

The Intangible Capital of Serial Entrepreneurs

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October 2016

Background

Deep interest in serial entrepreneurs

- Belief the entrepreneurship can be learned:
 - Business schools
 - Theory and empirical evidence (Lazear, 2005)
 - Entrepreneurs learn from family history (Fairlie and Robb, 2007)

Belief that managers matter:

- CEOs choice determines outcome of firms
- Bosses determine outcomes of workers

Empirical Framework

Hypothesis 1: Serial entrepreneurs are higher “quality” for reasons that are either observable or unobservable.

Hypothesis 2: Serial entrepreneurs learn from their first business, so that their second business starts at a higher scale or higher productivity level.

Hypothesis 3: Serial entrepreneurs learn how to learn from their first business, so that their second business can scale up or grow faster than other businesses.

DATA AND BACKGROUND STATISTICS



Danish Data on Entrepreneurs' Firms

- “Entrepreneurs” are founders of New Enterprises from 2001-2013.
 - Entrepreneurial firms must have at least .5 employees and some minimal sales.
 - Background on entrepreneur: education, age, experience, gender, marital status.
- “Sales” are monthly sales on VAT firms.
- “Employment, capital, education of workforce” are annual and interpolated to monthly.
 - After 2008, employment is monthly.

→ There are 216,524 firms with 191,053 founders.

This sample drops to 139,100 firms after requiring data for all control variables

→ Given month-firm observations, there are 1.38 million observations in regressions

Types of Entrepreneurs and Entrepreneurial Firms

(Table 1a)

	# of firms per entrepreneur	# of entrepreneurs	Percent	Cumulative	# of firms	Percent	Cumulative
Novice Entrepreneurs							
	1	171,667	89.85	89.85	171,667	79.28	79.28
Serial Entrepreneurs	2	15,607	8.17	98.02	31,214	14.42	93.70
	3	2,630	1.38	99.40	7,890	3.64	97.34
	4	703	0.37	99.77	2,812	1.30	98.64
	5	229	0.12	99.89	1,145	0.53	99.17
	6	94	0.05	99.94	564	0.26	99.43
	7	43	0.02	99.96	301	0.14	99.57
	8	26	0.01	99.97	208	0.10	99.67
	9	14	0.01	99.98	126	0.06	99.72
	10	9	0.00	99.98	90	0.04	99.77
	11	5	0.00	99.99	55	0.03	99.79
	12	5	0.00	99.99	60	0.03	99.82
	13	6	0.00	99.99	78	0.04	99.85
	14	3	0.00	99.99	42	0.02	99.87
	>15	12	0.02	100.00	272	0.13	100.00
All	Total	191,053	100.00		216,524	100.00	

- ➔ 10% of entrepreneurs are serial
- ➔ 20% of firms are opened by them

Characteristics of Entrepreneurial Firms, Across Types of Entrepreneur (Table 2b)

		Serial entrepreneurs – second experience		Serial entrepreneurs – first experience		Novice entrepreneurs	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
All firms	Total	23,298	100.0	21,559	100.0	171,667	100.0
Firm type	Sole proprietorship	2,980	12.8	8,293	38.5	126,626	73.8
	Stock-based corporation	1,271	5.5	1,227	5.7	3,286	1.9
	Limited liability company	18,958	81.4	12,006	55.7	41,664	24.3
	Other	89	0.4	33	0.2	91	0.1
Sectors	Manufacturing	1,170	5.0	1,097	5.1	7,545	4.4
	Service	10,490	45.0	9,440	43.8	85,184	49.6
	High Tech Knowledge intensive service	2,346	10.1	2,006	9.3	12,452	7.3
	Retail	5,433	23.3	5,268	24.4	39,994	23.3
	Construction	2,682	11.5	2,734	12.7	21,843	12.7
	Other	1,177	5.1	1,014	4.7	4,649	2.7

In sum, What kind of firms do they found?

The “novice” firms are:

- Run as sole proprietorships (74%)
- In the service (50%) and retail (23%) and construction (13%) sectors.
- Run only one establishment.

