

## PERSONALITY-RELATED DETERMINANTS OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE LIGHT OF OWN RESEARCH IN THE AGRIBUSINESS SECTOR

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### Abstract

The aim of this article is to identify the personality traits that can characterise entrepreneurial people and to determine what they believe to be important in achieving success. Entrepreneurship is defined very broadly in the literature and researchers consider different approaches to this issue. Certainly, being entrepreneurial is a combination of knowledge, passion, hard work and active learning. What is more, in many studies there are hypotheses indicating a correlation between the possession of certain character traits, or even temperament, and the propensity to start a business. In this article, an analysis of the behavioural and attitude approach to entrepreneurship is undertaken, which means that some personal traits and behaviour of the entrepreneurial person are analysed, as well as their perceptions of the issue. A descriptive-inductive method was used, using simple statistical methods. A survey method was used to obtain empirical data. An online survey form was sent to agribusiness entrepreneurs from Poland, the entrepreneurs were randomly selected. The respondents were primarily active in industries such as fruit, vegetable processing, as well as meat. A total of 57 returns were received between January and March 2023. The questionnaire included questions on personality traits that may be conducive to an entrepreneurial attitude, as well as identifying attitudes towards certain management situations. The respondents rated themselves as extroverted and open-minded, confident in their abilities. Most respondents described themselves as sanguines. A number of scientific studies confirm that sanguines and extroverts are the people who are most successful as entrepreneurs. Considering the statements of the respondents, there was a significant difference in the inconsistency of the responses from those labelled choleric and phlegmatic. The most consistent statements were obtained from sanguinis. Sanguinis were the most likely of all respondents to believe in the strength of their predispositions and character traits. Choleric, due to their explosive nature and not always good decisions, felt that it was appropriate to monotone external factors, as this was the basis for decision-making. As a result of the survey and the literature review, it can be confirmed that entrepreneurial personality traits play an important role when setting up one's own business and also when continuing to manage it, but also an external situation and business environment play an important role in decision-making process. All these factors should be correlated and a good entrepreneur should be able to use his/her strengths to exploit market opportunities. According to the authors of this article, it is necessary to integrate one's personality traits and aptitudes with market information and ongoing monitoring of the industry to achieve success.

**Key words:** personal traits, entrepreneurship, business motives

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## Introduction

Entrepreneurship can be defined as a certain way of thinking and acting. The starting point is a thought process and the result is a concrete idea put into practice (Praag, Versloot 2007). Entrepreneurship can be considered on many levels. Nevertheless, each time it is referred to new, creative, imaginative activities that are the result of a person's exploration, curiosity, ingenuity and courage (Manager's Handbook... 2017). As early as the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Adam Smith and Jean-Baptiste Say, and later, e.g. Torsten Veblen and Joseph Schumpeter, pointed to certain human qualities that determine success in business (Heilbroner 1993). Alan Jacobowitz and Vidler (1982) even claim in their research in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that entrepreneurship is an innate trait. However, contemporary researchers (e.g. Kreuger and Brazeal 1994) conclude that an important element of entrepreneurship is not only personal traits, but also factors flowing from the environment (surroundings), i.e. the market situation, upcoming 'opportunities', emerging opportunities from the environment, etc. Contemporary research therefore focuses on a slightly different view of the theories concerning the traits of an entrepreneurial person, treating them as something that can be acquired and learned. Hence, there is now an increasing focus on education and training towards entrepreneurship, creativity and proactivity (Kielbasa, Kalinowski 2018).

Entrepreneurship, in addition to possessing knowledge and communicative competence, is linked to many other human traits that define a person's personality, attitudes, character traits and even temperament (Kielbasa, Okrajni 2023). These traits can be divided into innate and acquired, hence different people have different levels of personal entrepreneurship (Stokes, Wilson, Mador 2010). For a person with innate entrepreneurial traits, success may come more easily. However, it is important to remember that many traits and skills can be successfully acquired and shaped. According to Miner (1990), among others, every entrepreneur is driven by different motives for action, but five key drivers can be identified: i) the desire to achieve something through one's own efforts, ii) maintaining control to minimise risk, iii) the drive to innovate, iv) thinking about the future.

In a broader sense, an entrepreneur can be called not only a person who owns a business, but also one who implements and manages innovative solutions in various spheres of life (Makarski 2000). Risk-taking associated with running one's own business sometimes arises out of necessity or is the result of an opportunity. Very often it is a resultant of many factors, including above all having a so-called vision of one's own company (idea). A vision is a certain dream, an idea of yourself and your business (Fillion 1991).

