

ERASMUS+ Programme 2015 – KA2 Adult Education

Project nº: 2015-1-ES01-KA204-015937

Document name: **O1.- Complex research according to the ethnomethodological pattern by applying  
professiography to the target group of housewives – Spain (Lorca)**

Partner: FEUP

Author: Eva María Paco Martínez

## **MUPYME Project - Employment and Women on the 21st century in Europe: From Household economy to SME economy (Small and Medium enterprises)**

**O1.- Complex research according to the ethnomethodological pattern by applying  
professiography to the target group of housewives – Spain (Lorca)**

Housework involves everyday activities within the household that are performed by housewives by means of physical work combined with capital goods. This implies those activities aimed to satisfying the needs of the household members by providing food, clothes, rest, and more.

The five interviews were conducted in May 2016. Each interview lasted about hours and they were based on a structural survey provided by FEUP. Our researcher implemented observation methods and she is the one who has visited the participants' households.

Eva María Paco Martínez, the project manager in Lorca (Spain), was the one in charge of the interviews. Eva is a professional adult educator for the Popular University in Lorca and Red Cross. She is an experienced educator, she evaluates adult education and works as a manager in many EU projects, as the SARA Project, Project: Social-Business Challenge for Labour Inclusion: Alliance (Proyecto: Reto Social Empresarial para la Inserción Laboral: Alianzas).

The selection of the 5 female participants was based on geographic criteria, number of family members, household experiences, financial situation, etc.

## Findings

1. Three out of the five participants live in hamlets of Lorca, Cazalla, El Campillo and Tercia. The three of them live in a single floor house with a garden, trees and animals. These hamlets are located within 3km from Lorca. Two participants live in the centre of Lorca: Ana lives in a flat, while Lola lives in a single floor house with a garden. All of them experienced, to some extent, the consequences the 2011 Earthquake had in their homes. They had to temporarily move to other villages for some months until they could return to their residences.
2. All 5 participants are between 35 and 50 years old. Three of them are married with children and the two remaining are single and living with their partners.
3. The participant's average education level is EGB (high school within the former Spanish education system), except for Agustina, who holds a Higher Level Training Cycle (CFGS) certification, and Ana, graduated in Law. Three out of the five participants are married with two children each, and two are single and living with their partners.
4. The participants' financial situation fits the average, except for one of them, whose financial situation is weaker.
5. All 5 participants have work experience: 2 of them quit their professional activities in order to raise their children, and one of them had to stop working due to a total

permanent disability, and two of them were fired as a consequence of the financial crisis. The two single participants have a higher qualification: Agustina is a Building Construction Technician and Ana holds a Bachelor in Law. Both of them lost their jobs with the financial crisis and both aspire to change their professional areas and acquire the skills for a new work field. Those experiences have been really beneficial for them, an aspect they have noticed while performing their usual housework and socializing.

6. Most of them feel grateful for the skills their mothers and sisters passed on to them. Their mothers taught them cooking, ironing, cleaning, clothing maintenance, dressmaking, shopping, household management skills, among others. They gave their daughters a chance to practice, to show initiative, make decisions, etc. Some women claimed that they learnt most of their current inherent character features -like sensitivity, hospitality, honesty and their active way of being- from their mothers.
7. The participants have been in charge of household economy for an average of 15-20 years.
8. The participants consider most challenging ironing and household management, and less challenging cooking and housework. Regarding the improvements that could be implemented in their homes, all believe that new technologies could be useful. As I have already pointed out, they all emphasize the fact that training and qualification would improve their skills at work. They want a change from experimental learning to organized qualification training.
9. Most of them believe that either their husbands and children do not help enough or they do not help at all. Housewives feel isolated and forced to perform all the house-related activities. Many of them feel that it is a continuous source of stress. Time is the main issue. Many claim that they cannot get all the work done due to a lack of time. They do not have time for themselves. Their husbands and children do not help with housework. They have to take care of house maintenance, their children's homework, grocery shopping, gardening, the pets, paying the bills, etc. Their husbands perform only activities that require a great amount of physical strength, as those related to fixing things around the house.
10. Three out of the five participants quit their jobs in order to take care of household management. Agustina and Ana did not have a choice since they lost their jobs.
11. All 5 participants would have preferred to engage on a different work activity had the situation been different.
12. All 5 participants listed and explained their housework activities. They listed an average of 15 activities each. Most of them mentioned the following:

ERASMUS+ Programme 2015 – KA2 Adult Education

Project nº: 2015-1-ES01-KA204-015937

Document name: **O1.- Complex research according to the ethnomethodological pattern by applying profессиography to the target group of housewives – Spain (Lorca)**

