

## Entrepreneurial Intention in Tourism post Covid 19: An Exploratory Study

**Teresa DIEGUEZ**

Polytechnic Institute of Cávado and Ave, Portugal [tdieguez@ipca.pt](mailto:tdieguez@ipca.pt), <http://www.orcid.org/0000-0002-4886-1446>

### Abstract

Entrepreneurship is a key element for any country that wants to be competitive in a global knowledge-based market. It is a complex concept that requires a deep and critical study from various perspectives and supported by the trinomial of sustainability. Higher Education Institutions can play a decisive role in developing the entrepreneurial intentions of their students, the future leaders of tomorrow. Covid-19 changed the world and Tourism was one of the sectors where the impact was greater, also because it is a highly technological sector, among other reasons. The present study is an exploratory and descriptive study of a quantitative nature. It was carried out, in April 2021, and it aims to study the entrepreneurial intention of the 1st year students of the master's degree in Tourism Management of the Polytechnic Institute of Cávado and Ave, based in Portugal.

### Keywords

Entrepreneurial Intention, Entrepreneurship, Digital, Tourism, Self-efficacy

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneurship is an important component for every nation who wants to compete in a global market founded on knowledge (Kabir, 2019; Penco, Ivaldi, Bruzzi & Musso, 2020), creativity (Belitski & Desai, 2016) and innovation (Schumpeter, 2000; Pradhan, Arvin, Nair and Bennett, 2020). It is a multifaceted concept with no sole meaning, and it has been developing over time (Hisrich, Peters & Shepherd, 2017). Today entrepreneurship begins to be associated with people with more education and often with professional careers already stabilized and successful and not only with people with needs or difficulties to earn living (Marvel, Davis & Sproul, 2016; Figueiredo & Paiva, 2019).

In this context, technological entrepreneurship emerges, which has as its main advantage scalability and a huge potential for return if the business is successful (Azoulay, Jones, Kim & Miranda, 2020). The tourism sector is a highly technological sector that has experienced huge conversions with Covid-19 (Sigala, 2020). Today decision-making resulting from complex relationships is easier to take, since the internet and Information and Communication Technologies allow the use in real time of "big social data" and content generated by users themselves (Cuomo et al., 2021). The offer is evolving, and technology is contributing to create more and more highly customized immersive experiences (Stankov & Gretzel, 2020).

This article focuses its research on the study of the entrepreneurial intention of 1st year students of the master's degree in Tourism Management of the Polytechnic Institute of Cávado and Ave (IPCA), Portugal, and is composed of three sections. It begins with a brief presentation of a literature review, followed by the used research methodology. It analyses and comments on the obtained results and, finally, presents the conclusions and suggests future developments.

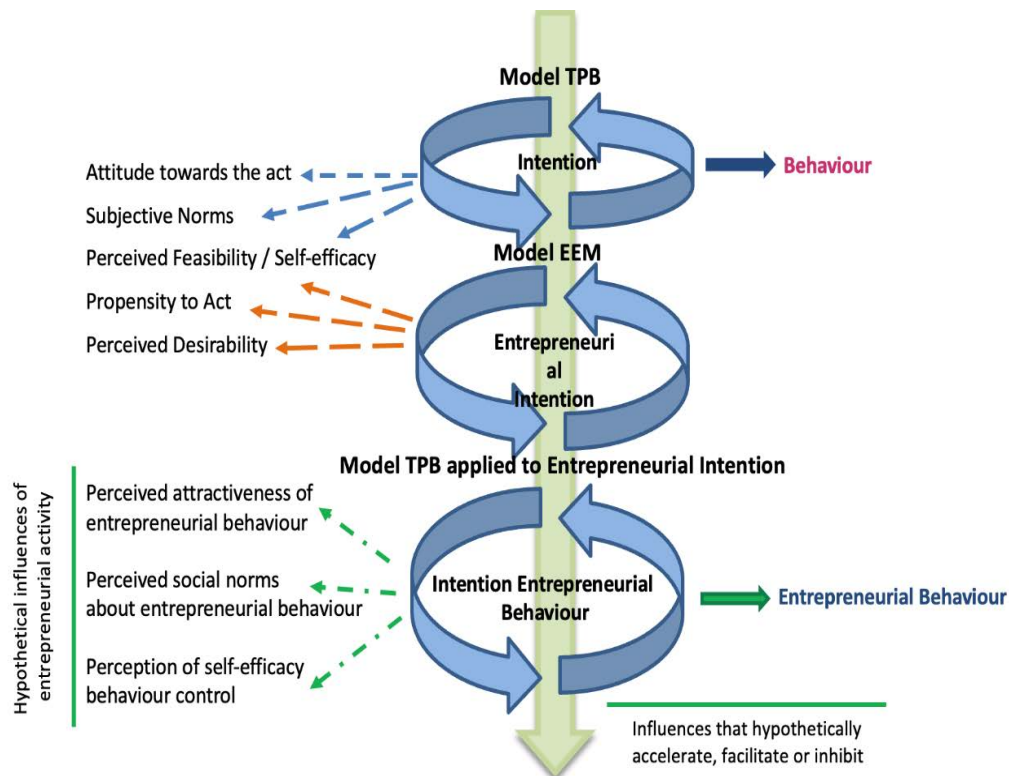
## 2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Intention seems to be a direct precursor to the implementation of a behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1997) and reports to an individual's notice, knowledges and activities concerning a particular purpose, piece, or goal (Bird & Jelinek, 1988). Intentions have a positive correlation with the behaviour occurring (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977) and have been evidenced to be the best predictors of individual behaviour when the behaviour is rare, difficult to observe, or contains random time lags (Krueger & Brazeal, 1994).

