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## **Enrichment for retail businesses: How female entrepreneurs and masculine traits enhance business success**

### **Abstract**

Studies indicate that more male entrepreneurs are pursuing business ventures than their female counterparts. Latterly, there has been increased research interest in female entrepreneurs and their positive contribution to the retail economy. The main purpose of this study was to examine how some specific masculine traits can be enculturated into individuals (i.e. female entrepreneurs). The study also reviewed literature that discussed reasons which hinder female entrepreneurs in the retail world. The reasons range from being risk averse, being too agreeable and being overly anxious about failure. Through qualitative research exploration of female entrepreneurs, semi-structured interviews were undertaken to examine and understand their experiences. Themes which emerged from questioning the ten female entrepreneurs enabled the researcher to construct a theoretical framework. Analysis of the content findings showed that female entrepreneurs were indeed willing to adopt specific masculine traits. The result of this investigation is that through implementing specific masculine traits, female entrepreneurs have greater chances of success in their retail businesses. Although the research presented valid findings regarding the benefits of masculine traits on the retail industry, the research was limited by the sample size and the location of the research. This contribution remains unique in the way that it provides valuable information to the retail industry about the process of overcoming failure through enculturating masculine traits into female entrepreneurs.

Keywords: Female entrepreneurs; retail business; gender traits; enculturation; gender identity

### **1. Introduction**

From the outset, the majority of entrepreneurs were men with the recognition of female entrepreneurs in the male-dominated business world fairly recent (Ladge, Eddleston, & Sugiyama, 2019; Shim, Eastlick, & Lotz, 2000). Today, female entrepreneurs are playing steadily increasing roles in the retail economy in terms of revenue and as employers. Research indicates that approximately 39 per cent of entrepreneurs are female, though this figure varies widely, depending on the culture and country (Miller, Besser, Gaskill, & Sapp, 2003; Shim et al., 2000). Individuals in the retail and service environment need gender-specific traits that enhance their chances of success in maintaining a business in very harsh economic situations (Home, 2011; Jaafar, Othman, & Jalali, 2014; Jamal, 2005). For simplicity, this study retitles the retail and service industry to retail industry.

Some of the requisite traits for success are linked to gender characteristics introduced to future retail entrepreneurs already during the early stages of childhood. These are gender-specific personality traits linked to social constructions (Arévalo Avalos & Flores, 2016; Kasen, Chen, Sneed, Crawford, & Cohen, 2006). These social constructs are enculturated into individuals to fit the social norm. In general, boys are enculturated with masculine ideals while girls are enculturated with feminine values. Individuals need to develop the ability to learn different gender-opposite traits and, with that, to acquire characteristics which are androgynous, both feminine and masculine traits, and essential for a more balanced and successful career in terms of establishing and maintaining a retail business (Kasen et al., 2006). This study investigates the impact of gender-specific traits (masculine and feminine) and enculturation implications on entrepreneurs and not necessarily the entrepreneurial traits.

Academics, including Klapper and Parker (2011), have concluded that the smaller number of female entrepreneurs forming new ventures cannot simply be explained by explicit discrimination in laws and regulations. They consider that it is more likely that the explanation

for the lower representation of female entrepreneurs in comparison to their male counterparts lays in business environmental factors for the retail industry. Hence, internal and external factors seem to contribute to the lack of females creating ventures (Yordanova & Alexandrova-Boshnakova, 2011). Of significant importance for entrepreneurs is the level of competitiveness and risk tolerance which differ significantly between men and women (Dalborg, von Friedrichs, & Wincent, 2015).

Although Schumpeter (2017) focused on the relevance of competitiveness as one of the main motivations for individuals engaging in entrepreneurship, gender identity has been largely neglected in previous empirical research on entrepreneurship, especially within the enculturation process. Based on a survey of the extant literature, this study found that women tended to be more risk averse in that they stepped back from competition and difficult situations which involved higher risk-taking capabilities. This had negative effects on female entrepreneurs and their retail business (Dalborg et al., 2015; Yordanova & Alexandrova-Boshnakova, 2011).

The study focused on the enculturation of masculine and feminine traits of individuals. In particular, it is argued that as women may differ with respect to their female traits, the aim of this study is to identify gaps and shortcomings of female entrepreneurs' traits and to empirically investigate whether enculturating some important masculine traits enhances the chances of creating successful ventures for female entrepreneurs in retail. Hence, the research is answering the question of: *How do enculturated masculine traits enhance female entrepreneurs' business ventures in retail?*

In term of traits, masculine traits are generally viewed by many academics as important for the success of starting new business ventures (Gupta, Turban, Wasti, & Sikdar, 2009; Ladge et al., 2019). For example, Kasen et al. (2006) mentioned that women that are working in a full-time position had more masculine and less feminine traits than nonworking women. When female entrepreneurs have only feminine traits, concerns arise that these traits can occasionally hinder starting and maintaining a start-up company in the retail industry due to an apparent deficiency in various fields (Efrat, 2010; Ladge et al., 2019). Consequently, the proposed ERMED model (Enculturation-Recognition-Manipulation-Enact-Develop Model) is introduced to mitigate the failure rate of individuals with feminine traits and to increase their chances to start up and maintain an entrepreneurial venture through the enculturation of relevant masculine traits. With that, the research adds theoretical knowledge to previous studies including enculturation, gender-specific traits and entrepreneurship. Further, the importance of the study benefits the outcome for the (1) economy - through healthy competition and increased GDP, (2) individuals - through gained opposite trait knowledge, and increased wealth and occupation, and (3) equality - through a decrease of gender gap (i.e. workforce and income).

The study points out that men are also able to possess feminine traits. Indeed, some men can score higher in female traits than some women. The research utilises the average patterns of gender differences in personality traits to find the best solution to enhance female entrepreneurs and their business success. Our study supports Jaafar et al. (2014) argument that it is not gender per se, but the gender personality traits that are related to the intention of choosing an entrepreneurship career. Further, our research enhances the theoretical understanding of the significant relationship between gender personality traits and enculturation. The result of this study confirms previous studies that, in general, people associate masculine traits with entrepreneurs. Our findings will be useful to the New Zealand retail industry, educators and researchers and can also expand through the ERMED model in other geographical, industrial, and theoretical areas.

Firstly, the study will present the literature review that guided the study. In defining the concept of entrepreneurship, theories were introduced along with the range of issues women

confront in establishing their retail businesses. Secondly, the study will identify those issues which impact negatively on female entrepreneurial ventures. Thirdly, the study will discuss the findings arising from the analysis of the face-to-face interviews conducted by the researcher. Fourthly, the study will introduce the theoretical ERMED model derived from the findings in a discussion format. Fifthly, the study will explore the limitations of the study suggesting further research opportunities. In conclusion, the study will summarise the project with closing comments on its relevance.

## **2. Literature review**

### *2.1 Entrepreneurship in the retail industry*

Entrepreneurship is a phenomenon that supports society through its economic value and its discoveries of new ways of innovative thinking and opening new markets (Bruyat & Julien, 2001; Hallak, Assaker, O'Connor, & Lee, 2018; Tajeddini, Elg, & Trueman, 2013). An agreed definition of entrepreneurship would be that entrepreneurs are business actors that take certain risks to exploit the imperfect market through innovation and creativity, for current or possible future opportunities with the creation of wealth in mind (Bruyat & Julien, 2001). Further, it is generally accepted that entrepreneurship and the innovation involved can be a difficult, unpredictable and risky occupation (Hallak et al., 2018).

