

Do Ventures Led by Women Set Different Target Margins?

Evidence from Emerging Markets

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Abstract

In recent decades, the number of female entrepreneurs has grown substantially, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. However, the characteristics and performance of female-led ventures differ significantly from those of ventures led by men. A potential reason for this is the lack of clearly defined venture goals, including the profit margin that ventures target. We study the relationship between gender and target margins using a large dataset of ventures located in Latin America and the Caribbean and Sub-Saharan Africa. We find that ventures led only by women are almost five percentage points less likely than male-led ventures to establish target margins, even after controlling for observable venture and founder characteristics. In addition, ventures with only female founders tend to set lower target margins than those with only male founders. These results suggest that policymakers, accelerators, and incubators, can play a major role in supporting female entrepreneurs as they grow their businesses by encouraging women to set clear and realistic target margins to be more successful at raising funds for their ventures.

Keywords Gender gap | Venture target margin | Venture performance | Gender composition

JEL Classification J16 | L21 | M13

1 Introduction

In recent decades, the number of female entrepreneurs has increased substantially. However, this growth has not had the expected impact on global economies due to the disparity between the performance of male- and female-led businesses (Elam et al., 2021). Previous studies have investigated the performance of female-led ventures in terms of the return on owner's equity, the return on total assets (Johnsen & McMahon, 2005), survival, revenue, profit, sales (Bardasi et al., 2011; Fairlie & Robb, 2009), and employment (Guzman & Kacperczyk, 2019). The general conclusion of these studies is that female-led ventures are more likely to close and have lower performance than those led by men¹.

Another indicator of the difference in performance between male- and female-led ventures is the rate of return on equity in the face of grants. Fafchamps et al. (2014) find that the equity stock of female-led ventures increases more when it comes from in-kind grants than cash grants. In most cases, women use most of the cash incentive for household expenses, rather than on improving their businesses, which affects the success of their ventures (Sittenthaler & Mohnen, 2020). As Marlow and Patton (2005) find, women experience additional disadvantages associated with gender ascription as opposed to men. These disadvantages translate into limited accumulation of social, cultural, human, and financial capital and thus limit women's ability to accumulate personal savings, generate credit histories attractive to formal lenders, or attract the interest of venture capitalists.

As documented by Bloom and Van Reenen (2007), setting clear profit targets is an important predictor of venture's success. If women are less likely than men to set target margins for their ventures, then that might explain why ventures led by women have lower chances of

¹ Elam et al. (2021) find that, in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), female-led ventures are 1.3 percent more likely to close, and the reason cited most frequently is a lack of profitability.

survival (Fafchamps et al., 2014; McKenzie & Paffhausen, 2019). In turn, the latest report on the Women’s Entrepreneurship Monitor finds that the regions with the highest rates of business closure are Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA)² (Elam et al., 2021).

In this paper, we study whether a difference exists in setting target margins and the level of the target margins across ventures by the gender composition of venture founders. We use the Global Accelerator Learning Initiative (GALI) cross-sectional dataset, focusing our attention on the SSA and LAC regions. We find that female-led ventures are almost five percentage points (pp.) less likely than male-led ventures to establish target margins, even after controlling for observable characteristics. Moreover, ventures with only female founders tend to set lower target margins than those with male founders; the distribution of ventures shows that female-led ventures tend to specialize in low value-added sectors, where target margins are usually lower. Regarding the characteristics of female entrepreneurs, we find that they have less experience than their male counterparts, especially in management positions.

Given that entrepreneurship has been encouraged as a solution for female unemployment, it is important to understand how women make business decisions. Future research should focus on exploring the mechanisms behind the gap we find—specifically, whether entrepreneurial confidence, more realistic expectations, or greater hesitancy to set a target explain the findings. Policymakers and governments, as well as accelerators and incubators, can play a major role in supporting female entrepreneurs grow their businesses, especially in developing countries.

² According to the most recent Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) report, lower-middle-income countries have the highest rate of total early-stage entrepreneurial activity (TEA) by women. In LAC, women account for 24 percent of TEA and female-led ventures are 40 percent more likely than male-led ventures to be sole proprietors. Likewise in Sub-Saharan Africa, one in three women is a sole proprietor of a business (more than twice as many as men) (Elam et al., 2021).

