

Teachers' Entrepreneurship: Intentions and Actions

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Abstract

This study examines teachers' entrepreneurial characteristics, either in terms of actions and efforts they have already carried out, or in terms of intentions and opinions they have regarding undertaking business initiatives. The research purpose is to examine whether certain stereotypical gender characteristics are connected with entrepreneurial intentions. A mixed method of data collection was applied to conduct the research. Specifically, 75 teachers (in-service, pre-service and graduates of pedagogic departments) filled out a questionnaire containing a combination of items from the Entrepreneurial Intentions Questionnaire, International Personality Item Pool, Human Values Scale, status-seeking, perceived masculinity and the Organizational Collectivism Scale. Furthermore, 8 teachers participated in semi-structured interviews. Theory of Planned Behaviour was used as a broad guideline for the interview scheme, suggesting that the intention to form a specific behaviour is influenced by three main factors: subjective norm, perceived behavioural control, and attitude towards the behaviour. The data analysis consists of descriptive statistics of the sample and the measured constructs and a calculation of the participant's intentions to create a new firm, the t-test analysis, the correlational analysis and a linear regression analysis. The results showed a strong interest among teachers in entrepreneurship, with several of those surveyed having tried their hand at it. However, due to the country's legal framework, government employment is still the only way of employment for most of them. Concluding it can be stated that status-seeking and risk-taking do have an influence on an individual's decision to realize entrepreneurial intentions.

Keywords

Assertiveness, Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurial Intentions, Gender Differences, Perceived Masculinity, Risk-Taking, Status-Seeking, Theory of Planned Behaviour

1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship is a key driver of economic growth and innovation. Understanding the entrepreneurial characteristics of teachers is crucial for promoting entrepreneurship education and fostering a culture of entrepreneurship in educational institutions. Entrepreneurial intention is a critical factor that drives creativity, innovation, and performance in firms (Liao et al., 2022). It is the self-acknowledged conviction by any individual that they are willing to initiate a new business enterprise and continuously plan to accomplish it in the future (Farukh et al., 2018). A definition of “entrepreneurial intention” comes from (Morian, Gorgievski, Laguna et al., 2012: p.165) as “the conscious state of mind that precedes action and directs attention toward entrepreneurial behaviors, such as starting a new business and becoming an entrepreneur”. According to Peng, Lu, and Kang (2013), an individual’s intention to become an entrepreneur is an essential variable predicting entrepreneurial behaviors.

Entrepreneurial intention has been regarded as a way to spur innovation and technological progress, engender competition, and create employment, leading to economic growth and national prosperity. Ruskovaara & Pihkala (2013) provide information on which methods appear to be used the most frequently in basic and upper secondary education, and how these practices vary between different school levels. The results indicate that the perception teachers have of their own entrepreneurship education skills is closely connected to the implementation of entrepreneurship education and the connection between teacher training and the implementation of entrepreneurship education.

1.1. Entrepreneurial Intentions and Gender Diversification

In the area of teachers’ entrepreneurship, several stereotypes seem to play an important role, as well as types of character attributes. Women’s entrepreneurship is increasingly important for creating new jobs and contributing to the social and economic growth of their societies, yet the interplay and nuances of women’s entrepreneurship and culture are currently understudied (Bullough et al., 2022). This study found that while female faculty was more proactive, male faculty was more innovative and willing to take risks. Jennings & Tonoyan (2022) explore gender stereotyping in the context of entrepreneurship and suggest paths for future research. The paper highlighted the importance of investigating intersectionalities, mapping masculinities, and revealing rationales. The OECD has also explored gender stereotypes in education and identified policy gaps, policy approaches, and initiatives that aim to reduce gender stereotyping across OECD education systems (Bullough et al., 2022).