### *2.2 Gender identity*

Gender identity is defined as a personal conception of oneself (Wood & Eagly, 2015). People identify themselves as being male, female, androgynous (both), or neither, depending on intrinsic and extrinsic factors (Wood & Eagly, 2015). Renowned psychologists, including Bem, focused on specific areas of gender identity which this study follows. Additionally, the study will be supported by big five personality traits, consisting of extraversion, agreeableness, openness, conscientiousness, and neuroticism (Goldberg, 1999). The contributors studied the distinct differences between personality traits and interests which were central to their research on gender stereotypical identities of feminine and masculine traits (Weisberg, Deyoung, & Hirsh, 2011; Wood & Eagly, 2015).

Any presupposed disagreement between gender roles falls outside the scope of the research. In addition, this study is not interested in any discriminatory factors. Instead, it will show how different masculine traits can help female entrepreneurs to enhance the processes for starting a new venture in the retail industry and possibly surpass male entrepreneurs' success rate. The characterisation of gender differences that involve personality include which of the gender – masculine or feminine – has a higher trait score (Weisberg et al., 2011). To measure the scores, Bem's Sex Role Inventory Test (BSRI), Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ) and other measurements can be applied (Bem, 1974; Goldberg, 1999). For instance, by exploring the big five personality traits, Costa Jr, Terracciano, and McCrae (2001) mentioned that in general, females are more agreeable and anxious than men. This can result in a negative impact on negotiations which will be explained in more detail in the subsequent sections. As previously mentioned, this research acknowledges that each gender can experience opposite traits – some stronger than others. The research seeks to find gender differences in personality traits to find the best solution to enhance female entrepreneurs and their business success.

Male roles are generally connected to masculine traits. These traits include defending one's own beliefs, being assertive, having a strong personality, being forceful, having leadership abilities, willing to take risks, being dominant, angry, assertive, experimental, individualistic, being open to ideas, competitive, ambitious, independent, analytical, and aggressive (Bem, 1974; Costa Jr et al., 2001; Friedmann & Brueller, 2018; Jaafar et al., 2014; Weisberg et al., 2011). Some of these traits can be important qualities for success in entrepreneurial ventures. A trait, for instance, that encourages taking risks can be beneficial for

any retail entrepreneur because of the possible positive outcome that arises with entrepreneurship.

Female roles, on the other hand, are connected to feminine traits. These include being affectionate, loyal, sympathetic, sensitive to the needs of others, understanding, compassionate, caring, softly spoken, warm, tender, gentle, susceptible to flattery, shy, cheerful, and childlike (Bem, 1974; Friedmann & Brueller, 2018). Some of these traits are also seen as important factors for succeeding in an entrepreneurial venture in the retail industry. A trait, for instance, that encourages loyalty and passion has the potential to have staff who have trust in the start-up business and the manager (Bem, 1974; Jaafar et al., 2014; Maxwell & Ogden, 2006).

Androgynous characteristics are behaviours that are strong in both feminine and masculine traits which can be classified as the third trait segment. These are mainly viewed as a good combination as entrepreneurs have more variety of traits to choose from, depending on the specific situation (Maxwell & Ogden, 2006). In general, gender differences in traits are, *inter alia*, reasons that some entrepreneurs fail, and others succeed in the retail industry. For example, female entrepreneurs with more dominant feminine traits are more risk averse than female entrepreneurs with more masculine traits. This supports the view that feminine traits owners are likely to be more unwilling to pursue an opportunity because of its risk or perhaps to change their goal and pursue a less dangerous, more familiar path with lower aspiration, income, and risk (Gupta et al., 2009; Wood & Eagly, 2015).

Female entrepreneurs starting to explore the option in the franchise industry, because there is evidence to suggest that cooperation, which is a form of a feminine trait, plays an important part in franchise system performance and subsequently female entrepreneurs opt for entrepreneurial options which reflect a lower degree of risk (Clarkin & Swavely, 2006; Thaichon et al., 2018). Feminine retail entrepreneurs tend to have traditionally more feminine traits due to enculturation throughout their lives which views them as participating in the required social norms for a woman from the standpoint of the society and culture (Arévalo Avalos & Flores, 2016; Friedmann & Brueller, 2018).

### *2.3 Enculturation theory*

The enculturation theory, in combination with gender identity theory, suggests that people are surrounded by society's culture and acquire society's necessary values and behaviours (Grusec & Hastings, 2015). It can also explain the development of differing behaviours between boys and girls from a very young age which reflects in adulthood on the entrepreneurial start-up business. Herskovits (1948) developed and defined the concepts foundational to enculturation theory. Enculturation refers to the process of transferring innate and hidden aspects of the culture from one person to the other by copying the influencer's social behaviours, values, expectations, beliefs, and other aspects which are then included or adopted by the influenced person (Grusec & Hastings, 2015; Herskovits, 1948). Enculturation can be further explained by the cultural transmission concept from the study of Cavalli-Sforza and Feldman (1981). It explains the three transmission processes (1) vertical, (2) horizontal, and (3) oblique transmission. (1) refers to a cultural transfer, including values, motives and beliefs from the parents to their children; (2) refers to a cultural transmission from peers during the development from birth to adulthood; and (3) refers to a cultural transfer from other adults in their society.

Following this theory, socialisation is the process that refers to the more obvious and open aspects that use direct instructions to deliberately teach and shape the individual (Segall, Dasen, Berry, & Poortinga, 1990). Grusec and Hastings (2015, p. 547) advocate that "the net result of both enculturation and socialization is the development of behavioural similarities within cultures and behavioural differences between cultures". That statement explains how each society or group feature will develop into an individual feature for a person.

Enculturation basically starts from the newborn baby and continues to flourish up to adulthood throughout society. Stereotypes are built up due to social constructs, that is that society dictates what a female or a male should do and how they should behave and act (Arévalo Avalos & Flores, 2016; Ferguson, Costigan, Clarke, & Ge, 2016). All these influencers have a positive and negative impact on the individual in the form of social behaviour which will guide the individual throughout their life in a number of experiences and situations unless they make a concerted effort to change (Ferguson et al., 2016; Grusec & Hastings, 2015; Herskovits, 1948). The study, therefore, claims that, inter alia, enculturation, socialisation and the three aforementioned processes mould babies, and the young and older people's masculine and feminine traits. The younger the individual, the faster and easier it is to enculturate specific cultural traits.

#### *2.4 Enculturation and trait developments*

Enculturation is one aspect that forms the human being, and, in the end, people's gender personality traits. In more historically patriarchal societies such as New Zealand (Hofstede Insights, 2019), the majority of boys have lower risk adversity than girls, because they are socialised to believe that getting hurt 'is part of being a boy, and boys don't cry' and their parents were generally not as fearful for them as they were for their girls (Buss, 2015; Rigney, 2011; van Oers, 2010). In addition, Buss (2015) reasons that more boys than girls preferred competitive wargames, which gave them probably an assertive advantage in their grown-up phase. The same applied to physical bullying and physical contact, in which more boys than girls participated. Further, the personality dark triad, consisting of narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism, is used for aggressive, manipulating, deceptive, dominant, and exploitative behaviour towards others (Buss, 2015; Dant, Weaven, & Baker, 2013). This may reflect small advantages of entrepreneurial success that people with masculine traits have over people with no masculine traits.

On the other hand, girls tended to play games considered more 'soft' than 'rough' (Rigney, 2011). Therefore, girls were also treated differently and with caution as though they were fragile 'little princesses'. Girls learnt to be tidy and perfect, to look after themselves and to help in the kitchen or play 'soft' games like 'mothers and fathers' (TED, 2016). Costa Jr et al. (2001) acknowledged that in a masculine society and country, like New Zealand (Hofstede Insights, 2019), only girls were allowed to cry. Presumably, such values could have indeed affected the development of gender differences in personality traits. Further, this was reinforced by parents who made sure that their girls were in safe surroundings, actively guarding their daughters with tighter rules (Buss, 2015). The enculturation differences between boys and girls are evident in adult behaviour which is then transferred to the way in which each gender manages their own retail business. In summary, most young girls avoid risks because they were taught to be careful when they were little (Rigney, 2011; van Oers, 2010).