The “serial” firms are different as:

- Run as limited liability corporations (57% first firms, 81% second firms).
- Same industries
- “First” firms may have more than one establishment by 2013.

Who are they?

Who is a “novice” entrepreneur?

- They are not very well educated (39% vocational; 23% college); they are men (69%); they are 39 years old; and half are married.

Who is a “serial” entrepreneur?

- Mostly men (86%). Otherwise, the same personal characteristics as the novice.

REGRESSIONS COMPARING NOVICE TO SERIAL ENTREPRENEURS

Comparing Novice and Serial Entrepreneurs

Making use of the panel data on people and firms, the performance equation to be estimated is:

$$\log Y_{ijt} = \beta_1 + \beta_{21} \text{Serial}_{it}^{\text{first}} + \beta_{22} \text{Serial}_{it}^{\text{second}} + \beta_3 t + \beta_{41} \text{Serial}_{it}^{\text{first}} \times t + \beta_{42} \text{Serial}_{it}^{\text{second}} \times t + \Gamma X_{ijt} + \varepsilon_{ijt} \quad (1)$$

- Y_{ijt} is the monthly log sales or log productivity or log employment for person i for business j at time t .
- $\text{Serial}_{it}^{\text{first}}$ is a dummy equal to 1 during the panel data that serial entrepreneur is operating his first business
- $\text{Serial}_{it}^{\text{second}}$ is equal to 1 during the panel data that he is operating his second business
- t is the number of months since the business was founded
- X are controls

Sales, Labor Productivity and Employment of Novice and Serial Entrepreneurs – Full Sample (Table 4, industry controls)

	Log(sales)	Log(employment)	Log(labor productivity)
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Serial E Firm 2	0.903***	-0.049***	0.951***
	(0.012)	(0.010)	(0.012)
Serial E Firm 1	0.665***	0.074***	0.590***
	(0.012)	(0.008)	(0.010)
R-squared	0.063	0.018	0.069
Number of observations	1381075	1381075	1381075
Months	≤12	≤12	≤12
Number of Serial E Firm 2	11,359	11,359	11,359
Number of Serial E Firm 1	14,458	14,458	14,458
Number of Novice E	113,283	113,283	113,283

In sum, Comparing Novice and Serial Entrepreneurs

Simple differences in means are in **Table 4**, with controls for 88 industries and month/year:

- Sales are 67% higher in the Serial Firm 1 than the Novice.
- Sales are 90% higher in Serial Firm 2 than Novice.
- Employment doesn't differ between firm types, so productivity differences are the same as sales differences.

Sales Rise When Learning Occurs in the First Four Months

Figure 1: Non-parametric Estimation of Learning Effects for Serial Entrepreneurs (Equation 1, Table 5, column 2)

