

Expanded abstract

Future entrepreneurial intentions in Chilean and Basque high school students

Entrepreneurial activity has been considered as one of the key factors to stimulate the development and growth of the different territories and countries around the world (GEM, 2021; Swarupa & Goyal, 2020). This economic and social importance of entrepreneurship –both commercial and social, the latter referring to entrepreneurial activity that addresses social problems– has brought to light the need to support and promote this type of initiatives (Defourny et al., 2014; Greene, 2021). In this scenario, gaining a deeper understanding of the main determinants of entrepreneurial behaviours is undoubtedly of great value for economies and societies in general.

The literature has identified numerous factors that impact the formation of entrepreneurial intentions, which have been understood as the key predictor of the decision to start a business (Tran, 2018). One significant line a research has highlighted, for example, the relevance of individual or personal factors (Palamida, 2016). Within this tradition is the so-called demographic point of view, which assumes that it is possible to predict entrepreneurial intention in a set of individuals if they share certain traits (Palamida, 2106; Tran, 2018). At the same time, within the individual perspective several theoretical models have been developed with a focus on personality characteristics as determinants of entrepreneurial intention (Brandstatter, 2011; Zhao et al., 2010). This point of view is based on the assumption that people who decide to start a business have a different psychological profile from the rest of the population (Baron & Henry, 2010; Rauch & Frese, 2007).

Within the framework of this individual approach, some important questions arise: Are there differences between entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs in terms of their personal and family characteristics and experiences? Is it possible to distinguish between commercial and social entrepreneurs in relation to these traits? Answering these questions is of great importance because, if we know more accurately the profile of the entrepreneur –attending to this distinction between commercial and social entrepreneurs– such information could be used either to improve or create entrepreneurship training programs that take into account the –often ignored– specific training in social entrepreneurship (Bel Durán et al., 2016; García-González et al., 2020). This is particularly relevant in the case of the younger population, since youth is precisely the most promising source of entrepreneurial initiatives that a country can count on (Greene, 2021).

The present study seeks to make a contribution in this direction, having as its central objective to characterize and compare high school students from two different territories –Chile and the Basque Country– from the point of view of a series of personal and family characteristics, relating them to their future entrepreneurial intentions whether in the field of commercial

and/or social entrepreneurship. Specifically, five central hypotheses are put forward: Chilean students are associated with a greater tendency to become entrepreneurs in the future (H1); work experience in enterprises, exposure to entrepreneurial role models within the family and self-perception regarding the possession of certain entrepreneurial attributes are all related to a higher probability of presenting future entrepreneurial intentions in both groups of students (H2, H3 and H4); and students with higher self-perceived levels of social sensitivity and ethical sense are linked to a stronger inclination towards social entrepreneurship (H5).

In order to achieve the main objective and test the hypotheses of this study, the same structured survey was applied to 4661 Chilean students and 5767 Basque students, all of them participants of entrepreneurship training programs in their respective educational establishments. A census sampling method was used, as it aimed to cover all the students enrolled in these entrepreneurship training modules. The survey was applied in person in both territories, and included a series of questions regarding: i) previous work experience of the students; ii) presence of entrepreneurs in their close family circle; iii) motivation for entrepreneurship and future entrepreneurial intentions; iv) characteristics of the enterprise they would create (commercial or Social Economy enterprise); and v) self-perception of entrepreneurial attributes (self-confidence, internal locus of control, risk propensity, capacity to innovate, stress tolerance, achievement motivation, social sensitivity and ethics).

Once the survey was applied and the database constructed, the analysis of the information from both territories was carried out by comparing percentages, using the chi-square coefficient to determine the association between categorical variables, and comparing means through the analysis of variance procedure.

The analysis reveals that, in accordance with what has been pointed out in the literature on entrepreneurship, there is a positive relationship between having entrepreneurs in the family and the development of future entrepreneurial intentions in both groups of students. Conversely, the positive influence of work experience on future entrepreneurial intentions is only verified in the case of Basque adolescents. The results also show that Chilean students are more inclined to follow an entrepreneurial career when compared to Basque students. These findings may be due to cultural differences related to the social valuation of entrepreneurship in both territories, where Chileans consider, in a higher proportion than Basques, that entrepreneurs enjoy a high social status (GEM, 2019a, 2019b). On the other hand, the main motivations of Chileans and Basques when it comes to entrepreneurship (difficulties in getting a job in Chile versus generating a high income in the Basque Country) are indicative of the different situations and economic expectations experienced in both places (GEM, 2019a, 2019b), which in turn can help explain the differences in entrepreneurial intentions in both populations.

With regard to entrepreneurial attributes, the results show that the perception of possessing a series of traits –which give shape to an “entrepreneurial personality”– is associated to a higher probability of presenting future entrepreneurial intentions in Chilean and Basque students. These entrepreneurial intentions, if realized, would mostly be directed towards the establishment of a mixed enterprise, that is, an organization combining social and individual objectives. In this respect, there are no major differences between Chilean and Basque stu-

dents. The students who would incorporate social objectives in an eventual enterprise –either as priority objectives or in combination with personal objectives– are precisely those who to a greater extent declare that they possess the attributes of social entrepreneurs, in this case social sensitivity and ethics.

In sum, the results of this study demonstrate the importance of practical experiences and especially of exposure to entrepreneurial role models in shaping adolescents' future entrepreneurial intentions. They also make it possible to establish a differentiated profile between potential commercial and social entrepreneurs. All this information can be very useful in the design of entrepreneurship programs at the school level oriented to the training of commercial and/or social entrepreneurs.

A research effort such as the one proposed in this article is justified given the scarcity of studies on pre-university youth entrepreneurship, i.e., that include adolescents in school (Brüne & Lutz, 2020; Obschonka et al., 2017). Likewise, with regard to research on social entrepreneurship, one of its central characteristics to date has been its strong emphasis on the conceptual aspect, with relatively few studies of an empirical nature and with large samples (Dacin et al., 2010; Tran, 2018). Beyond this, it should be noted that the formation of entrepreneurial intentions is a complex phenomenon, involving not only the variables considered in this research, but also others related to culture, the perception of support in the environment, etc. In this sense, this study is limited in that it covers only a small set of relevant variables. It is therefore necessary to explore in greater depth the determinants of adolescents' entrepreneurial intentions, covering, together with individual or psychological variables, factors of the broader context in which they are inserted.