



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Do Typical ADHD Traits Offer Advantages to Entrepreneurs?

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### Introduction:

In recent years, in the debate on entrepreneurship and the nature of this, it has been stated that ADHD could provide special conditions for entrepreneurship and be an asset. This may be true in various respects, but another aspect of ADHD and entrepreneurial management that deserves to be described is the demarcation and thus the debate needs to be nuanced.

We the authors: Hans-Olle Frummerin- Management consultant and licensed psychologist and Stefan Lindström-Management consultant and entrepreneurologist have under different assignments made different experiences from the area and in this post give their perspectives on the aspect ADHD and entrepreneurship. The points of view we present are based partly on familiarity with the conditions of entrepreneurship but also on the nature of ADHD and how this can affect the individual. Some of us probably associate ADHD with various forms of restlessness and difficulties in terms of attention which means that one may have difficulty concentrating and focusing on what one is not interested in. This is related to difficulties in concentration and the fact that one cannot focus on performing tasks for a longer period.

Besides, there are difficulties for a person with ADHD traits to organize activities of different types.

In essential respects to the problem of managing the time dimension. This means that a person with ADHD is exposed to a significant challenge in enduring and reaching all the way until the task is completed. In the everyday debate, there are various related examples of prominent entrepreneurs' exhibit ADHD behaviors, which are stated as an argument that ADHD people would have special characteristics to handle the challenges of entrepreneurship.

It may be that these entrepreneurs have certain traits that are commonly characteristic of ADHD and so it may be for many people. Most people probably have some traits in their personality that in some way associate with traits associated with ADHD. It can be a lack of focus, disorganized behavior, or forgetfulness to name a few traits that are typical of ADHD. In parallel with describing symptoms and difficulties for people with ADHD, there are characteristics within the syndrome such as "hyperfocus" or impulsive behavior, these are special

conditions for dealing with certain critical aspects of business management, but otherwise one would not describe without reservations that ADHD features provide particularly favorable conditions for entrepreneurship except in special cases.

Numerous attempts have been made to describe entrepreneurship and what characterizes a successful entrepreneur and today we have a good knowledge of this area. At the same time, there is still a lot to explore about the driving forces for entrepreneurship and why some entrepreneurs succeed so well while others do not. Here in this context, we limit ourselves to making a summary of entrepreneurship to put this to the mind of ADHD as an advantage in entrepreneurship, or not.

As we understand it, the cornerstone for an entrepreneur is to take the initiative for something new such as a product or service. This includes being able to organize the effort, which should lead to something new and possibly be innovative. An important prerequisite for this is to have suitable creativity and possess initiative.

**Some components for creativity to lead to new business are:**

1. Formulation and management of a good business idea. A good business idea provides the conditions for the business and its development. A business concept that is not adequate gives rise to uncertainty and causes energy losses in various respects. It does not have to be 100 percent ready but should be able to offer a focus that provides conditions for stakeholders to describe business logic and future development. New circumstances often arise that cause a change in plans and strategy.
2. Starting ability and ability to understand the need for the service or product. The ability to perceive that the described needs can be satisfied through the new business. It is in this respect where the ability to find

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out wholes and patterns that others may not see comes into being expression. This aspect often contains an intuitive ability or “silent” knowledge that is difficult to describe in any other way than that it is invisible and difficult to comprehend in a rational way.

3. The ability to organize the new business and see what is needed to develop the company. This houses what is usually called “management ability”. It is about leading and giving the organization conditions for the future and succeeding in the business idea offering conditions for business and interaction between the production systems.

Based on this framework and the description as well as our perception of entrepreneurship: an entrepreneur can be described as - a person, who acquires an idea for a product or service, reflects on the risk or rather the opportunity, identifies the possibilities, gathers resources, plans, and implements the idea. The above described was elaborated as a management perspective on entrepreneurship. The description of the conditions for how the entrepreneurial role is to be handled. But how to relate these characteristics and components to the traits that characterize a person with ADHD syndrome? We should then examine what characterizes a person with ADHD.

In this context, we cannot avoid noting that the syndrome seems to be increasing sharply in the western world but also other parts of the world. The reasons for this are multidimensional and related to the fact that it is a new diagnosis that causes a lot of interest and attention. To get an idea about what ADHD means for an individual, we want to refer to what some institutions describe as characteristics of ADHD. An appropriate description of ADHD has been developed at the Mayo Clinic Minnesota USA. According to this description, ADHD is often characterized by the following features:

In general, people with the diagnosis suffer from problems when it comes to focusing on tasks or in terms of concentration of attention. This manifests itself in more detail as effects in the following psychological reaction areas.

In short, this concerns the following areas:

- Restlessness and impatience
- Impulsivity and changeability
- Difficulties in completing tasks of different nature
- Disorganized behavior
- Low frustration level
- Repeated mood swings
- Hot temperament
- Difficulties in managing and mastering stress
- Difficulty establishing stable and long-lasting relationships

This list provides an overview of the problems that ADHD patients face. It can be developed even more with a degree of intensity and seriousness of time with it offers an illustrative illumination of what ADHD means.

