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Conditioning factors in Andalusian women's entrepreneurial profile

Factores condicionantes en el perfil emprendedor de mujeres andaluzas

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ABSTRACT

Conditioning factors and gender barriers in Andalusian women's entrepreneurship are described and analyzed, using a biographical-narrative method applied to a sample of 12 women with relevant profiles for the research. The life history is used as a technique and procedure for collecting information, proceeding to the qualitative content analysis. The results show that the entrepreneurial profile of the participants is conditioned by interrelated factors such as motivation, training and professional experience, social interaction, difficulties in entrepreneurship and gender. These conclusions are necessary references for the design of training and guidance actions in entrepreneurship.

RESUMEN

Se describen y analizan factores condicionantes y barreras de género en el emprendimiento de mujeres andaluzas, mediante un método biográfico-narrativo aplicado a una muestra de 12 mujeres con perfiles relevantes para la investigación. Se emplea la historia de vida como técnica y procedimiento de recogida de información, procediéndose al análisis de contenido cualitativo. Los resultados muestran que el perfil emprendedor de las participantes está condicionado por factores interrelacionados como la motivación, formación y experiencia profesional, interacción social, dificultades para emprender y género. Estas conclusiones son referentes necesarios para el diseño de acciones formativas y orientadoras en materia de emprendimiento.

1. INTRODUCTION

The importance of entrepreneurship is unquestionable in economic and social development (Serrano-Bedia *et al.*, 2016) given its ability to create employment both in a direct and indirect way, by creating job positions (Castro and Santero, 2014). In fact, there is a strong relationship between entrepreneurship and economic growth (Bakar *et al.*, 2015) where the highest levels of entrepreneurial activity are directly associated with higher growth rates (Carree and Thurik, 2010).

To characterize the female entrepreneurship profile, we need to clarify the term entrepreneurship/ entrepreneur. From a business point of view we can define an entrepreneur as that person who starts up an economic project which will become a company (Pérez *et al.*, 2009) and is mainly characterized by innovative behavior (Carland, Hoy, Boulton, and Carland, 2007). The businessman is considered an entrepreneur thanks to the positive connotations that highlight his entrepreneurial nature (Brunet and Alarcón, 2004), although it is true that there are types of entrepreneurs who lack this entrepreneurial spirit (Sampedro and Camarero, 2007), in general, we can consider entrepreneurs as entrepreneurs due to their ability to start or continue with a business project.

The factors which condition entrepreneurship have been classified in various ways by different authors, endogenous and exogenous (Quevedo *et al.*, 2010), internal and external (Navarro, 2012), formal and informal (Álvarez *et al.*, 2012), basic and precipitating (Veciana, 2007). Brunet y Alarcón (2004) consider that there are two theoretical perspectives in the study of the entrepreneurial function and the creation of companies, an individual approach, focused on psychological factors; and a structuralist approach focused on the variables that determine the structure of the market, and they explain that both approaches have to be taken into account. In this line, More up-to-date approaches suggest a more complex model of the entrepreneurial process (Kerr *et al.*, 2018) identifying as conditioning factors for success in entrepreneurship the entrepreneur's personality, the human capital and the characteristics of the environment, all this within the national culture of the country. It is suggested that more women entrepreneurs are need, however, the gender gap in entrepreneurship remains (Byrne, Fattoum, and Diaz, 2019). Taking into account that in the entrepreneurial process both cultural components (Lounsbury and Glynn, 2001; Busenitz and Lau, 1996)

and socio-demographic variables intervene, which can affect the probability of creating a company (Herranz and de Lara, 2008). For this reason, it is necessary to study the specific entrepreneurial profile of each region.

Specifically, Andalusia is one of the communities with the highest rate of entrepreneurship in Spain (7.20%), one point above the national average (GEM, 2018) and the highest number of companies, 15.2% of the national total (DIRCE, 2018), but if we compare the number of companies per thousand inhabitants, Andalusia remains in the last positions, also having a historical unemployment rate well above the national average.

Taking into account that the business world is clearly masculinized (Cruces Roldán & Palenzuela Chamorro, 2006) where women have less business representation and higher unemployment rate. The importance of this study is manifested by the need to delve into the knowledge of the entrepreneurial profile in Andalusia in order to understand, from its characteristics and its relationship with others (Poldner, Branzei, and Steyaert, 2019), the elements which are conditioning the entrepreneurial processes of women in our Region. This research aims to make visible the discourse of women entrepreneurs trying to identify the factors that influence female entrepreneurship to banish the persistent dominant male discourse in which entrepreneurship is framed (Ahl and Marlow, 2012).