The study also reasons that, in general, avoiding risks has a negative impact on the success of retail entrepreneurship (Stark & Zawojnska, 2015). The research argues that those people with relevant masculine traits are more tolerant to risk than people without relevant masculine traits, which is one of the core features of entrepreneurship and a probable reason why people with feminine traits recognise fewer opportunities and thus pursue less entrepreneurial paths than people with masculine traits.

The study sees the necessity or obligation to investigate the need to enculturate specific masculine traits in girls and women that are important for the process of starting up and maintaining a retail business. Further, it will help to negotiate terms that lead to competitive advantages (Guerrero & Richards, 2015). On a positive note, enculturation is malleable and can be influenced by one's life experience. Looi and Khoo-Lattimore (2015) and other researchers also conclude that the role model of entrepreneurial parents positively influences

the learning effect of their children. A significant percentage of children from the entrepreneurial background, up to 83 per cent, are actively involved in the business and more likely to have an entrepreneurial future. In other words, they get, inter alia, masculine traits enculturated from their parents and their surroundings. It is therefore feasible to assume, that in a later stage, different traits can be learned, developed, and executed (Kasen et al., 2006).

### *2.5 Self-efficacy theory*

Self-efficacy is defined as the belief in oneself and the ability to complete specific situations and tasks successfully (Baron, Mueller, & Wolfe, 2016). Studies noted that setting lower goals than required decreased the performance of entrepreneurs towards achieving set goals or starting new businesses (Baron et al., 2016). This could result in disappointment, discouragement of growth, less knowledge development, demoralisation, or simply the failure to start a retail business. Some feminine traits including being shy, gullible, having a lack of competitiveness and risk adversity contribute to low self-efficacy (Arévalo Avalos & Flores, 2016; Baron et al., 2016; Bem, 1974).

Arévalo Avalos and Flores (2016) further suggest that relevant traits, including some of the big five, have an indirect effect on the traditional gender career choice via self-efficacy (Stajkovic, Bandura, Locke, Lee, & Sergent, 2018). One of the skills female entrepreneurs with feminine traits lack includes negotiation self-efficacy, a capability that may be pivotal to launching and sustaining a new retail venture. Throughout the starting up phases of new entrepreneurial ventures, business financing, business deals, recruitment of vital staff members and managers, and acquisition of other resources require shrewd negotiation skills. Masculine, persuasive and confidence traits help to negotiate better outcomes for the negotiator (Guerrero & Richards, 2015). With these obstacles in mind, female entrepreneurs with feminine traits by in large tend to settle for less which gives them a competitive disadvantage and little strength to move their new retail idea beyond the conceptual phase thus failing at the important start-up phase (Guerrero & Richards, 2015; Stark & Zawojnska, 2015). Academics acknowledge that most women with female traits have to overcome greater challenges than females with masculine traits in securing the abovementioned resources (Guerrero & Richards, 2015).

### *2.6 Impression management*

Impression management, or self-presentation, is a vital tool for influencing others of their perception of oneself (Ho, Tojib, & Khajehzadeh, 2017). Research shows that entrepreneurs regularly use impression management behaviour to create, maintain and alter their image to impact on the perception of other people (Nagy, Pollack, Rutherford, & Lohrke, 2012). The ability to manage their impressions on others is an important asset for entrepreneurs in the retail industry to have in order to be able to obtain a better outcome in negotiations, i.e. securing vital resources including monetary and human assets (Nagy et al., 2012). Businesses operated by males were higher in annual gross sales than businesses operated by females (Miller et al., 2003).

Traits including shyness, agreeableness, and risk adversity are considered unhelpful in impression management as the need to promote and sell ideas of new ventures to other stakeholders is considered intimidating and oftentimes confronting. Some retail entrepreneurs with female traits tend to fear possible backlash or other negative implications. Therefore, women act more collaboratively in negotiations as they have greater concern for feelings or emotions. While this is not seen as a negative trait, masculine traits are inclined to exploit more persuasive tactics that influence others which results in better outcomes (Guerrero & Richards, 2015).

### *2.7 Retail businesses and the starting capital: Financial issues*

Many female entrepreneurs start their businesses in the retail industry consisting mainly of micro, small enterprises or home-based businesses (Chang, Travaglione, & O'Neill, 2015). The retail industry is usually seen as an overcrowded industry that has low margins, low sell-through and other limitations which do not have sufficient substance to warrant financial funding (Jamal, 2005; Kwong, Jones-Evans, & Thompson, 2012; Laukhuf & Malone, 2015). While female entrepreneurs with feminine traits have several positive traits, including their social network ability and their nurturing attitude towards others, it is evident that an increasing number of female entrepreneurs are failing in their retail and service businesses; leading to the closure of their business (Efrat, 2010), because most female entrepreneurs' businesses are too small, and they typically lack special management-oriented education, skills, and experiences (Chang et al., 2015; Efrat, 2010; Laukhuf & Malone, 2015).

The inability to secure financial capital to open a business, for instance, is an issue that entrepreneurs have to deal with in the modern economy (Tajeddini et al., 2013; Thaichon et al., 2018). In an examination of the question as to why most female entrepreneurs in the retail industry receive less funding, it appears that female traits tend to be the reason behind some of these issues include increased fear of failure, shyness, lack of assertiveness, and risk adversity (Efrat, 2010; Ladge et al., 2019; Thaichon et al., 2018; Wood & Eagly, 2015). Research conducted by Zhao, Seibert, and Hills (2005) discovered that gender was significantly related directly to entrepreneurial intentions. This shows that women have a reduced possibility to start an entrepreneurial path. In another study, in a psychological paper, Sexton and Bowman-Upton (1990) did a comparison of female and male business owners. Over 100 female owners were compared with comparable male entrepreneurs. The study used the top 10 per cent of business for sales and for the number of employees. Females scored meaningfully lower on traits linked to risk-taking and level of durability. The researcher concluded that these female entrepreneurs are reluctant to become involved in uncertain outcomes and have reduced energy level required to sustain a growth-oriented business. Through their study, they further confirmed that gender-related psychological traits associated with entrepreneurial differences do exist (Sexton & Bowman-Upton, 1990).

In addition, research shows that in retail, most female entrepreneurs with feminine traits seem to be vigilant about paying off debt, which could also encumber their personal and their business growth and opportunities (Efrat, 2010; Kwong et al., 2012). Being raised as a female or a male in a family of entrepreneurs does not guarantee that the child will succeed or even pursue a profession in retail entrepreneurship. However, research shows continually that individuals who are engaged, passive or active, in an entrepreneurial family or are in some way exposed to entrepreneurship early in life are far more likely to pursue entrepreneurial endeavours (Looi & Khoo-Lattimore, 2015). These types of entrepreneurs tend to be more persistent, assertive, focused and competitive; in general, they have more masculine traits.

### **3. Research design**

When selecting the method, the study considered the aforementioned research question and the theoretical contribution that would guide the study, i.e. developing the theory. Qualitative research is more likely to generate data quality rather than data quantity. The sample size was not an imperative factor in this study as qualitative researchers are mostly concerned with the quality and richness of information (Thaichon, 2017). The goals of a qualitative study are important and the number of respondents is sufficient if these goals are achieved (Fugard & Potts, 2015).

