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# The role of SME entrepreneurs' innovativeness and personality in the adoption of innovations

Alberto Marcati <sup>a</sup> ... Alessandro M. Peluso <sup>b</sup>

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## Abstract

Entrepreneurs' *innovativeness* and *personality* play a key role in the adoption of innovations in Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs). Following two complementary approaches, this study conceptualizes *innovativeness* at two levels of abstraction: *general innovativeness* (GI), that is, the degree of openness to newness; and *specific innovativeness* (SI), that is, the predisposition to be among the firsts to adopt innovations in a specific domain. This study measures GI and SI on a sample of SME entrepreneurs by using two different scales that are based on inventories extensively used in this field (i.e., the KAI [Kirton, J.M., 1976. Adaptors and innovators: a description and measure. *Journal of Applied Psychology* 61 (5), 622–629; Kirton, J.M., 2003. *Adaptation—Innovation in the Context of Diversity and Change*. Routledge, London] and DSI [Goldsmith, R.F., Hofacker, C.F., 1991. *Measuring consumer*

...and SI [Goldsmith, R.L., Holbeck, C.F., 1971. Measuring consumer innovativeness. Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science 19 (3), 209–222] inventories) and tests their effects on the entrepreneurs'™ intention to adopt innovations. Secondly, this study relates entrepreneurs'™ *innovativeness* (both GI and SI) to their basic *personality traits* as assessed through the Five-Factor Model of human personality (cf. [Digman, J.M., 1990. Personality structure: emergence of the five-factor model. Annual Review of Psychology 41 (1), 417–440; McCrae, R.R., John, O.P., 1992. An introduction to the five-factor model and its implications. Journal of Personality 60 (2), 1–26]). Finally, it compares the predictive power of both GI and SI on the entrepreneurs'™ intention to adopt innovations against that of a cognitive model that represents the framework of reference in this field (i.e., the *Theory of Planned Behavior* [Ajzen, I., 1991. The theory of planned behavior. Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes 50 (2), 179–211]). Results suggest a number of implications for entrepreneurs, managers, and policy makers.



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## Keywords

Entrepreneurship; Innovativeness; Innovation adoption; Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises

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