Entrepreneurial intention can be shaped by individual domains (e.g., motivation, personality, and prior experience) and contextual variables (e.g., social context and economy) (Bird, 1988). It can be impacted by psychological characteristics along with developed skills and abilities (Zhao, Seibert & Hills, 2005). Analysis of entrepreneurial intention can serve to predict an individual's behaviour towards setting up their own business (Shirokova, Osiyevskyy & Bogatyreva, 2016), although, as Davidsson (1995) suggests, intention may never reflect reality. Entrepreneurial intentions may predict, albeit imperfectly, an individual's choice to start a business (Davidsson, 1995), since entrepreneurial intention does not always trigger entrepreneurial action (Wilson & Martin, 2015).

In the literature review, it is possible to find several studies on entrepreneurial intention, from those focusing on personality traits or characteristics of individuals (Brockhaus, 1980; 1982), to behavioural and situational factors (Gartner, 1985) or to models of intention (Shapero & Sokol, 1982; Boyd & Vozikis, 1994), which focus on attitudes, antecedents, education, gender, and entrepreneurial models (Liñán & Fayolle, 2015). Figure 1 shows some convergence between the most used frameworks to evaluate intention, entrepreneurial intention, behaviour and entrepreneurial behaviour.

**Figure 1** – From Intention to Intention Entrepreneurial Behaviour (own elaboration)



The most widely used theoretical framework in the study of entrepreneurial intention is the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) (Ajzen, 1985), which argues that the strength of intention is the immediate antecedent of behaviour. Entrepreneurial intentions can become true entrepreneurial behaviours (Kautonen, Van Gelderen, & Fink, 2015) and there are several studies showing the significance and strength of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Schlaegel & Koenig, 2014).

The Theory of Entrepreneurial Intention received more attention when Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behaviour (1991) was brought together with Shapero's (1984) Entrepreneurial Event Model (EEM). However, it is with Krueger and Carsrud (1993) that these themes converge and apply Theory to Entrepreneurial Intention studies. Since then, research in this area has developed worldwide, but in a disorganized manner (Lages, Rodrigues and Sousa Filho, 2020). These theoretical models accept that entrepreneurial intention is the trigger of entrepreneurial action (Liñán & Fayolle, 2015), although intention does not always instigate an action (Townsend, Busenitz & Arthurs, 2010) due to various reasons, including constraints and changing individual preferences (Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2006).

### **3 - METHODOLOGY**

The phenomenon under study in this article is defined as the study of the entrepreneurial intention of 1st year students of the master's degree in Tourism Management of the Polytechnic Institute of Cávado and Ave (IPCA), based in Portugal. In this context and under the perspective of the postivist paradigm, the observation of this phenomenon aims at collecting data to analyse, according to the students' perception and experience, if the Covid-19 pandemic are really promoting the development of their entrepreneurial intention. This analysis also seeks to identify their perception about digital skills and their self-efficacy.