Men, being different than women, usually present stronger intentions to become entrepreneurs (De Bruin, Brush, & Welter, 2006; Díaz-García & Jiménez-Moreno, 2010). Despite a significant increase in the number of women in entrepreneurial roles in recent years, there is still an imbalance in the representation of men and women in these roles (De Bruin, Brush, & Welter, 2006). Studies on women’s

aspirations to start their own businesses are becoming increasingly common, and the goal of the research is to identify the various barriers that may prevent women from taking this route. Gender differences exist in entrepreneurial intents, with males demonstrating a greater inclination to pursue their aspirations than women (Gupta et al., 2009; Zhao et al., 2005). Although, globally, there are still substantial gender inequalities in the workplace, both horizontally (in terms of different industries and sectors) and vertically (in terms of leadership hierarchy) (OECD, 2017; Sojo, Wood, Wood, & Wheeler, 2016), gender diversity initiatives are often controversial, raising concerns that they undermine the value and unfair treatment of members of dominant groups (Dover, Kaiser, & Major, 2020). Furthermore, it is sometimes suggested that there are natural limits to gender representation, given the supposed inherent differences in the kinds of occupations or roles to which women and men are drawn or suited (Baron-Cohen, 2009; Hoffman & Yoeli, 2013). This is sometimes based on an inaccurate view of women as fundamentally different from men in how they think, feel and behave (Annis & Nesbitt, 2017).

1.2. Gender Diversification and Teachers' Entrepreneurial Characteristics

Gender differences in business may be based mostly on entrepreneurial intentions, as they are expressed through psychological factors diversified by gender. Factors such as the perception of masculinity and cultural norms influence entrepreneurial intentions. We follow Konutgan (2022) who focuses on three major psychological factors of diversification: assertiveness, entrepreneurship, status-seeking and risk-taking.

Assertiveness can be defined as a skill compromising of being able to communicate with others effectively and persuading others while being respectful without using aggression. As an entrepreneur, being assertive is a trait that appears to be commonly helpful. Traits such as assertiveness have been already found to influence an entrepreneur's successes (Kaur & Bains, 2013).

Status-seeking can be defined as: "the desire to increase one's rank in the social hierarchy and thereby to gain prestige" (Delhey, Schneickert, Hess, & Apłowski, 2022). There are numerous benefits to being an entrepreneur. People can acquire wealth and power, which are elements that boost a person's contentment when pursuing status (Gatewood et al., 2009). Individuals perceived as high in status are associated with higher competence whereas individuals behaving more cooperative instead of competitive are perceived as warmer (Oldmeadow & Fiske, 2007). The entrepreneurial characteristics commonly linked to entrepreneurship in literature include internal locus of control, self-confidence, need for achievement, tolerance of ambiguity, and innovativeness (Ndofirepi, 2020). Entrepreneurs are known to be self-reliant, self-starters, and confident decision-makers. They have the drive, persistence, and willingness to work hard to accomplish their goals and make their vision a reality (de Sousa et al., 2022).

Risk-taking can be defined as: “any purposive activity that entails novelty or danger sufficient to create anxiety in most people. Risk-taking can be either physical or social.” (Levenson, 1990). It can be associated to the numerous benefits to being an entrepreneur; people can acquire wealth and power, which are elements that boost a person’s contentment when pursuing status (Kozubíková et al., 2017). Risk-taking propensity is one of the most commonly used personality traits in entrepreneurship research, while risk takers develop resilience, adaptability, and problem-solving skills, which are essential for navigating the challenges of entrepreneurship and seizing future opportunities (Ndofirepi, 2020).

In other characteristics mentioned in literature, Burch et al. (2022) investigate how personal characteristics moderate the relationship between startup intent and entrepreneurial education among university students, while Kozubíková et al. (2017) identify the important characteristics of an entrepreneur in relation to risk-taking and analyze the relationship between risk-taking and entrepreneurial performance.

2. Methodology

2.1. Design and Procedure

This study examines teachers’ entrepreneurial characteristics, either in terms of actions and efforts they have already carried out, or in terms of intentions and opinions they have regarding undertaking business initiatives. A mixed method of data collection was applied to conduct the research. Specifically, 75 teachers (in-service, pre-service and graduates of pedagogic departments) filled out a questionnaire containing a combination of items from the Entrepreneurial Intentions Questionnaire, International Personality Item Pool, Human Values Scale, status-seeking, perceived masculinity and the Organizational Collectivism Scale. Furthermore, 8 teachers participated in semi-structured interviews. Theory of Planned Behavior was used as a broad guideline for the interview scheme, suggesting that the intention to form a specific behavior is influenced by three main factors: subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, and attitude towards the behavior.

