Safe Spaces

A qualitative study about the barriers to female growth-oriented entrepreneurship and how these can be mitigated by Business Support Programs in Kampala, Uganda

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By Olivia Fabreschi (41415) and Amanda Tivenius (41421)

Abstract: Growth-oriented businesses are those that have the potential to create jobs, support communities, and achieve higher productivity (Olafsen and Cook, 2016; Schoar, 2010), thus contributing to a nation's economic development. Female-growth oriented entrepreneurs, however, are largely neglected in research, particularly in developing economies. This thesis aims to investigate the challenges Ugandan female growth-oriented entrepreneurs face and how business support program (BSP) services can help mitigate those barriers. Qualitative, in-depth interviews and non-participant observations were conducted with the purpose of gaining an in-depth understanding of the entrepreneurs' experiences in the BSP environments. The theoretical contribution of this paper is twofold. First, it contributes to the body of literature on the challenges faced by female-growth oriented entrepreneurs in developing countries, providing explanations from socio-economic and managerial theoretical bodies. Second, it adds a gender embedded lens to the literature on organisation of BSPs, giving recommendations for ways to tailor BSPs to women in the context of a developing country. The findings suggest that female growth entrepreneurs in Uganda experience challenges that are significantly influenced by societal structures. Although BSPs were found to not meet many of these challenges directly, the BSP can act as a tool that helps women entrepreneurs respond to these barriers.

Acknowledgements

Glossary

Bridging	Bridging mechanisms help entrepreneurs actively engage with the environment outside of the BSP, by providing relational connections, creating social capital and a source of legitimacy (Amezcua et al., 2013b)
Buffering	Buffering mechanisms protect the nascent enterprises through creating a "buffered" environment where the entrepreneurs can develop without confronting direct threats of the external environment (Amezcua et al., 2013b)
BSP	Business Support Programs
Developing Country	A country with low per capita income, low human assets and high economic vulnerability (UNCTAD, 2013).
Embeddedness	The theory that people's economic initiatives are embedded in their network of social relations (Granovetter, 1985).
Female Growth-Oriented Entrepreneur	Women entrepreneurs who start their businesses out of opportunity as opposed to necessity, and who have the potential to create new jobs and generate productivity gains (World Bank, 2014)
Incubator	An organisation that provides protected environments for business start-ups in the emerging phases of new business creation (Buys and Mbewana, 2007), in this thesis equated with a BSP.
Role Encapsulation	The notion that the characteristics of individuals in minority positions are distorted to fit pre-existing generalisations about their category (Kanter, 1977)
Social Capital	Access to networks and formal/informal mentor relationships (Akisimire, 2015)
Tokenism	The theory that low relative numbers of socially and culturally different people in a group creates a token status for those different. This status increases their visibility and gives them the pressure of representing the whole group (Kanter, 1977).

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1.0 Introduction

Entrepreneurial activity is considered to be one of the most important conditions for a country's long-term economic development (Carree and Thurik, 2003). However, there is a current underutilisation of women in entrepreneurship that restrains economic growth (Bardasi et al., 2011). This is particularly evident in developing countries, in which the productive potential for women was found to be underutilised by 50% compared to 22% for men (ILO-WED, 2016). It is therefore vital for the economic growth of a developing country to actively involve women entrepreneurs in the economic mainstream (Guma, 2015; Scott, 2014).

Business support programs have been shown to be able to increase the participation and growth of women entrepreneurs (Ripley, 2017). However, there are contentions as to how, or if, they can be structured to fully meet the needs of women entrepreneurs. Traditional scholars assume entrepreneurship to be gender-neutral (Bruni et al., 2004), while other researchers argue the need to adjust entrepreneurial support according to gender differences (see Mugabi, 2014; Stevenson and St-Onge, 2005a, 2005b). This thesis therefore aims to investigate entrepreneurship through a gendered perspective and examine how business support programs are able to meet the needs of female entrepreneurs.

Uganda in particular makes an interesting subject of study as the country exhibits a larger than average presence of entrepreneurial activity, particularly when it concerns female entrepreneurs (Mastercard Index, 2019; GEM, 2014; Mugabi, 2014). However, the majority of these women tend to start their enterprises out of necessity, rather than opportunity, which limits their chances of growing to a point where they can have a significant impact on economic development (Olafsen and Cook, 2016). Those businesses that are created due to an observed opportunity, so called growth-oriented enterprises, have a higher potential to scale and support their communities by creating new jobs, often for other women (Olafsen and Cook, 2016; Schoar, 2010). As a result, in order to tend to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals of "decent work and economic growth" and "gender equality" (UN, 2020) it is imperative to improve the opportunities for female growth-oriented entrepreneurs within developing countries.

Little research has been conducted on female growth-oriented entrepreneurs within the context of a developing country (World bank, 2014). Previous studies have either been limited to female necessity entrepreneurs or to growth-oriented entrepreneurs in general, not considering gender differences (Stevenson and St-Onge, 2005b). However, studies suggest that women in growth-oriented entrepreneurship behave differently to both male growth entrepreneurs and female necessity entrepreneurs in that they employ different strategies and face different challenges (Gundry and Welsch, 2001). Thus, in order to create better opportunities for female growth-oriented entrepreneurs there is a need to further explore their specific challenges and examine how it is possible to mitigate them.

The previous literature on female growth-oriented entrepreneurship support in Uganda has largely been concerning macro-economic factors, and have resulted in frameworks targeted towards government and policy makers (Mugabi, 2014; Stevenson and St-Onge, 2005b). Although these frameworks address the need of "access to gender sensitive BSPs", they do not provide any microeconomic suggestions on how a BSP should be structured to become gender sensitive, leaving this area largely unexplored.

Hence, the purpose of this thesis is to explore the barriers to female growth-oriented entrepreneurship in order to investigate how the micro-economic environment of BSPs can be tailored to mitigate these female-specific barriers. In the general area of BSPs, the literature is lacking in the aspects of the governance and organisation of the incubators (Phan et al., 2005), and fails to focus on the experiences of incubatees themselves (Hackett and Dilts, 2004). As a result, this thesis will be guided by the following research questions:

What are the perceived challenges to female growth-oriented entrepreneurship in Uganda and how can these barriers be explained? To what extent can the challenges be met by business support programs?

By answering these questions, the researchers aim to make a twofold contribution to the literature on female growth-entrepreneurs. The first to the limited research on challenges experienced by female growth-oriented entrepreneurs in developing countries, particularly in Uganda. The second to the literature on business support program organisation by adding a gender sensitive lens.

The empirical method selected for the study was qualitative research as it allows for rich descriptions of the entrepreneurship experience to emerge (Bryman, 2012). The empirical results included 25 semi-structured interviews of female growth entrepreneurs and BSP staff, as well as observations from the BSP facilities. By examining the challenges and support forms as they were experienced by both the entrepreneurs and the BSP staff we were able to produce a nuanced and detailed picture of the barriers to female growth-entrepreneurship. The empirical methodology, in combination with the theoretical framework, laid ground for a thorough analysis of the extent to which the challenges can be mitigated by the BSPs.

The study was limited to female growth-oriented entrepreneurs and staff that were part of four purposefully selected BSPs in Kampala. Entrepreneurs and BSPs that were defined as not concerning the growth-oriented category, or were not located in Kampala, were therefore delimited. Although the study was carried out in Uganda, research shows that there are large similarities between low-income countries in Africa in terms of the business environment (Ramachandran et al., 2009), and so the results of this thesis are potentially generalisable to other culturally similar countries. Further, the focus of the analysis was limited to female-

specific challenges, delimiting the discussion from gender-neutral challenges that are as relevant for men as they are for women. As a result, the final recommendations of this thesis aim to help adapt a program to women, but should be used in combination with general BSP literature to meet both gender-neutral challenges as well as the female-specific barriers that were the focal point of this paper.

The paper is structured as follows. First, we review the existing literature on growth-oriented female entrepreneurs and the barriers they face. Second, we develop the theoretical framework on business incubators in two relevant parts: the BSP content, and the BSP organisational structure. Third, we present the methodology of the study. Fourth, the findings and analysis of the study are presented. This section includes an analysis of the barriers and the support forms and how they relate to each other and previous literature. Finally, we end the thesis with a summarising discussion and conclusion, answering the research questions.

2.0 Literature Review

The literature review will cover literature on female growth-oriented entrepreneurship and business support programs. Due to the limited number of studies on female growth-oriented entrepreneurship in Uganda, the literature review includes not only Uganda specific literature but also studies from other sub-Saharan African countries. This was deemed appropriate as there are large similarities between low-income countries in Africa in terms of the business environment (Ramachandran et al., 2009). In addition to this literature, we have chosen to include additional theoretical concepts from managerial and socio-economic areas to enrich the understanding of the research subject.

2.1 Female Growth-Oriented Entrepreneurship in Uganda

Uganda has one of the highest percentages of female entrepreneurs globally, with 38,2% of businesses in Uganda being run by women (Un.org, 2018, MIWE, 2019). However, research shows that female entrepreneurs in Uganda are more likely than male entrepreneurs to start their businesses out of necessity as opposed to opportunity, resulting in businesses that are difficult to scale (World Bank, 2014; Elam et al., 2019; MIWE, 2019; Stevenson and St-Onge, 2005b; Mugabi, 2014). This is significant as it is growth-oriented businesses that have the ability to produce a larger number of jobs, build communities and achieve higher productivity and innovation (Olafsen and Cook, 2016; Schoar, 2010; World Bank 2014). Indeed, although growth-oriented businesses represent only 6% of Ugandan firms, they create nearly half of the total jobs (Endeavor Insight, 2015).

Although few, there are a number of female entrepreneurs in Uganda who do create their businesses out of opportunity as opposed to necessity (Stevenson and St-Onge, 2005b). These are generally women with a minimum of secondary education, previous experience in a public or private sector enterprise, and a supportive husband (Stevenson and St-Onge, 2005b). To increase the number of women engaging in growth-oriented entrepreneurship the question of why these female entrepreneurs are not able to grow beyond the micro-level (Stevenson and St-Onge, 2005 b) is worth investigating.

There is a limited amount of previous research on how to assist female-growth oriented entrepreneurs in developing countries. Previous research tends to either focus on female necessity entrepreneurs only, or fail to distinguish between female growth-oriented and necessity entrepreneurs. This is a serious shortcoming, as opportunity and necessity entrepreneurs differ from each other in their economic objectives, skills, willingness to take risks, and role in the economy (De Mel et al., 2008), and consequently respond differently to economic cycles, support and policy changes (Schoar, 2010). As a result, there is a lack of

understanding as to which practices are best suited to encourage growth among these entrepreneurs (Jennings and Brush, 2013).

2.2 Barriers to Female Growth-Oriented Entrepreneurs in Uganda

This section will compile the relevant, growth-oriented barriers related to female entrepreneurship, primarily based on Stevenson and St-Onge's (2005b) framework on female growth-oriented entrepreneurs in Uganda. However, due to the dated nature of the framework and in order to enrich the literature due to a lack of research in this specific area, the barriers are supplemented with additional studies. These are those on female entrepreneurship in Uganda that are not growth-oriented specific, as well as studies from other developing countries that concern (non female-specific) growth-oriented entrepreneurship. Global reports on female entrepreneurship were also included to provide legitimacy and place the study within a wider context.

This section will discuss the barriers of gender roles in entrepreneurship, family life and domestic responsibilities, financial barriers, choice of industry, homogenous business networks, and lack of confidence. It will end with a discussion on the socioeconomic context of the barriers.

Gender Roles in Entrepreneurship

There are certain cultural perceptions of entrepreneurship as being a masculine occupation (Elam et al., 2019). Successful entrepreneurs depicted in the media are most often men, while there is a lack of visible female role models (Coleman and Robb, 2017). Further, in a study examining the role of gender stereotypes on entrepreneurship, it was found that both men and women perceived entrepreneurship as a masculine activity (Gupta et al., 2009). Indeed, this is particularly relevant in Uganda, where normative gender roles and expectations affect women's aspirations to be growth-oriented entrepreneurs, stigmatising entrepreneurship as a non-viable path for women (Mugabi, 2014; Stevenson and St-Onge, 2005b).

Family Life and Domestic Responsibilities

Women generally face more requirements in the home than men. Stevenson and St-Onge of ILO (2005a, 2005b) found that women are unable to spend as much time as men on their businesses because they are required to carry out their domestic responsibilities such as housework, food preparation and childcare. Indeed, in Kenya, Lock and Smith (2015) found that two thirds of the female entrepreneurs they interviewed spent over 10 hours per week on household chores, despite working 40 hours a week on their business. Lastly, Fiala (2014) found that family proximity in Uganda resulted in significant negative effects on the business investment decisions of married women, whereas men benefited from family proximity. This

was theorised as being due to the pressure for these women to spend money on school fees, health care and funerals.

Financial Barriers

Female entrepreneurs face more difficulties than male entrepreneurs in receiving financial support, as they face difficulties in receiving loans via formal institutions (Solano and Rooks 2018). This is due to a lack of access to collateral, often a piece of land, and because they often do not have bank accounts (Lock and Smith, 2015; Mugabi, 2014; MIWE, 2019). Because of this, women in Uganda are more likely than men to turn to their contacts instead of formal institutions for financial help (Solano and Rooks, 2018), or finance their start-up costs from personal savings, resulting in undercapitalised enterprises (Stevenson and St-Onge, 2005b).

There may be financial barriers stemming from female entrepreneurs' limited financial literacy. Lock and Smith (2015) found that although the Kenyan female entrepreneurs in their study stated keeping records of their finances, they were only stock records of the goods or services being sold and not financial accounting of the business' revenues and costs.

Homogeneous Business Networks

Brush (2006) found that female entrepreneurs tend to be part of networks that include mostly other women. Further, it was found that women were more likely to use their networks for emotional support whilst men were more likely to network for strategic reasons (Brush, 2006). As a result, women's access to information and networks tend to be more constrained than men's. This causes women to miss out on useful information that is channelled predominantly through male networks (Mayoux, 1995). This is supported by Stevenson and St-Onge (2005b), who found that women in Uganda were able to benefit from studying or working abroad as they could increase their exposure to, and contact with useful networks, particularly "powerful men".

Lack of Confidence and Expectations

An additional barrier is the lack of confidence female entrepreneurs have in their abilities to engage in entrepreneurship. The 2018/2019 Women's Entrepreneurship Report by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor found that women in general report lower confidence levels than men in their capabilities to start a business (Elam et al., 2019). This was particularly significant in sub-Saharan Africa, where women reported having "high growth aspirations" half as often as men (Elam et al., 2019). In Uganda, it was found that women are less likely than men to see entrepreneurship as a possibility, and that female growth-oriented entrepreneurs have lower confidence than their male counterparts (Stevenson and St-Onge, 2005b).

Choice of Industry

Women in Uganda are more likely to start businesses in sectors traditionally perceived as "female" and are less likely to create businesses in more lucrative sectors such as technology and agriculture (Stevenson and St-Onge, 2005b). This is due to the gendered nature of social roles, educational choices and labour market experiences currently prevalent in Uganda (Mugabi 2014; Elam et al., 2019). It is also due to the lower entry barriers in these industries as they require less start-up capital (Elam et al., 2019). The fact that women tend to choose "female" industries is a barrier to success as these industries are more difficult to scale in (Buvinic et al, 2014), generate lower margins, and have higher failure rates (Elam et al., 2019).

The Socially Embedded Nature of the Barriers

According to Mair and Martí (2006), entrepreneurship must be understood through the social context and local environment. The Ugandan context in particular is heavily structured around societal norms, especially for women (Mugabi, 2014), and the above barriers for female growth-oriented entrepreneurs were all found to be highly socially embedded. It is therefore relevant to examine literature from socio-economic domains in order to explain the reasons behind the barriers and be able to create business support programs that can address them.

