

The Role of Competences in Shaping the Leadership Style of Female Entrepreneurs.

By Vassiliki Bamiatzi, Sally Jones, Siwan Mitchelmore, and Konstantinos Nikolopoulos

Abstract

The paper explores the leadership styles of successful UK female small business owners in light of their personal, managerial, entrepreneurial and human relation competences. Despite leadership being a critical issue in small business development, there is limited research in this area, with most past studies focusing on large corporate contexts. Additionally, the context of small female enterprises remains a *terra incognita*. Employing a mixed-method approach, and adopting a combination of explanatory and confirmatory factor analysis, along with univariate and multivariate analyses, we make two distinct contributions to the literature. First, and for the first time, we specifically investigate the role of owners' competences in shaping leadership style among female owned business owners. Second, we present a detailed leadership profile of successful women entrepreneurs in the UK.

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Introduction

As the business environment becomes more turbulent, complex and dynamic, effective entrepreneurial leadership is increasingly viewed as a source of competitive advantage (Küpers, and Weibler 2008; Kuratko 2007; Yukl 2008). Although leadership is a critical issue in small business development (Thorpe, Cope, Ram, and Pedler 2009), there is limited research in this area, as previous leadership and management research has focused on large corporate contexts, ignoring the small and medium sized-enterprise context (Cogliser, and Brigham 2004; Vecchio 2003). Against this background, our paper explores the leadership styles of successful female small business owners.

Understanding leadership in the context of smaller entrepreneurial businesses, and specifically female owned ones, is a *terra incognita* in contemporary leadership research (Bass 1991; Buttner 2001; Jensen, and Luthans 2006); yet it is an area that offers valuable insights and contributions to advance our knowledge. After all, as Buttner succinctly puts it: “The women-owned business setting provides a unique opportunity to study how women run their organizations... an alternative paradigm to the traditional, male-dominated, hierarchical, command and control approach common in many business organizations” (2001: 253).

The assertion that women entrepreneurs are inferior to men when it comes to business success (Terborg 1977) has been challenged in recent years (Ahl 2004; Mirchandani 1999; Ogbor 2000). In fact, evidence suggests that, not only do female

entrepreneurs exhibit similar competences to their male counterparts, but they outperform men in open competition, where opportunities are equal and unbiased (Robb, and Watson 2012). However, one major hurdle remains; that of long-established stereotypes, which persist in devaluing female managerial and leadership skills, confidence, risk-taking propensity and entrepreneurial competences, despite the lack of evidence supporting such assertions (Gupta, Goktan, and Gunay 2013; Sexton, and Bowman-Upton 1990).

Prior research has indicated that management and leadership style is shaped according to a leader's personal traits and characteristics; yet few empirical studies have provided concrete linkages between these. To bridge this gap, we specifically investigate the role of female business owners' competences in shaping leadership style whilst controlling for the role of owners age and prior experience in the industry. We ask:

“What are the specific leadership styles exhibited by female small business owners in the UK?”

“To what extent are these styles influenced by the specific competences exhibited by these UK female entrepreneurs?”

We focus on owners of small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) operating in the United Kingdom, and examine their adopted leadership and management styles. Given the lack of current empirical research on the topic, we employ a mixed-method approach, with a questionnaire-based survey enriched with follow-up in-depth interviews. To analyze the data we employ a combination of explanatory and confirmatory factor analysis, along with univariate and multivariate Ordinarily Least Squares (OLS) Regression analyzes.

In doing so, we make two distinct contributions to the literature. First we provide new insights on the leadership styles adopted by the female entrepreneurs, presenting a detailed leadership profile of successful women entrepreneurs in the UK. Second, we specifically investigate the role of owners' competences in shaping leadership style. Due to the limited research existing on the topic in the small business and gender literatures, we draw inferences from the general bodies of leadership research, the newly established entrepreneurial leadership research and the gender psychology literature to inform our knowledge and arguments. Synthesizing these different strands of the literature, we offer a more holistic view of entrepreneurial leadership within female owned small businesses.

The paper is structured as follows: The theoretical foundations are explored first, followed by our research methodology. After this the analysis of the data is described, followed by a presentation of the research findings. Finally, we discuss our findings, their theoretical contributions and practical implications, and provide suggestions for further research.

Theoretical Framework

Entrepreneurs as Leaders: An Introduction

Entrepreneurial leadership, from the perspective of the leadership role performed in entrepreneurial ventures, is emerging as a critical issue in our understanding of economic development (Leitch, McMullan, and Harrison 2013). This approach is viewed as a 'new paradigm', as the literature to date has focused on larger organizations (Nicholson 1998) and corporate entrepreneurship behaviors of middle

management (Gupta, MacMillan, and Surie 2004). The challenge of understanding entrepreneurial leadership in the context of SMEs is relatively unknown (Jensen, and Luthans 2006; Leitch, et al. 2013). While our understanding of the strong relationship between quality of leadership and the management of SME are becoming clearer (Thorpe, et al. 2009), there is considerably less focus on the analysis of leadership and leadership development (Cogliser, and Brigham 2004; Leitch, et al. 2013).

Leadership capabilities are crucial for organizational success and sustainable competitive advantage (Luthans, and Youssef 2007). Inarguably, in SMEs the leadership role is even more important and influential than in a larger organizational context (Hale, and Cragg 1996); after all the leader is typically the principal – in some cases even the sole – decision maker (Davidsson 1989; Storey, Keasey, Watson, and Wynarczyk 1994). Therefore an owner’s personal competences and leadership capabilities will be particularly influential to the performance and success of the enterprise. Yet to date minimal empirical research exists on the intersection of small business leadership and leader competences (Jensen, and Luthans 2006), although it has previously been recognised that the range of competencies required to run smaller ventures are qualitatively and quantitatively different from those needed in larger organizations (Johnson, and Winterton 1999).