#### *3.1 Data collection*

For the data collection, this study adopted a qualitative, inductive approach and conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with ten female entrepreneurs from the retail and service



industry in New Zealand. Hence, one relied on concepts like saturation to assure the thoroughness of one's data collection. The plateau - saturation was reached within ten in-depth interviews. The number of interviews conducted in this study is also in line with the suggestion of Braun and Clarke (2013). The interviews were conducted separately for authentic results (Thaichon, 2017). The qualitative approach intends to explore the effects of masculine traits and the perception of female entrepreneurs. With a quantitative method, it would not be ideal to examine these issues due to lack of depth of data, and surveys would suffer from limited understanding of the issue (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

The participants for the study were identified and recruited through contacts within an entrepreneur conference in New Zealand. These participants were carefully chosen with the idea in mind of who could best engage with the research question and increase the knowledge of the gap under study (Creswell, 2009). Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling type which is widely used in qualitative studies and useful for understanding and identifying cases that are information-rich (Palinkas et al., 2015). With purposive sampling, the study is in line with the method of researching a specific cultural domain through knowledgeable professionals (Palinkas et al., 2015). Therefore, the study recruited participants through the purposive sampling method as it best fits with the qualitative study around the specific research question (Cooper & Schindler, 2014).

Entrepreneurs that took part in this study were asked to share their experiences and stories on how their (1) upbringing, (2) early childhood, (3) education, (4) work ethic, and their (5) working position in adult life have shaped their retail entrepreneurship. The ventures belonged to several types of retail and service businesses. At the time the interviews were conducted, the number of years these entrepreneurs had been in their businesses ranged from one to several years (for more information please refer to table 1), with an average of 13 years of business experience. Out of the ten participants, six have university education in various degrees and four participants have basic school education. The age group of these female entrepreneurs varied from 17 years to 72 years and an average age of 38.7. The average age of becoming an entrepreneur with a retail and service business was 25.8 years.

Table 1: Participant information

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Nature of Business</b>	<b>Business Founded</b>	<b>Core Products</b>	<b>Education</b>
Belinda	Principal Partner (60 / 40)	Beauty Therapy - Retail	2000	Skincare and healthcare products	Degree in Beauty Therapy (1999)
Melanie	Owner	Beekeeping - Retail	2005	Honey, Wax	PhD Management (2000), MBA (1993)
Marion	Owner	Production - Retail	2016	Knife	Basic School (2011)
Fatima	Owner	Retail	2012	Clothing	Degree in Management (1990)
Jana	Owner	Real Estate agency	1980	Houses, apartments	Degree in Management (1970)
Jessica	Principle Partner (75 / 25)	Education	2010	English for foreigners	Degree in Education (2001)
Amanda	Owner	Nursing	1989	Age care	Degree in Health Science (1986)
Rochelle	Owner	Import Retail	2014	Clothing	Basic School (1995)

Caroline	Owner	Service	2012	Hair Dresser	Basic School (2009)
Diana	Owner	Programming - Service	2012	Web design	Basic School (2000)

Participants were given pseudonyms in order to protect their anonymities. The participants were New Zealand citizens, or permanent residents, to give assurance that the study was valid for the New Zealand retail economy. The participants were interviewed for one to two hours in person. All ten female entrepreneurs had to fill out the Bem's Sex Role Inventory Test (BSRI) (Bem, 1974) before the interview began to see where in the matrix they were situated. Figure 1 gives a more detailed insight into the distribution.

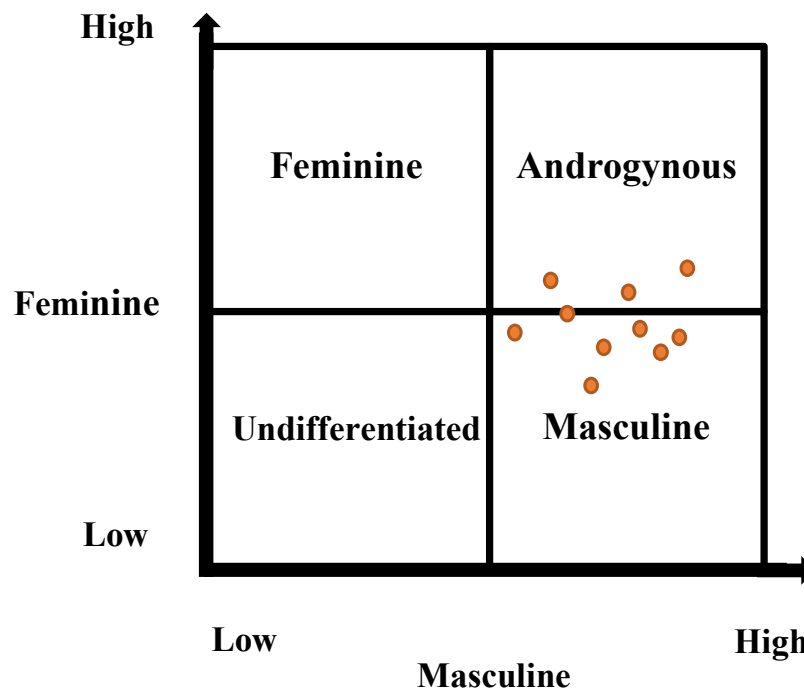


Figure 1: Adopted from Gender Role, Bem Matrix (1974)

### 3.2 Data analysis

Each interview was transcribed and analysed. A cover sheet containing basic information on the participant was included on every transcript including, but not limited to, date and time of interview, pseudonym, location, year of establishment, position, age, and the gender. The study used template analysis, a form of thematic analysis, to determine emerging key themes (Brooks, McCluskey, Turley, & King, 2015). This analysis emphasizes the hierarchical coding while still upholding a high degree of analysis structure and has the flexibility to adapt the coding template to specific requirements of a study (Brooks et al., 2015; Thaichon, 2017). This analytical approach is highly suitable for exploring the views of different people within a specific context (Thaichon, 2017).

Brooks et al. (2015) suggest conducting a template analysis through several procedural steps. First, it is important to become familiar with the accounts in the analysis. In smaller studies, it is recommended to read through the whole dataset in full. Second, the researchers carry out initial coding of the data. Third, after defining preliminary codes, researchers need to organise these emerging themes into meaningful groups and structure them within their relationships to each other. Fourth, a preliminary coding template will be created. Fifth, this tentative template will be further applied to additional data and modified (Brooks et al., 2015).

This includes adding new and removing redundant themes (Thaichon, 2017). Last, after finalising the template, it can be applied to the entire data set (Brooks et al., 2015).

#### 4. Findings

After conducting the interviews with the participants, it was possible to gather valuable information about the behaviours and actions they took before the time of entrepreneurship and, later, as retail entrepreneurs. The study concentrated on key issues which were then narrowed down further to similarities, or common traits, that the participants exhibited and which the interviewer was able to observe. The study also examined if these findings belonged to some overarching groups which were then used to discuss and inform the literature. The ERMED framework (Figure 2) explains the process of female entrepreneurs that implement or enhance masculine traits for their success as retail owners. The core results of the analysis were: (1) Enculturation – (2) Recognition – (3) Manipulation – (4) Enactment – (5) Trait Development.

