



**An Investigation into the Social and Cultural Impediments to Female
Entrepreneurship in Ireland**

Submitted by: Oluwabukola Adewuyi

Student Number: 19221011

Master of Science in Entrepreneurship

Submitted to the National College of Ireland

Abstract

Purpose: This study explores the perspective of females on entrepreneurship, stereotypes about female entrepreneurship, and socio-cultural factors that impede female entrepreneurship in Ireland. The study suggests future policies that impact female entrepreneurship in Ireland. These objectives were met by an inductive method with an investigate focus.

Research question and objective: What are socio-cultural barriers to female entrepreneurs in Ireland. Subsequent questions are the degree to which socio-cultural factors stop or motivate women from starting entrepreneurial ventures in Ireland. Lastly, does the national culture celebrates, encourage, or supports female entrepreneurship. First, the research investigates the impact of gender, stereotypes, and socio-cultural impediments on female entrepreneurship in Ireland. Lastly, the study seeks to suggest future policies for reducing the barriers to female entrepreneurship in Ireland.

Motivation: Personal drive to see more women involved and have influence in creating entrepreneurial ventures. A campaign to see policies on entrepreneurship that provides an enabling environment for new and existing female entrepreneurs to thrive.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The paper utilises a qualitative approach through in-depth interviews with five prospective entrepreneurs and five active entrepreneurs and official documents on female entrepreneurship indicators in Ireland. Data were analysed using thematic coding, NVivo software, and mind maps.

Findings: Gender and stereotypes impact the level of female-owned businesses in Ireland. Some socio-cultural factors that affect female entrepreneurship identified by participants include lack of role models, social issues, lack of entrepreneurial education, fear of failure, risk, and lack of requisite skillset. Significant factors such as non-supportive norms, close-mindedness, adversarial culture towards immigrant women, and lack of networking in the Irish culture impede female entrepreneurship.

Originality/value: The paper develops an exploration into female entrepreneurship in their socio-cultural contexts.

Keywords: Investigative study, female entrepreneurship, socio-cultural factors, Ireland

Paper-type: Dissertation

Declaration

I at this moment certify that this material, which I submitted for assessment of the programme of study leading to the award of Master of Science in Entrepreneurship, titled "An investigation into the social and cultural factors that affect female entrepreneurship in Ireland," is entirely my work and has not been taken from the work of others.

Signed: Bukola Adewuyi

Date: 18/08/21

Student Number: 19221011

Acknowledgment

I want to thank Victor Del Rosal for his support, direction, and suggestions during the conduction and writing of this dissertation. I would also like to thank my husband, Wale Adewuyi, for his continued support in everything. Finally, the participants of this research without whom the study would not have been possible. Thank you all.

Contents

Abstract.....	2
Declaration.....	3
Acknowledgment.....	4
List of Tables	7
List of Figures.....	8
List of Appendices	9
Introduction.....	10
Chapter I: Literature Review	13
1.1 Gender roles, Stereotypes and Entrepreneurship	13
1.2 Barriers to female entrepreneurship	16
1.3 Socio-cultural factors and entrepreneurship.....	17
1.3.1 Start-up motivation and female entrepreneurship.....	19
1.3.2 Fear of failure.....	21
1.3.3 A Gendered risk	22
1.3.4 Networks, Role Models, and female entrepreneurship.....	23
1.3.5 Perceived capabilities.....	25
1.3.6 National culture and policies promoting female entrepreneurship.....	26
1.4 Female Entrepreneurship in Ireland.....	28
1.5 Conclusion.....	31
Chapter II: Research Question and Aims	32
2.1 Research Question.....	32
2.2 Research aims and objective	32
Chapter III: Research Methodology	34
3.1 Introduction	34
3.2 Research Philosophy	34
3.3 Research Approach	35
3.4 Research Design.....	36
3.5 Time Horizon	38
3.6 Sampling Techniques	40
3.7 Research Ethics and Consent Forms	40
3.8 Data Collection.....	41
3.9 Data Analysis	42
3.10 Methodological Limitations	43

Chapter IV: Research Findings and Discussion.....	44
4.1 Introduction	44
4.2 Demographic Information	44
4.3 Summary of findings	46
4.4 Gender Roles in Female Entrepreneurship.....	47
4.4.1 Perceived roles of women and their effect on female entrepreneurship in Ireland	47
4.4.2 Women in Entrepreneurship in Ireland: Stereotypes and Normative beliefs	51
4.4.3 Thoughts on Entrepreneurship.....	53
4.5 Barriers and challenges to female entrepreneurship in Ireland	54
4.5.1 Role Models.....	56
4.5.2 Social issues.....	57
4.5.3 Structural barriers	59
4.5.4 Access to funding	59
4.5.5 National Culture	63
4.5.6 Policy and Government Support.....	64
4.5.7 Fear of Failure	65
4.5.8 Risk.....	66
4.5.9 Marginalisation.....	68
4.5.10 Access to Entrepreneurship Education	69
4.6 Future of Female Entrepreneurship in Ireland	70
Chapter V: Conclusions and Recommendations.....	72
5.1 Overview of study	72
5.2 Conclusions & Implications of Research Findings on Objectives	72
5.2.1 Implications for practice.....	73
5.2.2 Implications for Policy	74
5.2.3 Implications for future academic research.....	74
5.3 Research Limitations.....	74
5.4 Recommendations	75
References.....	76
Appendix I: Interview Questionnaire.....	85

List of Tables

Table 1: Enterprise Ireland statistics on High Potential Startups	29
Table 2: Linking research objectives to literature/research protocol.....	39
Table 3: Demographic data of respondents	45
Table 4: Overview of views of respondents on entrepreneurship.....	53
Table 5: Barriers to female entrepreneurship in Ireland	55
Table 6: Structural barriers to female entrepreneurship	59
Table 7: Access to Education as a barrier to female entrepreneurship	69

List of Figures

Figure 1: Institutions impacting entrepreneurship	16
Figure 2: Socio-cultural factors cited by literature	19
Figure 3: Perceived capabilities reviewed in the literature	26
Figure 4: Saunders Research Onion.....	34
Figure 5: Stages of data analysis.....	42
Figure 6: Perceived roles of women in Ireland.....	49
Figure 7 Role Models as barriers to female entrepreneurship	56
Figure 8: Social Issues	57
Figure 9: Access to funding as a barrier to female entrepreneurship	62
Figure 10: National culture as a barrier to female entrepreneurship.....	63
Figure 11: Risk as a barrier to female entrepreneurship	67
Figure 12: Future of female entrepreneurship in Ireland.....	71

List of Appendices

Appendix I: Interview Questionnaire	85
---	----

Introduction

Many researchers and policymakers recognize entrepreneurship as a significant driver of economic development and growth in a country (Henry et al., 2017). Studies have shown how entrepreneurial activities contribute significantly to the economy since it creates new organizations and revives existing ones (Nielsen et al., 2021). This is seen as the key to employment creation and growth in modern society. Furthermore, several authors have attempted to define entrepreneurship, yet there is no agreed definition. However, entrepreneurship is about creating new opportunities and processes, assessing and organizing them.

Entrepreneurs have a critical role in the formation, growth, and survival of businesses (Donbesuur et al., 2020). The key questions that have animated entrepreneurial studies over the past decade of the research are who becomes an entrepreneur and succeeds as one (Burton et al., 2019). These fundamental questions led to research and investigations that identified a significant difference between female and male entrepreneurs (Strategic Direction, 2019). However, the vast literature on entrepreneurship has concentrated on men and has not differentiated between genders (De Bruin et al., 2006).

Women's contributions, characteristics, and demands in business went ignored, unquestioned, and shrouded in silence. Fortunately, forerunners have traversed these frontiers, bringing female business out of the shadows. Scholars such as Candida G. Brush, Robert D. Hisrich, and others took up female entrepreneurship as a topic for research and academic inquiry (Loza, 2011). This research aims to broaden the current knowledge of female entrepreneurship.

Developing global entrepreneurial ecosystems need women entrepreneurs (Brush et al., 2018). Women are vital to entrepreneurship and economic progress (Kelley et al., 2017). Various studies have proven their impact on entrepreneurship (Meyer, 2018). Recent research shows that female entrepreneurs and those with higher education are more likely to be inventive (Hoogendoorn et al., 2020). Thus, the experience of female entrepreneurs matters because it affects societal conditions (Moreira et al., 2019).

Therefore, to address financial inequity and social isolation, it is necessary to support female entrepreneurs.

In Ireland, according to statistics from the **Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) report**, the gender gap in starting a business is increasing significantly, and this trend will continue. The statistics show that 1.8 more men are starting businesses than women (Fitzsimons & O'gorman, 2019). Furthermore, for existing businesses run by their owners, the men's rate increased; in contrast, women's rates decreased, increasing the gender gap to a ratio of 2.4:1. This difference shows that female entrepreneurial activity is less than their male counterparts in Ireland. Considering these findings, this paper seeks to address the reason for the gender gap in Ireland.

Previous research has highlighted the differences in starting an entrepreneurial venture could depend on the gender of the entrepreneur (Ahl & Marlow, 2012). There also has been some identified difference between male and female entrepreneurship. Besides playing a remarkable role in the different entrepreneurial activities, gender is often recognized as an essential attribute that influences an entrepreneur's performance and experience (Bruin et al., 2007). As a result, this study addresses the influence of gender and stereotypes in entrepreneurship as a possible area of investigation.

Several studies have shown keen interest in some factors affecting female entrepreneurship (Cullen, 2019). Specifically, research has identified social and cultural norms as significant barriers to female entrepreneurship (Noguera et al., 2013). Thus, understanding how social and cultural factors influence female entrepreneurial activity is critical in determining how to support entrepreneurial behaviour and culture (Rubio-Banon & Esteban-Lloret, 2016).

Various studies have proposed socio-cultural factors such as fear of failure, the perception of gender capabilities, lack of role models, risk-averseness, cultural norms, national values (Cullen, 2019; Enterprise Ireland, 2020). Further studies on the relationship between cultural belief and gender (Rubio-Banon &

Esteban-Lloret, 2016). This paper examines these socio-cultural factors in the Irish context to explore their influence on Ireland's female entrepreneurship. Finally, current studies on social-cultural barriers to entrepreneurship are primarily from the United States and other European countries. However, Ireland appears to be under-researched in this area.

The remaining part of this dissertation is divided into four sections; the first section examines a systematic literature review on gender in entrepreneurship. It begins with a discussion of gender as a social category. It then moves on to the stereotypes of entrepreneurship and the barriers that affect female entrepreneurship. The chapter ends with an identification of the research gap. The second section elaborates on the research questions and framework. The third section is built around the methodology used to carry out the research and outlines the design. It then discusses the data collection method. Detailed findings of the interviews and the discussions based on these findings are next. The conclusions, recommendations with theoretical contribution, and practical implications of the research are drawn out in the final section. It also outlines the limitation of this study and proposes future research agenda.

Chapter I: Literature Review

This part aims to critically assess and examine the relevant literature that supports this study. The literature review explores society's view of gender roles and the roles attributed to each gender, and the stereotype about women in entrepreneurship. The discussion then moves to a specific topic on the barriers to female entrepreneurship. The subsequent sections review the different socio-cultural factors examined in past literature. Finally, the chapter ends with a review of female entrepreneurship in Ireland.

1.1 Gender roles, Stereotypes and Entrepreneurship

The fundamental perspectives in entrepreneurship can be found in the context of gender, roles, and stereotypes. Gender is a complex phenomenon that includes biological attitudes and values preconceptions (Ayman & Korabik, 2010). Society uses gender to portray a person physically and biologically, and it would determine an individual's behaviour. It has been suggested that men's and women's social and cultural roles are socially formed and learned from childhood (Böing, 2009) as every society establishes a pattern of recognized behaviours that males and females are supposed to exhibit. Furthermore, gender influences the features associated with specific behaviours and assigned gender roles (Kim & Shin, 2017).

Eagly (1987) proposed social role theory is the most acceptable theory on an established pattern of the male group's behaviour. The theory explains the positive relationship between gender stereotypes and a socially acceptable person. Stereotypes are socially formed cognitive assumptions applied to specific groups of people (Greene et al., 2013). Thus, a gender stereotype refers to the social construct that men have higher chances of becoming entrepreneurs with higher achievement attitudes reflecting the societal view (Rubio-Banon & Esteban-Lloret, 2016). As a result, society believes that women cannot fill such roles when a position has been delegated to men.

Furthermore, it is widely assumed that men have more entrepreneurial inclinations than women (Bruin et al., 2007). However, theorists believe this ongoing masculinized social construction of the traditional

entrepreneurial persona is a significant hurdle to increasing rates of female entrepreneurship (Gupta et al., 2009). In addition, Cardella et al. (2020) discovered that gender disparity in entrepreneurship could be explained by society's stereotypes and social roles allocated to each gender. Furthermore, Gupta et al. (2009) also investigated the impact of socially formed gender stereotypes in entrepreneurship. According to their findings, people often identify masculine features with entrepreneurs, and entrepreneurship is viewed as a male discipline (Ahl, 2004). The authors discovered that both men and women perceive entrepreneurship as a male-typed occupation (male gender-role stereotype).

According to another expert, conventional gender discrimination is displayed and perpetuated by labelling women entrepreneurs as "female" to distinguish them from normative (typically male) entrepreneurs (Taylor & Marlow, 2010). Thus, masculinity defines the entrepreneurial stereotype, relegating women to a gendered arena in opposition to males. Similarly, some researchers state that gender variations in entrepreneurial intentions and behaviours reflect socially built gendered disincentives rather than the fundamental biological difference (Gupta et al., 2008).

Ahl & Marlow (2012) suggested that researchers cannot examine entrepreneurship from a gender-neutral stance. Therefore, there has been systematic research on gender as a factor determining entrepreneurial activity (Wilson et al., 2007). This includes extensive consensus among the literature that men, to a greater extent, are more likely to start entrepreneurial ventures than women (Mckay et al., 2010). And this male-female self-employment disparity has stayed nearly stable throughout time (Blackburn & Kovalainen, 2009).

In addition, there has been a growing recognition of the impact of the feminine gender on entrepreneurial experience (Marlow et al., 2009). The authors, in their work, outlined literature on different debates and themes surrounding gender and how it influences business ownership. Relevant literature cited in their studies is the social-economic context of female entrepreneurship (Rouse & Kitching, 2006) and the social construction of females' ventures (Ahl, 2006).

In line with the idea of the social construction of female ventures, scholars observed that women are more inclined to establishing their enterprises in lower-order services with low profitability and market share (Carter & Marlow, 2007). Some studies suggest that these women-owned businesses perform at lower levels than businesses owned by men concerning criteria such as survival rate and profit (Klapper & Parker, 2010). However, Marlow & McAdam (2013) debunked the myths that female entrepreneurs and female-owned businesses are less successful and do not underperform. This is in line with a similar finding by Robb and Watson (2012) that female entrepreneurs are less successful. BarNir (2012) also pointed out that gender differences could explain the differences in potential success factors and the strategic choices made by businesses started by women.

Similarly, studies investigating cultural differences in entrepreneurship between men and women, Rubio-Banon & Esteban-Lloret (2016) concluded that gender stereotypes push women away from entrepreneurship, putting them near chores and childcare. They established that the prominent gender roles in a country determine the entrepreneurial behaviour of its population and, therefore, the differences between male and female entrepreneurship. Further studies have also demonstrated behaviours such as being aggressive, capabilities (Bird & Brush, 2002) to create businesses being predominantly male (Dileo & Pereiro, 2019). This literature focuses on male-centric stereotypes, discouraging some females from participating in entrepreneurial activities. In line with this, studies also investigated how researchers have contributed to supporting the stereotypes about women in entrepreneurship showed female entrepreneurship is considered secondary to males (Ahl, 2004)

Finally, even though the proportion of women entrepreneurs is lower than that of men (Elam et al., 2019). Researchers have drawn attention to the female entrepreneur as this category represents the fastest growing in entrepreneurship globally (Cardella et al., 2020). Furthermore, the rate of research activity and women's proposed entry into the market is not the same (García & Capitán, 2016). As a result, there is a need for more research supporting female entrepreneurship rather than focusing on men.

1.2 Barriers to female entrepreneurship

Recognizing the importance of entrepreneurship to economies, entrepreneurship experts have long sought to explain the variation in entrepreneurship rates and types. Female entrepreneurship has received a great deal of interest as an academic research topic in recent years, and it is quickly becoming a key focus for scholars, practitioners, and governments (Henry & Johnston, 2007). While more women are becoming entrepreneurs over the recent years (Carter & Marlow, 2007), their overall sector share has remained stable. In addition, their enterprises are concentrated in a congested, low-value-added segment of the service industry (Wilson & Tagg, 2010).

Formal and informal institutions can act as barriers to women considering entrepreneurial careers (Cullen, 2019). The institutions are linked because informal institutions rely on the formal institutional context in which new economic opportunities are pursued (Fuentelsaz et al., 2019). The barriers can be political or related to the economy in formal institutions (laws and regulations) (Holmes Jr et al., 2013). Authors identified and explored the impact of formal institutions on entrepreneurship (Raza et al., 2019) and argued that it was significant.

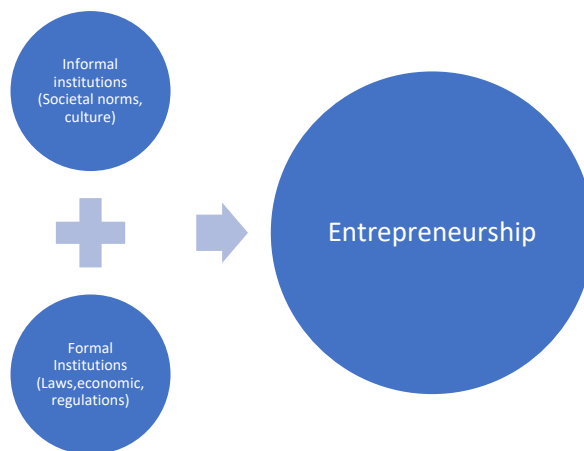


Figure 1: Institutions impacting entrepreneurship

However, informal institutions such as societal norms, attitudes, cultural expectations are also widely considered relevant (Strategic Direction, 2019). This is shown in increasing acceptance in recent research that socio-cultural factors significantly affect entrepreneurial activities and processes (Thornton et al., 2011; Welter & Smallbone, 2011). For instance, Noguera et al. (2013) highlighted the fear of failure and perceived capabilities as two determinants of a woman becoming an entrepreneur. This paper focuses explicitly on social norms and culture as an informal institution.