In order to realise any vision and to achieve success, certain conditions and factors are needed, such as (Niedzielski 2000): motivation, idea, skills and resources. On the other hand, according to Makarski (2000), for success one needs primarily: (1) an innovative idea, (2) motivation and (3) resources to implement the idea. All these

factors are interrelated and dependent on each other to varying degrees. According to Bieniok (2007), a condition that largely influences the shape of all the above-mentioned factors and their realisation is the possession of so-called personal entrepreneurship. According to this author, this is a psychological and sociological category, referring not only to the sphere of economic activities, but to the entire conduct of a person.

### **Methods and results**

This article addresses the personality-related determinants of entrepreneurship, which influence the decisions and behaviours of self-employed individuals. The results presented in the article are an extract from a larger study covering the determinants of entrepreneurial attitudes in the agribusiness sector. The aim of the paper was to explore the views of self-employed entrepreneurs on the influence of personality on entrepreneurial attitudes using their own example. The study was conducted among entrepreneurs in the agribusiness sector (purposive selection), mainly from the fruit and vegetable and meat processing industries. An online survey was used to obtain data. The survey included questions about personality traits, as well as perception of selected situations and motivation. The research was conducted using inductive-deductive methods, and correlation analysis and simple statistics (mean, deviation, quartiles) were used to determine relationships between variables (personality types and answers given). The results are presented in descriptive and graphical form (tables and figures).

To define personality traits, the systematics of Hippocrates was used, who divided people into different types due to certain personality traits. Thus, he distinguished between four types of people: sanguine, melancholic, choleric and phlegmatic. This concept was developed by many researchers, including Carl G. Jung, who in 1987 (Sharp 1987) developed this theory by introducing as many as 16 different personalities based on Hippocrates' theory. This article considers 4 basic personality types that will undoubtedly play an important role in business decision-making (Pacholski 1990):

- Sanguine (S) – extrovert and optimist, full of energy to act, likes people, establishes relationships quickly, does not hide his emotions, makes decisions quickly,
- Melancholic (M) – thinker, introvert, sometimes emotionally unstable, prefers listening to speaking, acts slowly, unhurried but effective,
- Choleric (Ch) – is active, has a lot of energy but can be impulsive, expresses feelings and opinions without hesitation, has leadership qualities and usually makes decisions quickly, likes to act and dominate, but is easily upset,

- Phlegmatic (P) – slow, introverted and pessimistic, has trouble expressing feelings, lacks self-confidence, does not trust people, but is kind, loyal and conscientious.

The study resulted in 57 questionnaires from entrepreneurs operating in the agribusiness sector. Analysing the personality types indicated by the respondents (Figure 1), it can be seen that more than half (58.0%) described themselves as sanguine, 17.5% of respondents were choleric, 14.0% phlegmatic and 10.5% melancholic. Given the results, the respondents can be considered extroverts and optimists, with strong democratic attitudes and the confidence to make decisions quickly. Such people like to be active, not only in business, and prefer cooperation with people to individual work.

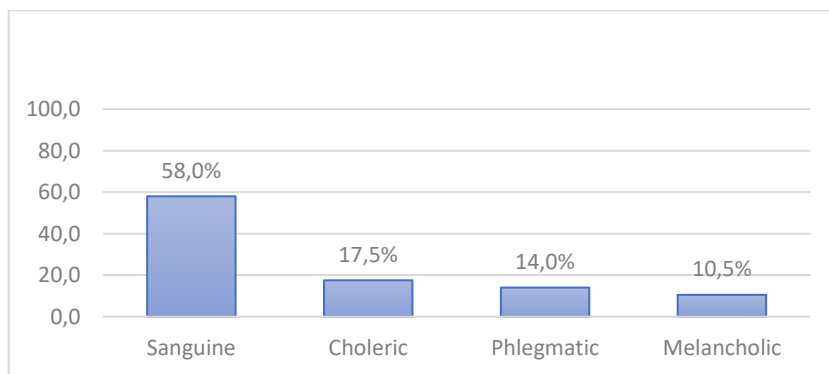


Figure 1. Respondents' personality types based on self-assessment

Source: own elaboration (N = 57)

The opinions obtained regarding the personality type presented were then contrasted with the respondents' answers regarding their specific motivation or behaviour in specific situations (four statements: S1, S2, S3, S4). Concepts from Miner's (1990) and Brandstätter's (1997) research were used and four statements were formulated:

**S1.** *I am able to make decisions on my own, spot opportunities and take advantage of them quickly.*

**S2.** *I am aware of the risks and uncertainties inherent in the activity, I accept this with full responsibility.*

**S3.** *I am more active and motivated to succeed than most people.*

**S4.** *I want to develop all the time, learn new things and I enjoy it.*

The questions were developed on a Likert scale, from 1 to 5 where 1 meant no trait and 5 meant having a strong trait. The results of this analysis are included in Figure

2 as a box plot, which shows the distribution of the data across quartiles, highlighting the mean and outliers (whiskers). The lines (whiskers) indicate the variability outside the upper and lower quartiles, and the points that are outside the boxes, represent outliers. As can be seen in the figure below, the highest number of outliers was given by people considering themselves to be melancholic. However, there were only six such individuals in the sample. Similarly, the answers given by those with a phlegmatic type appear to be inconsistent and uncertain. The level of dispersion in the answers given by the choleric also seems quite significant. In both cases, uncertainty in decision-making and less activity and self-motivation are evident. Considering the other personality types, greater decisiveness is clearly evident. In the group of people with the choleric type, more chaos and scattered answers are noticeable (Figure 2). However, it can be seen that all respondents were aware of the risks inherent in being self-employed, and showed a desire to further develop and gain knowledge. In this case, the respondents' statements were consistent in each group regardless of personality type.

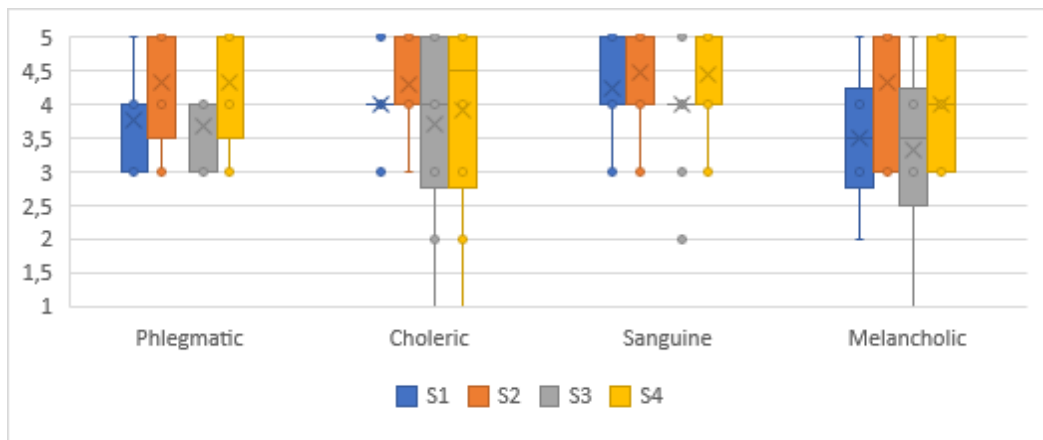


Figure 2. Box-and-whisker plot showing the distribution of respondents' answers to the four statements made (S1, S2, S3, S4) by their personality types

Source: own elaboration (N = 57)

Personality types were then contrasted with success factors based on the experience and opinions of the respondents. Three statements were listed which identify the most important success factors in business:

**(A)** *In my opinion, success is determined by both motivation and the current market situation.*

**(B)** *Success is determined by one's own determination and character traits.*

**(C)** *Business success depends solely on the market situation and the macroeconomic environment.*

Overall, 59.6% of respondents agreed with statement (A), 21.0% of respondents agreed with statement (B) and 15.7% agreed with statement (C).

In the last figure, opinions relating to the above three statements (A, B and C), characterising entrepreneurial action, are included, taking into account the personality types of the respondents. As can be seen in the figure below (Figure 3), sanguinarians strongly opined that the personality traits possessed by the entrepreneur determine success. It is clear that they see this as a factor in their success (motivation, determination, courage, self-confidence). They are calm, composed, optimistic and pursue their goals with persistence but also reason. The choleric, on the other hand, pointed more often to factors from the market environment as those that significantly contribute to business success or failure. It seems surprising that no respondent describing themselves as a choleric indicated statement (B) as the most important. This statement referred to personal success factors, i.e. intrapersonal factors originating from intrinsic motivation and determination. The choleric in the study group were far more likely to point to factors from the market environment as those that influence the success of business activities. They saw less potential in themselves, perhaps due to their explosive nature or impulsiveness, which can sometimes lead to ill-considered decisions.