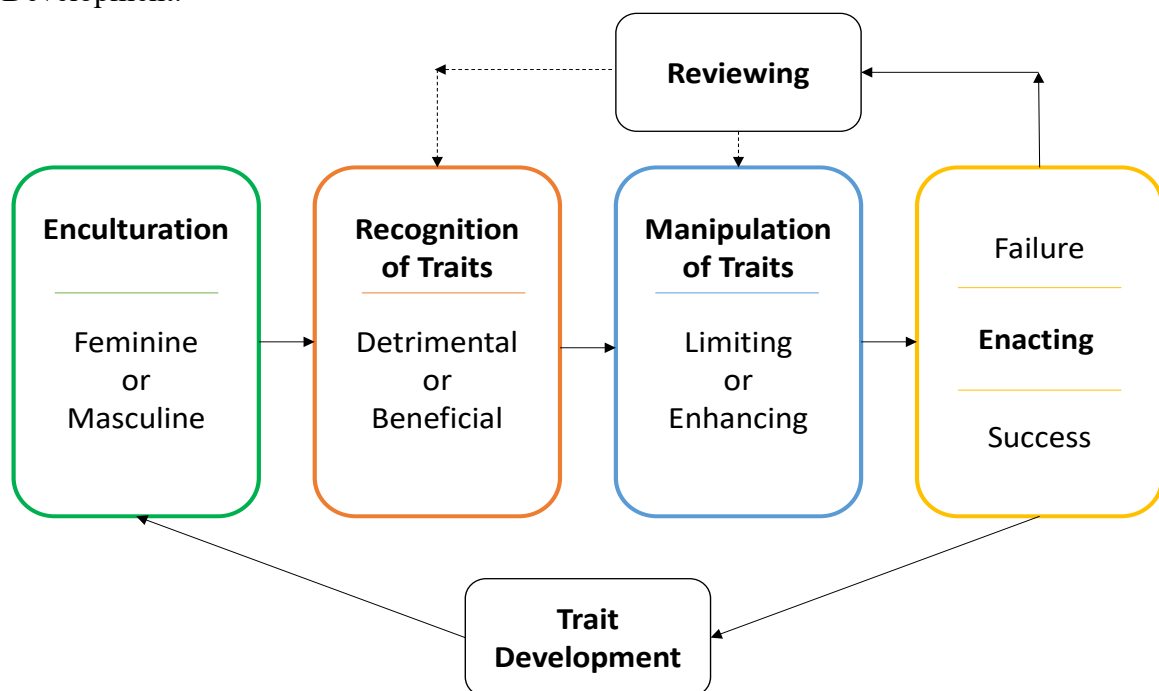


Figure 2: Enculturation-Recognition-Manipulation-Enact-Develop Model (ERMED model)

Further, the ERMED model in Table 2 defines the five different stages that are used to increase the success of female entrepreneurial ventures in the retail industry. With the ERMED model, entrepreneurs have an advantage over competitors as they are aware of and able to manipulate their traits. This circle of enculturating new or changed traits is a prolonged process that helps participants find a common ground of their entrepreneurial venture and with that an easier way to pursue, to establish and to maintain their entrepreneurial retail business in the long run.

In conclusion, all traits are adaptable through the willingness of the entrepreneur and can be moulded through training and/or mentoring over a period of time (Laukhuf & Malone, 2015). The result of this investigation is that through implementing specific masculine traits, female entrepreneurs can have a positive impact on the success of their retail business.

Table 2: Enculturation-Recognition-Manipulation-Enact-Develop Model (ERMED Model)

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Method/Type</b>	<b>Details</b>
1. <i>Enculturation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From learning</li> <li>• From Experiences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People are carrying their traits from different sources, including newly developed traits. This is the start of a cycle that benefits entrepreneurs that are willing to change their traits for the success of retail ventures.</li> </ul>
2. <i>Recognition of trait status</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beneficial traits that enhance individual business success</li> <li>• Detrimental traits that diminish business success</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entrepreneurs recognise their traits as per Bem's sex role inventory (Bem, 1974) and sort them into beneficial or detrimental traits. Beneficial traits are all traits that enhance individual retail success while detrimental traits are all traits that decrease individual retail success.</li> </ul>
3. <i>Manipulation and sorting or traits</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement or augment advantageous traits for business success in the retail industry</li> <li>• Limit or change hindering traits for business success in the retail industry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entrepreneurs are encouraged to limit or change traits that hinder their entrepreneurial retail success and implement or enhance traits that are beneficial for the entrepreneur's retail success. The manipulation itself is a combination of finding a mentor that can introduce beneficial traits to entrepreneurs to inherit or copy attitudes from former supervisors up to attending special courses. It is mandatory that entrepreneurs are willing to change, enhance old traits, or to implement new traits.</li> </ul>
4. <i>Enacting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful traits recognition, implementation or change move to trait development</li> <li>• Failed traits recognition, implementation or change move back to recognition or manipulation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entrepreneurs enact new or changed traits. Depending on the outcome entrepreneurs will review the trait in the case of a failure. Failure is defined by the lack of implementation, recognition or manipulation of traits and lack of retail business success. If traits were not accurately recognised or categorised, entrepreneurs need to go back to phase two and review the process.</li> <li>• If the recognition is successful but the trait still fails, it means the issue is in phase three. Entrepreneurs need to go back to that phase and review the process again.</li> <li>• Successful enactment will develop their trait further in the next stage.</li> </ul>
5. <i>Trait Development</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop traits for starting the enculturation process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The research showed that learning from their failures and successes is what pushes trait enactment and development as they learn and gain expertise in that area. Continuously developing traits will gradually start the enculturating process (phase 1). The cycle continues as the environment and business changes and so the traits need to be adjusted.</li> </ul>

#### *4.1 Enculturation of young girls*

One theme of enculturated traits is that people are not aware that they have such characteristics as they are 'programmed' into the person gradually from birth and individuals simply continue to mature and live with these traits unconsciously adopted or enculturated (Rigney, 2011; van Oers, 2010). The traits can include both good and bad, weak and strong traits but, blended together in a unique fashion, they make the person they are. Ultimately, it is up to the person to enhance the good traits and limit or sublimate the characteristics considered 'bad' through their lifetime.

The findings presented as two clearly delineated categories into which the participants could be segmented: masculine or feminine-oriented homes. For the participants, it was important how and in which environment they grew up. They stated that this was the base or plateau as to whether they were likely to become entrepreneurs or not. This was also acknowledged and confirmed in the study by Looi and Khoo-Lattimore (2015).

##### *4.1.1 Enculturation in masculine orientated entrepreneurial homes*

The first category, the larger of the two pools, consisted of feminine entrepreneurs who had been brought up in families where more masculine-oriented tendencies were encouraged. Some women, when they were young children, had mostly played with boys instead of children of their own gender (or had only brothers). It was clear to the researcher that these women had learned to be more assertive and to stand up for themselves, due in large part, to the rough and tumble of the playground and environment. On two occasions, the women had played soccer from a young age and had learned to be competitive, not to be afraid of the ball, of confrontation, or in general of losing, and to be more aggressive and assertive.

*"I was interested quite early in playing with boys. I felt somehow that they were more active. Girls never interested me. I mostly had friends that were boys or later men."*

*(Diana, age 30, owner of a web design company)*

*"I was a talent in sport. Mum encouraged me to play football. I was better than the average boy and that thrills me even now. I want always to be better."*

*(Jessica, age 36, Principle Partner)*

In addition to that, the majority of women had grown up in households where one or both of the parents were already in businesses of their own which prepared the girls at a very young age for the entrepreneurial ventures they would in time grow into family businesses. For example, Melanie had entrepreneurial parents and was involved in the whole business process early on. This led to introducing her to networking with other business partners. Melanie stated that:

*"I was lucky that I learned quite early to get my act together. I learned to work hard when I was 8 [years old] as I was working for my father in the dairy, helping to fill up shelves. Later, I started to sell and helped him to run the shop".*

*(Melanie, 44, beekeeper)*

Jana, 72, owner of her real estate agency, also experienced entrepreneurship in early childhood as she had had to work very hard. She did not have any options because her parents had no money and it was survival. This, however, taught her to withstand uncommon and different situations:

*“We had to go to our orchards and harvest our [Kiwi] fruit. That was a tough time for me as I had to work very hard during the whole year, with harvesting, pruning and to maintain the orchards and later go to markets to sell (...) Obviously, I got some great experience and some money for it which made me work harder... Looking back, living in an entrepreneurial home environment I learned to be persistent, strong and focused... Yes, it was very helpful.”*

#### *4.1.2 Enculturation in feminine orientated entrepreneurial homes*

The second category consisted of feminine entrepreneurs who had been raised in homes where more feminine-orientated tendencies were encouraged. These women, when they were younger, were treated very differently to the aforementioned women, i.e. those raised in masculine-oriented families. They had a more “traditional” upbringing with a focus on feminine trait values. The result was a more difficult path to become an entrepreneur in the retail industry. This was seen, especially from Fatima, 30, owner of a small retail business, as a negative start as the participant did not have the experience of associating with the other gender as a child.

