

Relationship between entrepreneurial intention and positive education: Case of communication students

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the article is to identify the trends in factors of positive education that affecting the entrepreneurial spirit in the students of the Communication's School. The research makes a Pearson's correlation coefficient analysis for its hypothesis test, between entrepreneurial intention IE (Kruger et al., 2004) and the strengths and virtues in action, short test VIA (Peterson and Seligman, 2004). For this purpose, the empirical research was applied to a sample of 81 students from the eighth semester of the terminal area of the Communication's School. The results demonstrate a high level of correlation between the two variables, highlighting the sub-dimension of significance, where *optimism* and *gratitude* expose significant degrees of correlation. The research framework proposes a guide and key factors to be included in the design of future updates for fostering entrepreneurial strategies.

Keywords: Positive education, virtue, character strengths, communication entrepreneur.

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INTRODUCTION

As we enter this new era of knowledge and information, university education is facing many structural changes, specifically unemployment, and the crisis of values. Being one of the most vulnerable groups of society the young university students, and of these groups as Goyanes (2015) exposes, they stand out the students of the discipline in communication that present greater delay in the development of the enterprising spirit compared to other disciplines such as in the case of the administrative and engineering. This is why, it is essential that areas of knowledge such as the social sciences and humanities encourage their students to detonate the entrepreneurial spirit in their different disciplines. Education then has a great challenge in its vocational structure, educational institutions now focused on training employers rather than employees, because a lasting and safe work within companies start becoming an utopia, these institutions now become promoters of entrepreneurial profiles (Sandoval and Luz, 2006).

The present article starts from this concern and asks

questions about it: Who is the entrepreneur? What are the most important approaches that have studied entrepreneurial intent and behavior? Is positive education an opportunity for ethical university profiling? Is the promotion of strengths and virtues the basis for ethical decision-making, and personal fulfillment? Based on the above reflection, it is necessary to give the definition of an entrepreneur: A human being with higher education who has sufficient knowledge and self-knowledge and who is motivated to initiate and develop his dreams, in an innovative, assertive, and proactive way, in the different economic scenarios or, social sectors, where he has to manage with the appropriate skills that make him a special individual destined by the his own characteristics to be efficient and stand out from others, leading him to produce impacts in the productive branch that seduces him (Cabello Díaz, 2006)

To answer and analyze the different factors set out above, the article was arranged into five sections, including this introduction.

THEORETICAL FRAME

Entrepreneurial intention and behavior

The first research is focus in economic theory, like Schumpeter's (1965) explained the entrepreneurial phenomenon of '*creative destruction*' which was a consequence of entrepreneurial efforts that disturbed the economic and corporate equilibrium, eventually leading to the establishment of new industries and the renewal of the older ones. On the other hand, Cantillon (2010) considered the entrepreneurs as those who invest their assets to bear and overcome uncertainty, paying expenses and expecting the return of profits. While Hisrich (1990) study the aspects and characteristics of entrepreneurship from a psychological perspective and the importance of both in contributing new products and services so vital to economic development and growth is discussed.

Shapero's first theoretical model on entrepreneurial intention (EI)¹ exposes a concept named *displacement*, which is understood as an event, together with other factors, make that person change the route in the decisions causing the birth of a new business (Shapero, 1982 quoted by Hinojosa Martínez, and Albornoz Pardo, 2013). Associated with this decision, a frequently cited theory Ajzen's *Planned Action* (1991), which establishes behavior or conduct, where the determinants of EI are the favorable or adverse self-judgment (attitude), or of a subjective norm of social pressure to carry out a behavior, and of the degree of *Perceived Control of the Behavior* (CPC). In the same context of attitudes, another of the most cited studies on EI is that presented by Krueger et al. (2000), they argue that attitudes are relevant in influencing innovative and entrepreneurial behavior. In other words, attitudes are an important explanatory variable of entrepreneurial actions through the influence of intentions (Garavan and O'Connell, 1994; Boyd and Vozikis, 1994; Krueger et al., 2000).

