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Entrepreneurial attitudes of Andalusian university students

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Entrepreneurial attitudes of Andalusian university students

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1. Introduction: the entrepreneur as a development agent

Economic development of a territory could be understood as the process of growth in average production per capita, maintained in the long term. In this sense, it is the consequence of the introduction by enterprises of -mainly technical and organizational- innovations that allow productivity increases. These, in turn, help improve the retribution of factors used in the production process. In order to try to achieve a higher development level, it is necessary, therefore, to pay careful attention to change processes generated by innovations in enterprises.

Economic growth and structural change are the requirements for development. These processes, in turn, depend on the implementation of new ways of organization, administration and production, both on old products and on new goods and services, destined to old or new markets. Is the invisible hand of the market deciding what changes take place? and in what moments? Surely no, the responsibility for these decisions falls on the entrepreneur.

The entrepreneur is the main responsible for economic development, as it is understood nowadays. Most authoritative conceptions about the entrepreneur's figure (Knight, 1921; Shumpeter, 1934; Kirzner, 1998) stress his/her promoter role in the economy, above and beyond those other more extended roles as manager and property owner. This economic function of entrepreneurs allows us to highlight their important part as development agents. According to it, entrepreneurs are responsible for the promotion of enterprises and businesses; they infuse dynamism in economic activity within their territory;

manage organizational and technical change; and also promote the innovation and learning culture on that environment.

Territories with higher increases on entrepreneurial initiative indexes tend to show a greater fall in unemployment levels (Audretsch, 2002). However, the entrepreneurial resource is scarce. In 2001, less than 10 percent of the OECD adult population was starting a new venture (Nolan, 2003). Therefore, a considerable agreement exists about the importance of promoting entrepreneurship to stimulate economic development and employment.

Entrepreneurship is an attitude that reflects an individual's motivation and capacity to identify an opportunity and to pursue it, in order to produce new value or economic success (European Commission, 2003, p. 5). This attitude is crucial for competitiveness, because new entrepreneurial initiatives raise the territory's productivity -increasing competitive pressure- and encourage innovation.

Sometimes, high unemployment indexes have stimulated entrepreneurial creation in activities that are new within that territory, allowing a new venture creation path in a town or region. This was the case during the eighties and nineties at some Andalusian towns, like Mancha Real (Rodríguez-Cohard, 2004). Other times, the stimulus came from large enterprises that have favoured the emergence of local production systems, as the case of Valeo in Martos (Rodríguez-Cohard, 2004). Whether this situation has been the consequence of high unemployment rates -over 20 percent in the eighties- or derives from the large enterprise strategy of productive flexibilization, the result has been an increase in start-ups in these towns.

However, Andalusia is far from enjoying a leading economic situation in Europe, neither has it got a high level of firm creation rates. Besides, other research has verified that in regions with lower development levels, as Andalusia, there is usually less entrepreneurial activity (Westall et al., 2000), although it needs not be always the case (Nolan, 2003). Therefore, one of the most important challenges for the European Union at present would be identifying the key factors that facilitate enterprise creation (European Commission, 2003, p. 9).

If the entrepreneur is a development agent, as it seems, is the Andalusian situation of relative backwardness a consequence of the low propensity of their people to be entrepreneurs? Is there in that region an image of the entrepreneur faced to a hostile environment? The answers are to be looked for in an institutional interpretation of economic development. As Rodríguez-Pose (1998) affirms, some territories create institutions that favour economic development, while those built by others limit it. Perhaps the Andalusian people's attitudes -as an economic institution- do not favour firm creation and economic development.

This is the question to be analysed in this paper. To do so, a strategic segment of individuals with high entrepreneurial potential has been selected: those between 25 and 34 years of age (De Castro et al., 2001) with university studies. This group seems to gather some especially favourable characteristics towards the creation of enterprises (Liñán, 2004). Thus, our main objective centres in analysing the entrepreneurial attitudes of Andalusian university students, a community that would probably show one of the greatest levels of entrepreneurial potential in that region.

This paper has been structured in six parts. After this introduction, the second section presents the entrepreneurial intention model applied in the study. The Andalusian economic and entrepreneurial situation is summarised in section three. The fourth part describes the empirical study, while the fifth one analyses the results obtained. Finally, the paper ends with some conclusions about the empirical work and its implications, especially regarding entrepreneurship in relatively backward regions.

2. Entrepreneurial intention model

Once the importance of the entrepreneurial agent in economic development processes has been established, we now focus into the decision to become an entrepreneur. In this respect, the methodology used has been changing along the years. Thus, many authors began looking for the existence of certain personality features or traits that could be associated with the entrepreneurial activity (McClelland, 1961). Later on, other works have been carried out pointing to the importance of different characteristics such as age, sex, origin, religion, level of studies, labour experience, etc. (Reynolds et al., 1994; Storey, 1994). These are usually called "demographic" variables (Robinson et al., 1991). Both lines

of analysis have allowed the identification of significant relationships among certain traits or demographic characteristics of the person, and the fulfilment of entrepreneurial behaviours. However, the predictive capacity has been very limited (Reynolds, 1997). On the theoretical side, many authors have criticized those approaches (Ajzen, 1991; Shapero and Sokol, 1982; Gartner, 1989; Santos, 2001; Veciana et al., 2000), so much for their methodological and conceptual problems as for their low explanatory capacity.