Fatima is a Muslim female entrepreneur. For her, from about the age of ten, it was the Muslim faith with its traditions and expectations enculturated by her parents and society which led her to develop more feminine behaviours. The participant said that she had had a very strict and disciplined upbringing like many Muslim women. This behaviour was also confirmed in the study by Essers and Benschop (2009). Fatima was neither allowed to be with or to play with boys from the age of ten nor was she allowed to partake in any kind of sport. The society in which Fatima lived created a group to which only girls were allowed to join. This shows that Fatima was very restricted in her upbringing. Later, she helped in her father’s retail business, behind the scene.

*“My parents were very strict on separating us girls from boys... Yes, I played only with other girls and never with boys (...) I was not allowed to play with boys at all. That was not normal, even for a Muslim family (...) I remember my mom telling me continually that I should help her and that girls are supposed to support her mum in the household with cooking, cleaning and so on... I helped my mum with the household and later with cooking. I loved to sew clothes from dad’s retail business... Better than cleaning... That was my passion later on as well.”*

Caroline, 32, owner of a hairdressing business, developed strong work ethics. The participant did not regret being a member of the feminine-oriented group. Despite being the fifth-generation Asian-New Zealander, Caroline’s family still held fast to the traditions instilled by their forebears who had travelled from the east coast of China a long time ago. Through her childhood, Caroline had learnt of two important values: family and work. One of four girls, she had played with her sisters and cousins – boys and girls - developing strong ties to her immediate family and those who lived further afield.

*“As far as I can recall I had a few girlfriends and we did our normal ‘girly’ stuff. You know, things like dress up and such... I hated sport... I was not interested in boys [either]. There were so mean to us [girls] ... Even after five generations that grew up in New Zealand, my parents made sure that we did not forget where we are coming from and what our responsibilities [boys and girls] are... That was what girls are doing, and so I followed the footsteps.*

*Being a girl with my duties in the household and helping at work was normal I believe.”*

Her father had a fruit and vegetable shop which meant early starts at the auctions and selling fruit and vegies at his business. Irrespective of the weather or how she felt, the participant knew she would have to contribute towards the family effort. Though her childhood was a mix of Western and Asian traditions.

*“I did not at all expect to run a business or being entrepreneurial. I did not know anything about running a shop. Yes, I helped out but that was about it. Now I think about it, my Asian background was mixed with the Western culture, but I was not really thinking to deal with the overall responsibilities and ownership of my own business.”*

There were clearly two different enculturation processes to be observed. The first one, the more masculine orientated, was seen as a more positive way for entrepreneurs of connecting with all kinds of opportunities and to learn to participate with the business and society environment. These women said that, in hindsight, coming from a family where the parents were open to let them play with whoever was a good experience with the other gender. Also, that the parents were already in business, that they were exposed to diverse sets of opportunities, challenges, and failures - all this was an important factor for them to learn and grow the basic steps of business early on. The participants said that it made it easier for them to start an entrepreneurial venture as they were not too much afraid of failing or taking risks at this point.

The second category, however, was seen from one participant as a neutral way for entrepreneurship: Caroline did not think about having her own business. Also viewed as negative: especially in Fatima’s case, in terms of setting a base to start a business. Two of the three entrepreneurs felt that they missed out on some opportunities and to learn to participate with the business and society environment earlier on. These women said that in hindsight traditional upbringing might hinder the personal growth of the person and the business.

#### *4.2 Recognition of entrepreneurial traits*

A very important factor of being an entrepreneur, in the eyes of the participants, was to recognize the strength and weaknesses of their traits. Participants found that some personalities were better suited than others if it comes to opening a new business. Most participants agreed that just going into a business without knowing what people were ‘good’ or ‘bad’ at is not a good start. In fact, some participants stated that this was the main reason why so many people continued to fail in their business ventures. Recognizing the strengths and weaknesses of oneself gives entrepreneurs competitive retail business advantages over others (Baron & Ensley, 2006). The participants felt that it helped to build a strategy around their personalities/traits. Melanie was adamant that recognition of one self’s strength and weaknesses, leads the way to success:

*“I knew that I was not good at customer service and hated to work for someone else. In the end, I decided to be my own boss and configure my business in that way that I do not need to have a lot to do with customers... I rather liked the idea of honey production and selling it on to a wholesaler. I like working on my own and I am good at it.”*

Rochelle, 26, producer and importer of clothing, said that she “kind of failed a lot of times”, but never gave up, before she got to the point that she could maintain the business. The trick for her was to realize that by acknowledging her strengths and weaknesses it made it easier for her to succeed in her business:

*“...Hell yeah. I nearly failed probably three times before I got to the point that I could actually make money. There are so many things you do not know beforehand like paying import taxes, shipping costs, insurance, price variations, foreign exchange rates, and heaps more. But now I am more organized and confident.”*

When Marion was employed by her former employer, she knew that she needed to change her career. The participant realized that there were advantages in being her own boss but that it is important to stay focused. Participants, including Marion, found that failure and taking risks was beneficial as a learning curve.

*“Being employed is like being on a leash. You do not think, you just follow orders. As an entrepreneur, you are your own boss. You have to be more organized on what you are doing. Calculate every phase carefully. One wrong step and you can be in trouble... You need to take risks. Also, people think that failure is bad, but failure makes you actually stronger and it leads the way to success. You learn from that mistake and that is extremely useful.... My strength is definitely persistence. You need to hold on to your business in good and bad times.”*

Jessica, 36, has an English school based in Auckland but now also operates in China. She took the chance and went overseas to increase her business there as a joint venture. The participant came from a family of school teachers and thought that she could open her own school. After some struggle, she decided to expand to China and open an English school for non-English speaking people. This was a very good move as more and more Chinese students are enrolling in her school now. It turned out that her strength as risk taker paid off. Jessica also found that taking calculated risks was beneficial for her business:

*“Yes, I took a big, but calculated risk opening a school in China but here in Auckland the school is working well, so I have a backup plan. There are too many factors that can make your life miserable. Also, you should not be afraid to take on risks otherwise you end up as a poor employee for your lifetime and never have enough passion or money to fulfil your dreams.”*

Jessica, though successful, knew that she could not open a business without help from the joint venture in China. Another strong point for her was networking capabilities:

*“I had some Chinese business friends [her former student] that helped me with the setup of the joint venture. So, a [business] network is important to have to be able to fall back on it and to get help if needed. I would consider that as my strengths. You have to be very committed to what you are doing.”*

Life had taken an unexpected turn for Caroline. Whilst she had worked as a hairdresser and was occupied with the children, her husband had become gradually unwell and was no longer able to work. The participant had to rethink how their family would survive. Caroline



found that she was not earning enough money to feed her family and needed to virtually retrain herself and pick up the skills necessary to be self-employed. Caroline had slowly established a mobile beauty salon, with the help of her husband, which meant she was able to visit the elderly in retirement homes:

*“I realised that my husband had dealt with the financial side of our family. While he is still doing that, I had to speak to suppliers, the loan officer, the solicitors, etc. I simply had no experience dealing with these things. Luckily my husband could help and lead me with some of the tasks.”*

The fact that Fatima had not been exposed to dealing with males created a series of negative issues including the inability to establish a valuable and professional network, through to developing confidence with the other gender:

*“I never got used to talking to people. When my husband and I moved to New Zealand I very slowly started to gain more confidence. He is a liberal Muslim which helped me a lot to come out of my shell.”*

Participants found that taking risk (including failure), communicating well, having a strong network, being adventurous and focused, and being confident in what entrepreneurs were doing were the main factors for being entrepreneurial, a view supported by Jamal (2005). Conversely, they mentioned being introverted, lacking business experience, having lack of communication and being risk averse were weaknesses that would hinder their venture.