McGrath and MacMillan (2000) were among the few to concentrate on the topic. They claimed that an ever-changing and dynamic business environment, with increasing uncertainty and competition, requires a different type of leader; an “entrepreneurial leader”. They defined the entrepreneurial leader as the one who creates “an organization that does things...as a matter of course” and achieves success through “continual search for new opportunities” (2000: 301). Subsequently

entrepreneurial leadership was linked to the development of an 'entrepreneurial mindset' for leaders who can strategically manage their organizations within an increasingly competitive and changing global environment (Gupta, et al. 2004). Gupta, et al. (2004: 246-248) further defined entrepreneurial leadership as involving five main elements: framing the challenge that will push the team, absorbing uncertainty by shouldering the burden of responsibility for this challenge, path clearing through negotiating internal and external environments, building commitment by inspiring the team to 'buy into' their vision, and specifying limits through managing preconceptions and acknowledging limitations and working creatively within these

Other studies have looked specifically at the human element of leadership. For example, Baum, et al. (1998) demonstrated the importance of the business founder's ability to convey a clear vision to employees. Hiam (2002) identified the importance of building trust and commitment of employees, whereas Ireland, et al. (2003) talked about the role of human capital in nourishing strategic entrepreneurial behaviour and entrepreneurial leadership. More recently, continuing this discussion, Roomi and Harrison (2011) defined entrepreneurial leadership as "having and communicating the vision to engage teams to identify, develop and take advantage of opportunity in order to gain competitive advantage." (2011: 2)

Finally, some attention has also been placed on the different leadership styles and practices portrayed by small business leaders. Initial studies by Ardichivili, et al. (1998) examining leadership styles and practices of 256 Russian small business owners, showed that they would involve peers, in decision making, but not subordinates and would also exhibit few authoritarian but more situational styles of leadership. In general, entrepreneurial leaders have been majorly linked to

transformational leadership styles. Acknowledging that transformational leaders are driven by the need “to transform individuals, teams and firms by going beyond the status quo and (affecting) their firms ability to innovate and adapt”, it has been claimed that transformationally led firms are more likely to be entrepreneurial (Ling, Simsek, Lubatkin, and Veiga 2008: 557). This is further supported by research that makes positive links between transformational leadership and entrepreneurial leaders (Visser, De Coning, and Smit 2005), with crucial dimensions centered on strategy, communication, and personal and motivational factors (Agbim 2013).

Gender and Entrepreneurial Leadership

Female entrepreneurship emerged as a research topic in the 1970s – initially in the US – as a response to the changing role of women and the increasing number of them entering the workforce either pursuing self-employment and/or business ownership (Schwartz 1976). In the UK, the relevant research developed in the 1980s, against the traditional entrepreneurial theories which until then assumed entrepreneurship to be a male activity (Goffee, and Scase 1985). Much of the early research focused on differences between male and female entrepreneurs, how to encourage and support women into entrepreneurship, and the barriers that women may face to business start-up (Brush, Carter, Gatewood, Greene, and Hart 2004; Carter, Anderson, and Shaw 2001; Moore, Buttner, Wong-Mingji, and Sullivan 1999).

Leadership research has long considered the role of gender in leadership styles and characteristics, with leader stereotypes generally considered to be masculine (Koenig, Eagly, Mitchell, and Ristikari 2011). The literature has traditionally posited certain traits and capabilities for entrepreneurial success (and indeed successful

leadership) as being typically associated with men (Halford, and Leonard 2001; Jones 2012; Marlow, and Strange 1994), with women positioned as having less capability in these areas when compared to men. Yet the empirical evidence so far has not been conclusive (Appelbaum, Audet, and Miller 2003).

Brush (1992) identified four major areas of research on women business owners centered on individual characteristics, organizational characteristics, process of business creation and acquisition and environmental factors, suggesting that there are “more differences than similarities between male- and female-owned business” but that “there are few gender-based differences in certain psychologically based entrepreneurial traits” apart from those linked with risk-taking propensity and energy levels (1992: 12). Brush also emphasised the assumed homogeneity of women, with little research across groups of women, effectively masking the wider, gendered complexities of business ownership and the differing reasons for, and attitudes towards, different approaches to entrepreneurship and leadership generally.

Taking into consideration the above, scholars have argued that different leadership styles would be adopted by female entrepreneurs in contrast to their male counterparts. Indeed, since the 1980s, many studies in the small business and entrepreneurship literature have been conducted upon this premise (Ahl 2006; Henry, Foss, and Ahl 2013), with many of them providing supporting evidence (Koenig, et al. 2011). For example, Aimo-Metcalf (1995: 5) showed that women’s constructs of leadership “relate to notions of transformational and interactive leadership whilst men’s are linked to transactional models’ with males’ primarily concerned with ‘entrepreneurship’ and ‘vision’ as a priority and women with ‘team management and effective service delivery’. Eagly, et al.’s (2003) meta-analysis of 45 studies of transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles found

that women were more transformational and ‘engaged in more of the contingent reward behaviors that are a component of transactional leadership’ (2003: 569). Mandell and Pherwani (2003) explored the links between gender, transformational leadership and emotional intelligence and argue that transformational leadership is not linked to gender but it is positively linked to emotional intelligence. Other research has shown that female managers perceive themselves to be more transformational than males (Carless 1998). Indeed, Eagly and Carli (2003) suggested that female leaders are more likely to lead in a style that is better suited to contemporary economic and organizational conditions than their male counterparts.

Different approaches to leadership have also been found – for example, effective communication and people skills, consensus building and communication, with women having more social capital than their male counterparts (Runyan, Huddleston, and Swinney 2006). Furthermore, it is suggested that women entrepreneurs perceive their lack of management experience and business skills as a major constraint (Heilbrunn 2004). The importance of perceptions is supported by Langowitz and Minniti (2007), who suggested that women tend to perceive themselves and the entrepreneurial environment in a less favourable light than men across many nations and cultures. Indeed in the same study, the authors found that subjective issues have a greater influence on women’s entrepreneurial propensity. On the contrary, other studies indicate that today female entrepreneurs are perceived as being tougher than other women (Ahl 2006), suggesting that female entrepreneurs of the 21st century may not conform to the traditional feminine stereotypes of leadership (McGrath, and MacMillan 2000).

In parallel, research methodologies which use gender as a variable to explore the behaviours and dispositions of male and female entrepreneurs, are also being

challenged (Ahl 2006; Hughes, Jennings, Brush, Carter, and Welter 2012). This is due to the homogenizing effect of matched pair studies which position men and women as inherently and essentially different (Carter, Shaw, and Britain 2006). Others argue that traditional conceptualisations of female entrepreneurs have posited a view that women are likely to have 'different' attitudes regarding areas such as leadership, profit and growth that position them as less successful (Marlow, and McAdam 2013; Sexton, and Bowman-Upton 1990). Women are subsequently viewed as deficient and inferior to the 'true' entrepreneurship and leadership involved in the masculinised, economically driven motives of high growth, high profit and jobs created (Ahl 2006; Marlow, and Strange 1994). For these reasons, and to challenge such homogenous accounts, there are calls to focus on women as an explicit research group. Indeed, Grundy and Welsch (2001) argued that differences *between* women entrepreneurs are of specific interest and that future research should 'further examine variables across categories (strategic or otherwise) of women-owned businesses' (2001: 467).