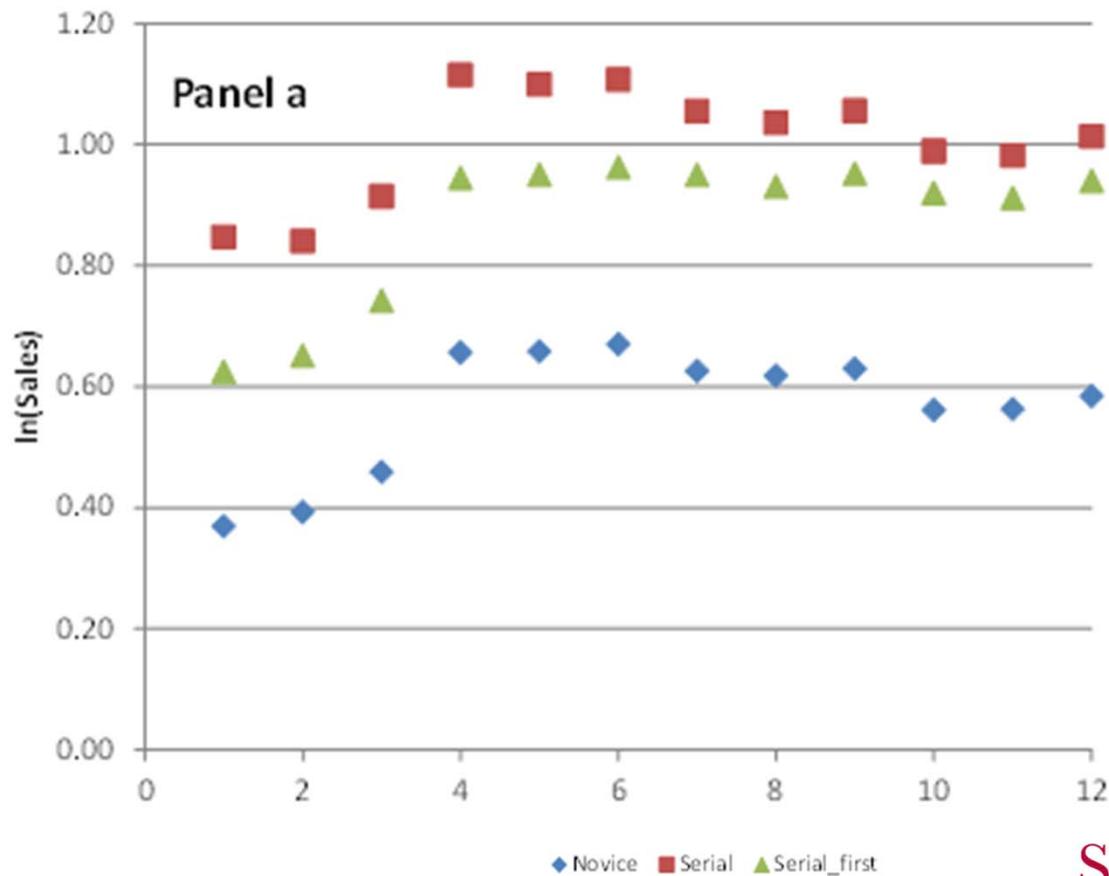


Table 5: Sales of Novice and Serial Entrepreneurs

	Log(Sales)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
	OLS	OLS	FE
Serial E Firm 2	0.973*** (0.017)	0.477*** (0.015)	
Serial E Firm 1	0.587*** (0.016)	0.258*** (0.013)	
Months experience	0.045*** (0.000)	0.013*** (0.000)	0.036*** (0.000)
Months exp. of SE Firm 2	-0.011*** (0.002)	-0.006*** (0.002)	-0.014*** (0.001)
Months exp. of SE Firm 1	0.009*** (0.001)	0.008*** (0.001)	0.012*** (0.001)
Capital intensity		0.468*** (0.003)	0.147*** (0.004)
Employment		0.714*** (0.004)	0.322*** (0.006)
Workforce education		-0.041*** (0.002)	-0.021*** (0.007)
Married		0.079*** (0.005)	
Years of Schooling		0.037*** (0.002)	
Male		0.129*** (0.006)	
Experience		0.002*** (0.000)	
Age		-0.001*** (0.000)	
Immigrant		-0.014* (0.008)	
Descendant		0.048*** (0.017)	
R-squared	0.075	0.441	0.085
Number of observations	1381075	1381075	1381075

Comparing Novice and Serial Entrepreneurs – Adding Control Variables in Sales Regression

Why are serial entrepreneurs performing at higher levels than novices? (Table 5)

1. What causes the serial entrepreneur to do better on the first day?
 - More capital and labor (but not a different workforce quality)
 - They are more likely to be married.
2. Is either group learning on the job? (over time within the first year)
 - Novices are: sales go up 4.5% a month in the first year (“Months Experience” column 1), and serial entrepreneurs learn the same rate
 - True learning curve must add firm fixed effects (column 3). Sales go up 3.6% a month for novices, and are little changed for serial. Sales are also rising because capital and labor are increasing (but we can’t rely on their monthly pattern).

→ Serial Entrepreneurs start with 59% higher sales than novices, but half of that is due to their decision to start firms with more K and L (and they are men).