Furthermore, studies suggest that women face more significant problems than men in each entrepreneurial activity phase (Holienska et al., 2016). These studies have identified some of these problems as a lack of managerial experience and complex social norms and cultures that have evolved in certain societies (Carter et al., 2007). However, there is significant variation in these barriers between countries (Strategic Direction, 2019). For instance, studies have conducted cross-cultural comparisons (Coleman et al., 2018; Baughn et al., 2006). This research identified differences in barriers, policies, and institutions relating to female entrepreneurship in Ireland. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the essential institutional environment and the conditions associated with entrepreneurial activity in a country (Simón-Moya et al., 2014).

1.3 Socio-cultural factors and entrepreneurship

As established, social and cultural influences can account for the difference in entrepreneurial activity (Hayton & Cacciotti, 2013). Furthermore, the degree to which people in a country have a positive attitude and opinion to innovative thinking and creating or managing entrepreneurial ventures is determined by culture, social norms, and beliefs (Hayton et al., 2002). A report also demonstrated a connection between females' tendency to pursue entrepreneurial careers and the country's socio-cultural norms (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2014). As a result, this paper focuses on the perception of cultural and social norms and how they relate to entrepreneurial behaviour (Stephan & Roesler, 2010).

Some literature established that some cultures support females willing to take up entrepreneurial careers (Baughn et al., 2006; Griffiths et al., 2013). The authors hypothesized that more women participate in entrepreneurship activities in these societies. In contrast, there are cultures where a career in entrepreneurship for females is perceived to have lower validity when compared to their male counterparts (Achtenhagen & Welter, 2003). These attitudes and perceptions can affect women's likelihood of taking up entrepreneurial careers. Researchers suggest that more impressive knowledge of how cultures impact entrepreneurial ambitions can help explain the gender gap in entrepreneurship and potentially offer solutions to close it (Shinnar et al., 2012).

Different socio-cultural factors have been suggested by studies, including education, prior experience, as significant factors that determine the level of entrepreneurship. For example, the way children are educated and the transferable skills they gain throughout their education are vital in developing entrepreneurial tendencies (Hayton et al., 2002). Shinnar et al. (2012) conducted a cross-country study to determine the role of culture on entrepreneurial intentions. Their findings reveal women in some countries consider lack of support, fear of failure, lack of competency to be substantial barriers. They suggest that culture matters in terms of perception of impediments to entrepreneurship and indicates the need to investigate cultural differences. Another critical driver that propels an individual to set up an entrepreneurial venture is alertness to good entrepreneurial opportunities around them in society (Koellinger et al., 2007). Other socio-cultural factors highlighted by literature are start-up motivation, lack of role models, access to networks, and national culture (Koellinger et al., 2007).

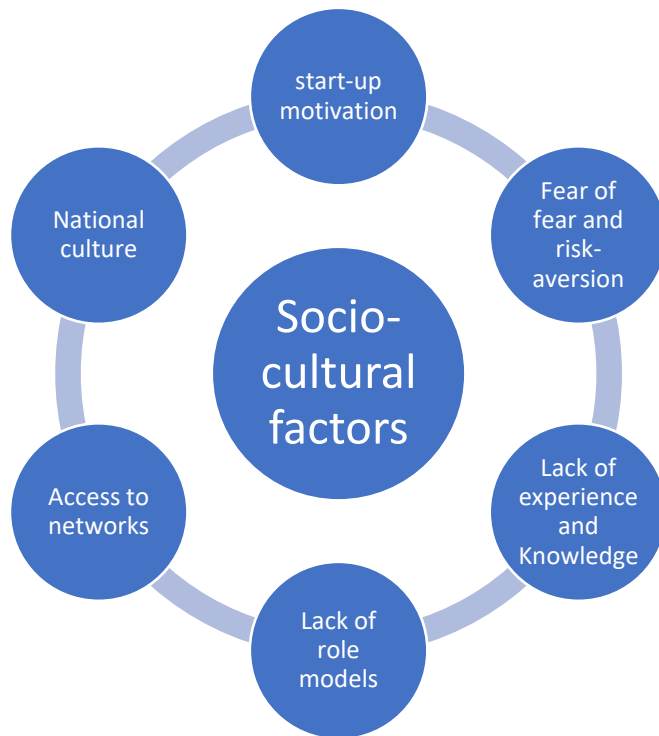


Figure 2: Socio-cultural factors cited by literature

Women are currently under-represented in entrepreneurship in Ireland. The Local Enterprise Office suggests this due to a greater fear of failure, aversion to risk, male-oriented design of ecosystem supports, under-representation in senior management positions in the industry, and a lack of recognizable role models (Enterprise Ireland, 2020). This is in line with recent studies on socio-cultural factors that influence female entrepreneurship (Longoria, 2018; Kaciak & Welsh, 2020), particularly in each country (Welsh et al., 2016). Thus, understanding the impact of socio-cultural factors on female entrepreneurship in Ireland is critical.

1.3.1 Start-up motivation and female entrepreneurship

The willingness to create a business and make the venture work is referred to as start-up motivation (Nabi & Liñán, 2013). Evidence from past literature proposed the effects of motivation have on starting a business are powerful (Rauch & Frese, 2007). Thus, an increased start-up motivation relates to females' desire to develop entrepreneurial ventures. Some studies even show both genders have more similarities than differences regarding their motivation (Ramadani et al., 2013). Nevertheless, specific significant

gender differences still exist (Mas-Tur et al., 2015). Female entrepreneurs pursue entrepreneurial endeavours for a range of extrinsic, intrinsic, and intangible reasons.

According to scholars, intrinsic or transcendental incentives exert a more substantial influence on women during decision-making processes (Mas-Tur et al., 2015). They propose that women are motivated mainly by internal characteristics such as a desire for independence (Ramadani et al., 2013). This also relates to some literature suggesting that they may be less profit-driven (Allen & Curington, 2014). However, Carter & Bennett (2006) disputed these findings and established women are as motivated by profit as men.

Furthermore, previous research suggests women's motivations are likely to include a sense of fulfilment, a desire for independence, and a search for a work-life balance that fits their unique personal and family circumstances (Henry & Treanor, 2007). This is in line with recent literature, which established that some women start their businesses because of the flexibility and autonomy of freelance work (Bari, 2021). They do this to balance their work and family life (Humbert & Drew, 2010).

Additionally, it has been argued that women initiate new ventures because of the so-called "glass ceiling" effect, which limits advancement chances in the workplace (Henry & Kennedy, 2003). Similarly, it was established in some studies that the increase in part-time solo self-employment in Europe is due to the rise in the number of women starting their enterprises to have more control over their working conditions (Henley, 2015). This was also true in a study on Irish solo entrepreneurs (Bari, 2021).

Hughes (2006) classified business owners into three major groups depending on their motive for starting a firm: traditional, compelled, and work-family. The conventional or classic females are those drawn to entrepreneurship for financial independence, autonomy, and self-fulfilment as motivational factors (Kirkwood, 2009). The compelled are those pushed due to unemployment or lack of job opportunities (Murray & Syed, 2010) and finally, those who want to balance family and work (Loscocco & Bird, 2012).

This is also linked to the study that women frequently use self-employment as a coping method to balance childcare and a profession (McGowan et al., 2012).

Furthermore, qualitative research was conducted by researchers on the entrepreneurial journeys of fourteen women in Northern Ireland. Their findings revealed that women were motivated to start their ventures by a range of positive and negative drivers (McGowan et al., 2012). The key motivation for engaging in venturing was a desire to balance familial responsibilities with running their own business and increased flexibility. Other findings include most of the women being discontented and some frustrated by traditional roles of women in the home as the primary carer, support from partners, some women afraid of failure, and time management plays a crucial role in each women's life. The authors suggest that policies aiming at encouraging more women to start businesses or assisting those who are already in a company must be examined alongside, for example, adequate childcare facilities.

1.3.2 Fear of failure

A comprehensive analysis of the existing entrepreneurship literature on fear of failure finds significant reservations about the concept and link to the entrepreneurial process (Cacciotti & Hayton, 2015). There are several reasons for this issue, including the fact that previous research has explored the fear of failure from views that are potentially at odds with one another, resulting in multiple definitions of this construct (Arenius & Minniti, 2005).

Given that entrepreneurship is inextricably linked to uncertainty and risk-taking, individuals' fear of failure is a significant factor influencing individuals to become entrepreneurs. The fear of failure hinders entrepreneurship and can negatively impact it (Morgan & Sisak, 2016). However, it also encourages entrepreneurship, providing an excellent chance to grasp entrepreneurial motivation (Cacciotti et al., 2016). The authors argued that it is a part of the entrepreneurial journey, contrary to the fear of failure being a barrier. They established that it is frequently associated with deciding to approach starting up

entrepreneurial ventures even more vehemently. This study aims to use an inductive qualitative method to examine the fear of failure as it is experienced by women in Ireland concerning entrepreneurship.

Studies have also associated entrepreneurs and averseness to risk to their activities and function in the society (Battistella et al., 2012). Previous literature shows that men have lower fear of failing than women (Koellinger et al., 2011), explaining the gap in taking up entrepreneurial careers between men and women. In a UK survey, most women named fear of failure as an element preventing them from being business owners (Persio, 2019). This paper seeks to investigate if potential female entrepreneurs are afraid of failure in their entrepreneurial intentions.

Finally, a study was conducted on how the consequences of an individual's fear of failure on entrepreneurial entry differed depending on national cultural practice. The authors observed that culture could influence fear of failure (Wennberg et al., 2013). This research explores if fear of failure hinders or motivates females in Ireland to start entrepreneurial ventures.

1.3.3 A Gendered risk

The traditional definition of risk is the possibility of suffering a loss (Knight, 1921). Entrepreneurship has been described in terms of risk and uncertainty (Gedeon, 2010). Linked to this literature is the researcher's belief that starting a business involves risk and risk-taking attitudes (Block et al., 2015). Risks may be viewed or perceived differently by different individuals and gender.

Earlier literature has broadened the restricted understanding of risk by classifying it into four categories for entrepreneurs: financial, career, family/social, and psychological (Liles, 1981). Further literature suggests that three sets of factors influence entrepreneurial risk: the decision situation context, such as starting a business during an economic crisis; the individual's personality traits, which range from risk-seeking to risk-averse; and the individual's context, which includes experience, families, and income (Maxfield et al., 2010).

Some studies claim that female entrepreneurs are more risk-averse (Treanor & Henry, 2010) than their male counterparts (Sitkin & Pablo, 1992). Similarly, Yordanova and Alexandrova-Boshnakova (2011) discovered that female entrepreneurs had reduced risk propensities. They established that gender influences risk perception indirectly through overconfidence and risk propensity. This implies that increasing women entrepreneurs' confidence would increase their risk-taking. Furthermore, authors suggest that women are more stringent in self-screening, reducing their risk perceptions (Chung, 1998). However, other research indicates that males are just as risk-averse as women (Humbert & Brindley, 2015). The social situation in which women find themselves may influence their risk assessment; an instance is family responsibilities which could lead to a decision of becoming an entrepreneur riskier.

On the contrary, there is no universal agreement in the literature on the risk-taking behaviour of female entrepreneurs (Humbert & Brindley, 2015). The researchers believe that risk should extend beyond financial danger and suggest that policies should address the various threats women face to foster the expansion of women-led businesses and assist those considering self-employment.

Recently, researchers carried out a qualitative study on ten Irish women entrepreneurs to explore risk perception and examine the relationship between the concept of risk and women's socially attributed roles (Humbert & Brindley, 2015). They established that the participants felt their gender impacted the level of risk they would have taken. Finally, that motherhood and womanhood are linked with risk perceptions. Relatedly in a study conducted in the United Kingdom, women mentioned risk perception as part of the element stopping them from becoming entrepreneurs (Persio, 2019).

1.3.4 Networks, Role Models, and female entrepreneurship

Literature highlights socializing among and with entrepreneurs increases the likelihood of people starting new businesses (Davidson & Honig, 2003). Similarly, research established that networking is a critical factor to a company's success (Reavley & Lituchy, 2008). There are two types of networks; business or formal networks, such as with banks, professional entities (Sharafizad & Coetzer, 2016). And informal or

social networks such as family friends and social circles (Klyver, 2011). Entrepreneurs require both types of networks to assist in establish and grow their company (Robert et al., 2013). These networks are initially built on social and business interactions with critical groups such as family, friends, and customers.

Numerous business owners leverage their network to acquire access to the knowledge and resources necessary to run their enterprise (Van Staveren & Knorringa, 2007). Although, modern technological breakthroughs like the internet have opened new routes for network communication. However, other researchers say that internet networking cannot wholly replace face-to-face communication since social relationships must be built first through face-to-face interactions to establish trust, rapport, and exchange knowledge (Doug & Anderson, 2012).

Literature suggests that female businesses are usually denied access to business networks because of their gender. (Sharafizad & Coetzer, 2016). Furthermore, they have insufficient support in professional organizations (Watson, 2012), third-parties support networks, and even government agencies. Finally, only a tiny percentage of businesswomen join formal networks in quest of business prospects, perceiving that such standard networks are not built on reliable connections (Farr-Wharton & Brunetto, 2007).

Scholars suggest that because of their perspectives, beliefs, and decisions to network, some women may believe that they cannot engage in male-dominated networks. (Dawson et al., 2011). This could also be because of their discomfort in male-dominated networks or their experience of exclusion from these networks. Additionally, entrepreneurs seem to exchange information with primarily other female entrepreneurs during the start-up stages of their businesses (Klyver, 2011). According to studies, this might significantly impede the growth and development of potential female-owned firms and isolate them from beneficial expertise (Hanson & Blake, 2009; Brady et al., 2011).

Finally, there has been evidence that experienced entrepreneurs who serve as successful role models may send positive messages to potential entrepreneurs (Urbano & Yordanova, 2008). Henry and Jackson

(2015) suggest mentoring young females and providing them with actual career development and leadership opportunities in their profession will increase their participation in entrepreneurship. In a survey performed in the United Kingdom, the studies showed that only one in every four women could name a successful female entrepreneur (Persio, 2019). Nearly 40% of the women polled mentioned a successful male entrepreneur, but only 25% could say the same for female entrepreneurs. This shows evidence of the lack of female entrepreneurs as role models.

1.3.5 Perceived capabilities

Self-perception of women in their skills determines their ability to identify business opportunities in their surroundings. Past literature has highlighted the importance of women's perceived capabilities, and they associated entrepreneurial behaviours with perceived capacity (Reed et al., 2012). This relationship is believed to be crucial in starting entrepreneurial ventures. A positive self-perception of personal entrepreneurial skills has been linked to greater credibility in starting a business (Menzies & Tatroff, 2006). This thesis accepts that self-perception plays an important in the attitude of persons starting an entrepreneurial venture (Bruin et al., 2007). For instance, opportunity recognition, which is also integral to entrepreneurship, is influenced by self-perception.

Past research suggests that women have frequently reduced self-capabilities compared to men (Wilson et al., 2007). This attitude may translate to fewer women entrepreneurs in that society (Verheul et al., 2003). It has also been suggested that female entrepreneurs are less confident in their entrepreneurial skills (Brush et al., 2010). This lack of confidence is frequently attributed to women having fewer resources during the start-up stage, their inexperience with business terminology, lack of senior management experience, and the traditional view of women as mothers and caregivers rather than entrepreneurs and risk-takers (Treanor & Henry, 2010).

These studies also suggest that women have fewer work experiences, generally lack essential expertise for their new venture, and have less training and business acumen (Treanor & Henry, 2010). Similarly, Brush

et al. (2002) established that female entrepreneurs with direct experience in their business were more likely to survive and expand their enterprises than female entrepreneurs without direct knowledge. This research is investigating if these are the factors that impede female entrepreneurship in Ireland.



Figure 3: Perceived capabilities reviewed in the literature

1.3.6 National culture and policies promoting female entrepreneurship

Culture can be defined in a variety of ways. Earlier theorists define culture as “the collective programming of the mind which separates the members of one group or category of people from another” (Hofstede, 2001). Cultural traits differ between societies. Studies claim entrepreneurial culture encourages a healthy social attitude toward entrepreneurship (Yasemin et al., 2014). The entrepreneurial culture is reflected in the degree to which a nation promotes and celebrates innovation and achievements.

Research has recognized entrepreneurship as performance-oriented activity and an achievement (Rauch & Frese, 2007). Thus, a national culture that supports entrepreneurship will reward innovation and achievement. The cultures that reward these individual accomplishments are performance-based (Stephan & Roesler, 2010). Rewards can be non-financial such as career satisfaction and comfort that the

entrepreneur can enjoy (Stephan & Roesler, 2010) and financial. Therefore, entrepreneurial activities thrive in an environment where the socio-culture supports performance-based behaviours.

An entrepreneurial economy produces circumstances in which members can recognize and use economic possibilities and knowledge to promote previously unseen entrepreneurial phenomena (Mueller, 2007). Ireland was listed as the fifth most accessible place to establish a business in 2008 (Brush et al., 2010). However, studies found that Ireland has less entrepreneurial activity than other developed OECD economies and needs more entrepreneurial activities (O'Gorman & Fitzsimons, 2007). This is consistent with findings from the recent GEM conducted in Ireland (Fitzsimons & O'gorman, 2019).

The stage of economic development is influenced in part by national differences, which are responsible for the prevalence of different types of entrepreneurships in each location (Simón-Moya et al., 2014). Therefore, national policies as an economic strategy can influence women's entrepreneurship (Thai & Turkina, 2014). As of 2006, there was no overall entrepreneurship policy in Ireland. An entrepreneurship policy was being developed in response to the proposals of the Small Business Forum report (O'Gorman & Cooney, 2007). The strategy sought to create an Ireland distinguished by a strong entrepreneurial culture, recognized for the inventive quality of its entrepreneurs, and recognized by entrepreneurs as a world-class environment in which to establish and grow a business. However, the first national policy statement on entrepreneurship was not developed by the Enterprise office until 2014 (Department of Business, Enterprise, and Innovation, Ireland, 2018). This could have impacted the level of entrepreneurial activity.