#### *4.3 Manipulation of entrepreneurial traits*

Another important factor is the manipulation of the participants' traits; their strength and weaknesses. Manipulation of traits or changing habits is basically a step to enhance business beneficial traits and limit or change personalities that hinder successful business outcomes. Participants tend to effectively work on their traits to gain a better foothold for the competition. The research also shows that the majority of the participants used private mentors or joined courses to accelerate the learning progress.

Fatima learned from her former employer how to manipulate her traits. First steps included to be more assertive, innovative and show more leading capabilities. That however needed another step - being responsible for her actions and taking initiative during her working hours.

*“After I asked about a career, she explained very well what was expected and how I should change my work ethics and behaviour, so the floor manager and the store manager would see my ambition... I learned from my department manager that I should start to be more of a leading personality. Take responsibilities, tell other staff members what they should do, be firmer and show initiative and so on.”*

Fatima was never a leader but was sure that she could learn the traits that were missing in her personality so she could fulfil her dream to be a business owner. After a prolonged process, she reached her goal and opened a retail business:

*“It was a very hard step for me as I was not the person to tell people nor was I good at taking the initiative. So, basically, I should do what I never done*

*before. I think after three or four years, or so, I started to become more the person they wanted. Thinking about that time at Farmers, it was actually a good thing as it got me out of my comfort zone. (...) Now I have my own little shop and very happy about it. “*

Melanie mainly used the experience of her father to mentor her. He was also an entrepreneur. Her father was very supportive and often took her with him into his business so that she could see the structure of it. Her father told her about his experience with his strengths and weaknesses and that she needed to change, refine and polish some of them for the success of the business:

*“You cannot really avoid your weak points because they are a part of you but what you can do is to minimize them by, again, working on them and, if possible, mould them to your advantage... I found out, after a few smaller mistakes and talking to my father, that actually to be able to grow my business as big as I wanted, I essentially needed positive customer and supplier relationships and that it is indeed an important factor in business [working and dealing with people]. Thanks to my father, I started to work on it, including having a better relationship with the people I dealt with on a regular basis.”*

Jessica used the joint venture partner also as a mentor to establish her company in China. She mainly had problems with the business side including the tedious paperwork and company establishment but not so much with the teaching:

*“When talking about manipulation, I think that I just followed my goals and changed some things that were needed. For instance, the administration and business part would be one of my weaknesses. I had a Chinese mentor and was really happy to have him by my side. Without him, I would be probably way harder to sustain the business there.”*

All participants had the drive to change their attitude towards traits. Most of the participants had issues with failure or risk adversity. However, for Fatima, it was the biggest challenge and change as she had very little knowledge about the practical side of a business and relationship management. But it was also the most surprising as she did not like any risky moves as she mentioned. Fatima manipulated her traits over time and acknowledged her persistence and drive to change her being. Most participants were led by one or another type of mentor to succeed in their ventures.

#### *4.4 Enactment and development*

All participants are still in business which gives credit to their persistence and manipulation of their traits. Caroline mentioned that she learned some new skills over a long period of time and developed them constantly:

*“I never thought that I would run a business. Faith put me in that position and I work hard to keep the shop running. It is our own [main] income. I am getting better and better with the business side. I learned so much from this journey. The more you learn the better you get. I think that my parents would be proud of me.”*

Jana mentioned that the adjustments that were needed now have to sink in and the trait needs to be developed over time:

*“These changes that I did needed to settle in first. It seems like a long process, but I like it as it is different and good for me and the business. I am way firmer with staff and that is good for my business. You cannot just change it. It takes time and you also need to adjust the customers all the time.”*

Fatima has now her own business and is proud of it. She mentioned that she is very thankful for the advice of her former boss and that that gave her new hope.

*“What I learned was very helpful. I am now in the position to deal with my business, suppliers, and everything. It took me long to get here and I am very thankful.”*

#### 4.5 Unexpected results

One unexpected result was that religion in combination with the upbringing of children played an unforeseen but significant role in this study. Entrepreneurs that grew up in households where religion was an important factor experienced greater difficulty in adapting to the concept of entrepreneurship. This was mostly due to the fact that religion and the traditions it encapsulates actually hindered the women, by and large, in opening up to the economy and starting a business (Essers & Benschop, 2009). Fatima, for example, struggled in opening her business:

*“Being a Muslim woman and living by the rules is not the best start as an entrepreneur... Trying to convince your father to let you open a business as a young woman. Nearly impossible, he was very strict... Only five years later, after I was married here in New Zealand, my husband knew that that was my goal and allowed it after a while and some convincing arguments. The other part was to learn to deal with different people. That was not my strong side...”*

In summary, the findings discovered that the traits female entrepreneurs referred to were mostly connected to masculine traits as per BSRI (Bem, 1974). All female entrepreneurs reported that the masculine traits they developed, consciously or unconsciously, helped them to be more successful in their entrepreneurial retail ventures. It determined that success in terms of greater confidence in what they did and the taking of more risks to have competitive retail advantage were an indicator of masculine traits. Further, the results showed that female entrepreneurs with masculine traits have better chances and were more optimistic to start up an entrepreneurial business.

The results also showed that enculturation is, inter alia, responsible for moulding gender personality traits as confirmed by other researchers (Ferguson et al., 2016; Grusec & Hastings, 2015; Looi & Khoo-Lattimore, 2015). In addition, it disclosed that through enculturating masculine traits and living in an entrepreneurial household, female entrepreneurs had a positive approach to entrepreneurship and to its challenges, including the risk of failure, aggressiveness, and confrontation as confirmed by Looi and Khoo-Lattimore (2015).

Through these important findings, the proposed ERMED model was used to explain aspects of an individual's ability to adapt relevant traits up to the benefit of successful entrepreneurship. These added benefits would be also an advantage over male entrepreneurs, as female entrepreneurs still inhabit their valuable feminine traits that male entrepreneurs are

lacking. Further, male entrepreneurs would be able to copy the ERMED model for their benefit and enculture important female traits to enhance their chances of success.

## **5. Discussion, implications and recommendations**

Since this study takes a developmental view, the discussion is presented in the sequential form the participants experienced in generating their ventures. That is, from the moment they encountered enculturation through the realisation of their traits up to the moment the trait had a direct or indirect outcome and participants established a retail business as an ongoing concern. The result of this research was that enculturated traits are by no means set in stone or inflexible. The study extended the literature with the knowledge that female entrepreneurs were indeed able to adapt and change their enculturated feminine traits and add valuable masculine traits so that they were more prepared for the masculine-dominated retail environment. The literature supported the view of Reshma Saujani (TED, 2016) to change the upbringing of young girls from being perfect to being brave. In addition, for the participants, mentoring was a big part of learning a different trait. The literature also suggested that female entrepreneurs should invest in professional mentors to succeed in their business ventures (Laukhuf & Malone, 2015).