To performance these objectives, quantitative research of descriptive nature is adopted, using the questionnaire for data collection (Grégoire, Lachance & Taylor, 2015). The supposition is that entrepreneurs and leaders act on building the future they believe in, developing and creating opportunities according to their beliefs and visions (Karp, 2006). Based on emotions and perceptions about the reality that underlies the situations they have experienced, their subjective choices for entrepreneurial value creation, and their ability to understand the potential effects of those choices (Karp, 2006; Grégoire, Lachance & Taylor, 2015).

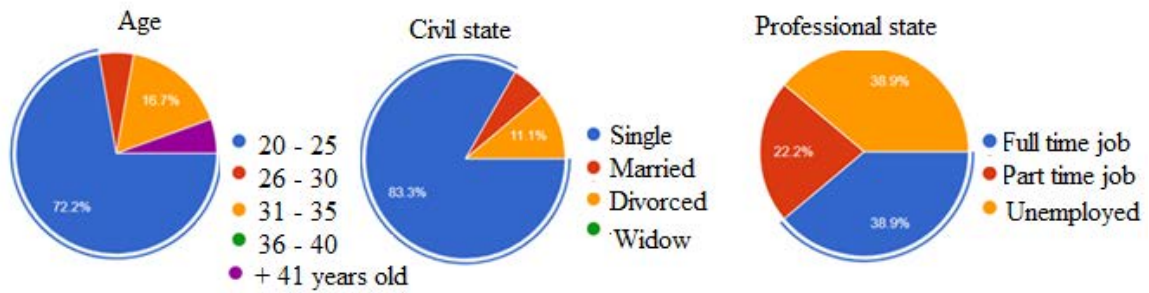
The population comprises all the master's tourism students of IPCA, with a total of 50 students. The instrument for data collection was designed by adapting scales validated in the empirical and conceptual literature. For this purpose, a questionnaire was prepared with 3 main areas namely socio-demographic data, students' perceptions, and reaction to Covid-19. It was used a Likert scale from 1 to 5, representing from less to maximum levels. The questionnaire was sent by google form during April 2021. The sample represents 81.8% of the population. The participants' responses were treated by means of descriptive statistics, based on the frequencies of responses, with the aim of profiling and discussing the most salient features of the entrepreneurial attitude of the respondents. allows concluding that Covid-19 is an opportunity to develop the entrepreneurial intention.

### **4 - RESULTS**

#### **4.1 Sociodemographic Characterization**

The respondents are mostly female (88.9%), aged between 20 and 25 years (72.2%), single (83.3%) and with a minority of part-time employees (22.2%), as shown in figure 2.

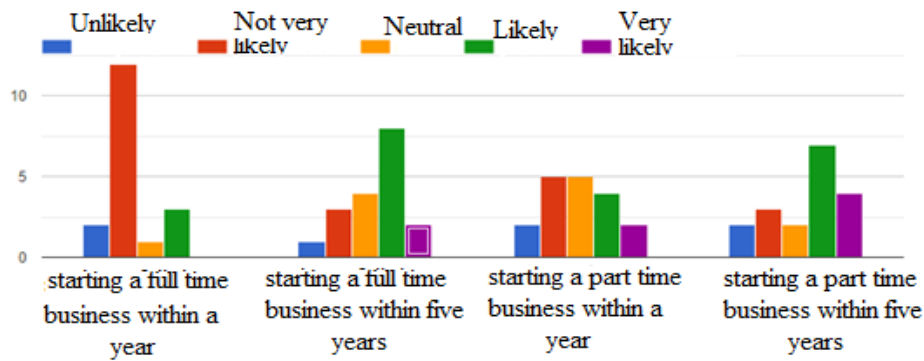
Figure 2 – Sociodemographic Characteristics of The Sample