Most EU countries had no specific policy about female entrepreneurship. In addition, Ireland does not yet have a particular policy on female entrepreneurship (Brush et al., 2010). Sections were only amended to the existing policies made in 2014 to include online resources, mentorship, and supports for female entrepreneurs (Department of Business, Enterprise, and Innovation, Ireland, 2018). However, the Local Enterprise Offices stated that they were instrumental in assisting female entrepreneurs around the country

in starting and growing their businesses in 2017 (Local Enterprise Office, 2018). They announce that over 18,500 female entrepreneurs benefited from training, mentorship, and networking opportunities.

However, questions that need to be raised by researchers are the awareness of these initiatives by the female entrepreneurs and if they were the appropriate support. As reported, one of the issues raised by female entrepreneurs in Ireland is the cost of childcare services (Department of Business, Enterprise, and Innovation, Ireland, 2018). According to institutional studies on gender and entrepreneurship, a gender gap is caused by institutional variations in work-family policies, such as the government's paid holidays and investments in childcare (Thébaud, 2015). Furthermore, research has documented the disadvantages women face in entrepreneurial environments, particularly organizational systems and norms (Burton et al., 2019). Thus, understanding how institutions and policies have boosted female entrepreneurship in industrialized nations is critical.

1.4 Female Entrepreneurship in Ireland

Ireland's history, culture, and previous entrepreneurship policies have impacted women's present level of entrepreneurial participation. Women's traditional role in Irish society was that of homemaker, and women were frequently solely responsible for children and other family dependents (Brush et al., 2010). Women entered the workforce across mainland Europe in the 1940s, however, in Ireland were still discriminated against by statute even in 1973. Furthermore, there was no entrepreneurial practice or culture in the past, and economic changes for indigenous entrepreneurship appear to be restricted in general (Henry & Kennedy, 2003). Most support programs for women entrepreneurs were begun at the regional level rather than at the national level.

Since the turn of the century, Europe's self-employment rate has been relatively stable, accounting for 15% of the overall EU labour force (Fondeville et al., 2015). Entrepreneurs in advanced economies typically start firms because they see an opportunity. It may only be a need if there are no other career possibilities. According to research, 73% of women who establish their enterprises choose this lifestyle to

seek chances (Longoria, 2018). With global advances in female entrepreneurship, the value of boosting women has been ingrained as a strategy for reducing poverty and for economic growth (Morris et al., 2020). Additionally, promoting self-employment and entrepreneurship, and closing the participation gap between men and women, are policy priorities in Ireland and the European Union (European Commission, 2020; Enterprise Ireland, 2020).

Ireland has advanced rapidly over the last five years, and income inequality has decreased by 8% during the same period (World Population Review, 2020). The GEM reports that Ireland ranks third among the rest of Europe on entrepreneurial activities (Bosma et al., 2007). Also, one out of every ten workers in the Republic of Ireland were self-employed in 2016 (Irish Congress of Trade Unions, 2017). Despite high levels of male entrepreneurship, Ireland's rate of female entrepreneurship is low (Humbert & Drew, 2010). From 2002–2004, the average rate of early-stage entrepreneurial activity among men was 11.77 percent. On the other hand, females had an average rate of 4.73 percent (O’Gorman & Fitzsimons, 2007). However, from recent statistics, the number of female-led start-ups has increased from 8% in 2012 to 23.75% in 2020 relative to the male start-ups (Enterprise Ireland, 2020). Yet, there is still a need for more female entrepreneurs (Fitzsimons & O’gorman, 2019).

Table 1: Enterprise Ireland statistics on High Potential Startups

EI Statistics 2020				
Year	Female	Male	High Potential Start Up	Percentage%
2020	19	61	80	23.75
2019	19	72	91	21
2018	18	64	82	22
2017	25	65	90	28
2016	19	82	101	19
2015	23	82	105	22
2014	18	84	102	17

There are disparities in the factors motivating each gender to engage in entrepreneurship in the Irish setting highlighting the importance of gender issues (Humbert & Drew, 2010). This brought about the need to study the gendered difference between female entrepreneurship in Ireland. The author established in their study that the probability of women starting enterprises has increased as they seek a better balance between work and family life. Researchers also argue that female entrepreneurs in industrialized countries typically launched their businesses as a second or third job after prioritizing their previous occupations and overlooking entrepreneurship as a viable choice. They believe they enter industry between 40 to 60 years, and they participate in customer-oriented activities and have less participation in the industrial sector (Longoria, 2018)

The latest research on Generation Y women in Ireland conducted by (Nevins & Hamouda, 2019) addresses the unique barriers associated with gender, and it is evident that men are twice as likely to become entrepreneurs as women. However, with a decade gap within the two pieces of research, according to the study by Nevins and Hamouda (2019) and Humbert and Drew (2010), female entrepreneurs in Ireland still point out that women have more responsibility for their families than males and seek a balance between professional and personal realms.

Recent research was also conducted by (Bari 2021) on the rising numbers of women, especially those with children seeking flexibility and autonomy as solo self-employed women in Ireland. They found that female participation in self-employment increased between 2003-2019. Still, their growth has been slow, and their numbers are relatively small. Finally, to increase the number of women-owned high potential start-ups, Enterprise Ireland narrowed down key issues affecting female entrepreneurship in Ireland: lack of role models, lack of confidence, and lack of access to networks (O'Connell, 2018). Hence, there are limited studies on the socio-cultural factors affecting aspiring entrepreneurs and active entrepreneurs in Ireland. This study seeks to address the lack of literature in that area.

1.5 Conclusion

A recent review of the body of literature concluded a preliminary study on the socio-cultural factors that impede female entrepreneurship in Ireland. Therefore, the present study aims to undertake an investigative approach to gain insight into these factors related to female entrepreneurship in Ireland.

Chapter II: Research Question and Aims

The preceding chapter attempted to overview previous research on gender, informal and formal institutions, and social and cultural factors relating to female entrepreneurship in Ireland. The discussion of other perspectives and additional research on the subject aided in framing the research question. It has been suggested that social, cultural factors have been found to influence entrepreneurial activity, which depends on countries, institutions, and collective behaviours. Due to these dependencies, this study identifies that an insight into the socio-cultural factors that influence female entrepreneurship for aspiring and active entrepreneurs is essential. The research question(s) and objectives can now be identified.

2.1 Research Question

Based on the literature review, the central research question is:

1. What are socio-cultural barriers to female entrepreneurs in Ireland

Followed by subsequent questions relating to the research question, such as:

- a. To what degree is the socio-cultural factors stop or motivate women from starting entrepreneurial ventures in Ireland
- b. To what extent does national culture celebrate and encourage or support female entrepreneurship

2.2 Research aims and objective

The research aims to examine women's entrepreneurship in an Irish context and pinpoint different cultural and social initiatives impeding more women from creating new ventures. This research will help policymakers inform educators and trainers to discern what can be done to promote female entrepreneurship at national levels effectively.

The research, therefore, has three objectives:

1. to investigate how gender roles and stereotypes are perceived in Ireland

2. to investigate the social-cultural impediments to female entrepreneurship in Ireland
3. suggest future policies for reducing the barriers to female entrepreneurship in Ireland

Having highlighted the objectives, the following section addresses the study philosophy, methodology, inquiry design, sample, data collection, and analysis.

Chapter III: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The methodology chapter justifies adopting the methods, tools, philosophical stances, and approach to the study. This chapter will explore the research paradigms, data collection and analysis process, and the tools used in interpreting the study results. This chapter will also discuss the ethical considerations of the study and the limitations faced when conducting the research. The research onion structure conceptualized by Saunders et al. (2019) was the primary tool to outline the research methodology section.

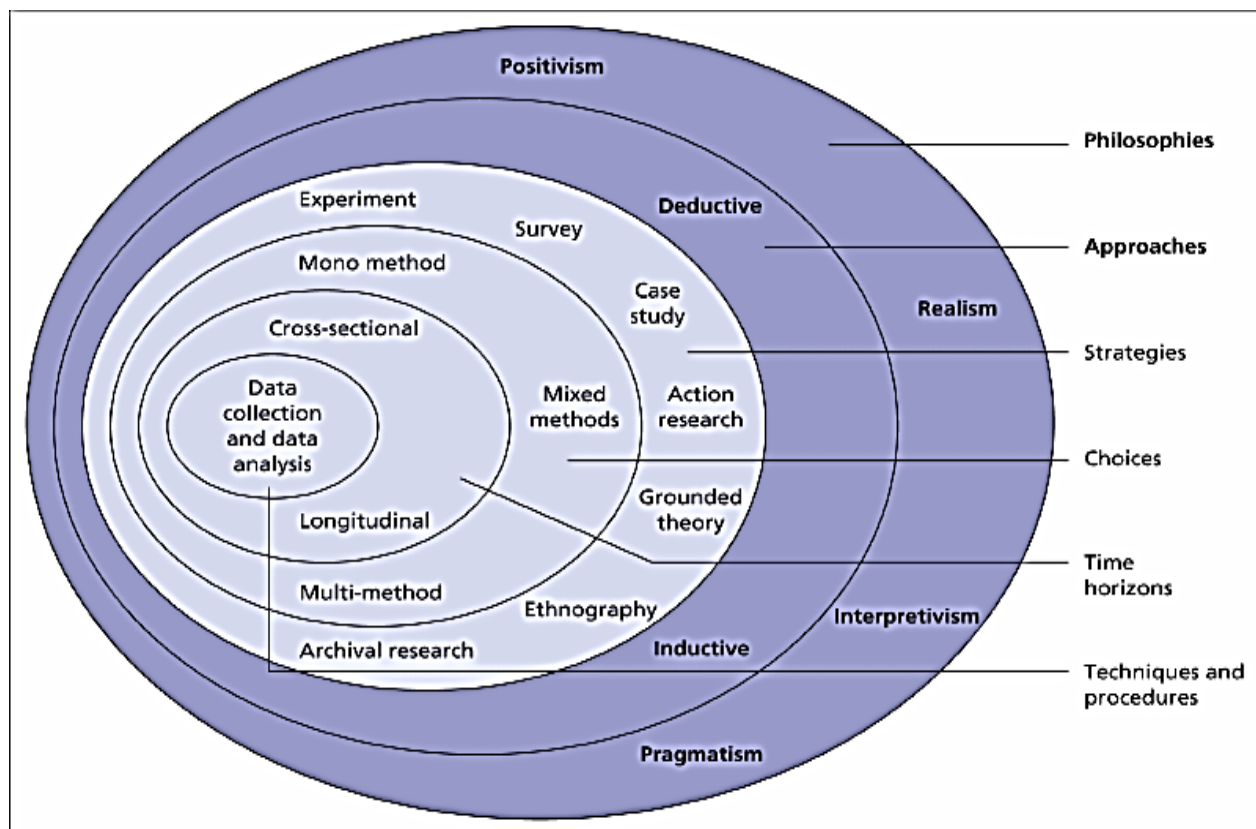


Figure 4: Saunders Research Onion

3.2 Research Philosophy

A style of reasoning a researcher embraces to develop the research is known as philosophy (Adams, 2007). This research adopts **interpretivism** to understand aspiring female entrepreneurs in their social context

while playing their social role in society (Saunders et al., 2019). It was embraced in contrast to positivism created for studying natural sciences. **Interpretivism** focuses on comprehending human behaviour. Interpretivism fits into the aims and purpose of this study because it seeks to understand aspiring female entrepreneurs' perspectives about the social and cultural norms that influence their decisions about starting an entrepreneurial venture.

Furthermore, according to the expert, empathy as a researcher's viewpoint allows one to grasp the social world of the research subjects from their perspective (Saunders et al., 2019). Another critical advantage that interpretivism has over positivism is the focus of the methods adopted by positivists on scientific methods, which are insufficient when dealing with individuals and social phenomena (Gage, 2007). The interpretivist worldview essentially believes that research demands can be satisfied (at least partly) by almost any theory (Hinkelmann, 2012).

3.3 Research Approach

This study follows the **inductive approach** (Saunders et al., 2019). The research starts with an observation, then a recommendation is based on the observation rather than hypothesize before the research is done. An inductive approach means the researcher observes the society and can infer some conclusions, leading to theory formulations (Adams, 2007). This research aims to build theories inductively and because it is based on non-numerical data. This approach will enable the research structure to be more flexible, focusing on aspiring female entrepreneurs.

Furthermore, unlike some studies on socio-cultural factors which followed deductive approaches, for instance, (Noguera et al., 2013; Hopp & Stephan, 2012); this study heads in an opposite direction because using an inductive approach will help provide valid results by focusing and being thorough on a smaller sample. Another reason is that discussions from findings on the hypothesis done by the deductive research have some contradictions (Hopp & Stephan, 2012).

3.4 Research Design

The research design elucidates the process of designing the research questionnaire in line with the research questions and state-of-the-art literature review. It is important to reiterate that the research was designed to explore a central phenomenon, i.e., social and cultural impediments to female entrepreneurship in Ireland, and the entire research design was centred around this theme. Creswell (2013) outlined three critical criteria to be considered in the research design process:

- The research design should explore a fundamental phenomenon and not employ a scatter-gun approach.
- The questions designed to elicit responses must be targeted and centred around the research questions/objectives
- Collection of data must be from a diverse yet focused research population

Based on this premise, this research design will consider the research question itself and its objectives, the mechanisms identified as links between the objectives, literature review and practice or the factors which may explain such connections, and the specific methods which were employed to analyse the data once it has been gathered.

Since the study has been established to be an inductive study, the research will follow the qualitative method of inquiry (Saunders & Tosey, 2012). The qualitative design focuses on understanding the context of the meanings people use to make sense of their immediate experiences. In this study, care was taken to align the parameters of the inquiry to the objectives before gathering the data.

The research design outlines an in-depth **exploratory study** to develop recommendations for policymakers and trainers (Saunders et al., 2019). This study is also interested in the in-depth account and views of active and aspiring female entrepreneurs in Ireland and their experiences. Therefore, the qualitative research design will help describe the context studied better than a quantitative survey.

A key consideration in the research design is the predominantly male-focused underpinning of entrepreneurship research, which has come under severe criticism in recent times (Ahl, 2004). As a result, this research design deviated from the norm by focusing on female-based entrepreneurship according to recommendations (Ahl, 2006). Researchers have also pushed for qualitative approaches to “catch the complexities and nuances” of the impacts on female entrepreneurs (Brush & Cooper, 2012). Building on this debate and calls for focus on female-led entrepreneurial ventures, the current research design targeted women entrepreneurs in Ireland to give them a voice and explore their narratives based on their experiences (Gilmore, 2010). The female gender is the central focus of the study. This informs the design of the questionnaire and the sampling, research population, and analytical themes.

The research design process was organized in two stages:

Stage 1: Review of literature on female entrepreneurship indicators in Ireland. This was done by exploring the indicators of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) in Ireland. The goal was to determine whether there was an increase in the birth rate of female businesses and whether there was a drop in the mortality rate of female companies (Fitzsimons & O’gorman, 2019).

Stage 2: This second stage involved an in-depth interview with active female entrepreneurs and aspiring female entrepreneurs to seek their opinions on the socio-cultural norms relating to female entrepreneurship in Ireland in present times. When investigating a case study, conducting exploratory interviews can be extremely valuable (Gog, 2015).

A list of semi-structured interview questions (Saunders et al., 2019) was created via the literature review and paired against the research question/objectives. This alignment of research questions/objectives to the interview questions helped to show the rigorous steps taken to develop the questionnaire and ensured their congruency with the research investigation and its expected outcomes (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2014). Table 2 highlights how the interview questions were developed in alignment with the literature and linked

with individual research objectives, using the recommendations proposed by Castillo-Montoya (2016), who argued that using this method makes the research investigation more theory-based and increases the reliability/focus of the study via ensuring that only questions that are relevant to the study, literature and the objectives are posed to respondents.

3.5 Time Horizon

This part of the research methodology deals with the time during which the research was conducted. Saunders & Tosey (2012) outlines that where the research focuses on answering a particular research question or address a problem in a specific time or 'snapshot,' that type of study is labelled *cross-sectional*, while studies that require data to be collected over an extended period is labelled *longitudinal*. Given the time constraints of a master's thesis at National College Ireland, this study will require a cross-sectional time horizon as it seeks to answer a definite research question over a specific period. Newman (2014) espouses that the time horizon of the research will also be linked to the methodological choice, research strategy, sampling frame, and data collection/analysis, and this was taken into consideration in subsequent sections.

Table 2: Linking research objectives to literature/research protocol

Theme	Question topic	Link to objective	References
Demographic	Age range	All objectives	
	Level of Education		
	Location		
Gender Roles in Entrepreneurship	Roles attributed to females and males in Ireland	Research objective 1	Gupta, et al. (2009); Wilson, et al. (2007); Rubio-Banon & Esteban-Lloret (2016)
	Stereotypes about women in entrepreneurship		Ahl (2004)
	Thoughts on women in entrepreneurship		Henry & Jackson (2015)
Barriers and challenges to female entrepreneurship in Ireland	Main barriers	Research Objectives 1 & 2	Strategic Direction (2019)
	Socio-cultural issues affecting female entrepreneurship		Fitzsimons & O’gorman (2019)
	Motivation for embarking on an entrepreneurial journey		Marlow, et al. (2009)
	Fear of failure as a barrier to an entrepreneurial venture		OECD (2016)
	Motivation for starting a business		Braches (2015)
	National culture and female entrepreneurship		OECD (2016)
	Role models and female entrepreneurship		Hamouda (2008)
Future policies	Characteristics of female entrepreneurs	Research Objectives 3	Bruin et al. (2007)
	Thoughts on the future of entrepreneurship		McHugh (2010)

3.6 Sampling Techniques

By specifying the sampling frame, the researcher defines the population for which generalisations were made (Saunders et al., 2019). The reason for determining a sampling frame is that it is impractical and uneconomical to collect data from every person within a target population. Therefore, a sample of the population needs to be selected (Arber, 2001). The selection of this research is collected through non-probabilistic sampling, making use of the purposive approach. Newman (2014) highlighted that it is suboptimal to gather a small set of cases that is a mathematically accurate representation of the entire population in qualitative studies. Instead, it is better to identify relevant categories at work in a few cases. The logic of applying the non-probabilistic sampling is to sample aspects of the social world, highlight key dimensions within these cases and pick a few to provide insight and understanding about issues or relationships therein. In essence, this sampling strategy aims to deepen our knowledge about a more extensive process, phenomena, or social concept.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it was challenging to obtain respondents for the study as there were restrictions to curb the spread of the virus and its increasing variants. As a result, the sample size was limited to ten (10) respondents, comprising of five (5) practicing entrepreneurs and five (5) aspiring entrepreneurs. While a single case is sufficient to create valid data, it is critical to correlate multiple cases wherever possible to establish its validity (Gog, 2015). The sampling method adopted is also known as the convenience/purposive sampling method, where respondents are selected based on the convenience of the investigator and because they are available (Acharya et al., 2013).

