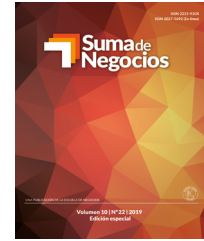




# SUMA DE NEGOCIOS



## Research article

# Psychological characteristics analysis that define a disabled entrepreneur



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### ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the study of people with physical or sensory disabilities who decide to start a business. The research question is to identify the psychological traits that characterize these people and to know what intangibles guide them towards the entrepreneurship. It has been chosen qualitative research to identify and describe their profile, in which 15 in-depth interviews have been executed with critical informants people related to the subject of study. The results show that these people have a reasonably defined psychological profile. Firstly, there have internal characteristics, that can sometimes be innate, such as self-esteem or self-confidence, internal security, adaptability or optimism. Secondly, there have interpersonal traits, oriented towards the entrepreneurship, such as initiative, empathy or leadership.

### Análisis de las características psicológicas que definen a un emprendedor con discapacidad

#### RESUMEN

Este trabajo se centra en el estudio de las personas con discapacidad física o sensorial que deciden emprender. Como pregunta de investigación, se busca identificar cuáles son los rasgos psicológicos que caracterizan a estas personas, es decir, qué intangibles los orientan hacia la tarea de emprender. Para identificar y describir su perfil, se ha optado por una investigación de carácter cualitativo, en la que se han realizado quince entrevistas en profundidad a informantes clave que se relacionan con el tema de estudio de diversa forma. Los resultados muestran que estas personas tienen un perfil psicológico bastante definido. En primer lugar, se observan características de naturaleza interna, que en ocasiones pueden llegar a ser innatas, como la autoestima, la seguridad interna, la capacidad de adaptación o el optimismo. En segundo lugar, se aprecian rasgos de tipo interpersonal, orientados hacia el emprendimiento, como la iniciativa empresarial, la empatía o el liderazgo.

Palabras clave:  
Iniciativa empresarial,  
autoempleo,  
discapacidad física,  
discapacidad sensorial,  
rasgos psicológicos,  
competencias, diversidad funcional.

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## Introduction

Studies on the entrepreneurship of people with disabilities are scarce in the literature, among other things, because they represent a little extended collective. In the member States of the European Union (EU), the rates of self-employment of persons with disabilities are relatively low, with the majority being between 5 and 15 % (European Union, 2014). The official data of Spain reveal that, in 2017, only 10.9 % of people with disabilities were employed on their own, so that 62.8 % are self-employed entrepreneurs without employees (Instituto Nacional de Estadística [INE] (Statistics National Institute [SNI]), 2018).

During the last years, it has become aware that entrepreneurship is an alternative to regular employment for people with disabilities (Moreno, 2019). For this reason, political measures have been created to favor the business initiative of this and other vulnerable groups (Balcazar, Kuchak, Dimpfl, Sariepella & Alvarado, 2014; Barrios, 2014; Maritz & Laferriere, 2016; Durkin & Gunn, 2017; Terziev, 2017). The project is proposed as well as a strategy to face the challenges that these groups into the labor market face. Despite the efforts, disability, and entrepreneurship, two realities remain that are difficult to come together; due to multiple factors such as the lack of confidence that the person with disabilities has in itself, the fear of losing a fixed income from public pensions, the lack of support and express training in business matters or the stereotyped and discriminatory vision that society has of the collective.

However, how are people with disabilities who do decide to undertake?, What is the profile that in psychological terms are characterized?, What intangibles move them towards this task? Are there psychological traits that favor and predispose the disabled person towards entrepreneurship? Are those traits innate or can they be acquired? This research work is proposed, faced with these doubts, whose primary objective is to identify the psychological traits that define a person with a physical or sensorial disability who decides to undertake. It is essential to investigate this issue for several reasons: first, because this way more visibility is given to a collective, that of people with disabilities and entrepreneurs, little represented in the labor market; and second because this study can yield useful information on how to favor the entrepreneurship of these people. As a starting hypothesis, it is considered that people with entrepreneurial disabilities have psychological characteristics common to those of any entrepreneur, and others specific to their condition as persons with disabilities.

Attending to the structure, in this work, firstly, relevant theoretical aspects on the subject are raised, emphasizing the psychological traits that characterize the entrepreneur in general and the person with an entrepreneurial disability in particular. Next, the methodology used in the study is presented, and the results are exposed that, in this respect, arise from the qualitative analysis carried through. Finally, a series of conclusions are collected.

