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Common Traits and Differences of Male and Female Entrepreneurs: Gender specific Characterizations by Students

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Abstract

In this paper we have examined gender-specific characterizations by the students, regarding common traits and differences between male and female entrepreneurs, strengthened also in the light of a previous contact with entrepreneurial activity.

Our two main scales from interviews to students and validated through a Paired Sample T-Test, demonstrate how young students from both genders converge typically in the traditional gender gap when thinking of a male or a female entrepreneur.

Our three hypotheses are confirmed in the research demonstrate also that exposure to entrepreneurial network act as a reinforcement stimuli make it possible to read the traits in a more similar way in both genders.

Fixed effects of gaps in students, as well as traditional hierarchies of image of an entrepreneur (be male a/o female) are therefore usefully clustered in our sample around a network perspective, brings about a lessened influential hegemony of masculinity in entrepreneurship

Keywords: entrepreneurial profile; female entrepreneurship; characteristics and traits; traditional gender gaps; quantitative paper; entrepreneurial exposure

JEL: L26 – Entrepreneurship / J24 – Human Capital; Skills; Occupational Choice; Labor Productivity



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Female Entrepreneurship

«despite the positive trends in recent years for women, most new businesses are still more likely to be started by men rather than by women»

Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM)
(Bosma *et al.*, 2021: 16)

The Research:

Main Objective

to understand if there is
a distinctive way
in describing
entrepreneurial profiles
when people are invited
to think of a man or a woman

(in our sample young university students)

Objectives and hypotheses

Specific targets:

- underscore the traits are attributed to a man and a woman entrepreneur,
- measure whether there are any common traits or differences in the above traits when these are attributed by male or female students,
- identify whether these entrepreneurial characterizations can be somehow strengthened also in the light of a previous contact with the entrepreneurial activity.

Research hypotheses:

- ***h1*** - male and female entrepreneurs are perceived with different traits,
- ***h2*** - students assign gender specific measures of traits when describing male and female entrepreneurs,
- ***h3*** - entrepreneurial work experience and the exposure to an entrepreneurial network make it possible to read the traits in a more similar way in both genders.



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Method and Instrument

Quantitative approach:

Mindset and Entrepreneurial Skills Questionnaire

- personal data (e.g., age, gender)
- entrepreneurial exposure
- attributed traits to Male and Female Entrepreneurs

Sample description (N= 711)

Groups	N	%	Age	Male	Female
			Average (SD)	%	%
Total	711		22.31(4.89)	17%	83%
Social Science	500	71%		12.2	87.8
Communication / Languages	148	21%		23.0	77.0
Business	58	8%		41.4	58.6

Key findings:

Results: *"indicate the personal traits you consider necessary in a male/female entrepreneur"*

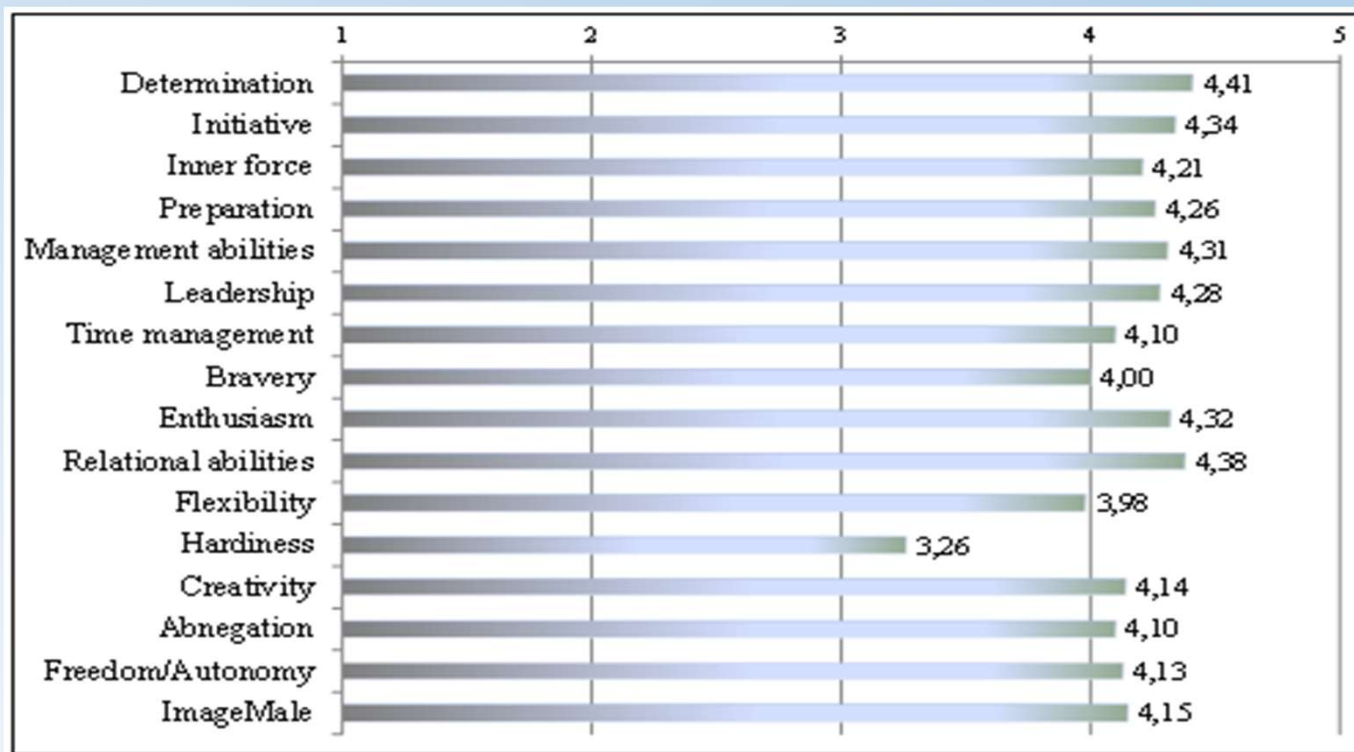
**DETERMINATION;
INITIATIVE;
INNER STRENGTH
PREPARATION;
MANAGEMENT SKILLS;
LEADERSHIP;
TIME MANAGEMENT;
BRAVERY;
ENTHUSIASM;
RELATIONAL SKILLS;
FLEXIBILITY;
ROBUSTNESS;
CREATIVITY;
SELF-SACRIFICE;
FREEDOM/AUTONOMY).**