In the next section 2.2, we continue with content analysis of a certain number of interviews, which provide in-depth understanding of entrepreneurial intentions’ characteristics in teachers. The results from this section will be combined with the results from the statistical analysis section 2.3 and chapter 3, in a triangulation approach to enrich and validate findings from different perspectives.

2.2. Content Analysis

We choose content analysis to our qualitative data. Content analysis is a research tool used to determine the presence of certain words, themes, or concepts within some given qualitative data (i.e. text). Using content analysis, researchers can quantify and analyze the presence, meanings, and relationships of such certain words, themes, or concepts.

Our source of data is from interviews and open-ended questions to 10 teachers from Greece, 6 women and 4 men, aged 30 - 41 years old, from higher and highest levels of education. We coded the text into code categories in order to identify the intentions, focus or communication trends of participants, to complement our quantitative data. There are two general types of content analysis: conceptual analysis and relational analysis. We applied conceptual analysis, which develops the conceptual analysis further by examining the relationships among concepts in a text.

We can divide the interview in five parts. The first part is about initial motivations and attitudes towards entrepreneurship. Four of the participants suggested economic drivers and seven of them choose autonomy, flexibility and innovation.

The second part is about perceived self-efficacy. The categories were about the ease and difficulty in business activity. Two interviewers found ease to start their business because of the low risk, five of them mentioned their social acquaintances as auxiliary factors and three of them recognized their personal good preparation as the main element that helped them to their business. On the other hand, the majority of the interviewers mentioned bureaucracy and extreme competition as the main inhibitors.

The third part is about dealing with the social environment and the social norms that apply in each situation. Eight participants claimed that their social environment had a positive attitude towards starting their business, economically, psychologically and as an advertisement to their wider social environment. As for the second category, the negative attitudes that the participants received from their environment, six of them mentioned as inhibitions the lack of trust, the negative stereotypes, the instability and the extreme criticism which has a connection with bad psychology. Also this part refers to the effect of education on entrepreneurship. The coded categories were two, the negative and the positive effect of education in interviewers' business plan. The vast majority of the participants (7 of them) claimed that their educational background helped them theoretically and practically, and only 3 of them mentioned the lack of practice, the lack of theoretical background and the insufficient funding as the main factors that caused problems to their entrepreneurial intentions.

The fourth part is about perceived self-efficacy and perceived masculinity in entrepreneurship. The coded categories were five: financial management, social communication skills, organization and strategy, innovation, lifelong education and development. Social communication and organization and strategy were the most common traits that the participants mentioned as their advantages. Some of them (3) mentioned the financial management and two of them claimed that they are dignified in innovation, lifelong education and development. It is important to mention that in this part 8 participants claimed that both sexes have the ability to practice the same profession and to become successful entrepreneurs.

The fifth part is about the financial barriers that the participants encountered starting their own business. Six of them mentioned that they received an initial, little support from their close environment and only two of them had no support at all.

2.3. Statistical Analysis

The data obtained with the survey was analyzed by use of excel and IBM SPSS Statistics. A series of descriptive statistics was produced and analysis of correlation with comparison between gender groups. The percentage of the respondents divided by their gender has been calculated in relation to the sum of the sample, in order to produce relative percentages of reference per gender group. In addressing the research hypotheses, independent t-tests were conducted to assess if individuals scoring higher in perceived masculinity, status-seeking, assertiveness, risk-taking or collectivism score higher in entrepreneurial intentions. Finally, a linear regression analysis was conducted to assess whether status-seeking, masculinity, risk-taking, assertiveness, age and gender significantly predicted entrepreneurial intentions.

