

New research shows ‘hyperactives’ are more likely to become entrepreneurs

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New research from Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University (RSM) finds that those diagnosed with hyperactivity, one of the main symptoms of ADHD - Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder - are more likely to be an entrepreneur.

Too often hyperactivity is associated with low job performance and a greater chance of becoming unemployed rather than offering the potential to become successful business people.

Surveys of more than 20,000 in Sweden and the Netherlands came to the overwhelming conclusion that those living with this behaviour are more likely to start their own company. The figures also showed that a low percentage reported to be previously unemployed before becoming an entrepreneur.

The report suggests that becoming an entrepreneur can be a positive career move for those with hyperactivity, fitting their specific talents and harness their highly re-active minds. The high energy levels associated with this trait can support those taking the initiative, being risk averse and running a business.

The study was not a clinical diagnosis of hyperactivity, but instead looked at behavioural tendencies, suggesting that healthy individuals also experience such symptoms to some extent. Therefore, it included respondents reporting no or low levels of symptoms.

Ingrid Verheul of Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University (RSM) and a team of colleagues set out to confirm through empirical research that hyperactivity is a catalyst to being an entrepreneur.

She said: “This research could have a significant effect to destigmatise hyperactivity or ADHD because it demonstrates that they have the potential to turn their hand to entrepreneurship. I can imagine that it may help young people to consider this career move as an alternative to wage-employment in which they often experience problems. Obviously, there is also a role for educators and parents here to point out the possibilities.”

Verheul added: “Statistics shows that in the USA there’s been a 43 per cent growth in young people with ADHD and that in the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy and Brazil there has also been a substantial rise.

“Coupled with our research this leads to the expectation that many more ‘hyperactive’ entrepreneurs could be on the horizon. That is, providing they are made aware of the potential fit with self-employment, and are guided to take entrepreneurial action.”

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