Entrepreneurial Competencies and the Role of Gender

There is widespread acceptance that the success, performance and growth of SMEs are heavily dependent on the competencies of the entrepreneur. Competency theory is based on studying successful leaders, by researching their behaviours, attitudes and skills into measurable aspects, and looking for ways of bringing them together in order to create individuals who demonstrate superior performance (Mitchelmore, and Rowley 2010). Research and practice related to competence is motivated by aspirations to achieve superior performance thus achieving business success (Spencer, and Spencer 2008). However, one of the key challenges in the competence literature is that there are many definitions of competence (Hayton, and

McEvoy 2006). The terms 'skills', 'expertise', 'acumen' and 'competency' are interrelated and are often used interchangeably in the literature (Smith, and Morse 2005).

Different frameworks and clustering of entrepreneurs' competences have been proposed. Typically competences of entrepreneurs are divided into two major categories; managerial and entrepreneurial, both equally required to survive and succeed (Chandler, and Hanks 1994). Managerial competences are the competences required to run a business successfully. For example, Smith and Morse (2005) identified two broad themes of managerial competences; functional competencies, such as marketing and finance, and organizational competencies, such as the skills related to organising and motivating, personal skills and leadership. Entrepreneurial competencies have been identified as a specific group of competencies relevant to the exercise of successful entrepreneurship; the development of small and new businesses (Colombo, and Grilli 2005). Man, et al. (2002) identified six competency areas under entrepreneurial competencies; these were opportunity, relationships, conceptual, organizing, strategic and commitment competencies. Finally, based on the work of Chandler and Jensen (1992) and Herron and Robinson (1993), Baum and Locke (2004) formed nine entrepreneurship competencies; knowledge, cognitive ability, self-management, administration, human resource, decision skill, leadership, opportunity recognition, and opportunity development.

Despite the interest in entrepreneurial competencies, relative studies on female entrepreneurs are rare. Most past studies on female business owners have examined only specific aspects of their competencies, and many are comparative to male business owners. Among the latter, some revealed that female entrepreneurs feel social adroitness and interpersonal skills to be their strongest skills (Birley, Moss,

and Saunders 1987; Hisrich, and Brush 1984). Others have found women reporting being weaker in financial skills than men (Collerette, and Aubry 1990; Stevenson 1986). Some studies have shown that women tend to focus more on their teams' development, empowering their employees and encouraging their achievements and perseverance (Bruni, Gherardi, and Poggio 2004; Brush, et al. 2004; Gundry, Miriam, and Posig 2002). Others have noted that women entrepreneurs spend more time in networking, engaged in conducting market research, and show advantages in strategic planning, leading change (Greve, and Salaff 2003; Lerner, Brush, and Hisrich 1997; Morris, Miyasaki, Watters, and Coombes 2006) and innovation (Hisrich, and Brush 1984; Sexton, and Bowman-Upton 1990).

Summary

Entrepreneurial competencies have been clearly shown to have important implications for business growth and success, and, an understanding of the nature and role of such competencies has important consequences for practice. At the same time, evidence of fast growing entrepreneurial firms clearly denote the paramount importance of leadership to success. Yet although leadership is a personal attribute, and better leadership is thought to result by developing the competencies of individual leaders, exploring the linkages between competences and leadership style development has received scarce attention in the past. When it comes to female entrepreneurs, the relevant discussion has been almost completely ignored. Acknowledging the increasing interest of female entrepreneurship and the role of women in the global economic environment, we bridge this gap in the literature, offering invaluable theoretical insights and practical contributions.

Methodology

Study Sample

In our study, to achieve a more diverse coverage of the female entrepreneurs' population, we focus on three regions of the country, in close approximation with each other: Yorkshire, Merseyside and Wales. It is estimated that these three regions cover 23% of the entire study population¹.

Our target population is female entrepreneurs that have been operating for at least two years in their respective industries. Inarguably, the first two years of an enterprise are the most crucial for survival, since 40% of all start-ups tend to fail within first year (Shepherd, Douglas, and Shanley 2000). In the UK, the Office for National Statistics (2013) estimates that, on average, 28.2% of companies typically fail within the first two years of operations. Hence, it was deemed necessary to exclude newly established companies to enable comparability among the results of the survey. Similarly, our focus was placed only on female leaders of micro (1-10 employees) and small companies (up to 50 employees).

To identify the sample for our analysis we used a combination of judgement and snowballing sampling (Goodman 1961). This technique is most suitable for sampling special populations which are either difficult to estimate or not easily identifiable from secondary databases, due to unreliable or limited available information (Churchill Jr, and Iacobucci 2009). In such cases, an initial sample of respondents which is representative of the study criteria and the population of interest is identified by the researchers, who are then used as "informants to identify others with the desired characteristics" (Churchill Jr, and Iacobucci 2009: 582).

¹ Department of BIS (Report by BMG Research 2013 for BIS)

In our case, we identified respondents initially through different women's networks and entrepreneur support programmes, such as Forward Ladies in Yorkshire and Chwarae Teg in Wales. These initial respondents were requested to identify other eligible participants by providing our team with the necessary contact details. In addition, acknowledging that not all female entrepreneurs are members of a network or a support programme/association, we further used the directory of regional entrepreneurs as well as direct personal contacts to facilitate the dissemination of the questionnaire more widely in all three regions of interest.

Survey Design and Methods

The survey questionnaire was split into three sections. The first section focused on the profile of the entrepreneur (age, years of business experience, qualifications, family history of enterprise) as well as the profile of their business (annual sales, number of employees, business sector, legal status, stage of business development).

The second section of the questionnaire focused on leadership attributes as identified by the relevant literature. A range of different types and taxonomies have been proposed for the determination of leadership styles and attributes (Bass, and Bass 2009). In small group formations, leaders have been classified according to their roles, behaviours and functions within their groups, all typically converging around the leader's focus on facilitating productivity and support for their group members (Bales, and Slater 1955). On the other hand, leadership in organizations and institutions has often been linked to the managerial style of the leader and the tasks adopted.