3.7 Research Ethics and Consent Forms

One of the most complex and yet critical aspects of research – and one of the least discussed within master's level studies- is how the research design inculcates ethics in the overall framing of the study (Trochim, 2006). Ethics/morality and informed consent was given priority in this study due to the gender-sensitive nature of the inquiry and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) guiding the collection of data within Europe. Based on the NCI Ireland guidelines, the researcher ensured that consent forms were sent to prospective interviewees in advance of the interview, and they were signed

and returned to the author before the interviews were conducted. In addition, no personal identifying information was collected during the study, and interviewees were informed that they could pull out of the study at any point during the interview.

3.8 Data Collection

The data collection process was conducted using semi-structured in-depth interviews. The questionnaire was designed as outlined in section 4.4. and attached in appendix I. Before circulating the questionnaire, they were pilot tested. Then the feedback from the pilot test was used to strengthen and refine the interview questionnaire (Seriki, 2020). Three critical criteria were considered in the choice of the respondents that were selected for the study:

- They identify as female/women
- They were current or aspiring entrepreneurs
- They were based in Ireland

Each respondent was sent an interview information pack before the interview, comprising a research information sheet, consent form, and interview questionnaire to review in advance. The data collection period spanned between June and July 2021, and each interview was recorded over Zoom. Furthermore, the researcher explained the socio-cultural aspects of female entrepreneurial markets and the present situation regarding female entrepreneurship in Ireland to clarify the study topic to the participants. This was done as a briefing before commencing the interview.

After each interview, the audio transcript was transcribed into text and compared with the interview notes for accuracy. The final, anonymised transcripts were sent back to the respondents for quality assurance and to ensure that the contents fully aligned with their thoughts on the topic. The average length of each interview was 23 minutes, and the interview transcripts were labelled using alphanumerical tags to ensure that no persons can be identified through the tags.

Overall, ten (10) separate transcripts were obtained, and all were deemed usable for the study as they all answered the questions in the questionnaire to sufficient detail, and the data was checked for errors, contextual clauses, and congruency in preparation for analysis using NVivo software.

3.9 Data Analysis

This section highlights the process involved in the analysis of the data collected as part of the study. Miles & Huberman (1994) outlined some qualitative analysis techniques, including thematic analysis, narrative analysis, cognitive mapping, or sentiment analysis. The preferred method employed in this study is the thematic analysis, which comprises of three main stages as explained by (Thomas & Harden, 2008):

First stage: Free coding of the initial raw findings

Second stage: This stage involves grouping similar free codes into descriptive themes

Third Stage: This final stage is where the analytical themes from stage II are developed into more detailed, insightful themes beyond mere descriptive ones.

This process is further outlined in the figure below:

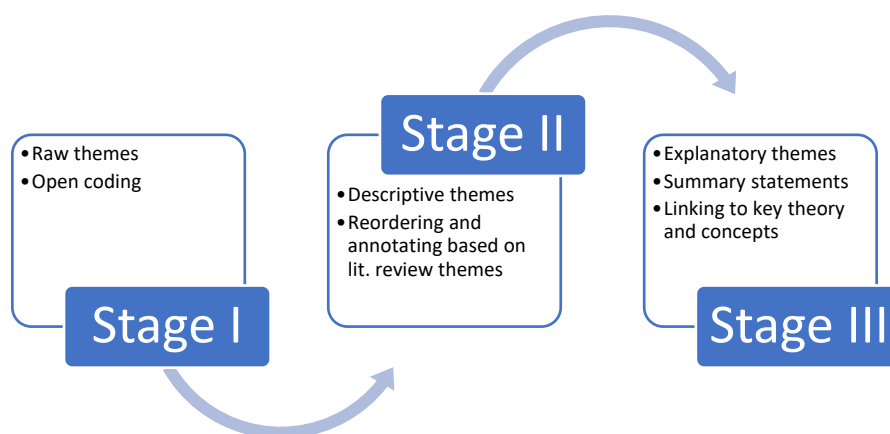


Figure 5: Stages of data analysis

In addition to the thematic analysis, the network/mind maps are also used to analyze and interpret results. The mind maps were adopted to gain insights into the data, visualise the main themes emerging from the study, and better link them to key ideas and findings (Melton, 2007). Afterward,

the results from the study were related to the research questions/objectives and coherent inferences drawn.

Having established how the data was analysed, the key limitations encountered in the data analysis for the study will now be outlined.

3.10 Methodological Limitations

Although this research method is not without limitations, first, the restriction limited access to people for the interview. Secondly, research will rely on individual characteristics and personalities, which may vary. The limitations of qualitative research that are frequently cited in the literature are its subjective nature, which might be open to interpretation, researcher bias, and over-reliance on researcher talents. Outcomes that have not been validated have high ethical risks and expenses (Stake, 1995). Furthermore, low representativeness and difficulty replicating the research may be an issue (Graziano & Raulin, 2009). Nevertheless, suppose the research involves investigating people's life histories or everyday behaviour and studying an intriguing phenomenon related to what individuals do in their day-to-day lives. In that case, a qualitative method is preferred (Silverman, 2010) and thus adopted.

Chapter IV: Research Findings and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

After establishing the data collection procedure in Chapter four, this section will undertake the analysis and discussion of the data. This chapter will describe the coding process, the three stages of data analysis, and networks emanating from the dataset, based on the information extracted from the interviews. The data was presented in tables and mind maps, according to the themes and sub-themes established in the literature review and emergent from the interviews. Afterward, the empirical findings are analysed using thematic coding, divided into four key areas: *Demographics, Gender roles and Stereotyping, Barriers/Challenges to women entrepreneurship, and Future policies for women entrepreneurship.*

Miles and Huberman (1994) and Braun and Clarke (2006)'s guidelines for thematic analysis were adopted for the thematic coding process in the study, with NVivo 12 CADQAS software used for coding and organizing the themes present in the data. The software is intuitive and selected because of its wide acceptance in the academic community and allows for tracking the analysis process.

4.2 Demographic Information

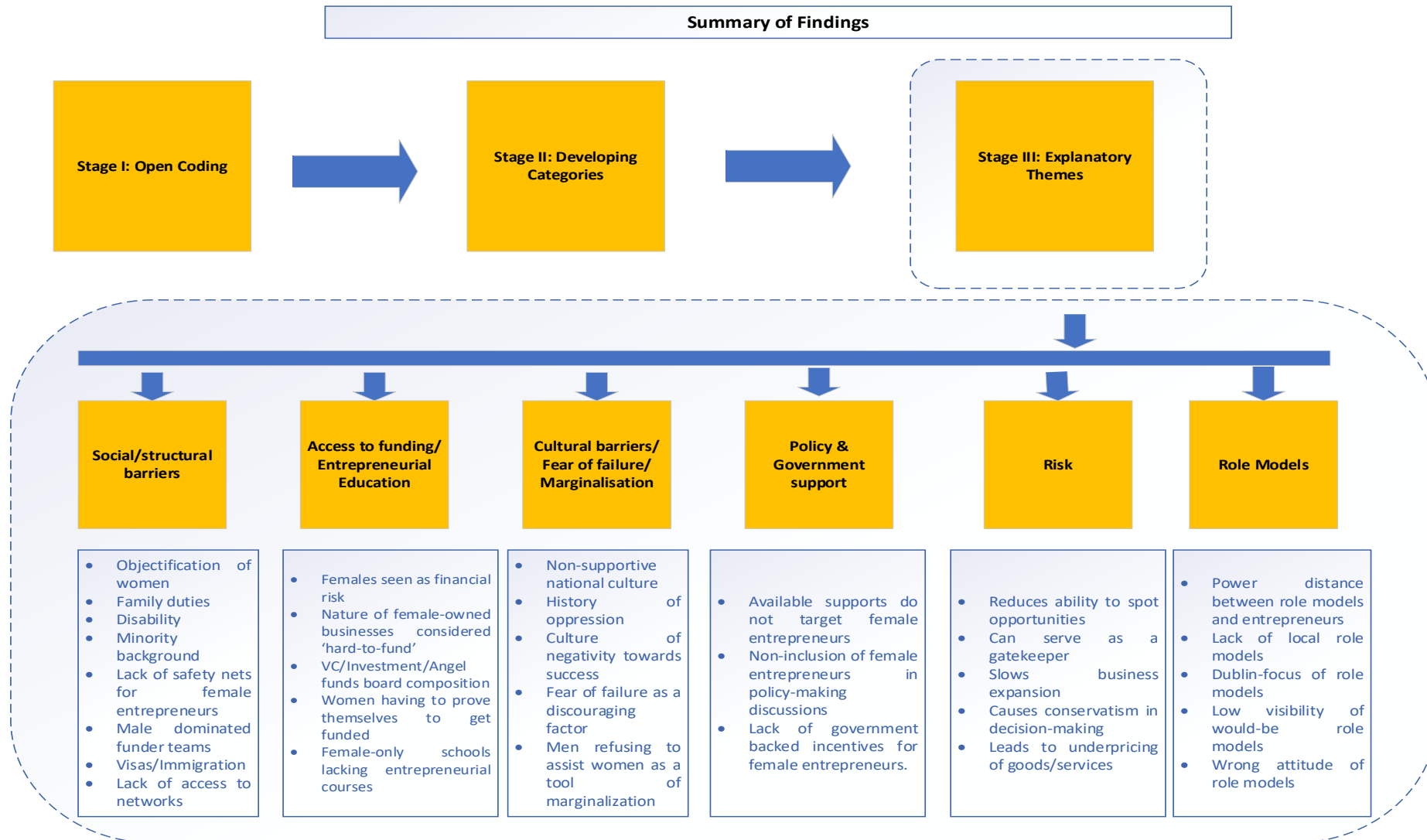
There were ten (10) participants in the study, and the first data to be reported is the demographic data, containing the age range of the respondents, their educational level, and their location within the Republic of Ireland. An anonymized naming structure was put in place to name the respondents, with the acronym "ENT" representing active entrepreneurs and "PROS" representing prospective entrepreneurs. The data on the respondents are presented in detail in table 3.

Table 3: Demographic data of respondents

Respondent	Acronym	Age range	Educational Level	Location
Entrepreneur 1	ENT1	25-35 years	Masters	Dublin
Entrepreneur 2	ENT2	35-45 years	MBA	Dublin
Entrepreneur 3	ENT3	35-45 years	Masters	Dublin
Entrepreneur 4	ENT4	<25 years	Bachelors	Outside Dublin
Entrepreneur 5	ENT5	<25 years	Bachelors	Dublin
Prospective Ent. 1	PROS1	25-35 years	Masters	Dublin
Prospective Ent. 2	PROS2	25-35 years	Masters	Outside Dublin
Prospective Ent. 3	PROS3	<25 years	Bachelors	Dublin
Prospective Ent. 4	PROS4	25-35 years	Masters	Dublin
Prospective Ent. 5	PROS5	25-35 years	Masters	Dublin

The table above shows a balance between active and prospective entrepreneurs, and one thing that stands out is that the entire population is highly skilled and educated women. Since the sample was generated randomly, it may imply that the respondent population is well educated and informed to respond to the interview questions. A summary of the overall results of the study is now presented in the next section, outlining the progress of the research from stage I – III

4.3 Summary of findings



4.4 Gender Roles in Female Entrepreneurship

Three key themes emerged from three cycles of coding: Gender stereotypes, perceived roles of women in society, and thoughts on female entrepreneurship. These themes were investigated to understand the current state around female entrepreneurship and the beliefs, myths, and historical antecedents. These will be analysed in detail under this section.

4.4.1 Perceived roles of women and their effect on female entrepreneurship in Ireland

Historically in Ireland, there are many socially attributed roles to women that serve as impediments to entrepreneurship. Some of these roles are presented in the figure below and grouped into major themes:

Women as more suited to house chores: Many respondents highlighted that women are more suited to household-related duties instead of entrepreneurship. An example of the responses is presented below:

“I think that like, well, definitely associated with my parent's generation, they will be like the woman would stay and do the housework. The man would bring home the money and go out and do work if that makes sense.” – ENT4

The response above aligns with the issues pointed out by Humbert & Brindley (2015), where women were said to be having traditional roles of childbearing and homemaking. Such functions attributed to women will serve as a barrier to women entering entrepreneurship.

Women as supports rather than leaders: Another key perceived role of women within the Irish society is that women are better suited to supporting roles rather than being leaders or business owners themselves is presented below:

“...the traditional man is supposed to be in charge. So, like, I usually get to see, like, interacting with a few families, I get, I realized that most of the time the men are like the sole breadwinners? And, yes, so they get to go to work and all of that for almost all the families

that I've got the opportunity to interact with the women were home, not to say they were not working, but they work from home. You understand I do not know if there's like, a provision for them in that sense. So, I think that most of the men are in charge.” – PROS5

The above response highlights a perception that men can work in significant roles outside the home while women can work in supporting roles from home. These kinds of women or perception of women is referred to as “adaptive women,” who do work but prefer to remain in supporting roles to have time for their family or care responsibilities.

Women as risk-averse: Another perceived role of women within Irish society is that women are more risk-averse and should not take on roles that involve risk. Entrepreneurship is essentially a risky venture, with new businesses having a high risk of failure within the first one or two years (Burke et al., 2018), and women are perceived not to be a ‘good fit’ with risk, hence the perception of not being suited to entrepreneurship. This is evidenced by the responses from some of the respondents:

“I haven't looked at, so I found that like, apparently, female entrepreneurs are not really risk-takers. And they are kind of afraid to like, you know, risk, certain strategies or, you know, ideas.” – PROS3

“Okay, the stereotypes that I've come across is, oh, women are not risk-takers, that they don't like risk.” – PROS1

One thing worthy of note is that the perception that women are not risk-takers is only held by prospective entrepreneurs and not by current entrepreneurs. There may be a reason for this, and this was investigated further as the study progressed. Other perceived roles of women within the Irish society are presented in figure 6:

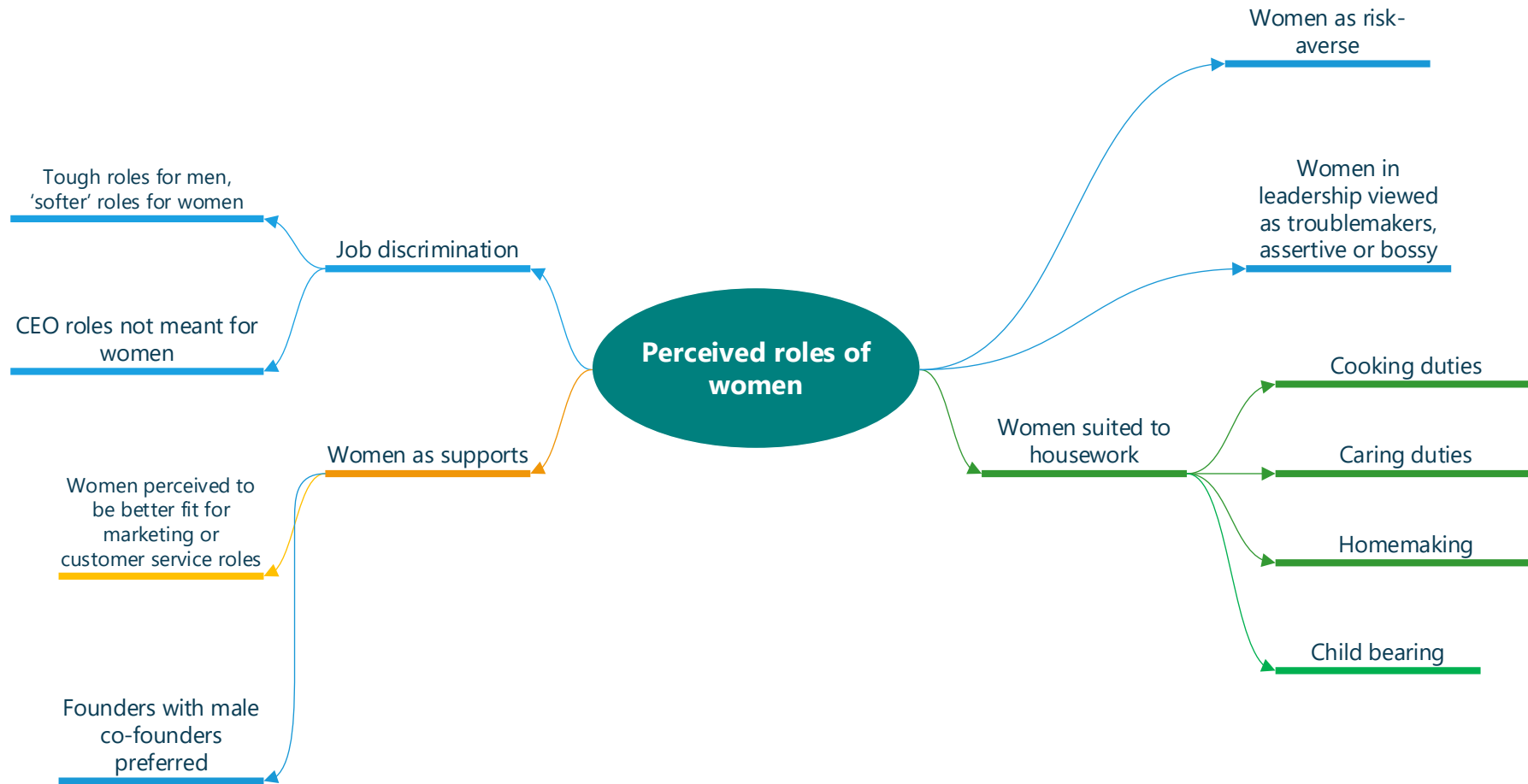


Figure 6: Perceived roles of women in Ireland

Women perceived as assertive/bossy: It is not news that managerial or entrepreneurial roles require active and assertive attitudes (Heilman & Chen, 2003), however, when women display these qualities, they are perceived as being bossy or proud. Therefore, it is not shocking that one of the perceptions of women in entrepreneurship is that they are authoritarian or assertive in nature.