1.1. A look from the gender perspective

As Marlow, Henry, and Carter (2009) said "The influence of gender upon entrepreneurial intention and experience has been recognized over the last 30 years". Even so, knowledge about the difference in entrepreneurship according to gender is very limited (Bönte and Piegeler, 2013) in spite of the efforts and the increase in the number of studies devoted to female entrepreneurship which have become more relevant in recent years (Sánchez and Fuentes, 2013). The differences between men and women regarding entrepreneurship have been explained based on two feminist theories: liberal feminism and socialist feminism (Fischer, Reuber, & Dyke, 1993). Most research on entrepreneurship is based on the liberal feminist stance (Marlow, 2020). This approach is based on the premise that women and men are equal and that existing inequalities in entrepreneurship are due to a lack of essential opportunities such as education or access to finance, consequence of the theory of the two spheres (Camarero, Castellanos,

García and Sampedro, 2006), where women was relegated to the private sphere and the man to the public.

They have been identified significant gender differences (Hmieleski and Sheppard, 2019) which put a brake on the development of the entrepreneurial career among women have been identified as women present a higher aversion to risk (Kelley *et al.*, 2015), are more afraid of failure (Sánchez and Fuentes, 2010) as well as presenting a significant lack of confidence (Sánchez and Fuentes, 2013) and limitations in geographic mobility (Camarero, Carmo and Santos, 2020). We do see barriers which are situated around competences related to personal and professional development. In fact, one third of women believed that gender stereotypes were a barrier to their career aspirations (Zacher, Rudolph, Todorovic and Ammann, 2019). The literature about this subject shows that women have more difficulties when they are trying to obtain financing for the development of their ideas or business (González-Pernía, 2013). This seems to be related to the decision of becoming an entrepreneur in certain activity sectors more than in others (Portillo and Millán, 2016). Specifically, women prefer to become entrepreneurs in the services sector where setting up a company requires less financing (Coleman and Robb, 2012). As regards motivation for becoming entrepreneurs out of necessity, it is 20% higher among women than among men (Kelley *et al.*, 2016), we wonder if this is due to their professional situation and specific employability difficulties, or due to experimenting role conflicts which means that being self-employed helps them to manage their own life plan in accordance with their own life style. On the contrary, other gender differences occur in entrepreneurship. These are already apparent among degree students, where a wide range of studies imply that women have less entrepreneurial intentions than men (Phipps and Prieto, 2015), and a greater tendency to sustainable entrepreneurship with more altruistic values and less aspirations for extrinsic reward compared to men (Vuorio, Puumalainen, & Fellnhofer, 2018). This brings us back again to the female decision making process where they aim to build their own professional and life projects looking at the need to maintain a balance between professional and private life.

Consequently, previous research about the factors which influence entrepreneurship have identified gender as one of the conditioning factors which causes inequality in the development of an entrepreneurial career (Portillo and Millán, 2016), causing men and women to have different dispositions in entrepreneurship (Reyes *et al.*, 2014), different entrepreneurial behaviours

and different competences and skills (Dempsey and Jennings, 2014). Gender is one of the factors which has an influence on entrepreneurship, referring to social attributes and the opportunities associated with being a man or a woman which are constructed socially through socialization processes, and which are contextual and specific to a time and therefore, changeable and have the possibility of being deconstructed and reconstructed (Comisión Europea, 2015, p.125). In fact, according to Pérez and Hormiga (2012), as the process of socialization of the individuals according to gender has an impact on professional development, it is necessary that, in order for women to define themselves as having an entrepreneurial orientation, to assume roles which traditionally and socially are considered masculine, as there is a tradition of self-employment (officially) which is dominated or managed by men, at least in the case of medium sized and large companies, although this is also the case in some small companies.

Most of the female business initiatives are framed in self-employment strategies (Palenzuela, Cruces and Jordi, 2002). Thus, self-employment is considered to be a dual way for women to achieve economic empowerment and at the same time fulfil family obligations (Braches and Elliott, 2017). According to a study by Luque (2008) about the professional timetable of women, women give more importance to family (67%) than work (32%), while the priorities for men are evenly balanced at least in theory, it should be the objective of a study to see how both, men and women deal with the daily realities of integrating both spheres.

The fact is that women are entrepreneurially less active than men in starting a company (Alvarez-Sousa, 2019) and they also make less progress than men in their careers due to social roles that lead to a situation of inequality (Santos *et al.*, 2016), because of institutional bias, stereotypes (Gupta *et al.*, 2019) cultural values (Zeb and Ihsan, 2020) or lack of self-confidence (Salinas and Bagni, 2017). Consequently, the research of Sánchez and Fuentes (2013) also suggests the need to eliminate psychological barriers which can prevent women from carrying out an entrepreneurial career as well as considering any other type of barrier related to the management of their careers (Sánchez-García y Suárez-Ortega, 2018). It is interesting to point out that fear of failure is a gender barrier which prevented 41% of the women who had the intention of starting a business (Kelley *et al.*, 2015). And this is an example of a gender barrier which affects entrepreneurship and which is specifically female.

