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DISABILITY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN SPAIN: REALITY AND INITIAL HYPOTHESIS¹

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ABSTRACT

This article presents the results obtained in the quantitative phase of a broader Research Project called "Disability and Entrepreneurship. Competence Analysis". The objective of such research is to know the reality of entrepreneurship of people with disabilities in Spain, so that it is possible to subsequently establish different research hypotheses which indicate which are the key variables to enquire into entrepreneurship of people with disabilities and to intervene in it. The descriptive results of the survey, which was conducted among people with disabilities, indicate the favourable attitude for such collective to launch a business as an alternative conducive to their personal, economic and social development. Nevertheless, the activity of the launched business is affected by weaknesses which hinder its development and jeopardize its survival, what reinforces the hypothesis that the acquisition and development of certain competencies is an aspect that can improve business profitability of launched projects.

Keywords: Disability, Entrepreneurship, Competencies.

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the International Classification of Impairment, Disability and Handicaps (ICIDH) (WHO, 1980) "disability is an issue that affects individuals, families and society as a whole and therefore has an important political relevance" (Abellán García & Hidalgo Checa, 2011). There is, therefore, an absence of normal capacities that, to some different degree should be developed through life in society. This situation concerns not only single people, but also groups of relatives, the closest social and economic environment, society as a whole and public authorities as those members of a democratic society who guarantee common welfare measures of last resort (National Disability Observatory, 2014; 2018).

One of the newest and most recognized principles, which implies universal integration into a democratic society, is that of participation: Once the principle of citizenship together with that of integration of the collective of people with disabilities have consolidated their position in a society that belongs to all collectives and where the legal precepts and procedures have been agreed by all its members (Sánchez-Mora & Lopera, 2014; Pereda et al., 2003; Rubio & Sánchez

¹ Proyecto Discapacidad y Emprendimiento. Análisis Competencial. CSO2016-75818-R (AEI/FEDER, UE).

Marín, 2014), it is necessary to establish the legal and social channels, which allow such collective to participate in all social spheres.

Certainly, one of the key areas of participation for anyone is the labour field. Participation in the labour market and the place occupied in it are the best guarantees for a citizen to be part of everything that society offers and to collaborate to supply those services and opportunities, which are at the disposal of everyone. Following such premise, diversity management can be established as an essential value of society (Harrison et al., 1998). In other words Manzanera & Ortiz (2017) point out that *"the labour market, however, is not homogeneous and access to it is mediated by socio-demographic characteristics such as sex, age, educational level, ethnicity or abilities/disabilities which are decisive when achieving labour insertion"*.

In recent years, the concern of various public and private initiatives has been maximum educational and employment integration of people with disabilities. In this regard, *"when it comes to studying the employment possibilities of the group of people with disabilities, it is nowadays essential to approach to their incorporation into the world of entrepreneurship, in the same way as those other people who belong to the active population do, namely as a form of integration into the labour market and as personal self-improvement"* (García-Palma & Sánchez-Mora, 2018). In such a vein, one of the fundamental objectives pursued in this research is to seek out what public authorities and private initiative are doing (Riaño, 2011) with the aim of facilitating learning, orientation, financing, management so that maximum participation of people with disabilities as de facto or prospective entrepreneurs, in short, in order to allow that both their personal and entrepreneurial goals and concerns are achieved (Cardona & Cabeza, 2014; Ortiz & Olaz, 2018).

To achieve this, it is necessary that collaboration between the will of people with disabilities, their families and those closest to them is maximized; In addition to that, we must certainly take into account, the fundamental function of school, training and the intervention both of administrative entities and companies (Spanish Strategic Action Plan for Disability 2014-2020).

Therefore, *"entrepreneurship, understood as one of the possible ways to boost employment, must be considered as a relevant element to promote the full inclusion of people with disabilities. Consequently, it is essential being able to have access to as much information as possible on the competencies that help understand entrepreneurship of people with disabilities and to know about factors that can favour or limit entrepreneurship of the mentioned collective"* (López & Manzanera-Román, 2018).

METHODOLOGY

This article, in addition to reviewing relevant literature exhaustively, follows a methodology based on data from a survey carried out within the framework of the research Project *"Disability and Entrepreneurship. Competence analysis"* (CSO2016-75818-R), developed by a research group from the University of Murcia and financed by the National R+D+I Plan.

This survey, whose details are offered in the article of Barba-Sánchez (in this review), in which this work is integrated, was conducted between November and December 2018 on a sample of residents in Spain with physical, sensory and organic disabilities. After this point, a

descriptive analysis of the recently obtained survey data, which provides a basis for the different articles of the mentioned review, was carried out.

As mentioned in the section dealing with the literature review, the fundamental objective which motivates this article is the description of the reality of people with disabilities when starting up a business and which competencies must be developed so that they fulfil their goals.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Profile

Regarding the respondent profile: it's a person who belongs to the group of people with disabilities; in 60.1% of the cases, we are dealing with a woman; in 42.7% of the cases, the age ranges between 35 and 50 years: in 36.0% of the cases is over 50 years old; Moreover, in 53.9% of the cases, higher education has been studied, either a university degree or higher vocational training.

As for the main labour activity, in a prevailing 27.2% of the cases, the situation of wage earner stands out; in 19.6% of the cases, that of unemployment; in 18.3% of the cases that of inactivity. Finally, 13.4% develop an entrepreneurial activity.

