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**Entrepreneurship as a career option: Do temporary workers have the competencies,  
intention and willingness to become entrepreneurs?**

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**ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS A CAREER OPTION: DO TEMPORARY WORKERS  
HAVE THE COMPETENCIES, INTENTION AND WILLINGNESS TO BECOME  
ENTREPRENEURS?**

**ABSTRACT**

This study analyses the entrepreneurial intentions and the willingness of temporary workers to consider entrepreneurship as a career option. Specifically, we analyse the self-perception of entrepreneurial competencies of a group of temporary workers. We conclude that the self-perception of different levels of entrepreneurial competencies is associated with different intentions and willingness to considering entrepreneurship as a career option. Temporary workers, an enlarging group in the labour market nowadays, do not always perceive themselves as having the necessary competencies to choose for entrepreneurship in their occupational paths.

**INTRODUCTION**

In the last years, deep changes in the labour market have occurred. For some time, careers were based on environmental stability, hierarchical organizational structures, a continuous exchange between employer and employee and growing economy (Sullivan & Baruch, 2009). Presently, there is also a call for more entrepreneurship and more entrepreneurial activities (York and Venkataraman, 2010), as a way to drive innovation and creating jobs in society. Due to a changing work environment, where stability and predictability of employment are no longer guaranteed, entrepreneurship might become an alternative. These changes challenge individuals to become entrepreneurs and organizations to become more entrepreneurial. Entrepreneurship, as a tool to take control over one's own career, for example in the form of self-employment, is an alternative to precarious situations at work. Additionally, a key aspect of this reasoning are entrepreneurial competencies, that is, the total ability to perform entrepreneurial activities successfully (Man, Lau, & Chan, 2002). Alongside with entrepreneurial competencies, intention and willingness to become an entrepreneur are necessary. Knowing if workers in the current labour market consider entrepreneurship as an option is important. In addition, organizational policies for recruitment

and selection must consider these points if organizations aim to introduce entrepreneurial strategies in their management guidelines. Therefore, insights in the competencies of job applicants related to entrepreneurship are relevant to recruitment and selection strategies, as well as to policy programs that aim to prepare individuals to develop their entrepreneurial initiative and employability.

Drawing on the evolution of the concept of career in the literature, we reflect on this concept as an *occupational path*, i.e., a collection of individual choices through their professional life, considering different occupational possibilities, organizations and forms of employment. Our view on career is influenced by the previously mentioned changes that the labour market has suffered leading to an increasingly employment instability, flexibility and unpredictability. The solutions that both organizations and workers have adopted to cope with this state of events seem to develop at a more rapid pace than the ability for workers to develop their competencies to adapt to it. One example of this is the use or being a temporary worker: a type of contract which allows organizations to purchase work force from outsourcing companies without being responsible for the contract management of the employee. This type of contracts has increased in the last years but the perceptions of both temporary workers and permanent workers towards this type of work are documented in the literature to be negative. We consider entrepreneurship, an economic mechanism able to generate jobs, and increasing job satisfaction to be a solution seen by temporary workers as a next step in their occupational paths.

This paper explores the self-perception of entrepreneurial competencies, intention and willingness to become an entrepreneur of temporary workers. Specifically, we analyse the individual entrepreneurial competencies profiles for each type of intention and the positive or negative willingness to consider entrepreneurship as an option for their occupational path. Being temporary workers groups increasing in the labour market, a better understanding over

their perceptions is necessary. Temporary workers are generally aware of the instability of the labour context (e.g., Galais & Moser, 2009). Rather than a precarious worker, the temporary worker is a new character in the present context of working contracts regulations. Therefore, neither can temporary workers perceive their career in a lifespan perspective or entrepreneurship as a career choice. Alternatively, temporary workers have *occupational paths* and might perceive entrepreneurship as another element in this path, for example, in the form of self-employment. However, little is known about the perception of temporary workers on their own entrepreneurial competencies.

This study is a first step in understanding how temporary workers perceive entrepreneurship and their skills in engaging in entrepreneurial activities as a career option. Moreover, we adopt an innovative view of careers referring to an occupational path where entrepreneurial competencies are an important element to consider.