Embeddedness:

Theories of embeddedness examine how economic action is embedded in social relations and the dilemmas that can occur by being embedded (Granovetter 1985). Being highly embedded implies that individuals abide the group norms and adheres to their social relations rather than to pure economic incentives (Granovetter, 1985). Thus, embeddedness is a useful concept when understanding how social relations contribute to the existence of the barriers experienced by female growth-oriented entrepreneurs.

Women entrepreneurs who are too embedded in their families and communities may be disadvantaged when trying to develop a successful entrepreneurial career. According to Xheneti and Thapa Karki (2018), families are a type of institution that work to reproduce social and cultural norms. This can affect women entrepreneurs' choice of business activities, as they may be likely to follow their families' expectations as opposed to their own priorities. Women entrepreneurs who are heavily embedded in their family or communities are more likely to get "locked" into existing societal structures and are thus less likely to engage in entrepreneurial ventures that go against cultural norms (Mair and Martí, 2006). This in turn limits their expectations for growth and affects their choice of industry. Further, Wheadon and Duval-Couetil (2018) found that entrepreneurship is framed as a masculine concept as a result of the embeddedness in cultural and cognitive associations meaning that it can subconsciously affect the women's choices of career.

However, there are positive benefits that can emerge from being embedded, as an entrepreneur's embeddedness in the community contributes to their network, affecting their ability to access resources and gain credibility (Mair and Martí, 2006). It was therefore found beneficial for women to be a member of various community associations or credit associations in order to promote their business (Ngoasong and Kimbu, 2016).

Tokenism:

Kanter's (1977) concept of tokenism has traditionally been used to examine gender imbalances in organisations. Tokenism theories state that when a small number of people in a group are different from the rest of the group, they are given a "token" status. Wheadon and Duval-Cuetil (2018) argue that this is also the case for women entrepreneurs in "traditionally masculine" entrepreneurial fields. Hence, tokenism theories can be applied to the minority group of female growth-oriented entrepreneurs in the Ugandan male-dominated entrepreneurship field. Tokenism theories state that the disadvantages experienced by the minority are due to three structural factors: opportunity, power and numbers. Recognising and understanding these factors is thus crucial to explain the barriers and to be able to organise a BSP that mitigates the challenges related to those. These factors are discussed in turn below.

Kanter reasons that opportunity shapes behaviour, thus when people do not expect to get the opportunity to advance (in this case as a consequence of the restraining norms for women entrepreneurs), advancement becomes less desirable for them. This is as people tend to protect themselves from feelings of failure by not pursuing an option they perceive as impossible (Kanter, 1977). In entrepreneurship, Thébaud (2015) found that women were discouraged from pursuing entrepreneurial opportunities due to gender stereotypes perceiving women owned businesses as less viable and thus less worthy of support by investors. As a result of this, women may be discouraged from becoming entrepreneurs, less likely to persist, and/or disadvantaged when they seek financial support for their venture (Thébaud, 2015).

Female entrepreneurs may be less likely to obtain power and beneficial information due to their limited, often homogeneous, networks (Brush, 2006; Mayoux, 1995). This is explained by Kanter (1977) as being due to the scarcity of women in powerful positions. Kanter argues that in order to get power you need to know powerful people that can help you advance, thus women are often left powerless since their peers and contacts are as powerless as they are. If this notion holds true, the lower number of women in powerful positions in the Ugandan society and business world (Mugabi, 2014), such as officials or investors, is a key hindrance to the size of the female entrepreneurs' network that can help them advance in entrepreneurship.

Lastly, the low number of women in growth-oriented entrepreneurship is in itself an issue. When individuals are in a vast minority, their visibility is increased which results in a performance pressure that is much higher for the "token different one" than for the majority (Kanter, 1977). Additionally, if the token woman fails, she becomes a symbol for all women,

while if she succeeds she is seen as an exception from her gender. This increased pressure on performance can make women less likely to take risks out of fear of failing, limiting their potential for success. Further, the token individual can never truly be seen as they are and are always fighting stereotypes (Kanter, 1977). Role encapsulation occurs, in which women become trapped into a stereotypical role based on pre-existing generalisations of their category (Kanter, 1977). If a female entrepreneur is in a token position, and the stereotypes against women entrepreneurs are currently negative, then the token woman faces the dilemma of either having to play their negatively caricatured role or fight against it (Zimmer, 1988).

Summary of Barriers

The barriers for female growth-oriented entrepreneurs were found to concern six main areas, the majority of which stemmed from the women's position in Ugandan society. Each barrier was found to be related to one or several of the socio-economic theories of embeddedness (Granovetter, 1985) or tokenism (Kanter, 1977), which allows for an explanation as to their existence within the Ugandan context.
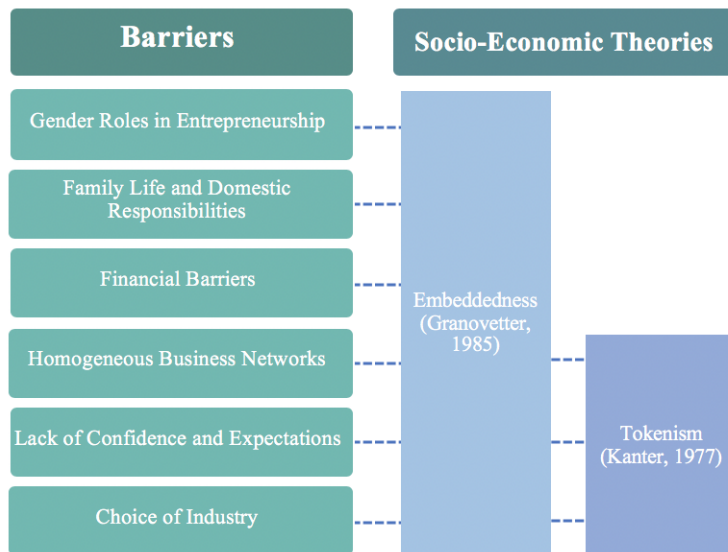
Figure 1: Theoretical model of the barriers and their relation to socio-economic theories.

2.3 Business Support Programs for Female Growth-Oriented Entrepreneurs

Although frameworks have been developed on how to support female growth-oriented entrepreneurs in Uganda (Mugabi, 2014; Stevenson and St-Onge, 2005a, 2005b), there has been a limited focus on the micro-economic environment of business incubators. Much of the literature based on these frameworks have focused on macro-economic factors relating to the legal and regulatory system, policy (leadership and the representation of women

entrepreneurs), financial services, access to markets and technology, and access to gender sensitive BSPs (Mugabi, 2014). These have primarily resulted in governmental recommendations on programmes and policies to aid female entrepreneurs (see Terjesen and Lloyd 2015; MIWE 2019; Mugabi 2014). However, there are fewer recommendations on the micro-economic aspects on how to actually create or manage a gender sensitive BSP, despite the fact that "access to gender sensitive BSPs" was mentioned as one of the factors of importance in Mugabi's (2014) and Stevenson and St-Onge's (2005b) frameworks. As a result, although there are numerous BSPs in Uganda, little is known about how these organisations can contribute to assisting female growth-oriented entrepreneurs. This thesis will therefore focus on the micro-economic environment of individual business support programs.

Business support programs, or business incubators, are organisations that provide protected environments for business start-ups in the emerging phases of new business creation (Buys and Mbewana, 2007). They aim to improve the firms' chances of survival in their early phases of life and assist in their later growth (Mutambi 2011) through "buffering" or "bridging" support activities (Amezcua et al., 2013b). Buffering mechanisms protect the nascent enterprises through creating a "buffered" environment where the entrepreneurs can develop without confronting the direct threats of the external environment. Bridging mechanisms help entrepreneurs engage with the external environment by providing relational connections. Through these methods, BSPs are able to help entrepreneurs grow and/or encourage their survival (Masutha and Rogerson, 2014).

Business support is also shown to be beneficial for female entrepreneurs specifically. A longitudinal quantitative study on female entrepreneurs in Kenya found that female-tailored entrepreneurship training not only improved their firm performance but also their overall levels of well-being. The study involved a treatment group of 1172 entrepreneurs and a control group of 988 entrepreneurs, and found that three years after participating in the five day training, the treatment group had 18 per cent higher sales and 15 per cent higher profits than the control group, with improved mental health and a better standard of living (ILO WED, 2017).

Business support programs are therefore an appropriate yet uninvestigated way to help female growth-oriented entrepreneurs in Uganda, and the following section of this literature review will therefore investigate the unexplored micro-economic environments of BSPs to determine how they can best be tailored to meet the barriers experienced by these entrepreneurs.

2.3.1 How to structure a BSP for female growth-oriented entrepreneurs

The following sections will discuss the literature on business support programs in terms of the program content and organisational structure. This division was made due to the differences in literature available within these categories.

The section on content is primarily based on studies on business support programs targeting female growth-oriented entrepreneurs in developing countries. However, there is a dearth of literature on the structural aspects of how BSPs in developing countries can be organised for gender equality, thus the literature covered in the organisational structure section will include studies from other literature bodies. We combine literature concerning the structure of BSPs in developing countries with organisational literature on gender equality in order to gain a theoretical understanding of the structural aspects of a gender sensitive BSP.

2.3.1.1 Business Support Program Content

Stevenson and St-Onge (2005a) developed a model for female growth-oriented entrepreneurs in Kenya. They found that there are three segments of women entrepreneurs, where the top two can be considered growth-oriented (See figure 2). The model is from 2005 and was conducted in Kenya, hence the situation for female entrepreneurs in modern-day Uganda is potentially different. However, it serves as a model that will be explored, and contributed to, in the following sections when discussing the content of BSPs.
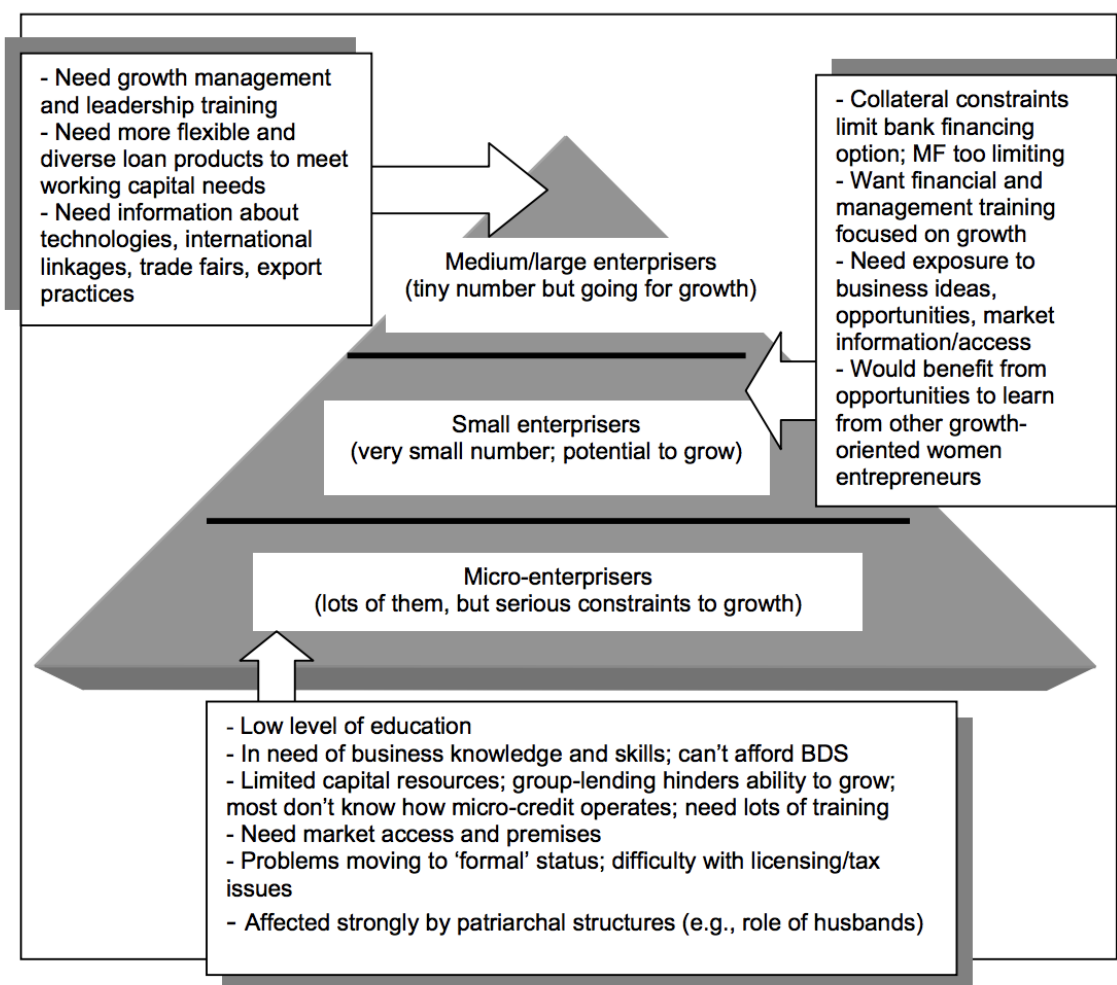
Figure 2: Model by Stevenson and St-Onge (2005a) Identifying the needs of various types of female entrepreneurs.

The model states that women in opportunity-entrepreneurship need specific types of services. This is explored in the following section through opportunities for financing, tailored business training, exposure to business ideas, and female networks and role models.

Opportunities for Financing

Financing can be provided to entrepreneurs either through direct funding or through bridging the entrepreneurs to external funding opportunities (Amezcua et al., 2013b). However, there are contentions in the literature as to how effective financing is for female entrepreneurs in developing countries. Fafchamps et al. (2014) found that funds given to women entrepreneurs were beneficial, however only if this was given as an in-kind grant, defined as payment in goods and services, as opposed to money. For men, it mattered less which way the funding was provided. Further, Guloba et al (2017) found that although financing is beneficial, it is not

sufficient to ensure the success of female entrepreneurs unless they have the knowledge of the fundamentals related to entrepreneurship.

The differences in funding could potentially be due to the industry choices of women entrepreneurs. Buvinic et al (2014) found that micro loans had a positive effect on the performance of male-owned firms, but not female-owned firms, likely due to the fact that many female entrepreneurs operate in sectors that were more difficult to scale in (see Fiala, 2014). This was also theorised as being the reasons for De Mel et al (2007)'s findings that showed grants given to male entrepreneurs had a return of 9% per month, while the average returns for female entrepreneurs was zero or negative.

Tailored Business Training

In Kenya, Lock (2015) found that almost half of female entrepreneurs perceive a lack of training opportunities as one of their biggest constraints to business growth, and that business management training was ranked as their top priority for external support. However, there is a lack of conclusive evidence on the specific types of training that work best for female growth-oriented entrepreneurs (World Bank, 2014).

A study by Sigvaldsen et al (2011) on a female business support program in Uganda found that although the program was effective, with entrepreneurs increasing their sales during the time period, the program needed to be adapted in several ways. They found that the training should be adapted depending on whether the entrepreneur is rural or urban and that hands-on training was necessary in order to ensure entrepreneurial action and not just a motivated mindset. Further, they found that in some cases it was necessary to involve the male spouses of the entrepreneurs in order to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the program, due to the resistance from the spouses.

Exposure to Business Ideas and External Opportunities

Due to the lack of growth opportunities in traditionally female sectors, it is vital to expose women to business ideas in sectors that are often male-dominated with higher growth potential, allowing women to "cross-over" to more lucrative industries (World Bank, 2014).