From a third perspective, since the decision to become an entrepreneur may be plausibly considered as voluntary and conscious (Krueger et al., 2000), it seems reasonable to analyze how that decision is taken. In this sense, an especially interesting line centres on the entrepreneurial intention as a previous and determinant element to perform entrepreneurial behaviours. In turn, the intention of carrying out a given behaviour will depend on the person's attitudes toward that behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). A more favourable attitude would make more feasible the intention of carrying it out, and the other way round. In this sense, this “attitude approach” would be preferable to those used traditionally in the analysis of the entrepreneur -as the trait or the demographic approaches- (Robinson et al., 1991; Krueger et al., 2000). Thus, the attitude is defined as the extent to which an individual values positively or negatively something. Attitudes are relatively stable, but they change with time and with situation. These changes take place through processes of interaction with the environment. The rhythm of variation of a certain attitude will be different depending on how basic it is for the individual's identity, and also according to the intensity of his/her live experiences (Ajzen, 2001).

In this paper, two contributions will be specially considered as a reference, due to their influence on other recent works. In the first place, Shapero and Sokol (1982)'s theory of the “entrepreneurial event” and, secondly, the much more highly structured theory of “planned behaviour” (Ajzen, 1991). Both models present a high level of mutual compatibility (Krueger et al., 2000). Therefore, our work is based on an integration of both.

The theory of the entrepreneurial event starts from the idea that the creation of enterprises is the result of the interaction among contextual factors, which would act through their influence on the individual's perceptions. The consideration of the entrepreneurial option would take place as a consequence of some external change (a precipitating event). The person's answer to that external event will depend on his/her

perceptions about the available alternatives. Perceived desirability refers to the degree to which he/she feels attraction for a given behaviour (to become an entrepreneur). Similarly, perceived feasibility is defined as the degree to which the person considers him/herself personally able of carrying out that behaviour. In this case, the presence of role models, mentors or partners would be a decisive element to establish the individual's feasibility level. In turn, both types of perceptions are determined by cultural and social factors, through their influence on the individual's value system (Shapero and Sokol, 1982). Therefore, external circumstances would not determine behaviours directly, but rather they would be the result of the (conscious or unconscious) analysis carried out by the person about the desirability and feasibility of the different possible alternatives in that situation.

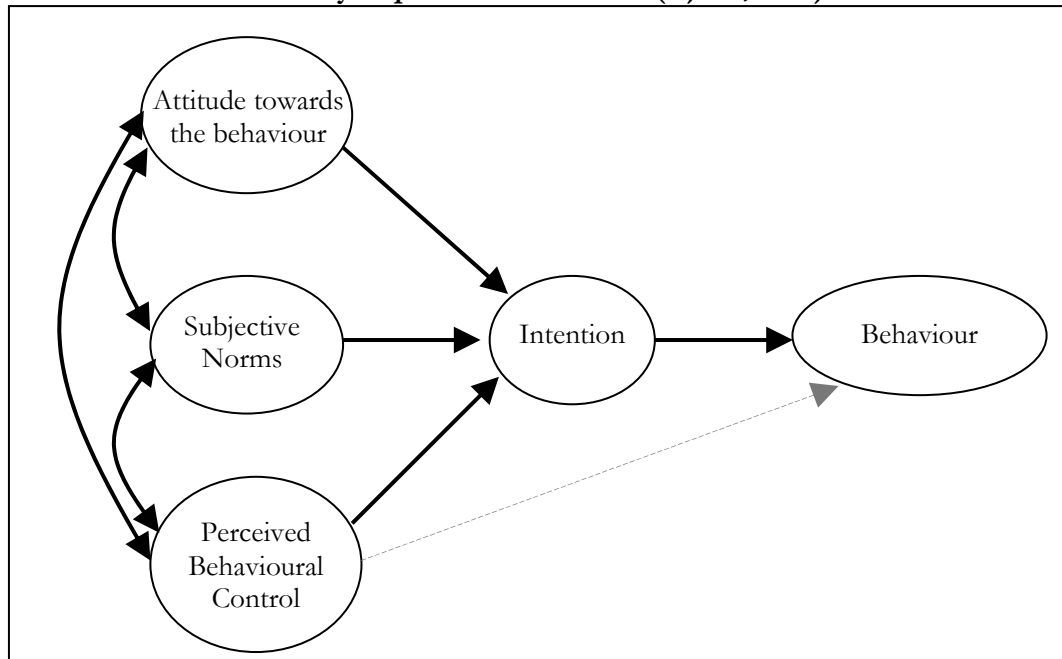
Along the same line, but much more detailed, Ajzen (1991) develops a psychological model of “planned behaviour”. It is a theory that may be applied to nearly all voluntary behaviours and it provides quite good results in very diverse fields, including the choice of professional career (Ajzen, 2001). Thus, a narrow relationship would exist among the intention of carrying out a given behaviour, and its effective performance, as Figure 1 shows. Intention becomes the fundamental element to explain behaviour. Therefore, intention would be indicating the effort that the person is willing to make to carry out that behaviour. And then, it would capture the motivational factors that influence behaviour.