1.2. Female entrepreneurship in Spain and Andalusia: Basic data

Spanish entrepreneurial research is an emerging field which is growing but that has not yet received enough social recognition (Sánchez and Gutiérrez, 2011). As regards literature about the characterization of entrepreneurship in Andalusia, it is very scarce and scarcer as regards gender perspective-based studies. A reference study on female entrepreneurship in Andalusia is that of Palenzuela et al., (2002), which focuses on rural areas. For these authors, the profile of rural Andalusian women entrepreneurs “is a woman who starts a business motivated by the lack of other employment expectations as an employee, who shares relevant business decisions with parents and siblings, with little training in business management and that adds to his work in the company the housework and the care of the children” (p.267).

The reality is that the figures confirm the gender gap when starting a business in Spain, 58,5 % of entrepreneurs at the in an initial phase being male, as well as consolidated entrepreneurs 57,4% GEM, 2018). Spanish Women, according to scientific literature, not only start fewer companies than men but also hold fewer management positions in companies (Valls and Cruz, 2019)

Specifically in Andalusia, the gender gap in entrepreneurship has been narrowing in recent years, but those women who do start a company have fewer employees than male entrepreneurs, 3,6% as opposed to 7% (Rosell, 2019), as we can see around 50% less.

According to the data in the GEM Report (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2018) the motivation and reasons for of 70% of the entrepreneurial population in Spain for becoming entrepreneurs was mainly because of opportunity, while in Andalusia it remains at 67,5%, entrepreneurship out of necessity in Andalusia (29,7%) is above the national average (22,6%). Although it has to be taken into account the fact that entrepreneurship motivated by necessity has increased in the last few years, specifically since the well documented employment crisis over the 2007 – 2008 period. This is possibly due to the unemployment work situation, affecting Andalusia (20,8%) more than the rest of Spain (13,7%) according to data from the Labor Force Survey (INE, 2019), affecting women more in both cases (24% Andalusia and 17,8% Spain) than men (17,8% Andalusia and 12,2% Spain). Considering the characteristics of the Andalusian business fabric and the employability data make Andalusia a special case that deserves a specific analysis.

Based on these theoretical references, from the aspects that characterize the entrepreneurial profiles of Andalusian women, we ask ourselves what factors condition them and what barriers and limitations do they feel? "The emphasis here is on finding routes to allow women to" enter "this field of activity on an equal basis with men" (Marlow, 2020. p.43), so that the general objective of this study is to describe, analyze and understand the conditioning factors present in the entrepreneurial professional development of Andalusian women, identifying gender barriers felt in these processes.

Consequently, the specific objectives are:

1. To identify the conditioning factors which have an influence on women's entrepreneurial profile.
2. To analyse to what extent gender barriers are present in women's entrepreneurial careers.

2. METHODOLOGY AND DATA

In order to answer the outlined objectives, for its suitability a qualitative method under an interpretative research paradigm has been selected (Viñas, 2004). Specifically, a biographical- narrative method gathered from life history (Moriña, 2017) as a strategy to gather data, given its potential to identify and understand a person's characteristics in their personal story and life project (Sobrado and Cortés, 2009) and supports reflection on past experiences (Kacar and Essers, 2019). Qualitative studies based on interviews continue to grow year by year (McDonald *et al.*, 2015) with the aim of making women's discourse visible (Rodríguez-Modroño, 2017), although currently there is limited entrepreneurial research concerning that approach, biographical techniques manage to address the need for a specific understanding of the situation (Fillis, 2015) so that other research studies similar to this, regarding entrepreneurial behaviour, also use the biographical- narrative technique (Santos *et al.*, 2019).-Thanks to a pilot and exploratory study carried out with the participation of 5 subjects (Gálvez-García y Suárez Ortega, 2019) we think that it is the most suitable methodological procedure as it allows us to answer the object of study, identifying and understanding the characteristics of women's professional and life projects as well as the decisions that are involved in their entrepreneurial career, as well as the conditioning factors

which are present in female entrepreneurial professional development, specifically gender barriers which are present in their professional and life projects.

Considering that we are working with the issue of entrepreneurship related to the creation of companies, the sample is made up of 12 Andalusian female entrepreneurs. For the sample selection we have resorted to an intentional sampling looking for representativeness of different sectors of activity and the maximum variability of sociodemographic profiles (age at which they undertake, education, number of children). The selection criteria of the sample are: 1) to be in charge of a company or business, 2) the entrepreneurial moment in which they are situated whether it is a transitional or a consolidated profile, 3) motivation to become an entrepreneur, we evaluate entrepreneurs due to necessity and vocational or opportunity entrepreneurs (Kelley *et al.*, 2015).

