so much of power. They are like the owners of the place. They can change anything as they wish. This makes my accounts to go off the balance.' – SE Owner
8	Company H	'We keep record of our vehicles and depreciation is charged. We have to do this as our business depends on vehicles. So had to make sure they are in good condition' – Manager
9	Company I	'Those days we only concentrated on cinnamon tea. But with the cinnamon oil, our profits are sky rocketed. It is a cash cow for us.' – Finance Manager
10	Company J	'To every order, 3 sample packets of 3 new products are delivered to the customer with the package. This strategy promotes our new products expecting the customer will order the new products in the next order. This is a successful strategy where customers have actually ordered the new products which make our profits to increase' – International Relations Manager
11	Company K	'We always try to minimize the cost and maximize the profits as well as delight our customers. We do standardization to lands and houses. We want to achieve more with less to develop' – SE Owner
12	Company L	'I can remember, I had to rest for three months. At that moment I did not have anybody to leave my company with. My wife rarely knows about my business. During that period, we lost 20% of the Russian sales, due to lack of attention payed. Profits went down and sales reduced.' – SE Owner
13	Company M	'If the customer is asking for less functionalities, they will have to pay less amount and we can still make a profit. Normally the clients later adding new features and we can charge for them and through that the profit margin increases' SE Owner
14	Company O	'With the cancellation of GSP+ the sales decreased and as per that profit also get decreased. It affected our accounts badly.' – SE Owner

Table 5.6: Record Keeping and Accounting knowledge of SEs

It was evident that, even though some of the SE owners are not aware of proper record keeping, they have a very good memory, and they follow up on their cash flows and day to day dealings.

Most of these companies do comprehensive planning by breaking down large tasks into sub-tasks with clear timeframes. Moreover, they ensure to revise plans considering feedback on performance or if the circumstances change. During the interviews they accepted that this strategy had given them a competitive edge over the large companies.

Company A works with a couple of highly demanding and fussy customers. The owner highlighted the importance of being punctual with his customers and he takes several precautions to make sure that customer order is delivered on the requested date. They utilise high standards and carry out extensive quality procedures to make sure that the customer is fully satisfied with their products. He further mentioned that they go out of the way to satisfy the customers. Once, after giving all the details, one customer had changed the design. The company had already printed the decal which goes into the design, which had caused them a considerable cost. Nevertheless, they had accepted the new design and had revised their plans on completion. The staff had agreed to work after hours, and they had managed to pull it off and handover the consignment on the requested date. He uses division of labour in his factory, where the whole process is broken down into small tasks, and each task is performed by separate individuals. From the design to finishing the product, each task is given a clear deadline. The owner emphasised that this strategy had done miracles in fulfilling some large orders despite their doubts in completing them within the given deadline.

Being flexible to revise original plans and to move ahead with newly implemented conditions makes these SE founders/owner-managers resilient. They are more responsive to individual customer needs. The SE owners utilise this flexible strategy and outperform the large companies which could not do so.

The owner of Company F daily tallies the materials used with the chef and the manager to monitor the progress and adjust accordingly. Through these meetings, the owner and the stake holders decide on the resource requirement and frequently demanded dishes and try to prepare and come up with novel dishes which go with the customer taste. In the case of Company E, the owner keeps a journal to track the sales. She is flexible in her dealings. Keeping a sales journal made her realise her difficulty and lack of readiness to deal with competitors, and she quickly moved away from the new production lines. Being flexible made her concentrate on the products, which allowed her to establish a strong presence on baby food items. Similarly, the owner of Company G maintains a database on current sales and future sales and potential

customers, which helps her to plan future activities. The owner in Company H keeps a record of all the vehicles and on the maintenance of vehicles. He stated the following.

> *'I have to look after them. They are like my children. And they are the ones who make me rich. I have instructed my manager to do the service for all the vehicles on the given date.'*
> *– (Company H – Owner)*

Being systematic planners and having proper organisation and monitoring had given these SE founders/owner-managers a competitive edge over the other big companies. This had helped them to become resilient despite the post-conflict turbulence.

5.3.2.1.3. Entrepreneur as a Controller

Entrepreneurs try to apply various strategies and techniques to influence, persuade and convince others in favour of achieving his/her objectives. As pointed out in the earlier sections, Company A was able to convince the UK ceramic producers to move their production locations to Sri Lanka. Using the personal relationship skills, the owner was able to convert the company back into a profit-making entity from being a loss making one. Likewise, through keeping proper and clear records he convinced the banks whenever a requirement for a loan arose. This quality had allowed him to progress in his business by confidently facing the rivals. When it comes to Company B, the owner is also a persuasive character in obtaining loans. When she was inquired on getting extra capital, she commented.

> *'I always depend on the bank. Since I have a good reputation in paying back and meeting deadlines, it is always easier to get loans than asking from another person'. – (Company B – Owner)*

Maintaining a good reputation with the bank and being able to convince them had always guaranteed success. On the other hand, she always tries to have a positive impact on her employees. She approves extra leave and freedom for employees who are engaged in higher education. Through it, she makes a positive influence on the employees, and they never say no to her. The manager's statement proves this fact.

> *'Employees are fond of boss. She is helping them a lot. Specially for the waiters who are doing their higher studies. Whenever a need arises to do extra work, I have many people lined up.'* *(Company B – Manager)*

Another SE owner who was able to provoke and influence potential and existing customers is the owner of Company E. She is good in influencing people, and she does this well during the exhibitions.

On the other hand, working with employees had been used by the owners of Companies I, N, L and O as a strategy to persuade their employees to work more. They believe that, through this strategy, employees are motivated and since the owners are also engaged in the production process, they pay extra attention and extra commitment on their activities.

Similarly, for Company M, the influencing ability of their owner had brought a lot of sales. The owner is good at convincing potential buyers. He always visits potential customers, provides free consultation, and influences their purchase decisions. This is vital as with the post-conflict turbulence, companies and individuals always revisit their decisions and make amendments.

Another common feature among the SE owners in this study was their ability to develop and maintain strong networks. These networks are developed with various stakeholders in the industry namely, with suppliers, customers, producers, competitors, and intermediators. These relationships and networks were very strong and had brought a colossal positive impact on the respective businesses. That was the main reason, Relationships and Networking became one of the main themes in this thesis, which was clearly discussed under the 5.3.1 section.

Another common feature among the SE owners under this study is the strong self-confidence which had allowed them to succeed in their career as an entrepreneur. The rest of this section presents proof on their self-confidence.

The owner of Company F faced a huge crisis in his life. Tsunami hit him so badly, where all his properties and some employees were lost. The whole country was in a shock and was clueless on what to do next. His employees thought they would never be able to start the company again as there was no sign of the building as it was washed away with the Tsunami waves. He was determined and he was confident that he can build it again. He convinced people to join with him. As explained in section 5.2.2., after trying various things, he managed to start his business

again. His self-confidence provoked and influenced his followers. The current HR Manager recalled her memory on the incident during the informal conversation.

> *'I was going through a trauma when he called me. I lost my sister-in-law and all the properties. I didn't have much but whatever I had washed away. I initially said no, then he motivated and encouraged me. Finally, I said that I will come. He is a motivated soul. He was so confident that we can rebuild the company. I can say anywhere that I am here today totally due to him.' (Company F – HR Manager)*

As HR manager confirmed, the owner has a strong self-confidence, and it had supported him to exercise power over the others and influence them towards fulfilling his targets.

Similarly, Company A owner faced with the decision whether to buy Decal from outside or to produce in-house, he took the responsibility in creating demand for Decals and turned it to a profitable venture. In the same way, the owner of Company B was in a dilemma whether to continue her restaurant after the divorce. The responsibility of the wellbeing of her daughter made her determined to develop the business somehow. She took up the responsibility and was confident in her talents and skills. With the help of partnerships and other methods, she confidently built her business. The owner of Company H also believes that his secret for success as the self-confidence. He added,

> *'I was just a supporter and a worker who got few Rupees to just survive within the day. My confidence and determination made me who am I today. People laughed at me when I wanted to start my own business. But it did not stop me.' (Company H – Owner)*

Similar to him, the owner of Company G moved away from her father to start her own business and that was the birth of Company G. Her confidence made her target the Western market, and she moved from her comfort zone to an unfamiliar zone due to her high level of self-confidence. Moreover, the founder of Company M has a strong self-confidence level, and he frequently visits the potential customers and try to convert them into effective customers. One of the main reasons for his success is the self-confidence. The following statement he made confirmed this fact.

> *'In the beginning I was not sure how to do this. I waited till people came to me. But soon I realised that I have to go to them. I have good communication skills and was not confident that much. I study some more on the technical side and become an expert. Then my*

confidence level boosted. Now I can proudly say that I am confident of what I am doing, and it helped me lot to achieve so many things.' (Company M – Owner)

Whenever there are crises, the SE owners in this study make sure to implement various strategies to overcome them. The owners of Companies I, O, N and L work with employees to fulfil the urgent demands. They pay bonuses and extra money for the employees to motivate them, and on top of that they also join with the work force and work in the production line. Similarly, when the breakwater barrier affected Company F, as explained previously, the owner confidently faced the crisis. Further to that, the owners of Company J were faced with a massive challenge to change the attitude on Ayurvedic products and to popularise their product among the customers. They achieved this challenge by employing various strategies and they were confident of their product and worked towards it, which secured their position in both local and international markets.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented the empirical findings on the SE founder/owner-managers under this study related to the main three questions raised by this research.

- What crises are faced by SE founders/owner-managers in a turbulent emerging economy with a post-conflict context?
- How do these crises affect SE founders/owner-managers resilience in a post-conflict turbulent environment?
- How do SE founders/owner-managers perceive their personal resilience to affect their organisational resilience and growth in a post-conflict turbulent environment?

Mainly two types of crises, i.e., micro and macro were identified. Personal level crises and organisational level crises were explained under the micro crises, which are controllable by the SE owners. On the other hand, industrial crises were affecting in the Meso level and societal crises were explained under macro crises, which are uncontrollable in the capacity of a SE owner. These vivid crises had impacted directly and indirectly on the SE owner-managers and on the organisation and details were presented in the section 5.2. Even though these crises became impediments to the SE's growth, these SE owners had come across various strategies to become

resilient. Through having effective attributes, strategies, and methodologies they had been successful.

Relationships and networking acted as one of the main strategies to overcome the crises and challenges confronted by SE owner-managers, in order to become more resilient and to grow. Relationship with family and relatives, employee relationships, customer relationships and business networking were found to be the vital components under 'Relationships and Networking' strategy. Business networking with suppliers, service providers, investors, well-wishers, and business partners was another strategy utilized by these SEs to become resilient. Effective customer relationships were another strategy used by these SE owner-managers to be resilient. It was presented through the data that effective complaint handling, customer customization and customer empowerment help to build a loyal customer base. Employee relations were utilised as a strategy to face crises. Considering employees as brand ambassadors, attracting fresh graduates to get new ideas, to expedite innovations and to establish strong bonds with the employees were used to exploit the employees' relationships to the maximum level. These relationships and networks were used effectively to face the crises.