There are several ways in which this was found possible to be done. One way is to give more information to female entrepreneurs, as many women who remain in female-dominated sectors are unaware that they are making less money than those who cross over (Campos et al, 2015). This can be done through exhibitions, trade fairs, media and websites, and by bridging the entrepreneurs to other opportunities (Stevenson and St Onge, 2005b). Further, providing exposure to these industries through family, friends, or roles models is beneficial in encouraging women to choose these industries (Campos et al, 2015). Indeed, the importance of

a role model within a male-dominated industry to encourage female cross-overs was so profound that it was the case even when the role model was male (World Bank, 2014).

Female Network and Role Models

The use of female role models, mentoring and female networks can play a large part in supporting women to take the risks needed to succeed with their businesses and increasing their self-confidence (Coleman and Robb, 2017).

Akisimire (2015) found that social capital, defined as access to networks and formal/informal mentor relationships, had a significant relationship with Ugandan women's entrepreneurial empowerment. The author states that this is due to the peer learning that takes place through social interaction, allowing for shared experiences and inspiration. Further, Blomqvist et al. (2014) described the benefits of social capital as increasing female entrepreneurs' aspirations and improving their long-term planning, which results in growth, business skills and new ideas. Social capital also provides access to collaboration and higher credibility, which gives women greater chances to access financing and increased emotional support (Blomqvist et al., 2014). These relational connections between entrepreneurs and the world outside of the protected BSP is an important aspect of BSP bridging (Amezcua et al., 2013b).

2.3.1.2 The Organisational Structure of the Program

The following section will discuss the various factors that constitute the managerial and organisational aspects of the BSP that are able to create a gender sensitive BSP.

Female-Only Environments

There is mixed evidence supporting whether women entrepreneurs are more likely to benefit from women-only or mixed gender incubators. Amezcua et al. (2013a) found that female entrepreneurs in mixed gender incubation experienced sales and employment growth levels that were 3.5% and 6% higher than the male entrepreneurs' businesses (Amezcua et al., 2013a). However, the World Bank (2014) found that in programs with both male and female entrepreneurs, firm performance improved in some cases for male-owned firms only.

There are potential issues that arise when women are the vast minority in a mixed gender incubator environment. Researchers suggest that when there is a disproportionately low number of female entrepreneurs in mixed gender incubators, it contributes to the image of a successful entrepreneur being male (McAdams and Marlow, 2012). This further contributes to negative entrepreneurship stereotypes, creating a hostile environment for women rather than encouraging and nurturing them according to the purpose of an incubator (McAdams and Marlow, 2012). Indeed, Stevenson and St Onge (2005a) expressed that in order for female

growth-oriented entrepreneurs to be successful, they need a supportive environment that encourages women to "go for it", allowing them to combat stereotypes and build confidence.

The literature is therefore conflicting on whether female entrepreneurs benefit from being in single or mixed gender environments. However, regardless of the gender proportions, several researchers have acknowledged the importance of not acting on "gender-neutrality" (Mugabi, 2014), but on recognising the difficulties faced by female entrepreneurs and supporting female entrepreneurs to overcome these.

Staff

The quality and competence of the staff is important as they have a direct impact on the entrepreneurs and the equality structure of the BSP. Relevance is drawn from organisational theories, where a larger presence of female top management was found to result in both symbolic effects of equality for the organisation and increased odds that equality actions were taken (Benschop and Van den Brink, 2018). It is therefore important that the staff in BSPs are guided by gender inclusive policies, and that there are a sufficient number of female top level staff in order to create these, as the mission and vision of the incubator affect the staff and how they develop and conduct the training for the entrepreneurs (Mutambi 2011).

Entry and Exit Criteria

The entry and exit criteria of the entrepreneurs need to be clearly defined prior to the entrepreneurs' entrance in the incubator (Papia, 2006). Papia (2006) found that incubators in some countries were found to recruit based not on merit but on contacts and political connections. Recruitment through networks and referrals is likely to disadvantage women because they are less likely to have these powerful contacts (Fernandez and Rubineau, 2019). In order to ensure gender equality within an organisation, Rao and Kelleher (2003) argue that setting gender sensitive organisational targets is important, increasing the number of women within the organisation.

Further, in regards to missing exit criteria, Papia found that the entrepreneurs of a BSP in Nigeria had been known to stay up to twenty years due to the cheaper rent. This is problematic as without an adequate flow of incubatees new entrepreneurs are unable to enter the BSP due to a lack of resources, thus limiting the overall number of entrepreneurs able to be helped (Papia, 2006). According to Ravjee (2010), the graduation of entrepreneurs is vital as it is one of the major measures of the incubator's performance. As a result, the BSPs should ensure to monitor the performance of the entrepreneurs, ensuring a representative number of men and women are able to graduate. The records kept should include the number of entrepreneurs

present, the number who have graduated or left, the reason to why they have left (Papia, 2006), as well as a gender analysis (Rao and Kelleher, 2003).

Creating Legitimacy

BSPs can gain value from being considered legitimate, i.e. meeting certain external demands of what is considered "viable", "desirable" or how a "real" organisation operates (Meyer and Rowan, 1977; Suchman, 1995). A business incubator can gain legitimacy from their affiliations and partners, such as international sponsors or high-status universities (Westhead and Batstone, 1998; Papia, 2006). A business incubator with a high level of legitimacy is better able to help the incubated firms through giving the companies legitimacy from being affiliated with the incubator (Miner et al., 1990). Suchman (1995) describes a legitimate start-up to be perceived not only as more worthy, but also as more meaningful, predictable, and trustworthy, which in turn incentivises stakeholders to invest in their organisation (Suchman, 1995). This is likely to be highly relevant for female entrepreneurs, as when considering the organisational literature it was found that female authority within business settings was generally regarded as less legitimate than male authority (Fuller, 2009).

Summary of Support

The current literature suggests that BSPs are a viable way in which to support female growth-oriented entrepreneurs. The support was found to concern nine main areas and was categorised into BSP content; what the BSPs can offer the entrepreneurs, and BSP organisational structure; how they can organise their program to be most beneficial for the entrepreneurs. Through combining the literature on BSP organisation for female growth-oriented entrepreneurs with managerial theories concerning the organisation of BSPs, and gender sensitive organisational literature, we build the foundation for a thorough empirical analysis.

2.4 Literature Gap

Based on the literature review and the empirical study, we aim to make two theoretical contributions:

The first is to improve the limited research on challenges experienced by female growth-oriented entrepreneurs in Uganda. According to a recent literature review by the World Bank, there is a "serious need" for further research on high-growth entrepreneurship in developing countries (Olafsen and Cook, 2016). This is relevant when considering female growth-oriented entrepreneurs in Uganda, a neglected group in research that has the potential to contribute to vital economic growth in the country. The aim is therefore to investigate the challenges experienced by female growth-entrepreneurs in Uganda and how their needs are currently being met by BSPs.

The second contribution is in regards to the literature on the managerial organisation of BSPs. The previous research on entrepreneurship in developing countries has largely been on a macroeconomic level, hence this paper contributes on a micro-economic level by addressing the specific management of independent BSPs. In the general literature of BSP organisation, much of the literature fails to focus on the experiences of incubatees themselves (Hackett and Dilts, 2004) and is lacking in the areas of the governance and organisation of the incubators (Phan et al., 2005), particularly concerning gender sensitive aspects. The aim is therefore to explore the experiences of both entrepreneurs and BSP staff regarding the services and structure of the BSPs. Through doing this, it is possible to investigate the extent to which the challenges of the female entrepreneurs are currently met by BSPs and identify how the BSPs can be improved. Hence, this thesis aims to contribute to the lacking research in business incubation management tailored to female growth-oriented entrepreneurs in Uganda, in the following manner:
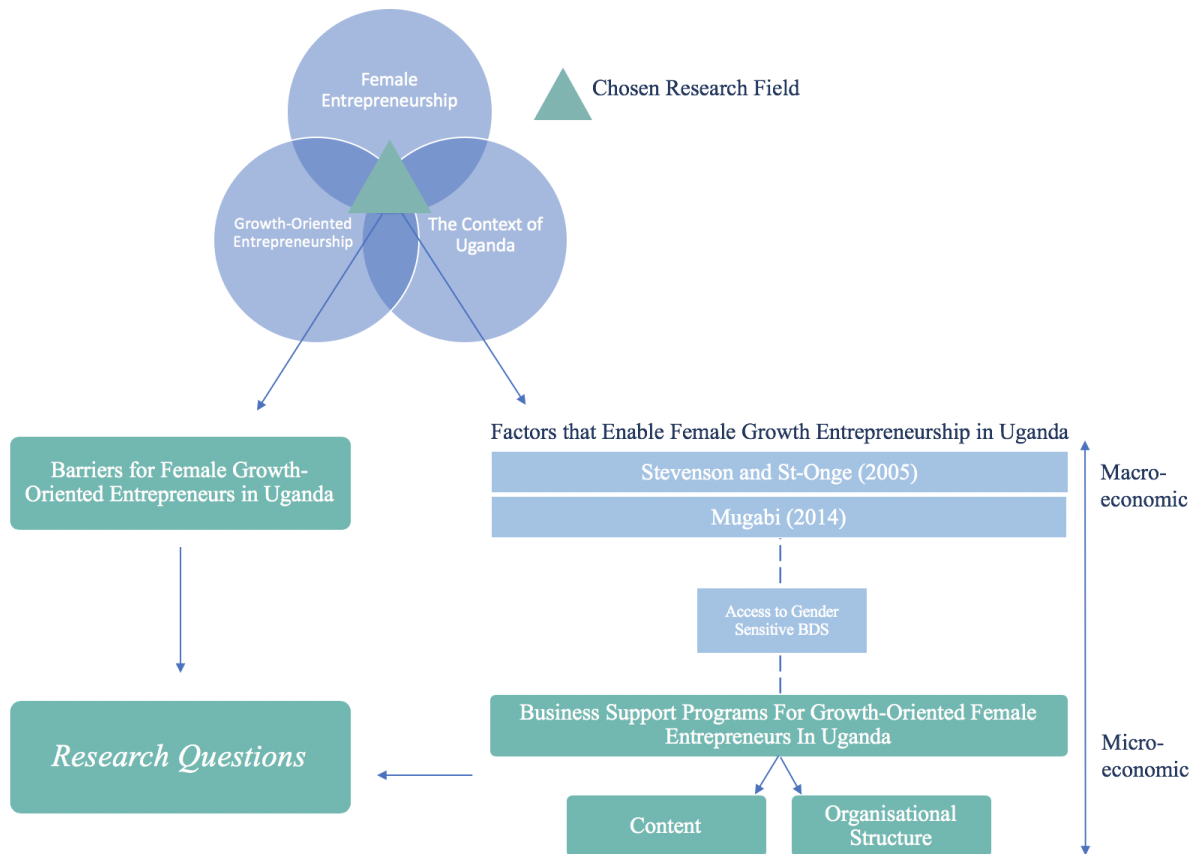
Figure 3: Theoretical Framework of the Literature Gap which results in the chosen research questions.

Through the research conducted in this thesis, the purpose is to explore and empirically confirm or reject the theoretical barriers to female growth-oriented entrepreneurship in order to

investigate how the micro-economic environment of BSPs can be tailored to mitigate these female-specific barriers, guided by the research questions:

What are the perceived challenges to female growth-oriented entrepreneurship in Uganda and how can these barriers be explained? To what extent can the challenges be met by business support programs?

By doing this, we also aim to provide practical implications of how a BSP can better themselves in regards to women, to ultimately contribute to an increased prevalence of female-owned growth enterprises in Uganda.

3. Methodology

In this section, the methodological approach of the field study is described in the sense of research reasoning (3.1), data collection (3.2), participant selection (3.3), data analysis process (3.4), and the quality of the study (3.5).

3.1 Research Reasoning

The literature review indicated the lack of insight into female growth-oriented entrepreneurship in Uganda. In order to contribute to the literature in such an unexplored area, a qualitative research approach was deemed most appropriate (Edmonson and McManus, 2007). A qualitative approach is suitable for an in-depth understanding of a social phenomenon in a specific context (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2008), allowing for rich descriptions of the reality of the interviewees to emerge (Bryman, 2012). In this situation, the challenges of female growth-oriented entrepreneurs were defined as the social phenomenon, and the specific context was defined as BSPs in Kampala, Uganda.

The study was conducted in an abductive manner in order to combine the benefits of both inductive and deductive research (Suddaby, 2006; Bryman, 2012; Tavory and Timmermans, 2014). The study was inductive as it explored and developed themes concerning the various entrepreneurs, BSP environments, and their contexts. This was appropriate as there is limited available data on the concept at hand, and allowed us to obtain an unbiased record of the participants' experiences. However, the method was also deductive in that the research was guided by past theories on entrepreneurship and business incubators. This combination allowed for a broad picture of the phenomenon to emerge and allowed us to develop our data collection in relation to other studies, both within and outside of the investigated field (Tavory and Timmermans, 2014).

3.2 Data Collection

The data was collected primarily through in-depth interviews with female growth-oriented entrepreneurs, staff, and management at four selected BSPs, and was supplemented with non-participant observations.

All the interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner. Semi-structured interviews are appropriate when understanding opinions and behaviours, and inferring relationships between variables (Saunders et al., 2009). The interviews were based on an interview guide with open-

ended questions that allowed the interviewee's point of view to surface clearly through encouraging the participants to go "off topic" and explore subjects they find relevant (Saunders et al., 2009). Semi-structured interviews can therefore reveal and deeply explore the interviewees' interests and priorities, allowing the researchers to get a wide picture of the interviewees (Bryman, 2012). This method was found appropriate as it allowed for the entrepreneurs and staff to provide rich descriptions of their situations in their own words while also ensuring we covered all topics of interest. Two different interview guides were used with questions that were adapted to whether the interviewee was an incubator staff or an entrepreneur (See appendix D and E).

The majority of the interviews were held in person at the BSP facilities. Face-to-face interviews were considered appropriate as the interviewees often feel a stronger trust towards a researcher they have met in person, ensuring they are more comfortable discussing their true thoughts and opinions (Saunders et al., 2009). Further, this allowed for observations to be made of the facilities and the non-verbal clues of the participants, such as body language and facial expressions. Non-participant observations were a useful addition to interviews as they allowed for data to be collected on the construction of particular social settings such as the way people moved, dressed, interacted and used space (Mulhall, 2003). However, four of the 25 interviews were limited to video-conferencing (see limitations below).

The interviews took place in English and lasted between 30-90 minutes. Both researchers were present at each interview to ensure that the data collected could be interpreted without variations (Eisenhardt, 1989) and that all topics of interest were covered. Permission was granted for all but one interview to be audio recorded. For this interview, one researcher led the interview and the other took detailed notes, ensuring to cover points of interest.

It was made a priority to adhere to the ethical principles involved in social research. Throughout the data collection process, we ensured that we followed the research ethics principles of ensuring no harm was done to the participants, that there was informed consent, and that there was no deception or invasion of privacy (Bryman, 2012). The interviews conducted took place at the facilities of the specific organisations or the entrepreneurs' own offices, ensuring that the participants were comfortable in their everyday environment. Further, the participants read and signed informed consent forms (see appendix C) to ensure that they were fully informed of the nature of the research and the implications of their participation, thus ensuring there was no deception (Bryman, 2012). The participants were aware that they had the right to decline answering any question or stop the interview at any time, ensuring that ethics related to their privacy was considered (Bryman, 2012). Lastly, the interviews were recorded and transcribed in a fully anonymous manner, in order to ensure the participants' confidentiality and privacy (Bryman, 2012).

3.3 Participant Selection

In order to gain a broad understanding of the overall BSP services throughout Kampala's incubator environment, a large number of BSPs were initially considered. However, in line with the principles of qualitative research (Merriam, 2009), the sample was narrowed down in order to produce an intensive, rather than extensive understanding of the researched BSPs. The scope was therefore set to focus the research solely within four BSPs focused on growth-oriented entrepreneurship in Kampala, Uganda. Entrepreneurs and BSPs that were defined as not concerning the growth-oriented category, or were not located in Kampala, were therefore delimited. The selection of the BSPs was purposeful, in accordance with recommendations for qualitative research (Merriam, 2009). It was based on the literature review, initial research of the incubator landscape in Kampala, tours of various BSP facilities, and pilot interviews with the BSP directors.