Firstly, an exploratory analysis of the transcriptions has been carried out, structuring the information in chronological order and significance of subject matters (Sánchez, 2017), maintaining the first person in order to achieve a greater identification with the subject which has resulted in the life history. Once finalized, they are anonymized and the information is returned to the women, negotiating the stories with them for dissemination and publication.

The analysis of the data has been carried out with Atlas.Ti software using the analytical *template analysis* approach and following the steps proposed by (King, 2012). Template analysis is a form of thematic analysis (Simons, Lim, Kimble, and Tyack, 2018), often used to analyse qualitative data (Akterujjaman, Mulder and Kievit, 2020), which stresses the use of hierarchical codification (Brooks *et al.*, 2015). An initial template has been developed, on deductive dimensions, other inductive ones have been included until configuring the category system was made set up where converging themes in all the stories were identified.

Through the elaboration of a professional and biographical profile chart of each of the stories, identifying landmarks and relevant themes, a comparative analysis has been carried out, which has been the main reference for the contrasting of the informant women's professional trajectories and which has allowed to understand the aspects that determine the female entrepreneurial behaviour. Subsequently, this contrast has been analysed integrating the discursive information provided in the different identified categories. Once the final template had been prepared, all the stories were analyzed again as a control (Tsiamparlis-Wildeboer, Feijen-De Jong and Scheele, 2020).

3. CONDITIONING FACTORS IN THE FEMALE ENTREPRENEURIAL PROFILE

The entrepreneurial profile of the women who have participated in the study which is shown in Table 1. is made up of eight consolidated entrepreneurs and four transitional entrepreneurs, their level of studies is high, mostly university studies. The prevailing motivation for setting up a business is that of opportunity rather than necessity, and what stands out is the number of situations where it is not clear what motivated the decision making to start a business. The main sector in which they undertake is the service sector, highlighting the activity related to fashion. The case of the company in the construction sector being relevant because it is a sector with very little female representation. All companies are considered SMEs, 4 small ones with up to 50 employees, 5 micro companies with up to 10 employees and 3 of them without employees (w/e). The companies with the highest number of employees are the cocktail bar and construction businesswoman, both Patricia and Virginia have more than one business. There are no family businesses, they are all newly created. All the participants have expressed business growth aspirations except Rosa (pharmacy) and Reyes, dedicated to the retail trade that she has no intention of hiring. The age at which they have undertaken ranges between 15 and 43 years, lacking representation of senior entrepreneurship. Regarding the family situation, Rosa is single without children, Laura is a single mother, Reyes is married without children and the rest are married with children.

The determining factors identified are 1) the motivation of need or opportunity that has led to the decision to undertake, 2) training and professional experience that refers to the different academic and professional transitions, 3) social interaction with people who have in some way influenced in the decision-making to undertake, 4) difficulties and barriers that condition the development of the entrepreneurial project; and 5) specific difficulties due to being a woman, referring to strategies that the subjects develop to overcome these gender barriers in the development of their entrepreneurial project, highlighting motherhood and work-life balance as a relevant aspect.

TABLE 1
**CHARACTERIZATION OF FEMALE ANDALUSIAN
 ENTREPRENEURS PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY**

Name	Entrepreneurial profile	Motivation	Age undertake	Education level	N. of children	sector	Size
Virginia	Consolidated	Opportunity	20	Higher	2	Construction	Small
Olivia	Transition	Need	33	Higher	1	Services/education	Micro
Reyes	Transition	Need	42	Secondary	0	Services/fashion store	w/e
Macarena	Transition	Opportunity	36	Higher	3	Services/fashion design and manufacture	Micro
Rosa	Consolidated	Opportunity	28	Higher	0	Services/pharmacy	Micro
Patricia	Consolidated	Opportunity	15	Secondary	1	Services/bar	Small
Laura	Consolidated	Need/ opportunity	39	Postgraduate	1	Services/pedagogy	Micro
Marina	Transition	Opportunity/ need	24	Postgraduate	0	Services/education-dance	Micro
Alicia	Consolidated	Opportunity	26	Postgraduate	2	Services/	Small
Rosario	Consolidated	Need	43	Higher	2	Services/	w/e
Eva	Consolidated	Need	42	Higher	2	Services/handmade fashion	w/e
Susana	Consolidated	Need/ opportunity	24	Higher	8	Services/education-kindergarten	Small

Source: Own elaboration.