As shown in Figure 1, if individuals consider the implementation of a given behaviour within their reach, this would take them to try harder. Concretely, “perceived behavioural control” would be defined as the perception of easiness or difficulty in the fulfilment of the behaviour of interest (Ajzen, 1991). It is, therefore, a quite similar concept to that of perceived self-efficacy. In the same way, it is also very similar to Shapero and Sokol (1982)’s vision about perceived feasibility. In all three instances, the important thing is the sense of capacity regarding the fulfilment of the behaviour under consideration.

Another interesting question to be taken into account relates the degree of realism in the perceptions. Some people may have a wrong impression of their own capacity to carry out that behaviour (Ajzen, 2002; Pinfold, 2001). This could be due to some new elements appearing into scene, or to facing non-familiar situations. In those cases, they could try to carry out the behaviour even though their actual capacity to achieve it is

negligible, or they could fail to attempt it although the objective probabilities of success are very high.

Figure 1
Theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991)



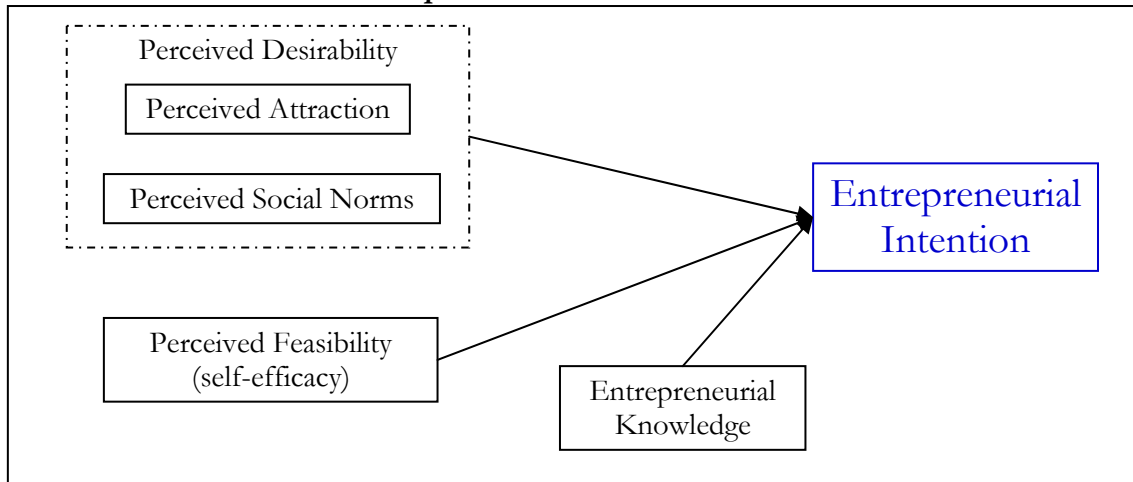
Source: Ajzen, I. (1991): "The theory of planned behavior", *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, vol. 50, pp. 179-211, Figure 1, p. 182.

On the other hand, the remaining elements of the model are much more intuitive. The first of them is the attitude towards the behaviour, and it refers to the degree to which the individual holds a positive or negative personal valuation about the behaviour in question. Secondly, subjective norms would measure the perceived social pressure to carry out -or not to carry out- that behaviour. These two elements, together with perceived control, would constitute the explanatory variables of intention. The relative contribution of each to the configuration of intention is not established in the model, as it can change from case to case. In particular, in the sixteen empirical works analyzed by Ajzen (1991), subjective norms tended to contribute very weakly to the intention of carrying out different behaviours. Finally, the model assumes the existence of interactions among the three explanatory elements.

If we compare these explanatory variables with those considered by Shapero and Sokol (1982), we can see that perceived feasibility -as it has been mentioned above- corresponds quite well with perceived behavioural control. On the other hand, the willingness to carry out that behaviour (perceived desirability) could be understood as

composed of the attitude towards it and the perceived subjective norms. In this sense, it may be remembered that Shapero and Sokol (1982) considered desirability as a result of social and cultural influences.

Figure 2
Entrepreneurial intentions model



Source: Author's elaboration.

Finally, in our opinion, there exists an additional element to take into consideration. This would be the level of knowledge about the entrepreneurial environment that a person has (Scherer et al., 1991). A greater knowledge will surely contribute to more realistic perceptions about the entrepreneurial activity. It will also directly provide a greater awareness about the existence of that professional option, and will make the intention to become an entrepreneur more realistic. Figure 2 summarizes the entrepreneurial intention model used in this paper.

