

## **Innovation, Female Entrepreneurship and Resilience**

The formalization of female entrepreneurship has been growing in Brazil and is already featured in lectures, courses, academic articles and research reports, as well as being a consolidated presence in the Brazilian start-up market.

However, the presence of women is not so common in what we call innovation entrepreneurship, which is entrepreneurship in projects where innovation is at the heart of the business. A lot of this is because this type of entrepreneurship is confused with technology-based companies, an area of activity that is not the “favorite” of women, given the social and historical context. Could this also be related to women's entrepreneurial behavior? I invite you to think about it.

Two groups of factors are related to the intention to undertake, called push - related to exogenous factors such as dissatisfaction with the job market - and pull - endogenous, such as personal characteristics. These characteristics include behavioral ones and, when it comes to entrepreneurship, they have already been studied in consolidated theory in the literature. In a study of 418 women, one of them was not present in the female universe: persistence. Women are resilient, while men are persistent. Could it be?

While persistence is the ability to keep going in order to achieve a goal, it brings experience and develops skills. Resilience, on the other hand, is the ability to overcome obstacles and get back on track to try again. Both are interesting characteristics for innovation, with resilience being more focused on day-to-day challenges and persistence on long-term objectives.

From this point of view, pull factors favor men more in terms of persistence, but other behaviors such as sociability, organization and planning skills are strongly present in the women who took part in the survey, meaning that women's behavioral profile in terms of entrepreneurial characteristics has a positive influence on their intention to undertake, despite persistence not being a predominant behavior.

In a scenario dominated by men - by the end of 2024 we have 12% of women at the head of startups (100 Open Startups 2024) - we can then evaluate push factors as important in shaping this scenario, especially the social and historical context. As early as the 1940s, during the Second World War, women took on various roles previously held by men, such as working in factories and running family businesses. However, this role was not permanent or remained secondary after the men returned to the cities. And in this context, to this day we have many businesses run by women that remain informal and therefore do not participate in research data.

With regard to innovation and university spin-offs, we have a social and historical context in which we still have a lower percentage of women in engineering faculties (data from the Federal Council of Engineering and Agronomy (Confea) – 2024), which are fertile breeding grounds for innovation spin-offs. Historically,

the participation of women in exact sciences has been low, possibly due to a collective awareness that it is not an area of female preference. Given that startups are technology-based, there is little interest among women in this type of business, which traditionally is of interest to men.

It is believed that changes are on the way, with an increase in the number of women at the head of start-ups, especially in the health, education and food sectors, coming to understand innovation not just as existing in technology start-ups. The number of women entering engineering is also on the rise, although this is still a lower percentage than men, but it may represent a trend towards breaking certain social rules due to changes in contemporary standards. Let's wait for the next research data and hope that we see more and more women at the head of Brazilian startups.

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Further reading:

KRAKAUER, Patricia Viveiros de Castro; MORAES, Gustavo Hermínio Salati Marcondes; CODA, Roberto; BERNE, Davi de França. (2018) "Brazilian women's entrepreneurial profile and intention", International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship, Vol. 10, Issue: 4, pp.361-380, <https://doi.org/10.1108/>

MORAIS, M. de O.; MEDEIROS, R. E. de.; FRANCO, E. G. . Female entrepreneurship and innovation: An opportunity for equality and development. **Research, Society and Development**, [S. l.], v. 13, n. 9, p. e9013946912, 2024. DOI: 10.33448/rsd-v13i9.46912