Combining these approaches, we employed the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) designed by Bass and Avolio (1997), augmented with detailed

questions on the decision making approach adopted (autocratic vs. democratic leadership style). The MLQ is a widely employed tool, used to diagnose the behavioural aspects of leaders. It is based on the following seven factors measuring transformational vs. transactional leadership attributes:

- *Idealized Influence* indicates whether a leader holds subordinates' trust, maintains faith and respect, shows dedication and overall acts as a role model;
- *Inspiration Motivation* measures the degree to which a leader provides vision and significance in one's work;
- *Intellectual Stimulation* shows the degree of encouragement a leader provides to others by creating an environment that is tolerant of experimentation;
- *Individualized Consideration* indicates the degree to which interest in others' well being and personal contribution in the group/team is shown;
- *Contingent Reward* focuses on the degree to which a leader tells others what to do to be rewarded, emphasizes expectations and recognizes accomplishments;
- *Management-By-Exception* assesses how content a leader is with standard performance;
- *Laissez-Faire* measures the extent to which a leader will let others do their own thing.

The tool comprises of 21 five likert-scale items, with each factor being determined by three specified items in the questionnaire, randomly deployed. A set of 8 five likert-type scale questions have been added into the questionnaire specifically focusing on the leadership/managerial style of the study group, along with two more questions that focus on the decision making approach the leader adopts for strategic and non-strategic decisions.

The third and final section of the questionnaire was focused on entrepreneurial competences. Many scholars have proposed various lists and clusters of entrepreneurial competencies, with varying levels of categorisation, however these are broad and it is difficult for any individual to demonstrate these simultaneously (Wu and Lee, 2005). Mitchelmore and Rowley (2013; 2010) in their reviews of the entrepreneurial competencies literature offered a framework which integrated previous research in this area, embracing both entrepreneurial and managerial competencies. In our study, we adopt their Female Entrepreneur Competence (FEC) Framework (Mitchelmore, and Rowley 2013; 2010). Four classes of competencies were surveyed namely, Personal and Relationship Competencies, Business and Management Competencies, Entrepreneurial Competencies, and Human Relations Competencies.

To validate the reliability and interpretation of the questions in our survey, the instrument was pilot-tested first through a small sample of female entrepreneurs. Three female entrepreneurs were contacted and requested to participate in this phase of the study, identified through personal networks. No specific problems were evidenced through this phase, whereas some slight adjustments to the survey instrument were made to alleviate possible tensions in some of the definitions provided.

All questionnaires were sent out to prospective respondents either through email (survey monkey link) or through post in hard-copy format accompanied by a cover letter explaining the study and ensuring the confidentiality of the survey research. A reminder letter and a second wave of questionnaires followed within the first month of the initial contact. Overall we collected 66 questionnaires throughout the two

waves, which yielded a sample of 58 usable and valid responses². No significant differences were observed between the two waves of data collection.

In addition to the above, we conducted ten follow-up interviews to further validate and strengthen the results from the previous two phases. For the selection of the interviews, personal contacts and networks of participants were again utilised in the respective regions of focus, matching the diversified sample of the responses collected through the survey. To be more precise, four interviews were conducted in the area of Yorkshire, three interviews in North Wales and three in Merseyside. All interviews were recorded with the consent of the respondent and in all cases the same questionnaire was completed in full.

Data Description

In Table 1 we present summary statistics on the characteristics of our female entrepreneurs and their enterprises. More specifically, we observe that the study sample is quite diverse with respect to the demographic characteristics of the participant female entrepreneurs. In particular, there is a good mix of different age groups, educational background and levels of experience. The majority of our respondents seem to hold either a professional or a bachelor (or above) degree in related or non-related subjects, and have at least five years experience in their respective industry. It is not surprising that there is only one representative of the youngest population group (19-25 years old).

With respect to the firm characteristics, most of the firms in the sample are at least four years old, with a very good representation (35%) of firms with more than 12 years in the industry. Yet at the same time we also have some very young ones too

² We had to exclude 8 responses because they were missing crucial answers for our analysis.

(within their second year of operations). Regarding their focus, the majority of the examined firms converge around business services or wholesale/retail with just a few concentrating on other services and even fewer on manufacturing. Finally the sample includes firms at different phases³ in their development.

----- Insert Table 1 here -----

In Table 2, we take a closer look at the surveyed female entrepreneurs and their leadership styles. In particular, we describe here the anatomy of the respondents' leadership style with respect to behavioural aspects (Panel A) and management aspects (Panel B). To derive the score for each style per respondent, we summed the respective scores on individual items, as per the instructions of Bass and Avolio (1997). We observe that the investigated female entrepreneurs are described as transformational leaders in nature, scoring on average at the upper range of moderate (8+) and/or high levels in all factors included in the instrument. The highest average scores are observed in leaders' role in influencing (9.14) and developing the well-being of their subordinates (8.84). The only factor which does not follow the same pattern is the *Laissez-Faire* with a mean score of just 4.54 out of a maximum of 12. Yet, it is important to note that the study population spans the entire range of the scale, with the minimum scores being zero -0- and the maximum 12 in almost all factors.

Hence, with a first look at the above data, we can infer that, although our female entrepreneurs are majorly transformational leaders, they are not willing or ready to release control of their businesses to their employees. This is better understood and corroborated when looking at the analysis in Panel B. Indeed, we observe that on

³ Initial phase of conception and development of products/services; Surviving phase with sufficient sales for breakeven; Stable and profitable phase; Growth orientation, growing from within or seeking finance for growth; Maturity phase, being many years in the industry and customers

average our female entrepreneurs adopt a moderate to high autocratic and/or bureaucratic (5.12 and 5.26 respectively) approach rather than the expected democratic style (4.8). In addition, the Laissez-Faire approach receives on average the lowest scores with just 3.96 out of a maximum of 8.

----- Insert Table 2 here -----

Finally, in Table 3 four major categories of competencies are examined, namely entrepreneurial, management, human relations and personal with multiple items measuring each one. It is obvious from the table that all four categories are well defined in our sample with all items measuring, with a high degree of reliability, different facets of each category. Indeed inter-item correlations for each category are fairly strong with Cronbach's' alphas t-tests ranging from 0.693 (for management competencies) up to 0.798 (for human relations), suggesting overall a good degree of convergent validity. In all cases, the factor means are above the scale midpoint, with personal competencies scoring the highest (3.234), and management competencies the lowest (2.698). Admittedly, the female leaders in our sample seem to perceive themselves to be well equipped with entrepreneurial and even better personal competencies, but not so much with managerial skills.

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Robustness Tests

To further verify the four factors in the competences table (Table 3), we investigated the homogeneity of the variables loading in each construct by running an exploratory Principal Components Analysis (PCA) on the latent variables contributing to each factor. It was revealed that Entrepreneurial and Personal factors only have one component, while Human Relations has two components but one

dominating one with more than 50% loading; so for these three competencies we are sure that the instrument captured and measured exactly what we were aiming for.