3. Results of Statistical Analysis

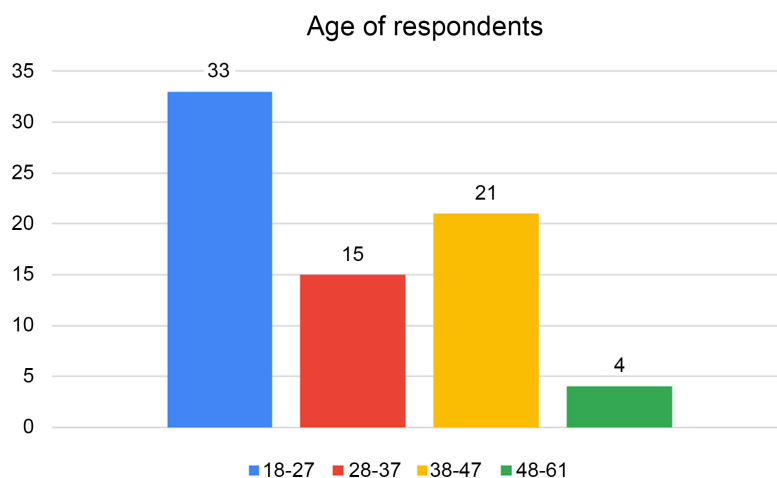
In this chapter, we present the results of the statistical analysis on the questionnaires; descriptive statistics and analysis of correlation with comparison between gender groups.

3.1. Descriptive Statistics

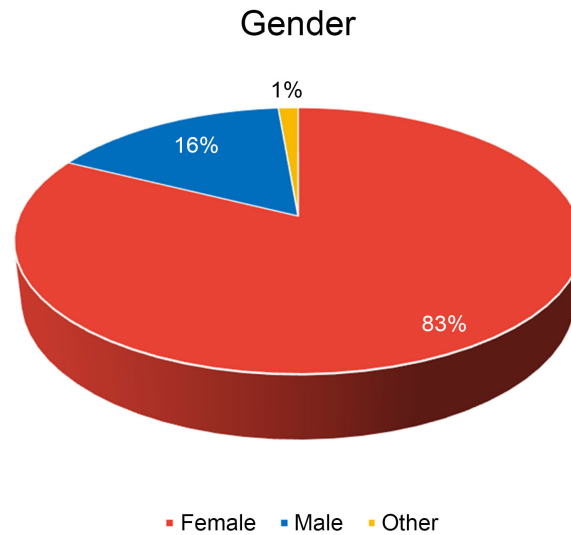
In this section, we present the descriptive statistics of our sample. In **Graph 1**, we present the age distribution of our sample.

In **Graph 2**, we present a pie chart of the gender distribution of the sample.

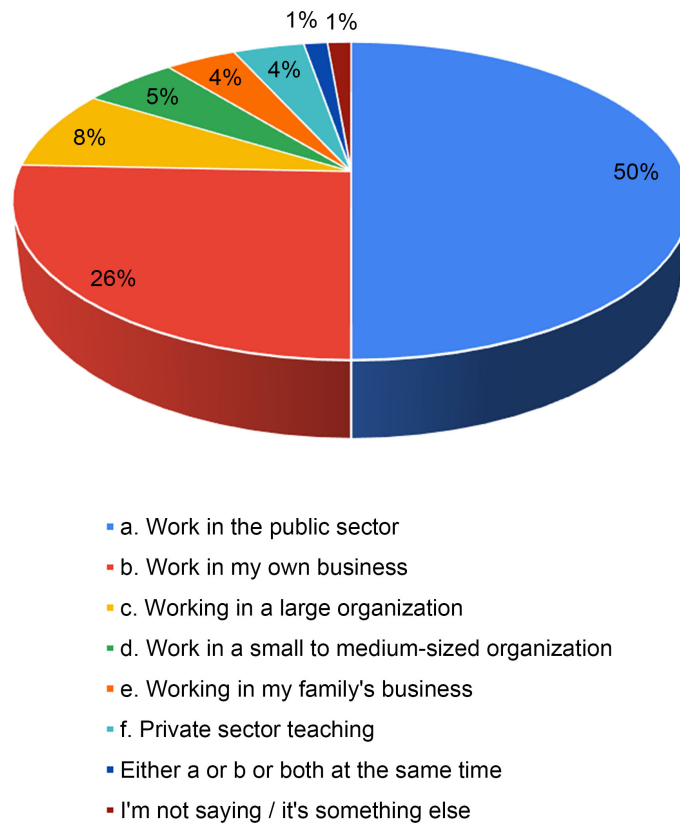
And in **Graph 3**, we see the primary ambition for future employment expressed by the participants.