3.1. Motivation to undertake

The decision to set up a business is motivated by an opportunity or a necessity. Sometimes the motivation for starting a business is clearly identified if it is due to opportunity or vocation, as is the case with Virginia:

When I reached my 16th birthday my dad had already had some success with in his company and he set up a parallel company, once again in the aluminium sector and I asked my father to take me to work in the company. Since then, and when the classes finished, during the Summer I went to work with my father at the company. I did all sorts of jobs, filling, destroying documents and even cleaning the toilets. Although I was the boss's daughter, I didn't go to the company to be a boss but to learn. My father

let me participate in the decisions he was making and he took me to the meetings. I liked the atmosphere. In the year 2000, when I was studying the second year of my Law degree at university, being just 20, a business opportunity came up and with my father's backing and guarantee I set up a company in the industrial sector [...] I had my 20th birthday on the 25th of February and I set up the company in March.

Macarena also set up a company because of opportunity, finding in entrepreneurship an opportunity for change, she tells the story in the following way:

I had a go at the at the degree I liked and still quite like, I worked in an advertising agency for two years and afterwards in a media agency for six years. Then, a close friend proposed setting up a clothes shop and I saw an opportunity for change. I was a bit burnt out at the agency where I was working because I had just had my first daughter and I was on maternity leave. At the agency my timetable was 9 to 2 and 4 to 7, I got home at 7:30 and my daughter was very young. So, I said yes. I didn't think much about it.

In other cases, the motivation due to necessity is clearly identified, this happens when you can't find a job and entrepreneurship is seen as a way to enter the job market, therefore entrepreneurship appears as an alternative to unemployment, Olivia explains it in the following way:

I don't see myself as an entrepreneur, I think of myself as being self-employed and I think that I started a business out of necessity, [...] If I had found a well-paid engineering job, I would not have started a business, if I had to close down my company it would not worry me much, it was clear in my mind that, if it didn't go well, I would leave it, but now I feel a bit sad to leave, because I love my job and it's my vocation.

In the same way, we consider motivation to be out of necessity when, although the person might work for somebody else, entrepreneurship comes up as an alternative to insecure casual employment, as we can deduce from Marina's words:

I wallpapered Seville with my CV, they would call me from every single place where I had left it, because having a degree in Dance in Seville is unusual, there are only about 15 of us. And dance is taught in many places, in all the schools. I bought a

motorbike so I could go from one place to another and in the evenings, I was doing a Masters. External companies contract you at schools, the schools don't contract you and they don't pay well. They don't pay well in small schools either. And after working in so many places earning so little, my parents asked me why I didn't set up my own dance school. And I said that I didn't know how to go about it, that I was very young [...] I had two options trying to get into the state-run dance school as a teacher which is very difficult because there are not many places or open a school if you want to earn a bit more money.

However, there are situations where the motivation is not clear and where the decision making is more complex, that is why it is not possible to identify clearly if the decision to become an entrepreneur is due to necessity or vocation because somehow the decision has been made for them. Reyes tells the story of how her sister-in-law gave her the shop and Laura who inherited the business from her boss:

"One of those days I met my sister-in-law and I told her about the situation at work. Three weeks later she called me and she said: "here's your shop, at 7 Monte Carmelo Street. It's a gift from me to you because you look after my brother and sister". [...]. That's why the shop is a gift from my sister-in-law for looking after her two siblings. [...] The shop was my sister-in-law's way of thanking me for everything I do for them. My sister-in-law took care of everything, she had even signed the rent contract, she hadn't given me a choice. And she gave me 70000 euros to invest in the shop, but. [...] after about a year and a half since setting up the company a lawyer called me and told me that Macarena, my sister-in-law and partner, had put everything under my name, so now the company is mine. When my sister-in-law realized that the company was doing well, she changed the name on the contract, she was my safety net until the shop took off, money wise and psychologically, she has helped me a lot.

I never thought of becoming an entrepreneur, in fact, somehow, I inherited the business. Although I had always thought of having my own practice I always put it off. Six years ago, my boss told me that he was going to retire and that if I wanted to take over the practice. I said yes but that he should stay for a year so I could train further.

In some cases, motivation due to vocation, identified as such by the researcher, is denied by the subject of the study, "I don't know if at first I

started out of necessity or inertia" as Patricia says. Therefore, although in theory it is clearly defined which motivation is out of necessity and which one is due to vocation, in practice it is not so easy to define, there are situations where the motivation for starting a business is not clear.

3.2. Training and professional experience

The transition into the working world is identified by entrepreneurial women as an important milestone in their professional development, in the same way transitions from one job to another are important in their professional trajectory. With one exception, all the female entrepreneurs but one has started their university studies, only two are working on professional entrepreneurial projects related to their studies. Rosa studied Pharmacy out of vocation and Marina who is a ballet teacher says: "I loved to dance. My mum sent me to dance school when I was three years old; I have studied a degree in the Teaching of Classical ballet for four years".