“There are so many stereotypes; you know that completely different. For example, a man that has strong ideas, that kind of speaking, of very objective way would be seen as an assertive man as a powerful man, and if a woman does exactly the same, she is seen as bossy, and it's never seen in a good way, you know.” – ENT1

“So, in terms of the stereotype, you realize this, the women are much more assertive, much more opinionated, like, you know, they are like, yeah, I personally think that that is what, the stereotypes are.” – PROS5

From the above statements, the stereotypes and perceptions of women are that they are assertive, which is an actual qualifying criterion for leadership and entrepreneurship, yet it appears to be a bad thing when women are involved. This issue and more are some of the inequalities that exist in society when women are considering entrepreneurship. A confident, strong, and opinionated woman risks being labelled as bossy, forming another barrier to taking on entrepreneurship as a vocation.

Discriminatory perceptions of women: The respondents highlighted that women are discriminated against mostly in terms of perception and their roles in society, with many of these perceptions being stereotypical and negative. Some of the seemingly discriminatory perceptions of women relate to the thought that men are more suited to some jobs than women. For instance, some respondents highlighted that men could cut more deals, while women are less and fit for empathetic roles.

“...men are seen as assertive and more sales orientated, and they're able to cut deals and negotiate and hustle. Women are seen more as marketing or kind of doing the traditional female roles of being able to talk to people and empathize with people and understand customers, customer Support.” – ENT1

“I know I might not have been able to launch my business this way if I was not starting the business with my husband, we have been able to move further because the culture favours the male more, more people want to do business with him”-ENT2

From the response above from ENT2, the respondent feels that she may not have been as successful as an active entrepreneur had she not found the business with her husband. This summarises the perception of women in entrepreneurship in Ireland concerning the roles fostered on them by society through accepted norms and cultural antecedents.

These stereotypical perspectives and normative gender roles have been long in existence. They have come to be accepted as the norm within Ireland. Yet, it is interesting to see women continuing to thrive and establish competitive businesses despite the challenges. The following sub-section will examine stereotypes and how they affect women in entrepreneurship in Ireland.

4.4.2 Women in Entrepreneurship in Ireland: Stereotypes and Normative beliefs

Apart from the perceived gender roles attributed to women in the earlier sub-section, respondents also identified several stereotypical dogma and beliefs in entrepreneurship. Foremost of these is that a mother cannot be an effective entrepreneur, as the burden of care overshadows their ability to cope with the demands of entrepreneurship. Some of the respondents outline this stance:

“...once you become a mother you are handicapped, not being efficient as men, the general norm is that woman is supposed to be doing the dishes or cooking, I don't know if it is the society that puts that way or the women who have programmed themselves to think that way.”-ENT2

“For example, the mother of two or three wants to start a business; they are faced with so many social-cultural barriers, they could just take care of their kids.”-PROS1

Humbert & Brindley (2015) outlined that motherhood or the expectations around it posed a risk to women in entrepreneurship and affected the propensity of women to engage therein. This is a

perception shared by both active entrepreneurs and prospective ones, suggesting that this remains an issue on concerned women across Ireland. Both spectrums.

Another stereotype faced mainly by active entrepreneurs is that entrepreneurship for a woman is a temporary venture and not a long-term career. An example of this stereotype was shared by Entrepreneur four, who claims she is often asked when she will get a real job despite being in entrepreneurship:

“Like the most common thing said to me when I tell people about my business, is like, ‘Oh, what? When are you gonna get a real job? I think it's the stereotypical thing.’”-ENT4

Sadly, the above statement is a significant issue within Ireland, and one wonders if the same would apply if the entrepreneur were male. Another stereotype is that women must deal with is the gendered nature of business. One of the respondents reports that when people hear that a store sells cheap, popular products, they assume a woman runs the business. In contrast, top enterprises such as tech firms are considered to be run by men. This notion also predicates that low-paying entrepreneurial ventures are run by women, while men run high-profit ones:

“...it is difficult for the women to enter like very high roles, those with huge salaries and huge benefit. But then if you come to like the very average menial roles, you find a lot of women in that is space.”-

PROS5

“...Usually when you hear Oh, there's this store nearby and they sell perfumes and creams, naturally, an average person would think a female runs that store and then when you hear there is this tech store near me automatically, you just think it's a man. And then it's so weird when they hear it is run by a woman, they go, oh, is this really real? Like, are you for real?”- ENT4

From the above statements, the gendered discrimination against women is evident, be it in women occupying top roles within an industry or the types of businesses they can own. Therefore, it is not

surprising that women still struggle within entrepreneurship amidst such misogynistic and discriminatory stereotypes.

The stage has now been set to explore the thoughts of the respondents themselves about female entrepreneurship.

4.4.3 Thoughts on Entrepreneurship

There is no better indicator of the subject matter than how participants in the sector feel about themselves. Table 4 outlines the opinions of respondents in this regard, delineating their negative perspectives, neutral viewpoints, and their positive views of the topic:

Table 4: Overview of views of respondents on entrepreneurship

Negative Views	Neutral Views	Positive views
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Difficult to balance with family or kids •Entrepreneurship too powerful for women to wield •Entrepreneurship is tough •Difficult to find men that support female entrepreneurs •Lack of confidence in women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Not enough female entrepreneurs •Entrepreneurship not meant for everybody especially women •Tech is increasingly required in entrepreneurship and women may not have sufficient skills in this area •Entrepreneurship requires networking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Entrepreneurship should be encouraged •Allows for flexibility •Untapped potential in female entrepreneurship •Female entrepreneurship promotes independence of women •Promotes a positive legacy for women •Promotes inclusiveness especially for marginalised groups e.g. people of colour •Helps women get into otherwise male dominated industries

A key thing that stands out in table 4 is that the overall perception of entrepreneurship is positive (more overall positive views than negative). Some of the viewpoints show optimism about entrepreneurship which is a potential to drive inclusivity for marginalized groups. Malach Pines et al. (2010) had already proven that female entrepreneurship promoted diversity, equality, and inclusion, which is a good development for Ireland’s increasingly diverse populace.

4.5 Barriers and challenges to female entrepreneurship in Ireland

This section will highlight the main barriers facing female entrepreneurship in Ireland, especially those that apply to prospecting and active female entrepreneurs. The data in this section is presented in table 5 and explained in detail accordingly.

Table 5: Barriers to female entrepreneurship in Ireland

Barriers	ENT1	ENT2	ENT3	ENT4	ENT5	PROS-1	PROS-2	PROS-3	PROS-4	PROS-5
National Culture	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Access to funding	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	
Fear of failure			X		X	X	X			X
Lack of requisite skillset			X			X			X	X
Gender-based Marginalisation	X		X	X	X					
Mental barriers				X	X	X				
Lack of role models	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Structural barriers	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	
Policy or government-related barriers	X	X		X	X		X			
Risk related barriers		X	X		X	X				X
Social issues	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Myths/Dogma			X	X						
Family duties				X	X	X				
Lack of entrepreneurial education	X		X	X			X	X	X	

4.5.1 Role Models

This was cited as one of the primary issues facing female entrepreneurs in Ireland, as they found it very difficult to source for reputable role models that they could pattern themselves after. Some examples of the challenges in finding role models are highlighted below:

“...[the problem] is so much deeper than that. Because it's not even having mentors, like touchable mentors, like it would have to be a woman in that meaning.”-ENT1

“I think there's plenty of research that demonstrates that women are more influenced by role models in fact than men and so the importance of visibility of successful women entrepreneurs is crucial.”- ENT3

The statements from ENT1 and ENT3 show that the lack of role models is a significant issue for Irish female entrepreneurs. There are essentially few success stories to relate with. Sajuyigbe & Fadeyibi (2017), in their research, highlighted mentorship as one of the critical success factors for female entrepreneurship and ranked it as one of the significant challenges facing female entrepreneurs.

Empirical studies have shown that women who have mentors and role models often experience better business outcomes in the long term. It is essential to state that this issue cannot be solved via policy or an Act, but it must be voluntary. Gaining access to mentors is often difficult, especially for women (WuDunn, 2012). Large and non-government organisations can easily drive it.

While most respondents claim that access to mentors/role models is a significant barrier, other issues were presented as barriers concerning role models. These are shown in figure 7 below:

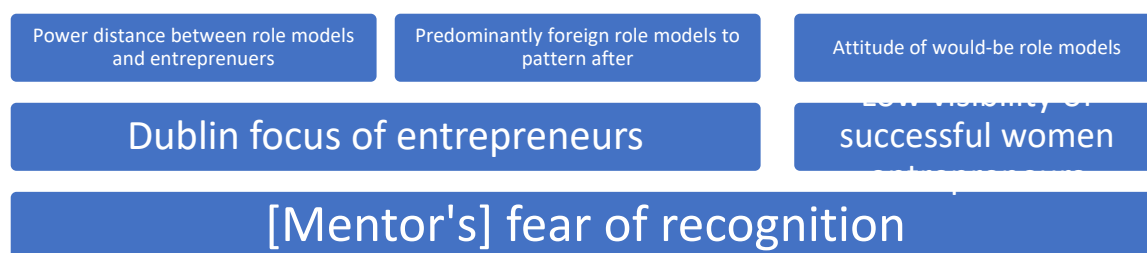


Figure 7 Role Models as barriers to female entrepreneurship

After exploring the first main barrier, the role of social issues to female entrepreneurship will now be examined.

4.5.2 Social issues

This section highlights the social issues that present as barriers to female entrepreneurship in Ireland, deconstructing how these issues impede women's engagement in the entrepreneurial process. A myriad of social problems was highlighted, and they are presented in figure 8 below. Some of the pertinent comments regarding social issues relate to the imposter syndrome issue, where women feel like they are not worthy of entrepreneurship:

“I still have that fear imposter syndrome. I constantly feel like I am waiting for someone to like, stop me in the street, and tell me that I'm a fraud.”-ENT1

Another vital issue is that women founders or entrepreneurs from minority backgrounds are not easily reckoned with. Being from a minority, regardless of race or socio-economic background, increases the challenges women encounter in entrepreneurship. This discrimination against minority women also spills over to disabled women or those from underrepresented communities. Hellman & Chen (2003) highlighted in their work that minority populations suffer from a perceived “lack of fit” in the group and may end up been neglected in the entrepreneurial process.



Figure 8: Social Issues

A participant identified what can be termed as women being seen as unworthy of owning businesses.

“I went into my local bank to set up a business account. It was a woman that I met. And because I just asked her that I tried to do [the account registration] online. It didn't work. So I asked how to set up a business bank account. And she was like, ‘Who was it for?’ And I was the only one there. I was surprised, so I think women are kind of looked down upon” -ENT4

Having the conversations above about women opening business accounts and statements suggesting that women could not be business owners will go a long way to discourage female engagement in entrepreneurship in the long run.

Lastly, one major social issue is the family-related or childbearing issues, where women are burdened by these factors that they cannot engage in entrepreneurship. Winn (2004) highlighted the challenges posed by family needs and childcare for women who have children, making it difficult for them to undertake an entrepreneurial venture. This issue was of particular concern to prospective female entrepreneurs, who espoused that the burden of childcare and family duties posed a significant barrier to them venturing into entrepreneurship:

“Let’s say a woman has a shop, and have kids before you get to your shop; you have to take care of the kids, you do your school runs, once you get to the school around, say nine o'clock before you open the store. Around 2 or 3 o'clock, the kids are back from school, you pick them up, do their assignments. When you get home, you have to cook, all those times harm your business.”-PROS1

These family obligations are often not limited to childcare only but may include maintaining the home and caring for extended family. This leaves women with more caring responsibilities and eventually impacting their ability to take up entrepreneurial careers. Some of these barriers have been cloaked into cultural norms and community beliefs, making them difficult to pinpoint and hard to change via policy. Therefore, requiring an innovative approach to removing them.

4.5.3 Structural barriers

Female entrepreneurship is an emerging embedded economic activity in a highly structured society. Several structures in the economy and social fabric contribute to barriers for women engaging in entrepreneurship. The respondents highlighted some structural issues in the Irish culture that may pose obstacles to female entrepreneurship in table 6.

Table 6: Structural barriers to female entrepreneurship

Structural issue	Explanation from interview data
Male-dominated management teams	Most investment companies and VCs that support entrepreneurs are male-dominated, increasing the barriers to entry for female entrepreneurs.
Instability of entrepreneurship	Due to the challenges faced by entrepreneurs and the propensity of entrepreneurial ventures to fail, this may act as a barrier to women from engaging therein.
Access to entrepreneurial networks	Businesses located outside of Dublin or the major cities face a structural issue of not have links to entrepreneurial networks.
Race/Ethnicity	People of colour are still majorly excluded from entrepreneurship
Visas/Immigration	The restrictive visa process in Ireland makes it difficult for migrant women to engage in entrepreneurship
Tight government control	The Irish government keeps a massive tab on entrepreneurs, where they are situated, and how they do business.
The perceived pay gap between men and women	Since traditionally, men get more pay than women, some women may decide not to embark on a career in entrepreneurship due to the perception that this trend will continue.

Structural barriers are institutionalised, but unlike socio-cultural obstacles, they can be tackled with legislation and the decisiveness of individuals and organisations. Some respondents attribute the propagation of these structural barriers to government-run media. They believe that they have the most prominent role to play in rolling back these barriers from an informative and communications standpoint.

The following sub-section will now consider barriers faced in accessing funding by female entrepreneurs.

4.5.4 Access to funding

Accessing funding is one of the most cited barriers to female entrepreneurship in this study. It has empirically been stated as a critical motivation for women engaging in entrepreneurial ventures

(Subramaniam et al., 2013). Several respondents claim that due to the lack of diversity on the board of venture capital and investment firms, women only receive about 2-3% of inbound funding. This startling yet anecdotal percentage will speak to one of the primary reasons women avoid entrepreneurship altogether, favouring home-keeping or paid employment. The network map in figure 9 below highlights the key issues in accessing funding encountered by women in Ireland.

Some of the respondents expressed their frustrations at the challenges involving women accessing business funds, stressing that it was an arduous task for female entrepreneurs:

“I think people are being biased. That is like the first one, I think it adds on to like, why females cannot get financial help from banks or, you know, credit unions or places to get loans.” -PROS3

Nieva (2015) posits that the primary responsibility for creating mechanisms to fund female-owned businesses lies with the government and other social actors. In Ireland, the problem is that most of the funding is held privately and disbursed by firms having predominantly male oversight, a frustration expressed by some:

“When it comes to female entrepreneurship, it's incredibly tough because again, all the venture funds are male or the angel investors. So, it's hard in that sense, because very few investments are made into female-led companies.”-ENT1

Figure 9 below summarises the issues facing women in accessing funding. A key policy recommendation in tackling this by Casserly (2013) opined that women should consider more open and egalitarian funding streams such as female-focused angel investing and crowdfunding models to beat the discriminatory funding process within entrepreneurial ecosystems. This is a good recommendation and workable in Irish female-led entrepreneurial ventures. This also agrees with the respondents' thoughts, who state that once women have their funding streams and validate their ideas, others will open their doors and grant them access to more funding opportunities.

The body of knowledge within entrepreneurship studies agrees that women naturally are disposed to pursuing business activities in sectors with lesser funding requirements, such as hairdressing/makeup, due to problems with accessing funding (Sullivan & Meek, 2012). As a result, they also are recipients of lesser funding from funders due to the low growth sectors in which they choose to operate because of this funding constraint (Coleman, 2000). This means it may be challenging to find women engaging in high-growth sectors due to the issue of securing funds, limiting their productivity and overall success as entrepreneurs over the long term.

The problems of access to finance are so detrimental for women that studies have shown that women are required to have a university degree before their chances of securing a loan increase compared to their male counterparts (Fay and William, 1993). However, the question remains whether it is ethical and sustainable that women should have to prove themselves 'worthy' via acquiring multiple qualifications or guarantees before accessing funds that are otherwise available to their male counterparts. These problems with accessing funding may be deeply rooted in a much larger issue, particularly the country's national culture, which was being considered in the following sub-section.