3. Andalusian economic and entrepreneurial situation

If we centre now in the specific economic environment to be analysed, it can be said that the region of Andalusia exhibits a low level of development relative to the European Union. It qualifies as Objective 1 region, as its per capita income is below 75 percent of the Community average -it was 68.5% in 2002 (Alcaide & Alcaide, 2003). This situation will continue in the next future, despite the recent European Union enlargement, which has made the EU average fall, as all new members display below-average income levels.

The productive structure in Andalusia is still characterized by a high rate of agricultural participation -more than 6 percent-, almost doubling the Spanish figure. In contrast, industrial production is sensibly lower -around 13 percent of GDP, as against 20 percent for the national average (ESECA, 2003)-. The latter is a consequence not only of the industrial sector restructuring, but mainly of the region's very late incorporation to the process of modern development, in the mid-sixties. On the other hand, the participation of construction and services in the Andalusian economy is above the Spanish average, as could be expected from its condition of tourist destination for large numbers of Europeans. Besides, many of them, specially British and German citizens, are increasingly choosing Andalusia as the place for a second residence or retirement.

Recently, during the period 1995-2002, relatively high growth rates have allowed to reduce per capita income differential with the EU-15 average by almost 9 percentage points. This has been based on productivity increases achieved especially in intensive agriculture -dedicated to horticultural products-, which was doubled over the last 25 years, rising from an initial 27 Tonne/Ha to the 52 Tonne/Ha reached in 2002 (ESECA, 2003, p. 30). At the same time, this improvement is also generating a group of industrial activities and support services -especially in the plastic sector, watering systems, distribution, etc. (Ferraro, 2000)- which employs a considerable number of people, even competing with tourist and residential activities along the Andalusian coast.

On the other hand, salary costs in Andalusia are still substantially lower than in other Spanish areas -12.4% smaller than the national average- and in the rest of Europe. This has helped maintain the region outside the strong delocalization processes that are taking place in those other areas. However, this risk is more and more evident, especially when the Andalusian industrial specialization in mature sectors with low technological intensity is considered. Nevertheless, some of these traditional activities are clearly linked with endogenous production chains, as it is the case with the most competitive agricultural sectors: olive oil and horticultural production.

The above-mentioned opportunities and risks being faced by Andalusia, have to be balanced against its weak entrepreneurial fabric, made up -to a greater extent than the

rest of Spain- of small and micro-enterprises, and self-employed workers without employees. Concretely, this last category represents 53.7% of all Andalusian enterprises. Besides, success values in the Andalusian culture have been traditionally related to providence, luck, rentierism, land possession, risk aversion or commercial passivity, more than to personal work, entrepreneurial activity, acquisition of knowledge, business capacity, risk control or searching for new markets. However, this situation is changing in the last decades (Maestre, 1999).

In this sense, Guzmán (2003) also finds a number of indications of qualitative change in the Andalusian entrepreneurial capacity. These have to do with the improvement on the entrepreneur's social image among the young, higher inclination towards working for oneself, resurgence of the cooperative movement, or the increase in the number of women entrepreneurs. That author, though, claims for more research on this field of the entrepreneurial capacity.

4. Empirical study

As it has been pointed out, the objective of this work is to know the attitudes of Andalusian university students towards the entrepreneurial activity. This group can be considered as belonging to that segment of the population with higher entrepreneurial potential, so much for their educational level as for their age. For that reason, they constitute a special interest group. To carry out this study we will use the entrepreneurial intention model described in section 2.

Nevertheless, given the characteristics of intention models, for the results to be really valid and useful it is required to analyze the situation before the entrepreneurial event has taken place (Noel, 2002). It is also necessary to include both individuals with entrepreneurial intention and those without it (Krueger et al., 2000). Therefore, last year university students constitute a highly suitable community. In the first place, they are about to face their professional career choice. Secondly, within this group, one can expect to find people with all type of preferences and intentions. Thirdly, very few of them will have developed entrepreneurial behaviours, so we can study their intention before fulfilment of behaviour. Accordingly, a longitudinal study may be undertaken to verify the correspondence between intention and subsequent behaviour. In this sense, longitudinal

studies offer much more satisfactory results even when only demographic variables are used in the analysis (Liñán et al., 2002). Our purpose, therefore, is to carry it out ourselves with this and with successive samples of students.

For this study, a questionnaire was administered to students of last year subjects in two Andalusian university business schools. Since Andalusia is a wide region with a sizeable population, a considerable diversity exists within it. Specifically, the situation in two very different centres within the region has been analyzed. The University of Seville is large (more than 60.000 students), old, and located in the biggest metropolitan area in the region. The University of Jaen is new, small (15.000 students), and it is located in a middle-sized city. Therefore, the existing differences among both can contribute to explain some of the factors that would influence entrepreneurial attitudes.