From the humanist approach of personal efficiency and personal empowerment that leads to a principle-based behavior, the model is more flexible and is based on common and superior values such as the search for the conscience of the other and the application of universal principles (habits). For Stephen Covey, when the person identifies an attractive objective, going for it will be pleasant, and the other hand not doing it, will be uncomfortable. In this same efficiency approach, empirical studies show that the entrepreneur's efficiency is significantly related to EI, and at the same time, this efficiency becomes a bridge between emotional intelligence (management of emotions) and EI (Manosalvas, 2017).

Hence, if societies and institutions that are promoters of habits, principles and values encourage the common good and respect the voice and ideas of their citizens, will

surely also reap the fruits of ethically minded entrepreneurs who manage truly value-added ventures (Covey, 1999). It is from these reflections, that is, justified to continue carrying out research based on EI diagnosis, because the prediction of future behavior can be obtained with this intention and its correlation with different factors. Thompson states that self-acknowledged convictions by individuals that they intend to set up new business ventures and consciously plan to do so in the future (Thompson, 2009).

Psychology and positive education

Positive psychology has among its objectives to explore positive emotions, behaviors given by strengths and virtues and the effects that these have on the people's life and societies. At first the purpose of this Positive Psychology school was to improve the pathologies of people, which today is very useful. The application of these investigations is to promote healthy behaviors that are based on welfare (Cuadra and Florenzano, 2003).

It is known that there is also a risk, when neglecting the conduct of entrepreneurs, because they usually break through innovation, often break paradigms with their ventures, then they can fall into the seduction of individualism and profit (IE incurring corporate corruption). Business corruption is defined as: the phenomenon of decision-makers seeking personal profit before the common good, which affects not only established entrepreneurs but also young entrepreneurs (Santiago, 2010).

In order to study the behavior of entrepreneurs and the factors that influence them, there is a recent interest in the study of general characteristics and ethical issues of their behavior. Character strength traits are psychological elements, which process or give mechanisms to create virtues (Peterson and Seligman, 2004). In the field of character strength, the term *Economic Optimism* was created by Welsch and Young. They state that there is a tendency to consider *Economic Optimism* to expand and grow of new businesses as very probable (Welsch and Young, 1982; López and García, 2011). Similarly, the *Economy of Gratitude* states that everything changes except the human sense; however, entrepreneurs neglect this strength, even though it is essential for the satisfaction and shopping experience of clients in business (Vaynerchuk, 2012).

Additionally, virtue as a concept of behavior in action seeks well-being in the field of positive psychology and business ethics, hence it is stated that "virtue ethics has been acclaimed as a valuable approach to business ethics, especially in Solomon's seminar works" (Solomon, 1992; Sánchez and Cabello, 2013). Virtue has proven its effectiveness in making decisions in justice, but what is virtue? Virtue is defined as: character traits that are distinctive elements in a person's psychology. Having a virtue is having a distinctive character trait to pursue of

¹ EI abbreviation for entrepreneurial intention

the good (Audi, 2012).

According to positive psychology aimed at health, psychological well-being, as a new field of empirical research with scientific guarantees and direct applications is a trend in business schools (Seligman et al., 2004 cited by García-Alandete, 2014). Therefore, positive education focuses on promoting training based on human strengths, also known as positive psychological resources (Vázquez and Hervás, 2008). Positive education is "defined as education for both traditional skills and for happiness" (Seligman et al., 2009:1).

Based on the above theoretical support, it is possible to reflect that the disciplines of the social sciences and humanities can also be competitive in their endeavors, if the curricular programs are designed with the inclusion of new findings on factors related to EI. Therefore, knowledge, values, strengths and virtues of their disciplines are integrated, when studying how to improve EI in their different professional contexts (Meyer, 2011). In this sense as has been published in different studies, high levels of entrepreneurship are achieved through education (Tkachev and Kolvereid, 1999), the promotion of EI education states the practice in entrepreneurship courses raised the indicators of new business and education (Salem, 2014).