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## Literature review

It is reviewed to address the issue, in the first place, what the characteristics are that at a psychological level have

entrepreneurs in general. Ambrosini & López (2006), after conducting a fieldwork with entrepreneurs and potential entrepreneurs they point out that the most crucial factor that makes them persevere in the idea of undertaking, until it is finalized, is related more to intuition than to reasoning; they also point out that it is their commitment to this idea that drives their action. The empirical work of Rodríguez (2013) on the personality of who makes the decisions in the SMEs in the entrepreneurship throw data of interest. Based on the model of the five major factors (extraversion, affability, conscience, neuroticism, and openness to experience), this researcher concludes that entrepreneurs have high levels of extraversion, awareness, adaptability, and openness to experience, as well as high levels of personal proactivity and low levels of neuroticism. Also in the field of SMEs, Entrialgo, Fernández & Vázquez (1998), taking as reference the three personality traits in which the literature has focused on the psychology of the entrepreneur, the need for achievement, tolerance for ambiguity and internal control, point out that individuals who show more entrepreneurial behavior are those who tolerate ambiguity better, have a need for high achievement and greater control capacity. From the analysis of the in-depth interviews, in this case made to the founders of fifty essential companies in the metropolitan area of Chicago, a series of personal characteristics common to most of the interviewees was identified, which gave rise to a model in which they intervene, as elements that favor the entrepreneurial spirit, tolerance to risk, desire to control, ambition-desire to succeed, perseverance and decision; related to the notion of decision is the willingness to act (Hatch & Zweig, 2000). Finally, mention the research of Naffziger, Hornsby & Kuratko (1994), who conclude that there are differences in the characteristics of the enterprising and non-entrepreneurial people in personality traits such as the locus of control, personal achievements, energy level, persistence and the desire-domain of personal control.

If attention is now placed on the psychological characteristics that a person with a disability specifically decides to undertake, it is observed that the literature, in addition to being scarce addresses the object of analysis from a negative perspective. This means that it accentuates the personality traits that hinder, limit or impede the entrepreneurship of these people and that therefore explain and justify the low proportion of people who, having a disability, opt for entrepreneurship as a job (Ortiz García & Olaz Capitán, 2017; Olaz Capitán & Ortiz García, 2018). The literature identifies, roughly, four groups of factors, which are summarized in Table 1.

Although, as has been pointed out, the studies tend to speak in negative terms, one might ask what the psychological characteristics of persons with disabilities who have undertaken them are. In this regard, the literature reveals that they are independent people who, with the creation of their own company or business, seek to promote their autonomy, have freedom and a certain flexibility in their day to day (Cooney, 2008). The creation of a company of their own allows them a better adjustment between their disability and their working life, through aspects such as flexibility in the pace of work, the schedule, the number of hours worked and the physical location (Doyel, 2002; Jones & Latreille, 2011;

**Table 1 - Psychological aspects that limit the entrepreneurship of a person with a disability**

Group 1. Objective aspects, derived from the disability itself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Slowness in learning</li> <li>• Difficulties of understanding</li> <li>• Limited capacities</li> <li>• Physical and psychic tiredness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depression</li> <li>• Low mood</li> <li>• Need for help from other people for day to day</li> </ul>
Group 2. Internal psychological aspects. Subjective mental barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low self-esteem</li> <li>• Lack of security and self-confidence and in their own abilities</li> <li>• Fear to fail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of motivation</li> <li>• Insecurities about what they will say</li> <li>• Fear of leaving the comfort zone</li> </ul>
Group 3. Psychological aspects related to entrepreneurship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited aspirations</li> <li>• Little entrepreneurial initiative</li> <li>• Lack of a clear business idea and ability to have it</li> <li>• Difficulties in developing a business idea</li> <li>• Unrealistic perception of business projects</li> <li>• Difficulties in identifying a business opportunity</li> <li>• Difficulties in committing to supporting infrastructures</li> <li>• Lack of specific business skills and competencies</li> </ul>	
Group 4. Psychological aspects related to the social environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family overprotection</li> <li>• Absence of external stimuli</li> <li>• Difficulties in accessing an initial capital</li> <li>• Difficulty accessing information sources</li> <li>• Lack of support services</li> <li>• Discrimination by clients or consumers</li> <li>• Lack of empathy and social understanding</li> <li>• Stereotyped vision of society with respect to the collective</li> </ul>	

Source: Self-made from European Union (2014), M. B. García (2017), J. J. García (2018), García & Durán (2018), Kitching (2014), Manzanera-Román & Olaz (2018), Observatory on Disability and Labor Market (Odismet, 2017), Ortiz & Olaz (2017) and Ortiz & García (2018).