Partner: FEUP

Author: Eva María Paco Martínez

- ✓ Cleaning
  - ✓ Household management
  - ✓ Ironing
  - ✓ Children mobility: picking them up from school, extra-curricular activities.
  - ✓ Helping the children with their homework
  - ✓ Paying the bills
  - ✓ Gardening
  - ✓ Cooking
  - ✓ Grocery shopping
  - ✓ Training activities, such as attending computer classes
  - ✓ Logistics
  - ✓ Accounting
  - ✓ Taking care of the pets
  - ✓ Clothing maintenance: doing laundry
  - ✓ Dressmaking tasks
  - ✓ Crafting
  - ✓ Baking
  - ✓ Recycling
- ✚ Some other tasks were mentioned individually: like the maintenance of an ecological greenhouse, taking care of farm animals, such as chickens, horses, etc.
- ✚ The women linked the household activities they performed to those often associated with an enterprise. They said that many of the skills and values learnt within the household are not that different from those business-related. Their considerations about the topic are:

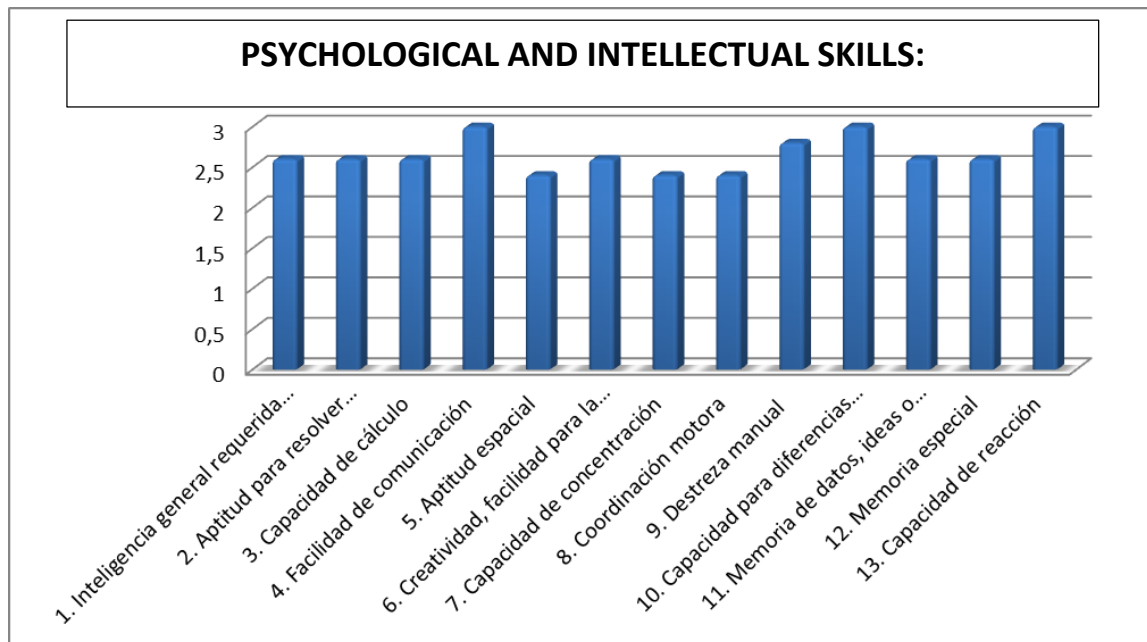
- Household-related financial area: mobility, time management, task-understanding skills, aesthetic criteria, social commitment, ensuring health and safety within the household, personal development, healthy economy, self-discipline, family development, planning, etc.
- Its relation with enterprises: skills to understand employee's work, Public Relations, conflict settlement, ability to create a comfortable atmosphere, safety control, skills to set priorities, response to changes in business, looking after the image of the enterprise, ability to develop attractive products, multi-tasking, logistics. motivation, leadership, communication, human development, maintenance, technological economy, profit and loss account management, marketing, purchasing management, inventory management, environment, risk management, planning, budget, teamwork, resource management, etc.

**13.** The participant's level of autonomy, initiative and responsibility shows that, in general, they have the skills required for conflict solving, both at a smaller level (as damaged devices in the household) and at a higher complexity level, such as those conflicts associated with family life –in which their tender and friendly character is self-evident. They also have the skills required for decision-making.