2 Theoretical background

2.1 Entrepreneurial gender gap and venture performance

The female entrepreneurs' performance has recently become an important area of political and academic debate. There are several factors that influence the performance gap between female-led and male-led ventures. Some are related to the characteristics of the owner, such as their level of education (Spring, 2009) and prior work experience (Duchin et al., 2021; Jaiswal, 2020).³ Other studies point out the differences between the ventures themselves: female-led ventures tend to be smaller than male-led ones (Bardasi et al., 2011), are concentrated in sectors with low added value (Allen et al., 2007; Orser et al., 2006) and also have lower levels of capital (Fairlie & Robb, 2009; Orser et al., 2006).

Min-Yen & Siong-Choy (2007) find that motivations and goals setting within the venture, such as profitability and sales growth are related to the performance and success of ventures. According to Storey (1994) women who are involved in the creation of their ventures earn higher profits and higher profit margins than men. However, due to a lack of clear objectives, female-led ventures tend to perform worse than male-led ventures. Noland et al. (2016) find that organizations with at least 30 percent female leadership could increase their net margins by as much as 6 percent, whereas, for teams composed of just one gender, male or female, this net benefit was just over 3 percent.

2.2 Factors influencing target margin setting

The differences in characteristics of founders and ventures can be partially attributed to cultural factors that can limit the development (Kalafatoglu & Mendoza, 2017) and performance (Bernhardt et al., 2019; Hardy & Kagy, 2020; Nichter & Goldmark, 2009) of female-led

³ Similarly, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) finds in its Women's Entrepreneurship Report, that female entrepreneurs with a primary education or less have 27% fewer opportunities than female entrepreneurs with higher education (Ababa, 2019).

ventures. Linked to this cultural factors are the psychological characteristics of entrepreneurs. Fatma et al. (2021) and Fatma and Ezzeddine (2019) study the effect of entrepreneurs' psychological biases on ventures success, and their findings suggest that, besides traditional factors like entrepreneur's age, experience and education, optimism and overconfidence are important factors that influence business success. A higher level of confidence and previous experience coupled with an older entrepreneur increase entrepreneurial success rates. However, behavioral factors seem to have a greater impact among female than male.

Schiller and Crewson (1997) establish prior industry experience and years of self-employment as the most important predictors of female entrepreneurial success. They find that due to women tend to have less work experience and focus on relatively new small businesses they often lack networks, contacts, socialization practices that limit not only the performance of their ventures but also long-term survival and growth. In addition to this evidence, Min-Yen and Siong-Choy (2007) find that women with little or non-technical and professional training may face financial constraints, such as barriers to accessing credit or funding, and personal constraints that limit their entrepreneurial activities and corporate performance. As Kobeissi (2010) find, entrepreneurship is about recognizing opportunities, and education is the key to being able to take advantage of these opportunities for growth.

In recent reports by the Global Accelerator Learning Initiative -GALI- (Davidson & Hume, 2020; Harris et al., 2020), access to financing is presented as the main barrier faced by women entrepreneurs at different stages of entrepreneurship due to the sector in which the venture is located and the bias of investors against women. As Sonneborn et al. (2020) show, ventures that access funding can grow up to 30% faster than those that do not, and only 11 percent of seed funding capital in emerging markets goes to ventures with at least one woman on their founding

team. However, empirical evidence on gender differences in access to capital is mixed. Coleman and Robb (2009), and Lassébie et al. (2019) find that the difference in the likelihood of receiving funding between male- and female-led venture decreases when founders have a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) degree, when founders have prior CEO experience, and when they own patents and founders that have prior CEO experience. Nevertheless, the same is not true for the difference in the amount of funding received.