Graph 1. Age distribution of the sample.



Graph 2. Gender distribution of the sample.



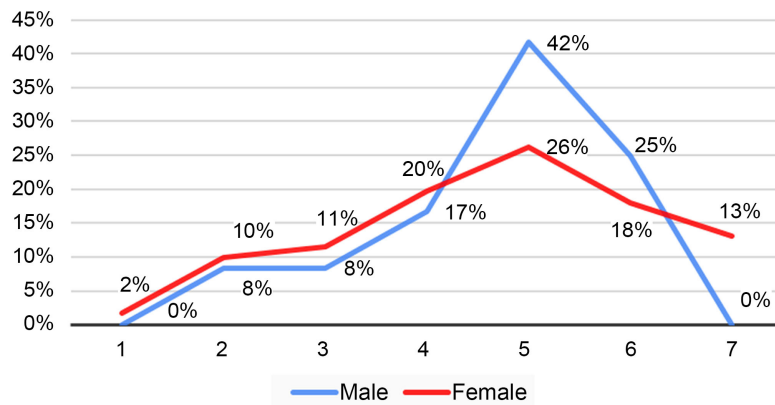
Graph 3. Primary ambition for future employment.

In employment ambition we see a significant majority of respondents expressing a preference for the public sector, given that the private schools are a significant minority in Greece and owning a business for teachers of the public sector is not allowed.

In **Graph 4**, we see the comparative percentages of females and males in the

desire to become entrepreneurs. Both groups present a peak around 5, but with females presenting a higher variance in the distribution.

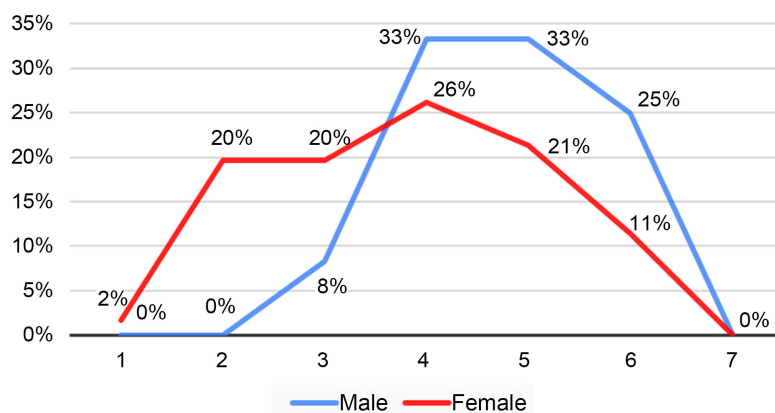
In **Graph 5**, we see the comparative percentages of females and males over their self-confidence on dealing with entrepreneurship. Males present higher confidence on their skills and their potential to succeed.



Average of responses:

- 11. Being an entrepreneur has more advantages than disadvantages for me.
- 12. The career of an entrepreneur is attractive to me.
- 13. If I had the opportunity and the resources, I would like to start a company.
- 14. Being an entrepreneur would bring me great satisfaction.
- 15. Among several options, I would prefer to be an entrepreneur.
- 23. I will make every effort to start and run my own company.
- 24. I am determined to create a company in the future.
- 25. I have thought very seriously about starting a company.

Graph 4. Entrepreneurial intention: aspiration.



Average of responses:

- 16. It would be easy for me to start a company and keep it running.
- 17. I am prepared to start a viable firm.
- 18. I can control the process of creating a new company.
- 19. I know the practical details necessary to start a company.
- 20. I know how to develop an entrepreneurial project.
- 21. If I try to start a company, I would have a high chance of success.
- 22. I am ready to do anything to become an entrepreneur.