50.0% out of 224 respondents have a grade of physical or sensory disability ranging between 33% and 49%. Only one third out of 224 respondents (33.5%) have a benefit related to their degree of disability, which in most cases does not exceed 600 euros per month. 70.1% of the 224 surveyed people belong to some association of people with disabilities.

Entrepreneurial Activity

As for the entrepreneurship of people with disabilities, following data are provided (Table 1):

	n	%
Yes, I have a business	27	12.1
No, but I have the intention to have one	42	18.8
Yes, I have had one but I gave it up	48	21.4
Neither have I had one, nor do I intend to have one, for I am not interested in it.	61	27.2
I don't have it because it's impossible for me because of my disability.	24	10.7
NS/NC (They don't know/ They don't answer)	22	9.8
Total	224	100

Source: Project Survey "Disability and entrepreneurship. Competence Analyse".

Despite the fact that only 12.1% of the respondents have a business, it is worth remarking that the 40.2% have grounded a business in the past or wish to launch one in the future. According to this, a high proportion either has developed an entrepreneurial activity, have it currently or consider launching a business in the future as an alternative to their personal, economic and social fulfilment.

The most significant factors for not developing a business, indicated by those respondents who neither have had a business nor intention of launching one, it is worth noting are the

following ones: lack of economic resources, 67.2%; doubts about the profitability of the business, 55.7%; lack of institutional support from different administrations, 52.5% and lack of business experience, 41.0%.

Hereafter, we will describe the characteristics of the business activity of those who either have one or wish to develop it. It should be noted, in the first place that, in 78.3% of the cases, the activity of the company or its project belongs to the services sector. In addition, the ownership is usually individual (41.4%) and shared (44.3%). 71.4% are mostly small businesses or companies without employees for only in 11.4% of cases their size exceeds 3 employees.

A highly relevant issue is the motivation to develop a business or entrepreneurial activity. In this respect, the results are as follows:

Table 2 WHAT IS THE MAIN REASON WHY YOU HAD STARTED UP A BUSINESS?/ WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF LAUNCHING A BUSINESS?		
	N	%
Out of necessity	63	53.4
Out of opportunity	45	38.1
NS/NC (They don't know/They don't answer)	10	8.5
Total	118	100

Source: Project Survey “Disability and entrepreneurship. Competence Analyse”.

As follows, these are the most important reasons for entrepreneurship among respondents who have current or past experience in the development of an entrepreneurial business activity:

Table 3 IN YOUR OPINION, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING REASONS ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT ONES IN RELATION TO ENTREPRENEURSHIP?		
	n	%
To better my personal income	40	33.9
To increase my personal independence	36	30.5
To achieve a personal challenge	32	27.1
To reach social recognition	7	5.9
Others	2	1.7
NS/NC (They don't know/They don't answer)	1	0.8
Total	118	100

Source: Project Survey “Disability and entrepreneurship. Competence Analyse”.

As can be observed, 53.4% manifest that the main motivation for them to develop a business is “out of necessity” (Table 2). Furthermore, “to better my personal income” and “to increase personal independence” are key reasons for developing an entrepreneurial activity, as well as “achieving a personal challenge” (Table 3). Such reasons are referred to rather personal elements, more oriented to personal satisfaction than to social recognition.

On the contrary, there are the reasons to give up a business once it has been grounded. In this regard, the reason “lack of profitability” (47.5%) stands out over the other ones. Moreover, that fact is coherent with one of the main reasons for entrepreneurship namely “to better my personal income”. On the other hand, the prevalence of “lack of profitability” supports the hypothesis which states that those who are represented by such percentage lack those specific training resources which favour developing entrepreneurial projects and economically sustainable businesses.

In this respect, it is central to the entrepreneurial dimension to analyse certain competencies. To develop such analyse, respondents have been asked a series of questions related to some of those competencies.

Competencies and Entrepreneurship

First of all, it is worth mentioning aspects, which, from a personal point of view, are included in Self-knowledge, such as emotional awareness, self-evaluation and self-confidence. Secondly, it is also worth mentioning Self-management, which includes emotional self-control, transparency, adaptation, achievement, initiative and optimism. Thirdly, it is worth mentioning Social Consciousness, which from the environment-oriented perspective, involves empathy, organizational awareness and service orientation; Finally, Relationship Management, which, in relation to entrepreneurship and personal management implies being capable of developing people, leadership, managing changes, managing conflicts and teamwork (Table 4).

	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Item 5	Item 6
Self-knowledge	83,7	92,1	78,7	-	-	-
Self-management	71,3	84,8	79,2	66,3	74,2	80,4
Social Consciousness	83,7	77,5	78,1	-	-	-
Relationship Management	69,1	68,0	67,4	74,2	81,5	87,1

Source: Project Survey "*Disability and entrepreneurship. Competence Analyse*".

As can be observed, respondents valued those statements that measure the development level of every rated competence very positively. However, on average, such rating is higher in self-management and social awareness, and lower in self-management and relationship management.

CONCLUSIONS

People with disabilities manifest a high tendency towards entrepreneurship and, therefore, towards self-employment as a means of fulfilling personal, economic and social needs. However, this alternative is chosen out of necessity rather than out of a detected opportunity. Probably, the fact that the launched business lacked profitability may be why the proportion of people with disabilities who have given up their start-up company is so noticeable. These results support the hypothesis that it is essential for this collective to acquire and develop certain competencies in order to develop an entrepreneurial model that improves the survival and the profitability of the launched business. In this sense, we must not forget the respondent profile, according to which women predominate, and in which the education level and the development of certain competencies must also be reinforced.

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