Since classrooms are the appropriate environment for the integral development of knowledge, it is necessary to activate the strengths and distinctive values of each knowledge discipline (Campos, 2010). In addition to this, integrating the action of virtue with disciplinary knowledge will make the student not only a successful professional but also a self-realized human being. The background of positive education can also be found in the area of emotional intelligence, and Bar-On (2000) who points out in his model of emotional intelligence that in positive education, personality traits are aptitudes together with optimism, of the general state of mind, and that reside in the capacity to enjoy oneself and others, to have fun, to feel satisfied with one's life, and to experience positive feelings and emotions. In the case of entrepreneurs, there is a realization in managing the activities of the business, which gives a challenge to the abilities of the entrepreneur providing satisfaction (García and Calvo, 2007).

Positive education is based on positive psychology and focuses on the search for well-being through the development of human strengths, also known as positive psychological resources (Vázquez and Hervás, 2008). Continuing *Positive Education* and *Wellness*, promotes the study of positive emotions that trigger conscious behaviors supported by strengths of character to promote optimism, gratitude, persistence, vitality, self-regulation and forgiveness among others, and virtues such as wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance and transcendence that lead to healthy welfare, understood as the search for fulfillment and happiness (Seligman,

2011).

Entrepreneurial intention in the area of communication

The traditional role of communication professionals proposed a profound revision in higher education institutions, the areas of social sciences and humanities in these times of economic instability (Aceituno-Aceituno et al., 2014). These professionals in the areas of communication and specifically in the journalistic disciplines have had an economic contraction in recent times. Because of this, they have made incursions into the new digital models to be able to solve the job instability (Goyanes, 2015). The same author (2015) explains in his study on *structural support* in the EI communicators as channels of information need more tools to enter the field of digital entrepreneurship; however, there are no previous studies that analyze the EI of potential entrepreneurs in the communication sector. According to the Mexican Institute for Competitiveness (2017), only 72% of the total number of professionals who have graduated from the areas of communication are formally employed, and the remaining 28% is in informal commerce or unemployed, Since its creation, the disciplinary field of communication consists of a general professional knowledge with a disciplinary domain, located between inter and transdisciplinary within the social sciences and humanities (Navarro, 2010).

Among other reasons for choosing a group of university students from the terminal area in communication for their studies, there are 3 arguments: firstly, the students who are in this lifecycle are about to finish their professional studies, and their condition will be making a decision between two options: a) look for a job or, b) create their own company. That is why governments and universities have the need to carry out studies to develop proposals considering the development of emotional intelligence and EI (Manosalvas, 2017). Secondly, it is considered indispensable to promote the entrepreneurial spirit, to carry out studies on the factors that determine the EI in university students (Olmos and Castillo, 2008), since this population is uncertain about the future (Veciana et al., 2005). Moreover, there are few studies on the factors that influence EI on young people. And thirdly, the psychological factors that affect behaviors in the entrepreneurial process must be studied for their understanding and motivation (Goyanes, 2015).

The proposal of the present study is not only to know the level the communication students have on IE, but also their strengths and virtues in action drive them to that intention. Based on the above reflection, the research questions are: Q1 What is the average of the variable IE in the students of the terminal area of the Bachelor of Communication in town? Q2 What is the average of the strengths and virtues variable (VIA) in the

students of the last period of the School of Communication?

(Table 1).

Hypothesis

“There is a positive correlation between the level of entrepreneurial intention (EI) and the level of character strengths and virtues or values in action (VIA) in students of the School of Communication”.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The study was conducted at a public university in Mexico and involved 81 students with an average age of 23 years, enrolled in a degree program in Communication; students were studying the eighth semester of the last period, nearing graduation. This sample is justified because there is a greater search for opportunities and well-being in both women and men, and at the same time, these study subjects are between the ages of 18 and 26, that is, in a formative stage of their life cycle (INEGI, 2009). Another advantage of diagnosing these students on a methodological level is that they will provide important data for future redesign strategies for curricular programs that foster the entrepreneurial spirit.