The agentic role played by the entrepreneur is the other main strategy utilised by the SE owner-managers to deal with the crises they encountered. The continuous innovation in terms of process and soft innovation had given the opportunity for these SE owners to be strong, vigilant, and competitive in their relevant industries to effectively face vivid crises and challenges. Innovative marketing strategies, new product development, innovative administrative procedures, novel organisational practices, and innovative HR practices implemented by the SE owner-managers had resulted in these organisations to be innovative, which was highlighted as a strategy for these companies to be resilient. On the other hand, the entrepreneur competencies of SE owners were another vital aspect, and it acted as a strategy to be resilient. Being an achiever, an effective planner and effective controller, these SE owners showcased their entrepreneur competencies through the agentic role. Opportunity seeking, initiating ideas, proactive behaviour, risk taking, demand for efficiency and quality, personal sacrifice and delivering whatever promised made them to be high achievers. Moreover, they were effective

information seekers and systematic planners, which made them to be effective entrepreneurs. Furthermore, all these SE owners possessed attributes such as the ability to persuade and influence others, strong self-confidence, and ability to complete difficult tasks, which made them effective controllers. All these competencies acted as a strong pillar to face the crises and to be resilient and was discussed in the section 5.3.2. of this chapter. The next chapter will discuss and contextualize the empirical findings highlighted in this chapter.

Chapter 06 – Discussion

6.1 Introduction

Three fundamental questions framed this research namely:

- What crises are faced by SE founders/owner-managers in a turbulent emerging economy with a post-conflict context?

- How do these crises affect SE founders/owner-managers resilience in a post-conflict turbulent environment?

- How do SE founders/owner-managers perceive their personal resilience to affect their organisational resilience and growth in a post-conflict turbulent environment?

The research questions were answered by themes that emerged from interview data and were reported in Chapter 5.

6.2 The crises faced by SE founders/owner-managers and their effect on SE founders/owner-managers resilience in a post-conflict turbulent environment.

As pointed out in chapter 5, the SE owner-mangers in this study had faced myriad crises and Micro, Meso and Macro Level Crises was emerged as theme 01. Regardless of the sector, crises continue to influence the functioning of organisations, locally nationally and internationally (Weligodapola & Darabi, 2018), where this was true for the SE owners under this study. Emergence of theme 01 support the claim that crises of relevance to entrepreneurial activity range from personal to social crises or to natural crises that broadly include 'disasters, business interruptions, catastrophes, emergency or contingency' (Herbane, 2010). Moreover, these crises had influenced the decision making of the SE owners and it had jeopardized the survival and growth of SE owner-managers and their businesses in the post-conflict turbulent environment. Hence the claim that crises are, conceptualized as processes that over time disrupt the normal functioning of individuals, firms, and/or communities (Williams & Vorley, 2017) was well said and applicable to the current SE owner-managers in this study.

Most of the SE owners in the study accepted that crises are part of their life, which affirmed the view that crises have become normal events in the world in which we live (Riddell, 2012). No business is immune to the potential devastation of crises, and SE owners with their limited

resources are especially vulnerable to the catastrophic consequences of crisis events not like in the large scale companies (Spillan & Hough, 2003). Interestingly, Sri Lanka seems to also differ in the cultural and social heritage that shapes the behavior of entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-managers, which resulted in vivid crises and most of them were different compared to developed and other developing countries. The following figure 6.1. illustrates the crises found in the past literature and the crises revealed in this research.

Post-conflict contextual barriers

- Institutional context (Poor formal institutions)
- Informal Institutions (Cultural context & Social context)

Personal/Individual level crises

- Change in wealth and income
- Psychological well-being
- Negative emotions
- Financial insecurity
- Psychological distress

Business level crises

- Change in demand
- Less profitability
- Less income
- Business closure
- Lack of financial resources

Societal level crises

- Social isolation
- Loss of relationships with family, relatives, customers, and employees

Personal crises

- Health issues
- Relatioship issues
- Work-life balance issues
- Personality issues

Organisational crises

- People impediments
- Customer impediments
- Cash-flow issues
- Manager impediments
- High cost of production
- Other impediments

Industrial crises

- Competition
- Geographical and international trade barriers
- Inefficient formal institutions

Societal crises

- Generation gap
- Relative pressures
- Attitude to women
- Government red tape

Figure 6.1. Crises found in the past literature and the crises revealed through data collection

The crises revealed in this study is different to the crises faced by the SE owner-managers operating in other countries as revealed through the past literature and being a post-conflict economy stimulated most of these crises. Countries that are in a post-conflict stage of development differ in many important aspects – in their economic state and potential, their political system, their bureaucratic capacities, and the state of security in the country itself (Brown et al., 2011). As pointed in findings chapter these differences resulted on vivid crises that are unique to Sri Lankan SE owner-managers.

The impact of a crisis on SE owner was particularly great because of the personal impact on owner-managers and their lack of preparedness and resources that make them more vulnerable (Runyan, 2006). The findings of the interviews revealed that there are mainly four types of Personal Crises: Health issues, Relationship issues, Work-life balance issues and Personality issues. One of the health issues revealed among the SE owners under this study is stress and this supports the claim that stress is a fundamental part of being an entrepreneur (Cardon & Patel, 2015). Moreover, the SE owner-managers are involved with intense work and frequently trying to manage their work-life balance, mainly due to the extra pressure stipulated by the post-conflict turbulence. This proves the point, 'Entrepreneurship is associated with risk taking, uncertainty, intense work effort, and considerable responsibility' (Stroe, Wincent, & Parida, 2018; Aldrich & Martinez, 2001; Covin & Slevin, 1991). Working longer hours is common and this suggests the fact that, self-employed individuals work longer hours compared to employees (Prottas & Thompson, 2006; Eden & Leviatan, 1975) and such a large commitment of time and energy is often at the expense of family and social activities (Kuratko, & Morris, 2018). Being a personal issue, the divorce has been a crisis for the owner of Company B. Sri Lanka being a collective society, dependence and relationships among relatives and fellow civilians are common. This cultural feature itself had make the divorce a crisis for Company B's owner. This supports the claim that divorcees often experience deteriorated physical and psychological conditions for years following marital termination including guilt, depression, distress, and intimacy issues (Waite, Luo, & Lewin, 2009; Afifi, 2006). This had been accelerated in the Sri Lankan post-conflict context with unique cultural dimensions. Loss of an immediate

family member was a big shock to anyone in this world. Leary & Springer (2001) found that the loss of an intimate relationship, such as a marital relationship, could escalate into more serious issues, including substance abuse, suicidal thoughts, or suicide attempts and this was true with Company C's owner. Bonanno (2004) states that some people seem to recover quickly but then begin to experience unexpected health problems or difficulties in concentrating or enjoying life the way they used to where the owner of Company C had missed loan payments dates. Work-family researchers have been interested in exploring individuals' conceptions of work-life integration and in investigating how they cope with or manage the transition between multiple roles demands (Vasumathi, 2018; Gregory & Milner, 2009; Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2009) where this was visible among the SE owners in this study. The quotes presented in chapter 05 reconfirm that the work life balance was affected due to vivid crises. The findings clearly suggest that work-family conflict appears to increase stress and to decrease satisfaction with work, family, and life overall (e.g., Duxbury, & Sean, 2008; Ohlott, Chrobot-Mason, & Dalton, 2004; Martins, Eddleston, & Veiga, 2002; Leary & Springer, 2001). This also aligns with the view of Runyan (2006) that the impact of a crisis on SEs may be particularly great because of the personal impact on owner-managers. Language barrier was another prominent personality issue among the SE owners under this study. According to Harzing & Feely's (2008) framework, the language barrier comprises both cognitive and emotional dimensions. Secondly, cross-language communication can fail for emotional reasons. This is because non-native speakers often feel uneasy, uncomfortable, and tongue-tied in English (Tenzer, Pudelko, & Harzing, 2014; Hinds, Neeley, & Cramton, 2014; Harzing & Feely, 2008). All these were felt by the owners of Companies H, I and N. All of them had faced many issues due to their lack of English language handling capability and this had challenged their resilience. According to Ali & Abou (2020), an abundance of literature exists attempting to define the attributes that distinguish entrepreneurs from others. Various personality attributes are associated with successful entrepreneurs and small-business owners (Umar, Sasongko, Aguzman, & Sugiharto, 2018; Ahmad, Ramayah, Wilson, & Kummerow, 2010; Man & Lau, 2005). Some of the business failures strongly correlate with the performance of entrepreneurial leadership and their personality (Chuen, Mohammad, & Yusoff, 2018). As pointed out through the data, these SE

owner-managers were also not an exemption. It was evident that these PCs affected their businesses, and they were acting as a barrier in their progression towards growth. With the post-conflict turbulence these PCs were exaggerated and had influenced the resilience of the SE owner-managers and their businesses.

People impediments, customer impediments, cash-flow issues, manager impediments, high cost of production and other impediments were the most common crises highlighted by the SE owner-managers as organisational crises. Moreover, competition, geographical and international trade barriers and inefficient formal institutions were revealed as the main industrial crises. Intense competition and increased choices available to customers create new pressures on these SE owner-managers to manage their customers in long-term relationships (Demoulin & Zidda, 2009; Shaw, Subramaniam, Tan, & Welge, 2001), where this has resulted in too dependency on the available customers by making these SE owners to adhere to fulfil vivid demands of the prevailing customers.

Sri Lanka being a post-conflict economy, the formal and informal institutions were playing a vital role in shaping and influencing the SE owner-managers decisions and their resilience. As exposed through the past literature, formal institutions have not been effective in fostering productive entrepreneurship (Williams, & Vorley, 2017). On the other hand, where formal institutions are not reformed, SE founders/owner-managers had turned to substitutive and informal practices, such as leveraging connections or engaging in corrupt activity, to overcome barriers and circumvent the rules of the game (Aidis, & Adachi 2007), which was visible among the SE owner-managers in this study. The finding of Adela and the others (Adela, Bernard, & Perseta, 2014) related to corruption affirms the SE owners' statements in this study. They stated that corruption acts like a tax or rate that different people or entities pay to bureaucrats; it also makes government services more efficient and provides a leeway for entrepreneurs to avoid established rules. Hence corruption bends rules. From this perspective, corruption acts as a lubricant that smoothens operations and so increases the efficiency of an economy. On the other hand, corruption can destroy an industry. Due to lack of clear policies and lack of monitoring in the industry, SE owners are suffering. Sri Lankan post-conflict economy is

characterized by weak formal institutions and poor enforcement of laws, regulations, and property rights as acknowledged by past researchers (Hoxha, 2009; Estrin, & Prevezer, 2011; Welter, & Smallbone, 2011). Trust in formal institutions was absent and interpersonal relationships, therefore, dominating, serving as substitutes for institutional trust (Welter, & Smallbone, 2011). Similarly, to transitional economies as discovered by Peng and Luo (2000) the relationships with government officials had helped SE owner-managers/entrepreneurs in Sri Lanka to achieve their desired results and have led to improved firm performance (Guo, Xu, & Jacobs, 2014). These relationships had led to the growth of corruption, and, with low levels of government oversight and accountability, they had become the social norm among SE owner-managers in this study. This conforms the findings of Damayanthi (2011), that various malpractices prevail within the Sri Lankan government institutes such as asking for bribe, favoritism/nepotism of the officials, scolding citizens, not providing customer orient service, asking to come again repeatedly, making delays, and hiding documents. The competition created for getting orders and bribing different parties had provoked more negative developments in the industry. In this study SE owner-managers had lost their motivation to develop their businesses further. Hence, this contradicts with the findings of Williams, Martinez–Perez, & Kedir (2017) where, they found that bribery enhances firm performance. Nonetheless this confirms the Fisman and Svensson's (2007) argument that the entrepreneurs having to pay huge amounts on bribes, which means lower potential profit for the company, may tend to distort, and reduce their production. It is clearly exposed that bribing has become a crisis in respective industries, and it has discouraged the entrepreneurs/SE owner-managers in growing. Bongomin et al., (2018) in their research, clearly stated that business skills, capital adequacy, access to finance, access to market, entrepreneurial education, and government support have significant and positive impacts on SMEs' survival. Spurge & Roberts (2005) also argued that government support that consists of tax reduction and exemption, fiscal fund aid, and access to loans strongly impacts on the establishment, expansion, and performance of SMEs in developing countries. Contrary was true identified in this research. All of SE owners were not happy and dissatisfied with the government intervention and support rendered to

develop their businesses. They consider government as a barrier rather a support mechanism in their business development.