### **Is the Concept of Career Changing? A Summary of Career Perspectives Literature**

For some time, careers were based on environmental stability, hierarchical organizational structures, a continuous exchange between employer and employee and growing economy. In contrast, nowadays, predictability, stability and guaranteed employment are no longer certain and thus the perspective on careers also has changed (Baron, 2012). The changing nature of the labour market has its effects on the way careers are shaped inside and outside the organization (Baruch, 2006).

According to Sullivan and Baruch (2009), traditionally, careers were defined and analysed in a stability basis: continuous exchange between an individual's loyalty and employer's job security. Several perspectives on career are mentioned in the literature such as the traditional career redux (Super, 1957) which refers to a career that is linear, has a rising

progression in no more than two organizations and focused on extrinsic rewards. However, environmental changes such as technology development, globalization, economic and political changes, modified the way organizations are structured and, therefore, the working context. Besides environmental changes, individuals themselves are changing their career attitudes and behaviours. This is due to several factors, such as longer life expectancy, changing family structures and other changes in society that affect the ways of living. Therefore new models and approaches of *career* started to appear in the literature. Schein (1990), called attention to these facts by stating that every organization faces the problem of trying to match its own constantly changing needs with the also constantly changing needs of the employees. He proposed the concept of career anchors to describe the self-evolving concept of matching what one is good at, their needs, motives and values with their professional choices. Hall (1996, Briscoe and Hall, 2006) used a metaphor of the Greek god Proteus to define the protean career as something that people change in agreement to their needs of self-fulfilment and are oriented by self-career management. Other authors, such as Arthur and Rousseau (1996) defined career as a set of opportunities beyond a single employer, referring to career as a boundaryless concept characterized by mobility based on employees' physical and psychological changes across employment situations. Later on, Greenhaus, Callanan and DiRenzo (2008) defined the three components of the boundaryless career: multidirectional mobility, career competencies and protean orientation, stating that economic factors, organizational conditions and personal characteristics are antecedents of ones' career orientation. Over time, the idea that a career was increasingly more detached from an organization became clear on literature: Granrose and Baccili (2006) stated that both protean and boundaryless careers were a reflection of the new and ambiguous employer-employee relationship, opening the chance to a new concept in literature, the career profiles (Briscoe and Hall, 2006). This idea states that it is possible to define potential career profiles

based on measuring the propensity of an individual engaging on protean or boundaryless careers.

The evolution of the career concept in the literature shows that it has moved from focusing on the organization (e.g., Sullivan & Baruch, 2009; Super, 1957), to perspectives more centred on the individuals and their needs (e.g., Schein, 1990; Hall, 1996; Briscoe & Hall, 2006; Arthur & Rousseau, 1996; Greenhaus, Callanan & DiRenzo, 2008). In this view, individuals act in a context where they assume the responsibility for their careers' management and employability (Sullivan and Baruch, 2009). Drawing from this reasoning we refer to career in this paper as an occupational path, i.e., a set of individual choices through life, considering different occupational possibilities. In this view, entrepreneurial intentions and actions (such as venture creation and or self-employment) career refer to an occupational choice, a transitory option and not necessarily to repeated or long periods of time engaged in entrepreneurial activities.

### **The Temporary *Career* as a Solution for Social and Economic Demands**

Nowadays, the labour market is characterized by flexible employment. One of the major risks associated to it is sudden and involuntary unemployment, threatening workers across sectors, occupations and industries (Lippmann, 2008). Krieshok, Black and McKay (2009) consider that individuals made a shift from the idea "it's all about the match" to "it's all about adapting to change" (p. 275), to describe the change from vocational occupations to other factors more decisive to employ someone and be part of an organization. Organizations and workers have to find new ways to cope with the labour market characterised by instability and flexible employment, and one of them is temporary work. Temporary workers, i.e., workers who "do not have an explicit or implicit contract for on-going employment (...) with alternative work arrangements" (Kraimer, Wayne, Liden, & Sparrowe, 2005, p.389), are