In the case of women who have started a company when they were very young, Patricia 15 and Virginia 20, respectively, abandoned their university studies, Virginia because she could not juggle it with the management of the company and Patricia explains it in following words:

I had started studying a Law degree at university but I stopped when I was 21 because I was making more money with my bars than I could make as a lawyer. I stopped studying Law because I didn't have a mother who made me study. I regret it nowadays. I'm proud of my life, I haven't stopped working, but I would have liked to have finished my degree. My father got really angry with me, but obviously I didn't pay attention to him, I would have paid more attention to my mother.

In Rosario's words we can see how she has moved away from gender stereotypes which were deeply rooted in her environment and that were related to education and professional and personal development, where women only thought about getting married and have having children, this is how she tells her story:

Because in my village, when you finished studying 8th year of EGB (compulsory education at 14 years of age) people wanted to get married, they went home to embroider and prepare their trousseau, especially the girls. It was very common

to ask people whether they were going to go to high school because there wasn't one in my village and you had to go to another village. My parents always instilled in me the need to be financially independent and to study a university degree. It was very clear to me that I wanted to study and I went to high school in another village where we had classes in the mornings and afternoons. I chose computer studies because I have always liked science.

As regards the professional trajectory of female entrepreneurs, it is not uncommon to detect professional inquisitiveness at an early age, doing small jobs such as teaching private classes as in Virginia's case, Olivia teaching dance classes or Macarena working in bars and pubs. That is why a common characteristic among all female entrepreneurs is their work ethic as Laura states: *"I did Psychology, I did early intervention training, I did Speech Therapy and afterwards a master in Speech Therapy. Many years studying. I've been lucky and have never stopped working but I am very hard-working"*, by combining freelance work and being employed by others Alicia explains: *"I worked part time at the chemist's and afterwards I did visits to try and get clients for my company"*.

There are two cases of women in the fashion business who have previous entrepreneurial experience and this would be the second time they start a business. Reyes was self-employed when she set up a franchise and Macarena had previously started a multi brand shop:

One day, all of a sudden, I started mulling over the idea of creating a brand, and again my entrepreneurial spirit came back, something that happens to me every now and then, [...]. After studying the fashion business, target audience and age, I found an interesting niche. Then suddenly I told the owner of the company that I was leaving my job and was starting my own brand for young girls, I was very sure about the target audience.

3.3. People who have had an influence on women about the decision to start a business

The people who influence female entrepreneurship, according to the women who have participated in the study are located firstly in the family environment, parents, siblings or even in-laws; secondly, within their circle of close friends or work environment, such as their boss or colleagues.

Occasionally, the influence of that person is triggered at a specific time and is essential in starting an entrepreneurial career and making the decision to start a business. In Marina's story her parents helped her with the last push and told her: "now is the time, we support you". In Patricia's case it was her sister who took the initiative and this is how she explains it:

My grandmother left us, me and my sister four million pesetas. My sister told me: "listen, why don't we set up a bar?". My sister was 19 and I was 15, I was at high school but I said yes.

Meanwhile in other cases, this influence takes place over a longer period of time, although it too leads to the decision to start a business. In this way, the entrepreneurial atmosphere seen in the family environment in Virginia's case, or the friends in Macarena's environment who own companies.

Although it is not considered a determining factor for starting a business, most entrepreneurs point to their partner's support in the decision to start a business. In the statements, is also clear how important the partners' support is in order to be able to strike a balance between professional and family life, as is Susana's case who says:

My husband of course, he thinks I don't love him as much as he loves me. But he was the one who has supported me all the time, sometimes I think that I don't deserve him, and the only thing he wants is for me to be calm and happy, for me to be fine. He has his own company but he deals with the financial side of the nursery school.

3.4. Difficulties to undertake perceived by women

The difficulties in starting a business identified in this study, lack of financing, excessive paperwork and high tax burdens, are part of an economic and political context, that's why we can classify them as external (Navarro, 2012) or formal (Álvarez *et al.*, 2012) factors.

The main difficulty for most of the women who have participated in this study is sorting out the financing as Rosa explains: "I had lots of problems, especially to get the money to start with because not all the banks lend you that sort of money". That is why sometimes, it is necessary that a person-who normally belongs to their own family environment- acts as a guarantee for the project. This is Marina's case who says: "The main problem is money.

I was afraid of not being able to pay back the debt. Luckily, I have parents who support me". In the case of the female entrepreneurs who have started their business project without the help of third parties, the initial investment tends to be small, as Macarena says "I started with the minimum investment".