#### 4.2 Entrepreneurial Intention

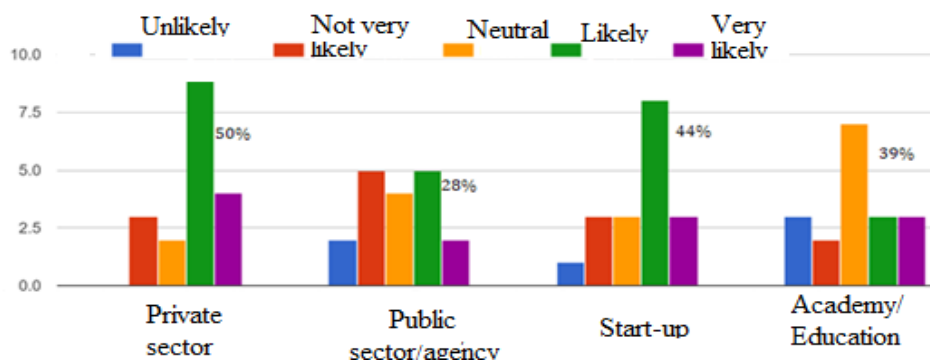
An attempt was made to understand the probability of students setting up their own full or part-time business in less than one year or, alternatively, within 5 years (figure 3). Most students believe that it is likely or very likely that they will have their own business within 5 years, either part-time (61%) or full-time (56%).

Figure 3. Intention to Start A Business



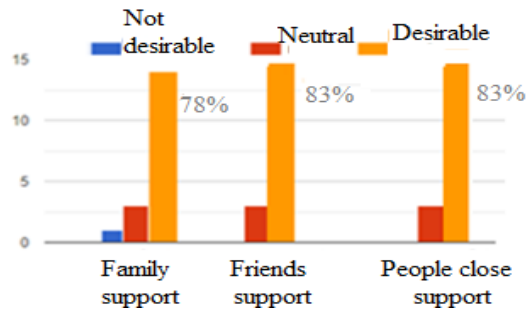
None of the students said it was unlikely to go and work in an established private company and 50% said it was likely. About founding a company, creating, and running their own business, 44% of the students were likely and 16.7% were very likely (figure 4).

Figure 4. Future Job Sector Activity



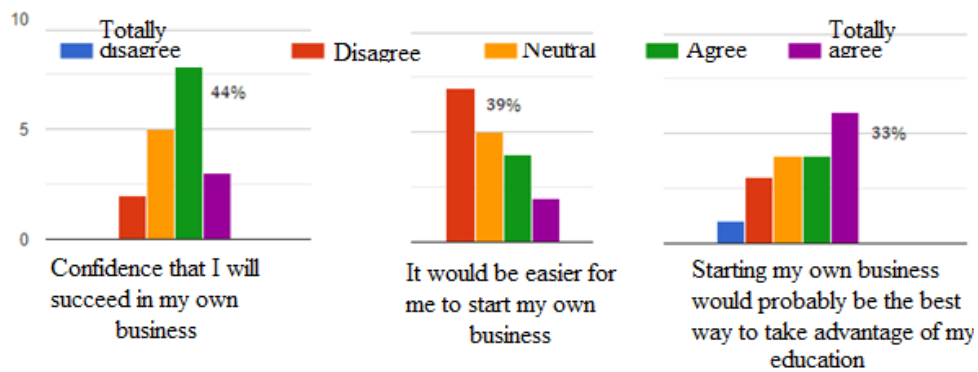
In terms of context and bearing in mind the relationship with the subjective Norms, students find themselves in an environment that is conducive to being an entrepreneur, both in terms of family (78%), friends (83%) and people close to them (83%). The only exception is one student who sees it as undesirable for his family to become an entrepreneur (figure 5).

Figure 5. Entrepreneurship in the Face of Subjective Standards



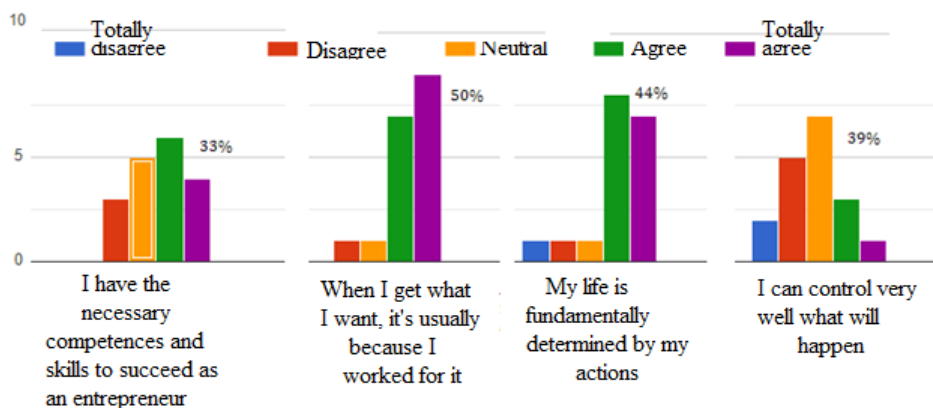
Regarding the confidence that they will succeed in their own business, most respondents (60%) agree (44%) or completely agree (16%). They do not believe it is the easiest way (33%), but it would certainly be the best way to take advantage of education (55%) (figure 6).