The pilot interviews were conducted with three program managers and four entrepreneurs of various BSPs and were beneficial in mapping the incubator landscape of Kampala. The pilot interviews allowed for programs not deemed related to growth-oriented entrepreneurship to be deselected. Growth-oriented entrepreneurs were identified as those who stated that they started their businesses due to a perceived business opportunity and not because they were in need of an income. Although the pilot interviews with non-growth-oriented BSP staff and entrepreneurs were therefore not included in the empirical analysis, they helped set the frame in which the research was conducted. Further, these interviews served as an opportunity to trial and refine the interview guide, leading to the reformulation of certain questions allowing the conversation to be steered quicker to topics of interest (Peat et al., 2002).

Based on the pilot interviews, literature, and investigated BSP landscape, two criteria were deemed relevant in the participant selection; the industry sector and gender proportion of the BSP. The industry sector was deemed relevant as women in traditionally male technical sectors were found to face different challenges than those in traditionally female sectors (Stevenson and St-Onge, 2005a, 2005b). Further, the gender proportion of the BSP was deemed relevant as an imbalance of numbers can contribute to the issues women face (Kanter, 1977). These criteria were found to be the most prominent differentiating aspects between the BSPs and were thus used to purposefully select varying BSPs in order to exemplify the BSP landscape. By mapping the incubator environment according to these criteria, four different programs from the different sectors could be selected. These are for anonymity purposes named A, B, C and D:
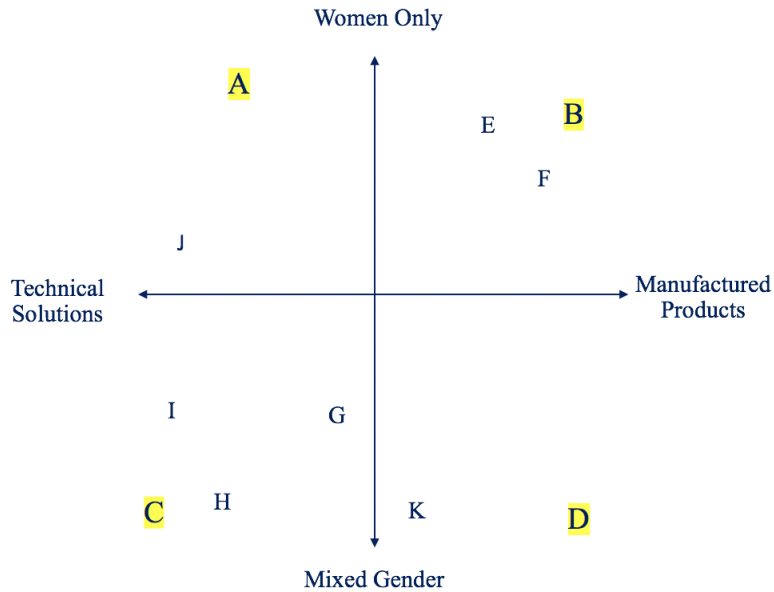
Figure 4: The incubation landscape in Kampala.

The interviewees consisted of incubator management, staff and coaches, as well as entrepreneurs incubated at each given organisation. By initially reaching out to the program directors we were able to obtain permission to research the full institution, including staff and entrepreneurs. Using snowball sampling (Bryman, 2012) the program director put us into contact with relevant staff members and female entrepreneurs who were then able to put us in to contact with additional entrepreneurs. In total, 25 interviews were conducted in this research project; seven pilot interviews, 10 interviews with entrepreneurs, four interviews with program directors, and four interviews with staff members. A complete list of the interviewees can be found in appendix A and B.

3.4 Data Analysis Process

Once the interviews had been conducted, the recordings were anonymised in order to ensure ethical consideration (Bryman, 2012), then transcribed and analysed. We chose to transcribe the interviews ourselves shortly after each interview. This allowed us to improve our interviewing technique, start identifying key themes, and allowed for increased familiarity with the data (Bryman, 2012).

Thematic analysis was used with an abductive approach (Bryman, 2012). Firstly, an inductive analysis of the raw data took place where the data was organised into a series of codes in order to capture the meaning of the phrases (Boyatzis, 1998). Following this, the codes were combined by identifying those that were often repeated (Bryman, 2012) in order to develop

themes and generate a network of associations (Boyatzis, 1998). Once the themes had been established, a deductive approach was used as those themes that emerged throughout the study were compared with existing empirical literature and theories. Throughout the data collection process, an iterative approach was taken as new data that emerged was able to contribute to the research questions (Bryman, 2012). Through the data collection and analysis process, it was possible to establish nine themes related to the barriers faced by female entrepreneurs, and nine categories related to the content and structure of the BSPs.
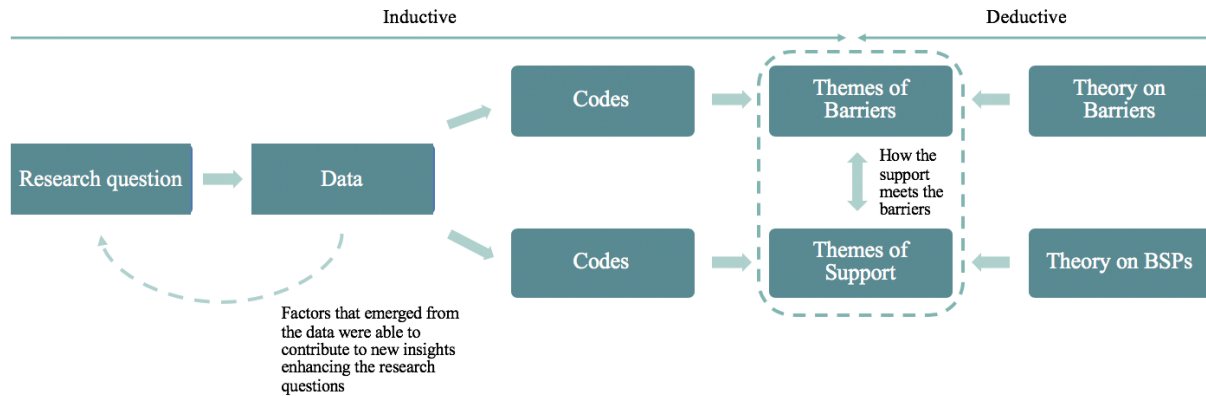
Figure 5: Visual representation of the abductive data analysis process.

Once the themes of the barriers and support programs had been identified, they were analysed individually and in conjunction with each other in order to identify their significance with past literature and how the barriers were able to be met by the BSPs.

3.5 Quality of Study

This section discusses the quality of the study in two parts. First, the actions taken to enhance the reliability and validity of the study are presented. Second, the potential limitations to the research method are discussed (Saunders et al., 2009).

Reliability and Validity

Before conducting the recruitment, we identified the risk of skewed participation, where only those incubators with an interest in gender equality would choose to participate. In order to minimise this risk, when reaching out to the mixed-gender incubators with an inquiry for participation, there was a deliberate intention to place the focus on "all groups of society" instead of female entrepreneurs specifically. This ensured that those BSPs who agreed to take part in the research were unbiased in terms of prioritising gender equality. However, the female-only incubators were aware of the female entrepreneurial focus from the start, and the

staff at the mixed gender BSPs were made aware of the gender focus when reading the informed consent form prior to each interview.

It was important to ensure that a diversity of perspectives and contents were explored (Bryman, 2012). Throughout the interview process, we ensured to acknowledge new topics that emerged throughout the interviews, adding them to the interview guide as questions for future interviews. This was found particularly important when statements were made by the BSP staff regarding their incubators and the entrepreneurs' barriers, as these topics were then able to be brought up when interviewing the entrepreneurs. Further, the reliability of the participant answers was improved by asking several questions in various formulations in order to investigate the same concept (Stevens et al, 2005). By doing this, a broader picture of each concept could be created as it allowed for additional aspects to emerge, and we were able to maintain a critical stance to what was said by obtaining the perspectives of both the BSP staff and entrepreneurs.

Lastly, our status as outsiders to the cultural context investigated could likely have impacted the reliability of the data, as there was the risk of unintentionally imposing meaning on the data (Josselson, 1996). To minimise the risks associated with being cultural outsiders, frequent meetings were held with a Ugandan gender studies professor in order to enhance our understanding of the Ugandan cultural context for women. Further, when interviewing, open-ended questions were asked in order not to let our potential cultural biases influence the participants' answers (Denscombe, 2010). It was also made a priority to ask clarifying questions when an unclear statement was made in order to increase our understanding of the stated concept. Lastly, when analysing the findings, readings of the transcripts took place by both researchers in order to minimise the risk of misunderstandings. However, our status as cultural outsiders could potentially have affected the reliability of the research and the interpretation of the data, something that should be considered for future research.

Limitations

The first potential limitation was in the participant recruitment methods, as the recruitment of five of the female entrepreneurs was a result of the BSP staff providing their contact details. This could mean that these participants were not a true representative of those female entrepreneurs present in the incubator (e.g. more successful or favoured than other entrepreneurs), and they could potentially have had a different experience of the BSP compared to others. However, when obtaining additional entrepreneur participants, snowball sampling from the previously interviewed women was used, allowing for contact to be made with entrepreneurs that were not referred from the incubator staff themselves.

The second limitation concerned the disadvantages of conducting qualitative research solely, as qualitative research alone is not sufficient to establish numerical cause and effect relationships. A supplemental quantitative approach could therefore have been useful for measuring the success of the various aspects we found important, strengthening the findings. We originally aimed to include an analysis of the data of the women's success after graduation from the different programs but were delimited due to the lack of data available in Uganda. It was found that neither the BSP staff, BSP program directors, donors and funders, nor the relevant government ministry had yet compiled this data. As a result, the empirical data was purely based on the subjective statements of those interviewed, and the analysis was therefore limited to the participants' experiences and opinions. However, as this research aimed to answer the research questions regarding the experienced barriers, and the extent to which BSPs currently meet the needs experienced by female growth oriented-entrepreneurs, a qualitative approach focusing on descriptive experiences, rather than numbers (Merriam, 2009), was deemed appropriate to answer the research questions.

Lastly, a practical limitation in carrying out the research was met due to the Covid-19 virus outbreak shortening the time spent in Uganda. Four of the interviews had to be conducted via video-call, which had two limitations. Firstly, there was the potential that the data generated was of reduced depth as the participants were potentially less willing or able to engage in exploratory discussions (Saunders et al., 2009) due to the reduced potential for building rapport and unstable internet connections. Secondly, the video-calls limited the extent to which observations could be made on the body language and the environment of the interviewee (Saunders et al., 2009).

4.0 Empirical Findings and Analysis

The following sections will present the empirical findings and an analysis of how they relate to previous literature. It is important to note that each section includes both the empirical results as well as an analysis of the literature comparison. This structure was chosen to facilitate for the reader, avoiding repetition of the findings in a separate analysis section, and was deemed appropriate for qualitative research (Merriam, 2009).

Firstly, the barriers identified by the female growth-oriented entrepreneurs will be presented, including how they relate to previous literature (4.1). Following this, the content and structure of the BSPs will be presented, including the women's and BSP staff's experiences of these, how they relate to previous literature and to what extent they are able to meet the women's barriers (4.2). Lastly, an elaborative analysis is presented in which the findings from the barriers and BSPs are summarised within the theoretical context (4.3).

4.1 Barriers to Female Growth-Oriented Entrepreneurs in Uganda

This chapter presents the female-specific barriers expressed by the interviewed entrepreneurs. It includes examples illustrated through quotations in order to help give participants a voice, enhance readability, act as an illustration of the situation, and deepen the understanding of the findings (Corden and Sainsbury, 2006).

The following female-specific barriers were found in the empirical data:

Barriers Found in the Empirical Data

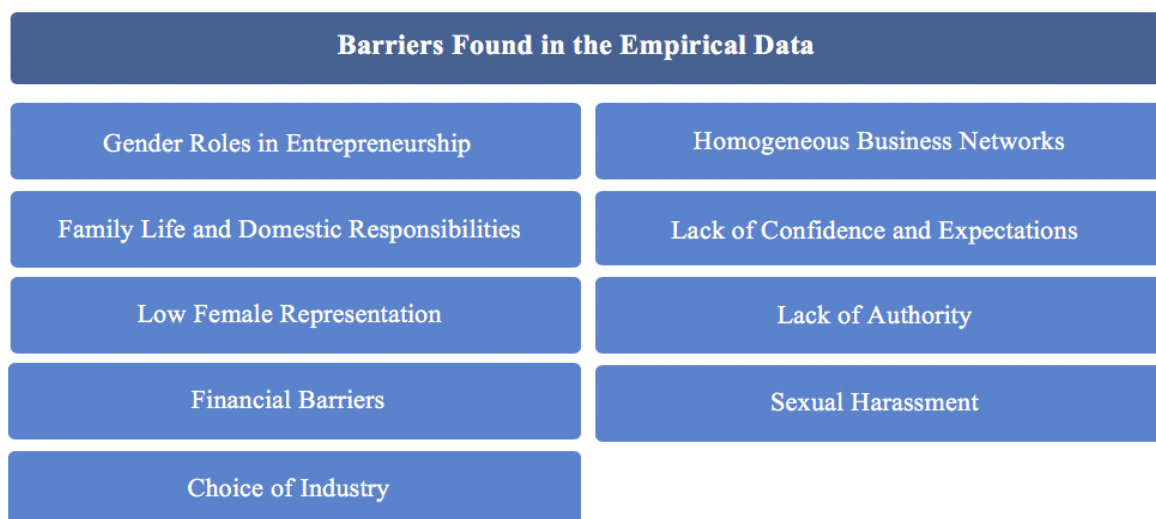|	
Gender Roles in Entrepreneurship	Homogeneous Business Networks
Family Life and Domestic Responsibilities	Lack of Confidence and Expectations
Low Female Representation	Lack of Authority
Financial Barriers	Sexual Harassment
Choice of Industry	

Figure 6: Thematic Framework of Barriers experienced by the Female Entrepreneurs.

Gender Roles in Entrepreneurship

In line with previous literature (Elam et al., 2019; Mugabi, 2014; Stevenson and St-Onge, 2005a, 2005b), the empirical results showed that cultural norms around social roles and entrepreneurship was a significant barrier.

Many women interviewed felt a societal pressure to act according to the expected gender roles, which would mean get married and have children early on in life. One woman explained how her choice to focus on her business was not understood by her peers:

> *"All my friends that I went to school with have children, they all have families now, and at this point I look like the one who is crazy, like 'what are you even doing for yourself?'"*

Further, one woman explained that being more successful than her husband would mean that she was taking on the more dominant role in the marriage, and that this was why many women did not aspire to grow to a level that could be considered more advanced than their husbands' career. This is in line with theories of embeddedness, in that women implicitly choose to adhere to group norms and social relations rather than to pure economic incentives (Granovetter, 1985). In order to change this, another entrepreneur explained that it is important to ensure that the husbands of female entrepreneurs understand that women entrepreneurs start their businesses to contribute to the community and to the family income, and not because they want to override the men. This indicates that the power dynamics of traditional husband and wife relationships in Uganda create an implicit barrier to the entrepreneurs' desire for success, as they are required to choose between prioritising relationships or careers.

In contrast to Elam et al.'s (2019) findings that entrepreneurship is perceived as a male occupation, the empirical findings indicate that success and growth within entrepreneurship was what was perceived as masculine, rather than the occupation of entrepreneurship itself.