Pagán, 2009; Meager & Higgins, 2011). People with disabilities who undertake an express desire to excel and social recognition. They seek to confront the state of discrimination to which they are exposed and to demonstrate to society that they are capable of successfully developing their business activity (Blanck et al., 2000; Godley, 2005; Schur, 2003). They want, in this way, to end the stigmatization and social marginalization that surrounds them. His business attitude then becomes a social mission (Caldwell, Parker & Renko, 2016). Besides, the business allows them to participate in the labor market by doing something that satisfies them, while at the same time they can improve their income and quality of life.

## Methodology

In this work, a qualitative methodology based on in-depth, semi-structured, individualized and oral interviews has been used. It has been considered the most appropriate technique to provide a higher degree of freedom to the interviewee and the interviewer, which has facilitated the collection of the different nuances in the speech.

Regarding the profile of the people interviewed, there are 15 people related to the world of disability and entrepreneurship. Specifically, three profiles have been identified:

- People with disabilities and experience in entrepreneurship and their families.
- People with disabilities without experience in entrepreneurship.

- Institutional and professional representatives related to disability (doctor, work counselor, and social worker).

The discourse analysis has been executed with the professional software ATLAS.TI, and has been carried out on the textual levels (from codified citations) and conceptual (the level at which the relationships between codes and citations have been worked out).

Finally, the script design of the interview has responded to the different dimensions from which entrepreneurship is addressed and its characteristics in this group: personal and psychological, institutional/legal, cultural/environmental, educational/training and economic and family. These aspects, together with the analysis of the differences in the entrepreneurship of the collective and the prospective of this activity, are treated in the different articles that make up this monograph.

## Results

Based on the information obtained in the fieldwork, the psychological characteristics the interviewees have indicated as most important in the person with disabilities that they undertake are described. The analysis is structured in two large sections. In the first, "Personal characteristics that define an entrepreneur with a disability," the most intimate issues of the personality of the disabled entrepreneur are addressed, those elements related to their self-knowledge and personal self-management capacity. The second one, "Social characteristics projected towards the company," focuses on the relational dimension, from a perspective that has to do with the person's environment and with his

capacity to manage social relations. These are specific characteristics of the person with disabilities that define their tendency to relate to others, and directly connect with the start-up and development of the business.

Next, the two mentioned sections are developed.

### ***Personal characteristics that define an entrepreneur with a disability***

Within this category, a series of codes or personality traits are included, which according to the interviewees characterize the group of people with physical or sensory disabilities who decide to undertake. These codes are listed below, ordered according to the number of appointments each one has. The analysis is based on the textual quotes of the interviewees.

#### *Self-esteem/self-confidence*

This characteristic refers to the level of confidence that the person has in their capacities; it is the perception that one has of himself. This characteristic that appears on more occasions in the discourse of the interviewees; in fact, the majority has pointed it out. They allude that the person with disabilities must have high self-esteem, believe in themselves and in their abilities to develop the business. Emphasis is placed on the importance of healthy self-esteem in the personality of the entrepreneur, who believes he or she is capable of. If so, the person who decides to undertake perseverance is constant, has more decision and a clear idea of what he wants to do, feels proud of having managed to undertake despite the difficulties.

I believe that they should be people who, despite their disability, feel an appreciation for themselves, that they feel, they are worthy, that they have confidence, that they do not feel insecure. [...] They are psychological characteristics of self-affirmation, of self-esteem, of self-confidence and of being valued despite their disability. [...] If the person has self-esteem, confidence, self-confidence can overcome any external problem that may arise. (J.A.M., personal communication, October 11, 2017)

#### *Security/strength*

Concerning self-esteem and self-confidence, is the security or internal strength of the person. It is the ability not to be intimidated by the circumstances that may come. The interviewees explain that the disability can act positively on the person, and turn it into someone stronger, or it can have negative consequences, by subtracting security in itself. Two textual quotes that exemplify this double perception about the impact that the disability can have on internal security and strength are included below.

