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# **PERSONAL SELF-KNOWLEDGE, A KEY FACTOR FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES<sup>1</sup>**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*The article hereby analyses the influence of psychological factors on entrepreneurship of people with disabilities, focusing on the dimension "Personal Self-knowledge". Its aim is to look into the extent of such an influence on this collective when launching an entrepreneurial activity as well as to know both, the competence self-evaluation in people with disabilities and the factors or barriers, which in their opinion limit such entrepreneurship. The data used in this article are the result of a survey which was conducted between November and December 2018 on a sample of residents in Spain who have physical, sensory and organic disabilities. The technical sheet of such survey appears referenced in the Article of Barba-Sánchez, published in this review. It was developed by the University of Murcia within the framework of the Project "Disability and entrepreneurship. Competence Analysis"(CSO2016-75818-R) and was funded by the National R+D+I Plan.*

**Keywords:** Disability, Entrepreneurship, Psychological Factors, Self-Knowledge.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Entrepreneurship is a way of labour insertion for collectives, which are traditionally discriminated against in the labour market, such as that of people with some type of disability. People with different abilities, due to their life experiences, have developed a lower self-esteem, what significantly influences both their position and mobility in the labour market (González-Olivares & Martín-Serrano. 2012) and the decision to launch a business.

In order to achieve a positive perception of oneself, competencies such as resilience and personal self-knowledge, are required. González-Torres (2006) states that, in the case of people with disabilities, self-knowledge should be promoted emphasizing the sense of self-worth of this collective, so that they find more opportunities, which allow them to use their capacities and abilities for their benefit. Thanks to the fact that they understand their disability, identify the way

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in which they are unique and know how they can take advantage of their uniqueness. In other words, Saavedra et al. (2012) understand that the development of resilience is strengthened by self-concept as part of the identity of individuals.

As a consequence of all that, previously to entrepreneurship in general and of people with disabilities in particular, *“it is essential that they recognize the fact that the more realistic personal knowledge, not only about oneself, but also about the own strengths and weaknesses as entrepreneur, the more adequate decisions about launching a business may probable be for the creation of a new organisation”* (Parra, 2013).

The objective of this article is to make visible the relevance of the study of the competences that make up the psychological aspect in general and of self-knowledge competence in particular, to promote the labor insertion, through entrepreneurship in people who, due to some type of disability, they find more difficulties when entering the labor market. To perform such studio will take into account both personal self-knowledge variables as entrepreneurial capabilities variable. Self-knowledge is defined as internal states, preferences, resources and intuitions, as well as entrepreneurial spirit refers to the factors whose convergence influences the creation of a commercial enterprise.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### Psychological Factors and Influence on Entrepreneurship

Among the basic competencies that constitute the psychological aspect, according to Goleman (1999) *“self-knowledge would be based on knowing the own internal states, preferences, resources and intuitions”*, and would be comprised of competencies, which are related to the motivation and initiative to carry out a business project. Such competencies are the following:

- Emotional consciousness (recognizing one's own emotions and their implication).
- Self-evaluation (distinguishing one's personal strengths and weaknesses).
- Self-confidence (being sure of one's own values and personal abilities).

Summarizing, entrepreneurs need to know: if focus is laid on people rather than on organizational tasks; if necessary interpersonal skills have been acquired; level of self-esteem (whether high or low), what may be conditioning; if the tendency is to compete or cooperate; situation of the control locus (internal or external); emotional stability level (whether it is high or low or way of thinking, among others. Accordingly, *“it is possible to predict his effective behaviour in a specific entrepreneurial situation”* (Parra 2013).

### Self-knowledge Dimension in People with Disabilities

Although entrepreneurship can be examined according to different approaches or perspectives, the factors whose convergence influence in the creation of a business company are multiple. In the case of certain collectives, such as that of people with disabilities or with different abilities, psychological factors determine in a very significant proportion the decision to develop a business. This is supported by motivational theories or those based on the entrepreneur's personality traits.

According to the European Union and the OECD (2014), as indicated in the document Policy Brief on Entrepreneurship for people with Disabilities, stress is laid on the fact that "*specific barriers faced by people with disabilities when starting their own business, beyond the general challenges faced by any entrepreneur*", are related to the psychological aspect or factor (Pérez & Avilés, 2018).

In Spain, recent research studies by Ortiz & Olaz (2018) also seem to confirm that, among the multiple aspects that condition entrepreneurship such as, the economic-fiscal, physical-accessibility, educational, institutional, business organizational and entrepreneurship motivating ones, as well as those concerning workplace or family members, the psychological one is considered to be the most relevant one in relation to the entrepreneurial motivation of people with disabilities. Also Pérez & Avilés (2018), following a personal and psychological approach, basing on a nominal group, analysed the factors that could hinder, limit or impede the entrepreneurship of people with disabilities. The specific factors alluded by such authors are comprised in four groups:

1. Objective difficulties which are the result from the disability itself, and which vary according to the disability type and degree.
2. Self-imposed mental barriers developed by people with disabilities themselves, which are related to the subjective perception they have of themselves and their disability. In this regard, aspects such as low personal self-esteem; lack of security and confidence not only in themselves but also in the abilities which they need to lead a business project. Respondents also pointed out other aspects as initial ignorance; doubts about the opinion of the environment and the lack of motivation and entrepreneurial initiative, which are directly linked to the lack of self-esteem and self-confidence.
3. Aspects that are directly associated with the business venture, such as the lack of a business idea or specific social skills.
4. They stressed the social environment, family overprotection, lack of external stimuli or lack of empathy from society regarding the daily difficulties that people with disabilities face.