Generation gap, a situation in which older and younger people do not understand each other because of their different experiences, opinions, habits, and behavior (Cambridge dictionaries online, 2019) had impacted the SE owner-managers in a negative way. This supports the viewpoint of Williams & Page (2011). As they pointed out, the marketers need to understand the factors in different characteristics and behaviors of these generations and it should be easier to build relationships, gain trust, and close business and if these are not addressed adequately, chaos can pop up. Health, energy, and wellness are the major goals of the Baby Boomers (Robison, Shugrue, Fortinsky, & Gruman, 2014; Beasty, 2006) and they were suspicious on the food which comes in a bottle. This impacts the owner of company E and she is struggling to market her product to daughters and most of the cases their decisions are influenced by their mothers due to the Sri Lankan collective culture. As suggested by the institutional theory, SE owner-managers must either conform or avoid significant deviations from the local community's acceptable way of doing things, including norms and social conventions. These norms, ethics, customs, and ideologies from the unofficial rules of the society, learned through the socialization process is the inherited view of the world from the older generations similar to the viewpoint on bottled food among Sri Lankan mothers who represent Baby Boomers. Having a very low score on long-term & short-term orientation cultural dimension (Hofstede Insights, 2022) proves this factor where the Sri Lankan mothers, prefer to maintain time-honoured traditions and norms while viewing societal change with suspicion. Likewise, Bennis & Thomas (2002) found that Veteran leaders exhibited a more directive style where Generation X leaders were more participative in their leadership style. This difference is visible in the company A between the father (the founder) and the son (the owner) and as mentioned this generation conflict had negatively impacted in company expansion. Relative pressure is another category which emerged as explained in chapter 05 and the Sri Lankan culture being a collective one, grandparents, relatives and neighbours play a considerable role in influencing the decisions of these SE owner-managers.

As presents in the data findings chapter, gender stereotypes had been influencing the women SE owners in this study. Being a male dominated, father-centered culture, Sri Lankans attitudes towards female is a mixed one. This is similar to the viewpoint of that due to these attitudes to women in traditional patriarchal societies, women may engender lower trust, have restricted access to credit associations, and face cultural and social hurdles in accessing resources (Lindvert, Patel, & Wincent, 2017). In this study, women SE owners had experiences vivid cultural and social hurdles when dealing with their business. This proves Lemmon's (2012), finding on that gender bias against female is visible in post-conflict zones.

Government Red tape or burdensome regulations have long been identified as a major cause for corruption, already featuring as central in the earliest corruption literature (Mauro, 1995). Sri Lankan SE owner-managers are no exception in this as they are victims of government red tape. Government red tape had become a crisis for these SE owners and as past literature pointed out ventures fail when governments do not create appropriate financial, legal, regulatory, political, and economic environment in a way that supports the business environment (Carter & Wilton, 2006). Changes in public policies are considered as a critical source of uncertainty that businesses face (Jacobson, Lenway, & Ring, 1993) and the SE owners under this study is suffering from this. This clearly aligns with the research done on micro enterprises in Malaysia. They found that the government should continuously aid and a favorable environment conducive to small entrepreneurship, especially for those in the rural areas to grow (Tuyon, Bujang, & Jidwin, 2012). In Sri Lanka, this is not happening, and it has become a crisis. It was exposed that government and its policies act as barriers for most of the industries under this study. These SE owner-managers are struggling due to government interventions, and it is challenging the whole community and has become a crisis.

All the crises revealed in this study is impacting and threatening the SE owner-managers resilience and their organisational resilience. As pointed out in the findings chapter, SE owner-managers in this study had suffered in various ways due to these crises. As a threat, it has substantially change existing structures necessitating spending on new resources (Eggers, 2020), and had caused danger and caused distress to entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-

managers. As Belitski and others pointed out crises had led to a multitude of issues including reduced business activity, temporary business closures, staffing issues and supply chain interruptions (Belitski et al., 2021). Moreover, as explained in the finding chapter these crises had challenged the individual psychological well-being of these SE owner-managers, and this confirms the findings of Salmony and (Salmony, Kanbach, & Stubner, 2021) Bliese (Bliese, Edwards, & Sonnentag, 2017). The post-conflict turbulent environment had enhanced the impact of these crises on Sri Lankan SE owner-managers materially and emotionally.

6.3 The way SE founders/owner-managers perceive their personal resilience to affect their organisational resilience and growth in a post-conflict turbulent environment.

The SE owner-managers in this study survived, adapted to the status quo, and had grown in the face of turbulence by facing vivid crises and had become resilient as pointed out by Fiksel (Fiksel, 2007). The effectuation and bricolage theories can be used to explain the process of developing resilience by the SE owner-managers within the turbulent environment of this study.

There were two main strategies uitlised by the SE owner-managers in this study to develop their personal and organisational resilience despite the vivid crises faced operating in the Sri Lankan post-conflict turbulent economy. 'Relationships and Networking' was developed as one of the major themes by merging four main categories: relationship with family and relatives, employee relationships, customer relationships and business relationships. They had utilized and used many contacts and much support from various stakeholders to face the crises and to ensure growth. The collective culture of Sri Lanka had accelerated this process and had helped to establish these socially constructed relationships to develop the resilience and growth. As theory of effectuation (Sarasvathy, 2001) assumes, the entrepreneurial opportunities of these SE owner-managers are subjective, socially constructed, and created by entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-managers through a process of social interaction. These SE owners had tapped these opportunities and had grabbed them and used them in favour of them. The core behind the bricolage theory is that making something out of nothing, which means that the under-utilized resources can be converted into productive resources to become resilient, where it was

visible among these SE owner-managers. As per Baker & Nelson (2005), there are 3 options available for the entrepreneurs when they are confronted with a crisis as (1) to seek resources from domains external to the firm; (2) to avoid new challenges by remaining inert, downsizing, or disbanding; or (3) to enact bricolage by making do by applying combinations of the resources at hand to new problems and opportunities, where SE owner-managers in this study had used all these 3 options to develop resilience. They had enacted bricolage in mainly five domains. They have used physical inputs which were forgotten, discarded, worn, or presumed single-application materials with new use-value. Secondly, they have used labor inputs by involving customers, suppliers, and hangers-on in providing work on projects. Thirdly they have used skills inputs by permitting and encouraging the use of amateur and self-taught skills that would otherwise go unapplied. Next these SE owners have effectively handled customers/markets by providing products or services that would otherwise be unavailable and finally they have utilized institutional and regulatory environment effectively by refusing to enact limitations with regard to many "standards" and regulations, and by actively trying things in a variety of areas in which entrepreneurs either do not know the rules or do not see them as constraining.

Commencing a family business creates extensive financial, time, and energy demands on business owners and their spouses (Gudmunson, Danes, Werbel, & Loy, 2009), which was true with most of the SE owners in this study. Family domain had supplied various types of resources that assist entrepreneurial success (Powell & Eddleston, 2013) for these SE owners such as love, protection, understanding, tolerance, positive influence, support, by providing constructive feedback, being a role model, and thoughtfulness. Knowing that one's family is supportive of one's entrepreneurial endeavor offers the founder a sense of comfort and security that allows him/her to focus his/her efforts on the business (Powell & Eddleston, 2017) which was proven in this study. This reasoning is in line with work-family enrichment theory, which proposes that individuals' performance at work is enhanced when they feel supported by their families (Powell & Greenhaus, 2006). Family relationships had made Several SE owners' life easy as entrepreneurs and had provided myriad benefits and exposure to the industry. This demonstrates that the findings of the family members are likely to gain satisfaction from the ability to support the family firm because the family's reputation is often enhanced by the

family's identification with the business (Miller, Le Breton-Miller, & Scholnick, 2008; Cabrera-Suárez, De Saá-Pérez, & García-Almeida, 2001). Their family constituted the core of the business with family members bound together by strong emotional bonds and a sense of loyalty and responsibility for the firm (Kellermanns & Eddleston, 2004) and it was visible and proved in this study. According to the family embeddedness perspective of entrepreneurship (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003), the mobilization of family forces is critical to the survival and growth of new ventures. Thus, Rogoff & Heck (2003) called for research on family as "the oxygen that feeds the fire of entrepreneurship." In the case of SE owner-managers in Sri Lankan post-conflict economy, the family relationships and bonds were the oxygen that fed their business.

Through business networking, the SE owner-managers in this study had gained massively, and it proves the finding that 'collaboration appears to be most likely to build network relationships that yield the highest business success' (Sorenson & Stuart, 2008). The intent of collaboration is to establish positive relationships and find ways to achieve goals of involved parties. When members of a network see the opportunity for potential mutual gain, they will be more likely to share information, exchange resources, and engage in mutually beneficial activities and the SE owners in this study had done the exact thing. All these SE owner-managers had depended on their business partners and networks to find extra money if needed. This aligns with the findings that collectivism with group loyalty as a dominant factor for successful business deals as well as to keep longtime business relationships with business partners within Sri Lankan businesspeople (Rathnayaka, 2014). The SE owners' most challenging task of finding extra capital had been achieved through proper business networking by utilizing social interactions. The results of the study do not suggest that financial support provided by formal sources helps to improve the performance of SEs in Sri Lanka. This is similar to the findings of Premaratne (2001), research conducted in Sri Lanka, hence this may be unique to Sri Lanka. It was evident that SE founder/owner-managers' relationships with business partners had allowed them to become resilient and grow within their industry in numerous ways, i.e., developing business, grabbing opportunities, understanding the market, and finding extra capital.

Another category who had supported these SE owners in their journey of resilience and growth is the employees. Specially the front-line employees, have been a unique and valuable resource, as they interact with customers in formal and informal situations, receive customers' comments, praise and complaints and hear information on competitors' market activities (Le Bon & Merunka, 2006). Employees had bought a lot of repetitive sales, and customers were impressed on the employees, and they had commended on their fascinating service. This affirms the viewpoint of Bitner, Booms, & Tetreault (1990) and Grönroos (2010) that front line workers play a central role in building and developing customer relationships and have a significant influence on perceived service quality, customer satisfaction and loyalty. It was evident that the customer loyalty had enhanced through effective customer relationships, and ultimately it had developed a competitive edge over the competitors in a similar way to Bhat & Darzi (2016). Collective Sri Lankan culture had allowed these SE owners to maintain closer relationships with the customers and these relationships had convert the customers to loyal and repetitive customers. Not like well-established companies, the SE owner-managers had to count for each and every Rupee as it could affect them in the long run, and which was the case with these SE owners. Effective customer complaint handling provided SE owners additional chances to identify internal deficiencies and helped in developing appropriate recovery strategies as Filip (2013) pointed out. Crises were rectified using effective customer relationships. Customer customization, which is similar to customer orientation, which refers to "the set of beliefs that puts the customer interests first, in order to develop a long-term profitable organisation" (Deshpande, Farley, & Webster, 1993) was effectively used by these SE owner-managers. Nowadays every customer is unique with his/her demands. Identifying that uniqueness and catering to them is the recipe to win over today's customers. Further studies provide empirical evidence for the argument that customer orientation enhances customer loyalty and performance of a firm (Pousa & Mathieu, 2014; Sirdeshmukh, Singh, & Sabol, 2002), hence these SE owner-managers are no exceptions to that. On the other hand, these SE owners had increased customer value by providing additional access, content, education, and commerce to wherever the customer is located (Pires, Stanton, & Rita, 2006) and it was evident

in this research that customer empowerment and customer knowhow had positively impacted the customer loyalty and long-term relationships.