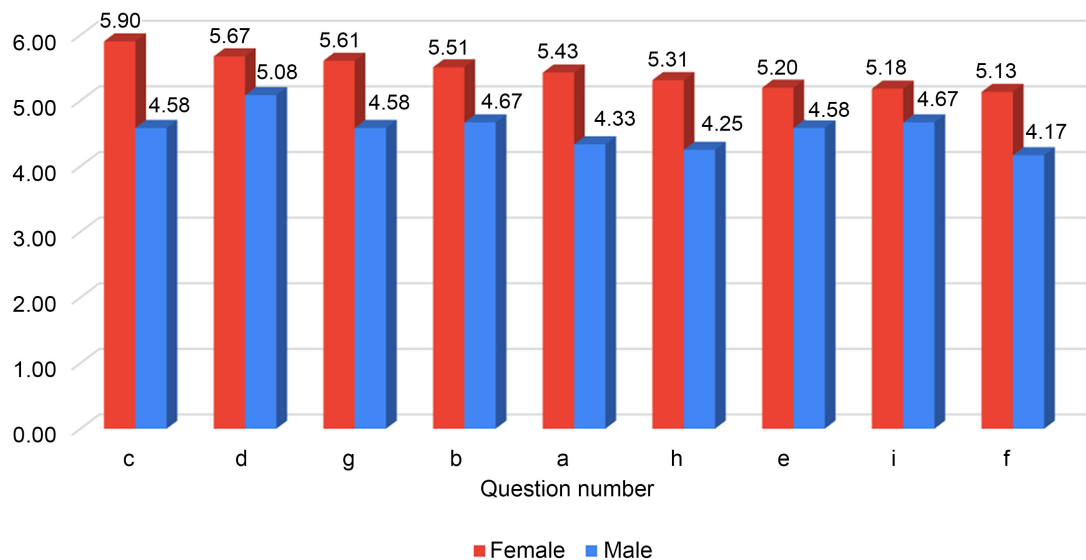
Graph 5. Entrepreneurial intention: self-confidence.

In **Graph 6**, we see the comparative evaluation of barriers to entrepreneurship by females and males, on descending order for females. Both groups recognize significant barriers to entrepreneurship (with mean higher than 4) but with females facing stronger barriers and in different areas.

In **Table 1**, participant's intentions to create a new firm have been calculated following *Konutgan (2022)* by counting up the sum of respondents answering "agree" more than average, i.e. 5 - 7 in the 7-graded Likert scale. Then, the percentage of the respondents divided by their gender has been calculated in relation to the sum of the sample. The difference in the percentages between men and women is also calculated and results are sorted by descending order of this difference. We see that female respondents present higher percentages in entrepreneurial intention, while male respondents present higher percentages in questions of confidence and skills.

3.2. T-Test and Correlation

In **Table 2**, we present independent-samples t-test results, comparing the means between the groups of females and males, in the areas of Assertiveness, Status Seeking, Risk Taking, Entrepreneurial intentions, Collectivism and Perceived Masculinity (average responses of relative questions). We observe some differences but statistically significant only in the responses about status seeking.



Average of responses (descending order for females)

- c. lack of official help to start a business
- d. lack of legal assistance or advice
- g. lack of knowledge
- b. lack of organizations to help entrepreneurs
- a. lack of assistance in assessing business viability
- h. lack of experience in management and accounting
- e. fear of failure
- i. lack of knowledge of the business world in the market
- f. lack of business ability

Graph 6. Probable barriers to entrepreneurship.

Table 1. Participant’s intentions to create a new firm.

0	Total	Agree (5 - 7)	Agree (%)	Female (total 61)	Female agree (%)	Male (total 12)	Male agree (%)	Female > Male
12. The career of an entrepreneur is attractive to me.	74	40	54%	36	59%	4	33%	26%
25. I have thought very seriously about starting a company.	74	34	46%	29	48%	5	42%	6%
11. Being an entrepreneur has more advantages than disadvantages for me.	74	32	43%	27	44%	5	42%	3%
15. Among several options, I would prefer to be an entrepreneur.	74	32	43%	27	44%	5	42%	3%
23. I will make every effort to start and run my own company.	74	30	41%	25	41%	5	42%	-1%
22. I am ready to do anything to become an entrepreneur.	74	22	30%	18	30%	4	33%	-4%
13. If I had the opportunity and the resources, I would like to start a company.	74	52	70%	43	70%	9	75%	-5%
16. It would be easy for me to start a company and keep it running.	74	27	36%	22	36%	5	42%	-6%
14. Being an entrepreneur would bring me great satisfaction.	74	44	59%	36	59%	8	67%	-8%
17. I am ready to start a sustainable company.	74	22	30%	17	28%	5	42%	-14%
21. If I try to start a company, I would have a high chance of success.	74	33	45%	26	43%	7	58%	-16%
24. I am determined to create a company in the future.	74	26	35%	20	33%	6	50%	-17%
18. I can control the process of creating a new company.	74	21	28%	15	25%	6	50%	-25%
19. I know the practical details necessary to start a company.	74	19	26%	13	21%	6	50%	-29%
20. I know how to develop a business plan.	74	23	31%	15	25%	8	67%	-42%