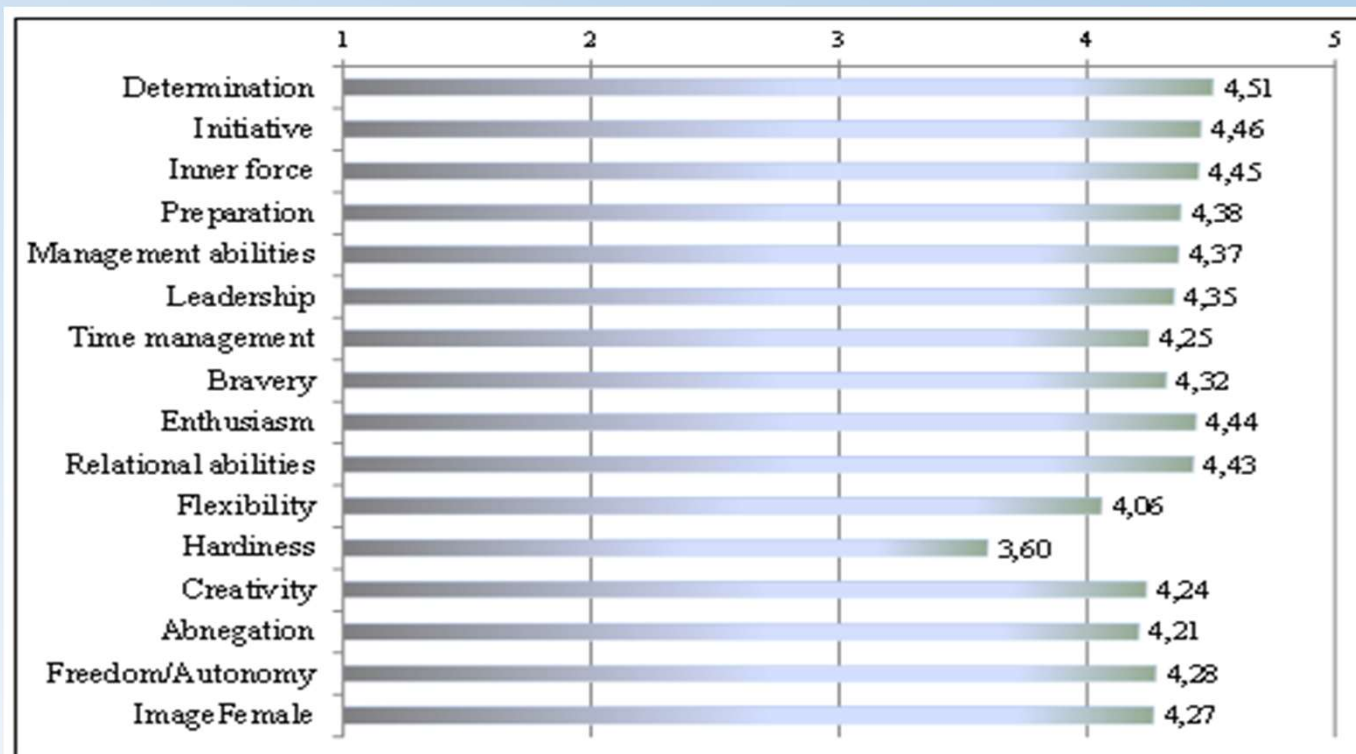
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Results: *"indicate the personal traits you consider necessary in a **MALE** entrepreneur"*