Family Life and Domestic Responsibilities

The majority of the women interviewed, including all women with children, expressed the difficulty of juggling a business and a family life. These demands limit the time they can invest in building their business compared to their male counterparts. One woman expressed her time restrictions the following way:

> *"For us there's a time limit, by five I have kids to pick from school, I have to cook for them, I have to read for them, make sure they go to bed. So while men might meet*

business people on a coffee or whatever, you are not able to do it, and so sometimes
you miss out on that, which for men they would be able to do because they know their
wife is at home, and she is going to cook, take care of the kids, she is there for him."

Further, the domestic responsibilities for some women meant that there were difficulties in
keeping their business finances separate from their personal finances:

"Sometimes you for example get a problem, maybe your kid is sick and your husband is
not around and you have to take them to the hospital and your business money is in
your bag, you'll just use it."

The responsibilities of rearing children being placed on the mother was evident in the research
(Stevenson and St-Onge, 2005a) causing the female entrepreneurs to experience a struggle in
balancing their time and finances with the business. This further emphasises the traditionally
structured gender roles of Ugandan society and its consequences for female entrepreneurs.

Low Female Representation

In line with tokenism theories (Kanter, 1977), it was found that many women entrepreneurs
experienced performance pressure due to their minority positions. Women expressed having to
work harder to prove themselves worthy because they were found that they were closely
scrutinised due to the limited amount of previous successful female entrepreneurs. This was
expressed in the following quotation:

"I feel like society expects women to fail... you have to try so much to prove yourself
that you're actually worthy of the title and worthy of the status as opposed to a
gentleman."

Further, the concept that when the token woman fails they become representative of all women
(Kanter, 1977) was found when one woman expressed the difficulty of obtaining financing as a
result of the low number of existing successful female entrepreneurs:

"For example, when you are looking for finances, these banks find it harder to venture
their money into your business since you are a woman, they know you will not make it,
and indeed they are right, there are very few women who have made it. Those are the
challenges, when you are a woman they think you will not make it. I have had to prove
their thinking is wrong."

This further extends the performance pressure on the token women, as their wrong-doings could result in them becoming symbols for women as a group and could result in female entrepreneurs becoming increasingly risk-averse (Kanter, 1977).

One entrepreneur was contacted by the media for interviews more often than her male co-founders due to her minority status in the industry they were in. While she experienced the interviews as a way to gain publicity, tokenism suggests that this kind of attention has a negative effect. It can either give the woman in question a chance to represent all women or tell the story of the woman in particular as a successful exception from the norm. The first case creates a high pressure on the chosen woman to represent the whole population of female founders, while the second case doesn't help women as a group as the successful one is framed as an exception.

It was found that the entrepreneurs who had achieved high levels of growth viewed themselves as different to other women. They often referred to women in general as "they" as opposed to "we", with one female entrepreneur stating that *"the challenge I know, which affects women, [is that] they don't think out of the box"* and *"most women are not hardworking"*. These entrepreneurs tended to create a distance between the "typical" woman and themselves, stating that they were aware that they were unlike the norm and that they were different to other women. This can possibly be explained by Kanter's theories of tokenism and how the minority group is exposed to increased role encapsulation (Kanter, 1977). In accordance with this theory, these women may feel that they are constantly held to certain gender stereotypical roles that do not fit the description of a successful entrepreneur, making them feel the need to differentiate themselves from "the typical woman".

These statements are also in line with theories of embeddedness in that these women were able to engage in these successful ventures, challenging rules and norms, because they were less embedded in the prevailing social structures than other women. They were not "locked" into the existing social structure as they distanced themselves from the female stereotype (Mair and Martí, 2006).

The implication of successful women stating that they are different to other women is that it limits the extent to which they can serve as positive female role models. When the successful woman distances herself from other women, she creates the image of a successful female entrepreneur as something rare and unattainable for other women to become. As a result, it reiterates the idea that the general woman is not suited for success in entrepreneurship, but rather that you have to be an exception from the norm to succeed.

Financial Barriers

In line with previous literature (Lock and Smith, 2015), many women experienced issues with gaining the initial money needed to invest in their businesses as they were unable to obtain loans from formal institutions due to a lack of collateral. The reasoning for their lack of access to land collateral was found to be due to the Ugandan traditions that rule that women will not inherit the tribe's land, with one woman explaining that her father reasoned the following way:

> *"I'm only giving the boy [the land inheritance] because you girls are going to marry into other clans. I can't give property to another clan, that's making another clan richer".*

The literature review found that women are often required to turn to their contacts for financial resources (Solano and Rooks, 2018). However, the empirical findings showed that married women are often unable to receive help also from their contacts, as it is seen that the husband is the provider of the family and should be the one in charge of the money:

> *"When you get married we have what we call a give-away ceremony, your family gives you your last gift: a mattress, a bed, everything for the house, and then you're gone! So they expect you to get any other help from your husband's family or your husband. Of course the family wouldn't help you because they also have sons so it has to be through the husband to get something"*

In line with the literature (Elam et al., 2019), it was found that financial barriers were most prominent within technology sectors, as these sectors have larger initial start up costs. Those female entrepreneurs who had successful businesses within these sectors had received multiple grants in order to be able to start and develop their businesses. The financial barrier to enter this sector was made clear when one female entrepreneur with a background and interest in technology stated that she chose to start her business within beverages instead of technology due to the high start-up costs of her potential technology business.

The gendered structure of society and family roles therefore result in a lack of opportunities for women to obtain business finances, and thus mean that women are more inclined to start their businesses in industries with lower entry barriers (Elam et al., 2019), further perpetuating the notion of certain industries as being more "female".

Choice of Industry

The theoretical barrier of choice of industry (Stevenson and St-Onge, 2005a, 2005b) was not expressed as a challenge by most of the women. This was likely due to the women not acknowledging or recognising the significance of industry choices as a barrier.

However, when observing the different BSPs, the gender proportions of the various sectors clearly reflected previous literature (See Stevenson and St-Onge, 2005a, 2005b; Mugabi, 2014; Elam et al., 2019). At BSP D, the sewing and cosmetics centres consisted largely of women whereas the wood-working and butchering facilities consisted largely of men. Further, the technology incubators were found to have a proportionately low number of women. The mixed gender BSP C was found to have a majority of male entrepreneurs, and in the female-only technology BSP (A) it was found that many of the female entrepreneurs were in industries other than technology, or were not growth-oriented. Indeed, one woman at BSP A stated that she was forced to go to a mixed-gender BSP in order to get more advanced training opportunities for her business.

The majority of the women interviewed had their businesses in manufacturing or cosmetics sectors, with only a small number of women engaging in stereotypically male industries such as technology. In line with the literature (Elam et al., 2019; Mugabi, 2014), the reasons for the entrepreneurs choosing non-lucrative, "female" industries was often due to the lower start up costs, social role expectations and past education choices. Indeed, one woman with a background and idea in technology chose to start a beverage company instead as she did not have the funds to enter the technology sector. This indicates that the barrier of start-up capital is perhaps more significant than past educational choices concerning industry choices.

Further, it was found that women purposely chose less lucrative industries as they did not want to become too successful and thus not find a husband to marry:

> "A man with a small business you cannot marry because now you'll be the dominant person...so around here you'll find very young girls who decide to do - and she has the brains for science and the passion, but because in her mind she's looking at the future of marriage, she's like 'let me do a smaller course and smaller career so that I can marry.'"

Although the literature acknowledges the implications of educational choices for business choices (Mugabi, 2014), our research contributes by emphasising the reasons behind those educational choices, and that even those women with backgrounds in technology were at times unable to start businesses in the sector.

Homogeneous Business Networks

In line with literature (Brush, 2006) the entrepreneurs expressed preference in doing business with women as opposed to men. They explained that this was due to their wish to support female suppliers and help other women succeed. However, this can result in women entrepreneurs having a limited, homogeneous network that they are able to benefit from (Mayoux, 1995).

Due to their lack of male contacts, the female entrepreneurs expressed difficulty in gaining access to areas in which men held the power. One woman expressed her limitations in certain networks like this:

> *"When you go to places where, especially if you try to get a contract with an organisation that is mainly male dominated, they want to use people of the same gender. Even in bidding, like when you go for public procurement and you are trying to bid with the males, definitely they will prefer to work with them… people do prefer working with a particular sex over the other, which is a personal choice you can not argue about."*

Consequently, as many of these entrepreneurs were found to have homogeneous networks, and there are fewer successful women in powerful organisations that can benefit entrepreneurs, the women had fewer powerful contacts that could help them advance (Kanter, 1977).

Lack of Confidence and Expectations

In line with previous literature (Elam et al., 2019), the women interviewed experienced a lack of confidence in their abilities to engage in entrepreneurship. Indeed, half of the women interviewed expressed the need to get an extra push in their confidence throughout their entrepreneurial journey, particularly in the early stages:

> *"I think I needed an extra push, not just in confidence, but also that 'it's ok to be wrong, it's ok to not say something right, it's ok to be big and have an ambitious goal, it's ok to be powerful'... yeah I needed that push."*

Further, one woman stated that female entrepreneurs generally have lower expectations for success than male entrepreneurs, and that men have more confidence that their businesses will succeed. This highlights the societal stereotypes and the perceptions women entrepreneurs have of themselves and their male counterparts.

Those women who portrayed higher levels of confidence were those who had managed to establish successful businesses, or had received a push from their BSP. We therefore contribute to existing research on female entrepreneurial careers through adding the importance of a "push" for confidence, particularly in the early phases of an entrepreneurial career.

Lack of Authority

A majority of the women interviewed expressed that their authority as business founders was often questioned because of their gender, and that they were often met with surprise or disbelief by others when they stated that they were the founder of their businesses:

> *"I have had times I've gone for a meeting and I tell someone I'm the cofounder of [company] and they're like 'really?!, are you sure?'"*

Several of the entrepreneurs stated that people lack confidence in them as well as in their products because they are female. One entrepreneur explained that some people view that there is something "not right" about her engaging in business as a sole woman, and that because of this they feel as if there is something lacking in her product. Another founder mentioned that she involves pictures of her male friends on her company's website in order to create the image of men being part of the team for increased authority and trust in her product. Lastly, one entrepreneur explained that *"when you are a woman they think you will not make it"*, and that she has consequently had to work hard to prove their thinking wrong.

Researchers have previously explored the various barriers stemming from the perception of entrepreneurship as a stereotypical male occupation (Elam et al., 2019; Coleman and Robb, 2017; Stevenson and St-Onge, 2005a, 2005b; Mugabi, 2014). However, these studies did not conclude how that perception could result in a lack of authority for the female entrepreneurs and their enterprises. Previous literature concerning female entrepreneurs' lack of authority in developing countries have primarily focused on the lack of authority experienced concerning access to resources (Solano and Rooks, 2018). Our findings contribute to existing research by adding the aspect of the lack of authority experienced in the entrepreneurs' daily business operations. The lack of authority can be theorised to be due to the lack of visible female role models and success stories in the media (Coleman and Robb, 2017), resulting in disbelief and skewed perceptions of those who do succeed.

Sexual Harassment

Half of the women stated that they had experienced sexual harassment throughout their careers. Many of them described situations in which they had lost a deal or not come to a business

consensus because they had turned down a man's suggestions. One woman described a conversation with a retailer in the following way:

> *"He wants a favour, like he wants maybe a sexual relationship before you can put your products in his shop. He will say something like 'what am I going to get in exchange?', but he won't tell that to a man, he will just say yes or no and then a man will go."*

Sexual harassment had limited presence in the previous literature on barriers to female entrepreneurship. This is likely due to the fact that sexual harassment is not an issue limiting entrepreneurship specifically, but is rather a societal issue limiting women in general. However, as half of the women brought up the issue of sexual harassment in relation to conducting their business, the issue seems to be critical to entrepreneurship and further emphasises the relationship between sociocultural influences and female entrepreneurship.
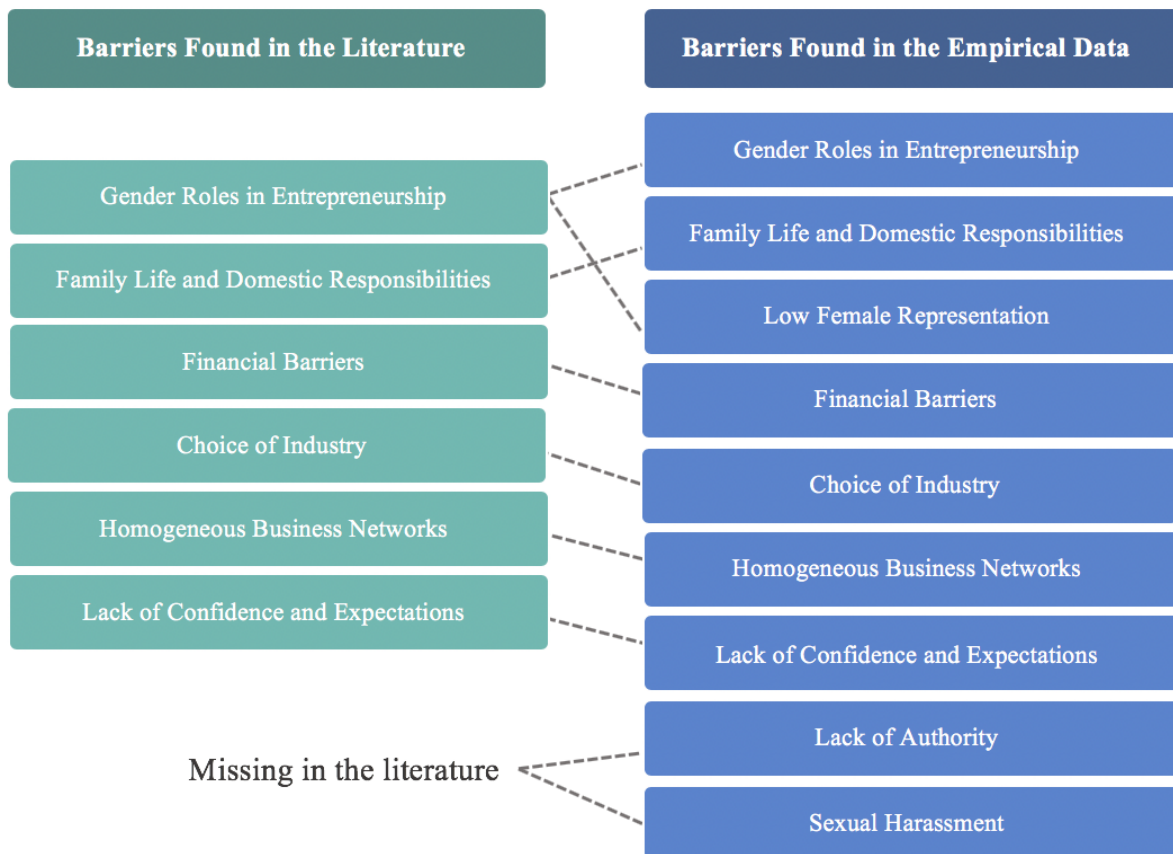
Summary of Barriers

Figure 7: Illustration of the barriers found in the literature compared to those found in the empirical data.

Overall, the barriers the entrepreneurs experienced were strongly influenced by societal gender roles, where the women's career choices and business decisions were often influenced by perceived expectations.

The barriers that were in agreement with the literature review were *gender roles in entrepreneurship, domestic responsibilities, low female representation, financial barriers, choice of industry, homogeneous business network* and *lack of confidence and expectations,* empirically confirming the relevance of these barriers for female growth-oriented entrepreneurs in Uganda. The empirical findings add to the literature the barriers of *lack of authority* in the operation of the business and *sexual harassment* as an entrepreneurial barrier for women in business. Potential reasons for these barriers not being discovered during the literature review could be several. Either the barriers were insufficiently researched, overlooked by the researchers, considered taboo to discuss, or not covered in the field of female entrepreneurship literature as they tend to be more readily discussed within the social sciences.