For the management competencies, the results of this analysis indicated that the eight variables loading on the factor could be reduced into two – instead of one – principal components with weights of 33% and 19% indicating therefore a more complex structure in the model. Although further research with a bigger sample is required to identify the two components, given the nature of the eight directly observable variables, we could speculate that one component captures the ‘high level/strategic’ managing skills of ‘management competency’ (Familiarity with the Market, Planning Business Activities, Managing the Financials, Business Administration) while the second, the ‘day-to-day/operational’ respective skills (Acquisition of appropriate resources, Marketing and Sales, Operational Systems Development, Ability to use technology), and both of them together build up to the overall ‘management competency’.

Data Analysis and Results

To address the study research questions and thus identify the role of entrepreneurs’ competencies in shaping leadership style, we employ a combination of univariate and multivariate (Ordinarily Least Squares) analyzes. We first employ t-tests to examine the role of the four competencies against the 7 factors of leadership behaviour (Panel A) and the 4 factors of management style (Panel B). We split the sample based on the scores of each leadership factor using, as a cut-off point, the median of each individual factor as shown in Table 3 (*low* for scores below the median and *high* for scores equal to or above the median). We then calculate the

means of each competence per group (low-high) and estimate the statistical significance of mean differences as depicted in Table 4.

The first observation is that not all competencies shape leadership style to the same extent. In particular, it is clear that human relations and personal competencies are significantly different across the high and low groups for almost all factors related to transformational leadership (apart from the Laissez-Faire factor). This finding indicates that female entrepreneurs who perceive they have high levels of human relations and personal competencies are more likely to adopt a transformational leadership style in their firms. Yet the perceived levels of management skills do not seem to impact on transformational leadership style adoption, whereas entrepreneurial competencies may positively affect some of the factors related to transformational leadership (such as motivation, simulation, consideration and management-by-exception) but not all. Interestingly, no one competence seems to be directly related to the adoption of laissez-faire behavior.

When looking, however, at Panel B, we can see that there are no significant differences across the level of each competence between the management style groups (low-high). There are only two observed significant relationships: personal competencies seem to be negatively related to the adoption of bureaucratic management styles and human relations competencies are negatively related to the adoption of a laissez-faire style.

----- Insert Table 4 here -----

Following the above, the data is tested under a multivariate setting. This step aims at further corroborating the above findings, whilst exploring the combined effects of each competence on shaping leadership behavior and style, while accounting for the

role of external characteristics. In each of the models in Table 5 the dependent variable is the score of each entrepreneur on the different leadership styles, while the independent variables are the respective scores on each competence factor. In addition, a number of control variables is added to the model, namely the age, qualifications and respondent's experience, and age and stage of development of the firm.

Interestingly, we observe that although on average personal and human relations competencies univariately affect all factors related to the adoption of transformational leadership styles among female entrepreneurs, when examined jointly some of the coefficients are no longer flagged as significant. Clearly, human relations and personal competencies affect mostly factors associated with the personal development and emotional support of subordinates. Entrepreneurial competencies have a positive and significant effect on the development of the appropriate environment for a transformational leader to effectively lead. Management competencies relate to the support of subordinates so they can promote themselves and the firm's goals. Again, no competencies, are directly related to the laissez-faire leadership approach. When using the four management styles as our dependent variables, similarly to our previous findings, we see that no significant relationships are identified; there is only a direct positive effect between personal competencies and autocratic management style.

The addition of the control variables has also yielded a few interesting findings. Specifically, that the age of the entrepreneur has a singular negative effect on leaders' expectations from their subordinates. Entrepreneurs' qualifications negatively influence their laissez-faire behaviour, and are also negatively related to the adoption of a bureaucratic management style. Experience is positively related to the adoption

of an autocratic management style as well as to a leader's expectations from their subordinates, but negatively related to the influence they project on the latter. Firm age has a positive effect on both levels of autocratic and bureaucratic management styles adopted, whereas the stage of company development is only negatively related to the level of motivation provided by the leader.

With the exception of just a couple of models (Reward in Panel A and Laissez-Faire in Panel B), the estimated models present acceptable levels of goodness of fit and explanatory power, as supported by F and adjusted R² statistics. In addition, mean variance inflation factors (VIF) (not reported here) are below 2 in all models, thus raising no concerns for collinearity.

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Discussion

Profile of UK Female Business Owners

The first goal of our paper was to provide a detailed leadership profile for UK female business owners. Taking first into consideration their behavioural aspects, we show that in line with past studies (Alimo-Metcalfe 1995; Bass 1991), female business owners are inclined to adopt a transformational leadership approach. The investigated UK female leaders are particularly interested in achieving high levels of trust, faith and respect with their subordinates; they place significant emphasis on their well-being and their personal development, whilst providing them with inspiration and intellectual stimulus to develop their creativity and ideas.

“...we do a lot of personal development with the teams, a lot of 1-1 sessions and we try to give people more responsibility to handle themselves...in difficult situations...people feel that I am their ‘rock’; they can always rely on me to support

them and I have heard people saying how proud they are to have been working with me” (Interview 4, Designing Firm)

At the same time, and contrary to past studies showing women to be participative and democratic in their management style (Eagly, and Johnson 1990), we reveal that our female business owners are not willing or ready to release control to their employees. When it comes to management, they tend to follow a rather moderate to high autocratic approach, and in some cases even a high bureaucratic stance. Chaganti (1986) has long suggested that irrespective of gender, the "masculine" style of decisiveness and goal-orientation are prerequisites for a successful leader. Indeed, when the respondents were asked to denote how they dealt with decision making on operational and strategic level, 20 percent admitted making all operational decisions on their own with only 8 percent suggesting 'blind' trust in their employees; for the strategic decisions, 39 percent admitted taking the decision without any consultation and not even one allowed such decision making to their employees, feeling that it is entirely their responsibility to run the business.

“I do normally ask people before making any serious decision; and we do have a system of how employees need to deal with operational, the mundane daily decisions. Yet when it comes to most significant ones, it is all down to me...it is my company after all.” (Interview 7, Catering)

Interestingly, we observe that management approach is positively influenced by leaders' experience and firm age. This finding can be interpreted in two ways: from one point of view, the more experienced the leader is, the more confident she will be in her ability and knowledge in managing the company. Hence it is natural that she will not require consultation of others, but she will accept full responsibility and control of the company she owns.