Results: *"indicate the personal traits you consider necessary in a **FEMALE** entrepreneur"*



Results: *"indicate the personal traits you consider necessary in a male/female entrepreneur"*

Graphs highlight that the ***h1 – male and female entrepreneurs are described with a different presence of confirmatory traits:***

- ImageMan and ImageFemale Scales: have a very good level of reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.80$)
- and are significantly different (in particular, ImageFemale is significantly higher: ANOVA; $p = 0.000$).

Results: *"indicate the personal traits you consider necessary in a male/female entrepreneur"*

This outcome **confirms h2** – because *male and female students assign different measures of traits when they describe male and female entrepreneurs respectively,*

and highlight a specific approach provided in particular by **female students... they describe the female entrepreneur (more than the male) as being necessarily *exquisitely endowed* with most among the enlisted characteristics**

(specifically: Initiative, Inner strength, Preparation, Management skills, Relational skills, Flexibility, Creativity, Self-sacrifice, Freedom/Autonomy).



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Results: *"indicate the personal traits you consider necessary in a male/female entrepreneur"*

We can highlight as further confirmation:

- FEMALE STUDENTS:
 - ImageMan mean 4.16; SD .50;
 - ImageFemale mean 4.30; SD .54
 - significant difference with $p = .000$
- MALE STUDENTS:
 - ImageMan mean 4.09; SD .49;
 - ImageFemale mean 4.11; SD .54
 - do *NOT* yield statistical *significance*

Results: *"indicate the personal traits you consider necessary in a male/female entrepreneur"*

The image of the female entrepreneur is seen by female students as necessarily (and significantly) more *gifted* than the figure of a male entrepreneur.

It is interesting to highlight those significant differences do not appear when looking for entrepreneurial contact variables effects on the personal characteristics considered necessary in a male/female entrepreneur (ANOVA; $p > 0.05$)...

Results: *"indicate the personal traits you consider necessary in a male/female entrepreneur"*

We can therefore **confirm *h3*** - *entrepreneurial work experience and the presence of an entrepreneurial network's exposure makes it possible to read more common traits in both genders.*

- ENTREPRENEUR STUDENTS:
 - ImageMan mean 4.18; SD .66;
 - ImageFemale mean 4.22; SD .70;
 - do *NOT* yield statistical *significance*;
- NON-ENTREPRENEUR STUDENTS:
 - ImageMan mean 4.14; SD .49;
 - ImageFemale mean 4.28; SD .54;
 - significant difference $p = .000$

Results: *"indicate the personal traits you consider necessary in a male/female entrepreneur"*

As further details:

- MALE Entrepreneur students:
 - ImageMale mean 4.05; SD .71;
 - ImageFemale mean 4.04; SD .71
 - do *not* yield statistical *significance*.
- FEMALE Entrepreneur students:
 - ImageMale mean 4.18; SD .65;
 - ImageFemale mean 4.24; SD .70
 - do *not* yield statistical *significance*

Value and Implications

The **gender specific attributed** characterizations in the mindset of young students and associated with men or women in entrepreneurial activities **apparently differ from each other, confirming the traditional gender gap when thinking of a male or of a female entrepreneur.**

We notice that a female entrepreneur is substantially imagined, in particular by female students, as endowed with traits must be embodied in a much more preponderant way than in the case of their male colleagues.

This effect is anymore less marked when young students are in close **contact** with entrepreneurs, while **working**, or when they have an **exposure** to entrepreneurial network



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Value and Implications

The differences demonstrated in gender specific characterizations of the entrepreneurial profile among students can be configured **as the cause of a continued strong gender gap**. At the tipping point, this **can be seen as a kind of self-restriction for young female students**.

Because female students set up the entrepreneurial profile for themselves through a goal formulation is very high.

Then, they make it harder to be close to this perspective future profile (Image Theory, Beach and Mitchell, 1998)
when choosing a career (Stevens, 1998)

Value and Implications

A great challenge for the future is therefore to address until when certain characterizations of entrepreneurial activity will be attributed by the young people when asked about, more than how these **pre-assigned gendered ascriptions remain largely effective.**

Thank you for your attention!
Kiitos Huomiostanne!

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