The questionnaire used was developed under a research project financed by the regional government¹ and it is divided in seven sections: personal data; education and experience; entrepreneurial assessment; entrepreneurial environment; creation of enterprises; personality test; and contact data. The personality test used was originally designed by King (1985), and it tries to measure certain traits that are traditionally associated with entrepreneurship (achievement motivation, internal locus of control, risk-taking propensity, problem solver and manipulator). Contact data will allow a longitudinal follow up of the interviewees along time.

The items included in the first five parts of the questionnaire have been measured using 5 points likert-type scales, or by means of ordinal scales with three or four categories. Nevertheless, when necessary, dichotomic answers have been used (yes/no type) or nominal variables.

In the classrooms where the questionnaire was used, answer rates were above 95%. Thus, the total number of valid answers rose to 166. Of them, 141 filled in contact data. It means that 84.9% of students could be ideally traced for the longitudinal follow-up. Our sample is made up of 93 students from university of Seville, and 73 from that of Jaen. Regarding the division by sexes, 43.4% are women and 56.6% are men. 68.0% of the sample belongs to the age interval from 22 to 25 years. The degree studied by most

¹ Ref. No.: ACC-953-SEJ-2002, Programa Acciones Coordinadas, III Plan Andaluz de Investigación. The questionnaire is available from the authors upon request.

interviewees is Business Administration (103 cases, 62.1%), including the 5-year, 4-year and 3-year degrees².

Table 1
Sample characteristics

| | | University | | | | | |
|-------------------|---------------|------------|------|------|------|-------|------|
| | | Seville | | Jaen | | Total | |
| | | Nº | % | Nº | % | Nº | % |
| Degree | Business Adm. | 61 | 65.6 | 42 | 57.5 | 103 | 62.1 |
| | Economics | 31 | 33.3 | - | - | 31 | 18.7 |
| | Others | 1 | 1.1 | 31 | 42.5 | 32 | 19.3 |
| Sex | Men | 59 | 63.4 | 35 | 47.9 | 94 | 56.6 |
| | Women | 34 | 36.6 | 38 | 52.1 | 72 | 43.4 |
| Age | < 22 years | 8 | 8.6 | 24 | 32.9 | 32 | 19.3 |
| | 22 y 23 years | 37 | 39.8 | 23 | 31.5 | 60 | 36.1 |
| | 24 y 25 years | 35 | 37.6 | 18 | 24.7 | 53 | 31.9 |
| | > 25 years | 13 | 14.0 | 8 | 11.0 | 21 | 12.7 |
| Length of studies | < 5 years | 9 | 9.8 | 32 | 43.8 | 41 | 24.8 |
| | 5 years | 25 | 27.2 | 22 | 30.1 | 47 | 28.5 |
| | 6 years | 32 | 34.8 | 12 | 16.4 | 44 | 26.7 |
| | > 6 years | 26 | 28.3 | 7 | 9.6 | 33 | 20.0 |
| Work Experience | Yes | 51 | 54.8 | 37 | 50.7 | 88 | 53.0 |
| | No | 42 | 45.2 | 36 | 49.3 | 78 | 47.0 |

Source: Author's elaboration.

Table 1 displays the main characteristics of both sub-samples. As may be observed, some minor differences exist between them. In the first place, those surveyed in Seville are studying business administration or economics. In Jaen, on the other hand, economics is not available as a degree and, as the campus is geographically concentrated, it is more common for students in other disciplines to take subjects at the business school. Besides, those other degrees tend to be shorter (3 years). Therefore, the existing difference with respect to age in both sub-samples, and also with respect to the length of studies - significantly shorter in Jaen-, would be explained by this reason.

The second significant difference refers to sex. In Jaen, the proportion of women within the sample (52.1%) is well above that on Seville (36.6%). This difference seems to correspond with the general situation in both universities. In Seville, at least with respect to business studies, there are fewer women. Meanwhile, in Jaen there is a slight majority of women students, not only in business administration, but in most degrees.

² University studies in Spain are either “diplomatura” (3-year degree) or “licenciatura” (4- to 5-year degrees). In Seville, the “licenciatura” in business administration lasts 5 years, while in Jaén it is 4. This helps explain why Jaén students are younger, and spend less time at university.

With respect to other characteristics, there is not any significant difference among the Seville and Jaen sub-samples regarding the following aspects: income level, parents' level of studies, labour experience, or personality traits. Therefore, and with the exception of degree studied and sex, we understand that both samples are considerably homogeneous. Thus, we can assume that there exists an Andalusian population of university students that may be considered as a whole. In the next section we analyse the answers offered by those students.

