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# THE TYPE OF DISABILITY AS A DIFFERENTIAL FACTOR IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

*In a context characterized by the deterioration of the position of people with disabilities in relation to employment, entrepreneurship can be considered as a useful element to favour both labour and social inclusion of this collective, despite the fact that such a resource is underutilized by people with disabilities.*

*Research on entrepreneurship of persons with disabilities has focused on those impediments or obstacles, which hinder persons with disabilities from initiating entrepreneurial actions. Among these obstacles, there are, on one hand, those related to the social field, including institutional ones, those concerning education and training linked with entrepreneurial competencies, socio-economic ones and even the ones related to family. On the other hand, there are those related to the personal sphere, which, on the contrary, have to do with the type of disability.*

*Furthermore, this research is based on a survey which was conducted between November and December 2018 on a sample of residents in Spain with physical, sensory and organic disabilities. Such a survey has been developed by the University of Murcia within the framework of the Project "Disability and entrepreneurship. Competence Analysis"(CSO2016-75818-R), which was funded by the National R+D+I Plan. The results of such research manifest that having disabilities is a differentiating factor in entrepreneurship.*

*Therefore, people with disabilities related to the osteoarticular system are those who start up a business to a greater extent than the rest, since almost 60% of surveyed people with that disability have launched a business on some occasion, while only 14.3% of people with visual system disability or 15.2% of hearing impaired have developed a business. This may be due to the fact that people with the latter two types of disability find a better socio-labour insertion through paid work. On the contrary, 23.1% of people with disabilities related to the neuromuscular system do not develop a business, as they consider that it is impossible for them because of their own disability. However, it seems that concerning entrepreneurship, social factors are more determining than personal factors. Lack of economic resources or lack of institutional support for entrepreneurship are factors that condition entrepreneurship and should be taken into consideration to promote self-employment among persons with disabilities.*

**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship, Type of Disability, Obstacles.

<sup>1</sup> Proyecto Discapacidad y Emprendimiento. Análisis Competencial. CSO2016–75818–R (AEI/FEDER, UE).



## INTRODUCTION

Employment is one of the most effective elements for the integration of people in society but in recent decades it has suffered a serious deterioration. Moreover, the position in the labour market of people with disabilities is worse than that of people without disabilities. Even if the labour situation of both groups has become more demanding in the years of economic and financial crisis, in the case of people with disabilities, their rates of activity, employment, unemployment and self-employment represent a reality that is to be improved.

Entrepreneurship is an option to promote labour and social integration of people with disabilities. However, for this group, such option is conditioned not only by social factors such as factors related to training, socio-economic and institutional ones, etc., but also by more personal factors. Among the latter, both the degree and the type of disability are crucial for this collective to start a business. This article sheds light on the main concepts that have been considered above mentioned research field. First of all, it describes the methodology used; thereafter, it suggests the main results of the research and, finally, it sets out its conclusions.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Disability must be understood as a multidimensional phenomenon and must be approached from a social perspective (Ferreira, 2007; 2008), rather than from a biological and psychological one, even less, following a medical approach. Since the birth of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2006, a social model that improves the rehabilitative model is promoted, so that disability is no longer considered a personal characteristic, being considered a social construct. The issue is not about people with disabilities adapting to their environment, but rather about the environment adapting to people with disabilities (Saad & Mini, 2018). According to this approach, it is easier to achieve the development of actions and/or policies that aim at the normalization of people with disabilities.

Labour is one of the most important fields for normalizing disability (Manzanera-Román & Ortiz, 2017) and entrepreneurship is among them. In recent years, social and labour integration of people with disabilities has become increasingly relevant, as their position in the labour market has deteriorated (Manzanera-Román & Ortiz, 2017). With this background, entrepreneurship of people with disabilities can be considered as an important factor for this group to evolve professionally and socially (Jones & Latreille, 2011; Moreno-Rodríguez, 2019). Such collective should be encouraged or promoted by public policies, which have been enhanced in recent years thanks to the principles of rehabilitation to autonomy.

In relation to employment, the situation of people with disabilities is worse than that of persons without disabilities (Manzanera-Román & Ortiz, 2017; Ortiz & Olaz, 2018). The National Statistics Institute, provides data, which were collected by ODISMET and published as Survey on Employment of People with Disabilities. Such data indicate that in 2017 there is a difference of 42.7% between the activity rate of people without and people with disabilities (35.0%), so that more or less a third part of this collective is not active in terms of labour (*“more or less”* means that such third part is surpassed only by few percentage points). The same is true when it comes to the employment rate, since it reaches 25.9% in persons with disabilities and 64.4% in persons without disabilities. Concerning the unemployment rate, it is higher among people with disabilities (26.2%), being 8.5% higher than that of people without them. Finally, the self-employment figure is not better either, as the self-employment rate of persons without disabilities (10.9%) is 5.4% below that of persons with disabilities. Therefore, the professional

situation of people with disabilities is mainly that of salaried, while entrepreneurship and self-employment are a minority form of labour and social inclusion. Having compared people with and without disabilities, there is evidence that those who suffer from disabilities find it more difficult to launch a business than other collectives. Thus, the main focus of the few researches done on the entrepreneurship of people with disabilities has focused on the obstacles or hindrances for their self-employment.