hired by an employer through agencies that do not supervise their work. However, these agencies are responsible for the management of their contract (including salary) and for their recruitment (Kalleberg, 2000). Aletraris (2010) pointed out that temporary work agencies have increased their activity in the last years. Although being a stronger and larger group in the labour context, this type of workers shows lower levels of job satisfaction than permanent workers. Permanent workers, i.e., those who have a contract directly to the organization where they work at, see temporary workers as a threat to their job security (Kraimer et al., 2005). Therefore, although being a work force increasingly more representative in the labour context, temporary workers do not perceive their work conditions favourably and neither their co-workers with different job contracts accept them in a good way. Other studies (e.g., Galais & Moser, 2009), also showed that the sense of commitment of temporary workers is affected by their type of contract. This also leads us to consider that temporary work is a reactive answer to all the changing conditions in the work environment and not an ideal solution for workers or organizations. Most probably, the increasing of alternative contracting solutions, such as temporary contracts, has had a more rapid development than the speed on which workers are able to develop the adequate competencies to deal with these changes. This, in turn, leaves with little alternatives but to waver from job to job with periods of unemployment in between. Entrepreneurial competencies development and entrepreneurial activities, such as self-employment, could represent a more sustainable alternative in a labour context characterized by occupational paths, where individuals would experience higher levels of job satisfaction (Schjoedt & Shaver, 2007). Having a business of themselves, for example, would increase satisfaction and commitment to their work. The questions that raise from this reasoning, however, are whether these temporary workers consider entrepreneurship as an option for their occupational path and if they consider that they have the necessary competencies to engage in such an activity.



## **Entrepreneurship, Career and Entrepreneurial Competencies**

Entrepreneurship always depends upon the existence of a business opportunity and individuals who engage in entrepreneurial activities, recognize opportunities and explore them (e.g., Baron, 2006; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000; Shane, 2012). This perspective highlights the importance that the entrepreneur plays in the labour context. Entrepreneurs are “adults in the process of setting up a business they will (partly) own and or currently are owning and managing an operating young business” (Reynolds et al., 2005, pp. 209). Korotov, Khapova and Arthur (2011) refer to the entrepreneurship career concept as an “illegitimate” career move that individuals do to succeed in the contemporary labour market. Entrepreneurs are described as individuals who did something different and unexpected and their success in doing so is evaluated by the fact of having a career on the area they tried to succeed. This shows that entrepreneurship is seen as a special case and not as something that individuals do as a temporary or permanent move in their occupational path (Sullivan, Forret, Mainiero, & Terjesen, 2007; Mainiero and Sullivan, 2005). In the literature of career, entrepreneurship is rarely referred to as a career, but it has been associated to the kaleidoscope career model (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2005). Sullivan and colleagues (2007) considered that entrepreneurs create their career because they act outside the boundaries of a company who employs them, perfectly balancing the three components of this model: authenticity, balance and challenge. According to Politis (2008) entrepreneurs’ career experiences can consist in prior start-up experience, prior management experience, and prior industry-specific experience. These experiences by their turn produce effects at the entrepreneurial learning level, namely for opportunity recognition. In fact, entrepreneurship as a career option has also been described in the literature as self-employment (Kenney and Mujtaba, 2007; Verheul, Thurik, Grilo and Zwan, 2012; Salimath and Cullen, 2010). Self-

employment, as the act of launching one's own business and being self-employed by it, requires a strong degree of motivation and competencies to engage in entrepreneurial activities. This idea is stressed by the theory of career choice (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman and Johnson, 2005) which suggests that individuals choose occupations that match their personality, values, needs and interests. Baron (2012) stressed that individuals choose to be entrepreneurs when they perceive a fit between their competencies and this occupational option. However, regarding the antecedents for an entrepreneurial career choice, Brice and Nelson (2008) argued that individuals' perceptions of the rewards of an entrepreneurial career affect their intentions. This means that although vocation and independence may play an important role in choosing to become an entrepreneur, the financial reward is still one of the main factors to do so. Douglas and Shepherd (2002), on the other hand, demonstrated that individuals show more positive intentions to become self-employed when they are tolerant to risk and demonstrate a higher motivation towards independence. This shows that entrepreneurship as a step in one's career path is highly related to individuals' self-perception of their competencies. Although research has shown that the predictors of entrepreneurial careers and activities rely on stable factors, little is known about the role of competencies self-perception of the individuals who show the intentions and willingness to become entrepreneurs.