5. Entrepreneurial attitudes of Andalusian university students

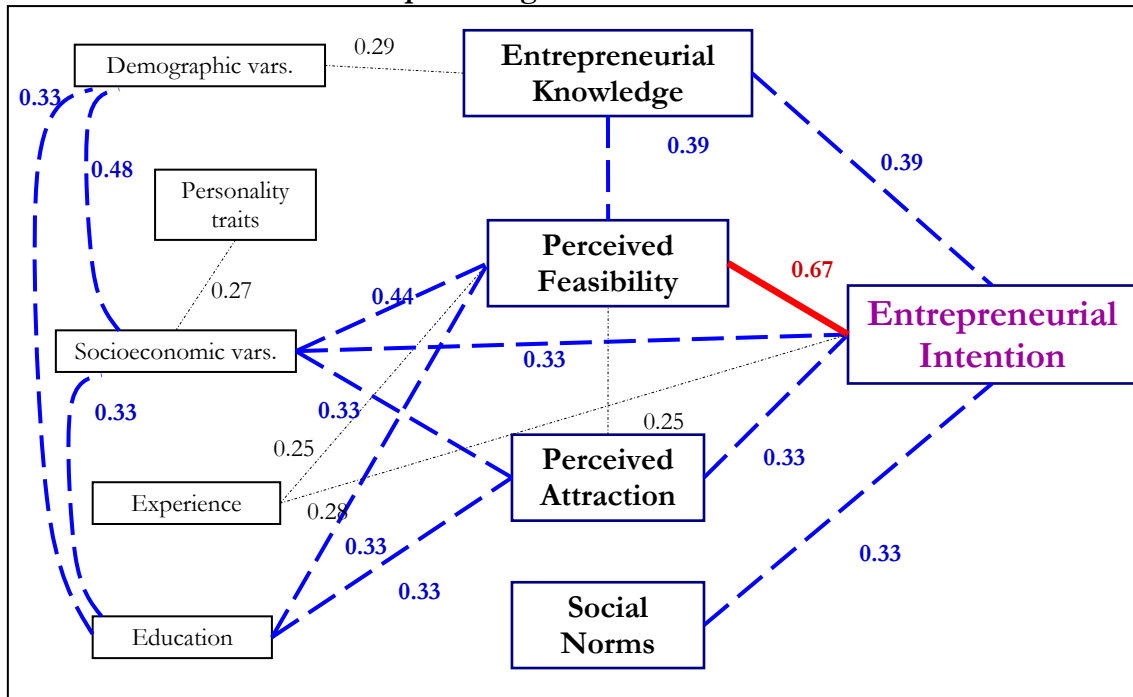
The results can be considered in two different levels. In the first place, the relationships established among the analyzed variables seem to confirm the validity of the intention model to study the entrepreneurial phenomenon. In the second place, the entrepreneurial potential of Andalusian university students differs significantly in some aspects according to the centre in which they study.

Regarding the first of those results, Figure 3 tries to synthesize the existing significant relationships among the components of the intention model. As this is a relatively complex model, with non-linear relationships, and where there are latent variables (not observed), linear regression is not a valid option as instrument of analysis. As a first approach to this problem, we have measured the intensity of the relationships among each group of variables -construct- included into the model. To do so, we have identified the number of existing significant relationships among the variables comprised into each one of those constructs. Next, that number of significant relationships has been divided by the total number of possible relationships. The resulting value (ranging from 0 to 1) has been called “intensity” of the relationship. As an example, the variables that measure socioeconomic level are three, while those used to assess feasibility are six. The maximum possible number of relationships between both constructs will be, therefore, $3*6=18$. Among those two constructs eight significant relationships showed up. Hence, the intensity level of that relationship is: $8/18=0.44$, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3 includes all the relationships whose intensity level is above 0.25. Those relationships with lower intensity have been omitted to allow for greater clarity in the results. And finally, a code of colours has been used to indicate the intensity of each

relationship more clearly. The dashed lines (in blue) designate intensity indexes above 0.30. Meanwhile, the thick line (in red) indicates that that intensity index is greater than 0.50.

Figure 3
Relationships among the elements of the model



Source: Author's elaboration.

Those variables that we have called external are located on the left-hand side of the Figure. These have been traditionally studied as explaining entrepreneurial behaviour. In our sample, however, the effect of those external variables on intention to be an entrepreneur would be indirect. There would be some mediating or filtering variables in between (entrepreneurial knowledge, perceived desirability -attraction and social norms- and perceived feasibility). Thus, as may be observed, the relationships seem to be more intense among external variables, on the one side, and those variables explaining intention, on the other side. By contrast, there are relatively few direct significant relationships between the external variables and intention. Therefore, the main hypothesis of the intention model seems to be confirmed: external factors influence intention indirectly, to the extent that they affect the person's attitudes and perceptions.

Regarding the answers given by students to the different questions, Table 2 shows the mean values obtained in each university. As it was expected, answers tend to be similar in both cases. This would be reflecting the existence of relatively homogeneous attitudes among Andalusian university students with respect to the entrepreneurial activity. In this

sense, the sample comes from only two of the universities in Andalusia. Nevertheless, they are clearly different and even opposed institutions, located in two very disparate economic and social environments. Therefore, it may be assumed that there are not large general differences in Andalusia regarding the entrepreneurial attitudes of their university students.