Figure 6. Confidence in Success, Ease and Opportunity



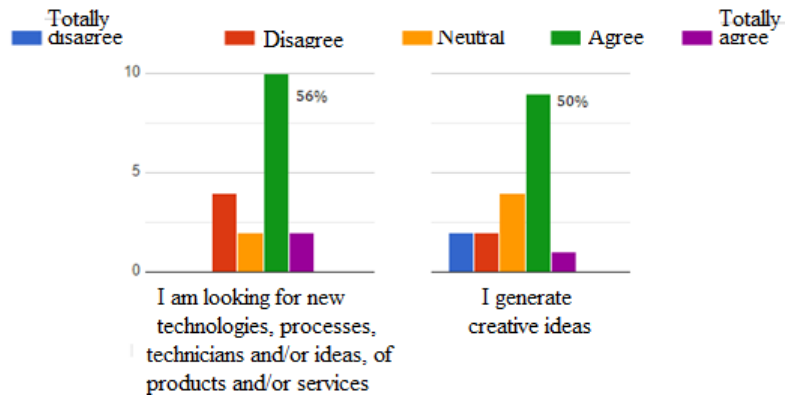
Respondents believe they have the skills and abilities required to succeed as entrepreneurs (55%), when they get what they want it is because they have worked for it (88%), their lives being fundamentally determined by their actions (82%), but with the notion that they cannot control very well what will happen in their lives (78%) (figure 7).

Figure 7 – Confidence in Skills, Perseverance, Attitude and Uncertainty



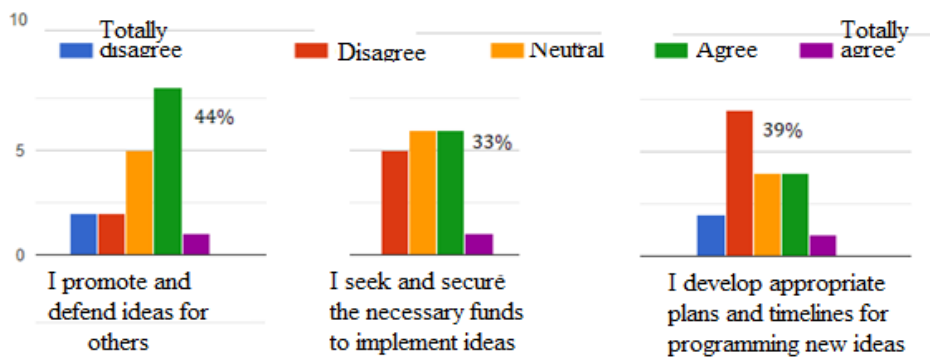
Respondents seek new technologies, processes, techniques and/or product/service ideas (66%). They can generate creative ideas (55%) (figure 8).

**Figure 8 – Proactivity and Creativity**



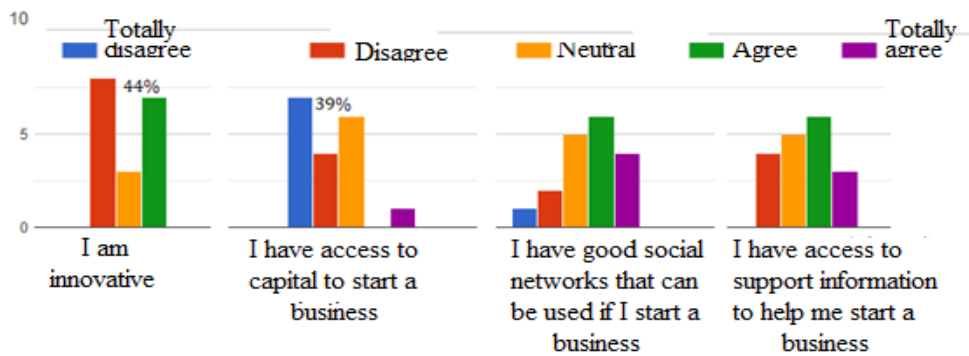
Promoting and championing ideas is a common feature of most respondents (49%), although only 38% seek and secure the necessary funds to implement ideas (38%). However, 50% of respondents can develop adequate plans and timelines for implementing new ideas (figure 9).