We can also find barriers in the political and institutional contexts which put a brake on starting a business, bureaucracy being the main difficulty that slows down the setting up of the entrepreneurial project as well as the carrying out of the activity. Reyes tells her story like this:

I had many problems with the company. For example, I had trouble getting the renovation and opening permits, it seemed like they were opening the doors to heaven for me. And all that in spite of the fact that you are making money. There's lots of paperwork and when you try to hand it in, you are always missing something. They say "you're missing form 426 ", so you go back home, call your lawyer and get the piece of paper, you go back to Town Planning and then they say you are missing form 412. For a month and a half that's what happened

And Rosa explains how bureaucratic obstacles make her daily business activity difficult:

At the moment I have no time (to go on entrepreneurial courses) because there are lots of papers, lots of forms to hand in, we have made progress with the electronic prescriptions because with the stamping of prescriptions you waste a lot of time.

In this institutional context, reference is also made to the high taxes that employers have to face, specifically if you want to be self-employed, you pay higher taxes in Spain than in other countries. Olivia complains about this: "I have to pay 300€ to work freelance and you don't get sick pay. My salary would be 1200€ but in reality, I get 800€ to take back home".

The other difficulty that is often mentioned is the lack of training and knowledge of the different areas within a company, especially from a tax and administrative point of view. This lack of training makes the initial starting up of a business more difficult, as Marina explains below:

I learnt by making mistakes. Asking around a lot. The first year I had to learn everything. Everything works out in the end. My uncle is a lawyer and he taught me how to do my taxes.

Among all the different departments, special mention is made of the Human Resources department, where leadership is necessary. Patricia explains below:

When I was 20 years old, I was in charge of 5 employees and I was worried about not managing them well. I was offered a job in a bar in Málaga during the Summer so I didn't want to go on holiday, I went to work there.

4. GENDER BARRIERS IN WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURIAL TRAJECTORIES

4.1. Difficulties being a woman

Businesswomen who carry out their activity in sectors with a higher female presence such as the pharmaceutical sector, baking or fashion do not mention special difficulties because of the fact that they are women. However, in traditionally male sectors, such as the building sector, pubs, clubs and cocktail bars, which are considered to be a man's world or sales and commercial activities, they do mention special difficulties because of the fact that they are women, such as pejorative behaviour like Laura explains: "Many fathers, not so much the mothers, speak about you like "the girl who works with my son". However, with the male colleagues that does not happen, they are more respectful". Also, with lack of authority like Marina explains: "They didn't pay attention to me because I'm a woman, because if my mother was there the same thing happened but if my father turned up everybody did what he said. Patricia gives us an example:

It's sad, but they don't treat you well maybe I don't remember after so many years, but some things are very clear in my head such as the time a soft drinks lorry driver called me "pussy" when I was a successful entrepreneur. Another example was when my sister and I were taken to the Madrid Drinks Masters event, because we were the ones who sold more tonic water than anyone in Seville. We were taken to a strip club because the trip was organized with men in mind and they didn't expect us to attend the event.

On other occasions women are incapable of identifying gender barriers, and they justify the behaviour because they are very young or inexperienced, but in reality, that behaviour is caused because of gender.

4.2. *Maternity and its intersectionality with other professional and vital factors*

In the women's statements, motherhood is seen as an important milestone which marks a turning point that leads them to a professional restructuring. The work life balance strategies of entrepreneurial women in face of motherhood are diverse, some see entrepreneurship as a way of juggling things due to its flexibility, Eva explains it in the following way:

The good thing about sharing the studio is that we can make use of the synergy, they are architects [...] and we complement each other, we give each other ideas. It is luxury to be able to work in an open space, with lots of light and I start to work next to the window and people look at you. We all have children and sometimes we've had to bring them here, we send them off to the square or we sit them at the table to work. Work-life balance is a problem.

The possibility of taking kids to work is also important for other entrepreneurs as in Susana's case, who took her own little children to the nursery or Virginia, who says:

Being the owner of the company has allowed me to take my children to work, I put a rug on my office floor with the toys and my children played there. In the afternoons I made arrangements, so I didn't have to go to work, and I worked on the computer and especially on the phone. Everything has a good and a bad side. For example, I've never missed a school play or if my son is sick I can pick him up, I don't need to ask my mum or anybody for help. That's an advantage.

On the other hand, motherhood is occasionally perceived by the interviewed women as a reason to quit the idea of becoming an entrepreneur, or as a reason if not to stop working, to lower the amount of time dedicated to the company so that they can look after their children. Like Patricia says: "I've decided that I have to slow down in order to be able to enjoy my family". On the other hand, Olivia had to quit the idea of having more children to be able to look after the company:

In any case, for entrepreneur mothers it is important to be able to dedicate enough time to both the company and the children, but it is not easy, Alicia says: "I've felt guilty for not being able to be with my children, but that can happen to a man too". Virginia explains the difficulties of working and looking after the children in the following way:

I gave birth to my son on Thursday and on Monday, as soon as I could stand, I went back to the company with my baby, I take him with me. Could I have stayed at home for four months? Probably not. Because if I'm not there my company cannot function, unless it's a big company where there's a general manager with x functions. But the owner of a company does not have specific functions, he/she does everything, you're everywhere in the company. You don't do a specific job but you do everything. I could not even contemplate going away for four months, it was unthinkable. That's never going to happen.