Drucker (1985) has defined entrepreneurship as "an act of innovation that involves endowing existing resources with new wealth-producing capacity", to which these SE owner-managers had done justice. These owners had developed innovative ways to navigate their companies within intense competition. Innovations are high risk and resource consuming activity for an organisation (Li & Atuahene-Gima, 2001) and this is highly applicable for the SE owner-managers as they suffer from four main resource constraints: financial resources, marketing and management, technical capabilities, and human resources availabilities (Freel, 2000). Apart from these constraints, poor management competency and lack of market information can also negatively impact SMEs on their new product development capabilities (Zheng Zhou, 2006; Ragatz, Handfield, & Scannell, 1997). All these constraints were there for the SE owner-managers in this study. Marketing is also a vital aspect for these SE owners. Nevertheless, it was revealed that due to their mere size, these SE owners do not have a separate marketing function. As Kowalkowski, Kindström, & Gebauer (2013) indicated that SMEs must build a unique way of persuasion toward their market to improve their value and existence in the market perspectives and these SE owner-managers had used various innovative channels of marketing to expand their customer base. Trade exhibitions was used by these SE owners to establish successful partnerships with international parties, and this confirms the view of Kontinen & Ojala (2011a) and Kontinen & Ojala, (2011b) who examined eight Finnish SME family cases and found that newly established formal ties formed in trade exhibitions had a more significant role in identifying international opportunities than existing informal or family ties.

SE owner-managers in this study had used social media to promote their businesses being a less costly method. This aligns with the past literature which has found that using social media is the most cost-effective way for marketing and is thus suitable for small businesses (Hassan, Nadzim, & Shiratuddin, 2015; Birkner, 2011; Kirtiş & Karahan, 2011; Hoek & Gendall, 2003). Further, these SE owner-managers had used their relationships to popularize their social media

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sites among the customers and other stakeholders. The collective culture within the country had helped them to popularize their marking campaigns through vivid relationships.

As presented in chapter 05, the SE owner-managers had to face some barriers when it comes to internationalization, which include entrepreneurial, managerial, and marketing knowledge and skills in accessing financial resources, technological equipment, and know-how (Crick, 2007), in comparison to other large enterprises. As a result, lack of knowledge has a considerable weight in internationalization obstacles, where SE owner-managers had overcome this challenge by partnering with multinational companies. Discounts also had increased the sales of these SE owner-managers by confirming the view that out of the wide range of sales promotion strategies available, immediate price reductions using discounts have a more important effect on consumer behaviour (Alvarez & Casielles, 2005). It was evident that these SE owners did not spend much on marketing, which confirms Carter & Jones-Evans's (2006) statement that SMEs engage in little marketing activity due to inadequate resources to devote for marketing. Contradictory to this point in view, these SE owners had utilized their relationships as a resource to promote their products and services and had overcome the scarcity problem.

SMEs tend to lose in the recruitment battle as large firms usually can provide better compensation packages to attract high competent talents (Dobson & Safarian, 2008). To avoid this, SE owner-managers in this study had utilized vivid innovative HR strategies and all of them had supported their businesses to become resilient and win the recruitment battle. Almost all the SE owners viewed their employees as assets with high potential and had tried to find ways to improve employee skills, experience, and knowledge continuously (Rosenbusch, Brinckmann, & Bausch, 2011). Individual referencing method was used by these SE owner-managers and this method aligns with the Social Identity Theory, which argues that people derive parts of their identity from the categories to which they belong (Stets & Burke, 2000; Tajfel, Turner, Austin, & Worchel, 1979). Although people belong to many categories and have many social identities (e.g., mother, lecturer, singer), cognitions and behaviours should only be affected by a particular identity when that identity is temporarily salient (Reed, 2004). That is, assuming that referrals are a behaviour that confirms one's identity as a member of a firm, an employee may

be more likely to refer his or her friends when that identity is salient. On top of it, due to the collective culture, Sri Lankans are maintaining close and strong relationships with their community and through that screening out suitable candidates for their relevant working places had become an easy task. Hence employees of these SEs had identified themselves strongly with the company and their social identity as an employee had become salient. Even though there was evidence to prove that the consumer referrals may be increased through material rewards (e.g. Ryu & Feick, 2007; Wirtz & Chew, 2002) researcher did not come across any studies to prove the same for employee referrals. In this study, it was revealed that monetary benefits act as a motivator to exercise employee referral method. Job rotation was another strategy and according to the employee motivation hypothesis, job rotation may make the working life more interesting for employees by reducing boredom, monotony, and fatigue associated with higher stress levels and lower performance (Hsieh & Chao, 2004), where this was proved in this study by identifying that SE owner-managers utilise job rotation to motivate their employees, and it had given them positive results. As Sri Lankans are enjoying the social interactions this strategy had become successful and used by the SE owner-managers to win the recruitment battle.

It was revealed through the data collection process that these SE owners make time for tasks that do not necessarily pertain to work. This thinking is similar to that of Kim, Watkins, & Lu (2017), who demonstrated that voluntary, non-work social activities weakened the effects of daily work demands on subsequent negative affect at work. All the SE owners believe that building relationships in a relaxed setting can make workers feel their work more comfortable and natural. They always find time to celebrate their achievements and have fun through socialising, extracurricular activities and by celebrating important events in their life. These social interactions had enhanced the interpersonal relations at work, and this goes with the concept of relational energy (Owens, Baker, Sumpter, & Cameron, 2016), which explains that interpersonal interactions at work give employees a heightened level of psychological resourcefulness that can enhance their capacity to do work. By utilizing this psychological resourcefulness, employees of these SEs had exceeded the expectations. SE owner-managers are using lunch breaks as presented in findings chapter and Trougakos, Hideg, Cheng, & Beal

(2014) also found that daily lunch break socialisation reduced end-of-work fatigue. Outbound training is also used, and past research had proved the effectiveness of outbound training. Satpathy & Patnaik (2014) pointed out that outdoor programmes offer relevant learning experience and help employees to enhance interpersonal skills, develop technical knowhow and team building skills.

Providing opportunities for extramural activities for the employees was one of the strategies utilised by these SE owner-managers to motivate and enhance the productivity, which had increased employee morale and had promote productivity (Rodriguez & Walters, 2017). Owners believe that extramural activities break the monotonous work and routine of the employees, and their productivity increases. This complied with the finding that employees who draw more relational energy from social interactions tend to be highly engaged in their job and become more productive (Owens et al., 2016). These SE owner-managers have a laissez-faire leadership style where they allow employees to participate in decision making. This thinking is aligning with the viewpoint that employees who participate in decision making feel secure in their jobs and will be indirectly motivated to provide the best possible performance in their job, which reflects their pride and loyalty towards the organisation (Irawanto, 2015). Frequent meetings were conducted with the employees, and it had boosted the motivation of the employees and made them feel part of the company. This aligns with the finding of Abdulai & Shafiwu (2014), where they found that regular meetings should also be held to solicit the views of all employees to make them feel part of the organisation. It was clear that innovative HR strategies, organisational practices, and administrative procedures implemented by these SE owner-managers had allowed these SEs to be resilient in the turbulent environment.

As shown in Lin (2007), the characteristics of the manager become the primary determinant which impacts on the SMEs success in achieving the expected performance, and it was evident through this research that good leadership is the key factor in engaging staff to perform at their best in a less resourceful and turbulent environment. In these SEs, the agentic role of the entrepreneur played by the SE owner as an innovator, achiever, planner, and controller had acted as a strategy to develop personal resilience and paved the way to develop organisational

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resilience. As shown in Lin (2007), the characteristics of the manager become the primary determinant which impacts on the SMEs success in achieving the expected performance, and it was evident through this research that good leadership is the key factor in engaging staff to perform at their best in a less resourceful and turbulent environment. Research by McClelland, Spencer, & Santiago (1987), funded by USAID, has identified 14 personal entrepreneurial competencies (PECs) which appear to characterize the behaviour of successful entrepreneurs. The characteristics of the entrepreneurs revealed in this study are very similar to the competencies found in the USAID project.

It was clear that these entrepreneurs are achievers and are willing to work long and hard to reach their personal goals. They like to plan and are committed to making things happen. Continuous growth demands for high relational sacrifices, as in time spent with family, and high personal sacrifices, as in increased effort and less leisure time (Kozan, Oksoy, & Ozsoy, 2012) which was visible with these SE owner-managers' families. In terms of sacrifice, threats to conditions would cover possible adverse effects on the owner's marriage or time-related conflicts with the immediate or extended family (Kozan et al., 2012). As presented in the findings chapter it was visible that owner's recreation time, time with friends or in social networking, and opportunity costs such as personal or occupational growth through other undertakings were lost due to their business (Jennings & McDougald, 2007). Nevertheless, these SE owner-managers are good at dealing with crises and they try to be good at everything. By seeking opportunities, initiating ideas, taking risks, being proactive, demanding for efficiency and quality, fulfilling commitments, and through personal sacrifice, these SE owners have become achievers.

These SE owner-managers had developed their resilience by being systematic planners and information seekers. Larsson, Hedelin, & Gärling (2003) found that lack of contacts with outside expert advisers is an obstacle to the expansion of SEs in the region, and consequently to regional economic growth. These SE owner-managers had overcome this obstacle by getting expert advice and developed their businesses locally and globally. It was realised that by personally seeking information from customers, suppliers, and competitors, by doing personal

research on how to provide their products and services and by consulting experts, these SE owners acted as effective information seekers to plan their businesses in an effective way.

Ability to persuade and influence others, having a strong belief in oneself, and the ability to complete a difficult task are the main entrepreneur competencies developed by these SE owners as controllers. Entrepreneurs differ from non-entrepreneurs in self-confidence levels, and such belief in their abilities is closely linked with entrepreneurial intentions (Minniti, 2004). This self-confidence had acted as an influential factor for these SE owners to complete difficult and challenging tasks. They had always taken the full responsibility of their activities to make things happen. They express confidence on their ability to fulfil a task no matter how difficult it was. All these SE owners have a strong self-confidence level, which helped them to confidently face all the crises faced on their journey. Through enormous confidence, they persuade others by being role models and controllers to effectively achieve their business targets.

6.4 Conclusion

The conclusions drawn from the findings outlined in chapter 05 are discussed in this chapter with specific reference to how the three objectives listed above have been achieved. The chapter discusses what the research findings reveal on how SE owner-managers become resilient and grow in a turbulent post-conflict context, their unique characteristics, the challenges, and crises they faced and how they had overcome them.

The findings from the data indicate that several micro level, meso level and macro level crises, which had previously been ignored by researchers, do affect the resilience and growth of SE owner-managers during times of turbulence. The findings illustrate that the participants' resilience developed through various strategies. This scenario was given in figure 6.2. below, which follows a process to be resilient in a turbulent economy. This figure is an extension of the conceptual framework used in literature review chapter.