Dependent variable (EI)

The variable EI has only one dimension called the same way EI (Krueger et al. 2000 cited by Sánchez, 2009), where the objective was to measure the level of sensitivity to the creation of a new company by university students about to get the degree in Communication

Variable independent strengths and virtues (VIA)

In the field of positive psychology, Peterson and Seligman (2004) proposed a hierarchical classification of habitual qualities, which, unlike talents may be susceptible to mobilization and growth through stimulation and education are the so-called strengths of character these in turn are grouped to be the psychological elements that generate virtue. The scale is organized into 24 strengths are grouped into 6 virtues: wisdom, humanity, courage, justice, temperance and transcendence. Completing this model, the authors describe their VIA classification as the social science equivalent in social sciences as the ethical virtue. The following is the operationalization of the VIA variable (Table 2).

Measurement and statistical test for reliability

The instrument was integrated by the entrepreneurial intention variable (IE) which consists of a single item and the strengths and virtues in action variable (VIA) with 24 items. The variables were measured with a Likert type scale; these scales allow us to measure attitudes and to know the degree of conformity. The format of the questions responds to a measurement scale of 1 to 5 points. 1 corresponds to total disagreement with the attitude *it is not like me*, low requirement; and 5 in total agreement with the statement *exactly like me*, high requirement. In order to check the internal consistency of the instrument, the Cronbach's alpha equation was applied to the result $\alpha = 0.89$, because it is a value close to the unit, the instrument is considered reliable and with stable and consistent measured (Table 3).

Table 1. Dependent variable (EI).

Dimension	Instrument	Indicator
EI	Entrepreneurial intention which is measured with a single item as recommended by the author (Krueger et al. 2000 cited by Sanchez, 2009)	The level of sensitivity for the intention to create a company in the short term

DISCUSSION

To achieve this objective, the results in their descriptive totals report an average of 3.43 (SD 1.13) for the EI, and an average for the total VIA of 3.58 (SD .951) for the *Communication students*, both variables are at a medium level of performance. At the same time, the data sample is homogeneous because the standard deviation is less than the averages in both variables (Figure 1).

Regarding the correlation between EI and VIA virtues, we observe that they present a strong and statistically significant positive correlations between four of them, the highest is EI and Humanity/Interpersonal virtue ($r = .749$, $p \leq .05$), followed by EI and Justice virtue ($r = .726$, $p \leq .05$), then EI and Courage virtue ($r = .722$, $p \leq .05$). In the position of a moderate correlation are first, EI and the virtue of Temperance ($r = .686$, $p \leq .05$), followed by EI and the virtue of Transcendence ($r = .683$, $p \leq .05$),

Table 2. Variable operationalization VIA.

Virtues	Strengths of character	Indicator
Wisdom and knowledge. Cognitive and knowledge strength	Curiosity	Level of interest in what is happening in the world
	Creativity	Level of production of ideas and behaviours considered as new
	Judgement	Level of thinking to examine things and their meanings and nuances
	Open mindedness	Level of critical thinking
	Love of learning	Level to enjoy and seek new knowledge
Interpersonal/humanity strength that leads to caring for the other	Kindness	Level of friendliness
	Love	Level of affection to maintain important relationships.
	Social Intelligence	Level of awareness to know what things are important to others
Level of awareness to know what things are important to others	Bravery	The courage level
	Persistence	Level of perseverance in acts
	Honesty	The sincerity level
	Vitality	Level of vigor
Justice Civic strength that supports community life	Social Intelligence	Level of recognition of being part of a group
	Fairness	Level of treatment on equal terms with others
	Leadership	Level of empathy with a group
Temperance / moderation Strength of good government against excesses	Humility/Modesty	Level of accepting my wrong doings
	Self regulation	Level of self-control
	Forgiveness	Level of forgetfulness of offenses
	Prudence	Level of clear control of making decision
Transcendence Strength that promotes connection with the universe and meaning of life	Appreciation of beauty	Level of recognition of beauty in everything
	Gratitude	Level of conscious to be thankful
	Hope	The optimism level
	Humor	Level of transmission of joy
	Spirituality	The Spiritual level

Source: Author's design based on research data.