Table 2
Entrepreneurial attitudes of Seville and Jaen students

| | Order | Min Max | | Univ. Seville | | Univ. Jaen | | Total | |
|---|----------|-----------|----------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| | | | | Mean | Std. Dev. | Mean | Std. Dev. | Mean | Std. Dev. |
| Entrepreneurial knowledge | | | | | | | | | |
| Knows an entrepreneur | n | 0 | 1 | 0,785 | 0,413 | 0,836 | 0,373 | 0,807 | 0,396 |
| Relationship with entrepreneur | n | 1 | 3 | 1,537 | 0,682 | 1,883 | 0,922 | 1,701 | 0,820 |
| Valuation of the entrepreneur | + | 1 | 4 | 2,931 | 0,657 | 2,852 | 0,573 | 2,895 | 0,619 |
| Knows an association | n | 0 | 1 | 0,419 | 0,496 | 0,315 | 0,468 | 0,373 | 0,485 |
| Knows a support body | n | 0 | 1 | 0,452 | 0,500 | 0,356 | 0,482 | 0,410 | 0,493 |
| Knows support measures | + | 0 | 4 | 2,194 | 1,245 | 2,548 | 1,179 | 2,349 | 1,225 |
| Perceived attraction | | | | | | | | | |
| After finishing studies | n | 1 | 5 | 2,591 | 1,475 | 2,667 | 1,695 | 2,625 | 1,573 |
| Preferred activity | n | 1 | 5 | 2,419 | 1,330 | 2,384 | 1,276 | 2,404 | 1,303 |
| Prospects entrepreneur (general) | + | -2 | 4 | -0,237 | 0,852 | -0,068 | 0,948 | -0,163 | 0,896 |
| Prospects entrepreneur (employee) | + | -2 | 2 | 0,065 | 1,030 | 0,096 | 1,056 | 0,078 | 1,039 |
| Perceived social norms | | | | | | | | | |
| Social obstacles | n | 0 | 1 | 0,538 | 0,501 | 0,452 | 0,501 | 0,500 | 0,502 |
| Number of social obstacles | - | 0 | 4 | 1,054 | 1,146 | 0,753 | 0,997 | 0,922 | 1,090 |
| Family support | - | 1 | 4 | 1,742 | 0,859 | 1,726 | 0,731 | 1,735 | 0,803 |
| Entrepr. valuation (envir./Spain) | + | -4 | 3 | 0,097 | 0,835 | -0,425 | 1,235 | -0,133 | 1,059 |
| Entrepr. Valuat. (envir./province) | + | -2 | 3 | 0,323 | 0,836 | 0,068 | 0,962 | 0,211 | 0,900 |
| Perceived feasibility | | | | | | | | | |
| Difficulty of firm | + | 1 | 3 | 2,140 | 0,379 | 2,137 | 0,346 | 2,139 | 0,364 |
| Qualified for creation | - | 1 | 4 | 2,108 | 0,714 | 2,097 | 0,632 | 2,103 | 0,677 |
| Trained for creation | + | 1 | 4 | 2,667 | 0,785 | 2,329 | 1,302 | 2,518 | 1,054 |
| Training needs | - | 0 | 6 | 2,538 | 1,079 | 2,301 | 1,063 | 2,434 | 1,075 |
| Survival probability | + | 1 | 5 | 3,293 | 0,806 | 3,431 | 0,728 | 3,354 | 0,773 |
| Probability of success | + | 1 | 5 | 2,533 | 0,919 | 3,014 | 0,682 | 2,744 | 0,855 |
| Entrepreneurial intention | | | | | | | | | |
| Business idea | - | 1 | 4 | 1,226 | 0,662 | 1,123 | 0,551 | 1,181 | 0,616 |
| Thought of becoming entrepreneur | n | 0 | 1 | 0,656 | 0,478 | 0,575 | 0,498 | 0,620 | 0,487 |
| Possibility if becoming entrepreneur | - | 1 | 4 | 2,495 | 0,736 | 2,521 | 0,709 | 2,506 | 0,722 |

Note: The variables in boldface indicate the existence of a marginally significant relationship ($p < 0.1$), according to the t-test for the equality of means. The variables in boldface and italic indicate the existence of a clearly significant relationship ($p < 0.05$).

Order: The sign “+” indicates increasing ordinal answers (higher value represents a more favourable attitude toward entrepreneurship). The sign “-” indicates decreasing ordinal answers. The letter “n” indicates nominal or categorical variables, not ordered.

Source: Author’s elaboration.

When the results are analyzed in deeper detail, however, some prominent differences do arise. In the first place, the clearest distinction relates to perceived social valuation of the entrepreneurial activity. Jaen students have a much more negative opinion about the valuation of that activity in their closer environment. There seems to be specific institutional barriers for entrepreneurship in Jaen. Meanwhile, Seville students consider that

there exist a higher number of social obstacles to be entrepreneur, although not in their closer environment. So they would perceive less direct barriers to entrepreneurship.