Table 6: Performance By Type of Entrepreneur

(Regressions comparable to Table 5, columns 1, 4, 6, having controls for industry, month/year)

	Log(Sales)	Log(employment)	Log(labor productivity)
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Serial E Firm 2, "sequential E"	0.626*** (0.040)	-0.256*** (0.031)	0.882*** (0.048)
Serial E Firm 2, "portfolio E"	1.044*** (0.018)	-0.219*** (0.016)	1.263*** (0.021)
Serial E Firm 1, "sequential E"	0.451*** (0.032)	-0.088*** (0.020)	0.539*** (0.033)
Serial E Firm 1, "portfolio E"	0.635*** (0.018)	-0.020* (0.012)	0.655*** (0.018)
Months experience	0.045*** (0.000)	0.016*** (0.000)	0.029*** (0.000)
Months exp. Serial E Firm 2, "sequential"	0.007* (0.004)	0.018*** (0.003)	-0.011** (0.005)
Months exp. Serial E Firm 2, "portfolio"	-0.015*** (0.002)	0.026*** (0.001)	-0.041*** (0.002)
Months exp. Serial E Firm 1, "sequential"	-0.004 (0.003)	0.013*** (0.002)	-0.017*** (0.003)
Months exp. Serial E Firm 1, "portfolio"	0.013*** (0.002)	0.016*** (0.001)	-0.003* (0.002)

→ "Portfolio" entrepreneurs have 63% greater sales than novices; "sequential" entrepreneurs have 45% greater sales.

REGRESSIONS COMPARING FIRMS OPENED ONLY BY SERIAL ENTREPRENEURS

Following Serial Entrepreneurs

(Dropping Novice Entrepreneurs)

The sample size falls, and now the coefficients on the X variables are estimated only off the serial entrepreneur data:

$$\log Y_{ijt} = \delta_1 + \delta_{21} \text{Serial}_{it}^{\text{second}} + \delta_3 t + \delta_{41} \text{Serial}_{it}^{\text{second}} \times t + \Gamma X_{ijt} + \varepsilon_{ijt}$$

(3)

The base case for the intercept and time effects are the serial entrepreneur's first firm, so the test of Hypothesis 2 is that $\delta_{21} > 0$ and the test of Hypothesis 3 is that $\delta_{41} > 0$.

Table 7: Sales of Serial Entrepreneurs – Second and First Firm

	Log(Sales)			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	OLS	OLS	Person-FE	Person-FE
Serial E Firm 2	0.539*** (0.036)	0.329*** (0.030)	0.504*** (0.041)	0.385*** (0.035)
Months exp. of SE Firm 2	-0.022*** (0.003)	-0.019*** (0.003)	-0.021*** (0.003)	-0.023*** (0.003)
Months experience	0.052*** (0.003)	0.023*** (0.002)	0.055*** (0.002)	-0.012*** (0.004)
Capital intensity		0.407*** (0.009)		0.373*** (0.010)
Employment		0.675*** (0.010)		0.573*** (0.013)
Workforce education		-0.028*** (0.006)		-0.046*** (0.009)
Married		0.086*** (0.017)		0.133*** (0.036)
Male		0.113*** (0.027)		0.000 (.)
Experience		-0.000 (0.000)		-0.000*** (0.000)
Age		0.001 (0.001)		-0.377*** (0.042)
Immigrant		-0.016 (0.034)		-1.511 (1.146)
Descendant		-0.034 (0.068)		-1.341 (1.138)
Years of Schooling		0.025*** (0.005)		0.110*** (0.023)
R-squared	0.055	0.418	0.550	0.663
Number of observations	109324	109324	109324	109324
Months	≤12	≤12	≤12	≤12
Number of Serial E	6843	6843	6842	6843

Sales of Serial Entrepreneurs – Second and First Firm

Following the same serial entrepreneurs over time, as they open their first and then their second firm:

1. There is a 54% increase in sales – they open bigger second firms on day one.
2. About half of the increase in firm size is because they open second firms with more capital and labor (col 2).
3. Adding person fixed effects (column 3) the results are the same (column 1).
4. After controlling for K, L, the gain in sales is 39% (column 4)
→ suggesting that there is some intangible capital obtained in the first firm that is utilized when opening a second firm with higher sales.