Ewens and Townsend (2020) utilize the AngelList platform and a linear probability model with fixed effects to study whether early-stage investors are gender-biased when allocating resources. They find that, *ceteris paribus*, female-led startups are between 0.8 and 1.3 percent less likely to raise funds from a male investor than those led by men, an indication of gender bias. In turn, Greenberg and Mollick (2015) find that women investors are more likely to support female entrepreneurs, but they tend to invest in sectors where women are underrepresented (such as financial and insurance activities, and information and communication technology). This implies that support from female investors does not have the expected impact.⁴

Bernstein et al. (2017) find that more experienced investors with greater resources focus their investments on strong founding teams with a good background, since the team's composition is important in operational terms and reduces the risk for the investor. In this regard, Ullah and Zhou (2020) use startup data obtained from the Kickstarter platform and a binary response model to study the determinants of fundraising. They find that female-led ventures tend to be more successful than male-led ones in raising funds, for women tend to interact more with potential investors and are more orderly and clearer in their entrepreneurial projects. However,

⁴ Harris et al. (2020) report that the share of female-led ventures in financial and insurance activities is only 17%, and the share in information and communication technologies is 27%, a pattern previously identified in The Female Entrepreneurship Index (FEI) (Terjesen & Lloyd, 2015), which shows that the percentage of female founders in the technology sector declined by 19% in 2015.

their data shows that women are more likely than men to be solo entrepreneurs, which is a barrier to accessing funding. This makes the effects found by Bernstein et al. (2017) and Ullah and Zhou (2020) little applicable to female-led ventures. In this regard, Davidson and Hume (2020) find that female-led ventures raise on average almost \$100,000 less in capital than men-led ones.

3 Data and methods

3.1 Sample

The data used for this study comes from the Global Accelerator Learning Initiative (GALI)⁵ between 2013 and 2019. When a venture applies for one of the GALI programs, the founder is asked to complete a survey on the socio-economic characteristics of the venture and its founders. These include, among others, the manufacturing department, the venture's headquarters and geographical location, funding sources and amounts, profit targets, workforce size, and whether the venture exists on social media. The data on up to three founders includes their educational level, previous work experience, gender, and if they were accepted into the program.⁶

For this study, we focus on the data collected from each venture at the time of applying for a program, regardless of whether it was accepted by the GALI program. We restrict our attention to for-profit ventures, as they are the ones that tend to set a profit margin, and those ventures located in either Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) or Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA).⁷ Our final sample consists of 7,683 ventures in 70 countries: 4,813 ventures are in 28 LAC countries and 2,870 ventures in 42 SSA countries.

3.2 Model

⁵ GALI is a research initiative that seeks to explore key questions about business acceleration. GALI data is based on Emory University's Entrepreneur Database Program, which works with accelerator programs around the world to collect data describing the entrepreneurs they attract and support. GALI data is a public database. To learn more about GALI and access related publications, visit www.galidata.org

⁶ If the venture is accepted into a program, they are further surveyed once a year.

⁷ We define the location of the venture using the geographic location of the headquarters.

We chose two types of regressions: a linear and an interval regression. With the linear regression, we first identify whether female-led ventures are less likely than male-led ones to set a target margin. Then, with the interval regression, we identify whether the magnitude of target margins of exclusively female-led ventures differs significantly from the target margins of male-led ventures. We estimate equations of the form:

$$Y_{isjt} = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{OnlyFemale}_i + \beta_2 \text{SomeFemale}_i + \theta_s + \mu_j + \nu_t + \Gamma X_{isjt} + \epsilon_{isjt}$$

where i indexes venture, s venture's primary sector, j venture's country and t program year of application to a GALI program. The variable *OnlyFemale* takes the value of one if venture's founders are only women, *SomeFemale* is equal to one if venture founders' gender is mixed, θ_s , μ_j , ν_t are sector, location and time fixed effects. The X represents a vector of controls according to venture and founder 1 characteristics. The dependent variable Y_{isjt} are various measures of ventures' target margin, described in the appendix.

3.3 Descriptive statistics

Table 1 summarizes the statistics of venture's characteristics used in this analysis by the gender composition of the founders and maintaining the restrictions imposed on the data, such as geographic location and the fact that they are only for-profit ventures.

We find no statistically significant differences for the venture size variables and the variable that accounts for the decision to set or not to set a target margin. We identify artisanal, culture, education, and health as the sectors with the highest share of female-led ventures. While financial services, information and communication technologies, energy and housing and infrastructure development services have more representation in male-led ventures. Thus, female-led ventures are concentrated in traditional sectors with little value added, while male-led ventures are in sectors that generate value added and are at the forefront of current market needs.

