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# Creativity vs Grit: nurturing entrepreneurial potential from the Entrepreneurial University

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In recent decades, universities have undergone remarkable development in terms of awareness of the relevance of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurial thinking has been increasingly implemented into the structure and management of higher education, thereby impacting teaching, research, and knowledge transfer activities and fostering an entrepreneurial spirit among the university community, including academics, university staff, and students (Gibb & Hannon, 2006; Guerrero et al., 2016). In this context, human capital is understood as a critical factor for the development of both formal and informal entrepreneurial activities (Hsu et al., 2015). This research focus on students as potential entrepreneurial human capital from a competence approach.

Potential entrepreneurship or entrepreneurial intention (EI) is the first step in the entrepreneurial process (Reynolds et al., 2005). Thus, EI is an important concept, especially in the context of higher education, but further research is needed on the antecedents of EI (Fayolle et al., 2014; Martín-Navarro, 2023) to improve the strategies that enhance its growth. To better understand EI, the present research focuses on competences, as previous research has highlighted their relevance in the entrepreneurial process, especially with respect to enhancing spirit, intention, behavior, and success (Barney, 1991; Lewis & Churchill, 1983; Onstenk, 2003). Six critical entrepreneurial competences are identified from analyzing former entrepreneurial competence research. Although the general relevance of these competences for entrepreneurship has been demonstrated, there is a lack of empirical research focused on their differential effects and their influence as EI antecedents. As Fayolle et al. (2014) pointed out, there is a gap in the literature concerning the antecedents of EI and how they are formed. The present study responds to this need through two research questions: *RQ1: Do the six entrepreneurial competences (creativity-CR, opportunity recognition-OR, networking-NT, resilience-RS, consistence of interest-CI, perseverance of effort-PE) have the same effect on the formation of university students' EI? RQ2: Is it possible to distinguish any key entrepreneurial competence in the EI formation of university students?*

The research objectives are addressed with a quantitative methodology (SEM) that studies the effect of the six competences on IE, through the three dimensions of the theory of planned behavior (TPB), which allows for a deeper understanding of the indirect effects. The sample consists of 732 students from the University of Malaga. Two validated questionnaires were combined and distributed to collect information on the variables and a SEM model was created to analyze the relations between them.

The results offer support for using TPB to understand intention formation, as the three dimensions explain EI with the highest level of significance, corroborating the findings of previous studies (Gird & Bagraim, 2008; Liñán & Chen, 2009). The results also suggest that the entrepreneurial competences should each be specifically treated, as their effects on EI differ both in relation to their total effects and in terms of individual indirect effects. The positive effect of CR, OR, NT, and RS is significant, whereas CI and PE have no significant influence on EI. One key conclusion stands out here: Not all competences are useful in promoting EI. While CR stands out as a critical competence, the variables (CI and PE) related to the psychological construct grit, which is widely linked to entrepreneurial performance, do not influence the intention formation phase. It is also worth mentioning that differences between mediators are noted. It is observed that PBC is the dimension that most captures the competence influence on EI.

From a theoretical perspective, the results contribute to the advancement of knowledge on EI by applying a competency-based approach. The research also provides knowledge on the differences between entrepreneurial competences by considering a specific stage of the entrepreneurial process. Second, in line with the increasing awareness of universities in generating entrepreneurial human capital, these results entail practical implications. Focusing on the educational impact, the results highlight the relevance of competence training to increase the entrepreneurial potential of students, considering the stage of the entrepreneurial process. Moreover, they provide information on the competences to be developed to promote each TPB dimension. Thus, the results can guide and inspire educators involved in both the design and delivery of entrepreneurship training at the university level or in other educational contexts.