In this sense it is relevant to understand how different perceptions of entrepreneurial competencies are associated to entrepreneurial intention and willingness to consider entrepreneurship as a step in one's occupational path. This point is even more relevant when we consider an enlarging group of workers in today's labour market whose main characteristic is to build an occupational path anchored in different activities, companies and professional activities: temporary workers. To do this, we analyse the *entrepreneurial intentions* (the positive willingness to launch one's own venture), *willingness to consider*

*entrepreneurship as a career option* (individual's perception of self-employment as an occupational choice for their present situation), and *entrepreneurial competencies* (individual characteristics that provide the ability to perform entrepreneurship activities successfully) of temporary workers.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Participants**

One hundred and eighty-four temporary workers participated in this study. The participants were recruited in a temporary work agency in Portugal to answer a survey, which took them approximately 25 minutes to complete. Table 1 shows the description of the sample according to age, gender, education average number of business opportunities previously identified and intentions and willingness to engage in entrepreneurial activities.

*Insert Table 1 here*

### **Measures**

#### *Entrepreneurial intention and entrepreneurship as career option*

We asked two questions to participants regarding their entrepreneurial intention (“Are you planning on launching a business in the future?”) and willingness to consider entrepreneurship as an occupational path option (“Do you consider self-employment as a solution for your professional life?”). Participants had to answer *yes* or *no* to these questions.

#### *Entrepreneurial competencies*

We used the Entrepreneurial Potential Assessment Inventory (EPAI) (Santos, Caetano, & Curral, 2013) to measure a set of entrepreneurial competencies described in the literature as crucial to predict entrepreneurial success and performance: entrepreneurial motivation, social competencies, management competencies, and psychological competencies. This instrument measures the entrepreneurial potential defined as a “set of

distinctive competencies and motivations that are the manifest aspects of every individual's preparedness to become an entrepreneur" (Santos, Caetano, & Currel, 2013, p. 2). The entrepreneurial potential is operationalized by the entrepreneurial competencies that are associated with success in entrepreneurial activities. This instrument was validated with entrepreneurs, university students and workers (Santos, Caetano & Currel, 2013), which makes it suitable to be used also in our sample of temporary workers. Following the indications used by the authors, we assessed entrepreneurial motivation, social competencies, management competencies, psychological competencies. Therefore, entrepreneurial motivation was assessed by four items regarding *economic motivation* and two items regarding *independence motivation*. Social competencies were measured by two items regarding *communication and persuasion capacity* and two items regarding *capacity to develop a social network*. Management competencies was assessed by three items regarding *vision*, four items regarding *ability to gather resources*, two items about *leadership capacity* and two items regarding *entrepreneurial self-efficacy*. Finally, psychological competencies were measured by two items regarding *innovation capacity*, three items regarding *emotional intelligence* and four items regarding *resilience*. All the items were measured in 5-point scale ranging from "completely disagree" to "completely agree".

#### *Business opportunities identified*

In addition to the previous questions, we also asked participants how many business opportunities they had identified in the past. Participants had to indicate the number of business opportunities they had thought about, answering the question "How many feasible business opportunities have you thought about?"

## RESULTS

### Entrepreneurial Intention and Entrepreneurship as a Career Option

Regarding entrepreneurial intention and participants' willingness to consider entrepreneurship as a career option, results show that 50% of participants have the intention to launch a business venture and 40% consider entrepreneurship as an option for their professional lives. On a first analysis, we observed that there is a significant association between intention and willingness to consider entrepreneurship as career option ( $X^2 = 25.11$ ;  $p < .001$ ). However, the direction of the relationship between the two variables is negative ( $\text{Lambda} = .32$ ;  $\text{Pearson } R = -.056$ ). This means that not every individual who has the intention to launch a business venture considers entrepreneurship as a career option and vice versa. We could also observe that the participants with positive entrepreneurial intention and positive willingness to consider entrepreneurship as an occupational option had identified significantly more business opportunities in the past than the other participants (Average of business opportunities previously identified:  $\text{Mean Positive Entrepreneurial Intention} = 1.83$  versus  $\text{Mean Negative Entrepreneurial Intention} = .55$ ;  $F(1.169) = 22.21$ ;  $p < .001$ ;  $\text{Mean Positive willingness towards entrepreneurship as career option} = 1.57$  versus  $\text{Mean Negative willingness towards entrepreneurship as career option} = .99$ ;  $F(2.181) = 3.40$ ;  $p < .05$ ).