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics for the main characteristics of founder 1, according to gender composition and the restrictions imposed on the database. We see that in the case of female-led ventures, their participation rate in work roles such as CEO is almost half compared to the other groups, while their participation in operational and support roles is 8% higher, an expected result according to the literature. There seem to be no significant differences between only-gender and mixed-gender ventures in the variables of educational level and age.

4 Results

We start by analyzing gender differences in setting target margins. We regress an indicator that takes the value of one if the venture has a target margin on two indicators that take the value of one if the venture was founded only by women or if the founders are of mixed gender, respectively. The base category are ventures in which all founders are men. We include controls for venture's age and for the number of founders in the venture, since ventures with mixed-gender founders must have at least 2 founders, while those with only male or only female founders can have only one founder. In Table 3, columns 1, 3 and 5 present a linear regression model with fixed effects for venture's primary sector, venture's location, and the year in which the venture completed the survey to apply to a GALI program, while columns 2, 4 and 6 we also include controls for ventures and main founder characteristics. The latter includes previous work experience, highest educational level achieved and age for founder 1. The characteristics of the venture are given by venture's size, its operating model and whether venture is invention based.

The coefficient for female-only ventures is always negative and significant (except when we restrict the sample to ventures located in SSA), even after including controls for venture and founders' characteristics. Female-led ventures are 5 pp. less likely than male-only founders to set target margins. Since the definition of a target margin is related to the success potential and

survival rate of ventures, the lack of target margin could be a sign that the venture is not sufficiently prepared or solidified, which could have repercussions when it comes to fundraising.

In Table 4 we regress the target margin in the indicators for female-only and mixed-gender founders. The sample is restricted to ventures that set a target margin. Because in the data target margin is expressed as a range, we use an interval regression model. We find that female-led ventures set target margin a 0.7 pp. lower than male-led ventures when we control by the characteristics of the venture and the founder 1. In the case of ventures led by mixed-gender founders, their target range is 0.49 pp. below that of ventures led by men only.

Since we find that ventures differ in their target margin setting and range by the gender composition of the founders, we examine whether these results are driven by particular sectors of the economy. In Table 5 we estimate the likelihood of setting target margins and the target margin size, separately for each sector of the economy. The base category are again ventures in which all founders are male.

We find that our results regarding target margin setting are driven mostly by ventures in the Tertiary sector. Female-led ventures in the Tertiary sector are 8 pp. less likely to set a target margin than those founded solely by men. While the coefficient for female-only founders is negative for the Primary sector, it is small and not statistically different from zero. In turn, the coefficient for mixed-gender founders is always positive, but not statistically significant.

When we look at the target margin range, we find that ventures with only female founders set lower target margins in the Primary and Tertiary sectors than ventures with only male founders. For the Primary sector of the economy, target margins in ventures with only female founders are 1.26 pp. lower than those of male-only founders. In the Tertiary sector the difference is of an insignificant 0.67 pp.

In summary, our results suggest that women are less likely to set target margins in sectors where they are underrepresented, while they set lower target margins than men in sectors where women are more likely to entrepreneur.

5 Robustness checks and limitations

Since the order of the founders may not indicate any difference in relevance or responsibility, in Table 6 we performed regressions of target margin setting and target margin range replacing the characteristics of founder 1 by the average across all founders. We find that the results do not change significantly with this new specification in the controls, suggesting robust results.

A limitation of this study is a possible endogeneity bias due to omitted variables in the model. One such variable is the quality and advancement of the venture, which although within the analysis we included the age of the venture as a proxy, this variable may be underestimated. Likewise, as mentioned in the literature review, variables linked to attitudinal behavior may also affect the decision to set a target margin within the venture, however, there are no such variables in the GALI database used.

Finally, another drawback comes from the structure of the GALI survey. Regardless of the total number of founders, we can only see information about three of them. Moreover, we cannot identify the role of the founders for whom information is reported. Hence, ventures with three founders coded as single gender may in fact be of mixed gender.