It was revealed that the post-conflict context of Sri Lanka had presented these SE owner-managers with vivid crises which had impacted them in multi-level namely micro, meso and macro. These crises were discussed highlighting the unique points related to the Sri Lankan post-conflict scenario and their impact on the SE owner-managers and on their businesses. This

was done by creating a dialog between the existing literature and the findings of this study. Relationships and networking are one of the strategies used by SE owner-managers to develop the resilience. The relationship-based resilience was prominent among these SE owners and by operating in a collective culture these SE owner-managers were able to develop relationships with family, relatives, customers, employees and business partners and these relationships had made them resilient.

Personal/Individual level crises

- Health issues
- Relationship issues
- Work-life balance issues
- Personality issues

Organisational level crises

- People impediments
- Customer impediments
- Cash-flow issues
- Manager impediments
- High cost of production
- Other impediments

Industrial level crises

- Competition
- Geographical and international trade barriers
- Inefficient formal institutions

Societal level crises

- Generation gap
- Relative pressures
- Attitude to women
- Government red tape

The Agentic Role of the Entrepreneur/SE owner-managers

- Achiever
- Planner
- Controller
- Innovator

Relationships and Networking

- Relationships with family and relatives
- Employee relationships
- Customer relationships
- Business

Resilient SEs

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Figure 6.2. – Multi-level analysis of Crises and SE owner-manager Resilience in a Post-conflict Context

The SE owner-managers in this study had played an agentic role and it had made them become resilient and eventually it had supported the organisations to become resilient. Playing vivid roles as an achiever, a planner, a controller, and an innovator equip these SE owner-managers with the necessary toolkit to face vivid crises and made them resilient. Their personal resilience had informed the organisational resilience and these SE owner-managers had become resilient and grow their businesses despite all the vivid crises came across in their path. It was revealed that personal resilience of these SE owners is informing the organisational resilience and on the other hand organisational resilience is informing the personal resilience. Collectively through personal resilience of SE owner-managers and organisational resilience give birth to resilience SEs.

Chapter 07 – Conclusions

7.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the discussions within the previous chapters and draws conclusions upon them, and it presents the original contribution of this research study to both knowledge and business practice. The chapter also outlines the key practical implications of the findings, the limitations of the thesis, areas for future research and ends with the author's personal reflections.

Through the review of the past literature, the author revealed several shortcomings in the previous literature. During the critical review of the literature, it was discovered that there was a lacuna in knowledge established on how SE owner-managers deal with crises and develop resilience and grow in turbulent emerging economies. Almost all the research around SE entrepreneurs/owner-managers had focused on samples in established and comparatively stable economies in developed countries and had not paid any attention to emerging economies with high turbulence. In addition, in examining the research methods of existing studies related to SE owners, it was found that previous research had depended predominantly on quantitative methods, and qualitative research approach had been almost ignored. Hence the past research had not been able to build a complex and holistic picture, analyzing words and detailed views of informants, and conducting the study in a natural setting (Creswell, 1999). Similarly, the author noted that the analyses of the SE literature on growth were so omnipresent that a timely examination was needed to consider their relevance to how SE owner-managers become resilient and grow in a turbulent post-conflict environment. The theoretical problems revealed in the prevailing literature led the author to develop the aim and objectives of the thesis, the achievement of which is discussed in this chapter, along with the contributions made to knowledge.

The aim of the thesis was '*to contribute insights into the resilience and growth of small enterprises (SEs) by exploring the experiences of SE founders/owner-managers within a post-conflict context.*

To achieve this aim, three objectives were constructed.

1. To explore the crises faced by SE founders/owner-managers in a turbulent emerging economy with a post-conflict context.

2. To explore on the way these crises affect SE founders/owner-managers resilience in a post-conflict turbulent environment.

3. To explore on the way SE founders/owner-managers perceive their personal resilience to affect their organisational resilience and growth in a post-conflict turbulent environment.

7.2 Summary of Key Findings

The conclusions drawn from the findings outlined in chapter 05 are discussed in chapter 06 and this chapter summarise the issues identified in chapter 6 with specific reference to how the three objectives listed above have been achieved. This section summarises the research findings on how SE owner-managers become resilient and grow in a turbulent post-conflict context, the crises faced, effect of these crises, and how these crises impact personal resilience of the SE owner-managers and its effect on the organisational resilience and growth. Key contributions to the literature are highlighted comparing the initial conceptual diagram with the newly developed framework multilevel analysis of crises and SE owner-manager resilience in the Sri Lankan post-conflict context (See figure 7.1).

The findings from the data indicate that several micro level, meso level and macro level crises, which had previously been ignored by researchers, do affect the resilience and growth of SE owner-managers during times of turbulence. The findings illustrate that the participants' resilience developed through various strategies. This scenario was given in figure 6.2 in chapter 06, which follows a process to be resilient in a turbulent economy.

Figure 7.1. Key Contributions to the conceptual framework

Figure 01 – Conceptual Framework

Post-conflict contextual barriers

- Institutional context (Poor formal institutions)
- Informal Institutions (Cultural context & Social

Personal/Individual level crises

- Change in wealth and income
- Psychological well-being
- Negative emotions
- Financial insecurity

Business level crises

- Change in demand
- Less profitability
- Less income
- Business closure
- Lack of financial resources

Societal level crises

- Social isolation
- Loss of relationships with family, relatives, customers, and employees

Entrepreneurial/personal Resilience

- Individual traits & qualities
- Resilience process
- Demographic characteristics

Organisational Resilience

- Resources
- Resilience process
- Planning
- Expertise

Figure 01 – Conceptual Framework

Figure 6.2

Personal/Individual level crises

- Health issues
- Relationship issues
- Work-life balance issues
- Personality issues

Organisational level crises

- People impediments
- Customer impediments
- Cash-flow issues
- Manager impediments
- High cost of production
- Other impediments

Organisational level crises

- Competition
- Geographical and international trade barriers
- Inefficient formal institutions

Societal level crises

- Generation gap
- Relative pressures
- Attitude to women
- Government red tape

The Agentic Role of the Entrepreneur/Owner-managers

- Achiever
- Planner
- Controller
- Innovator

Relationships and Networking

- Relationships with family and relatives
- Employee relationships
- Customer relationships
- Business

Figure 6.2. Multi-level analysis of Crises and SE owner-manager Resilience in a Post-conflict Context

7.2.1 The crises faced by SE founders/owner-managers and their effect on owner-manager's resilience and growth in a turbulent emerging economy with a post-conflict context

This section presents the key findings related to objective 01 and 02, which were 1) to explore the crises faced by the SE founders/owner-managers operating in a turbulent post-conflict economy and 2) to explore on the way these crises affect SE founders/owner-managers resilience in a post-conflict turbulent environment. The findings of the thesis provide a rich insight into the vivid crises faced by the sample of SE owner-managers and their impact on the growth of their businesses. The author found that the crises are mainly micro level crises, the day today issues which are under the control of the SE owner, and meso and macro level crises which are outside the control of the owner of the SE.

Despite the abundant research that has contributed towards investigating challenges faced by SEs and SE owner-managers, the findings of this research demonstrate that SE owner-managers operating in Sri Lankan post-conflict context face crises at mainly four levels: **Individual, firm, industrial, and societal** levels. At the individual level, four types of crises were revealed: *Health issues, Relationship issues, Work-life balance issues and Personality issues*. It was evident that these four types were affecting the SE owner-managers resilience and growth in a negative way. It was found that the SE owner plays a vital role in the business, and that the issues or problems faced by him/her directly influence the business. These individual crises had directly impacted on the SE owner-managers and resulted in deteriorated physical & psychological condition, depression, distress, intimacy issues and suicidal thoughts. Missing the loan payments deadlines, less concentration on the business, inability to manage and handle the business are some of the consequences from individual crises which threatened the organisational resilience of these SE owners. Hence the individual crises faced by the SE owner had a negative impact on the business, and this thesis claims that SE owner is a key part of the SE's functions. The owner's behaviour and dealings are a vital factor for the SE growth, and if this factor is challenged the SE as an organisation has to face consequences.

When it comes to the firm level, irrespective of their sector, the SE owner-managers face various crises as follows.

All these crises were hindering the growth of these SE owners. **People impediments** were various, and they are related to the employees and their dealings. ***Lack of appropriate expertise in the country due to brain drain, difficulty in finding and retaining good staff, lack of management resources, lack of new ideas*** was found to be influencing these SE owners. These SE owners were the main losers of brain drain as highly skilled experienced employees are leaving the country which is common in emerging economies (Marchiori, Shen, & Docquier, 2013), due to myriad of opportunities and due to the turbulence of Sri Lankan economy the brain drain had been accelerated. Due to the scarcity of resources, the training SE owners provide for the employees is expensive and when the employees leave after the training it was a considerable sunk cost for them. The companies in the modern era are in a "war for talent" where large companies have impressive ways and means to attract good employees (Schuler, Jackson, & Tarique, 2011), whereas SE owners are in a disadvantaged position in this talent hunt. Whenever there is an efficient employee, there are large companies who trying to attract them with better packages, hence putting these SE owners in a disadvantageous position. On the other hand, whoever attracted to their organisations are lacking new ideas as per the SE owners, which hinders the innovative capacity of the SEs. This tug of war for talent is a firm level crisis faced by SE owners. All these people impediments were highlighted by the SE owners, and they further commented that this situation had occurred due to the country's turbulence. Similarly, intense competition and increased choices available for the customers due to the turbulent environment had put pressure on the SE owners. This thesis claims that ***rigidness of the customers, accessibility of information and their extensive power*** had made the position of the SE owners challenging and hence customer impediments were one of the micro level crises faced by the SE owner-managers. Moreover, ***disorganised books, profit problems, cash flow forecasting problems, high cost of production, bad debts and not having the proper know-how*** had resulted in chaos related to cash flow and this had made these SE owners to suffer certain losses. Besides, the cost of production had increased due to employee theft, not

having proper accounts, too much overhead costs, unseen costs, frequent changes in government taxes, and unplanned recruitments. Finally, manager/owner related issues within the organisation were revealed as a firm crisis and ***conflict of management philosophies, growing too fast, lack of knowledge on the market and lack of marketing*** were the catalysts for the same.

Another set of crises emerged through the data, which were directly related to some industries and sectors, and it was given a bracket name as other impediments. These impediments were unique, and some cases applied only for one or two companies.

> ***Breakwater barrier, lack of government support to develop the business, nature of the raw materials, non-availability of a proper place which deals with SEs, Tsunami, lack of financial support***

Breakwater barrier, which was a human made barrier had directly affected one company in terms of less profits and issues in customer attraction. Moreover, lack of the government support was highlighted by some SE owners, and it had badly impacted them. Compared to the large organisations, SE owner-managers in this turbulent context struggle to manage the things by their own. The prevailing tax rates and other regulations are manageable and fair for the large companies, whereas for the SE owners the same rates and regulations were imposed, and it was considered as unfair by these SE owners due to their size and vulnerability. Furthermore, not having a proper place to deal with SEs was another issue faced by these SE owners. For the large and multinational companies, there are various organisations to support and monitor ill practices and ways to reduce the risk through insurance and other methods. For SE owners there is not a single place to get advice, support and to complain on the unfair practices or treatments happened. Tsunami was another natural disaster impacted SE owners which resulted in job loss, employee loss, infrastructure loss and business loss. This was a natural crisis faced by these SE owners and the impact was colossal. Likewise, lack of financial support was another crisis faced by the SE owner-managers. Some were not in a position to find extra capital when they need them due to their lack of networks or due to their size. Hence lack of financial support had resulted some of them to not to expand and to lose valuable orders and opportunities to grow. As pointed out all these

other impediments; **Breakwater barrier, lack of government support to develop the business, nature of the raw materials, non-availability of a proper place which deals with SEs, Tsunami and lack of financial support** resulted in developing resilience and growth of these SE owners. Hence it was an important finding under crises.