## Discussion:

The studies on ADHD, which describe the connection and connection between ADHD and entrepreneurship, are in several cases worked out in the United States. In that respect, one should keep in mind that ADHD is a more general term in the US and that up to 10% of young men report ADHD traits while in Sweden only 4-5% has been termed ADHD. This provides different input values in a discussion about ADHD and entrepreneurship. There are also other problems with ADHD diagnostics. Traditionally, it has been required to be able to get an ADHD diagnosis since you must have shown the problems since childhood. At the same time, various studies state that many adults who meet the diagnostic criteria did not have problems during childhood. This demonstrates the difficulty in diagnostics. Some thoughts on this subject are that it can be about different types of ADHD and describe that a lot can happen during an individual’s life course. The dynamics of ADHD development thus need to be highlighted even more in future research.

If we leave the general description of ADHD, interviews with people diagnosed with ADHD can give a clearer picture of what problems they experience at work, and other activities. Several of these individuals state how important it is to manage the forces and to be able to do this there is a need to take frequent breaks. Other aspects of this are working with perseverance and long-term behaviors. There is, of course, a general need to obtain support and help in dealing with the perceived weaknesses of the individual.

The ability to deal with ADHD problems of the nature described by the Mayo Clinic requires a so-called “coping strategy”. This provides conditions for the individual to handle problems through a different approach. The above described may have bearing on different entrepreneurial situations but still does not diminish the overall picture that ADHD causes complications in the context of entrepreneurship.

It may be that the general image of the entrepreneur is characterized by a traditional image of a Startup that with different whims makes a business work. Sometimes there can be a picture of a person with a magic wand who with invisible forces starts a business. It is this image of successful innovators that has often dominated the image of entrepreneurship although there are so many more dimensions to it. This can be linked to the fact that one often searches after a model or one model and will grasp any explanation that seems to offer a simple explanation.

An additional reason for associating entrepreneurs with a character may also be that some recognized personality tests and behavioral profile tests demonstrate one typical profile for the entrepreneur. DISC and DISA report this as the unit category - The Entrepreneur. Myers Briggs presents one of its 16 profiles, as the Entrepreneur or ESTP in their MBTI letters. Extrovert, Sensing, Thinking, Perceiving. We cannot resist stating that there is a general image of the entrepreneur that can lead to mistakes with quick conclusions in the area. Entrepreneurship contains different archetypes that, for example, have been

reported in a test EPT (EntrepreneurProfileTest) developed by Lindström, Frummerin. Other types of entrepreneurship tests also describe how complex entrepreneurship can be designed. In short, profiles include the professional entrepreneur, inventor, lifestyle entrepreneur; this is described in the world's first EntrepreneurProfileTest - EPT. Stockholm 2010.

Entrepreneurship and the development of this associated with ADHD is a central issue for society regarding the need for innovations and development of organizations. In this perspective, it is interesting that one-dimensional images of what entrepreneurship is, and an ignorance of what it really is, and the functions involved in it, are often exposed.

Another aspect is that the ability to think in a different way than some ADHD termed can expose solutions that otherwise would not be possible. This perhaps reflects more of the desire that exists among some to break down the company's traditional structures and achieve something different than usual. The approach is quite understandable but rather naive.

There may also be an effort among some to somehow use ADHD personalities' way of thinking and bring it into the organization's way of functioning. It can be about breaking with the organization's traditional way of functioning and being part of a renewal. Here, the non-conformist ways of certain ADHD personalities as well as unbounded actions can form a basis for utilizing their capacity. The above arguments for components must be carefully examined with it require much more concrete experience for them to be used as arguments for ADHD to be a resource for entrepreneurship.

Our view is that the perspective of ADHD and entrepreneurship is of restricted importance as a general perspective.

Given the complexity of the role of entrepreneurs and the requirements set by different stakeholders in the organization, ADHD and the effects offers several limitations for entrepreneurship. This, in conjunction with difficulties in disorganized behavior and difficulties in completing tasks, does not lead to an affirmation of ADHD as a resource in terms of entrepreneurship.

At the same time, society must have more focus on managing

how the ADHD-diagnosed people's resources and abilities can be used in a constructive way for society. This should lead to an improved adaptation of the school system with a better adaptation of pedagogy and vocational preparation. In this respect, there are limitless development areas. This is important because there is a clear increase in people diagnosed with ADHD in the world. This increase in ADHD leads to many obstacles and challenges. The needs probably include increased support efforts and an adaptation to everyone's special circumstances that must be assessed carefully. Within these initiatives, one could develop and individualize various initiatives to develop future ADHD entrepreneurs with the special conditions required.

<https://entrepreneurprofiletest.com>

EPT – Entrepreneur Profile Test – is developed by Stefan Lindstrom specialist in Entrepreneurial management, and Hans-Olle Frummerin licensed Psychologist, after an idea by Nicklas Mattsson at that time, editor in chief of the Swedish magazine *Entreprenör*.

Lindstrom and Frummerin have created the test, based on Lindstrom's knowledge of and research about entrepreneurs, and use of behavioural tests as well as Frummerin's knowledge within psychology, and personality & psychology tests. Both as management consultants within organizational development Since 2010 EPT has been updated by Lindstrom in 2017 as well as launched in English 2020.

### Conclusion:

We all recognize that improving self-awareness can be extremely helpful to entrepreneurs who wish to improve their performance and that of their companies.

Developing a successful company requires the development of the organization. For an entrepreneurial company, this process needs to start with the entrepreneur, or as our research says, the entrepreneur needs to develop oneself. But gaining the insights necessary for this development is not easy. We have developed a set of profiles, enabled by our research, which greatly facilitates the process of identifying and motivating the development.

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