Table 2. t-test results, comparing the means between the groups of females and males.

	Independent Samples Test-Equal Variances Assumed									
	Female			Male			t	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Sig > .05: accepted equal means hypothesis
N	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation					
Assertiveness	61	4.493	.598	12	4.492	.542	.010	.992	.0018	equal
StatusSeeking	61	4.689	1.457	12	3.750	1.621	2.004	.049	.9385	different
RiskTaking	61	3.785	.729	12	4.067	.711	-1.226	.224	-.2814	equal
Entrepreneurial intentions	61	3.895	1.395	12	4.267	.895	-.885	.379	-.3716	equal
Collectivism	61	3.825	1.001	12	3.625	1.316	.598	.552	.1996	equal
Perceived Masculinity	61	2.634	1.135	12	2.858	1.378	-.603	.548	-.2239	equal

In **Table 3**, we have a table of Pearson correlations between main areas of response. Two stars point to 99% level of significance and one star to 95% level of significance. The 99% significance correlation categories are reported in an adjacent table below.

In **Table 4**, we get the results of linear correlation with Entrepreneurial intentions as the independent variable, the only statistically significant coefficients are those of Assertiveness and Risk-taking.

Table 3. Pearson correlations between main areas of response.

		Pearson Correlation						
		Assertiveness	Status Seeking	Risk Taking	Entrepreneurial intentions	Collectivism	Perceived Masculinity	Gender
	Assertiveness	1						
	StatusSeeking	.226	1					
	RiskTaking	.365**	.216	1				
	Entrepreneurial intentions	.418**	.269*	.388**	1			
	Collectivism	.179	.312**	.341**	.193	1		
	Perceived Masculinity	.056	.274*	.194	-.050	.522**	1	
	Gender	-.040	-.221	.130	-.030	-.078	.033	1
.522	Perceived Masculinity	Collectivism						
.418	Entrepreneurial intentions	Assertiveness						
.388	Entrepreneurial intentions	RiskTaking						
.365	RiskTaking	Assertiveness						
.341	Collectivism	RiskTaking						
.312	Collectivism	StatusSeeking						

**Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed). *Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed). Secondary table of .01 level significance.

Table 4. Linear correlation results.

		Coefficients ^a				
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	-1.416	1.243		-1.139	.259
	Assertiveness	.647	.261	.278	2.482	.016**
	StatusSeeking	.160	.103	.177	1.550	.126
1	RiskTaking	.470	.222	.251	2.119	.038**
	Collectivism	.156	.166	.120	.934	.353
	PerceivedMasculinity	-.262	.143	-.225	-1.837	.071
	GenderNum	.015	.343	.005	.043	.966

Dependent Variable: Entrepreneurial intentions. **Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

4. Conclusion

The results showed a strong interest among teachers in entrepreneurship, with several of those surveyed having tried their hand at it. However, due to the country's legal framework, government employment is still the only way of employment for most of them. Concluding it can be stated that status-seeking and risk-taking do have an influence on an individual's decision to realize entrepreneurial intentions.

The measurement constructs in this study are one of its strongest points; they were quite valid and reliable. One further advantage is the fresh perspective on the question of whether perceived masculinity influences the inclination to start a business. Future research should take into account and solve the various limitations identified in this study. A potential constraint of the study is the fact that the results are based on a uniform sample of University of Crete students. Additional diverse samples could be utilized to determine whether results are comparable and noteworthy.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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