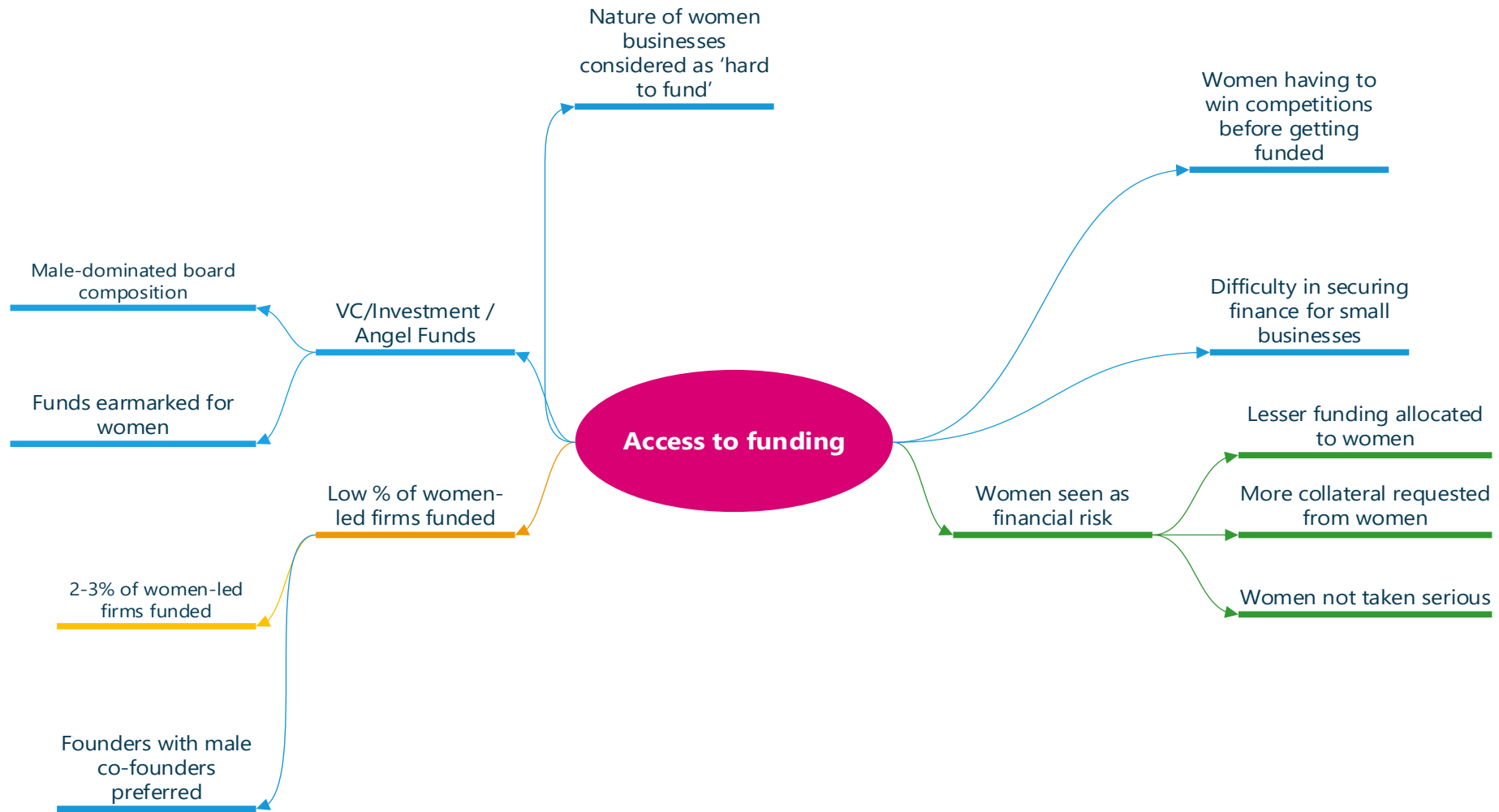


Figure 9: Access to funding as a barrier to female entrepreneurship

4.5.5 National Culture

Ireland is known for its historical culture, and the national culture is part of the barriers linked to female entrepreneurship. Sasi (2011) outlined a prevalent cultural mindset that affects people when they think about female entrepreneurs, with the presupposition that women are the weaker sex and not strong enough to make business decisions for a successful business.

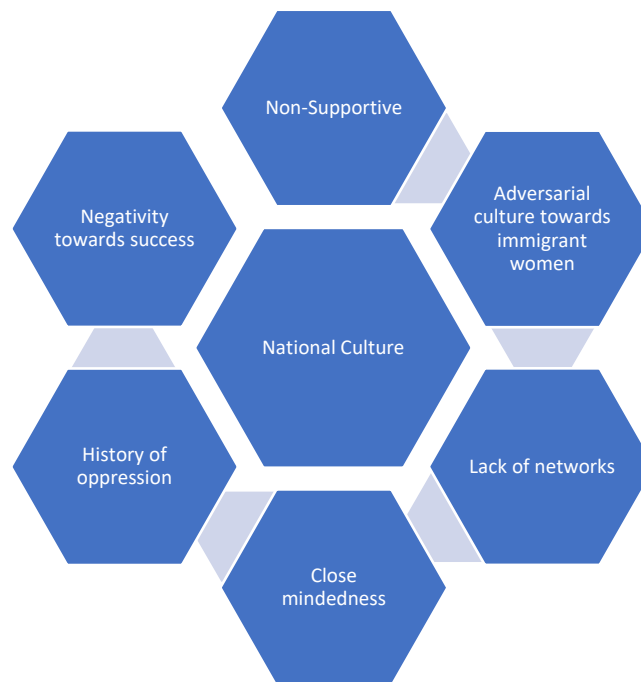


Figure 10: National culture as a barrier to female entrepreneurship

Respondents identified seven critical issues under the cultural barriers to entrepreneurship. One of the issues discussed was that the Irish culture is naturally adversarial and non-supportive, which spills over into entrepreneurship, particularly female-led ventures.

“So, I would wholeheartedly say that the Irish culture does not support entrepreneurship on any level. And I think it's like culture.”-ENT1

“I can't say that I have noticed that the national culture supports female entrepreneurship. I think it supports entrepreneurship generally, but there's not that extra hype for the female.”-

PROS5

Since culture refers to the learned information that people use to interpret their experiences and generate social behaviour, it is clear that Irish culture is unfriendly to entrepreneurship, particularly

female-led companies. Islam (2020) states that it is critical to recognise that culture can be learned and unlearned; as a result, this barrier can be easily overcome via a change of thinking. Since culture is formed from information and precedes behaviour, we can expect long-term behavioral changes if the thinking informing culture is changed. One significant way of achieving the above is via policy, and this in itself can present as a barrier and was examined in detail in the following sub-section.

4.5.6 Policy and Government Support

One of the most powerful tools for effecting change in any society is policies and government statutes, however, the findings from this study opine that approach can also serve as an impediment to female entrepreneurship. The predominant viewpoint from respondents in the study is that the Irish government policies do not support female entrepreneurship. One significant comment was that although the government tries to support entrepreneurs, there are no specific programs or policies targeted at helping female entrepreneurs.

“I know that the local enterprise office offers a lot of supports for businesses, especially startup businesses, so you can kind of link up with lots of other local entrepreneurs through that, and you kind of build your own network of support and people through that, but I do not think there's anything specifically for female entrepreneurs to kind of grow in its work and grow the community for us.”-ENT4

Sajuyigbe & Fadeyibi (2017) outlined that a crucial reason government policies do not appear to support women is the non-inclusion of women in the policy-making process for entrepreneurs. It is surprising that of all ten respondents interviewed, none have ever been invited to participate in focus groups or panels looking at policy-making for entrepreneurs, despite half being practitioners. As a result, while the Irish legislation towards entrepreneurs is mainly gender-neutral, it does not go over and beyond to ensure equal opportunities for women and men.

One last issue was that current entrepreneurs feel that there should be more incentives for entrepreneurs than currently. Although some acknowledge that some funds have been earmarked for women, there are not many incentives for them to apply:

“So, they are investing in women, they have specially allocated female investment funds. But because women are so nervous to even engage in start-ups, you have to go back to the groups with education and inspiration i.e. men So, it's a bit of a funny one.”-ENT1

The response above shows that although policies are in place to make funds available to women, they still do not apply to the funding opportunities due to nervousness or perceived fear of failure. This issue is examined in detail in the following sub-section.

4.5.7 Fear of Failure

Hughes et al. (2012) highlighted the fear of failure as one of the top three issues facing female entrepreneurs, and respondents' thoughts regarding this issue are now considered. This study highlights that women entrepreneurs suffer more from fear of failure than their male counterparts.

“...it certainly is more of a factor for women than for men, and it's back to that all confidence and about women being you know more conservative in their approach to things and wanting more certainty before they make a decision, so I think it definitely is a factor that prevents women from making that decision.”-ENT3

Nieva (2015) highlighted that women entrepreneurs often suffer from an underlying lack of self-belief, resulting in hesitancy in decision-making, avoidance of commitment, and an intense fear of judgment and failure. This is especially true in a country like Ireland, a small country, and most people know each other, hence the fear is amplified.

“I definitely think fear of failure is like a big part of it because like, especially like say like Ireland, is a very small country, so say you start a business and it does not go well, people are going to talk, you know.”-ENT5

The above sentiment reiterates the earlier assertion about the negativity ingrained as part of the Irish culture, thus building fear in women to fail in business. As a result, they seek coping mechanisms with the fear of failure, and some of them decide not to even engage in entrepreneurship altogether (**PROS1**).

Agarwal and Lenka (2018) outlined that one of the ways to identify a society with positive indicators of growth of female entrepreneurship is when women do not fear the failure of an enterprise. Yet in Ireland, the fear of failure is prominent, even amongst aspiring entrepreneurs:

“I think in all fairness, I think when it comes to starting up a business, I think most women usually have this hidden fear to start. There's always this feeling of are they going to accept me? How well will I be accepted? That kind of thing.”- PROS2

“The degree to which fear of failure stops women? to an extent because, you know, as I said earlier on, it is not really ingrained in the females to be risk-takers, you understand. So usually, for them, when it comes to risk, it's either a 100 or zero thing, do you understand. If they do not get the 100, then it means that they failed.”-PROS5

From the above, we see the detrimental effect fear of failure has on the ability or propensity of women to engage in businesses. Jeong and Kehoe (2012) argued that fear of failure can completely dissuade women from entrepreneurship altogether and poses a risk of impacting the belief of women in their capacity to start and run businesses. Some studies such as Benjamin (2012); Benard and Victor (2013) have outlined that when women experience fear of failure or other issues that lead to lack of confidence during the early stages of entrepreneurial ventures, the risk of the business ceasing to exist increases.

Other forms of risks posed to female entrepreneurs and how it serves as an impediment are examined in the next sub-section.

4.5.8 Risk

Humbert and Brindley (2015) opined that risk perceptions are highly anticipated when considering female entrepreneurship, and this in itself can serve as impediments to female entrepreneurship from an Irish viewpoint. The perspectives of respondents concerning risk as a barrier to female entrepreneurship are presented in figure 11:

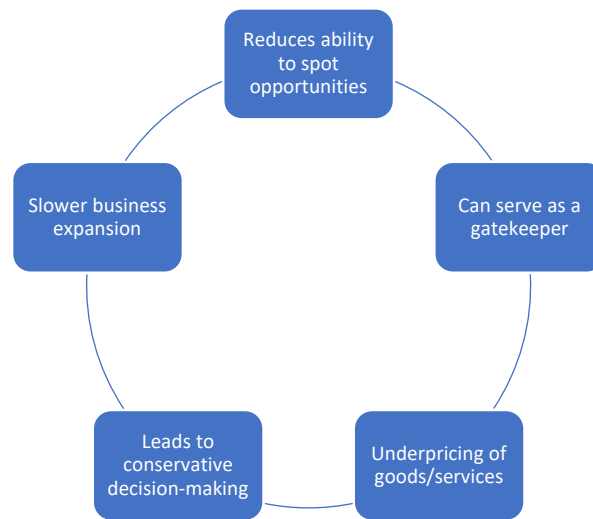


Figure 11: Risk as a barrier to female entrepreneurship

The perception that entrepreneurship is a very risky venture can serve as a social/cultural impediment, especially to aspiring entrepreneurs. An example is provided below:

“I believe risk-taking is one of the vital elements when it comes to entrepreneurship. The guys [men] are encouraged to be daring, you know, they are encouraged to go all out and all of that, so they get a bit easier, you know, take your risk, because most of the businesses we find, you know, men can go zero or nothing, but for women, they are a bit more cautious, you know, they want to play safe and all that.” -PROS5

Women are increasingly awakening to the reality that there is no entrepreneurship without risk. Rather than shirk away from entrepreneurship due to the perceived risks, the government should be lobbied to reduce the risks posed to female entrepreneurs. Female entrepreneurs should also be reminded that risks are not entirely a bad thing; as Hisrich, Peters, and Shepherd (2010) stated, taking calculated risks usually becomes profitable in the long term, leading to positive financial returns, personal fulfilment, and individual independence.

A crucial way that risks have been identified to affect female entrepreneurs adversely is in serving as a barrier to entry, eventually leading to the marginalisation of female entrepreneurs. This is explored next in the following sub-section.

4.5.9 Marginalisation

Marginalisation is a critical issue facing female entrepreneurs. Al-Dajani and Marlow (2013) pointed out that it is frequently used to discourage women from engaging in business. Within the Irish business ecosystem, some of the respondents claim that marginalisation is used to frustrate the efforts of active and prospecting entrepreneurs.

“...it's really frustrating being a woman in that ecosystem. Because if I try to assert myself, I'm seen as unagreeable, I'm seen as aggressive or bitchy or rude. But if I do not assert myself, I got walked over, and I am ignored. It's a frustrating catch.”-ENT1

It is disheartening that women are manipulated by such maligning tactics, as highlighted above. ENT3 also mentioned that the entrepreneurial setup and its accompanying supporting systems (e.g., legal, finance, corporate structure) in Ireland is set up to suit men's schedules, temperaments, and lifestyle, with very few allowances made to align with females.

Another respondent claimed that getting support from male entrepreneurs as a female was challenging, as the men try to marginalise women by refusing to offer needed supports to them:

“So, I think if I went to, like a man who was an entrepreneur in Donegal, I do not think they'd have much interest because they probably think that I'm nothing. Like the, I found that I've contacted some local female entrepreneurs, and they're very interested, and they're very kind of supportive. And they're like, Oh, I hope you get on really well if you ever need any help.”-

ENT4

Welter et al. (2014) explained that continued marginalisation and subordination of women perpetuates patriarchal stereotypes within female entrepreneurship and continually forces them to adjust to cultural expectations. One of the patriarchal stereotypes identified in this study is the traditional objectification of women, which the respondent identified as having the potential to marginalize women and limit their engagement with the entrepreneurial process.

“I think the objectification of women sometimes can be like a barrier where people maybe do not want to take you as serious. If you are an attractive woman, people maybe do not want to take you seriously.”-ENT5

From the above statement, it is appalling that despite all the problems facing women, they still face marginalisation concerning their looks. This trivialisation of women leads to the denial of a positive self-image of female entrepreneurs, making them less likely to consider entrepreneurship as a serious career option (Achtenhagen & Welter, 2011).

4.5.10 Access to Entrepreneurship Education

The last barrier to be considered is the lack of access to entrepreneurial education by Irish female entrepreneurs. Women have traditionally been denied access to entrepreneurial education (Sajuyigbe & Fadeyibi, 2017), which is critical to succeeding as entrepreneurs. The barriers are summarised in table 7 below. The issues presented show how women are at a disadvantage systematically in terms of equal access to entrepreneurial education.

Table 7: Access to Education as a barrier to female entrepreneurship

Respondent	Barrier	Explanation
ENT1	Secondary school subjects	The respondent claimed that they had no access to core entrepreneurial-related courses such as woodworking or business in their secondary school. They also claimed that there was no innovation in teaching within secondary education
	Focus on ‘soft courses’	Women and all girls’ schools are usually pushed towards perceived ‘soft courses’ such as home economics in preparation for the standard or domestic life.
ENT3	STEM Courses	Fewer women entering high growth courses that lead to increased growth start-ups/spinouts such as technology firms
ENT4	Lack of business-focused courses in education	<i>“I haven't been taught anything [in education] about starting a business or kind of keeping my own accounts or all the crucial sides of the business.”</i>

PROS3/PROS5	The girls-only school have limited choice of courses	Girls in Irish secondary school have limited access to classes like woodwork, metalwork, and economics. The actual subject of economics is just not taught in girl's schools at all.
PROS5	Irish Education does not inspire innovative ability	The Irish Educational system is criticised for not encouraging innovation, focusing on women becoming good employees and working for other people instead of leading their charge.

In table 7, a vital issue is that girls-only schools in Ireland have limited course options that make it difficult for female students to go into entrepreneurship in the future. Nieva (2015) explained that schools that place a strong emphasis on developing an entrepreneurial mindset empower and educate future entrepreneurs. It is recommended that policymakers in Ireland consider ensuring entrepreneurial educational access parity across all schools in Ireland. Sullivan & Meek (2012) also espoused that educating women is critical for economies seeking sustainable development, especially those seeking to empower entrepreneurs. Galindo & Ribeiro (2012) warned that educational inequality between males and females was detrimental to women's access to entrepreneurship.

Having fully analysed the barriers that may form an impediment to female entrepreneurship, a quick examination of the suggested future of female entrepreneurship is now explored.

4.6 Future of Female Entrepreneurship in Ireland

A quick look at the future entrepreneurship policies is conducted, showing what needs to increase (top-facing arrow) and what needs to reduce (bottom-facing arrow) across the social and cultural spectrum in Ireland is presented in figure 12. Networking was a vital issue that was cited as necessary in the future of entrepreneurship in Ireland.

"I think networking is in the top list of importance to entrepreneurship for the future."-

PROS5

Although Hughes et al. (2012) stated that asking women to network to improve their entrepreneurial success was prescriptive and possibly sexist, networking has been shown to be a veritable tool for improving outcomes and success of entrepreneurship across all genders. Szycher (2020) outlined that networking with other entrepreneurs was crucial to creating and eliminating bottlenecks in business for women. Therefore, it is a great tool that should be harnessed in Ireland post-Covid. As outlined in the study, two other key issues that will assist future female entrepreneurs are the **ability to spot opportunities** and gain *recognition for their work*. The respondents posit that in the future, female entrepreneurs should develop specialist skills in spotting opportunities for business and not be afraid to be visible in their industry. More issues in the future of entrepreneurship in Ireland is presented below:



- Increase in Opportunities for Networking for female entrepreneurs
- Special purpose funding for female entrepreneurs
- Removal of educational disparity in schools
- Public awareness/information campaign against gender stereotypes
- Schemes to cushion risks facing female founders
- Increased visibility for current successful female entrepreneurs.



- Discrimination against female entrepreneurs seeking to access funding disparity in schools
- Socially allocated roles for the female gender
- Cultural expectations and pressure on female founders
- Gap between ratio of male to female founders i.e. gender parity in entrepreneurial venture.

Figure 12: Future of female entrepreneurship in Ireland

The next section outlines the conclusions and recommendations for the future.

Chapter V: Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Overview of study

This study set out to explore the social and cultural impediments to female entrepreneurship in Ireland to foster an inclusive entrepreneurship future for female-led ventures in Ireland. The study pinpoints different cultural and social issues that impede women from participating in entrepreneurial ventures. The study set out to meet three objectives, namely:

1. to investigate how gender roles and stereotypes are perceived in Ireland
2. to investigate the social-cultural impediments to female entrepreneurship in Ireland
3. suggest future policies for reducing the barriers to female entrepreneurship in Ireland using best practices worldwide.