People with disabilities, for having been educated in an environment with more difficulty, because in school the children are tyrants and reject the different, they have been, have become, stronger; I believe that strength leads them to be more persistent, more capable and more tenacious in achieving their goal and that helps in entrepreneurship. (F.J.G.M., personal communication, October 20, 2017)

Regarding the limitations of the person with a disability [...], the significant limitation is related to the health problems that hinder the daily work that the person with disabilities has to consummate. Unlike other people who do not have that health problem, people with disabilities have medical check-ups, someday you feel worse, some task that due to your health problem you cannot perform. Then those limitations also produce a significant effect, which is the lack of security, because that person is afraid of not being able to perform that activity as any other person would. Moreover, that part of security, then, can make you not dare to undertake things that another person would dare. The problem is these physical limitations that are there, and the lack of security that sometimes exists. (M.J.M., personal communication, October 19, 2017)

#### *Adaptability*

It is the ability to be flexible before the changes that arise and the circumstances that are presented, adapting to them. For the interviewees, it is a fundamental characteristic that any entrepreneur must meet, but, above all, who has a disability. They point out that, due to their circumstances, this adaptation may cost more effort than the rest.

Adaptability, I think is also essential; you have to be a flexible person and adapt to the changes that may arise, both within yourself and the environment, as well as changes in the same business or company. If you have to make changes, not be authoritarian or not be very close, but open and flexible to new possibilities, that is important to be able to move forward. (J.A.M., personal communication, October 11, 2017)

#### *Self-realization/self-improvement*

The interviewees point out that people with disabilities undertake because they want to feel fulfilled, they see the business activity as a challenge, and they work to achieve personal success. They have the incentive of being able to overcome the obstacles implied by their disability and to prove to themselves that they have been capable of.

They are people who feel discriminated against and their desire, is to overcome and be recognized. (L.M.L., personal communication, November 2, 2017)

Being able to work a person who has had so many difficulties throughout his life is to show that you are an average person, that you can do the same as others. It is a pleasure to see that, after everything you have been through, you can entirely reach the highest level of society, if that is the reason for having self-employment or a job. (F.J.G.M., personal communication, October 20, 2017)

#### *Optimism*

Ability to insist on the achievement of objectives despite obstacles. The accent is placed on the attitude and character with which people with disabilities face the situations that arise, highlighting as key elements the hope for doing the task and the hope that everything will go well. Therefore, expectation and hope are qualities that the interviewees

associate with optimism; a positive attitude, together with a cheerful, optimistic and hopeful character, will help them to undertake and overcome obstacles.

They are people with a very positive character towards life. [...] An optimistic character, that does not go out in the least and stays [...], that can overcome, that they cut the light in the business [...], we will finish as we can, with candles, and then we go to have a beer, to see if we see life in another way. (A.Z.C., personal communication, October 19, 2017)

#### *Realism and mental clarity*

It is alluded to that the person who decides to undertake must have a mental clarity to perceive reality as it is, without making distortions. He has to be reasonable and sensible with what he is going to create; otherwise, the business is bound to fail.

Depending on how that person is to see the reality, this way he will be able to work in a company, if he psychologically distorts reality because [...], it is realistic I consider it essential. (L.M.L., personal communication, November 2, 2017)

They are people who have bright ideas, they are very realistic people, I at least believe it, although there have been exceptions of people who set up a business and think that it will work by itself, I have also seen it, and at the end of the day always fails. (T.L.O., personal communication, October 23, 2017)

#### *Resilience*

Capacities and abilities that are acquired or developed to face the limitations or difficulties caused by the disability, either at birth, or soon, and which serve to face it positively. It is significant that a large number of appointments are for entrepreneurs with disabilities. They also provide comments, in this regard, the family companion and technicians. They talk about the importance of reinventing oneself, of getting ahead, of having an added strength, of looking for an exit, of breaking barriers, of not sinking, of not letting oneself die or being dragged by traumas.