“...there are times when you do have to make decisions and there may be roads you embark upon and want to get them to a certain place before you'll actually engage

with the staff, so I think the strategic planning – at that level - for us works better if it's kept at board level.” (Interview 8, Business Services)

“I don't feel anyone in the company sees the commercial aspect of the company as well as I do...When it comes to product lines I'll pick them on my own purely because I've done them so many times and I kind of know the formula I work with, if that makes sense...and I'll tell them we've introduced this product... if I think it's a sure certainty I'll just do it and tell them that it's coming” (Interview 1, Online Retail)

On the other hand, the older the company is, the more confident the leader becomes in the success of her adopted management practices. To maintain the same performance levels, she naturally adopts a controlled management style based on past experience.

Regarding the industrial segregation of the firms, it has been suggested that female owned firms would be concentrated in retail sales and in personal and educational service industries (Kalleberg, and Leicht 1991). Indeed, our sample is majorly service oriented. Yet it is not retail that attracts the majority of female entrepreneurs but mainly the business, hospitality and education services. Although our sample consisted of firms in different development stages, the in-depth interview analysis revealed that all participants were interested in growing their businesses further. This finding is particularly interesting since it challenges past notions suggesting female entrepreneurs are growth averse (Shane 2008); especially those running small businesses (Ahl, and Marlow 2012). It has indeed been suggested that smaller business owners would not be willing to grow their businesses, being traditionally positioned within the 'lifestyle' sector. Yet this does not seem to be the case among our interviewees.

Finally, with respect to competences, it is clearly observed that, in line with past studies, the female leaders in this study perceive themselves to be well equipped with entrepreneurial and personal competencies, but not so much with managerial skills

(Heilbrunn 2004). They indeed seem to highly trust their communication, human relations and interpersonal skills as well as their ability to be creative and take advantage of opportunities, but not their administrative, marketing, sales, and financial skills. This finding is not surprising per se. Female leaders have always been considered - sometimes even accused of - being more people oriented (Terborg 1977). These traits were suggested as both strengths and weaknesses. Yet what is particularly surprising is the fact that most of the women in our study are highly educated (with some of them having business related doctoral degrees), rich experience in related or non-related industries, and great support from their immediate-close environment (with more than half of them having a business owner in the family). Hence, whereas in the past women's inferiority in leadership was associated with objective barriers such as lack of education, family and workplace restraints (Kalleberg, and Leicht 1991) or even gender-related discrimination stereotypes (Sexton, and Bowman-Upton 1990), nowadays female leaders are only limited by their own perceived ability to successfully manage a company (Langowitz, and Minniti 2007).

*"I think what I'm really good at is ideas and getting some of the way along, but I can get myself into a bit of a mess because I don't think in a very detailed way."
(Interview 3, Business Services)*

*"This process thing – its taken me ages – it shouldn't have taken as long but that's 'cos my mind isn't that way geared up – working in warehouse distribution, and operations and processes that require a full warehouse. It's a different environment from where I've come from so it's all a big learning curve but at the same time it's definitely not a strength. I can see the vision and I can see where I want to take it but sometimes it's quite frustrating because I'm not doing that well."
(Interview 1, Online Retail)*

Perceived Competences and Leadership Style

With respect to the role of competences on shaping the leadership style of the examined female entrepreneurs, we make three main observations.

Firstly, not all competencies have the same impact on leadership style formation. A clear connection between human relations (responsibility delegation motivation of others, hiring the right people, monitoring performance) and personal competencies (decision making skills, interpersonal skills, perseverance, self-confidence, communication and self-management skills) to transformational leadership style is revealed (Table 4). Mandell and Pherwani (2003) have already claimed that emotional intelligence is positively linked to transformational leadership styles. Indeed, our findings here suggest that the female entrepreneurs with higher emotional intelligence, prioritize the development of an environment of trust and commitment within their firms, by constantly motivating and caring for their employees (Table 5).

“I’m a really firm believer in personal development and my employees being able to reach their maximum potential” (Interview 5, Health Care Service Provider).

In addition, we reveal a positive connection between entrepreneurial skills and transformational leadership style. In fact, the female entrepreneurs in our sample who believe they are well equipped with entrepreneurial skills, seem to prioritize providing the right stimulus to their employees for success, and the necessary supportive environment as expected by entrepreneurial leaders (Roomi, and Harrison 2011). Interestingly though, no significant relationship is revealed between either factors and reward. This might be due to the fact that all female entrepreneurs are rather sensitive to recognition and reward engagement (Eagly, et al. 2003), and hence no significant differences could be revealed among the different styles.

A further interesting finding is the lack of a clear relationship between management competences and leadership styles. In fact, a negative relationship between influence and motivation elements of transformational leadership is only revealed in the full model. This finding can be interpreted in two ways. On one hand, it has long been suggested that female entrepreneurs perceive themselves as disadvantaged with respect to business and management skills (Collerette, and Aubry 1990; Heilbrunn 2004; Hisrich, and Brush 1984), and indeed our interviews confirmed the above. Therefore, we could argue that the lack/negative relationship is a result of the negative perceptions of our female entrepreneurs to such competences. On the other hand, this finding can be associated with the fact that the managerial competence factor is the only one consisting of two, rather than one, principal components, as identified in the robustness tests. Hence naturally clear results cannot be conveyed.

Secondly, no one competence seems to be directly related to the adoption of a laissez-faire behavior. Perhaps this is due to the negative properties of the specific style. Indeed, laissez-faire has been described as a type of destructive leadership behavior (Skogstad, Einarsen, Torsheim, Aasland, and Hetland 2007); as a general failure to take responsibility for managing (Eagly, et al. 2003). In fact, Skogstad, et al. (2007) found laissez-faire leadership to be positively related with role conflict, role ambiguity, and conflicts with coworkers.

Finally, the management style classification of autocratic, bureaucratic, democratic and laissez-faire, does not seem to be particularly influenced by competences. As mentioned above, contrary to the belief that women's management style would be more "feminine" and "participative" in nature (Brush 1992; Chaganti 1986), the majority of the participants in our study were reluctant to release control

of their firms, adopting a rather autocratic management style when it comes to strategic decision making. This was particularly obvious among the participants who considered themselves well equipped with personal skills and/or higher experience within the firm and the industry. Lerner and Almor (2002) showed indeed that past experience is positively related to female venture performance (Lerner, and Almor 2002). Hence, the reluctance of the female entrepreneurs in our sample to release control of their companies can be attributed to their understanding of this underlying relationship. Yet further exploration of the matter is necessary before making any particular inferences.