There are several conditioning factors which can have a relevant influence on entrepreneurship of people with disabilities. The type of disability (and even the degree of it), as a factor circumscribed to the personal dimension, conditions entrepreneurship significantly, so that support to people with disabilities should increase (Pérez & Avilés, 2018). As to the type of disability basing on the aforementioned data from the Survey on the Employment of People with Disabilities of the National Statistics Institute, in Spain entrepreneurship was in 2017 more frequent among people with physical disability (52.4%), being followed by people with hearing disability (12.5%), by those with mental disability (7.9%), by those with visual disability (3.7%) and last by those with intellectual disability (2.1%).

Moreover, there are multiple factors which are determinant for entrepreneurship thus limiting it or making possible for people with disabilities to launch a business (García, 2018). Among them, it is possible to differentiate between those which, on one hand, are related to a more personal field and those which, on the other hand, are rather more linked to a contextual or social factors. Those factors included in the first case are personal ones as they contain issues derived from the disability itself, what has been mentioned in relation to the type of disability. In the second case, we can include a wide range of factors comprising institutional factors (Ortiz & Olaz, 2018), educational factors related to entrepreneurship itself (Doyel, 2000; Kitching, 2014; Renko et al., 2015), socio-economic factors (Ortiz & Olaz, 2018), as well as factors related to family (De la Red Vega et al., 2008; Potts, 2005; Renko et al., 2015; Rizzo, 2002).

## METHODOLOGY

This article uses data which result of a survey which 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. It 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 paper of Barba-Sánchez, published in this journal. For this paper's purpose of defining the profile of the entrepreneur, the type of disability that the person suffers has been taken as an independent variable and the situation towards entrepreneurship as a dependent variable.

## RESULTS

Having a disability may itself be a limiting factor for certain activities, namely those related to the entrepreneurial initiative. However, not all types of disability imply the same difficulties. Some types of disability may be more limiting than others. Table 1 shows how people make different decisions with regard to entrepreneurship basing them on their personal situation according to the type of disability and his relation to it.

**Table 1**  
**DIFFERENT TYPES OF DISABILITY AND THEIR RELATION TO ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

	Osteoarticular system	Neuromuscular system	Visual system	auditory system	d	Other type of disability	Total
Yes, I have a business	28.6%	7.7%	0.0%	6.5%	15.6%	8.6%	12.1%
No, but I have the intention to have one	5.7%	26.9%	21.4%	23.9%	15.6%	20.7%	18.8%
Yes, I have had one but I gave it up	28.6%	19.2%	14.3%	8.7%	28.9%	24.1%	21.4%
Neither I have one, nor I intend to have one, for I am not interested in it.	25.7%	15.4%	57.1%	26.1%	22.2%	31.0%	27.2%
I don't have one for it's impossible for me because of my disability.	5.7%	23.1%	7.1%	10.9%	13.3%	6.9%	10.7%
NS/NC	5.7%	7.7%	0.0%	23.9%	4.4%	8.6%	9.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

\*Chi-square (p)<0.05

Source: Own elaboration

First of all, it should be emphasized that Pearson's chi-squared test allows establishing a statistically significant link between the variables "type of disability" and "situation towards entrepreneurship", what supports the affirmation that the fact of starting a business is conditioned by the type of disability.

According to the data, it can be confirmed how, in relative terms, people whose disability is related to the osteoarticular system are those who develop a business to a greater extent, since almost 60% of surveyed people who suffer such a disability have launched a business at a given moment (28.6% have a business currently and 28.6% had a business once, but abandoned it). On the contrary, cases of entrepreneurship of those whose disabilities are related to the visual and to the auditory system are much rarer (14.3% and 15.2% respectively). The explanation for this does not lay so much in the own recognition of the limitations caused by such disabilities (7.1% and 10.9%, respectively), but rather in the fact that a large part of them are already employed as salaried workers, what means that they are the collective with the greatest labour insertion.

According to the collected data, it is also worth highlighting that the neuromuscular system related disability seems to be the most limiting one when it comes to entrepreneurship, since 23.1% of those who suffer from such disability say that it is impossible for them to start up a business given their disability, while such percentage is remarkable lower in the case of those who suffer from other types of disabilities.

Finally, it is interesting to highlight, considering another question of the survey, the reasons given by those who did not intend to develop a business. Among the reasons pointed out in their answers, those related to the context (lack of economic resources, doubts about profitability or lack of institutional support), stand out from other personal aspects (confidence in their own abilities, sufficient training). This would suggest that the hindrance to entrepreneurship

in these groups is a consequence of the lack of resources and social aid rather than of their own limitations due to the fact of suffering from a disability.

## CONCLUSIONS

The main conclusion reached in this research suggests that the type of disability can be considered as a differentiating factor in relation to entrepreneurship, despite the fact that it is a factor, which is conditioned by other factors of social nature. In this regard, people with disabilities related to the osteoarticular system have a greater tendency to entrepreneurship than the rest of people with disabilities, probably, because they face greater difficulties in achieving social and labour insertion as salaried workers. That would explain why people with disabilities related to auditory and visual system do not express so often that they have the intention to launch a business or have done so. However, it seems that, other than personal factors, social factors, such as the lack of economic resources or the lack of help of the administration, are what hinder entrepreneurship to a greater extent.

Therefore, it is worth mentioning the recommendation that entrepreneurship of people with disabilities should be supported through programs, plans, economic aid, public and social policies designed by the administration and focused on the problems of such collective. (Manzanera-Román, 2018). Only so, those obstacles which are conditioned by the type of disability could be overcome.

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