I am still a reasonably resilient and quite proactive person and when I have a problem I grow up and within the difficulties I have, probably because I am aware that I have more difficulty than another person, I am prepared and mentalized that I can meet specific problems that another person does not. So I do not usually fall quickly, but it is true that even then there is a specific moment when you have a terrible time because you are physically tired, with a disease, with age, with sensory limitations, with my capacity for resilience and getting ahead is what helped me to get out and be here. So one day is going well, and another day is going badly, well ... you are there. (A.L.G., personal communication, October 19, 2017)

#### *Utility and social recognition*

As has been pointed out, for the interviewees, the person with disabilities decides to start because they want to

feel fulfilled and overcome the limitations that the disability itself entails. About this, it acquires force in the discourse the fact that it also does so because it wants to feel useful and obtain recognition from society. It is a question that is intimately associated with the desire to excel.

I believe that one of the things that leads them to undertake is to feel useful, [...], they are people who need to be recognized, feel useful and overcome. They are people who feel discriminated against and their desire, is to overcome and be recognized. (L.M.L., personal communication, November 2, 2017)

The attempt to feel useful, which is very important in this type of case, that is, I am disabled, but I can develop my capacity in another way and then that is another crucial element, to feel that one is useful to society. (A.Z.C., personal communication, October 19, 2017)

#### *Autonomy*

Ability to make personal decisions about how to live according to one's preferences, and thus strengthen self-esteem and empowerment. In this case, there are several references dictated by the interviewees, the majority with high qualification. The comments revolve around two ideas; on the one hand, the need not overprotect the person and, on the other, the incentive to work for oneself, independently, without submitting to the discipline of a company.

Because if you are a minimal person, has not acquired autonomy skills and if you are very overprotected, it is hardly going to occur to start a business with the unknown and challenging road that entails entrepreneurship. (C.T.O., personal communication, October 25, 2017)

It is people who want to be their boss, organize. They have that idea that when you set up your business, it is your dream and you will not work for anyone else. That is something that usually likes, and that we usually use to encourage and decide to undertake. (T.L.O., personal communication, October 23, 2017)

#### *Self-appraisal*

Knowledge of one's strengths and limitations. The self-assessment has been highlighted by the interviewees, who point out the need to adapt the qualities of the person with a disability to the type of business that is going to be undertaken, taking into account not only the type of disability but also the training and experience labor. They conjugate, therefore, curriculum, training, and capacity; hence the importance of an accurate self-evaluation.

The self-appraisal is to know the strengths and limitations of oneself, because that is very important, in such a way that the limitations to the best can transform them into strengths; then, to be evaluated and to get to know each other more and more, that is very important. (J.A.M., personal communication, October 11, 2017)

It is imperative that the person knows himself, his abilities, his weaknesses, and strengths, facing the business he is going to undertake, facing this new stage, it is fundamental. Because, just as you will have weaknesses,

like everyone else, you will have many skills, knowledge, and training to which you can access. (J.S.G., personal communication, October 30, 2017)

#### *Emotional intelligence*

Be understood as the ability of the person to recognize their own emotions, know how to manage them, and if necessary, contain their effects and possible harmful impulses. The interviewees allude to the need for the person to be emotionally mature and stable, as critical requirements for the development of entrepreneurship. This is not always easy since disability sometimes becomes a handicap, which hinders emotional stability.

The person has to be emotionally stable or have a balanced emotional intelligence because undertaking implies that you have to fall many times, and you have to know how to manage frustration because there are many times when you feel very frustrated. (A.L.G., personal communication, October 19, 2017)

The emotional self-control is very important to undertake, but also not to undertake, not to get too excited about it and say that "as the situation is ... I have to be firm". (A.L.B., personal communication, October 19, 2017)

#### *Motivation*

An impulse that moves the person to perform specific actions and persist in them for its completion. Motivation is the engine of resilience. There are found abundant literature on the psychology of the entrepreneur who approaches it, pointing it out as a pillar on which the initiative of the person who decides to undertake is supported. Motivation can come from outside or emerge from the person.

People with disabilities are motivated to work, put much effort and hard work, and when they have a goal and have bright ideas, they even put more desire than any person without disabilities [...]. Maybe thinking that you are going to have some difficulties in a job makes you have more energy, more motivation, give more time to the idea and work. (J.S.G., personal communication, October 30, 2017)

Personal motivation is what moves any person to create something [...] because it makes you want [...] because you want to have your project [...]. Motivation is what moves. (A.L.B., personal communication, October 19, 2017)

#### *Social characteristics projected towards the company*

Within this category are considered aspects that directly relate to the business and that have to do with the most relational sphere of the person. These aspects are also ordered according to the number of citations received. The features highlighted by the interviewees are listed below.