Conclusions

Most leadership research has been situated in corporate contexts, and there has been much less attention given to entrepreneurs as leaders (Cogliser, and Brigham 2004; Jensen, and Luthans 2006). Yet recognising that, in SMEs, the leadership role is even more important and influential than in larger organizations, this study is one of very few to examine female entrepreneurs' adopted leadership and management styles. We provide new insights on the leadership styles adopted by the female entrepreneurs, while linking their personal, managerial, entrepreneurial and human relation competences to the adopted style.

Practical Implications

Our findings have important practical implications, particularly for policy makers. We clearly show here that perceptions regarding personal skills and competences have a significant impact on the adopted leadership style. Hence, and if we assume that transformational leadership is the leadership style favoured by many female entrepreneurs, policy makers could allocate resources to develop programmes for the

enhancement of the competences linked to transformational leadership styles, such as communication, employee empowerment, responsibility delegation etc.

Limitations & Further Research

As in all studies, certain limitations are present. One limitation is the size of the study sample. Despite being quite diverse and well representative of the population, sample size is still quite small to reveal causality between competences and leadership style. A larger sample size could provide us with all the latent variables which load in each leadership style (transformational vs. transactional) and as such build a scale denoting the level of 'transformational', 'transactional' or 'mix' leadership style. Using the level scale of the second step, we could then run a multinomial logit (with reference base being the mix) on the 4 competencies and the demographics, similar to what we did in our current analysis, and identify as such causality linkages between leadership levels and competences, enabling the construction of a decision making tool. In addition, a larger sample could allow for higher accuracy levels in the identification of the latent variables loading in each competence and provide an even more accurate representation of each construct/factor.

As mentioned above, our analysis revealed a large proportion of firms on a growth oriented trajectory contrary to past notions positioning female entrepreneurs as growth averse (Shane 2008). Unfortunately our survey instrument did not allow for a clear measurement of intentions to grow and their implementation strategies. Future research on growth orientations among female entrepreneurs could shed further light to the above. In addition, the current survey design, although focused on successful female entrepreneurs, did not provide a clear connection between firm

growth and specific leadership style; so it is not possible to claim how each leadership style impacts on growth. An interesting angle in this line of research would be to identify the role of the leadership style to a firm's growth potential, whilst investigating both female and male owned enterprises.

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TABLES & FIGURES

Table 1.
Sample Description and Demographic Characteristics

<i>Demographics of the Leader</i>		Frequency	
Respondent's Age	N	(%)	
17 - 25	1	2%	
26 - 35	14	24%	
36 - 45	18	31%	
46 - 55	21	36%	
over 55	4	7%	
Highest Qualification	N	(%)	
GCSE	6	10%	
A-Level	1	2%	
Vocational	5	9%	
Professional	10	17%	
BA/ BSc	21	36%	
PG	15	26%	
Year of Experience prior to Establishing Enterprise	N	(%)	
No experience	9	16%	
Less than 5 years	19	33%	
6 to 10 Years	9	16%	
11 to 15 Years	9	16%	
More than 15 years	12	21%	

Figure 1.
Firm Demographics



Table 2.
Sample Leadership Characteristics

<i>Panel A: Behavioral Taxonomy*</i>								
	Mean	SD	Min	Median	Max	Low	Moderate	High
Influence	9.140	2.148	0	9	12	2%	26%	72%
Motivation	8.360	2.048	0	9	12	4%	38%	58%
Stimulation	8.180	2.760	0	9	12	8%	40%	52%
Consideration	8.840	2.427	0	9	12	4%	34%	62%
Reward	8.060	2.535	3	8	12	8%	44%	48%
By-exception	7.780	2.359	0	8	12	10%	48%	42%
Laissez - Faire	4.540	2.636	0	4	12	52%	40%	8%
<i>Panel B: Management Style Taxonomy**</i>								
	Mean	SD	Min	Median	Max	Low	Moderate	High
Autocratic	5.120	1.686	1	5	8	12%	42%	46%
Bureaucratic	5.260	1.651	1	5	8	4%	56%	40%
Democratic	4.800	1.604	1	5	8	10%	54%	36%
Laissez - Faire	3.960	1.456	1	4	8	12%	72%	16%
* Low=0-4; Moderate = 5-8; High = 9-12								
** Low=0-2; Moderate = 3-5; High = 6-8								

Table 3.
Competencies of Female Entrepreneurs in the Study Sample

Survey Item	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Cronbach's α	Competencies	Mean	SD
Creativity & Innovation skills	3.060	0.913	1	4	0.772	Entrepreneurial	2.935	0.638
Ability to envision/ taking advantage of opportunity	3.160	0.738	1	4				
Formulating and Implementing strategies	2.760	0.716	1	4				
Scanning environment for new opportunities	2.760	0.938	0	4				
Familiarity with the Market	3.120	0.689	2	4	0.693	Management	2.698	0.493
Acquisition of appropriate resources	2.780	0.737	1	4				
Planning Business Activities	2.760	0.771	1	4				
Marketing and Sales	2.640	1.005	0	4				
Managing the Financials	2.900	0.814	1	4				
Operational Systems Development	2.380	0.830	1	4				
Ability to use technology	2.480	1.092	0	4				
Business Administration	2.520	1.035	0	4				
Ability to Delegate authority and responsibility	2.980	0.869	1	4	0.715	Human Relations	2.928	0.575
Motivate others	3.120	0.689	1	4				
Hiring Skills	2.560	0.884	0	4				
Monitoring Employee Performance	2.740	0.944	0	4				
Human Relation Skills	3.240	0.822	1	4				
Decision Making Skills	3.400	0.606	2	4	0.798	Personal	3.234	0.479
Interpersonal Skills	3.180	0.691	2	4				
Perseverance	3.440	0.760	2	4				
Self-Confidence	3.220	0.679	1	4				
Communication Skills	3.240	0.687	2	4				
Negotiation Skills	2.980	0.820	1	4				
Self-Management	3.180	0.748	1	4				