Even though the past researchers had found that finding extra capital as a main barrier for small companies, out of 15 companies only one owner pointed out this as an issue. Hence due to strong networks finding extra capital was not a major issue for these SE owners.

At the ***industrial level, geographical and international trade barriers, competition, lack of good practices and regulations and inefficient formal institutions*** were the most common crises they face, whereas, ***sabotage activities, bureaucratic barriers, taking and giving bribes, sugar label and breakwater barrier*** were discovered as some industry specific crises.

Societal level crises emerged as the final type of crises faced by the SE owner-managers. ***Generation gap, Relative pressures, Attitude of women and Government red tape*** were the main macro level crises discovered through data.

Whilst researchers have acknowledged the fact that SE owner-managers have to face vivid challenges and barriers on their path to development, they had failed to empirically explore the crises faced by the SE owners with the turbulence. This thesis filled this vacuum by answering this timely and attention needed issue. Consequently, individual, firm, industrial and societal crises were discovered, and it was proved that they influence in three levels, namely micro, meso and macro levels. The author claims that this thesis is the main contribution so far related to the literature in SE owner-manager's resilience and growth focusing on a turbulent post-conflict economy. Moreover, even though the 'wait and see' approaches being a commonplace strategic response to uncertainty (Clarke and Liesch, 2017), among majority of SE owners in other countries, these Sri Lankan SE owners were not like that. They had utilized strategies to combat these crises. This thesis exposed two main strategies used by the SE owners, to develop resilience and grow in the turbulent post-conflict context.

7.2.2. Relationships and Networking as a strategy to develop personal resilience and organisational resilience and grow

Chapter 6 of this thesis discussed in detail the relationship and networking strategy, which was an extensively used strategy by the SE owners on their path to resilience. The sections 7.2.2 and 7.2.3 relate with the objective 03 of the study, where the author wanted to explore on the way SE founders/owner-managers perceive their personal resilience to affect their organisational resilience and growth in a post-conflict turbulent environment. The SE owner-managers had been immensely benefited by the maintenance of good relationships and networking with family and relatives, employees, customers, and business networking. The author agrees with the past researchers (Dobbs & Hamilton, 2007; Barringer & Jones, 2004; Robson & Bennett, 2000) who suggest that collaborative relationships such as joint ventures, networks, alliances, and trade associations provide quick access to industry related information and the opportunity to network with industry peers. It was evident that their relationships with business partners had allowed these SE owners to flourish and develop within their industry in numerous ways, ***developing business, grabbing opportunities, understanding the market and through finding extra capital.*** Business relationships had acted as a remedy to overcome some of the major challenges and crises faced by these SE owner-managers. On the other hand, relationship with family and relatives had acted as a strategy for these SE owners to face the crises. As Brown, Mawson, and Rowe (2019) pointed out, different types of networks; interpersonal and inter-organisational networks, strong and weak, close, and far had played an important role in these SEs. The author confirms the viewpoint of Powell & Eddleston (2013), that family domain supplies various types of resources that assist entrepreneurial success. ***Mental support, encouragement, motivation, being a role model, helping to sharpen the entrepreneur skills and exposure to the industry*** were identified as the benefits of family and relative relationships.

Furthermore, it was found that employee relationships were used as a strategy to face the crises and maintaining a sound relationship with the employees had been a unique and valuable source, as they are the organisation's closest link to their customers, which was highlighted by De Jong, Verbeke, & Nijssen (2014) and Sirdeshmukh et al., (2002) as well. Employees had been a great source of energy and an asset for these SE owners to

be resilient. ***Acting as brand ambassadors, ethnocentric HR strategies, fresh graduates as innovators, bringing repeated sales and committed employees*** were the main employee-related strategies utilised by the SE owners in this study. Hence the maintenance of proper employee relationships had made these SE owners to become resilient and made their organisations resilient within the turbulent environment.

Equally, customer relationships have been given top attention as a strategy to grow. It was noted and explained that customers were well taken care of by these SE owners due to several reasons, i.e., lack of a sound customer base, difficulty in attracting new customers, word of mouth being the main customer attraction strategy, and high dependency on a few customers. Hence, they had used every possible way to entertain the customer and it had worked positively for these companies. It was revealed that these SE owners were using ***complaint handling, customer customisation and customer empowerment and knowhow*** to build strong and long-term customer relationships, which had worked as an effective strategy to face crises faced on their path to resilience.

7.2.3 The agentic role of the entrepreneur as a strategy to develop personal resilience and organisational resilience and grow

It was revealed that through ***innovation, becoming a planner, becoming an achiever, and becoming a controller,*** these SE owners had transformed their organisational culture and enhanced their adaptability. Chapter 06 explored this fact in a detailed manner and provided evidence to prove this claim. The author agrees with Szczepańska-Woszczyna (2015) and claims that the organisational culture of these SEs had positively influenced organisational performance by guiding staff, motivating employees, and shaping employees' behaviour in respect of specified goals. The author was surprised to see that these SE owners were utilising very simple strategies to develop the culture of learning and adaptability. ***Open door policy, conducting lengthy recruitment interviews, using individual referencing method and job rotation*** were used to know each other well in the organisation. Knowing each other well was a ground rule in all of these SE owners, and it had worked well. Similarly, ***holding daily or monthly meetings to get feedback, getting the support of the employees to organise activities and keeping a suggestion box*** had encouraged the participation of the employees, a method highly valued by these SE owners. Further, setting milestones through ***weekly meetings to assign workload and weekly time sheets*** was used. Similarly, work happiness was

another strategy utilised to develop resilience. These SE owner-managers had to do a collusive amount of work to sustain competing with large scale companies. With this backdrop, surprisingly, it was revealed through the data collection process that these SE owners allocate time and resources for exercises that do not necessarily or directly pertain to work. Staff bonding activities such as *annual trips, celebrating the New Year, having lunch together, outbound training programmes, providing company uniforms and organising one-dish parties* were common strategies among the SE owners. Further, *celebrating birthdays, celebrating various festivals, best employee recognitions, celebrating weddings and child births* were carried out to mark the achievements and milestones in their lives. Likewise, extramural activities were encouraged such as *the provision of facilities for playing carom, table tennis, and card games, providing gym memberships, and organising annual cricket matches and musical shows.* The author learnt that through these new soft processes, the productivity of the employees had increased and hence the agentic role of the entrepreneur had become one of the strategies to become resilient with turbulence.

Innovativeness was the main cause for these SE owners to be adaptable to the turbulent environment. Evidence was presented throughout the chapter 05 to highlight the innovativeness of these SE owners in terms of production, marketing, entering strategies and HR strategies.

Even though past researchers claim that SMEs were not interested in marketing due to lack of resources, it was visible, within the SE owners in this study, that they had developed unique ways of attracting and persuading customers and of improving their value and existence in the market perspectives through various innovative channels of marketing to expand their customer base. *Developing strong international networks, management contacts, providing discounts for specific product items, attractive web-based advertisements, marketing the product using brand ambassadors, buyers' visits, rectifying the customers' difficulties, after-sales facilities, unique packaging, participating in exhibitions and attractive Facebook (FB) page* were the main strategies utilized by them so that they could be strong within the turbulent environment.

It was visible that the SE owner-managers were into product innovations, and they were quality conscious and quality oriented. They had never compromised the quality, and

evidence on how they had become resilient with it were presented in the chapter 5. Even though they were small in size, these SE owners had identified the importance of training their employees, and it was clear that all these companies had used vivid ways to train their employees. Almost all the SE owners had viewed their employees as assets with high potential and had tried to find ways to improve employee skills, experience, and knowledge continuously, which had made them more resilient. It was found that all these aspects such as innovativeness in production, marketing, HR strategies and entering strategies had made these SE owners and their companies resilient.

Moreover, the data informed the author that these SE owners were having vivid competencies and they play roles; *as an achiever, as a planner and as a controller* to develop their businesses and these had immensely supported the SEs to be resilient. The author claims that there are several personal entrepreneurial competencies coming under these roles and when an entrepreneur possesses them, there is a high potential to be resilient.

Most of these SE owners were achievers, they found a niche market, took the risk, and entered and exploited the market to the fullest level. They have an eye to identify opportunities and grab them before anyone else does it. This quality helped them to become an achiever. Not only that, but they were also proactive and were risk takers. Even though they are small and vulnerable, they never compromised the efficiency and quality. They had realized the quality was much important than the quantity and they had lived by that. They were committed and had sacrificed their personal lives on behalf of their companies. They have regrets in sacrificing family life over the business however, their sacrifices had reaped the benefits. These SE owners had overcome the micro level and macro level crises by being an achiever.

All of these SE owners were great planners. Contrast to many of the past research, these SE owners were peculiar on keeping proper records on their accounts and using them rigorously in decision making. Not like the large companies, these SE owner-managers were not keeping records due to the requirement imposed by the authorities but to refer them in their daily activities. Contrary to the large companies, these SE owners were paying attention to details and monitoring their ins and outs from the company. As they pointed out, if they were not considerate on these small figures, ultimately it

can cost them even to lose their business. Time frames were playing an important role on them as they always keep deadlines and work accordingly. They are trying their best to meet the deadlines and if a necessity arises from the customers side and for the benefit of the project or the activity, they are flexible to revise their plans. Thus, being a Planner had helped these SE owners to develop resilience and grow with the backdrop of turbulence.

By becoming a controller, these SE owners had faced crises and developed the resilience to operate in this post-conflict turbulent environment. Being small had not become a barrier for them where, they were able to control the big companies, multinational companies, government, banks, and powerful customers. Some of these SE owners convinced large companies to be their partners. These strong networks had paved the way for them to enter into deep waters which were unknown to them, which resulted in expanding their customer base, product ranges and sales. Likewise, some of these SE owner-managers were excellent in convincing the banks to get extra capital and convincing the customers to buy their products and convert them to repetitive sales. Most of them are having a strong self-confidence where some of them are competing with international brands which comes from Multinational companies. These SE owners' vocabulary is not having the word 'NO'. They always take challenges in fulfilling difficult tasks, which had attracted many loyal customers. Being a controller, these SE owners had helped to develop the resilience of the SEs.

Being an innovator, an achiever, a planner, and a controller, stimulated the retention capacity of the SE owners and had developed positive entrepreneurial skills on them. This had resulted the SE owners to develop resilience. This study had expanded our understanding of how the owner's resilience directly influences and impact the resilience of their organisation in post-conflict turbulent context.

7.2.4 Methodological Stance

Previous research in the SE growth literature has predominately taken a positivistic approach to explore the growth, and it has paid only little attention to the individual's experience (Davidsson et al., 2005). The inductive approach utilised by the author in this research to explore the resilience and growth of SE owner-managers gave participants the opportunity to discuss their experiences with growth. Due to the qualitative nature

of the research method, a large amount of information was gathered, which indicated that these SE owners were continuously bombarded with crises and challenges. The approach, which examined how the SE owners develop and grow with turbulence, showed that there is various micro-level, meso-level and macro-level crises faced by these SE owner-managers, and they had impacted in their personal resilience and organisational resilience in numerous ways. The findings also recognised that each participant used various strategies which were summarised into two main strategies, i.e., relationships and networking and the agentic role of the entrepreneur to overcome the crises they faced (figure 6.2). The influence of family, relatives, customers, and employees was found to have a significant impact on the resilience and growth of these SE founders. Participants considered new soft innovations, new process innovations, and becoming a planner, achiever, and controller as strategies to develop an agentic role, which was another strategy applied by the participants to be resilient.