##### *Business initiative*

This quality is understood as the disposition that the person has to act on the opportunities that arise. The interviewees explain that they have to be a person capable

of making decisions, with determination to act as the circumstances present themselves, brave and with a business vision. Almost all allude to this code, insisting that having an entrepreneurial spirit is a crucial variable that can counteract the disability handicap.

Being a person with vision and with a decision to say that there is this need in society and I put something into practice to give you an answer. That is an important thing. It would be the initiative, to be willing that, if an opportunity presents itself, to take it forward, that is also important. (M.J.M., personal communication, October 19, 2017)

##### *Empathy/service orientation*

This quality refers to the capacity of the entrepreneur to internalize the feelings, expectations, and concerns of the people around him (for example, his workers), in addition to putting the focus of attention on customers, trying to anticipate and recognize their wishes, needs, and among others. It is a characteristic that projects attention to the other, to satisfy their real interests as far as possible.

That can see the people to whom the company is directed to know how it has to do to have good results [...], they have to be able to understand the population that will be served with their work. (L.M.L., personal communication, November 2, 2017)

These people can even seek a spiritual overcoming, a more communal, more cooperative, more [...] conception of life, not only seeking personal benefit but also more community, more cooperative, and not only in the sense of money, but to see that another person can be happy. (J.A.M., personal communication, October 11, 2017)

##### *Feeling supported/accompanied*

Entrepreneurship is a complicated road, the interviewees recognize, even more so for people with disabilities. Therefore, it is vitally important to feel protected, to know that they have other people, especially family members, who support and accompany them in the process, although sometimes it is only by giving them emotional help.

Do not feel alone, In fact, I have had help in the course that I told you I did, I had a tutor who helped me a lot and I thought the company was going to work, and he would tell me around here, or I would do this or that. [...] Then I have felt protected in that sense because he has worked with me explicitly taking into account my visual problem and he has given it to me. (A.L.G., personal communication, October 19, 2017)

The people around you, the motivation you see in them, the motivation that they transmit to you is fundamental, also the family. It would be similar to what you receive from them, the learning that you do from those people with whom you relate. (J.S.G., personal communication, October 30, 2017)

### Teamwork

Work with others towards shared goals, create synergies in the pursuit of collective goals. The interviewees put the focus on how important it is that the person with disabilities and entrepreneurs can interact with workers, respecting their opinions, generating a climate of friendly work and knowing how to delegate functions. It is also vital that they take care of the individual needs of their workers. In this way, workers are more committed to the company and work more willingly to achieve a common goal.

Teamwork is essential because if you work as a team you can make the rest of the people who work with you feel good. [...] You can negotiate, resolve conflicts [...], working as a team can achieve almost everything that is proposed at the level of objectives. (L.M.L., personal communication, November 2, 2017)

Teamwork is crucial because when a person is going to start, they will have to interact with many professionals, both from public entities where you may ask for financing or invest money. As well as with other professionals, workers, counselors, even with possible people with whom they share the business or the idea of entrepreneurship, and of course with the person who is going to undertake and will provide service to another person because teamwork and communication with others are critical. [...] People with disabilities [...], I know myself from my experience [...], are usually people that teamwork is very good at. (J.S.G., personal communication, October 30, 2017)

### Leadership

It is in direct relation with the previous characteristic. It is understood that the person with disabilities. In addition to working as a team, must be able to inspire the people who are part of that team. Only in this way will successes be achieved in the company.

Being a person that leads and has strength and character to take the company forward, that has that quality. (L.M.L., personal communication, November 2, 2017)

If he believes that he will be able to take his company only forward, I think it is tough, he has to learn to delegate, not be a leader or an authoritarian businessman, rigid. (J.A.M., personal communication, October 11, 2017)

### Social skills/sociability

Set of behaviors that allow us to interact and relate to others effectively and satisfactorily. The interviewees speak explicitly of the need for the person with disabilities to be a sociable person, who has the skills to perform with others.

It has to be a very open-minded person, very sociable. Sociability occurs in people who already have many relationships and contacts in advance and individual history. (A.Z.C., personal communication, October 19, 2017)

They must be well prepared to socialize, it is a problem that in many disabilities has not been worked on. Work has been going on for a few years now, and good results are being achieved. (J.L.A., personal communication, October 16, 2017)

### Transparency

This quality is understood as the capacity to act in a manner congruent with one's values and principles. It is about personal integrity in the development of business activity.