Who Learns the Most?

Table 8: Age • (Serial Firm 2) Interactions among Serial Entrepreneurs

	Log(Sales)				Log(labor productivity)		
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
	OLS	OLS	Person-FE	Person-FE	OLS	OLS	Person-FE
Serial E Firm 2	0.822*** (0.072)	0.955*** (0.069)	1.533*** (0.087)	0.871*** (0.072)	0.973*** (0.073)	0.844*** (0.074)	0.778*** (0.077)
Serial E Firm 2 * Age	-0.007*** (0.002)	-0.017*** (0.002)	-0.028*** (0.002)	-0.013*** (0.002)	-0.007*** (0.002)	-0.013*** (0.002)	-0.009*** (0.002)
Months exp. of SE Firm 2	-0.022*** (0.003)	-0.019*** (0.003)	-0.022*** (0.003)	-0.023*** (0.003)	-0.036*** (0.004)	-0.021*** (0.003)	-0.027*** (0.003)
Months experience	0.052*** (0.003)	0.023*** (0.002)	0.053*** (0.002)	-0.011*** (0.004)	0.018*** (0.003)	0.010*** (0.002)	-0.045*** (0.005)
Capital intensity		0.403*** (0.009)		0.367*** (0.010)		0.484*** (0.010)	0.491*** (0.013)
Employment		0.670*** (0.010)		0.567*** (0.013)			
Workforce education		-0.028*** (0.006)		-0.046*** (0.009)		-0.003 (0.006)	-0.017* (0.009)
Married		0.075*** (0.017)		0.087** (0.037)		0.048*** (0.018)	0.081** (0.038)
Male		0.116*** (0.027)		0.000 (.)		0.115*** (0.028)	0.000 (.)
Experience		-0.000 (0.000)		-0.000*** (0.000)		0.000 (0.000)	-0.000*** (0.000)
Age		0.010*** (0.001)		-0.363*** (0.042)		0.005*** (0.001)	-0.509*** (0.049)
Years of Schooling		0.024*** (0.005)		0.082*** (0.023)		0.012** (0.005)	0.045* (0.024)
R-squared	0.056	0.421	0.559	0.665	0.066	0.362	0.620
Number of observations	109324	109324	109324	109324	109324	109324	109324
Months	≤12	≤12	≤12	≤12	≤12	≤12	≤12
Number of Serial E	6843	6843	6842	6843	6843	6843	6843

- ➔ Age 25 gains 55% in sales; Age 40 gains 35% (col 4)
- ➔ The older entrepreneur opens a bigger first business

Summary

- The serial entrepreneur has 57% greater sales the day he opens his first firm, compared to the novice:
 - Half is due to greater capital and the higher performance by men (and married men).
 - Those serial entrepreneurs who hold a portfolio of firms operate larger firms.
 - The sales of the serial entrepreneur jump up by 50% on first day he opens his second firm relative to his first firm.
 - Some of this increase is due to the greater capital in the second firm.
 - Younger serial entrepreneurs learn more than older ones.
- The serial entrepreneur is said to be building **intangible capital** because the greater size of the second firm cannot be explained by its physical capital or human capital.

Appendix Table A1: Interpolated and Observed Monthly Employment

	Interpolated employment	Observed employment
	Log(employment)	Log(employment)
	(1)	(2)
Serial E Firm 2	-0.142***	-0.112***
	(0.039)	(0.032)
Serial E Firm 1	0.033	0.093*
	(0.060)	(0.050)
Months experience	0.048***	0.012***
	(0.002)	(0.002)
Months exp. of SE Firm 2	0.006*	0.009***
	(0.003)	(0.003)
Months exp. of SE Firm 1	0.013***	0.011**
	(0.005)	(0.005)

Extra

EXTRA DATA AND BACKGROUND STATISTICS



Characteristics of Entrepreneurs; Across Types of Entrepreneur (Table 2a)