The study analyses small firm owner-managers in Sri Lanka, thus responding to calls made by entrepreneurship scholars (Corey & Deitch, 2011; Korber & McNaughton, 2018) in the context of post-conflict entrepreneurship (Aldairany, et al., 2018; Brück, Llussá, & Tavares, 2011). Specifically, how SE owner-managers can be supported after conflicts has led to the development of a novel multi-level framework of SE owner-manager resilience in a post-conflict context (Figure 6.2).

7.3 Implications of findings

One of the important **theoretical implications** emerged related to the determinants of SE owner-manager resilience and growth. The theory should acknowledge the contribution of SE owner-managers in extreme, marginalized post-conflict economies. This research observed some differences in terms of determining factors implying entrepreneurial activity differ considerably according to the context in which it occurs. Potentially a separate focus is needed when studying SE owner-managers in post-conflict economies. Overall, findings of this research fulfil and refine our understanding of the SE owner-manager resilience and growth in a turbulent post-conflict context. Studies that consider entrepreneurs/SE founders/Owner-managers in similar settings like Sri Lanka may thus contribute to extending the current theoretical perspective.

Several **practical suggestions** are proposed for SE owner-managers and policymakers. First, SE owners can overcome their crises at the micro level by developing a strong

desire and attitude to succeed by building strong relationships with friends, family members and stakeholders – in other words, via 'relationship-based resilience'. At a micro-level, therefore, entrepreneurs in post-conflict contexts ought to consider the impact of crises not only on themselves but also, consequently, on the small firm (and thus on themselves, e.g., cash flow). Given the conflict-prone context of Sri Lanka and its social focus (collectivist) culture, SE owner-managers also need to establish professional communities of businesses within their sectors as well as across sectors or industries that can be supportive of each other; for example, by providing knowledge and financial support to face the disturbances and achieve resilience, and thus the survival and growth of the business. This will work as a supporting cluster to enhance both the personal resilience of SE owner-managers and organisational resilience.

Secondly, support from industry (at the meso level) needs to be more accessible to SE owner-managers as such support is vital at the early stages of achieving resilience. Partnerships and collaboration with suppliers, service providers, and investors are the main strategies of SE owner-managers to overcome challenges and become resilient after a conflict. Support organisations such as sectoral and industry associations should help to improve entrepreneurs' awareness and knowledge of the external environment such as policies which can directly affect entrepreneurs in making the right decisions in dealing with crises.

Finally, more specific government policies targeted SE owners are needed as in a particular context like post-conflict contexts, general policies are certainly insufficient. Policymakers (at the macro level) should investigate financial facilities (e.g., low interest rate loans), and promote inclusion and equality by having a regulatory regime to mitigate bribery to safeguard SE owner-managers in post-conflict contexts. Trust on the government should be restored. This will entail the establishment of rules, regulations, contract enforcement and lowering the cost of business formation. The policy reforms should be accompanied by addressing corruption and unfair competition. Therefore, after conflicts, government agencies should help to raise entrepreneurs' awareness of the factors that affect entrepreneurs and the small firms' organisational culture in coping with external disturbances.

Even though it is not claimed that the study is representative of all SE owner-managers in Sri Lanka, and thus is not generalisable, the perceptions and experiences of every participant provided in-depth insights into a multi-level (spatial) analysis of crises and the post-conflict relationship-based resilience of SE owner-managers. Therefore, the significance of this study lies in the rich contextualised insights it provides regarding the entrepreneurial environment of post-conflict Sri Lanka and thus the motivation of future research that can apply and test the framework (Figure 6.2) across different contextualised post-conflict contexts.

7.4 Contribution to knowledge

Taking into consideration the lack of entrepreneurship research on emerging and developing countries, one of the key contributions of the present Doctoral thesis is that this study extends the current body of knowledge about SE owner-manager resilience and growth by bringing empirical results from rather unique context such as Sri Lanka. By drawing from the research in Sri Lanka, a society characterized by extreme and marginalized conditions for doing business, this research offer a more contextualized view of entrepreneur resilience, enabling a better understanding of the importance of context for entrepreneurship research. In terms of small business entrepreneurs/owner-managers resilience research, the assumptions derived from western developed economies may need considerable adjustment when researching underdeveloped, turbulent and maginalised societies.

Next this thesis illuminates how SE owner-managers in post-conflict contexts achieved 'relationship-based resilience' by making two theoretical contributions. First, it adds to the literature on entrepreneurship by addressing the proposition Korber & McNaughton (2018) that a more holistic view on entrepreneurship and resilience can be formed by adopting multi-level analyses. Second, it synthesises a framework of how SE owner-managers become resilient in post-conflict contexts at multiple levels of analysis (Figure 6.2) via effective relationships and the agentic role that entrepreneurs play in this process, following (Williams & Efendic, 2019), and also building on Efendic et al., (2015). This study also responds to Herbane (2020) call by revealing that family and social capital are key in achieving relationship-based resilience by SE owner-managers in post-conflict contexts because they support entrepreneurs in growing confidence in their decision-making and their entrepreneurial responses to challenges and crises, which is a key enabling mechanism therein. Thus, it draws from Bullough et al., (2014) insights to introduce and conceptualise 'relationship-based resilience'. Finally, it adds to a clearer explanation of SE owner-manager resilience in the unique post-conflict context of Sri Lanka, which has specific historical, institutional, social, and cultural contexts, which have influenced SE owners to achieve relationship-based resilience.

This thesis discovered how the historical context of Sri Lanka (e.g. being colonised, man-made conflicts, and natural disasters) influenced and shaped the institutional context (e.g. the lack of a regulatory regime, presence of bribery and corruption, and attitudes

to women) and eventually enabled Sri Lankan SE owner-managers to learn and develop a social focus culture and a cultural context that is supportive via business and family relationships within which the agentic role of entrepreneurs is the key in achieving resilience. Additional contribution to the entrepreneurship literature in general is the empirical evidence which points to the influence of these institutional factors and this study proved that institutional factors hinder the growth of SE owner-managers and it influence their organisational resilience. This was proven by the fact that by discovering two main subcategories under crises as 'inefficient formal institutions' and 'government red-tape'.

The novelty of this approach illustrates how SE owner-managers can flourish when they experience crises such as environmental turbulence, resource constraints and adversity. By analysing the stories of the SE owner-managers in their specifically situated contexts, it clarified the dynamic nature of crises at multiple levels, and how these SE owner-managers achieved resilience and grew in the post-conflict context. In this regard, social capital in the form of relationship-based resilience was vital.

Moreover, this study contributed to better understanding of the behaviour of SE owner-managers with the respective context. Most research implicitly assumes context as granted (Welter, 2011). On the contrary, in this research context sometimes had enabled or constrained SE owner-managers by providing new opportunities and at the same time by limiting their actions.

Furthermore, this study shed light about the theories which have been used by the researchers in conducting SE research. It was visible that **Institutional theory** is not applicable in this context. These entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-managers challenge the existing norms, social conventions, and other unwritten rules of conduct in gaining legitimacy. Most cases they are not conforming and doing significant deviations from the local community's acceptable way to achieve their targets and still being able to successfully develop their personal and organisational resilience and grow. On the other hand, **Effectuation theory** seems to be the most suitable one to discuss about the SE owner-managers resilience related to the post-conflict contexts. As discussed in chapter 6, at the individual level, these SE owner-managers had used personal knowledge, skills, and social networks and at the business level, they had used physical, human, and

organisational resources to develop their resilience and grow. Their core effectuation behaviors are positively related to SE performance. Furthermore, this study confirms the strength of the **entrepreneurial bricolage theory** in understanding the SE owner-managers operating in marginalized environments such post-conflict contexts. These SE owner-managers were using the physical inputs with new use-value, labour inputs were efficiently used through proper employee relationships, had permitted unapplied amateur and self-taught skills, and had enhanced better customer relationships. Most importantly they had refused to enact the limitations put forwarded by formal institutions and law framework, where they had achieved their targets through informal institutions via relationship-based resilience.

Despite all promising results, questions remain what exactly SE owner-manager resilience means in the past literature. Taken together, the results of this study suggest that SE owner-manager resilience as *"the SE owner-manager's adaptability to disruptions, positive performance, and their ability to seize the business opportunity amid a challenging business environment"*. Thus, the future research can use this in defining the SE owner-manager resilience in the turbulent post-conflict context.

7.5 Limitations of the Study and Further Research

The exploratory nature of the study led to the selection of a relatively small sample size of 15 Sri Lankan SE owner-managers. Subsequently, a limitation of the study is the interpretation of the data with regards to the individual participants' experiences, rather than broad generalisations. The author makes no claims that the findings provide a universal truth that can be generalised to all SE owner-managers operating in turbulent post-conflict contexts. Nonetheless, the sample size provides sufficient insight to achieve the thesis aim and objectives in furthering understanding regarding how SE owner-managers develop resilience and grow in a turbulent post-conflict context. The author is confident that the research findings are valid due to the rigorous approach of the research study, with the findings providing a reliable basis for further research.

Indeed, future research can focus on testing two propositions:

Proposition 1. Business networking at societal and industry levels has a strong influence on the achievement of relationship-based resilience in SE owner-managers.

Proposition 2. Family relationships and support mechanisms at individual and firm level has an impact on the achievement of relationship-based resilience in SE owner-managers in post-conflict contexts.

As pointed out a potential limitation of the thesis was identified as the generalisability of the findings, in light of the small sample size. Future research could include a survey of a larger sample of entrepreneurs/SE owner-managers that are statistically representative and already comprising of individual micro-level small firms, which could be "grossed up" to provide a more macro- or meso-level perspective of the effects of challenges faced after a conflict, and the actions and strategies taken by SE owner-managers to become more resilient via the use of relationships.

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Appendix 01

Sheffield Hallam University

Participant Consent Form

Project Title: Resilience and Growth of Small Enterprises in a Turbulent Post-conflict Economy

Director of Studies   :   Dr. Fariba Darabi
Student Investigator: Mano Weligodapola

1. I consent to participate in the project named above. I have been provided the participant information statement to which this consent form relates and any questions I asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

2. ***In relation to this project, please highlight/circle your response to the following***.

   - I agree to be interviewed by the researcher for the purpose of this study   **Yes   No**

   - I agree to allow the interview to be recorded for the purpose of this study   **Yes   No**

   - I express my interest to participate in future research related to this study   **Yes   No**

3. I acknowledge that:

   - my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without explanation;

   - This project is for the purpose of research and not for profit;

   - Any identifiable information about me which is gathered in the course of and as the result of my participating in this project will be (i) collected and retained for the purpose of this project and (ii) accessed and analysed by the researcher(s) for the purpose of conducting this project;

   - I understand the length of time researcher(s) will have access to this information and

   - my confidentiality is preserved, and I will not be identified in publications or otherwise without my express written consent.

By signing this consent form, I agree to participate in this project.