We have further contributed to entrepreneurship literature through finding additional explanations to the reasons behind these barriers. Firstly, we contribute to the *lack of confidence and expectations* barrier by emphasising the importance of creating a "push" in the early stages of their career. Secondly, we contribute by illustrating the *financial barriers* women in Uganda face and the family's importance to financing. Although Solano and Rooks (2018) found that women in Uganda were often required to turn to contacts instead of formal institutions for financing, our findings indicate that married women were often not able to turn to their contacts at all, as the husband is seen as the one that should take care of the household economy. Further, our findings show that the fear of appearing dominant in a relationship can affect both educational choices and entrepreneurial choices, affecting the entrepreneurs' *choice of industry*, and adding an explanation to how *gender roles in entrepreneurship* affect the success of female entrepreneurs. Lastly, we found that success as well as specific sector choices were those factors that were likely to be stereotyped as being typically male, and not entrepreneurship in itself as found by Elam et al. (2019).

4.2 Business Support Programs for Female Growth-Oriented Entrepreneurs

In this section the various BSP components found in the empirical data are presented and compared with previous literature. An analysis is made on the extent to which they can solve the aforementioned challenges of the female entrepreneurs.

The section is structured in the following way. Firstly, the selected BSPs will be introduced (4.2.1), followed by a presentation of the contents of the BSPS (4.2.2). Lastly, the organisational structure of the programs will be presented (4.2.3).

4.2.1 Introduction to the Selected Business Support Programs

To give an overview of the investigated BSP landscape, the following table presents the four BSPs and how they differentiated from each other:

Support Form Offered	A	B	C	D
Financial capital	✓	☐	✓	☐
Network	✓	✓	✓	✓
Production Facilities	☐	☐	☐	✓
Co-working space	☐	☐	✓	✓
Business Coaching	✓	✓	✓	✓
Financial Advice	✓	✓	✓	☐
Inspirational workshops	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mentorships	☐	☐	✓	☐
Legal support	☐	✓	☐	✓
Tailored Curriculum	✓	☐	☐	✓
Focus on manufacturing skills	☐	✓	☐	✓
Investment bridging	✓	☐	✓	✓
Gender equality in management	✓	✓	✓	☐
Average Support Period (time)	9 months full time/ 18 months part time	Ongoing membership	Depends on sponsored program	(3 years) + 2 years - often run longer
Source of Funding	Donor funded. Unicef, Google, single family foundations etc.	UK Aid, UN Women, Trademark East Africa	Sponsors, e.g. Google, UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund)	Government

Admissions Criteria	A	B	C	D
Business plan	☐	☐	☐	✓
Already running business	☐	✓	☐	✓
Take part in Hackathon/Challenge	✓	☐	✓	☐
Fees for participation (UGX)	Depends on entrepreneur's finances; either 0 or small contribution towards rent	50 000 life membership + 100 000/year	Depends on the program: challenges are free, 220 000 per month for office space	Small contribution towards utility bills

Figure 8: The Characteristics of the Selected Incubators A, B, C & D.

As shown in figure 8, the programs differed notably from each other in several aspects. The areas selected to be presented and discussed more deeply in this thesis are those that were empirically confirmed to help mitigate the aforementioned barriers to female growth-oriented

entrepreneurs. These aspects are separated in two sections, the content and the organisational structure, presented in the figure below.

BSP Program Content	BSP Organisational Structure
Training	Female Only Environment
Female Network and Inspiration	Female Staff Members
Incubator Bridging	Staff Awareness of Challenges
Providing Resources	Entry and Exit Criteria
	Providing Legitimacy

Figure 9: the BSP content and organisational structure found relevant to mitigate barriers to female growth entrepreneurship in the empirical data.

4.2.2 Business Support Program Content

The below section will discuss the types of BSP content, summarised to training, female network and inspiration, incubator bridging and providing resources.

Training

Accounting skills were one type of training mentioned as being appreciated by several female entrepreneurs in order to assist with their *financial barriers.* In line with the literature (Lock and Smith, 2015), several women stated that they did not know how to do proper bookkeeping before receiving training. One woman mentioned that training in differentiating the business money from her personal money was also something that was needed:

> *"I think it's very important to teach us how to keep that money. Cause i think it's not about the books, you can do the bookkeeping but you can still pick from your physical money. So yes, how to safely keep it, how to assume it's not your money."*

This was found particularly relevant for female entrepreneurs as in line with literature (Fiala, 2014; Stevenson and St-Onge, 2005a), it was found that the women had the primary responsibility of ensuring the children's welfare and had domestic pressures on how to spend their money.

Although husband involvement in training was stated to be beneficial in both previous research (Sigvaldsen et al., 2011) and in the interviews, the investigated BSPs did not currently involve the husbands in the training. One entrepreneur expressed that the husbands of female entrepreneurs need to be educated to understand that the women are running businesses not in order to "take away the men's ego" by becoming more successful than them but because they want to strengthen the family income. The need for husband involvement was reinforced by the program director at BSP B who explained that they occasionally run campaigns targeted towards men in order to encourage their participation in the domestic responsibilities. Through involving the husbands in the training, the BSPs could therefore help mitigate the barrier of *domestic responsibilities* and *gender roles in entrepreneurship*.

However, all female entrepreneurs do not need the same kind of training. In line with Sigvaldsen et al. (2011), the BSP should adapt their training not only to female entrepreneurs as a group but to each individual woman. This was found by an entrepreneur who stated that the women-only BSP that she was part of was not sufficiently tailored to all industries, and that it should focus more on tailoring the training content to different sectors.

Female Network and Inspiration

In line with previous literature (Coleman and Robb, 2017; Kanter, 1977; Akisimere 2015), the entrepreneurs stated that their networks with other female entrepreneurs, mentorships, and motivational workshops helped them feel inspired, motivated and confident.

The entrepreneurs stated that the success stories from other female entrepreneurs meant that they were given encouragement that they also could grow and succeed, playing a crucial part in overcoming the barrier of *lack of confidence and expectations.* The importance of role models was further emphasised by Kanter (1977) who argues that in order to mitigate the barrier of *low female representation* in powerful positions it is crucial for women to have other successful women to look up to, allowing them to recognise that high growth in entrepreneurship is an opportunity. Examples of successful women taking non-typical routes were also able to help meet the barriers of *choice of industry* and *gender roles in entrepreneurship.* Many of the successful women mentioned how other female entrepreneurs had inspired them in building their businesses:

> *"Peer learning is very important because it facilitates replication of best practices. So seeing people who have tread the waters and they are somewhere, it gives you an encouragement that you can also do it. Because what sometimes kills businesses is lack of role models, people who have tested all the waters and they have high levels of integrity and all that, and looking at such a person, it also sets you at a pace, that you must measure up your business. So it is critical."*

Further, the female entrepreneurs stated that the informal connections formed with other female entrepreneurs through the network allowed them to discuss and cope with sensitive topics, such as *sexual harassment,* that were not formally brought up in the program. The priority of the BSPs may therefore not be on purely formal training and networking opportunities but on facilitating the creation of these informal connections amongst female entrepreneurs.

However, women-only networks were not able to overcome the challenges that were found as a result of *homogenous business networks*. An important consideration for the BSPs is therefore to ensure that women have an opportunity to engage with role models and other entrepreneurs who are not only female, but also male. Brush (2006) found that women's access to information and networks tend to be more constrained than men's, thus a mixed-gender social capital would have the potential for female entrepreneurs to include more powerful contacts that can help them advance.

Incubator Bridging

An important feature of the BSPs was "bridging", as it allowed exposure to the world outside of the BSP (Amezcua et al., 2013b) and allowed entrepreneurs to be connected to important stakeholders such as funders, other organisations, and partners.

Connecting aspiring entrepreneurs with funding, other organisations or new opportunities was found to have a significant positive relationship with entrepreneurial empowerment (Akisimire, 2015). One entrepreneur mentioned that she was able to benefit from a funding opportunity provided by her BSP:

> *"They recommended us to apply for the [accelerator challenge], so they keep putting us in contact with different players in the industry that they think could be useful"*

Other entrepreneurs mentioned how they were able to obtain contact with "strategic partners" and other entrepreneurs within their fields through expositions provided by the BSPs. The bridging opportunities were therefore able to reduce the *financial barriers* and the barrier of *homogeneous business networks.*

Providing Resources

Due to many women experiencing *financial barriers*, it was generally appreciated when the BSPs were able to assist in obtaining financing. This was done either through bridging the entrepreneurs to funding opportunities or by giving grants, with the technology incubators

more likely to be able to do the latter. It was expressed as important that the money was given in a structured manner:

> *"I think having the structure [was the best thing about BSP C]. Because many accelerator programs have the habit of just throwing at you money and then expecting you to magically turn it into a product ... it's very difficult for you to be given money and then to make sense out of it. But our money was structured, it's not that they gave us the money and went like ˈok find what to do with it'"*

In line with literature (Fafchamps et al., 2011; Buvinic et al., 2014; De Mel et al., 2007), providing resources was not always clearly beneficial for the entrepreneurs. Some women and staff members stated that it was important for entrepreneurs to contribute with their own finances in order to experience ownership over their business and its success. One entrepreneur stated that the reason she left a specific incubator for another was because she wanted to "challenge" herself and see if she could pay the rent required at the new incubator, as a way to indicate growth and track her own progress. This was echoed by a staff member, who mentioned that they had stopped giving funding to entrepreneurs as they had a tendency to become "spoon fed", and that she saw a bigger investment of effort from the entrepreneurs' side if the entrepreneurs had to contribute with resources themselves.

The empirical findings confirm the previous literature that combining financing with training is crucial to create a positive effect from the resources (Guloba et al., 2017). The findings add to the current literature the need to structure the payout scheme in order to guide the entrepreneurs' spending of the money, as well as the need for entrepreneurs to feel personal responsibility for their contributions.

4.2.3 The Organisational Structure of the BSP

In this section, the organisational structure of the investigated BSPs will be analysed in conjunction with literature to determine how well they were able to meet the female entrepreneurs' challenges.

Female-Only Environments

The female entrepreneurs in this study expressed an appreciation for women-only environments. They saw it as a type of "safe space" in which they were able to express their opinions and talk about issues they felt only other women could relate to. This was expressed by one woman as:

> *"I feel like in the women-only accelerator the women are more aggressive and more expressive. I think it's more of a safe space, I'd say because there they tend to come out of their shell. Mostly because I guess they feel secure around fellow women so they don't have a fear of saying something wrong and they feel free to express themselves. I feel like in mixed accelerators many women have an inferiority complex. They feel that if I put up my hand and say something wrong I'm finished, or if i say something everyone will look at me like I'm crazy or too aggressive. "*

Previous literature has acknowledged the feelings of inferiority and hostility that can occur when there is *low female representation* in a mixed-gender environment (McAdams and Marlow (2012). The findings suggest, in accordance with Stevenson and St-Onge (2005a), that female growth-oriented entrepreneurs need a supportive environment that encourages women to "go for it", allowing them to combat stereotypes and build confidence. In line with previous research (Mugabi, 2014), this means that if the environment is mixed-gender, the BSP should consequently ensure not to act solely on "gender-neutrality" but to ensure to allow for additional support.

However, it was found that women-only environments may not be suitable for the whole entrepreneurial journey. One entrepreneur argued that in later stages a mixed-gender environment would be beneficial to emulate a real-life environment. This was reiterated by the program director for the women-only BSP A:

> *"A women-only space is good for a short period of time to get people confident, to get them to believe they can do it. But then I find men are usually more aggressive and the more you are in an environment that shows you that it's not all lovey dovey, or it's not all easy, you will toughen up, you will grow the same kind of skin that they have."*

Business incubators are thus potentially made most effective by adapting their gender ratios depending on the stages of the entrepreneur's career. In line with the concept of "buffering" by Amezcua et al. (2013b), a "safe space" can allow for the female entrepreneurs to be protected from the external environment of the barriers that stem from gender discrimination. Early stage sessions with only women can help speed up the entrepreneurs' learning curve and overcome the barrier of *lack of confidence and expectations* as they dare to take more space and ask questions, yet later stage mixed-gender environments would mitigate the barrier of *homogeneous business networks*.

Female Staff Members

When discussing the importance of gender equality, BSP A, B, and C, all with at least one female staff member in the top management, mentioned that they maintained a gender equality

focus. However, the male program director at BSP D, an incubator with no female directors, stated that they did not take gender into consideration:

> "Anyone with an innovative idea is welcome – I don't look at it from a gender perspective... the gender balance is the least of my worries."

Previous literature states that the focus of the incubator affects the staff and how they conduct training (Mutambi 2011). It is therefore important that the higher-level staff share a gender focus in order for values related to gender equality to be established and maintained. In line with the literature (Benschop and Van den Brink, 2018), one female staff member who felt strongly about gender equality within entrepreneurship mentioned that it was difficult to influence the decisions regarding gender equality within the BSP as there were no female directors.

A female manager at the mixed-gender BSP C further expressed the importance of having female staff in order to appeal to women applicants and potentially decrease the risk of sexual harassment within the BSP:

> "[Having female management] does encourage more women to apply cause if they see an environment where women are comfortable and they do not have to be so worried about different issues in the workplace, whether its sexual abuse, or any inappropriate behaviour from men, then they are definitely more encouraged to apply."

The barrier of *low female representation* can therefore potentially be reduced as a result of the increased presence of female management, and a mixed gender director's board is therefore likely ideal in order to encourage more women to apply and to ensure female input in the decision-making process. However, the barrier of *sexual harassment* was not mentioned by the entrepreneurs interviewed to be within the BSP environment, rather in their daily operations. Hence, that barrier was not considered met by the BSP having female staff.

Staff Awareness of Challenges

The program directors and staff of the different BSPs acknowledged the majority of the challenges brought up by the entrepreneurs. However, they did not address the barriers of *sexual harassment* and *lack of authority* in the operation of the businesses. This could have been due to the fact that these are seen as personal issues related to the daily operations of the business and not seen in the BSP environment and were thus something the staff were not aware of. Interestingly, these were the same barriers that were lacking in the entrepreneurial literature review, indicating that there is perhaps a broader lack of awareness on these topics or a failure to include them in entrepreneurship literature.

Despite a lack of awareness of certain barriers, the staff brought up barriers to female entrepreneurship that the interviewed entrepreneurs had not mentioned themselves. One staff member at BSP D theorised that women have lower growth aspirations than men:

> *"We have realised that some of the women are comfortable where they are now so they don't want to grow big. Cause when you talk to them about expanding their business they are like ´naaah I think I'm okay where I am´."*

This is in line with literature that indicates that women may have lower growth aspirations and perceive fewer opportunities than men (Elam et al., 2019). However, this contrasts to statements made by the entrepreneurs themselves, who when asked about the future expressed having ambitions to grow.

Another barrier to the success for female entrepreneurs was brought up by a staff member at program A. She noted that women tend to recruit empathetically rather than rationally, leading to lower success rates for the business. She expressed this notion the following way:

> *"Sometimes women hire because they are empathetic, you meet someone they tell you "oh my god, I am a single mother, I am looking for some money to take care of my child" and you end up giving this person a job. And when men are hiring they are looking at who will be able to deliver. So we hire for different reasons. As a woman I am hiring to support a single mother but as a man you are looking for quality."*

When the entrepreneurs were questioned on their recruitment strategy, it was found that some of them did indeed recruit based on convenience and empathy. However, there were also those who used recruiting companies and stated that they had learned from their experiences in not hiring friends. The staff member at program A suggested that recruitment training could help mitigate this potential barrier.

The fact that the barriers of *lack of growth aspirations* and *empathetic recruitment* were brought up despite not being mentioned by the entrepreneurs themselves could have been due to various reasons. It may be because the entrepreneurs themselves were not aware of these barriers, that they do not see them as issues, or that the entrepreneurs simply do not experience these barriers.