Table 2 provides the means, standard deviations and correlations between the entrepreneurial competencies measured and the number of business opportunities previously identified. The lowest mean value observed was for independence motivation ( $M = 3.16$ ) and the highest in entrepreneurial self-efficacy ( $M = 4.10$ ).

*Insert Table 2 here*

## **Entrepreneurial Competencies, Entrepreneurial Intention and Willingness to Consider Entrepreneurship as a Career Option**

With the goal of identify profiles in temporary workers' competencies and their entrepreneurial intention and willingness to consider entrepreneurship as a career option, we performed a multiple correspondence analysis (MCA). Associations among categories of variables were examined according to two dimensions: entrepreneurial intention and willingness to consider entrepreneurship as a career option. As MCA only analyses ordinal and nominal variables, the competencies' variables were recoded into three categories: weak, medium and strong. Table 3 shows all the variables and categories involved in the analysis.

*Insert Table 3 here*

The analysis of discrimination measures allowed to distinguish which variables were better represented in dimensions 1 (entrepreneurial intention) or 2 (willingness to consider entrepreneurship as a career option) (see Table 4).

*Insert Table 4 here*

We can observe that both variables *entrepreneurial intention* and *willingness to consider entrepreneurship as a career option* were in different dimensions. Therefore, this means that dimension 1 was more related to the entrepreneurial intention and dimension 2 was more related to the willingness to consider entrepreneurship as a career option.

Observing the coordinates of each category for dimension 1, entrepreneurial intention, which allows us to establish associations and contrasts between categories of variables, results show that there is an association between individuals who have strong entrepreneurial

competencies and have the intention to launch a business venture. In contrast, those who consider having weak or medium entrepreneurial competencies are also the ones that do not have the intention to launch a business venture (see Table 5).

*Insert Table 5 here*

Regarding willingness to consider entrepreneurship as a career option, Table 6 shows that positive and negative willingness are opposing each other and that there is an association between participants who do not consider or do not know if they would consider entrepreneurship as a career option, have had less than five business ideas and at the same time consider to have a strong emotional intelligence, strong resilience, and weak independence motivation. In contrast, individuals who present a positive willingness to consider entrepreneurship as a career option, have had more than five business ideas and consider to have a strong or medium independence motivation, weak or medium resilience and medium or weak emotional intelligence.

*Insert Table 6 here*

The joint analysis of both dimensions (intentions and willingness) provides an understanding of four profiles identified in the analysis: group 1: positive intention and positive willingness towards entrepreneurship; group 2: positive intention and negative willingness towards entrepreneurship; group 3: negative intention and negative willingness towards entrepreneurship; group 4: negative intentions and positive willingness towards entrepreneurship. Different combinations between intentions and willingness towards

entrepreneurship can be made and, therefore, it is possible to define different competencies profiles, as shown on Figure 1.

*Insert Figure 1 here*

The participants that have positive entrepreneurial intentions and positive willingness to consider entrepreneurship as a career option (group 1) are individuals that have strong independence motivation and strong economic motivation. In the opposite quadrant of the graphic is the group of participants that have a negative entrepreneurial intent and negative willingness to consider entrepreneurship as a career option (group 3). The participants in this group consider themselves to have weak independence motivation, medium or weak economic motivation, medium innovation ability and have identified less than 5 business opportunities. Also in opposite quadrants of the graphic are the participants on groups 2 and 4. The ones in group 2 have positive entrepreneurial intention and negative willingness to consider entrepreneurship as a career option and consider to have strong social network development ability, strong resilience and strong emotional intelligence. Some of them do not know if they would consider entrepreneurship as a career option. Participants in group 4 have a negative entrepreneurial intention but positive willingness to consider entrepreneurship as a career option. These participants consider themselves to have medium communication and persuasion skills, medium or weak emotional intelligence, medium capacity to develop their network, medium or weak resilience, medium vision, medium leadership capacity, medium independence motivation and medium ability to gather resources.