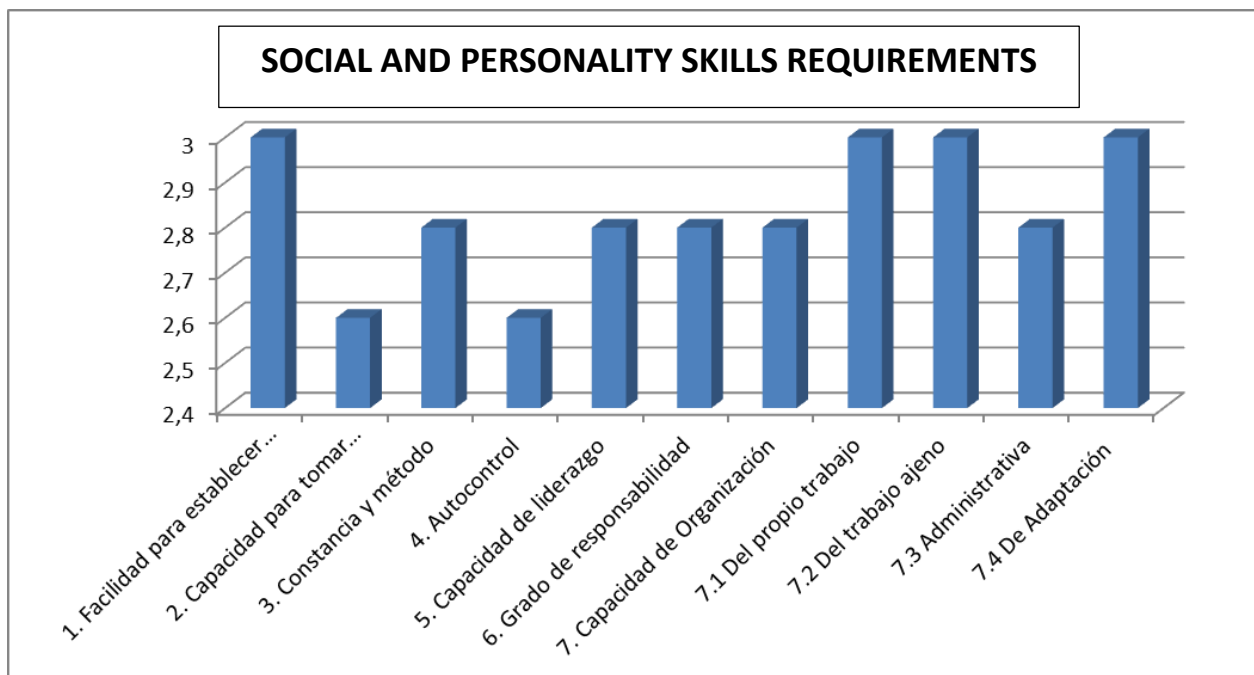
**14.** Regarding the usual working tools used by the participants:

- The devices they usually use: washing machine, vitro ceramic, coffee maker, microwave, iron, dishwasher.
- The kitchen equipment or specific tools required for specific tasks used by all of them: mop, cloth, brush, scoop, etc.
- Common materials: cleaning chemicals, organic products for cooking purposes.

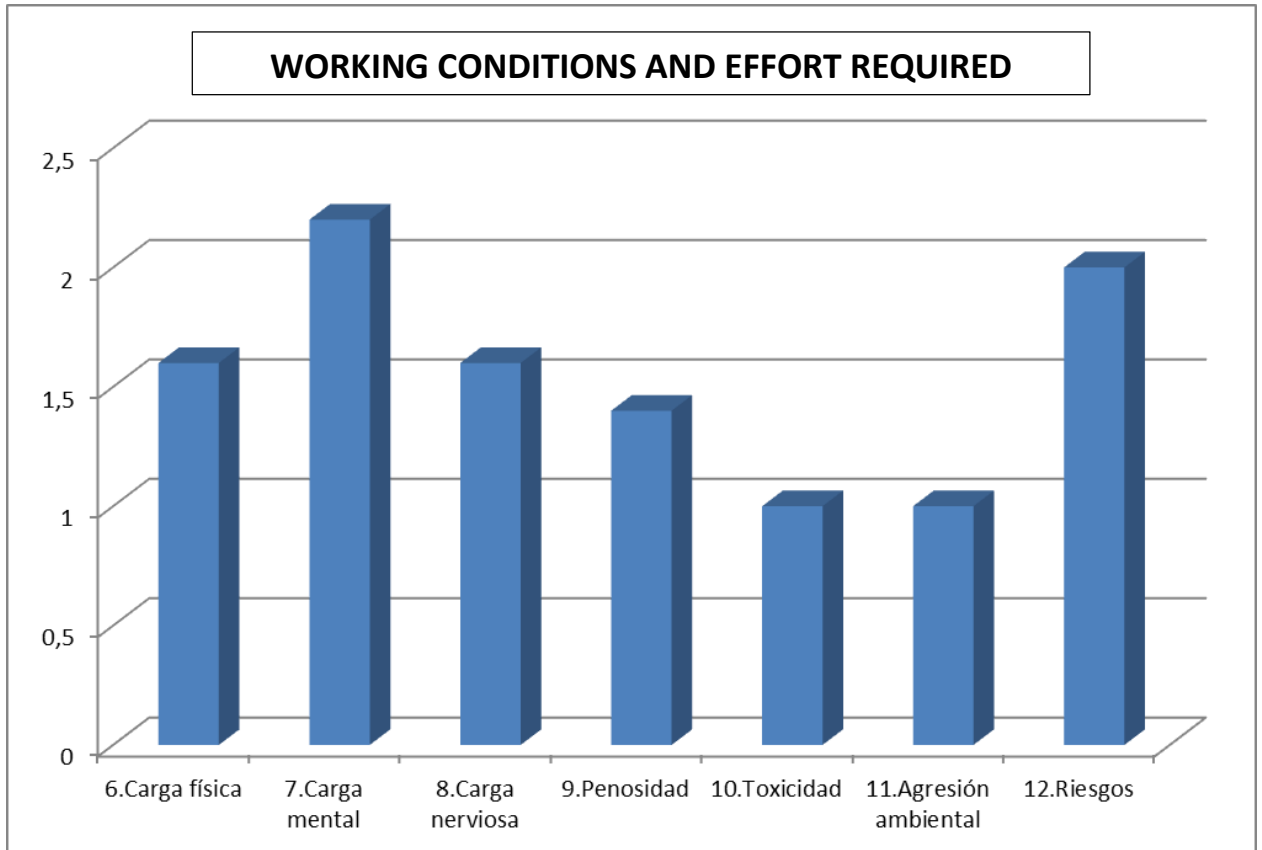
**15.** Regarding the Work Analysis, expressed by means of a graphic and representative approach:



1. Basic intelligence required; 2. Problem –solving skills; 3. Calculation skills; 4. Communication skills; 5. Space-related abilities; 6. Creativity; 7. Concentration skills; 8. Motor coordination; 9. Manual skills; 10. Ability to differentiate; 11. Remember; 12. Specific memory skills; 13. Ability to react quickly



1. Ease to establish; 2. Decision-making; 3. Perseverance and method; 4. Self-control; 5. Leadership skills; 6. Responsibility level; 7. Organization skills; 7.1. Of her own work; 7.2. Of other people's work; 7.3. Management; 7.4. Adaptation



6. Physical resistance; 7; Mental resistance; 8. Stress resistance; 9. Unpleasantness; 10. Toxicity; 11. Environmental damage; 12. Risks

**16.** Regarding working conditions, all 5 participants think they are not performing really complex tasks, but they agree it requires organization and logistics, as well as remaining active and in a constant state of alert. Loneliness and isolation have the strongest psychological consequences. For them, time management is a problem, since they need to multi-task. There is a great need for decision-making, being ready to take risks, being able to organize different things simultaneously, etc.

**17.** All mentioned the importance of stability and both physical and psychological strength. They also remark how relevant cooperation and coordination are, due to the nature of housework.

**18.** All 5 participants think social relationships are very important to housewives. That provides an opportunity for thinking and creating new ideas, to relax, and, thanks to that exchange of ideas and knowledge, they can also acquire new skills.

**19.** Most of them believe some crucial qualities every housewife should have are emotional intelligence, problem solving skills, commitment, creativity, communication, empathy and teamwork.

**20.** All of them are interested in attending training courses to improve their skills and knowledge level. However, there are not many available courses compatible with their timetables. They improve those aspects on their own, trying to attend conferences or 1 o 2-hour courses, while the children are at school.

**21.** All of them consider the following to be crucial values: building interpersonal relationships, organized work, leadership and adaptation skills and creativity.



## SUGGESTIONS

1. Training courses and programmes are vital in order to bring women in the labour market. The Popular University (UP) in Lorca already has qualification resources in their education programme. However, we should commit to:
  - Creating an Emotional Intelligence Training for women so as to improve their self-esteem levels and make them aware of their equal position compared to men. Housework does not have different gender-based implications. Partnership between men and women observed in other countries regarding housework layout should be examined and implemented.
  - Creating training courses regarding Project Management: teamwork, time management, risk management, budget management, target achievement, actions, planning, environment, human resources, leadership, quality, spending, etc.
  - Creating a training programme focussed on Business Skills: Marketing and advertisement, motivation, human development, etc.
2. Another interesting action would be to organize Conferences bringing together both housewives and businesswomen, so the latter could share their experiences regarding business planning with the housewives.
3. Developing training courses aimed to housewives in order to encourage them to launch a business by showing them the similarities between household-related skills, as seen in culinary activities (such as the elaboration of jam and cakes, crafting, crochet, sewing, etc.).
4. The organization of Conferences to engage husbands in the equality process involving housework layout and women integration at the workplace would be remarkably relevant as well.