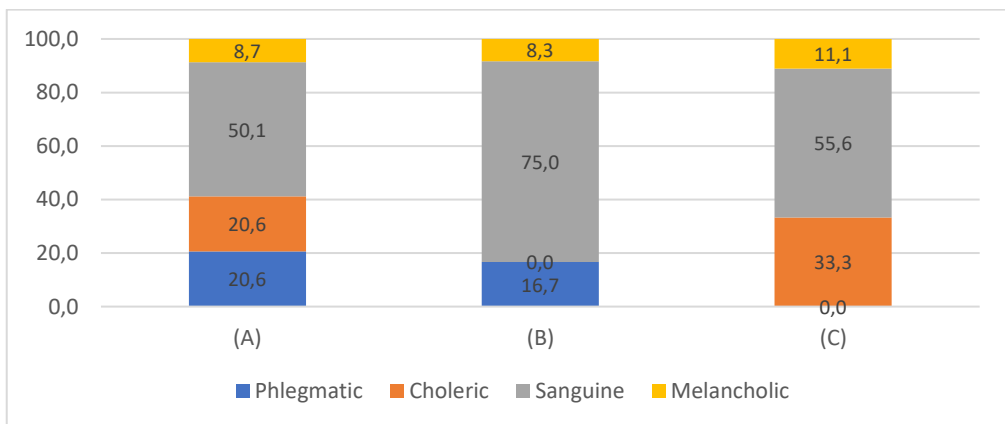


Figure 3. Business success factors as perceived by respondents (by personality type)

Source: own elaboration (N = 57)

The results presented above make it possible to point to some characteristics that may favour entrepreneurial activities. These are mainly: extroversion, optimism, activity and energy, having leadership qualities, striving for independence and autonomy, ability to overcome fears, success and achievement orientation, decisiveness and consistency. Among the respondents, it is also possible to speak of self-confident and decisive people who like to act pragmatically and often use intuition

supported by their own experience. Confidence in people is also evident, as is confidence in one's own abilities. Sanguinarians see the success factors largely in their personality traits. Nevertheless, they keep a close eye on market trends and take them into account. Traits that can inhibit entrepreneurial attitudes and hinder them include a pessimistic and melancholic temperament and phlegmatic action. Lack of energy, contact with people, avoidance of risks and decision-making, can significantly hinder becoming an entrepreneur and managing a business. On the other hand, an explosive character, decision-making under the influence of the moment or an authoritarian approach to management – in the case of choleric – can also cause barriers to success in the market.

### **Conclusions**

Based on the research conducted, it can be concluded that the aim of the study has been fulfilled. Moreover, the results of the study coincide with the results of other researchers, e.g. Antoncic et al. (2015), who in their work identify several key personality traits that an entrepreneurial person must possess. Identifying such traits can help to educate future entrepreneurs. The most important traits include: creativity, knowledge and courage. Considering the group surveyed, similar traits can be identified. However, some people felt that they lacked the self-confidence needed in business, which can significantly affect the success of business strategies. It should be noted, however, that the vast majority of respondents rated themselves as optimistic and extrovert and identified qualities such as decisiveness, courage and creativity as key qualities they possessed. The vast majority of respondents are hard-headed people who believe that determination and a strong character alone are not enough to succeed in business. What is also important is the market situation, i.e. conditions conducive to decision-making in establishing and developing a business, not only in the agribusiness sector (although here it is particularly important). The market situation for agricultural and food products and the current economic climate are of colossal importance in agribusiness activities. As emphasised by the respondents, in addition to personal qualities, knowledge and familiarity with the sector, as well as constant monitoring of the situation in a given market, are extremely important.

In conclusion, it can be stated that success in business is to a large extent based on the psycho-physical predispositions of the individual. It is much easier for open-minded, creative and flexible people to become entrepreneurs than for shy people who have problems communicating with others. But even the latter have the chance to become entrepreneurs and realise their dreams of owning and running their own business. However, they need to know that it will be more difficult for them to succeed, as they will have to make the extra effort of working on themselves.

On the basis of the research carried out, several conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, the decision to start one's own business results from an individual choice, however,

the process of building one's own company and the successes achieved are a result-ant of the psychological characteristics of the entrepreneur and the economic and social situation in the environment. Importantly, the starting point for the decision to set up one's own business should be getting to know oneself (strengths, but also weaknesses), followed by learning about the market and the field in which they plan to operate.

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