Name of Participant: ……………………………………………………………………………

Signature & Date: …………………………………………………………………………

Appendix 02

Company Name :

Date :

Participants :

Factors Associated with Firm Resilience and Growth	Different Categories/Factors	Questions developed through the LR	My Notes
Firm Characteristics	Size	• What is your opinion on your size? • Do you enjoy being small? • What are your benefits in being small? • Any disadvantages?	
	Type/sector	• Why this type/sector of business?	
	Legal Form	• Do you believe the legal form that you are in helped you to grow? Or limit your growth?	
	Innovativeness	• Do you think you are innovative? Comment on it.	
	Techniques/Tools utilised	• What sort of tools/techniques that you use to control your business? Balanced scorecard/PESTLE/SWOT/Porters five forces etc. • How do you manage your business?	

		• Do you have formalized routines?	
	Staff	• Do you believe in delegation?	
		• Do you believe in your staff?	
		• Have you recruited the correct managers? Manager capabilities? Finance?	
		• Can you describe an ideal employee?	
	Competitors	• Do you know who your competitors are?	
		• Do you see competitors as a challenge?	
	R & D	• Have you spend money on R & D?	
Entrepreneur Characteristics	Education	• What is your Education background?	
		• Is the education you had helped you to manage your business?	
	Commitment	• Will you ever give up your business for higher benefits?	
	Exposure/Expe rience	• Comment on your previous employment if you have been employed before.	
		• Did you use the exposure you got from prior employment to develop your business?	
		• Do you think your experience matters when facing the problems in a turbulent environment? Barriers?	
	Attitudes	• Do you believe that you are a good entrepreneur? Why?	
		• How long do you stick with an idea before giving up?	
		• Why are you in business?	

	Networks	• Have you build any networks within your industry?	
		• Do you think these networks are important?	
	Opinion Questions	• How many hours do you work a day on average?	
		• Describe/outline your typical day	
		• How has being an entrepreneur affected your family life?	
		• What motivates you?	
		• How do you generate new ideas?	
		• How far are you willing to go to succeed?	
		• How do you define success?	
		• What is the best way to achieve long-term success?	
		• Who has been your greatest inspiration?	
		• What are the biggest mistakes you have made?	
		• What makes you happy?	
		• What sacrifices have you had to make to be a successful entrepreneur?	
		• If you were conducting this interview, what questions would you ask?	

Environment		• What do you think about the current environment? Is it too rigid or too flexible?	
		• How does the external environment affect your business?	
		• What is your opinion/view on external changes? Are they impacting you?	
		• How do the social, economic, environmental, technological, legal and political environments impact your business?	
		(political environment - changes in legislation and taxation are some factors that affect an organisation; economic environ. – changes in interest rates, GPD trends and unemployment. Sociocultural factors – the changes in population, income, mobility, and attitudes. Technical environ. - changes in government spending on research, government and industry focus on technological efforts, new discoveries/development, speed of technology transfer, and rates of obsolescence. This force is a critical point to "continuous innovation keeping success on business survival".	
Strategies Utilised	General	• Name the strategies you utilized to face the crises and grow?	
	Going Global	• Does going global made a difference in your business?	
		• How did you manage to go global?	
		• Do you plan to compete in the global market place? If yes, how? If no, why not?	
		• Did you expect this to happen?	
	Low Price	• What is your priority? Keeping prices low or paying attention to customer needs?	
		• How did you keep the prices low?	
		• How do you address the customer demands?	
Barriers/Challenges	Financial	• If you would have had more access to finance do you believe that your condition/status would be much higher?	

		• Have you encounter any problems when accessing for extra capital?	
		• Can you comment on the crises/obstacles that you faced in your business?	
Growth	Opinion on growth	• Have you maintained growth? How long? • Have you ever thought to not to grow? Why? • Do you have plans in the future to improve your business? • Have you found that any area that you wanted to improve? • Comment on your growth over the years from 2008. • Are you happy with the profits that you earn? • Where you see yourself and your business in 10 years? 20 years?	

Appendix 03

The mapping of past literature and justification of questions included in the interview guide

Themes in the interview guide	Questions developed through the LR	The reason to raise these questions from the participants	Past Literature	The mapping section of the conceptual framework in the Literature review chapter
Firm Characteristics	• What is your opinion on your size? • Do you enjoy being small? • What are your benefits in being small? • Any disadvantages? • Do you believe the legal form that you are in helped you to grow? Or limit your growth? • Why this type/sector of business? • Do you think you are innovative? Comment on it.	The theme 'Firm characteristics' was developed to understand on various characteristics of the SE itself which support/hinder the resilience and growth of the organisation. Past literature has come across vivid factors which impact the resilience and growth of a SE which related to the organisation. Moreover, questions were raised to understand the opinion of the SE founders/owner-managers relating to growth. Past literature revealed that there is no consensus among the definition of growth and discrepancies on growth whether all the SE founders would really like to grow, and some are purposely refrain from growth due to various reasons. In order to understand Entrepreneurs/SE founders/owner-managers	Williams & Vorley 2014; Njanja et al., 2012; Papaoikonomou, Segarra, & Li, 2012; Fraccastoro, 2011; Achtenhagen et al., 2010; Rauch, & Frese, 2007; Masurel, Montfort, & Lentink, 2003; Beaver, 2002; Watson, Newby, & Woodliff, 2000	**Organisational Resilience**

		• What sort of tools/techniques that you use to control your business? Balanced scorecard/PESTLE/SWOT/Porters five forces etc. • How do you manage your business? • Do you have formalized routines? • Do you believe in delegation? • Do you believe in your staff? • Have you recruited the correct managers? Manager capabilities? Finance? • Can you describe an ideal employee? • Do you know who your competitors are? • Do you see competitors as a challenge?	ambitions and perceptions of growth, these questions were raised.		

	• Have you spend money on R & D?			
Entrepreneur Characteristics	• What is your Education background? • Is the education you had helped you to manage your business? • Will you ever give up your business for higher benefits? • Comment on your previous employment if you have been employed before. • Did you use the exposure you got from prior employment to develop your business? • Do you think your experience matters when facing the problems in a turbulent environment? Barriers?	There are a quite a collection of past literature on SE founders/owner-managers stating various entrepreneur characteristics such as demographic characteristics/ psychological and emotional aspects of the SE founders/owner-managers, and Individual traits and qualities. This theme is developed to understand whether the entrepreneur/SE founder/owner-manager characteristics had influenced the personal resilience and organisational resilience.	Jones, 2014; Ongoro, 2014; Anderson & Eshima, 2013; Ahl & Marlow, 2012; Hansen & Hamilton, 2011; Aworemi et al., 2010; Nichter & Goldmark, 2009; Bekele & Worku, 2008; Barringer & Jones 2004; Kristiansen, Furuholt, & Wahid 2003; Wiklund et al 2003; Papadaki et al., 2002; Hamilton & Lawrence, 2001; Smallbone & Wyer, 2000	**Entrepreneurial/personal Resilience**

	• Do you believe that you are a good entrepreneur? Why? • How long do you stick with an idea before giving up? • Why are you in business? • Have you build any networks within your industry? • Do you think these networks are important? • How many hours do you work a day on average? • Describe/outline your typical day • How has being an entrepreneur affected your family life? • What motivates you?			

	• How do you generate new ideas? • How far are you willing to go to succeed? • How do you define success? • What is the best way to achieve long-term success? • Who has been your greatest inspiration? • What are the biggest mistakes you have made? • What makes you happy? • What sacrifices have you had to make to be a successful entrepreneur? • If you were conducting this interview, what questions would you ask?			

| Environment | • What do you think about the current environment? Is it too rigid or too flexible?

• How does the external environment affect your business?

• What is your opinion/view on external changes? Are they impacting you?

• How do the social, economic, environmental, technological, legal and political environments impact your business?

(political environment - changes in legislation and taxation are some factors that affect an organisation; economic environ. – changes in interest rates, GPD trends and unemployment. Sociocultural factors – the changes in population, income, mobility, and attitudes. Technical environ. - changes in government spending on research, government and industry focus on technological | The theme 'Environment' was developed to understand the impact of environment on which the SE founders/owner-managers operate to their organisation. | Littlewood & Holt, 2018; Abebrese, 2015; Dahles & Susilowati, 2015; Page & Söderbom, 2015; Covin & Slevin, 2008; Doole, 2008; Davidsson & Wiklund, 2007; Delmar, Davidsson, & Gartner, 2003; Covin, Slevin, & Covin, 1990 | **Post-conflict contextual barriers** |

	efforts, new discoveries/development, speed of technology transfer, and rates of obsolescence. This force is a critical point to "continuous innovation keeping success on business survival"			
Barriers/Ch allenges/Cri ses / Impact of crises	• If you would have had more access to finance, do you believe that your condition/status would be much higher? • Have you encounter any problems when accessing for extra capital? • Can you comment on the crises/obstacles that you faced in your business? • What are the crises that you have faced so far in your life as an entrepreneur?	This theme was developed to get an idea on vivid challenges/ barriers and crises faced by the SE founders/owner-managers.	Magambo, 2015; Hamelin, 2013; Kazungu, Ndiege, & Matolo, 2013; Coad & Tamvad, 2012; Gill & Biger, 2012; Fumo & Jabbour, 2011; Ishengoma & Kappel, 2011; Johnson & Nino-Zarazua, 2011; Storey, 2011; Franco & Haase, 2010; Robson & Obeng, 2008; Moktan, 2007; Okpara & Wynn, 2007; Okurut & Bategeka, 2006; Runyan, 2006; Irvine & Anderson, 2004;	**Personal/Individual level crises** **Business level crises** **Societal level crises**
Impact of Crisis	• What was the impact of those crises on you and your business?	This question was asked to develop insights into how the vivid crises impacted the SE	Stephan, 2018; Bliese, Edwards, & Sonnentag, 2017; Liu, Shankar, & Yun, 2017; Amann, &	

		founders/owner-managers and their business.	Jaussaud, 2012; Audretsch, 2012; Faria, Cuestas, & Mourelle, 2010; Egan, & Tosanguan; 2009; Latham, 2009	
Strategies Utilised	• Name the strategies you utilized to face the crises and grow? • Does going global made a difference in your business? • How did you manage to go global? • Do you plan to compete in the global market place? If yes, how? If no, why not? • Did you expect this to happen? • What is your priority? Keeping prices low or paying attention to customer needs? • How did you keep the prices low?	This theme was developed to understand the various strategies used by the SE founders/owner-managers in developing resilience and grow.	Williams & Vorley 2014; Sharifi, Ismail, Qiu, & Najafi, 2013; Gunasekaran, Rai, & Griffin, 2011; Sullivan-Taylor & Branicki, 2011; Sheffi, 2007; Levy, Alvesson, & Willmott, 2003	**Entrepreneurial/persona l Resilience** **and** **Organisational Resilience**

	• How do you address the customer demands?			
Resilience and Growth	• Have you maintained growth? How long? • Have you ever thought to not to grow? Why? • Do you have plans in the future to improve your business? • Have you found that any area that you wanted to improve? • Comment on your growth over the years from 2008. • Are you happy with the profits that you earn? • Where you see yourself and your business in 10 years? 20 years? • How did you deal with those crises?	This theme was developed to understand how SE founders/owner-managers react towards crises and how they become resilient and grow.	Linnenluecke, 2017; Williams & Vorley, 2017; Sharifi, Ismail, Qiu, & Najafi, 2013; Sullivan-Taylor & Branicki, 2011; Sheffi, 2007	**Entrepreneurial/personal Resilience** **and** **Organisational Resilience**