Entry and Exit Criteria

The staff of the BSPs expressed partially relying on "gut feeling" when recruiting participants. This is potentially problematic as it can eventually lead to a biased selection or recruiting from

contacts (Papia, 2006). Indeed, one entrepreneur stated that she was able to gain admission to BSP D through her government connections. Due to the found barrier of *homogenous business networks*, leading to a lack of access to powerful networks and connections (Fernandez and Rubineau, 2019), it is therefore especially important for BSPs to ensure they are unbiased in their recruitment. The need for clear entry criteria is therefore important in order to not discourage entrepreneurs without those powerful contacts from applying (Papia, 2006).

BSP C was the only mixed gender incubator that took gender into account when recruiting, as they required that the start-up teams that entered their initiatives had at least one female member. Entry criteria that are gender sensitive and based on objective performance criteria, rather than gut feeling, can decrease the risk of homogenous recruitment and gender discrimination, mitigating the barrier of *low female representation* (Rao and Kelleher, 2003). Mixed-gender BSPs should consider having a set quote of the minimum number of women they should accept to the program, ensuring to increase the number of women in the BSP and thus making them less susceptible to tokenism (Kanter, 1977).

The exit criteria should be clear in order to allow for an adequate flow of entrepreneurs, allowing for more entrepreneurs, thus also women, to join the BSP, (Papia, 2006; Ravjee, 2010) helping mitigate the barrier of *low female representation*. This was found relevant in the findings as only two entrepreneurs had graduated from BSP D, and zero from BSP A (started in 2018). Both of these programs had a set time frame during which the entrepreneurs should have matured to graduation, but when the graduation date was reached the time was extended. For incubator D this was an especially recurring phenomena, where the time frame of three years had in certain cases been prolonged to up to 10 years. When asked why the time frame was constantly prolonged leading to a low graduation rate, one staff member described the issue the following way:

> *"As a human being you can't just kick out someone when you know that's their bread winning, you know? So you can't just kick someone out like that. But we try to encourage them, we try to talk to them, because honestly you can't be supported for long. and you are occupying space for others who also want to be supported."*

While acknowledging the issue, there seemed to be no firm plan in place for making any changes. In contrast, BSP C, had a shorter set time frame of seven month per accelerator program, from which they graduated four start-ups per batch. It is therefore important for BSPs to have set time frames with thorough monitoring throughout the incubation period (Papia, 2006). The monitoring should include a gender analysis (Rao and Kelleher, 2003) to more accurately observe differences between genders, encouraging gender equality and allowing BSPs to better adapt their services to women entrepreneurs.

Providing Legitimacy

Being associated with a BSP was found to be able to give the entrepreneur credibility towards larger players, customers, and funders, as they had been selected to join the incubator and were therefore seen as legitimate. Providing legitimacy can therefore be seen as a buffering activity (Amezcua, 2013b), protecting the entrepreneurs' nascent brands with the image of the BSP. This was expressed by one entrepreneur who stated that *"if you have a bigger name attached to you things just become a little easier."*

In line with Suchman's (1995) findings that legitimate start-ups were seen as more worthy, meaningful, and trustworthy, the barrier of *lack of authority* could be met through increased legitimacy. One entrepreneur stated how the incubator's approval of her business helped her gain the authority to receive a loan she was previously denied from. Another woman mentioned that the BSP legitimacy allowed her to gain contact with potential foreign buyers, who reached out to the BSP to purchase from legitimate, registered businesses. Being perceived as legitimate was found to also help the barrier of *lack of confidence and expectations*. One woman described how being a part of a BSP gave her product a certain quality assurance which both gave her more authority and increased her confidence:

> *"[BSP D's] quality-assurance of the products I make is important because that also gives me confidence, if [BSP D] has approved them after making, and they quality assure me, I walk with my head high. These products, even when I stand in front of people, I can market it, knowing that [BSP D] has approved it. Yes, so that builds your confidence."*

Moreover, credibility from having been part of a program and taken part in entrepreneurship training was found to help the entrepreneur overcome the barrier of *access to finance* as it proved the entrepreneur knew how to handle seed money and run a business:

> *"If you tell a grantor that you've been part of all [the incubator's] training they trust you better because they know that you know exactly what you are going to use the grant for."*

Certain business support programs were perceived as having higher legitimacy than others. In line with the literature, the factors that were observed to play a part in increasing the legitimacy included the time of operation as well as funders and partners (Westhead and Batstone, 1998). It was found that being associated with the government or large international organisations had effects on incubator legitimacy, with one entrepreneur stating that due to her BSP having connections with the UN she was able to conduct research at a respected hospital.

The increased legitimacy offered by BSPs can be particularly beneficial for helping women overcome the challenges of *lack of authority, access to finance,* and *lack of confidence and expectations* as they stem from others' perceptions of the entrepreneurs and are highly social in nature. As a result, BSP legitimacy is likely to be a support aspect of particular importance for female entrepreneurs as these societal barriers are likely more prevalent among women than men.

4.2.4 Summary of Business Support Programs

The investigated BSPs were found to provide four types of content to the entrepreneurs and had five types of aspects within their organisational structure that were related to the female specific problems. The BSPs were able to meet the investigated barriers to a certain extent, with slight differences being observed amongst the different types of BSPs.

The BSPs were found to be able to mitigate the barrier of *access to finance* in two ways, either by providing resources directly to the entrepreneurs by grants/loans, or by bridging the enterprises to investors. The researchers add to the current literature on financing the emphasis of the need to structure the pay-out scheme in order to guide the entrepreneurs' spending of the money, as well as the need for entrepreneurs to feel personal responsibility for their contributions.

There was a difference between the mixed gender and female-only BSPs in how well they could meet certain challenges. It was found that female-only BSPs met the challenge of *lack of confidence and expectations* better than the mixed gender ones. These programs were able to provide female inspiration, safe spaces and networks that were found to play a crucial part in overcoming this barrier. The mixed-gender BSPs were found to better help overcome the barrier of *homogeneous business networks.* Although the female-only BSPs allowed for female networks and inspiration*,* they did not create sufficient mixed-gender social capital that the female entrepreneurs could benefit from.

The BSPs that had program directors that recognised the gender imbalance in growth entrepreneurship had more gender sensitive entry and exit criteria and more women in the board of directors, hence were better suited to meet the barrier of *low female representation.*

The researchers found that the BSPs could not fully meet the challenges of *gender roles in entrepreneurship*, *domestic responsibilities, lack of authority*, or *sexual harassment,* however, certain components of the BSPs were found to help deal with the issues. For example, the networks that female entrepreneurs gained from the BSPs were beneficial in that they became an arena to discuss the barriers of *domestic responsibilities, lack of authority, gender roles in entrepreneurship* and *sexual harassment,* thus potentially mitigating the effect of these barriers.

Further, BSPs can change the barrier of *gender roles in entrepreneurship* by increasing the awareness of female entrepreneurship. It was found that involving the husbands through training and campaigns could be one way to increase the men's awareness in order to encourage them to take a larger responsibility for the home. Further, the findings indicated that BSP legitimacy could create additional benefits for female entrepreneurs as compared to male, as the increased legitimacy gained from the BSP affiliation could help overcome the barriers of *lack of authority, lack of confidence and expectations* and *financial barriers,* that men don't experience to the same extent.

The BSPs currently do not meet the barrier of *choice of industry* as it was found that this choice generally occurred during the entrepreneurs' educational choices earlier on in life or was based on the industry entry barriers.

4.3 Summary and Theoretical Elaboration of Analysis

In this section, we will present a broader theoretical analysis of the barriers and support programs, emphasising the most significant aspects and how they relate to each-other in order to answer the research questions.

Barriers

It was found that the majority of the barriers stemmed from the pressures placed on women in Ugandan society. As specified by Mair and Martí (2006), it is important to understand the social context in order to fully understand female entrepreneurial activity. This is particularly relevant for the Ugandan social context as it has pronounced cultural norms and attitudes about women's roles (Mugabi, 2014). As a result, we chose to include Granovetter (1985) and Kanter (1977), arguing that one cannot understand markets without understanding the social context and that issues arise when women are in the vast minority.

In line with Granovetter's theories of embeddedness, it was found that those entrepreneurs who were less embedded in social relations were more likely to become successful, as they were more easily able to go against norms (Mair and Martí, 2006). The entrepreneurs who expressed perceiving the least amount of gender-specific challenges and had achieved the highest growth were those who tended to distance themselves from the traits of "typical" women. This suggests that embodying an identity that differs from the female identity may help the individual woman succeed. However, although this is beneficial for the individual successful female entrepreneur, it does not help the success advancement for women as a group, as it reiterates the current societal notion that the typical woman is not able to succeed within

business. This can further be explained by the use of Kanter's organisational theories. According to her research, being part of a minority group can lead to the members of that group being categorised into one generalised encapsulated role that represents the group. In this case, the experienced need of the successful women to distance themselves from the "typical women" can be explained by the need to avoid this disadvantageous role encapsulation of women.

Business Support Programs

As a theory for explaining the services of the BSP and how they could be improved, Kanter's (1977) organisational theories were applied. Kanter argues that for any organisation to change the structures that prohibit women in minority to grow they need to increase the women's opportunities, power and number. Firstly, Kanter's (1977) concept of tokenism can help solve the barrier of *lack of growth aspirations* found by the BSP staff. According to Kanter's concepts, this barrier may result from the perceived lack of entrepreneurial opportunities for women in Uganda. Showcasing visible successful female entrepreneurs would increase the number of female entrepreneurs who aspire for success as it makes it seem like a viable opportunity. Further, Kanter's concepts explain how the *homogeneous business networks* of female entrepreneurs in combination with the low number of women in power means that women are less likely to have access to powerful networks. It is therefore possible to increase the power of female entrepreneurs by increasing their social capital. Lastly, an increased number of women in managerial staff positions of the BSP, as well as among the entrepreneurs, can help increase the success of women in BSPs. Increased representation of female entrepreneurs can help change the *gender roles in entrepreneurship* through altering the norms, thus having positive effects on the barriers of *lack of authority* and *lack of growth aspirations*.

Further, the need for increased female representation was more evident in certain industries. To mitigate the challenges that occur when women are in the minority, Kanter (1977) proposes actions for increasing the number of women in minority settings. "Cross-over" opportunities for entrepreneurs can be a way to increase the number of women in more lucrative industries. BSPs could do this by allowing for opportunities in which women are able to try out non-gender typical departments (World Bank, 2014), by providing grants to allow women to enter certain sectors, or by exposing women to business ideas in other sectors through mentorships or role models (Stevenson and St-Onge, 2005a, 2005b; Campos et al., 2015; World Bank, 2014). Increased representation can in turn ensure that there are sufficient female entrepreneurs in male-dominated industries, warranting BSPs to provide female-specific training.

Further, Amezcua's (2013b) concepts of bridging and buffering were useful in understanding the BSP services and environments. It was found that the BSPs were able to assist the

entrepreneurs by bridging them with networks and contacts. The BSPs were also able to help the entrepreneurs through creating a protected "buffered" environment within the incubator which allowed for the entrepreneurs to focus on developing their enterprises. This was seen possible through buffering activities such as training, female inspiration, resources and legitimacy. We contribute to literature by adding that the female-only "safe space" in the early stages of women's entrepreneurial careers can be seen as a buffering activity, as it shelters the women from the hostile environment of mixed-gender settings (McAdams and Marlow, 2012) and potential gender discrimination.

The business support programs were found to meet some of the barriers fully, some to a certain extent, and some not at all. However, the literature and statements from the entrepreneurs and BSP staff were able to result in suggestions for improvement of how the incubators can adapt their services to better meet the barriers. Although the BSPs may not be able to combat the barriers stemming from societal issues directly, they are able to contribute by acting as a response to these social issues and guiding the entrepreneurs with specific tools and training.

5.0 Discussion

This section forms a discussion around our theoretical contribution, practical contribution and the relevance of the study.

5.1 Theoretical Contribution

The purpose was to make a twofold contribution to theory to close the literature gap.

The first was to the limited research on challenges experienced by female growth-oriented entrepreneurs in developing countries, particularly in Uganda. Many of the challenges found in the literature review were empirically confirmed within the study. However, we add to existing female entrepreneurship literature the challenges of *lack of authority* in the operation of the business as well as the barrier of *sexual harassment*. It was theorised that these barriers may have not been included in female entrepreneurship literature before as they relate to wider social phenomena and are thus not present in entrepreneurship literature. These barriers are possibly better explained by social theories, hence we have contributed to the literature of female entrepreneurship by adding elements from economic sociology (Embeddedness, Granovetter, 1985) and organisational studies (Tokenism, Kanter, 1977). We therefore recommend future researchers to explore the phenomena of female entrepreneurship in a wider literature setting, ensuring to acknowledge the broader societal contexts through female organisational literature as well as socio-economic literature.

We found that these barriers are important as they have a large impact on other more traditional entrepreneurial barriers. A lack of authority in everyday operations easily translates into disadvantages in entrepreneurial success. The barrier of lack of authority can be tied to previous literature that has been done on venture capital spending to women versus men. According to Kanze et al. (2018), women are more likely to receive prevention questions compared to promotion questions, giving them a disadvantage in pitching situations. Many of the interviewed women described the lack of confidence they had in pitching situations and pitching training. They described situations when people questioned their authority as the founder, which further discouraged them in pitching situations. If women are perceived to have a lack of authority and lack of confidence, this is likely to further encourage venture capitalists to ask prevention questions; focusing on potential losses instead of potential gains. This leads to women having a more disadvantaged position when acquiring finances.

The barrier of sexual harassment can also result in significant disadvantages in the business setting. Similar to a study found with female entrepreneurs in Nigeria (Ojo, 2020), the sexual harassments most often experienced by female entrepreneurs result in an entrepreneurial experience that is more difficult and disencouraging than for male entrepreneurs, as the women

must navigate not only their work but also the sexual transgressions. Further, sexual harassment can have a large impact on the acquiring of financing. With the venture capital market being dominated by male investors, previous research has shown that women have more often than men experienced sexual harassment in relation to pitching (New York Times, 2017). As the women are relying on the investors to finance their enterprise, they are put into a difficult position where their business decisions are affected by the presence of the harassments, forcing them to either accept an offer along with the inappropriate behavior, or deny an investor because of a reason non-related to the business, thus limiting the financing options for the start-up. These barriers ultimately accumulate to create an uneven playing field between male and female entrepreneurs.

The second contribution was to enrich the literature on business support program organisation by adding a gender sensitive lens. Firstly, we contribute by discussing the importance of creating a gender-sensitive organisational structure, and how this can be done, as this was not found in the literature on female-focused BSP support. Further, by adding the aspect of gender to the buffering activities as explained by Amezcua (2013b), we were able to contribute with the aspect of a female-only safe space as being a buffering activity. Previous literature on buffering activities has not recognised the threat of the BSP itself becoming a hostile environment for minority groups, which McAdams and Marlow (2012) pointed out could be the case for women entrepreneurs in a heavily male-dominated incubator. Lastly, we contribute to the BSP literature by using managerial theories to explain how the situation for women within entrepreneurial settings can be improved. Kanter's (1977) theories were useful in explaining how increased opportunities, power and number of women in entrepreneurship can reduce the barriers faced for the minority group, and warrant female-tailored programs. It was therefore found important to increase the representation of women in the BSPs in order to encourage changes in societal norms.

5.2 Practical Contribution

The following managerial implications are recommendations of how a BSP can be more gender sensitive, based on the results of this thesis. The implications are meant to be viewed as suggestions and are based on the female entrepreneurs' statements, the BSP staff's experiences, and the theoretical framework.