To complement this analysis, we analysed the average level of competencies of participants according to these four groups (see Table 7). In this analysis we considered only the participants who reported positive or negative intention and willingness to consider



entrepreneurship as a career option (n=119, excluding the participants who have answered “Don’t Know”). Participants in group 1, with positive entrepreneurial intentions and positive willingness to consider entrepreneurship as a career option, have in general higher values in entrepreneurial competencies than the other groups. Group 3 has, in general, the lowest scores for the competencies in general. We observed also that participants in group 1 have significantly higher economic motivation than the participants in the other groups ( $F(3.109) = 3.01; p < .05$ ) and participants in group 2 have significantly higher ability to gather resources ( $F(3.103) = 2.99; p < .05$ ).

*Insert Table 7 here*

## **DISCUSSION**

This study explored the role of self-perception of entrepreneurial competencies, entrepreneurial intention and willingness to become an entrepreneur among temporary workers.

A first analysis of the intention and willingness to engage in entrepreneurial activities showed that although significantly associated, not every individual showing a positive intention towards entrepreneurship was willing to become an entrepreneur and vice-versa. This suggested differences among the participants of our study worth being explored. We performed a multiple correspondence analysis to define profiles in temporary workers’ competencies in association with their entrepreneurial intentions and willingness to consider entrepreneurship as a career option. Four profiles were defined according to different combination of intentions and willingness towards entrepreneurship and the levels of competencies. Group 1 refers to the temporary workers who have a positive intention and a positive willingness towards entrepreneurship as a career option. These individuals generally report higher levels of entrepreneurial competencies, specifically significantly higher

economic motivation than the other participants. The literature has demonstrated that individuals with a higher entrepreneurial motivation tend to have a high economic motivation and consider working for themselves more profitable than working for others (Brice & Nelson, 2008; Santos et al., 2013). Temporary workers with positive entrepreneurial intention also demonstrate higher economic motivation and high level of entrepreneurial competencies in general.

Interestingly, there is a group of temporary workers that has positive entrepreneurial intentions but does not perceive entrepreneurship as a career option (group 2). We consider that these individuals are willing to engage in entrepreneurial activities but they do not consider it as a long-term solution, as the term career usually implies. This finding is in line with the evolution of the concept of career in the literature and with our notion of career more as an occupational path rather than in a lifespan perspective. These temporary workers do not have an idea of career but just another temporary solution to which they feel they could adapt to. Entrepreneurship appears to them just as another solution, which is stressed by their perception of strong emotional intelligence and resilience. These individuals have become used to facing uncertainty and to adapting to different situations, which is in line with the definition of entrepreneurial resilience in the literature (e.g., Friborg, et al, 2006). Participants in this group also see entrepreneurship as another step in this occupational path that they might have to adapt to, rather than a solution for an unstable career. The participants in this group demonstrated a significantly higher ability to gather resources than the others in the remaining groups, which is a crucial competence to initiate entrepreneurial activities and adapt to complex environments (e.g., Tan & Peng, 2003).

Unsurprisingly, the participants with negative entrepreneurial intention and negative willingness to consider entrepreneurship as a career option are also the ones who reported lower levels of entrepreneurial competencies and motivations. This result also opens space

for the reflection on the importance of the development of entrepreneurial competencies. Based on these results we can argue that there is a possibility that these individuals do not consider to have the necessary competencies to engage in entrepreneurial activities and consider them as a next step in their occupational path. This reasoning is also consistent with the results found on group 4. On the group of temporary workers who have a negative entrepreneurial intention but a positive willingness to consider entrepreneurship as a career choice (group 4) we could observe that participants consider to have low or medium levels of the competencies associated to their profile. These individuals are not willing to engage in entrepreneurial activities most probably because they feel a lack of some competencies to do so, but would consider it as a choice for their careers, if they would be able to perform this activity. Specifically, these temporary workers consider that their entrepreneurial competencies are not low but at an average stage, which allows them to consider entrepreneurship as an option for their occupational paths but lack of preparedness to engage in such activities in a near future.

The literature shows that temporary workers do not perceive their labour situation positively (Kraimer, et al 2005). They are in a precarious situation and are aware of the instability of the working context, so it is relevant to know whether they are willing to be self-employed as an option, considering the work market conditions and the present concept of career. However, our conclusions show that temporary workers neither perceive entrepreneurship as a clear alternative for their careers, nor consider having all the competencies necessary to engage in entrepreneurial activities.