Table 4.
Comparisons of Mean Competencies by Level of Leadership Style

Panel A: Behavioral Taxonomy

		Competences			
		Entrepreneurial	Management	Human Relations	Personal
Influence	Low ¹	2.714	2.688	2.529	2.867
	High	3.021	2.701	3.083	3.377
	Difference	0.307	0.014	0.555 ***	0.510 ***
	T-Test	(1.546)	(0.089)	(3.369)	(3.814)
Motivation	Low	2.655	2.673	2.648	2.952
	High	3.138	2.716	3.131	3.438
	Difference	0.483 ***	0.043	0.483 ***	0.486 ***
	T-Test	(2.822)	(0.301)	(3.196)	(4.060)
Stimulation	Low	2.729	2.609	2.700	3.030
	High	3.125	2.779	3.139	3.423
	Difference	0.396 ***	0.169	0.439 ***	0.393 ***
	T-Test	(2.282)	(1.220)	(2.887)	(3.152)
Consideration	Low	2.645	2.592	2.695	2.993
	High	3.113	2.762	3.071	3.383
	Difference	0.468 ***	0.170	0.376 ***	0.390 ***
	T-Test	(2.669)	(1.188)	(2.345)	(3.015)
Reward	Low	2.783	2.549	2.774	3.075
	High	3.065	2.824	3.059	3.370
	Difference	0.282	0.275 **	0.285 *	0.296 **
	T-Test	(1.581)	(2.029)	(1.786)	(2.265)
By-exception	Low	2.776	2.520	2.747	3.045
	High	3.032	2.807	3.039	3.350
	Difference	0.256 ***	0.287	0.291 ***	0.305 ***
	T-Test	(1.389)	(2.061)	(1.776)	(2.276)
Laissez - Faire	Low	3.000	2.688	2.922	3.270
	High	2.898	2.703	2.931	3.214
	Difference	-0.102	0.016	0.009	-0.055
	T-Test	(-0.536)	(0.106)	(0.053)	(-0.390)

Panel B: Management Style Taxonomy

Autocratic	Low	3.000	2.714	2.800	3.102
	High	2.910	2.691	2.978	3.286
	Difference	-0.090	-0.023	0.178	0.184
	T-Test	(-0.445)	(-0.149)	(0.981)	(1.223)
Bureaucratic	Low	3.143	2.830	3.057	3.418
	High	2.854	2.646	2.878	3.163
	Difference	-0.289	-0.185	-0.179	-0.256 *
	T-Test	(-1.452)	(-1.193)	(-0.990)	(-1.728)
Democratic	Low	2.845	2.655	2.771	3.116
	High	3.000	2.728	3.041	3.320
	Difference	0.155	0.074	0.270	0.205
	T-Test	(0.843)	(0.518)	(1.667)	(1.509)
Laissez - Faire	Low	2.857	2.649	3.105	3.320
	High	2.991	2.733	2.800	3.172
	Difference	0.134	0.084	-0.305 *	-0.147
	T-Test	(0.730)	(0.590)	(-1.897)	(-1.074)

¹ The cut-off point between Low and High is the median of each Leadership Style, as shown in Table 2 (i.e. for Influence: Median=9)

*, **, *** : Significant at 0.1, 0.05 and 0.01 respectively

Table 5.
Regression Models of Female Entrepreneurship Competencies and Leadership Styles

Panel A: Behavioral Taxonomy

DV:	Influence	Motivation	Stimulation	Consideration	Reward	By-exception	Laissez - Faire
Constant	3.102 (1.333)	-0.577 (-0.334)	-0.741 (-0.327)	-0.141 (-0.050)	2.219 (0.756)	2.790 (0.945)	8.097** (2.596)
Entrepreneurial	-0.276 (-0.704)	0.539 (1.401)	1.859*** (3.492)	1.112** (2.062)	0.076 (0.119)	-0.244 (-0.432)	-0.710 (-1.185)
Management	-1.357** (-2.169)	-1.021** (-2.149)	-0.992 (-1.247)	-0.690 (-0.963)	0.418 (0.401)	0.797 (0.882)	0.938 (1.169)
Human Relations	1.693*** (2.955)	1.247*** (2.993)	1.181 (1.398)	1.436* (1.718)	1.129 (1.257)	-0.888 (-1.138)	-0.692 (-0.812)
Personal	2.125** (2.497)	2.501*** (3.603)	0.957 (0.861)	0.906 (0.803)	0.664 (0.603)	2.899** (2.513)	1.572 (1.495)
Age	0.055 (0.132)	0.163 (0.677)	0.541 (1.349)	0.104 (0.245)	-0.297 (-0.657)	-0.730* (-1.863)	-0.633 (-1.335)
Qualifications	0.027 (0.149)	-0.006 (-0.037)	0.239 (0.939)	0.307 (1.255)	0.370 (1.286)	0.016 (0.078)	-0.939*** (-4.022)
Experience	-0.494** (-2.291)	-0.215 (-1.333)	-0.045 (-0.190)	-0.150 (-0.537)	-0.065 (-0.232)	0.470* (1.753)	0.154 (0.571)
Firm Age	0.104 (0.533)	0.109 (0.664)	-0.401* (-1.871)	-0.127 (-0.606)	-0.037 (-0.121)	0.246 (0.936)	-0.100 (-0.313)
Stage of Dev.	-0.358 (-1.229)	-0.493* (-1.859)	-0.353 (-0.980)	0.027 (0.065)	-0.050 (-0.108)	-0.580 (-1.437)	-0.175 (-0.499)
F	5.099	4.582	6.165	3.613	1.472	1.815	4.164
R ²	0.503	0.629	0.496	0.395	0.199	0.297	0.432
Adj. R ²	0.372	0.531	0.363	0.236	-0.012	0.111	0.283

Panel B: Management Style Taxonomy

DV:	Autocratic	Bureaucratic	Democratic	Laissez - Faire
Constant	1.847 (0.757)	6.928*** (4.785)	-0.238 (-0.104)	2.321 (1.010)
Entrepreneurial	-0.247 (-0.460)	0.202 (0.507)	0.128 (0.219)	0.442 (1.037)
Management	-0.025 (-0.045)	-0.003 (-0.005)	0.177 (0.434)	0.675 (1.286)
Human Relations	-0.447 (-0.766)	0.118 (0.232)	0.427 (0.844)	-0.966 (-1.586)
Personal	1.553** (2.223)	-0.578 (-0.835)	0.773 (1.105)	0.313 (0.463)
Age	-0.192 (-0.579)	-0.349 (-1.256)	0.299 (1.053)	-0.051 (-0.172)
Qualifications	-0.138 (-1.032)	-0.252* (-1.835)	-0.092 (-0.515)	-0.060 (-0.407)
Experience	0.328* (1.983)	0.060 (0.366)	0.128 (0.825)	0.136 (0.711)
Firm Age	0.351* (1.885)	0.440** (2.573)	0.050 (0.236)	0.259 (1.424)
Stage of Dev.	-0.245 (-1.161)	0.169 (0.891)	-0.012 (-0.040)	-0.194 (-1.246)
F	2.070	2.020	1.592	1.532
R ²	0.291	0.369	0.243	0.199
Adj. R ²	0.105	0.202	0.044	-0.012

*, **, *** : Significant at 0.1, 0.05 and 0.01 respectively

T-Test in brackets (...)