6 Conclusion

Female entrepreneurs make important contributions to the global economy, yet they continue to face significant barriers to business creation and growth. Our study adds to the body of research that illustrates the main obstacles faced by female entrepreneurs, especially in low/middle income regions, such as LAC and SSA. Our econometric analysis shows that female-led ventures

are less likely to set a target margin, and when they do, their targets are lower than those of male-led ventures. On average, female-led ventures set a profit margin 0.76 pp. lower than that of male-led ones, even after characteristics that affect the success and survival of their ventures, such as their level of education, prior experience, and age, are controlled for. In addition, women`s tendency to be solo entrepreneurs means that their ventures tend to be much smaller and focus on local markets in the primary and secondary sectors of the economy.

All these factors suggest that women are overrepresented in the ventures that are most susceptible to market shocks and economic downturns. These structural barriers can be addressed through incubators, accelerators, and entrepreneurial networks that support funding for female entrepreneurs, especially in male dominated environments. This would allow female-led ventures to make decisions more easily about defining a target margin and set higher profit margins. Our findings provide important insights into gender differences and similarities in setting a target margin, its magnitude, and the gender gap as policy inputs. Policymakers should encourage the creation of networks of female investors, so that their resources do not go only to sectors where female entrepreneurs are underrepresented, and the capital level of ventures led only by women can be raised. This, in turn, should be accompanied by support for female business owners in male dominated sectors. In this case, incubators and accelerators are key to ensuring that women are properly supported to create strong ventures that have a lasting impact on markets and industries.

Research Data Policy and Data Availability Statements: The datasets analyzed during the current study are available in the ANDE repository <https://www.galidata.org/data-request/> upon reasonable request.

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Declarations of interest: none

Table 1 Panel A Venture characteristics

	Full sample		Only female founders		Some female founders		Zero female founders					
	Mean	Std. Dev	Mean	Std. Dev	Mean	Std. Dev	Mean	Std. Dev				
Categorical variables												
Venture has target margin	0.72	0.45	7,683	0.69	0.46	1,016	0.74	0.44	2,946	0.70	0.46	3,721
<i>Venture size</i>												
Micro	0.87	0.33	7,641	0.93	0.26	1,013	0.85	0.35	2,922	0.87	0.34	3,706
Small	0.11	0.32	7,641	0.06	0.25	1,013	0.13	0.34	2,922	0.11	0.32	3,706
Medium size	0.01	0.11	7,641	0.01	0.08	1,013	0.02	0.12	2,922	0.01	0.12	3,706
Large	0.00	0.04	7,641	0.00	0.03	1,013	0.00	0.04	2,922	0.00	0.04	3,706
Venture is invention based	0.53	0.50	7,683	0.39	0.49	1,016	0.53	0.50	2,946	0.58	0.49	3,721
<i>Venture's primary sector</i>												
Agriculture	0.18	0.38	7,683	0.14	0.35	1,016	0.23	0.42	2,946	0.15	0.35	3,721
Artisanal	0.03	0.16	7,683	0.08	0.28	1,016	0.03	0.16	2,946	0.01	0.10	3,721
Culture	0.01	0.12	7,683	0.03	0.18	1,016	0.01	0.11	2,946	0.01	0.10	3,721
Education	0.08	0.27	7,683	0.10	0.31	1,016	0.08	0.27	2,946	0.07	0.26	3,721
Energy	0.05	0.21	7,683	0.02	0.15	1,016	0.05	0.21	2,946	0.05	0.23	3,721
Environment and water	0.08	0.28	7,683	0.08	0.27	1,016	0.09	0.29	2,946	0.08	0.26	3,721
Financial services	0.09	0.29	7,683	0.03	0.16	1,016	0.06	0.24	2,946	0.13	0.33	3,721
Health	0.08	0.28	7,683	0.11	0.31	1,016	0.09	0.28	2,946	0.08	0.26	3,721
Housing development and Infrastructure development	0.03	0.17	7,683	0.02	0.14	1,016	0.03	0.18	2,946	0.03	0.18	3,721
Information and communication technology	0.11	0.32	7,683	0.04	0.21	1,016	0.09	0.29	2,946	0.15	0.35	3,721
Supply chain services and technical assistance services	0.04	0.20	7,683	0.04	0.20	1,016	0.04	0.20	2,946	0.04	0.21	3,721
Tourism	0.03	0.16	7,683	0.02	0.15	1,016	0.03	0.17	2,946	0.03	0.16	3,721

