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BORN TO GROW? THE IMPACT OF ORGANIZATIONAL AND INDIVIDUAL IMPRINTING ON GROWTH INTENTION ACROSS GENDER (SUMMARY)

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≈ SUMMARY ≈

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Principal Topic

The paper aims at answering the following question: Why do companies that are run by women are smaller than companies that are run by males? While recent researches states that women entrepreneurs either do not really want to run big companies or do not have access to the same resources as their male counterparts, we assume that such a question can be solved through the concept of imprinting and its impact on growth intention. The imprinting effect refers to organizational characteristics as well as characteristics of the entrepreneurial team of the company at the early stage of its creation. Therefore, here, we aim at identifying the trace of any imprinting – individual or organizational - effect on the intention the entrepreneur has to make his / her company grow.

Method

Based on a sample of 846 French SMEs which have been set up during the last 20 years, regression analysis reveal that imprinting effects on growth intention differ from those of venture creation. Education and past experience remain significant while the network of the founder loses its importance. When focusing on growth intention, it is also important to include growth modalities. Imprinting does not explain incremental growth but influences radical growth.

Results and Implications

The paper contributes to existing entrepreneurship theory in three ways. First, it reveals the existence of a “gene” to grow that may influence the mental model of the entrepreneur or the way he/she organizes his/her business. Second, it emphasizes the difference between the determinants of growth and the determinants of creation: The intention to growth depends more on the organizational imprint than on the intrinsic individual characteristics of the entrepreneur. Third, it sheds light on the difference role of imprinting on growth intention and modes to growth. Focusing on sales growth may introduce noise in the analysis while focusing on radical growth intention highlights clear drivers.

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