In conclusion, it is possible to change female entrepreneurs' traits to more suitable (masculine) traits with appropriate interventions and the will of entrepreneurs. Participants showed that traits can be formed in two ways. First, to enhance or implement important masculine traits beneficial to female entrepreneurs' business ventures and second, to limit detrimental traits which have the potential to hinder business success. The participants commented that though it was possible to enhance existing behaviours, or adopt new ones, an extended period of time was needed to learn and enculturate the trait. Laukhuf and Malone (2015) suggested enhancing or adding masculine traits in female entrepreneurs in the form of mentoring.

The findings showed clearly that masculine traits had a positive effect on the behaviour of female entrepreneurs in their retail businesses. These effects included traits such as risk taking, being assertive, sensation seeking, ambitious and competitive (Costa Jr et al., 2001; Cross, Cyrenne, & Brown, 2013; Feingold, 1994) - all of which helped female entrepreneurs to manage their businesses. This follows the study of Dalborg et al. (2015) which showed that risk taking is more present in male entrepreneurs who have masculine traits. Whilst not all female entrepreneurs fail in their business venture, this study provided evidence that female entrepreneurs with masculine traits have a better understanding of the entrepreneurial obligations, are more prepared to take on the task and, in general, have better chances of sustaining the retail business than female entrepreneurs with feminine traits. This is in line with Jennings and Brush (2013) as they also found notable differences with respect to the amount of financial capital. That is, female entrepreneurs with feminine traits tend to set up businesses with lower levels of initial funding.

The research provided evidence that enculturation with masculine oriented beliefs in female entrepreneurs has a positive impact on the retail business venture. Enculturation is what the person has learned and inherited over a period of time (Grusec & Hastings, 2015; Herskovits, 1948). This is important as every person is starting from a different point of traits and knowledge in their entrepreneurial venture (Jamal, 2005). As research shows, female entrepreneurs with feminine traits have a harder time to have similar success in their entrepreneurship than female entrepreneurs with masculine traits.

### *5.1.1 Theoretical implication*

The study produces theoretical implications which can add value to the literature. First, this study contributes to the theoretical literature as it discovered correlations between gender personality traits, entrepreneurship, and cultural dimensions. Research around the evolving

factors is limited. This triangulation of the factors previously mentioned has a unique existence in the literature. It is thus important and necessary for the literature to understand the correlation between these factors and to gain knowledge. Existing theories can draw from this new enquired knowledge and enhance any further studies.

Second, an innovative ERMED model was developed that explains how different and specific traits can be successfully enculturated into individuals. The study did not find other research that proposes a theoretical model like the ERMED model. The model explains how future research can utilise the enhanced knowledge to explain the way in which enculturation plays a significant role. Our proposed model comprises factors that drive the long term and continuing cycle of enculturation and gender personality traits. Further, this model can be used not only for masculine traits but also for feminine traits. The results disclose that the proposed ERMED model has good explanatory power in the entrepreneurial area and has also the potential to open up new possibilities for future research in other areas including management, psychological and social theories. Therefore, the study adds valuable theoretical knowledge to previous findings.

### *5.1.2 Practical implication*

Except for the theoretical implications, this study found emerging implications that are useful for practical use. The practical implications include that not only entrepreneurial traits, but also specific masculine traits have a significant impact on female entrepreneurs' start-up decisions. The study will redound to the benefits of society considering that female entrepreneurs play an important role in the economy and innovation today. It has the possibility to reduce the gap between female and male entrepreneurs as through increased assertiveness and risk tolerance more successful female entrepreneurs will arise which will benefit society at large including the government. More innovations and competitiveness from female entrepreneurs with androgynous traits (male and female traits) will have a positive impact not only on the economy but also on creativity. The study believes that women's entrepreneurship can be also stimulated by gained knowledge of enculturating necessary masculine traits, i.e. risk tolerance, at a very young age to provide benefits as well beyond entrepreneurship. Indeed, masculine traits can benefit a broader audience within the economy and further reduce the general gender pay gap that is now visible as women with masculine traits will be more assertive, take the risk to ask for a pay increase and use self-efficacy and impression management to negotiate better deals. Enculturation further increases the opportunities for female entrepreneurs to search for non-traditional careers.

### *5.2 Recommendation*

Following the aforementioned discussion, the study offers four recommendations that have theoretical and practical implications, ranging from engaging academics in future studies, testing the ERMED model to enhancing entrepreneurial retail ventures. Further, the whole retail industry will benefit from androgynous traits.

#### *5.2.1 Enculturating androgynous traits in early childhood*

The study agrees with Bem (1974) that androgynous skills are preferred in the entrepreneurial environment. Androgynous traits are also beneficial for entrepreneurs that have difficulties in their businesses in the retail industry. Consequently, the study recommends that children's caregivers and educational staff members should encourage the implementation of androgynous characteristics into young children. These androgynous traits will be beneficial

as more flexibility in choosing traits can be applied to complex everyday situations and enhance success.

#### *5.2.2 Female entrepreneurs need to develop traits*

Another research stream would be to encourage entrepreneurs not to stagnate and cease their development. Instead, they should actively seek chances to increase their trait portfolio and further develop them to increase their retail advantages (Home, 2011). In addition, female entrepreneurs would also have various advantages because male entrepreneurs would most likely have only masculine traits developed.

#### *5.2.3 Government supporting mentor program*

The study found that some entrepreneurs worked successfully with mentors. This study supports the idea of Laukhuf and Malone (2015) of increasing (female) entrepreneurs' educational (management) knowledge and financial funding. Further, not only private service providers, but also the government needs to introduce a mentoring program including a business network that is accessible to all entrepreneurs and highlight opposite gender traits that are beneficial to their businesses in the retail industry. Sharing knowledge, customer orientation and introduction to other important traits are essential in the fast-moving entrepreneurial retail environment (Tajeddini et al., 2013).

#### *5.2.4 Opposite gender research*

The implications for future study include continuing the research and highly recommends investigating the opposite (male) gender and how feminine traits (Maxwell & Ogden, 2006) can enhance male entrepreneurs' businesses in the retail industry. The outcome will be verified with the same ERMED model presented in this study. It is expected to get positive results in the enhancement of male entrepreneurs in regard to their business success.

### **6. Conclusion and limitations**

This study was conducted in New Zealand and discussed the importance of female entrepreneurs, and, in more detail, the negative issues that the women confronted in their entrepreneurial retail paths ranging from cultural, financial policy issues through to business and network matters. The researcher views the relatively high number of issues as barriers to female entrepreneur retail business success. The study found that, to a large degree, many problematic areas stemmed from inherent issues with enculturation including, but not limited to, access to financial resources, risk adversity and fear of failure. The research explored a positive way to address these issues through the implementation of masculine traits and found that the women were willing to adopt masculine traits to support their retail venture through a training and mentorship program. The research provides the foundation for further studies and suggests that additional exploration in areas that seek to explain entrepreneurs' knowledge acquisition and self-control will be of benefit to the study of retail entrepreneurship at large.

As with most research, this study also has limitations. The first limitation is directed towards the sample size in that only the small number of ten female entrepreneurs were interviewed. With such a small sample, the findings do not give an in-depth analysis nor paint the entire picture of entrepreneurial behaviour. Further, entrepreneurs were situated only in New Zealand thus a very limited scope from a geographical perspective. It is not that one gender should dominate the other, but that they should complement each other. This research acknowledges that this is not an easy task as societal norms are so deeply ingrained within the cultural contexts that changes will not occur without great determination on the part of every member of society.

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