**Figure 9. Proactivity and Creativity**



None of the students consider themselves to be totally or not at all innovative, with the class split between not innovative (44.4%) and innovative (39%). Only 5% have access to capital to start a business and 60% consider that they do not have access. They believe they have good social networks that can be used if they decide to start a business (55%) as well as access to supportive information to help them start a business (50%) (figure 10).

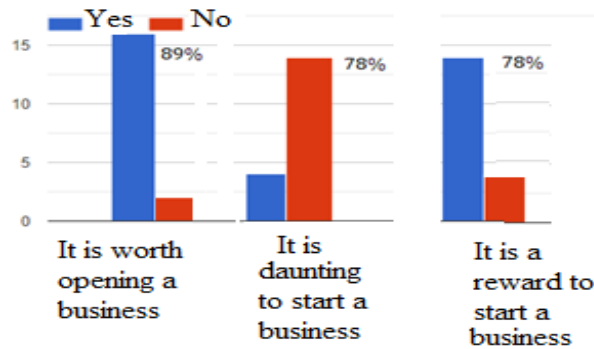
**Figure 10. Innovative, Access To Capital, Social Networks and Access to Information**



### 4.3. Reaction to Covid-19

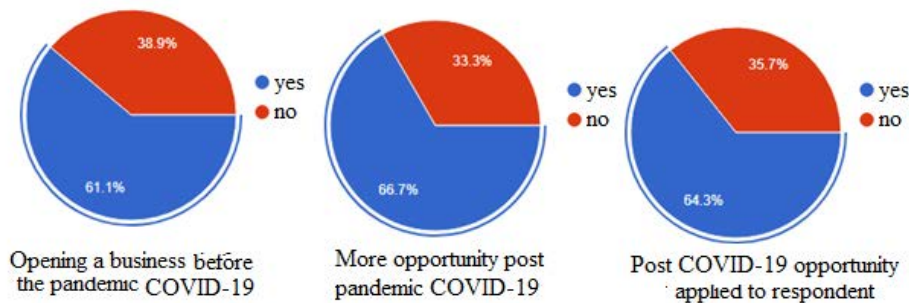
For respondents, starting a business is worthwhile (89%), not daunting (78%) and a reward (78%) (figure 11).

**Figure 11.** Feelings About Starting A Business



Before the Covid-19 pandemic most of them (61.1%) had already thought about starting a business. With the pandemic, they felt that there might be more opportunities to create businesses (64.3%) and, except for one respondent, all feel that these opportunities apply to them (Figure 12).

**Figure 12.** Covid-19 Opportunity To Start A New Business



Asked the open-ended question of what possible reasons they believed Covid-19 had increased their entrepreneurial intention, the answers focused mainly on digital development and the skills they had to develop to adapt to the constraints imposed by confinement. The possibility of having been in training also allowed them to critically reflect on the world, the precariousness of employment, and the need to proactively build their future.

## 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

### 5.1 Discussion of Results

Most respondents believe it is possible to open their own business in the next 5 years, either on a full time or part time basis. There are respondents who prefer to go self-employed in the short term but can also see themselves working in established private companies. However, there is not a great appetite to work in the public sector or in the Academy (university or research centre).

These are students who live in a context where entrepreneurship is seen as desirable by all around them, except for one student whose family does not share this status. They are confident, positive and see success as a very real possibility, although very dependent on their self-efficacy,

perseverance, and attitudes. They are positive, like to explore and learn about new technologies and processes. They are creative, innovative and enjoy challenges, although these characteristics need to be developed further. This development could, for example, be worked on in the context of the Master's curriculum itself.