Transparency seems very important to me, it is consistent with values because if you are not consistent with your values [...], it also has to do with disability. If your values do not match your capabilities. (C.T.O., personal communication, October 25, 2017)

### Conflict management

It is understood as the ability of the person to resolve conflicts, disagreements or adversities that may arise, especially through negotiation. The interviewees allude in a lesser proportion to this quality, although they point out that it is directly associated with teamwork and leadership.

Being able to correctly manage conflicts, know how to negotiate, resolve disagreements [...], all that is very important. (A.L.B., personal communication, October 19, 2017)

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## Conclusions

In this work has been tried to specify what are the psychological characteristics of a person with a disability who decides to undertake. First, a series of characteristics of an internal nature have been identified, which can sometimes be innate: self-esteem/self-confidence, security/strength, adaptability, self-realization/self-improvement, optimism, realism and mental clarity, resilience, usefulness and social recognition, autonomy, self-appraisal, emotional intelligence, and motivation. It is the most crucial group of characteristics because it influences the rest of the aspects of a person's life and will determine the impulse and entrepreneurial initiative. Of all of them, the one that the interviewees have indicated to a greater extent is the need for self-esteem and self-confidence ( $n = 33$ ), followed by security and strength ( $n = 25$ ). Numerous studies show that the perception that the person with disabilities has of itself, personal self-knowledge, as well as self-determination, are the variables that most influence their personal and professional success, as well as their options to integrate into the different areas: labor, social, economic, educational, and among others. (Polo & López, 2012). The studies also point out that they are people who have a positive perception of themselves, have a strong character, are confident and confident in their possibilities, have high levels of self-esteem and desire for achievement and self-realization. This positive self-concept is reinforced because they have specific training in entrepreneurship, not only concerning the business they undertake, but also in the aspects related to the management of relationships and human resources, and in the technical issues of the company. They also have emotional and economic support, especially from family and friends, which motivate them to undertake.

The second group of characteristics encompasses aspects that are interpersonal, and that are more oriented towards entrepreneurship. It is about entrepreneurship, empathy/service orientation, feeling supported/accompanied, teamwork,



leadership, social skills/sociability, transparency and conflict management. They are traits that put the person concerning the environment. These are interrelational characteristics, which have to do in most cases with the business that the person has undertaken or wants to undertake. As can be seen, many of these characteristics put the focus on human relations, correctly, the entrepreneur with his workers and with the social environment. This means that the interviewees positively value that the person with disabilities who starts a business has qualities linked to personal treatment and human relations. It is an aspect that acquires a particularly significant dimension in the analysis if it takes into account that entrepreneurs with disabilities do not usually have salaried workers, but that they create small companies that adjust more to self-employment (INE, 2018; Kitching, 2014; Manzanera & Ortiz, 2017). The characteristics that appear in this group in more occasions are the business initiative (n = 22), empathy or service orientation (n = 14) and the need to feel supported by the surrounding environment, especially the immediate one such as the family (n = 14).

The analysis concludes by noting that people who have some physical or sensory disability and who have decided to undertake are characterized, from a psychological dimension, by having high levels of self-esteem and security or internal strength, can adapt to the circumstances that happen. They are optimistic, with personal autonomy, motivation, and capacity for self-appraisal, quite realistic in their projects and resilient in the face of adversity. They want to feel fulfilled and useful. They seek social recognition through their entrepreneurial work and personal improvement. Their emotional intelligence levels are adequate. They are people with entrepreneurial initiative, service orientation, capacity for teamwork, leadership, conflict management, and transparency. Their character is open; they are sociable people, who value positively feeling wrapped in their entrepreneurial initiative.