		Serial entrepreneurs - second experience		Serial entrepreneurs - first experience		Novice entrepreneurs		
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Cum
Persons	Total	19386	100.00	17083	100.00	171,667	100.00	100.00
Education of entrepreneur	Elementary	2,872	14.8	2,686	15.7	34,089	19.9	19.9
	High-School	1,888	9.7	1,767	10.3	14,303	8.3	28.2
	Vocational	7,703	39.7	6,831	40.0	66,741	38.9	67.1
	2 year college	1,478	7.6	1,204	7.0	9,333	5.4	72.5
	4 year college	2,673	13.8	2,243	13.1	22,008	12.8	85.3
	University	2,402	12.4	1,873	11.0	17,152	10.0	95.3
	Unknown	370	1.9	479	2.8	8,041	4.7	100.0
Marital Status	Married	11,567	59.7	8,921	52.2	88,364	51.5	51.5
	Single	5,597	28.9	6,465	37.8	61,764	36.0	87.5
	Other	2130	11.0	1,470	8.6	18,276	10.7	98.1
	Unknown	92	0.5	227	1.3	3,263	1.9	100.0
Gender	Man	16,704	86.2	14,618	85.6	117,885	68.7	68.7
	Woman	2,585	13.3	2,242	13.1	50,905	29.7	98.3
	Unknown	97	0.5	223	1.3	2,877	1.7	100.0



Characteristics of Entrepreneurial Firms and Entrepreneur; Across Types of Entrepreneur (Average for First 12 Months)

(Table 3)

Variable	Serial entrepreneur – second experience		Serial entrepreneur – first experience		Novice entrepreneur	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Firm Characteristics						
Sales	247.9	1,684.5	286.8	4,490.9	107.0	868.0
Employment	1.682	3.19	2.001	8.91	1.358	8.495
Labor productivity	392.0	5,546	270.8	3,930.6	115.2	1,770.5
Capital Stock	1,462.9	18,571	1,387.9	19,326	422.7	6,054.1
Capital intensity	3,544.4	409,007	1,686.1	77,351	603.2	11,663.0
Average years of schooling for employees						
Average years of schooling for employees	12.4	2.33	12.3	2.32	12.3	2.52
Entrepreneur Characteristics						
Married	0.590	0.49	0.521	0.50	0.527	0.50
Male	0.867	0.34	0.883	0.32	0.747	0.43
Experience	13.99	8.99	12.13	8.33	13.13	9.59
Age	40.38	9.67	36.61	9.30	38.78	11.00
Years of Schooling	13.746	2.52	13.64	2.53	13.34	2.67



How do their firms fare?

The “novice” firms compared to “serial first:”

- Sales almost three times as big for serial
- Capital stock three times as big for serial
- Employees goes from 1.4 to 2

Estimating Performance Over Time

Introduce a firm fixed effect to control for ability (in estimating the within-firm learning curve):

$$\begin{aligned} \log Y_{ijt} = & \lambda_j + \beta_3 t + \beta_{41} \text{Serial}_{it}^{\text{first}} \times t \\ & + \beta_{42} \text{Serial}_{it}^{\text{second}} \times t + \Gamma X_{ijt} + \varepsilon_{ijt} \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

where the firm fixed effect is λ_j .

But obvious drawback is that we no longer know the average difference between serial entrepreneurs and novices,

$$\beta_{21} \text{Serial}_{it}^{\text{first}} + \beta_{22} \text{Serial}_{it}^{\text{second}}.$$

REGRESSIONS COMPARING FIRMS OPENED ONLY BY SERIAL ENTREPRENEURS

Serial Entrepreneurs with Person Fixed Effects

Add a person fixed effect to (3) to estimate:

$$\log Y_{ijt} = \eta_i + \delta_{21} \text{Serial}_{it}^{\text{second}} + \delta_3 t + \delta_{41} \text{Serial}_{it}^{\text{second}} \times t + \Gamma X_{ijt} + \varepsilon_{ijt} \quad (3')$$

with η_i being time-invariant talent of serial entrepreneur i .