Table 2 Panel B Founder 1 characteristics

	Full sample		Only female founders		Some female founders		Zero female founders					
	Mean	Std. Dev	Mean	Std. Dev	Mean	Std. Dev	Mean	Std. Dev				
<i>Categorical variables</i>												
<i>Role at the most recent job</i>												
CEO	0.27	0.44	7,683	0.17	0.38	1,016	0.26	0.44	2,946	0.30	0.46	3,721
Senior Management	0.27	0.44	7,683	0.24	0.42	1,016	0.29	0.45	2,946	0.26	0.44	3,721
Support Staff	0.30	0.46	7,683	0.38	0.49	1,016	0.30	0.46	2,946	0.28	0.45	3,721
<i>Highest level of education completed</i>												
Less than 9th grade	0.01	0.09	7,683	0.01	0.09	1,016	0.01	0.09	2,946	0.01	0.09	3,721
High school	0.06	0.23	7,683	0.04	0.20	1,016	0.05	0.23	2,946	0.06	0.24	3,721
Some graduate degree	0.03	0.17	7,683	0.02	0.14	1,016	0.03	0.18	2,946	0.03	0.17	3,721
Associate technical	0.14	0.35	7,683	0.13	0.33	1,016	0.14	0.35	2,946	0.14	0.35	3,721
Bachelor' s degree	0.49	0.50	7,683	0.52	0.50	1,016	0.47	0.50	2,946	0.49	0.50	3,721
Master' s degree	0.25	0.44	7,683	0.27	0.44	1,016	0.26	0.44	2,946	0.25	0.43	3,721
PhD	0.02	0.15	7,683	0.02	0.13	1,016	0.03	0.16	2,946	0.02	0.15	3,721
<i>Continuous variable</i>												
Founder 1 age	34.78	9.88	7,683	34.74	9.48	1,016	35.71	10.50	2,946	34.05	9.42	3,721

Table 3 Results of linear regression with fixed effects and controls

	Venture has a target margin					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Only female founders	-0.046*** (0.017)	-0.039** (0.017)	-0.009 (0.026)	-0.007 (0.026)	-0.069*** (0.023)	-0.052** (0.023)
Some female founders	0.009 (0.012)	0.010 (0.012)	-0.013 (0.020)	-0.010 (0.020)	0.016 (0.015)	0.018 (0.015)
Constant	0.701*** (0.018)	0.826*** (0.157)	0.658*** (0.028)	1.032*** (0.268)	0.727*** (0.024)	0.741*** (0.196)
Observations	7,649	7,607	2,857	2,837	4,792	4,770
Region	All	All	SSA	SSA	LAC	LAC
Controls						
Headquarter country FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Program Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Primary sector FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Venture's characteristics	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Founder 1 characteristics	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes

Note: The dependent variable is an indicator that take the value of 1 if the venture has target margins. Regressions include a control for the number of venture founders and venture's age.

Robust standard errors in parentheses *** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Table 4 Results of interval regression with fixed effects and controls

	Magnitude of the venture's target margin					
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Only female founders	-0.693	-0.763*	-0.786	-0.948	-0.813	-0.819
	(0.425)	(0.428)	(0.618)	(0.625)	(0.587)	(0.588)
Some female founders	-0.404	-0.490*	-0.724	-0.830*	-0.210	-0.274
	(0.295)	(0.296)	(0.450)	(0.454)	(0.391)	(0.392)
Constant	20.838***	18.718***	22.575***	58.847	51.428	59.472
	(3.277)	(4.748)	(3.261)	(974.5)	(2,005.2)	(1,640.4)
Observations	5,458	5,429	2,126	2,115	3,332	3,314
Region	All	All	SSA	SSA	LAC	LAC
Controls						
Headquarter country FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Program Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Primary sector FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Venture's characteristics	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Founder 1 characteristics	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes

Note: The dependent variable is the value of the target margin, measured in intervals. The sample is composed of all for-profit ventures that set a target margin. Regressions include a control for the number of venture founders and venture's age.