Ten (10) semi-structured interviews were conducted among both active and prospective female entrepreneurs to explore their perceptions about the socio-cultural impediments to female entrepreneurship in Ireland. Having collected and analysed the data, inferences can now be drawn from the data and linked to the objectives, after which references for future research can be put forward.

5.2 Conclusions & Implications of Research Findings on Objectives

This section will outline how/whether the thesis has met the research objectives and the implications for stakeholders involved in the entrepreneurial process.

Research objective 1: The study has investigated gender roles and stereotypes. The study showed that social gender roles and stereotypes have a significant impact on female entrepreneurship in Ireland. Also, Ireland's history and culture are conservative on gender roles. Thus, this deeply rooted socio-cultural constraint influences female entrepreneurship. The gender roles are that women are more suited to house chores as cited in (Rubio-Banon & Esteban-Lloret, 2016); women are supports rather than leaders. The stereotypes observed are that women are risk-averse and businesses with

male co-founders are preferred, as two interviewees mentioned that male founders helped boost the image of their organizations. Finally, that women in leadership are viewed as bossy. The respondents highlighted that women are discriminated against mostly in terms of perception and their roles in society.

Research objective 2: The study has investigated the social-cultural impediments to female entrepreneurship in Ireland. A barrier to female entrepreneurship in Ireland highlighted is the lack of role models as studies show success stories inspire women (Henry & Jackson, 2015). Other socio-cultural factors were social issues, structural barriers, access to funding, fear of failure, lack of requisite skillsets, marginalisation, and risk. Finally, the study identifies access to entrepreneurial education as mentioned by six respondents as a barrier to female entrepreneurship in Ireland.

Regarding the national culture, respondents highlighted negativity towards support, the non-supportive norm of the culture, the close-mindedness of policy, and the adversarial culture towards immigrant women.

Research objective 3: The study suggests future policies for reducing the barriers to female entrepreneurship in Ireland. The respondents identified policies increase in opportunities for networking to improve collaboration between aspiring and leading entrepreneurs. Future policies also include recognizing the work of entrepreneurs and improving entrepreneurial education from the foundational level to help more girl-child aspire to become entrepreneurs.

5.2.1 Implications for practice

Females in Ireland should not let the fear of failure and societal norms stop them from starting their businesses. Contrary to seeing the fear of failure as a barrier, they should see it as an entrepreneurial journey (Cacciotti & Hayton, 2015). Also, this issue exists regardless of being female or not. Still, they should instead strive and use this as a motivating factor to propel them to be better. They should leverage available networks even if they are male-dominated and seek mentors and role models to help them perform their business successfully.

5.2.2 Implications for Policy

In terms of policy, current support is targeted at high-growth start-ups, and it is viewed as a better approach. However, given that interviewees mentioned caring supports, policies can introduce childcare facilities and support to assist women in businesses. Furthermore, policies can improve the female-only schools' curriculums to include subjects such as economics and other topics the girl child can leverage to become entrepreneurs in the future. Regarding access to finance, policies should encourage professional organizations and government agencies to focus on female funding and improve access for existing and prospective businesses.

5.2.3 Implications for future academic research

The findings of this study have an impact on future research in a variety of ways. One way forward would be to further explore the undoing or redoing of gender on entrepreneurship. The social-cultural impediments to female entrepreneurship in Ireland could also be quantitatively explored with a large enough sample to examine whether the emerging issues are factors for a larger population. Furthermore, this study proposes applying feminist theory to female entrepreneurship to explore how gender as a construct interacts with present understandings and assumptions of entrepreneurial activity as suggested by (Ahl & Marlow, 2012).

Finally, the socio-economic context could be explored, which examines the state of the economy, environmental factors, and technology advancement as its affect female entrepreneurship in the country.

5.3 Research Limitations

The study presented few limitations that may have restricted the reach and depth of the study. First, the study is limited by the small sample size of the research participants due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the accompanying difficulty of getting interview participants. This makes it difficult to easily generalise the findings of this study to the entire Irish population. One way in which this limitation was mitigated is by ensuring that the data was obtained across a representative sample in terms of age, educational level, and location.

Next, due to the limited timeframe required for a master's degree thesis, a cross-sectional study was adopted instead of a deeper, more rigorous longitudinal study. The period available for the study posed a critical limitation, as it was difficult to determine whether the responses were influenced by the prolonged period of the Covid-19 pandemic or not.

Lastly, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the interviews were conducted virtually, making the interactions relatively brief. The researcher believes that more extended responses could have been received if the interviews were conducted in person.

5.4 Recommendations

This study has conducted a rigorous analysis of the barriers/impediments faced by female entrepreneurs in Ireland. Three key recommendations have been identified for future research and the benefit of future female entrepreneurs.

First, the literature would benefit from a broader base and diverse knowledge pool regarding national studies and country-specific investigations. A lot of the current studies are focused mainly on Asia or Europe, and there needs to be a more diverse pool of resources available to researchers and policymakers alike.

Secondly, the research has shown that women are hardly engaged in policymaking for entrepreneurship, which may be the main reason why several barriers still exist to female entrepreneurs. It is recommended that early involvement of female entrepreneurs in policymaking via focus groups and open forums would be beneficial for promoting female-friendly entrepreneurial policies.

Lastly, women are the best people that can empower other female entrepreneurs; hence it is recommended that current entrepreneurs endeavour to mentor and network with upcoming/prospective female entrepreneurs. This way, they can help the forthcoming female entrepreneurs to eliminate barriers that might present themselves on their entrepreneurial journey.

References

- Acharya, A., Prakash, A., Saxena, P. & Nigam, A., 2013. Sampling: why and how of it?.
- Achtenhagen, L. & Welter, F., 2003. Female entrepreneurship in Germany: context, development and its reflection in German media”, in Butler, J. (Ed.). *New Perspectives on Women Entrepreneurs*, pp. 77-100.
- Adams, J., 2007. *Research Methods for Graduate Business and Social Science students*, New Delhi: Sage Publications Pvt. Ltd.
- Agarwal, S. & Lenka, U., 2018. Why research is needed in women entrepreneurship in India: a viewpoint. *International Journal of Social Economics*, 45(7), pp. 1042-1057.
- Ahl, H., 2004. The Scientific reproduction of gender inequality; A discourse analysis of research texts on Women's Entrepreneurship. *Copenhagen: Copenhagen Business School Press*.
- Ahl, H., 2006. Why research on women entrepreneurs needs new directions. *ET&P*, 30(5), pp. 595 - 621.
- Ahl, H. & Marlow, S., 2012. Exploring the dynamics of gender, feminism, and entrepreneurship: advancing debate to escape a dead-end?. *Organization*, 19, pp. 543-562.
- Al-Dajani, H. & Marlow, S., 2013. Empowerment and entrepreneurship: A theoretical framework. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Research*, 19(5), pp. 503-524.
- Allen, D. W. & Curington, W. P., 2014. The Self-employment of men and women: What are their motivations?. *Journal of Labor Research*, 35, pp. 143-161.
- Arber, S., 2001. Designing Samples. *Researching social life 2*. pp. 58-82.
- Arenius, P. & Minniti, M., 2005. Perceptual variables and nascent entrepreneurship. *Small business Economics*, pp. 233-247.
- Ayman, R. & Korabik, K., 2010. Leadership: Why gender and culture matter. *American Psychologist*, 65(3), pp. 157-170.
- Bari, L., 2021. Who are solo self-employed women? Analysis of the trends and characteristics of solo self-employed women in Ireland. *Irish Journal of Management*, 40(1), pp. 42-50.
- BarNir, A., 2012. Starting Technologically innovative ventures: reasons, human capital, and gender. *Management Decision*, 50(3), pp. 399-419.
- Battistella, C., Biotto, G. & De Toni, A., 2012. From design-driven innovation to meaning strategy. *Management Decision*, Band 50(4), pp. 718-743.
- Baughn, C., Chua, B. & Neupert, K., 2006. The normative context for women's participation in entrepreneurship: a multi-country study. *ET&P*, 30(5), pp. 687-708.
- Bird, B. & Brush, C., 2002. A gendered perspective on organizational creation. *Entrepreneurship*, 26, pp. 41-65.
- Blackburn, R. & Kovalainen, A., 2009. Researching small firms and entrepreneurship: Past, present, and future. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 11(2), pp. 127-148.
- Block, J., Sandner, P. & Spiegel, F., 2015. How do risk attitudes differ within the group of entrepreneurs? The role of motivation and procedural utility. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 53(1), pp. 183-206.
- Böing, S., 2009. *Basics of gender and gender problems in companies*.
- Bosma, N., Jones, K., Autio, E. & Levie, J., 2007. *Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2007 Executive Report*, London: Global Entrepreneurship Research Association.

- Brady, D. et al., 2011. Sector, size, stability, and scandal. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 26(1), pp. 84-105.
- Brush, C., Carter, N., Greene, P. & Hart, M., 2002. The role of social capital and gender in linking financial suppliers and entrepreneurial.
- Brush, C. & Cooper, S., 2012. Female entrepreneurship and economic development: International perspective. *Entrepreneurial and Regional Development*, 24(1/2), pp. 1-6.
- Brush, C., De Bruin, A., Gatewood, E. & Colette, H., 2010. Women Entrepreneurs and the Global environment for growth: A research perspective.
- Brush, C., Edelman, L., Manolova, T. & Welter, F., 2018. A gendered look at entrepreneurship ecosystems. *Small Business Economics*, pp. 1-16.
- Burke, A., Milan, J., Roman, C. & Van stel, A., 2018. Exploring the impact of different types of prior entrepreneurial experience on employer firm performance. *Journal of Business Research*, 90, pp. 107-122.
- Burton, D. M., Fairlie, R. W. & Siegel, D., 2019. Entrepreneurship and Employment: Connecting labour Market institutions, Corporate demography, and Human Resource Management Practices.
- Cacciotti, G. & Hayton, J., 2015. Fear and entrepreneurship: a review and research agenda. *International Journal of Management Review*, 17, pp. 165-190.
- Cacciotti, G., Hayton, J. C., Mitchell, R. J. & Giazitzoglu, A., 2016. A reconceptualization of fear of failure in entrepreneurship. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 31, pp. 302-325.
- Cardella, G. M., Hernández-Sánchez, B. R. & Sánchez-García, J. C., 2020. Women Entrepreneurship: A systematic review to outline the boundaries of scientific Literatures. *Journal of Frontiers in Psychology*.
- Carter, N. & Bennett, D., 2006. Gender and Entrepreneurship. In: *In Carter, S. and Jones-Evans D. Enterprise and Small Business - Principles, Practice, and Policies*.
- Carter, N. M., Henry, C., Cinneide, B. O. & Johnston, K., 2007. *Female Entrepreneurship: Implications for education, training, and policy*. London: Taylor & Francis e-library.
- Carter, S. & Marlow, S., 2007. Female Entrepreneurship: Theoretical Perspectives and Empirical Evidence, in N. Carter, C. Henry, B. O Cinneide and K. Johnston (eds). In: *Female Entrepreneurship: Implications for Educations, Training, and Policy*. London: Routledge, pp. 11-37.
- Chung, J., 1998. Risk reduction in public accounting firms: are women more effective?. *International Review of women and leadership*, 4(1), pp. 39-45.
- Coleman, S. et al., 2018. Policy Support for Women Entrepreneurs' Access to Financial Capital: Evidence from Canada, Germany, Ireland, Norway, and the United States. *Journal of Small Business Management*, pp. 1-27.
- Creswell, J., 2009. *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach*. 3rd Ed. Hrsg. London: Sage Publications.
- Cullen, U., 2019. Sociocultural factors as determinants of female entrepreneurs' business strategies. *Journal of Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies*.
- Davidson, P. & Honig, B., 2003. The role of social and human capital among nascent entrepreneurs.
- Dawson, C., Fuller-love, N., Sinnott, E. & O'Gorman, B., 2011. Entrepreneurs' perception of business networks: does gender matter?. *Entrepreneurship and Innovation*, 12(4), pp. 271-281.
- De Bruin, A., C.G., B. & Welter, F., 2007. Advancing a framework for coherent research on women's entrepreneurship. *ET&P*, 31(3), pp. 323-339.

- Department of Business, Enterprise, and Innovation, Ireland, 2018. *The National Policy Statement on Entrepreneurship Mid-term Review*, Dublin, Ireland: Department of Business, Enterprise, and Innovation, Ireland.
- Dileo, I. & Pereiro, T. G., 2019. Assessing the impact of individual and context factors on the entrepreneurial process: A cross-country multilevel approach. *International Entrepreneurship Management Journal*
- Donbesuur, F., Boso, N. & Hultman, M., 2020. The effect of entrepreneurial orientation on new venture performance: contingency roles of entrepreneurial actions. *Journal of Business Research*, 118, pp. 150-161.
- Doug, J. & Anderson, C., 2012. Innovation in small business: comparing face to face with virtual networking. *Journal of Business Strategy*, 33(5), pp. 51-58.
- Eagly, A., 1987. Sex difference in social behavior: A social-role interpretation.. *Psychology Press, New York*.
- Elam, A. B. et al., 2019. *Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2018/2019 Women's Entrepreneurship Report*.
- Enterprise Ireland, 2020. *Department of Enterprise, Trade, and Employment*. [Online] Available at: <https://enterprise.gov.ie/en/What-We-Do/The-Business-Environment/Entrepreneurship-/Female-Entrepreneurship/> [Zugriff am 16 July 2021].
- Enterprise Ireland, 2020. *Enterprise Ireland 2020 Action Plan for women in Business Fuelling growth through Diversity*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.enterprise-ireland.com/en/Publications/Reports-Published-Strategies/Action-Plan-for-Women-in-Business.pdf>
- European Commission, 2003. *Entrepreneurship in Europe*, Brussels: European Commission.
- European Commission, 2020. *Innovators of the Future: Bridging the Gender Gap: Horizon 2020 Framework Programme 2018-2020*. [Online] Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2018-2020/main/h2020-wp1820-swfs_en.pdf [Zugriff am 15 July 2021].
- Farr-Wharton, R. & Brunetto, Y., 2007. Women entrepreneurs, opportunity recognition and government-sponsored networks: a social capital perspective. *Women in Management Review*, 22(3), pp. 187-207.
- Fitzsimons, P. & O'gorman, C., 2019. *A SURVEY OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN IRELAND: GLOBAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP MONITOR (GEM)*, Dublin: Enterprise Ireland.
- Fondeville, N., Erhan, O., Lelkes, O. & Ward, T., 2015. *Recent Changes in Self-Employment and Entrepreneurship across the EU*, s.l.: European Commission Research note.
- Fuentelsaz, L., González, C. & Maicas, J. P., 2019. Formal institutions and opportunity entrepreneurship. The contingent role of informal institutions. *Business Research Quarterly*, 22(1), pp. 5-24.
- García, P. O. & Capitán, Á. O., 2016. Elements that contribute to boost female entrepreneurship: A prospective analysis.
- Gedeon, S., 2010. What is Entrepreneurship? *Entrepreneurial practice review*, 1(3), pp. 16-35.
- Gilmore, A., 2010. Reflections on methodologies for research at the marketing/entrepreneurship interface. *Journal of Research in Marketing and Entrepreneurship*, 12(1), pp. 11-20.
- Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2014. *Global Entrepreneurship Monitor: Women's report*, s.l.: <http://gemconsortium.org/report/49281>.
- Gog, M., 2015. Case Study Research. *International Journal of Sales, Retailing & Marketing*, 4(9), pp. 33-41.

- Graziano, A. & Raulin, M., 2009. *Research methods: a process of inquiry*. 7th Edition Hrsg. London: Pearson Education Inc.
- Greene, F. J., Han, L. & Marlow, S., 2013. Like Mother, Like Daughter? Analyzing Maternal influences upon women's entrepreneurial propensity. *Entrepreneurship Theory & Practice*, 37(4), pp. 687-711.
- Griffiths, M., Gundry, L. & Kickul, J., 2013. The socio-political, economic, and cultural determinants of social entrepreneurship activity: An empirical examination. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 20(2), pp. 341-357.
- Gupta, V., Turban, D. & Bhawee, N., 2008. The effect of gender stereotype activation on entrepreneurial intentions. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93(5), pp. 1053-1061.
- Gupta, V., Turban, D., Wasti, S. & Sikdar, A., 2009. The role of gender stereotypes in perceptions of entrepreneurs and intentions to become an entrepreneur. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, pp. 397-417.
- Hanson, S. & Blake, M., 2009. Gender and entrepreneurial networks. *Regional Studies*, 43(1), pp. 135-149.
- Hayton, J. & Cacciotti, G., 2013. Is there an entrepreneurial culture? A review of empirical research. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 25(9-10), pp. 708-731.
- Hayton, J. C., George, G. & Zahra, S. A., 2002. National culture and entrepreneurship: A review of behavioural research. *Entrepreneurship: Theory and Practice*, 26, pp. 33-52.
- Heilman, M. & Chen, J., 2003. Entrepreneurship as a solution: The allure of self-employment for women and minorities. *Human Resource Management Review*, 13(2), pp. 347-364.
- Henley, A., 2015. *The Post Crisis Growth in the Self-Employed: Volunteers or Reluctant Recruits?*. The UK, Institute of Labour Economics.
- Henry, C. & Jackson, E. L., 2015. Women's Entrepreneurship and the future of veterinary Profession. *Journal of the Association for Management Education and Development*, 22(3), pp. 34-40.
- Henry, C. & Johnston, K., 2007. Female Entrepreneurship: Implications for education, training, and policy. In: N. M. Carter, C. Henry, B. Cinneide & K. Johnston, Hrsg. pp. 1-8.
- Henry, C. & Kennedy, S., 2003. In search of a new Celtic tiger. New perspectives on women entrepreneurs. Band 3, p. 203.
- Henry, C., Orser, B., Coleman, S. & Foss, L., 2017. *Women's entrepreneurship policy: A 13-nation cross-country comparison*, s.l.: Researchgate.
- Henry, C. & Treanor, L., 2007. *Business growth training programme for women entrepreneurs*, s.l.: Report to the Gender Equality Unit of the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.
- Hinkelmann, K., 2012. *Design and analysis of experiments, Volume 3: special designs and applications*. s.l.: John Wiley & Sons.
- Hofstede, G., 2001. *Culture's consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviours, Institutions, and Organizations across Nations*. Second edition Hrsg. California: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Holienkaa, M., Jančovičová, Z. & Kovačičová, Z., 2016. Drivers of women entrepreneurship in Visegrad countries: GEM evidence. *Procedia: Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 220, pp. 124-133.
- Holmes Jr, R., Miller, T., Hitt, M. & Salmador, M., 2013. The interrelationships among informal institutions, formal institutions, and inward foreign direct investment. *Journal of Management*, 39(2), pp. 531 - 566.
- Hoogendoorn, B., Van der Zwan, P. & Thurik, R., 2020. Goal heterogeneity at start-up: are greener start-ups more innovative?. *Research Policy*, 49(10), p. 104061..