Table 3. Assessment of responses based on a Likert scale.

Scores	Categories	Interpretation
1-2.99	Low performance	Lack of agreement or not like me, low level of performance
2.99-3.99	Medium efficiency	A medium level is required for medium performance
3.99-5	Optimal performance	A high level is required for optimal performance or evaluated as it is like me

Source: Author's design based on research data.

continuing with EI and the virtue of Wisdom ($r = .621$, $p \leq .05$) (Table 4).

Additionally, the most significant results of Pearson's correlation for the EI and the 24 strengths of VIA character, the findings in the positive correlations regarding the strengths that present very strong and statistically significant high correlations, are: in first position EI and the strength of *Optimism* with ($r = .996$, $p \leq .05$); second position EI and the strength of *Gratitude* ($r = .991$, $p \leq .05$); third position EI and the strength of

Open-mindedness ($r = .989$, $p \leq .05$) and EI and finally, fourth position the strength of *Persistence* ($r = .966$, $p \leq .05$). It could be deduced from the above results that undergraduate students in communication who do not have an EI are also more prone to pessimism and the feeling of not achieving personal fulfillment by not persisting in goals. On the other hand, there is no correlation with the strengths of *Kindness* and *Social Intelligence* with EI (Table 5).

The total EI and VIA are positively and highly correlated

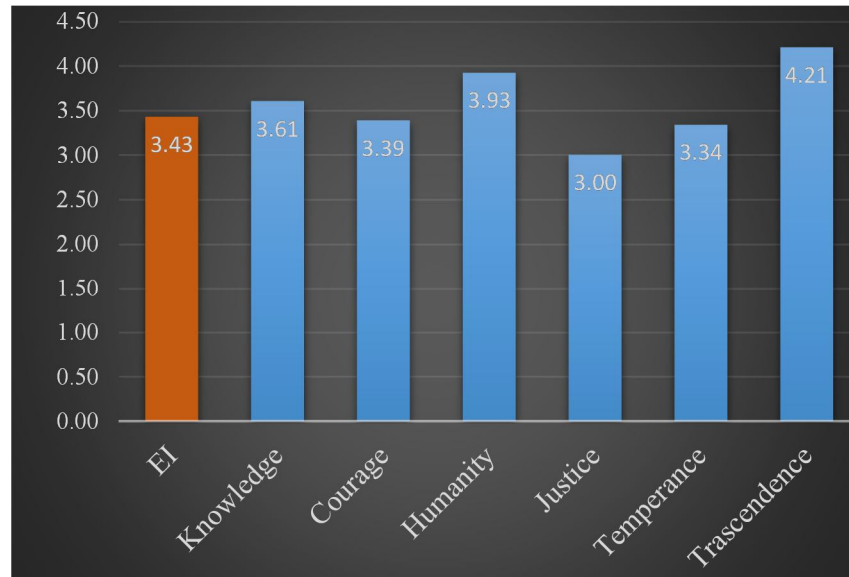


Figure 1. Comparison of EI averages and VIA virtues. Source: Author's design based on research data.

Table 4. Correlation table of IE and VIA virtues².

EI	3.43	1.139		
VIA total	3.58	0.951	0.750	**
Knowledge (VIA)	3.61	1.253	0.621	*
Courage (VIA)	3.39	1.082	0.722	**
Interpersonal/Humanity (VIA)	4.04	0.687	0.749	**
Justice (VIA)	3.15	1.031	0.726	**
Temperance (VIA)	3.37	1.102	0.686	*
Transcendence (VIA)	4.35	1.035	0.683	*

p ≤ .05

Table 5. Correlation table for IE and the 24 VIA character strengths.