The work life balance is not a problem for women without children although it is something that worries them when thinking about motherhood in the future as Marina says:

What worries me more is having children, it is complicated because I don't work sitting in an office, I have to bend down, move around a lot and if I have a complicated pregnancy or I have to stop working for too long, that scares me a bit. But anyway, I'm going to be a mother. And I hope more than once.

To sum up, we can highlight that the people who have an influence on the professional trajectory of female entrepreneurs are within their family circle or their close circle, the main difficulty in becoming an entrepreneur lies in the institutional environment where access to financing, complex bureaucracy and heavy taxes are variables which have a negative influence. It is interesting to point out the need for training in tax and administrative matters. Specific difficulties due to gender have been identified especially in traditionally male environments related to behaviour and authority. Female entrepreneurs have a high level of training and education, mostly university studies and masters; although motivation due to vocation when making the decision to become an entrepreneur is common, it is not always easy to identify it when it is due to necessity or opportunity as it is a combination of both on some occasions. Motherhood is identified as an important milestone which affects their pro-

fessional projects making it difficult to achieve a balance between working in the company and looking after children. We can see how motherhood has an influence when making decisions, the work – childcare balance being an underlying worry for all female entrepreneurs.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In order to be consistent with the research approach, and in relation with the first objective which proposed identify the conditioning factors which have an influence on women's entrepreneurial profile. We conclude that the set of circumstances which surround the decision making might make it difficult to identify whether entrepreneurship takes place out of vocation or necessity. It is found that a situation of unemployment might lead to people starting a business out of necessity, but unhappiness in the current job might also be considered a factor which leads to starting a business out of necessity. The difference between starting a business out of necessity or out of entrepreneurial spirit might be clear from a theoretical point of view but it is more difficult to implement on a practical level (Cueto, 2018).

Regarding training and professional experience, it is concluded that the profile of the businesswomen who have participated in the study presents a high level of education, however, most of the participants do not have specific training for entrepreneurship that they supplement through professional experience. So, life experience is presented as a catalyst to start or continue with the entrepreneurial project and face the different difficulties and barriers. Cruces and Palenzuela (2006, p.294) reach this conclusion in their work on rural entrepreneurs who “despite training deficiencies, efficiently take advantage of the experiences acquired, and often develop an intelligent design of their business strategies to be able to face the large number of obstacles and restrictions of various kinds.

The people who have more influence on the participants women's decision making belong mainly to the family circle such as parents, partners, siblings or in-laws. The influence ranges from support at a given moment to make the leap to entrepreneurship to influence exerted over time, as is the case of the business culture experienced in the family. The results of this study back the idea that most women refer to the support they get from their partners, be that in the decision making or by helping with the work –

life balance. These results coincide with Bowen and Hisrich's (1986) study which states that women's first support is their husbands, while in men's cases the support comes from professional people and their wives being the second option.

Although in the sample profile we do not find family businesses, we can refer to the "family guardianship" to which it refers Sampedro and Camarero (2007), in our case through guarantees to obtain financing or help with accounting, which are usually carried out by the father or husband. In fact, one of the main difficulties to undertake that the participants manifest is precisely the difficulty of obtaining financing. Other difficulties in entrepreneurship expressed by the sample are related to public administration: excess bureaucracy and high tax burden.

As regards the second objective which tried to analyze how gender barriers are present in women's entrepreneurial trajectories, specific gender difficulties have been identified such as pejorative behaviour towards women and we also found problems to exert authority in sectors which are considered traditionally male like the building sector, bars and sales. Motherhood is considered one of the most significant transitions in women's professional and life projects and is identified as a moment of reflection and rethinking of their professional trajectory, increasing the difficulty to achieve a balance between their dedications to the company and looking after their children, which leads to the problem of the conflict of roles and health. Some of the reconciliation strategies carried out by the participants with children are taking the children to work, seek family help, hire a babysitting or reducing the pace of dedication to the company.

Limitations and future research suggestions

A limitation of this study could be its local character, based on the descriptive and interpretive analysis of individual career paths of Andalusian women entrepreneurs. On the other hand, although it has not been the focus of this study, it is true that it would be convenient to consider a sample of male profiles, and diversify the profiles including different contexts or regions in order to advance in a comparative study; what is considered as prospective of this study.

In coherence with the object of study and the method applied, the conclusions can be considered useful for the design of training and guidance

actions in entrepreneurship, favoring the management of effective policies through the development of measures and resources that contribute to shaping a panorama more equitable entrepreneur. For this, without a doubt, it is necessary to achieve the commitment of institutions and society in general to guarantee equal access and development to the business world and the development of life.

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