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## SEX DIFFERENCES IN ENTREPRENEUR SIGNATURE STRENGTHS (SUMMARY)

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## SUMMARY

### SEX DIFFERENCES IN ENTREPRENEUR SIGNATURE STRENGTHS

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#### **Principal Topic**

Recent work from the field of positive psychology has created a classification of twenty-four basic virtues that have been found to be consistently valued across all major cultures (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Further, these virtues group together to form six distinct character strengths (i.e., wisdom and knowledge, courage, humanity, justice, temperance, and transcendence). Individuals have been found to rate most highly on 1-2 character strengths, which are defined as their signature strengths. People who are able to focus their time on endeavors in which they are able to apply their signature strengths are found to experience heightened levels of performance and satisfaction (Seligman, 2002). In fact, one of the founding premises of the recent positive psychology movement is that human potential is maximized when individuals spend more time working in areas that allow them to apply their strengths and less time on activities that require them to act through their weaknesses (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Bridging the positive psychology and entrepreneurship domains, the current study attempts to determine which character strengths are most strongly linked to entrepreneurship.

#### **Method**

A sample of 420 undergraduates and 250 MBA students completed measures relating to their character strengths using the Values in Action (VIA) survey developed by Peterson and Seligman (2004). In addition, they completed measures of entrepreneurial intentions (Chen et al., 1998) and entrepreneurial alertness (Singh, 2000).

#### **Results and Implications**

The results failed to uncover a global relationship of specific character strengths with entrepreneurial intentions or alertness. Two striking interactions were, however, identified across both samples when considering sex differences. First, amongst males there was a significant positive relationship between the character strength of Wisdom and Knowledge (i.e., those exhibiting the combined virtues of curiosity, love of learning, ingenuity, social intelligence, and perspective) with entrepreneurial intentions and alertness. In direct contrast, amongst females there was a highly significant negative relationship between these variables. Secondly, amongst females there was a significant positive relationship between the character strength of Justice (i.e., those exhibiting the combined virtues of citizenship, fairness, and leadership) with entrepreneurial intentions and alertness. In direct contrast, amongst males there was a highly significant negative relationship between these variables.

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