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## SEX-TYPING OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP: EVOLUTIONARY OR SOCIAL FORCES? A TALE OF TWO THEORIES (SUMMARY)

Vishal K. Gupta

*The University of Mississippi, USA, vkgupta@cba.ua.edu*

Safal Batra

*Indian Institute of Management at Kashipur, India*

Alka Gupta

*Lynchburg College, USA*

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≈ SUMMARY ≈

## SEX-TYPING OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP: EVOLUTIONARY OR SOCIAL FORCES? A TALE OF TWO THEORIES

*Vishal K. Gupta, The University of Mississippi, USA*  
*Safal Batra, Indian Institute of Management at Kashipur, India*  
*Alka Gupta, Lynchburg College, USA*

### Principal Topic

Scholars have described entrepreneurship as ‘leadership in a special context’ (Cogliser & Brigham, 2009; Gupta & Fernandez, 2009; Vecchio, 2003) - a context characterized by the recognition and pursuit of new opportunities to introduce goods and services (Eckardt & Shane, 2003). Broadly speaking, prior research offers two generalized explanations to understand occupational sex-typing of entrepreneurship: an essentialist perspective associated with evolutionary psychology theory (EPT) and a constructionist perspective from social role theory (SRT). Cross-cultural studies examining consistency or variability across societies are particularly useful for establishing the plausibility of one theoretical perspective over the other (Costa, Terracciano, & McCrae, 2001; Lippa, 2009). As Lippa (2010: 620) argued, to the extent that there is strong consistency- perhaps, even universality- across cultures, it is likely that biological factors are dominant, but to the extent that there is wide variability across cultures, the likelihood increases that systematic cultural processes are regnant.

### Method

We conducted two independent studies- one with business students and another with working adults- using literally the same procedures and measures, albeit with different samples. A total of 442 respondents (45.7% women) participated in the first study, while a total of 509 working professionals (56.3% women) participated in the second data collection.

### Results and Implications

Our research focuses on sex-typing in entrepreneurship, using SRT and EPT to generate testable competing predictions. Data collected from US and India revealed strong support for SRT. Specifically, we found that entrepreneurship is perceived as masculine in the US, but both masculine and feminine in India. When entrepreneurship is construed in masculine terms, entrepreneurs were perceived as high on agency and low on communality. Conversely, when entrepreneurship was constructed in both masculine and feminine terms, entrepreneurs were perceived as high on communality and low on agency. We acknowledge that data from only two countries may not be enough to draw conclusions about sex-typing worldwide. Nevertheless, our results offer novel insights into sex-typing of entrepreneurship. We hope future studies will build on our research by extending it to other societies and cultures.

**CONTACT:** Vishal K. Gupta, [vgupta@bus.olemiss.edu](mailto:vgupta@bus.olemiss.edu), 662-915-2048 (O) 227 Holmann Hall, The University of Mississippi, Oxford, MS 38677, USA.