Several of these characteristics, such as self-confidence, self-esteem, adaptability, initiative, and leadership, are familiar to any entrepreneur, regardless of whether or not they have a disability (Alonso & Galve, 2008; Rodríguez, 2013). However, other attributes, specifically those that connect directly with attitude and motivation, are specific to the group of people with disabilities. The disabled person who undertakes has developed a series of social skills and a particular sensitivity, which facilitates contact with the other. At the same time, it embarks on the desire to feel useful and fulfilled, to surpass itself and achieve social recognition. Thus, there is a strong link between the business career and the identity of the person who experiences the disability. This coincides with the findings of other investigations, such as the one executed by Haynie & Shepherd (2011), in which it was found, based on the study of people with disabilities, that they had to make adaptations in their professional careers as a result of traumatic events. The entrepreneurial spirit was due to two reasons: either to a desire to overcome the perceived or real social obstacles they faced or to a desire to satisfy a psychological need rooted in the trauma experienced. In the study by Caldwell et al. (2016), the participants pointed out that people with disabilities

that undertook were driven by passion, interest, and concern for the social environment, specifically to eliminate the discrimination they experienced. The starting hypothesis is confirmed in this way: entrepreneurs with disabilities have psychological characteristics common to those of any entrepreneur, and others specific to their condition as persons with disabilities. The latter seems to be the ones who gain more weight in the decision to undertake.

Currently, governments and third sector companies are developing strategies that favor the employment of people with disabilities, through the creation of small and medium enterprises. Part of these strategies focus on issues such as financing, business training or tax benefits, but neglect others that directly connect with the most internal and subjective part of the person. In this sense, this research reveals the existence of specific psychological attributes that are key in the entrepreneurship of people with disabilities and that, through programs of empowerment and personal development, they could work, and thus boost their entrepreneurial spirit. In this research, a qualitative approach has been made, from the discursive point of view of the critical informants; opens the door to future more specific works, in which different methodologies can be used.

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## Appendix

### In-depth interview script

#### Thematic block: differences

1. Can differences in entrepreneurship be seen when the person who develops it presents some type of disability (sensory or physical)? If yes, what can those differences be concerning the person without a disability?

2. What could be the underlying reasons (motivations) that would explain entrepreneurship in people with disabilities?

#### Thematic block: competencies

3. What are the characteristics, abilities, capabilities, qualities, character traits... (in other words, competencies) that help to understand and value entrepreneurship in people with disabilities?

4. Among the following elements: psychological, institutional-legal, cultural-environmental, educational, fam-

ily, physical-accessibility, which do you consider are more critical than others when it comes to understanding entrepreneurship in people with disabilities? Why?

5. Among the following aspects: geographical area, economic sector, financing, taxation ..., which do you consider to be more critical than others when it comes to understanding entrepreneurship in people with disabilities? Why?

6. What elements do you consider that limit (mediate, prevent, hinder, deteriorate or condition) entrepreneurship in people with disabilities? Why?

#### Thematic block: prospective

7. What elements (scenarios, variables, aspects ...) would help to promote entrepreneurship in people with disabilities?

8. Of the following competencies (show table), what do you think (point 5) that are the most important for the entrepreneur who has some disability?

**Table (P.8)**

	Aspects	
1.	<b>Emotional awareness:</b> Recognition of one's emotions and their effects.	
2.	<b>Self-evaluation:</b> Knowledge of one's strengths and limitations.	
3.	<b>Self-confidence:</b> Sense of self-esteem and one's own personal abilities.	
4.	<b>Emotional self-control:</b> Containment of noxious emotions and impulses.	
5.	<b>Transparency:</b> Integrity and action congruent with one's values.	
6.	<b>Adaptability:</b> Flexibility before changes.	
7.	<b>Achievement:</b> Impulse to satisfy and improve own objectives of excellence.	
8.	<b>Initiative:</b> Willingness to act on the opportunities presented.	
9.	<b>Optimism:</b> Ability to insist on the achievement of objectives despite obstacles.	
10.	<b>Empathy:</b> Ability to internalize feelings and perspectives of others acting actively in their concerns.	
11.	<b>Organizational awareness:</b> Ability to interpret emotional currents of a group and existing power relations.	
12.	<b>Service orientation:</b> Anticipate, recognize and meet the needs of customers.	
13.	<b>Development of people:</b> Detection of the development needs of people as well as the strengthening of their capacities.	
14.	<b>Inspirational leadership:</b> Inspire people under effective leadership.	
15.	<b>Catalyze change:</b> Start or propel change management.	
16.	<b>Influence:</b> Implement activities aimed at persuasion.	
17.	<b>Conflict management:</b> Negotiation and resolution of disagreements.	
18.	<b>Teamwork and collaboration:</b> Work with others towards shared goals. Create group synergy in the pursuit of collective objectives.	