	Mean score	Standard deviation σ	Correlation coefficient r	
IE	3.43	1.139		
Forgiveness	3.36	1.304	0.785	**
Self regulation	3.57	1.150	0.597	*
Humility	3.57	1.300	0.958	***
Prudence	2.99	1.306	0.764	**
Bravery	3.42	1.306	0.743	**
Persistence	3.31	1.312	0.966	***
Honesty	3.30	1.948	0.820	**
Vitality	3.77	3.582	0.639	*
Kindness	4.21	3.614	0.311	
Social Intelligence	3.90	4.001	0.019	
Love	4.00	4.011	0.514	*
Justice	3.16	4.047	0.607	*
Leadership	2.80	4.040	0.677	*

² Idem. 6

Table 5. Continues.

Curiosity	3.52	4.040	0.641	*
Creativity	3.79	4.066	0.679	*
Judgment	3.44	4.086	0.702	**
Open mindedness	3.64	4.107	0.989	***
Love of learning	4.04	4.135	0.738	**
Hope	4.23	4.136	0.996	***
Spirituality	4.12	4.147	0.723	**
Appreciation of beauty	4.23	4.175	0.914	***
Gratitude	4.44	4.188	0.991	***
Humor	4.70	4.218	0.646	*
$p \leq .05$				

Source: Author's design based on research data.

Table 6. Correlation coefficient EI and total VIA.

	Mean score	Standard deviation	Correlation coefficient r	
EI	3.43	1.139		
Total, VIA	3.58	0.951	0.750	**
$p \leq .05$				

Source: Author's design based on research data.

($r = .750$, $p \leq .05$), therefore, the hypothesis of a positive correlation between the variables is verified, clarifying that is advanced to take it as definitive because it is an exploratory study, it is recommended to apply it to a greater population and that includes not only a career but several disciplines. The positive results in the correlation show, as Audi (2012) says, that every individual who seeks virtue will also go in search of other goods such as entrepreneurship (Table 6).

CONCLUSIONS

This paper aims to enlighten in the field of the entrepreneur intentions that has not been sufficiently studied and could be promoted. EI in social and human areas is prone to a weakness in economic knowledge. The average shows a medium efficiency in both variables (Table 6). This minds a necessity of better curricular EI programs, looking for more convinced student entrepreneurs. However, this research gives new routes in the contribution of positive education and its influence on ethical factors. These contributions are related to behaviors that promote entrepreneurship in university students close to graduating.

In addition, this contribution may be more relevant due to the fact that when performing an analysis of averages, these data provide us with the level of performance of IE and VIA in students who have received substantial career training, and with these results obtain an evaluation of the

programs to be improved. At the same time, by average of Pearson's coefficient we can see the correlation between the variables in order to locate the 24 strengths of character and the 6 virtues that are in a strong correlation to be reviewed in future curricular plan updates and to empower them. Therefore, a new entrepreneur spirit with gratitude and optimism could change the way economic grow (Welsch and Young, 1982; López and García, 2011; Vaynerchuk, 2012).

Since the classrooms are the appropriate environment for the integral development of knowledge, as explained in the theoretical section, it is necessary to make the teaching exercise an activation of the strengths and distinctive virtues of each knowledge discipline (Campos, 2010). If virtue is integrated with disciplinary knowledge, it will contribute to the formation of not only successful professionals but also self-realized professionals.

A future line of research will benefit by using longitudinal studies; since there is a lack of information as to the manner and time in which a student turns his intention into action to entrepreneurship. Recent researchers are trying to obtain a better understanding of the role to manager emotions in entrepreneurs. This study, through the approach and development statistic tries to respond to this question.

The suggestion for future research to have a complete the university student welfare profile in social science, needs also correlation results between IE, VIA and ethics competencies.

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