They see entrepreneurship as a reward, an experience worth having and the best way to get a return on investment in education. Able to generate creative ideas, they can communicate and showcase their ideas, seek funding, and use their networks to support their needs. They are autonomous, like to make decisions and act on the opportunities that come their way. Possibly it is these characteristics that mean they do not see themselves working in the civil service or in Academia.

Regarding the increased opportunities to create a business in post Covid-19, probably the positive response is very much related to the tourism industry and the area of studies and content that the respondents are attending.

## 5.2 Conclusion

The present study aimed to study whether Covid-19 enhanced the entrepreneurial intention of 1<sup>st</sup> year master's degree students in Tourism Management at IPCA, considering their activity sector, the development of digital skills and their self-efficacy.

The study allows concluding that students have a very positive view on the creation of a business in their area of activity. This possibility is a result of their characteristics, their environment, and their sense of self-efficacy. Covid-19 accelerated the digital development, and the Tourism sector was one of the activity sectors where this trend had more impact, opening possibilities and breaking paradigms. Also in personal terms, Covid-19 triggered the need to view the virtual as an extension of the real, which allows, in an innovative way, to generate ideas and seize windows of opportunity.

As limitations of the study are pointed out the fact that data analysis is only descriptive, and the small size of the population, and the results cannot be generalized. However, they are quite significant to work on *curricula* and skills to be developed in the set and context of the respondents. For future studies it is suggested to extend the research to other Schools and Courses, as well as to try to understand the wide range of reasons why the respondents are so positive about the possibility of creating a business

## REFERENCES

- Ajzen, I. (1985). From Intentions to Actions: A Theory of Planned Behavior. In *Action Control: From Cognition to Behavior, Softcover Reprint of the Hardcover*, 1st ed.; Kuhl, J., Beckmann, J., Eds.; Springer: Berlin, Germany, 11–39.
- Ajzen, I., & Fishbein, M. (1980). *Understanding Attitudes and Predicting Social Behaviour*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.
- Autio, E., Keeley, R.H., Klofsten, M., Parker, G.C., & Hay, M. (2001). Entrepreneurial intent among students in Scandinavia and in the USA. *Enterprise and Innovation Management Studies*, 2(2), 145-160.
- Azoulay, P., Jones, B.F., Kim, J.D., & Miranda, J. (2020). Age and high-growth entrepreneurship. *American Economic Review: Insights*, 2(1), 65-82.



- Belitski, M., & Desai, S. (2016). Creativity, entrepreneurship and economic development: city-level evidence on creativity spillover of entrepreneurship. *The Journal of Technology Transfer*, 41(6), 1354-1376.
- Bird, B. (1988). Implementing entrepreneurial ideas: The case for intention. *Academy of Management Review*, 13(3), 442-453.
- Bird, B., & Jelinek, M. (1988). The operation of entrepreneurial intentions. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 13, 21-29.
- Boyd, N.G., & Vozikis, G.S. (1994). The influence of self-efficacy on the development of entrepreneurial intentions and actions. *Entrepreneurship theory and practice*, 18(4), 63-77.
- Brockhaus Sr, R. H. (1980). Risk taking propensity of entrepreneurs. *Academy Of Management Journal*, 23(3), 509-520.
- Cuomo, M.T., Tortora, D., Foroudi, P., Giordano, A., Festa, G., & Metallo, G. (2021). Digital transformation and tourist experience co-design: Big social data for planning cultural tourism. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 162, 120345.
- Davidsson, P. (1995). Determinants of entrepreneurial intentions. In RENT XI Workshop.
- Dieguez, T. (2021). Covid-19: uma oportunidade para desenvolver a Intenção empreendedora. Proceedings of the 5<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Marketing and Consumer Behaviour., Number 2 (2021), Universidade de Aveiro.
- Figueiredo, E., & Paiva, T. (2019). Senior entrepreneurship and qualified senior unemployment: the case of the Portuguese Northern region. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 26(3), 342-362.
- Gartner, W.B. (1985). A conceptual framework for describing the phenomenon of new venture creation. *Academy of Management Review*, 10(4), 696-706.
- Gollwitzer, P.M., & Sheeran, P. (2006). Implementation intentions and goal achievement: a metaanalysis of effects and processes. In Zanna, M.P. (Ed.), *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 38, 69-119.
- Grégoire, D. A., Cornelissen, J., Dimov, D., & Van Burg, E. (2015). The mind in the middle: Taking stock of affect and cognition research in entrepreneurship. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 17(2), 125-142.
- Hisrich, R.D., Peters, M.P., & Shepherd, D.A. (2017). *Entrepreneurship*. McGraw-Hill Education.
- Kabir, M. N. (2019). Knowledge-Based Social Entrepreneurship: Understanding Knowledge Economy, Innovation, and the Future of Social Entrepreneurship. Springer.
- Karp, T. (2006). The inner entrepreneur: A constructivistic view of entrepreneurial reality construction, *Journal of Change Management*, 6(3), 291-304.
- Kautonen, T., Van Gelderen, M., & Fink, M. (2015). Robustness of the theory of planned behavior in predicting entrepreneurial intentions and actions. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 39(3), 655-674.
- Krueger, N. (1993). The impact of prior entrepreneurial exposure on perceptions of new venture feasibility and desirability. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 18(1), 5-21.
- Krueger, N., & Brazeal, D.V. (1994). Entrepreneurial potential and potential entrepreneurs. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 18(3), 91-104.