## METHODS

The methodology used in this article is based on a survey which was developed within the framework of the Project "*Disability and entrepreneurship. Competence Analysis*" (CSO2016-75818-R) and was funded by the National R+D+I Plan of the Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness. Its aim is to know the competencies that promote and/or, on the contrary, hinder the entrepreneurial activity of people with disabilities. In any case, we seek to shed light on the possible proposals that will make it possible to put into value the strategies implemented by them as entrepreneurs, as well as the problems they have found.

In order to identify the influence of psychological factors on entrepreneurship, in this article we will deal with the relation between the data referred to the "*Personal Self-knowledge*" dimension and the entrepreneurial competencies.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In the questionnaire applied to this research study on the collective of people with disabilities, we aim at knowing what opinion they have about the obstacles or factors of which hinder their entrepreneurship. Regarding the psychological dimension of personal self-knowledge, we also seek to determine the importance or weight that such collective attach to such factors; that is, the self-perception that they have about their competencies. Following this,

we present those relations which are considered absolutely significant (chi-square is 0.000), basing on the answers, where 1 is "Nothing" and 5 is "A lot", as expressed by those who were interviewed and have responded.

Self-confidence is undoubtedly related to the capacity of anticipating, and recognizing the needs that enhance customer satisfaction, as well as to the capacity of being persuasive when proposing their activities while training is linked to the capacity of entrepreneurs, which takes place at their work, in order to anticipate and recognise the needs of customers and so to achieve their satisfaction. In addition, training is also related to the capacity of entrepreneurs to manage conflicts by seeking a negotiated way to reach agreements (47% of those with this ability confess having little or no training). Moreover, training also enables them to enhance teamwork (having little or no training is what 50% of those who say they have this ability confess). There is no doubt that having entrepreneurial experience has an enormous influence on being aware of the own emotions and their possible consequences. Such experience also conditions whether there is ability to adapt to change, whether anticipation and recognition of the needs involved in customer satisfaction at the workplace is developed, whether the personal development needs of others can be detected, and last but not least, whether conflicts are managed by seeking a negotiated way to reach an agreement. Concerning the fact that there is lack of economic resources, we must note the remarkable relation between that shortage and the fact of considering oneself as being an optimist or anticipating and recognizing those needs which guarantee customer satisfaction (72.97% of those with this capacity have enough or many economic resources). In addition, the lack of economic resources is also related to the ability to detect the needs of the others for personal development (80% of those who have this capacity claim to have enough or many economic resources). There is also a relation between the lack of economic resources and the ability to manage conflicts by seeking a negotiated way to reach agreements, as well as to team work. Doubts about the profitability of the business are crucially conditioned whether at work the needs that satisfy their customers are anticipated and recognized (56.81% of those who anticipate the most say they have many doubts), and also whether in order to manage conflicts a negotiated way to reach agreements is sought after. The lack of stimuli in the immediate environment (family, friends, associations) determines whether there is adaptation to changes at work or whether needs that characterise customer satisfaction are anticipated and recognised at work; whether knowledge about how to detect the needs of others to develop personally is developed. Those stimuli also have an influence in relation to the capacity that determines whether being convincing when proposing the activities and whether in order to manage conflicts a negotiated way to reach agreements is sought after. The lack of institutional support (state and autonomous administration) also influences whether at work needs that allow meeting customer satisfaction he can be anticipated and recognized. In this regard, 64.86% of those who consider themselves quite or very competent receive enough or large amounts of institutional support.

In Table 1, which is shown below, stand out those response percentages in which the surveyed who have answered, attribute themselves personal self-knowledge competency to a very high extent, in as much as we considered that the greatest hindrances to entrepreneurship are mainly due to lack of economic resources, lack of institutional support, doubts about the profitability of the business and lack of training.

<b>Limiting factors</b>	<b>Self-knowledge</b>
Lack of economic resources	72.97%-80%
Lack of institutional support	64.86%
Doubts about the profitability of the business	56.81%-62.16%
Lack of training	47.5%-50%

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

In this vein, Moreno & Tejada (2015), agree with some of these barriers, which limit the promotion of entrepreneurship in the collective such as: lack of funding for the business idea; lack of training, but do not agree with others such as those related to entrepreneurship, namely the capacity for self-management and occupational planning of the collective of entrepreneurs disabilities; nor with the insufficient involvement of public authorities in promoting entrepreneurship as a professional alternative for such collective.

## CONCLUSION

Psychological factors and the self-knowledge that each person, generally speaking, has of his competencies, which involve knowledge, capacities and abilities as a whole, together both of them represent an essential condition for labour integration for everyone. Particularly, such condition is especially necessary for people who have added difficulties as in the case of people with disabilities, where having disabilities stays for having different capacities.

The study on competencies in entrepreneurs and their transmission through training is a determining factor that can be especially positive in order to promote the inclusion of the collective of people with different abilities in the current labour and business environment.

As stated by numerous authors namely Van Praag & Cramer (2001), Arenius & Minniti (2005), Langowitz & Minniti (2007) and Minniti & Nardone (2007), in García & Fernández (2016), individuals decide to launch a business depending on the knowledge or evaluation they make of their knowledge, skills and abilities (competencies). In short, Campos & Sanchís (2014) affirm that a business is started up "*because there are people who have motivations for doing so*". Among the limitations of this study, we can refer to the sampling frame, which in later studies can be expanded together with other primary sources, although there is enough literature that allows us to affirm that the analysis of disability and its relationship with entrepreneurship is a line of research in which you must deepen. As future study perspectives some proposals to encourage entrepreneurship are the following:

- To develop training actions on those entrepreneurial competencies which promote the proactive attitude of people with disabilities as a collective.
- To develop institutional actions that favour entrepreneurship of such collective through economic aid or financing resources.

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