### **Limitations and Directions for Future Research**

Although we addressed entrepreneurial intentions and willingness to engage in entrepreneurial activities as a career choice, these items do not predict the actual behaviour of the participants. Knowing whether these temporary workers actually engage in

entrepreneurial activities and whether they are willing to consider this activity as a career would be a first interesting line for future research.

Secondly, other competencies and other career perspectives could be taken into consideration in future studies. For example, Segal, Borgia and Schoenfeld (2002) used a theory of social cognitive career to predict self-employment goals among students. Adding these measures in a next study with temporary workers or others in unstable working conditions would be a useful direction for further research. Moreover, other competencies or frameworks for competencies based approaches such as the one suggested by Man et al., (2002), which is more focused on the competitive advantage of such competencies in specific organizational contexts, could be a suggestion for further research.

There is also some debate in the literature about whether self-employment can be considered as entrepreneurship. Some authors (e.g., Blanch, Oswald, & Stutzer, 2001) consider that self-employment is the simplest kind of entrepreneurship. Therefore, we considered that for temporary workers this would be the entrepreneurial action that would suit them better, as a transitory option and a first step to a larger entrepreneurial activity. Finally, although we have considered that temporary workers face in general negative working conditions and that self-employment could be a positive alternative, Patzelt and Shepherd (2011) also demonstrated that self-employment can be associated with negative emotions. However, our intention was mainly to explore the self-perceptions of temporary workers about their competencies and understand their perception about entrepreneurship in their occupational path.

Nevertheless, this study is a first step in understanding how emerging working groups in a changing work environment perceive entrepreneurship as well as their ability to engage in entrepreneurial activities as a career option. It also provides important leads on what competencies different groups of workers should develop to become active entrepreneurs.

## **Implications for Practice**

The labour context has been changing and the solutions found both by organizations and workers seem to develop more rapidly than the ability of workers to develop the competencies to adapt in the new reality. Employing or being a temporary worker has been one of these solutions. In a context of constant economic and social change, entrepreneurship can be solution. However, when entrepreneurship is presented as another step in an occupational path, it is clear that temporary workers do not perceive themselves as having the adequate competencies to do so. In a context of economic change, entrepreneurship is a fundamental mechanism to create jobs and mitigate insufficiencies in the economy (e.g., Shane and Venkataraman, 2000). Not only it is important for workers as individuals, as also organizational and economic development is substantially dependent on entrepreneurship in existing organizations (Antoncic, 2007). We believe that the evolution of the concept of career is going to be more and more related to the introduction of innovation and entrepreneurial activities in companies by their workers. The power of organizations to generate entrepreneurial activities is also well documented in the literature (Burton, Sørensen, & Beckman, 2002; Dobrev & Barnett, 2005; Dobrev, 2012; Schjoedt & Shaver, 2007; Sørensen & Fassiotto, 2011). However, we could observe that a group that is increasingly present in the work context does not have a clear perception of entrepreneurship as a choice for their careers. Mainly, this happens because these individuals do not perceive themselves as having the necessary competencies to do so. This leads to another relevant topic in entrepreneurship research nowadays which is the need to promote the creation of entrepreneurial mindsets. Some authors (e.g., Colombo, Mustar, & Wright, 2010; Heinonen, 2007; Krueger, 2007; Wright, Piva, Mosey, & Lockett, 2009) stress the importance of the university and the role of the university student in this task. As shown in literature, careers

cannot be perceived as linear anymore and they are less associated to an organization. Therefore, it is necessary that educational entities, such as schools and universities, provide future workers the competencies to cope and fit within this context. It is important that not only companies are open to these activities but also that the educational entities provide more entrepreneurial competencies to their students, the future work force of society.

This study provides important insights that can be taken into consideration for training programs focusing on entrepreneurial competencies development. In addition, organizations looking for employees keen on entrepreneurship should consider the assessment of their entrepreneurial competencies as well as investing in them for the development of such competencies. This study provides a first overview of how a specific group in the current labour context perceives entrepreneurship and their own competencies.

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