Firstly, the BSP should consider how they can improve their training offerings. A training program should be adapted to the individual entrepreneurs. Apart from traditional business development, the training should include opportunities to involve the husband, and lifestyle coaching to increase the entrepreneur's confidence. If funding can be provided, it should be highly structured and in conjunction with training.

The BSPs should also consider how they can leverage bridging and network opportunities for the entrepreneurs. The BSP network should allow for peer learning, include mentors and role models, and allow for the entrepreneurs to build informal contacts with whom they can discuss sensitive topics. Diverse networks and role models can also help encourage cross-overs to more lucrative industries. Further, the BSP should have a wide contact net of helpful organisations and potential investors that the BSP can bridge the entrepreneurs to. Having high-status partners and positive associations among a wide range of contacts in the entrepreneurial sphere also allows for the BSPs to achieve a highly legitimate image.

Further, the BSPs should improve their gender ratios by having gender sensitive entry and exit criteria and ensure increased female representation of both the staff, the directors and the entrepreneurs. Our findings indicate that it could be beneficial to have opportunities for training in women-only settings in an early stage of the entrepreneur's career in order to increase their levels of confidence and create a safe space. At the later stages of the entrepreneur's career, there should be opportunities for a mixed-gender environment that simulates real-life competition and allows more heterogeneous connections, resulting in more powerful networks. Lastly, the BSP should ensure that their board of directors consists of mixed genders, allowing for increased female input in the strategy decision making processes and encouraging more women to apply due to the increased visibility of women.

5.3 Relevance of Study

Due to the fact that many of the barriers were found to stem from macro-economic societal issues, it is imperative for the broader social structures to change. Although macro-economic efforts are likely to have a higher impact on changing these structures, it can be argued that BSPs are also able to make an impact on a macroeconomic level. Individual behaviour is embedded in and influenced by societal structures (Granovetter, 1985), but according to structuration theory the actions of the individuals are also what create the structure in the first place (Giddens 1979). The women who become successful thanks to the support of gender-focused BSPs thus have the potential to change the structures through their individual actions (Mair and Marti, 2006). Optimally, this results in altered perceptions of successful female entrepreneurs, as when more women become successful, they will create a new structure in which they no longer have to perceive themselves as 'exceptions' from the norm. The increased prevalence of successful female entrepreneurs (that have succeeded as a result of tailored BSP programs) therefore has the potential to change the gendered structure of entrepreneurship. However, while this theory addresses how an increased number of successful women can alter societal structures, it does not take into account other significant factors that contribute to societal stereotypes, nor the other aspects that can contribute to female entrepreneurial success.

Further, considerations should be taken as to potential drawbacks that occur when tailoring BSPs to women. Calás et al. (2009) argue that BSP environments in which women are segregated and receive different help from men could potentially reinforce societal norms of women entrepreneurs appearing weaker than their male counterparts. This would be detrimental as it was found that those gendered stereotypes are what ultimately contribute to the majority of the barriers found. However, as the literature (Stevenson and St-Onge, 2005a, 2005b) and the findings have shown, the "safe spaces" created by women-only environments were seen as a vital aspect of the BSP. The dilemma of providing assistance without it being seen as differential treatment and a characteristic of weakness is a potential for future research.

6.0 Concluding Remarks

To conclude the thesis, we will present the research questions in a compiled manner, discuss the generalisability of the results, as well as the limitations and potential for future research.

6.1 Answering the Research Questions

The purpose of the thesis was to gain an in-depth understanding of the challenges faced by female growth-oriented entrepreneurs in Uganda, and potential reasons for their existence. The purpose was also to understand how the investigated business support programs were currently able to meet the needs of the entrepreneurs, and how they potentially could be better structured. This objective was led by the following research questions:

What are the perceived challenges to female growth-oriented entrepreneurship in Uganda and how can these barriers be explained? To what extent can the challenges be met by business support programs?

Considering the theoretical and empirical findings analysed through this thesis, the research questions can be considered to have been answered.

The empirical results from the interviews with women discovered the barriers of *gender roles in entrepreneurship, domestic responsibilities, financial barriers, choice of industry, low female representation, homogeneous business network* and *lack of confidence and expectations,* which confirmed the literature, and *lack of authority* and *sexual harassment,* which were not in the literature. The barriers of *lack of growth aspirations* and *empathetic recruitment,* stated by the BSP staff, were also added. As the barriers were found to be embedded in the social structure in Uganda, they could be theoretically explained by the socioeconomic theories of embeddedness (Granovetter, 1985) and tokenism (Kanter, 1977).

To answer the second part of the research question, it was shown that the BSPs can meet the barriers of *low female representation, homogeneous business networks, financial barriers, lack of confidence and expectations, lack of growth aspirations* and *empathetic recruitment* to a certain extent, with slight differences between the mixed/single gender BSPs. The challenges of *gender roles in entrepreneurship*, *domestic responsibilities, lack of authority*, *choice of industry,* and *sexual harassment* could not be directly met by any individual BSP, as the issues were found to be deeply embedded in society. However, it was found that increasing the representation of women in the BSPs is an important first step towards changing these social structures. Further, while not removing these barriers, the BSPs have the potential to help women respond to them by providing them with tools that can allow them to mitigate and reduce the impact of the barriers.

6.2 Generalisability

This study was delimited to focus solely on a small sample of female growth-oriented entrepreneurs in Kampala, Uganda, and it can therefore be discussed whether the study is applicable to other contexts. The literature for this study was not only from Uganda-specific sources, but also from other parts of Sub-Saharan Africa as they were deemed culturally similar (Ramachandran, 2009). As a result, the findings are likely to be generalisable to other Sub-Saharan countries. Further, the results of this thesis are potentially transferable to additional developing countries, provided it is first determined how culturally similar the contexts are. We recommend replicable studies in other contexts in order to establish differences in findings and thus determine the extent of the generalisability. Further, contingencies such as sector, country, rural/urban and phase in the entrepreneurial career should be considered when replicating the study.

6.3 Limitations

The first limitation is that the findings for the improvements of the BSPs were based on the experiences of the entrepreneurs and staff and were not able to be supplemented by quantitative data that reinforce the effectiveness of various measures. Further, the barriers presented in the findings were those that were stated by the entrepreneurs and staff members themselves. Due to the non-representative sample size, there could therefore potentially be additional barriers to female growth-oriented entrepreneurship that the researchers have failed to include. Lastly, there were certain methodological limitations (see methodology).

6.4 Future Research

The knowledge on female growth-oriented entrepreneurship and how BSPs can best aid them would best be investigated using a variety of different research methods. We recommend conducting a longitudinal study in order to be able to establish precisely which factors of the various BSPs are more likely to result in successful businesses. This is beneficial as the researchers are able to create their own data measures and therefore not rely on the BSPs for this information. We also suggest future comparative research, investigating some of the differences found relevant amongst growth-oriented entrepreneurs. This is relevant when considering the differences amongst various business sectors and geographical locations, as well as the differences between male and female growth-oriented entrepreneurs. These studies would result in additional understandings of the barriers and experiences of female growth-oriented entrepreneurs.

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APPENDIX A - PARTICIPANT SAMPLING: BSP STAFF

Interviewee	Gender	Incubator	Time at company	Job title
Program Director C	Male	C	8 years	Program Director
Program Director A	Female	A	8 years	Founder
Program Director B	Female	B	4 years	CEO
Program Director D	Male	D	14 years	Program Director
Staff D	Female	D	14 years	Head of Special Projects
Staff A	Female	A	6 years	Head of Operations & Finance
Staff C	Female	C	4 months	Member - Startup Associate
Staff D	Female	D	9 years	Engineering Researcher in the Instrumentation Division

APPENDIX B - PARTICIPANT SAMPLING: FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS

Interviewee	Gender	Reason for starting business	Type of Business	Support Program(s)	Education	Background	Family Situation
Entrepreneur 1	Female	Tired of employment, wanted to manage her own time to easier combine with family life	Cosmetics	**B**, D for product testing	University	10 years in customer service - calling center	Married with children
Entrepreneur 2	Female	Saw an opportunity where there was no business	MedTech	**C**, J, various female only short courses; a program for top female entrepreneurs in Africa	University - Business	University graduate	No children
Entrepreneur 3	Female	Had an interest in the cosmetics field, wanted to help rural female Ugandan farmers	Cosmetics	**D**	University - Chemistry	Employment within Electrical engineering	Married with children
Entrepreneur 4	Female	Saw an opportunity to add value to discarded food items, and at the same time help female farmers	Catering	**B**, several associations, aspires to be in D	University abroad	Work with her mother's catering business	Husband, no children yet
Entrepreneur 5	Female	Resigned from employment to rehabilitate her child, saw an opportunity to make a living of her hobby, wanted to help teach people in the slums crafting	Woodmaking	**D**	High School	15 years of employment	Married with children (one sick child)
Entrepreneur 6	Female	Wanted to supplement her salary, then found a passion	Beverages	**B**, K, several associations, young, female programs.	University - Accounting	Started a confectionary business as a supplement to working with her dad's company right out of graduation. Then evolved into the current business.	Married with one child
Entrepreneur 7	Female	During an internship in a rural area she saw the need for developing the device	MedTech	**C**, D for prototyping, various grants & competitions + a program for top female entrepreneurs in Africa	University - Medical Science	University graduate	Husband, no children yet
Entrepreneur 8	Female	Saw an opportunity due to a gap in the market	Beverages	**D**, B	University abroad	30 years as a civil servant, Ministry of Finance	Married with children
Entrepreneur 9	Female	Wasn't fulfilled from teaching, wanted to empower children further	EdTech	**A**, I, H, mentorship groups	University - Education	Teaching	Married with children
Entrepreneur 10	Female	Saw a potential to increase her revenue and help employ others	Beverages	**A**	University - Computer Science	4 years employment	Married

APPENDIX C - INFORMED CONSENT FORM

We are two master students in Business and Management from the Stockholm School of Economics who have chosen to research the field of female entrepreneurship in Uganda for our master's thesis. The study is made in collaboration with SIDA - The Swedish International Development Agency.

Title of project: How can business support programs be tailored to enable success for female growth-oriented entrepreneurs in Kampala, Uganda?

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to accept the invitation it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Feel free to ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.
Thank you for reading this.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this study is to investigate through management theories varying business incubators as well as their management and programmes, in order to identify how female entrepreneurs can better be supported through them.

Why have I been asked to participate?

You have been asked to participate as you are involved in some way with a business incubator in Kampala, uganda.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you take part, you agree to sit for an interview with one or both researchers. You are free to refuse to answer any questions and free to withdraw at any time.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

All information, which is collected, about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. Any information about you will have your name and address removed so that you cannot be recognised from it. Any quotations used in research reports will be fully anonymised so that there is no possibility of you being identified.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The conversation we have will form part of our Master's thesis in Business and Management. Additionally, the results of this study may be published in a scientific journal or book. Participants will be provided with a condensed summary of the results and will have access to the full results if they wish to receive a copy.

Who has reviewed the study?

The study has been reviewed and approved by Mats Jutterström, Stockholm School of Economics.

Contact for Further Information

If you require any further information, or if you have any questions regarding your participation in this study, please feel free to contact us or our supervisor.

Olivia Fabreschi, 41415@student.hhs.se
Amanda Tivenius, 41421@student.hhs.se
Mats Jutterström, mats.jutterstrom@hhs.se

CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: How can business support programs be tailored to enable the long-term success for female entrepreneurs in Kampala, Uganda?

Name of Researchers: Olivia Fabreschi, 41415@student.hhs.se , Amanda Tivenius, 41421@student.hhs.se

☐ I agree to take part in the above study.

☐ I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

☐ I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

☐ I give permission for the research process to be audio recorded. I understand that re- cordings will not be used in a public form without expressed permission.

☐ I give permission for the data that emerges from this research project to be used by the researchers in a fully anonymised form.

☐ I understand that data will be stored on password protected university or personal computers.

Name of Participant   Date   Signature

Name of Researchers   Date   Signature

APPENDIX D - INTERVIEW GUIDE: BSP STAFF

Overview of the hub:

- Tell me a little bit about you and your program, the background and your vision for the future. Why did you get started?
- What motivates you about working at this BSP?
- What is your revenue model?

Programmes:

- Which programs/different types of support do you offer for entrepreneurs?
  - Why these ones specifically?
  - What is included?
  - Training: How often? Individual/group?
  - Why did you decide to include these training sessions?
  - Do you tailor your support services - ex. coaching depending on different groups?
  - What do you think about female-specific problems in these training sessions? Give examples
- Do you consider gender equality when operating the program?
- How has the BSP changed over time? Why? (ex: when did you start female-specific training, and why?)
- What do you think is missing from your support program? Why? Are there any other services you would like to add if you could dream freely?

Daily Operations:

- What are the main challenges you believe women face compared to men?
- How do you help them with that in your operations? Give examples
- What challenges do you face in regards to supporting women?
- We have read a lot about female entrepreneurship in Uganda and it seems as though there are many women starting businesses but fail to scale and succeed long term. Is this something you have seen? Why do you think that is? How do you work to help them achieve sustainable growth?

Management:

- How do you obtain financing?
- Who do you report to? What categories of information do you report? How do your sponsors/funders decide whether you are doing well or not?
- How many men/women work here in the management team? Trainers? Mentors?

Measuring success:

- How have things gone for the entrepreneurs (especially female) after being part of your program? Do you measure their success? If yes, how?
- What are your requirements on the entrepreneurs that are part of the program?
- Do/have female entrepreneurs ever failed to complete the program? Why?
- What are your goals for the entrepreneurs when graduating?
- Do you see a difference in the long-term success between women and men? If yes, why do you think?

Recruitment:

- How do you recruit participants? Do you keep gender in consideration?
- What are the selection criteria for choosing entrepreneurs that take part of the program?
- What is your ratio of female to male entrepreneurs? + rate of applicants
- How do you think you can get more women to apply/be selected?

APPENDIX E - INTERVIEW GUIDE: FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS

Background to the Entrepreneur:
- Tell me a little bit about you and your background - education, family, professional etc. How did you get started with your business?
- Why are you an entrepreneur? And why this business?
- What is your vision for your future? And your enterprise's?
- Why did you choose to apply to this incubator? How did you find out about it?
- Do you know about other business support programs?
- Have you been to any other incubators/received other support? (comparisons, positive, negative?)

Overview of the BSP:
- What kind of program are you part of? What does it entail?
- What do you think is the most important things that you get out of being part of the incubator? For you personally.
- What other support forms are offered here? Do you take advantage of these as well? /Why are they not as important for you?
- Have you seen any change at the incubator while you have been here? What?
- What do you think is missing from your support program? Why?
- Where do you expect to be when you are finished with the program? How do you plan to grow sustainably without the support of the program?

Challenges:
- What are the biggest challenges you face right now?
- Do you think you face the same challenges as male founders?
- What challenges do you think you face that men do not face?
- How does the BSP help you overcome these challenges?
- Do you need different kind of support compared to men/ more of something? What in that case + are you given that?
- Have you ever thought about quitting the program, why?
- Do you know anyone who quit the program, why?

Daily Operations:
- How do you integrate the support from the incubator into the daily operations?
- Considering your own experiences, do you feel like you have been treated differently as a female entrepreneur compared to male counterparts? (How?)
- How did you recruit the staff working for you?

Networking:

- Did you know any other female entrepreneurs before you started here?
- How do you use your network of other entrepreneurs to grow your business?
- Do you have a role model?
- Do you think it is important for you to be surrounded by other women/meet other women that also run a business?

Measuring success:
- What do the BSP expect of you?
- Do you think the expectations are the same for men and women regarding performance?
- Do you believe you can run this business as well/easy as a man would be able to?
- How would it be different if you were a man?

Women-Only Programs:
- Why did you choose this incubator?
- Why did you not choose a mixed gender incubator?
- What do you get from a women-only incubator that you don't from a mixed gender?
- How do you think that affects your performance?