- Hopp, C. & Stephan, U., 2012. The influence of sociocultural environment on the performance of nascent entrepreneurs: Community culture, motivation, self-efficacy, and start-up success. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*.
- Hughes, K., 2006. Exploring motivation and success among Canadian women entrepreneurs. *Journal of Small Business and Entrepreneurship*, 19(2), pp. 83-94.
- Hughes, K. et al., 2012. Extending Women's Entrepreneurship research in New Directions. *Entrepreneurship: Theory and Practice*, 36(3), pp. 429-442.
- Humbert, A. L. & Brindley, 2015. Challenging the concept of risk in relation to women's entrepreneurship. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 30(1), pp. 2-25.
- Humbert, L. A. & Drew, E., 2010. Gender, entrepreneurship and motivational factors in an Irish context. *International Journal of Gender and entrepreneurship*, 2(2), pp. 173-196.
- Irish Congress of Trade Unions, 2017. *'Insecure and Uncertain: Precarious Work in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland..* [Online] Available at: https://www.ictu.ie/download/pdf/precarious_work_final_dec_2017.pdf [Zugriff am 2021 July 15].
- Islam, N., 2020. Socioeconomic factors of women entrepreneurship development in Bangladesh. *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 19(1).
- Jeong, S. & Kehoe, C., 2012. *Women in Entrepreneurship Education in U.S.*. Urbana-Champaign University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign University of Illinois, Higher Education Jeonghwan Choi University pp. 11-26.
- Kaciak, E. & Welsh, D., 2020. Women entrepreneurs and work-life balance interface: The impact of sustainable economies on success. *Journal of Business Research*, 112, pp. 281-290.
- Kelley, D. et al., 2017. *Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2018/2017 Report on Women's Entrepreneurship.*, s.l.: Babson College: Smith College and the Global Entrepreneurship Research Association.
- Kim, S. & Shin, M., 2017. The effectiveness of transformational leadership on empowerment: The roles of gender and gender dyads. *Cross-Cultural & Strategic management*, 24(2), pp. 271 - 287.
- Kirkwood, J., 2009. Motivational factors in a push-pull theory of entrepreneurship. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 24(5), pp. 346-364.
- Klapper, L. & Parker, S., 2010. Gender and the business environment for new firm creation. *The world Bank research Observer Advance access*, pp. 1-21.
- Klyver, K., 2011. Gender differences in entrepreneurial networks-adding an alter perspective. *Gender in Management*, 26(2), pp. 332-350.
- Knight, F., 1921. *Risk, Uncertainty, and Profit*. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Koellinger, P., Minniti, M. & Schade, C., 2011. Gender differences in entrepreneurial propensity. pp. 213-234.
- Koellinger, P., Minniti, M. & Schade, C. 2., 2007. I think I can, I think I can: Overconfidence ad entrepreneurial behavior. *Journal of Economic Psychology*, Band 28, pp. 502-527.
- Liles, P., 1981. Who are the entrepreneurs?. In: *Gorb, P, Wilson, P. (Eds) Small Business Perspectives*. London: Institute for Small Business.
- Local Enterprise Office, 2018. *Local Enterprise Office, Cork*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.localenterprise.ie/SouthCork/News/Latest-News-Press-Releases/Biggest-ever-National-Women%E2%80%99s-Enterprise-Day-taking-place-on-October-18th.html>

- Longoria, C., 2018. Women entrepreneurship in developing, developed, and transitional economies - differences and similarities. *JWE*, pp. 73-82.
- Loscocco, K. & Bird, S., 2012. Gendered paths: Why women lag behind men in small business success. *Work and Occupations*, 39(2), pp. 183-219.
- Loza, E., 2011. Female Entrepreneurship Theory. *JWE*, 1-2, pp. 26-64.
- Malach Pines, A., Lerner, M. & Schwartz, D., 2010. Gender differences in entrepreneurship: Equality, diversity, and inclusion in times of global crisis. *Equality, diversity, and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 29(2), pp. 186-198.
- Marlow, S., Henry, C. & Carter, S., 2009. Exploring the Impact of Gender upon Women's Business Ownership. *ISBJ*, 27(2), pp. 139-148.
- Marlow, S. & McAdam, M., 2013. Gender and entrepreneurship: Advancing debate and challenging myths; exploring the mystery of the under-performing female entrepreneur. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour & Research*, 19(1), pp. 114-124.
- Mas-Tur, A., Soriano, D. & Roig-Tierno, N., 2015. Motivational factors of female entrepreneurs. In: *Female entrepreneurship in transition economies*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 31-44.
- Maxfield, S., Shapiro, M., Gupta, V. & Hass, S., 2010. Gender and risk: women, risk-taking and risk aversion. *Gender and Management: An International Journal*, 25(7), pp. 586-604.
- McGowan, P., Redeker, C. L., Cooper, S. Y. & Kate, G., 2012. Female entrepreneurship and the management of business and domestic roles: Motivations, expectations, and realities. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 24(1-2), pp. 53-72.
- Mckay, S., Phillimore, J. & Teasdale, S., 2010. Exploring the 'Gendered' nature of social entrepreneurship: Women's leadership, employment, and participation in the third sector.
- Melton, T., 2007. Project Management Toolkit. *Project Management Toolkit*, Issue <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-075068440-8/50008-4>, pp. 53-106.
- Menzies, T. V. & Tatroff, H., 2006. The propensity of male versus female students to take courses and degree concentrations in entrepreneurship. vol. 19(2), pp. 203-218.
- Meyer, N., 2018. Research on Female Entrepreneurship: are we doing enough. *Polish Journal of Management Studies*, 12(2).
- Moreira, J., Marques, C. S., Braga, A. & Ratten, V., 2019. A systematic review of women's entrepreneurship and internationalization literature. *Thunderbird Int. Bus. Rev.*, Band 61, pp. 635-648.
- Morgan, J. & Sisak, D., 2016. Aspiring to succeed: A model of entrepreneurship and fear of failure. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 31(1), pp. 1-21.
- Morris, M., Santos, S. & Neumeyer, X., 2020. Entrepreneurship as a solution to poverty in developed economies. *Business Horizons*, 63(3), pp. 377-390.
- Mueller, P., 2007. Exploiting entrepreneurial opportunities: The impact of entrepreneurship on growth. *SBE*, pp. 355-362.
- Murray, P. & Syed, J., 2010. Gendered observations and experiences in executive women's work. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 20(3), pp. 277-293.
- Nabi, G. & Liñán, F. 2., 2013. Considering business start-up in recession time: The role of risk perception and economic context in shaping the entrepreneurial intent. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research*.

- Nevins, R. & Hamouda, A., 2019. Generation Y female in Ireland: An insight into a new entrepreneurial phenomenon. *Proceedings of the European Conference on Innovation & Entrepreneurship*, pp. 716-723.
- Nielsen, S., Klyver, K., Evald, M. & Bager, T., 2021. *Entrepreneurship in theory and practice: Paradoxes in Play*. s.l.: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Nieva, F., 2015. Social women entrepreneurship in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. *Journal of Global Entrepreneurship Research*, 5(1).
- Noguera, M., Alvarez, C. & Urbano, D., 2013. Socio-cultural factors and female entrepreneurship. *International Entrepreneurship Management*, pp. 183-198.
- O'Connell, D., 2018. *Businesswire*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20180822005143/en/Enterprise-Ireland-Puts-Female-Led-Irish-Companies-at-Center-of-Investment-Growth-and-Development-Efforts> [Zugriff am 15 July 2021].
- O'Gorman, B. & Cooney, T. M., 2007. An Anthology of Enterprise Policy in Ireland. *Irish Journal of Management*, 28(2), pp. 3-27.
- O'Gorman, C. & Fitzsimons, P., 2007. Entrepreneurial Activity in Ireland: Evidence from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor. *Irish Journal of Management*, 28(2), pp. 29-50.
- Persio, S. L., 2019. *Forbes*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/sofialottopersio/2019/06/11/uk-women-name-successful-female-entrepreneur/?sh=6ba52eacc5e8>.
- Ramadani, V., Dana, L.-P., Gerguri, S. & Tasaminova, T., 2013. Women entrepreneurs in the Republic of Macedonia: Waiting for directions. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business*, 19(1), pp. 95-121.
- Rauch, A. & Frese, M., 2007. Let's put the person back into entrepreneurship research: A meta-analysis on the relationship between business owner's personality traits, business creation, and success.
- Raza, A., Muffatto, M. & Saeed, S., 2019. The influence of formal institutions on the relationship between entrepreneurial readiness and entrepreneurial behaviour: A cross-country analysis. *Journal of small business and enterprise development*, 26(1), pp. 133-157.
- Reavley, M. & Lituchy, T., 2008. Successful women entrepreneurs: a six-country analysis of self-reported determinants of success? More than just dollars and cents.
- Reed, R., Storrud-Barnes, S. & Jessup, L., 2012. How open innovation affects the drivers of competitive advantage: trading the benefits of IP creation and ownership for free invention. *Management Decision*, 50(1), pp. 58-73.
- Robb, A. M. & Watson, J., 2012. Gender difference in firm performance: Evidence from new venture in the United States. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 27(5), pp. 544-558.
- Robert, A., Blackburn, M. & Wainwright, H., 2013. Small business performance: business, strategy, and owner-manager characteristics. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 20(1), pp. 8-27.
- Rouse, J. & Kitching, J., 2006. Do Enterprise Support Programmes Leave Women Holding the Baby. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 24(1), pp. 5-19.
- Rubio-Banon, A. & Esteban-Lloret, N., 2016. Cultural factors and gender role in female. *SUMA DE NEGOCIOS*, 7, pp. 9-17.
- Sasi, J., 2011. Meenu Goyal Women paper. 1(6), p. 14.

- Saunders, M. N., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A., 2019. *Research Methods for Business Students*, United Kingdom: Pearson Education Limited.
- Sharafizad, J. & Coetzer, A., 2016. Women business owners' start-up motivations and network content. *Journal of small business and enterprise Development*, 23(2), pp. 590-610.
- Shinnar, R., Giacomini, O. & Janssen, F., 2012. Entrepreneurial Perceptions and Intentions: The Role of Gender and Culture. *Entrepreneurship Theory & Practice*, pp. 465-493.
- Silverman, D., 2010. *Doing qualitative research: a practical handbook*. 3rd Ed. Hrsg. London: Sage.
- Simón-Moya, V., Revuelto-Taboada, L. & Guerrero, R. F., 2014. Institutional and economic drivers of entrepreneurship: An international perspective. *Journal of Business Research*, 67(5), pp. 715-721.
- Sitkin, S. & Pablo, A., 1992. Reconceptualizing the determinants of risk behaviour.
- Stephan, U. & Roesler, U., 2010. Comparison of entrepreneurs' and employees' health in a national representative sample. *Journal of Occupational and Organisational*, 83(3), pp. 717-738.
- Strategic Direction, 2019. *Empowering female entrepreneurs: How cultural differences in the UK and Turkey influence female entrepreneurship*, s.l.: Emerald Publishing Limited.
- Subramaniam, I., Arumugam, T. & Abu Baker Akeel, A., 2013. Demographic and family-related barriers on women managers' career development. *Asian Social Science*, 10(1), pp. 86-94.
- Sullivan, D. & Meek, W., 2012. Gender and entrepreneurship: a review and process model. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 27(5), pp. 428-258.
- Szycher, P., 2020. Women and Entrepreneurship. *The Guide to Entrepreneurship*, 6(2), pp. 62-77.
- Taylor, S. & Marlow, S., 2010. *Engendering entrepreneurship: Why can't a woman be more like a man?*. Montreal, American Academy of Management Conference.
- Thai, M. & Turkina, E., 2014. Macro-level determinants of formal entrepreneurship versus informal entrepreneurship. *JBV*, 29(4), pp. 490-510.
- Thébaud, S., 2015. Business as plan B: Institutional foundations of gender inequality on entrepreneurship across 24 industrialized countries.
- Thomas, J. & Harden, A., 2008. Methods for the thematic synthesis of qualitative research in systematic reviews. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, Band 8, p. 45.
- Thornton, P., Ribeiro-Soriano, D. & Urbano, D., 2011. Socio-cultural factors and entrepreneurial activity: an overview. *ISBJ* 29(2), pp. 105-118.
- Treanor, L. & Henry, C., 2010. Gender in campus incubation evidence from Ireland. *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, 2(2), pp. 130-149.
- Treanor, L. & Henry, C., 2010. Influences on women's entrepreneurship in Ireland and the Czech Republic. In: *Women Entrepreneurs and the Global Environment for Growth. A research perspective*. UK & Northampton, USA: Edward Elgar, pp. 73-95.
- Urbano, D. & Yordanova, D., 2008. Socio-cultural factors and transnational entrepreneurship: a multiple case study in Spain. *International Small Business Journal*, 29(2), pp. 119-134.
- Van Staveren, I. & Knorringa, P., 2007. Unpacking social capital in economic development: How social relations matter. *Review of Social Economy*, LXV(1), pp. 107-135.
- Verheul, I., Uhlaner, L. & Thurik, R., 2003. Business accomplishments, gender, and entrepreneurial self-image. *Scientific Analysis of Entrepreneurship and SME*, Band 12.

- Watson, J., 2012. Networking: Gender difference and the association with firm performance. *International Small Business Journal*, 30(5), pp. 536-558.
- Welsh, D., Kaciak, E. & Thongpapanl, N., 2016. Influence of stages of economic development on women entrepreneurs' startups. *Journal of Business Research*, 69(11), pp. 4933-4940.
- Welter, F., Brush, C. & De Bruin, A., 2014. The gendering of entrepreneurship context. Working Paper(1), p. 14.
- Welter, F. & Smallbone, D., 2011. Institutional perspective on entrepreneurial behavior in challenging environments. *JSBM* 49(1), pp. 107-125.
- Wennberg, K., Pathak, S. & Autio, E., 2013. How culture moulds the effects of self-efficacy and fear of failure on entrepreneurship. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 25(9-10), pp. 756-780.
- Wilson, F., Kickul, J. & Marlion, D., 2007. Gender, Entrepreneurial self-efficacy and entrepreneurial career intentions: implications for entrepreneurship education. *ET&P*, 31(3), pp. 387-406.
- Wilson, F. & Tagg, S., 2010. Social Constructionism and personal constructivism: getting the business owner's view on the role of sex and gender. *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, 2(1), pp. 68-82.
- Winn, J., 2004. Entrepreneurship: not an easy path to top management for women. *Women in management review*, 19(3), pp. 143-153.
- World Population Review, 2020. *Developed countries list 2020*. [Online] Available at: <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/developed-countries>.
- Yasemin, H., Ülkühan, B. D. & Şükran, S. Y., 2014. Relationship between Uncertainty Avoidance culture, Entrepreneurial Activity and Economic Development. *Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Band 150, pp. 908-916.
- Yordanova, D. & Alexandrova-Boshnakova, M., 2011. Gender effects on risk-taking of entrepreneurs: evidence from Bulgaria. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Research*, 17(3), pp. 272-295.

Appendix I: Interview Questionnaire

Topic: An investigation into Social and Cultural impediments to female entrepreneurship in Ireland

1. Demographics – age range 21-25, 26 – 30, 31 - 35, 35- 40 level of education - location
2. What are the roles attributed to females and males in Ireland (Gupta, et al., 2009; Wilson, et al., 2007; Rubio-Banon & Esteban-Lloret, 2016)
3. What are the stereotypes about women in entrepreneurship? (Ahl, 2004). What do you think about women taking up entrepreneurial careers (Henry & Jackson, 2015)
4. What do you think are the main barriers to female entrepreneurship?
Political issues? Cultural issues? Accessing finance? Attitudes? Societal norms? National expectation? (Strategic Direction, 2019)
5. To what extent do you think socio-cultural issues affect female entrepreneurship in Ireland? (Fitzsimons & O’gorman, 2019)

Examples of socio-cultural issues are Pressure from family life, Personal capabilities/characteristics, fear of failure, lack of role models, start-up motivation, networking, education
6. What are the exact reasons you started your own business since you desire to have one? (Marlow, et al., 2009)
7. To what degree do think fear of failure stops women from starting an entrepreneurial venture? (OECD, 2016)
8. What is your motivation to start? (Braches, 2015). Have you encountered women who were motivated to start in Ireland and weren’t able to start?
9. How does national culture celebrate and encourage or support female entrepreneurship? (OECD, 2016). What policies can be made?
10. Are there Irish female role models, if there are, do you connect with them? (Hamouda, 2008) How well have they inspired you?
11. What do you think are the characteristics/capabilities a female entrepreneur should have? Good self-esteem, assertiveness, opportunity recognition, autonomy? (Bruin, et al., 2007; McHugh, 2010)

Submission of Thesis and Dissertation

National College of Ireland
Research Students Declaration Form
(Thesis/Author Declaration Form)

Name: Oluwabukola Adewuyi

Student Number: 19221011

Degree for which thesis is submitted: Master of Science in Entrepreneurship

Title of Thesis: An Investigation into the social and cultural impediment to female entrepreneurship in Ireland

Date: 18th August 2021

Material submitted for award

- A. I declare that this work submitted has been composed by myself.
- B. I declare that all verbatim extracts contained in the thesis have been distinguished by quotation marks and the sources of information specifically acknowledged.
- C. I agree to my thesis being deposited in the NCI Library online open access repository NORMA.
- D. **Either** *I declare that no material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award.
Or *I declare that the following material contained in the thesis formed part of a submission for the award of
-
- (State the award and the awarding body and list the material below)