- Krueger, N., & Carsrud, A.L. (1993). Entrepreneurial intentions: Applying the theory of planned behaviour. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 5(4), 315-330.
- Lages, J., Rodrigues, R.C., & Sousa Filho, J.M. (2020). *Evolução da pesquisa sobre a intenção empreendedora: uma revisão sistemática*. Anais do XI EGEPE - Encontro de Estudos sobre Empreendedorismo e Gestão de Pequenas Empresas, 11, 119161.
- Lee, D.Y., & Tsang, E.W. (2001). The effects of entrepreneurial personality, background and network activities on venture growth. *Journal of Management Studies*, 38(4), 583-602.
- Liñán, F., & Fayolle, A. (2015). A systematic literature review on entrepreneurial intentions: citation, thematic analyses, and research agenda. *International Entrepreneurship and Management Journal*, 11(4), 907-933.
- Marvel, M.R., Davis, J.L., & Sproul, C.R. (2016). Human capital and entrepreneurship research: A critical review and future directions. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 40(3), 599-626.
- Penco, L., Ivaldi, E., Bruzzi, C., & Musso, E. (2020). Knowledge-based urban environments and entrepreneurship: Inside EU cities. *Cities*, 96, 102443.
- Pradhan, R.P., Arvin, M.B., Nair, M., & Bennett, S.E. (2020). Sustainable economic growth in the European Union: The role of ICT, venture capital, and innovation. *Review of Financial Economics*, 38(1), 34-62.
- Schlaegel, C., & Koenig, M. (2014). Determinants of entrepreneurial intent: A meta-analytic test and integration of competing models. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 38(2), 291-332.
- Schumpeter, J. A. (2000). Entrepreneurship as innovation. *Entrepreneurship: The social science view*, 51-75.
- Shapero, A. (1984). The entrepreneurial event.[in:] CA Kent (Ed.), *The environment for entrepreneurship*. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books.
- Shapero, A., & Sokol, L. (1982). *The social dimensions of entrepreneurship*. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's Academy for Entrepreneurial Leadership Historical Research Reference in Entrepreneurship.
- Shirokova, G., Osiyevskyy, O., & Bogatyreva, K. (2016). Exploring the intention-behavior link in student entrepreneurship: Moderating effects of individual and environmental characteristics. *European Management Journal*, 34(4), 386-399.
- Sigala, M. (2020). Tourism and COVID-19: Impacts and implications for advancing and resetting industry and research, *Journal of Business Research*, 117, 312-321.
- Stankov, U., & Gretzel, U. (2020). Tourism 4.0 technologies and tourist experiences: a human-centered design perspective. *Information Technology & Tourism*, 22(3), 477-488.
- Townsend, D.M., Busenitz, L.W., & Arthurs, J.D. (2010). To start or not to start: outcome and ability expectations in the decision to start a new venture. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 25(2), 192-202.
- Wilson, N. & Martin, L. (2015). Entrepreneurial opportunities for all? Entrepreneurial capability and the capabilities approach. *The International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation*, 16(3), 159-169.
- Zhao, H., Seibert, S., & Hills, G. (2005). The mediating role of self-efficacy in the development of entrepreneurial intentions. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90(6), 1265-1272.