Robust standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 5 Primary sector effects on setting a target margin

	Venture has target margin			Target margin size		
	Primary sector	Secondary sector	Tertiary sector	Primary sector	Secondary sector	Tertiary sector
Only female founders	-0.039 (0.032)	0.033 (0.061)	-0.080*** (0.027)	-1.263* (0.726)	0.465 (1.399)	-0.671 (0.724)
Some female founders	0.015 (0.020)	0.088 (0.055)	0.003 (0.018)	-0.437 (0.453)	-0.234 (1.230)	-0.478 (0.469)
Constant	0.706*** (0.033)	0.629*** (0.078)	0.688*** (0.028)	56.999 (1,445.3)	52.059 (1,763.0)	21.025*** (4.284)
Observations	2,339	418	3,443	1,764	317	2,352
Region	All	All	All	All	All	All
Controls						
Headquarter country FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Program Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sector FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note: The dependent variable is the value of the target margin, measured in intervals. Primary sector corresponds to Agriculture, Environment and Water, and Energy. Secondary sector includes Artisanal and Housing and Infrastructure. Tertiary sector corresponds to Culture, Education, Financial Services, Health, Communication, Supply chain and technical services and tourism. Regressions include a control for the number of venture founders and venture's age.

Robust standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Table 6 Results of linear and interval regressions using the average of the founders' characteristics

	Venture has target margin			Target margin size		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Only female founders	-0.038** (0.017)	-0.011 (0.026)	-0.050** (0.023)	-0.724* (0.428)	-0.998 (0.626)	-0.737 (0.590)
Some female founders	0.011 (0.012)	-0.013 (0.020)	0.021 (0.015)	-0.490* (0.296)	-0.846* (0.452)	-0.260 (0.392)
Constant	0.759*** (0.161)	0.949*** (0.274)	0.685*** (0.201)	16.802*** (4.825)	57.258 (973.8)	48.946 (1,639.3)
Observations	7,607	2,837	4,770	5,429	2,115	3,314
Region	All	SSA	LAC	All	SSA	LAC
Controls						
Headquarter country FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Program Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Primary sector FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Venture's characteristics	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Average founder's characteristics	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Note: The dependent variable for columns 1 to 3 is an indicator that take the value of 1 if the venture has target margins. For columns 4 to 6 the dependent variable is the value of the target margin, measured in intervals. Regressions include a control for the number of venture founders and venture's age.

Robust standard errors in parentheses *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

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Appendix

Definition of variables

1.1 Dependent variables

The differences in behavior when defining a profit margin and its magnitude are given by two variables. The first variable, called *Venture has a target margin*, is a dichotomous variable that takes the value of 1 if the venture set a target margin in year t or the value of 0 if it did not. The second variable, called *Target margin*, is a variable created for the interval regression analysis based on the magnitude of the target margin set for year t , where the lower bound is given by a zero percent profit margin and the upper bound by a profit margin of more than 20 percent.

1.2 Independent variables

Based on the variables that describe the gender of the three main venture founders, we create three new dichotomous variables. The dummy variable *Only female founders* is equal to one if all venture founders self-report being female (either one or more founding members) and zero otherwise. The variable *Some female founders* tells us whether there is at least one male and one female founder among the founding members or not. And finally, the variable *Zero female founders* will be equal to one if none of the members self-declare as female and zero otherwise.

These dummy variables are the ones used throughout the study to analyze the relationship between the decision to set a target margin and the gender composition of the founders.

1.3 Control variables

Based on literature review, several control variables are included in order to capture possible interfering effects on the decision to set a target margin. There are variables for venture and founder characteristics in

the analysis. According to venture characteristics, the venture's size⁸ variable was included since it is a factor that can influence ventures' costs and profits as well as the profit margin. The primary sector to which the venture is dedicated is included as a control variable since, as the literature review showed us, the sector to which the enterprises belong affects their access to credit and financing, thus affecting the success of the enterprise. The age⁹ of the venture is also included, since a very young venture will have very different profit objectives than a mature.

In the case of the characteristics of the founders, given that several ventures only report information for founder 1, for estimations are use the variables age, last level of education and previous work experience only for founder 1.

⁸ This variable was calculated based on the classification of companies according to the number of employees from the World Bank's website. Which is: Micro enterprises with less than 9 employees, small enterprises with more than 10 and less than 49 employees, medium enterprises with between 50 and 249 employees, large enterprises with more than 250 employees.

⁹ This variable is obtained by subtracting the year in which the venture was founded and the year in which the venture filled out the GALI form.