A second result refers to entrepreneurial knowledge. In this sense, Jaen students affirm they know a greater number of support measures for entrepreneurs. The existence of a large quantity of local development initiatives in that area, no doubt, helps explain that result. In the same way, in both cases there is a wide majority of interviewees that say they know personally an entrepreneur. Nevertheless, in Seville it is more common that those entrepreneurs are friends, while in Jaen other acquaintances are mentioned more frequently. The explanation could reside in the existence of smaller urban centres in Jaen, where their inhabitants have a greater knowledge of each neighbour's activities.

In the third place, significant differences exist with respect to perceived feasibility. Seville students consider themselves as better trained to be entrepreneurs. On the other hand, Jaen students believe that their probabilities of reaching entrepreneurial success are higher. Nevertheless, the possibility for the enterprise to survive and be profitable does not differ significantly between both sub-samples. The distinction is centred, therefore, in entrepreneurial success.

Table 3
Have you seriously thought of becoming an entrepreneur? (%)

| | This study | | Urbano (2003) |
|-------|------------|-------|---------------|
| | Seville | Jaen | Catalonia |
| Yes | 65.6 | 57.5 | 68.2 |
| No | 34.4 | 42.5 | 31.7 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: Author's elaboration and Urbano, D. (2003): *Factores condicionantes de la creación de empresas en Catalunya: un enfoque institucional*, PhD Dissertation, Dpto. Economía de la Empresa, Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona, Barcelona, Table 7.26, p. 272.

In our opinion, this result would be revealing a different concept of success. The metropolitan area of Seville has more than a million inhabitants, and it is the political capital of the region, so it may be considered a moderately cosmopolitan city. Therefore, students at that university seem to perceive the need to expand the business and to compete in wider markets. In Jaen, being a much more traditional environment, success tends to be perceived in a different way. Concretely, asked about their own definition of success, the answers vary significantly. Seville students point out, to a greater extent, “to become world leader in their field”, “to compete efficiently in world markets” and “to

achieve a great social recognition”. In contrast, Jaen students point out more often “to help solve the problems of society”, “a pleasant place to work” or “to support their family”.

Finally, in relation to entrepreneurial intention, there are not significant differences in any of the variables used to measure it. Table 3 shows the answers given to the question of whether they have seriously thought of becoming entrepreneurs. The results are slightly more favourable in Seville, although not significantly. In any event, Andalusian answers are less favourable than those obtained by Urbano (2003) for Catalanian university students. This result seems to confirm that a smaller entrepreneurial intention exists in Andalusia with respect to more developed Spanish regions, as Catalonia.

6. Conclusions

This paper has focused on entrepreneurs’ outstanding role as development agents. From an institutional perspective, attitudes towards entrepreneurship become very significant elements in determining entrepreneurial behaviours. In the case of Andalusia, some evidence has been presented showing low levels of both firm creation and business dynamism. In particular, the population segment that tends to exhibit higher entrepreneurial potential is made up of young adults with university education. For that reason, we have centred this study in the analysis of last year university students.

The empirical research has been based on entrepreneurial intention models. The intention to carry out an entrepreneurial behaviour would depend on individual’s perceptions about its desirability (personal attraction towards it and social valuation) and feasibility, as well as his/her level of knowledge about entrepreneurship.

The sample selected for this survey comes from two very different universities - Seville and Jaen-. In this way, we have tried to account for the existing diversity within Andalusia. However, only minor differences were found between both sub-samples. Therefore, we can assume that there exists a homogeneous population of university students in the region.

Regarding the results, two distinct outcomes could be mentioned. In the first place, the relationships established among the variables seem to confirm the validity of the

intention model to study the entrepreneurial phenomenon. However, this result has to be taken with caution, as the analysis carried out has been too simple. Therefore, it cannot be considered as a rigorous contrast of that model.

Secondly, answers given by both sub-samples of students tend to be similar. There is not any significant difference regarding perceived attraction or entrepreneurial intention. However, when entrepreneurial knowledge, social norms and perceived feasibility are analysed, some discrepancies do arise. In particular, Seville students perceive that their closer environment is not especially negative for entrepreneurial activity, but the society as a whole pose numerous obstacles to those wanting to create an enterprise. In Jaen, students feel that even their closer environment has a negative valuation of entrepreneurship.

Finally, entrepreneurial intention levels are relatively low among Andalusian university students, as it was expected. A similar study carried out in Catalonia (one of the most developed regions in Spain) showed higher levels of entrepreneurial intention. Despite this similarity among Andalusian students, the reason why they want to create their enterprise, the concept of enterprise itself, and the kind of firm to be created differ significantly among both sub-samples. Therefore, there seems to be some relevant characteristics of their local economies that are influencing student's perceptions about entrepreneurship. The analysis of those institutional factors would help explain the low levels of entrepreneurial activity found in Andalusia.

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