



# Conceptions on disability of Spanish university students

## *Concepciones sobre la discapacidad de estudiantes universitarios españoles*

**Dr. Lúcia Pereira Leite** is a professor at Universidade Estadual Paulista (Brasil) ([lucia.leite@unesp.br](mailto:lucia.leite@unesp.br)) (<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2401-926X>)

**Dr. Sandra Martins** is a professor at Universidade Estadual Paulista (Brasil) ([sandra.eli@unesp.br](mailto:sandra.eli@unesp.br)) (<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4247-1447>)

**Dr. Anabel Moriña** is a professor at Universidad de Sevilla (España) ([anabelm@us.es](mailto:anabelm@us.es)) (<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0852-7523>)

**Dr. Beatriz Morgado** is a professor at Universidad de Sevilla (España) ([bmorgado@us.es](mailto:bmorgado@us.es)) (<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3549-9476>)

Received on: 2022-04-19 / Revised on: 2022-11-24 / Accepted on: 2022-11-29 / Published on: 2023-01-01

### Abstract

In the context of education and, specifically, in the university stage, the presence of people with disabilities in Higher Education is today a reality, both in Spain and in other international contexts. Currently, there is a global movement that claims the right to access, permanence and success of non-traditional students, including those with disabilities. This study aims to present and analyze the conceptions of 676 university students (undergraduate and postgraduate) from different areas of knowledge of the University of Seville (Spain) on disability. A quantitative methodology has been used with the application of the Intercultural Scale of Disability Concepts (EICD). The results showed a preponderance of the social conception of disability, followed by the biological/medical aspects. Differences were observed in relation to the variables analyzed, younger university students and those who were doing postgraduate studies indicated the prevalence of statements linked to the social model of disability. No significant differences were found between participants with and without disabilities. Among the conclusions, we can highlight the relevance of understanding disability as a social phenomenon for the offer of inclusive psychosocial and psychoeducational practices. This decision then reveals that accepting the review of social paradigms to resignify concepts in the social conception of disability is a possible for the recognition of the differences that constitute the human.

**Keywords:** University students, disability, concept formation, evaluation measures, public policy, social psychology.

### Resumen

En el contexto de la educación y, concretamente, en la etapa universitaria, la presencia de personas con discapacidad en la Educación Superior es hoy en día una realidad, tanto en España como en otros contextos internacionales. En la actualidad, existe un movimiento global que reivindica el derecho al acceso, permanencia y éxito de estudiantes no tradicionales, entre los que se encuentran las personas con discapacidad. Este estudio pretende presentar y analizar las concepciones de 676 universitarios (grado y posgrado) de diferentes áreas de conocimiento de la Universidad de Sevilla (España) sobre la discapacidad. Se ha utilizado una metodología cuantitativa con la aplicación de la Escala Intercultural de Conceptos de Discapacidad (EICD). Los resultados mostraron una preponderancia de la concepción social de discapacidad, seguida de los aspectos biológicos/médicos. Se observaron diferencias en relación con las variables analizadas, universitarios más jóvenes y aquellos que realizaban estudios de posgrado señalaron la prevalencia de afirmaciones vinculadas al modelo social de discapacidad. No se encontraron diferencias significativas entre los y las participantes con y sin discapacidad. Entre las conclusiones, podemos destacar la relevancia de la comprensión de la discapacidad como un fenómeno social para la oferta de prácticas psicosociales y psicoeducativas inclusivas. Esta decisión revela entonces que, aceptar la revisión de los paradigmas sociales para resignificar conceptos en la concepción social de la discapacidad, es un camino posible por el reconocimiento de las diferencias que constituyen lo humano.

**Descriptorios:** Estudiantes universitarios, discapacidad, formación de conceptos, medidas de evaluación, política pública, psicología social.

## 1. Introduction

Disability is a complex, multidimensional phenomenon and is constructed according to different cultural, social and historical contexts (Gallagher *et al.*, 2014). This notion implies an interaction between the biological characteristics (sensory, intellectual, motor and emotional functions of people) and the characteristics of the society in which they live (attitudes, accessibility to transportation and infrastructure, or social support) (Organización Mundial de la Salud, 2018).

Studies reveal that theoretical models that explain the understanding of the phenomenon of disability have been and continue to be marked by contradictions to discuss disability as a constitutive mark of the human in the historical-cultural context (Martins, 2013).

Society has looked at people with disabilities from different perspectives. Following the model proposed by Leite and Lacerda (2018), some people show an organic conception of disability as the possibility of [...] “the individual to interpret disability as an inherent attribute of the individual, adopting as a reference the deviation of an organic pattern of normality, or the presence of a failure or limit leading to a malfunction of a given organism [...]” (p. 436). Other people show a psychosocial conception, interpreting disability as [...] “a distinct organic condition, associated with causal factors of social, emotional, economic and/or educational nature that influence the human condition [...]” (p. 436). Other people show a historical-cultural conception and disability is explained “[...] as dynamic, relational and processual based on an association between individual and sociocultural context, causing a differentiated human development, adjustable according to expectations and attitudes towards it [...]” (p. 436). Finally, the authors point out that there are people who show a metaphysical conception linked to the vision that characterizes disability [...] “as something that transcends the human condition, and

may be linked to spiritual and/or religious causes, or to supernatural factors. Therefore, it is a phenomenon set in motion, which depends little on the action of man [...]” (p. 436).

In a complementary way and in relation to the understanding of disability by the metaphysical conception in medieval times, it is justified to transcend the human responsibility, the metaphysical conception, superimposing the idea of having a demonic soul or divine designs (Pessotti, 1984). For this reason, such position of Strelhow (2018) states that this conception of disability is represented in the Christian tradition, which shows that this is a complex issue, and it is necessary to understand it as a phenomenon attributed to people in this condition. In making a historical digression, the author analyzes the influence of Christianity in the interpretation of disability today, stating that it is not [...] rare to find common sense speeches that qualify people with disabilities as “a gift from God, angel, enlightened, the will of God” (Strelhow, 2018, p. 276). Because of this religious influence, it is quite common for people with disabilities to adopt charitable practices, i.e., reproducing the care of Christian communities in earlier times.

From another theoretical model, a difference is made between the medical and social conception of disability (Oliver, 1990). In the first one, it is assumed that the problem is in the person and must be solved by experts based on a diagnosis. In other words, the focus is on “normalizing” disability (Barton, 1996), moving closer to organic conception. However, it is necessary to move towards a conception of disability based on the social model of disability (Moriña and Carnerero, 2020), approaching the social conception. The understanding of disability as a social phenomenon has allowed us to think of diversity as something distant from the homogenizing model that denies difference as constitutive of the human being. Hence the social model of disability seeks to overcome the clinical biomedical model of normality, respecting human



diversity, regardless of the different functional limitations existing in the individual.

In the social model of disability, political and practical attitudes generate barriers and/or aids access, as well as the participation of the person in different contexts. (O'Byrne *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, social, cultural and economic structures can be more or less disabling and oppressive to people with disabilities (Cunnah, 2015; Hutcheon and Wolbring, 2013). In Ochoa's words, social inclusion and equity in access to rights favor the implementation [...] of participatory strategies, creating the conditions and mechanisms necessary for everyone to participate (2019, p. 193).

In the context of education specifically at the university, the presence of people with disabilities in higher education is now a reality, both in Spain and in other international contexts. Today, there is a global movement that claims the right to access, stay and success of non-traditional students<sup>1</sup>, including those with disabilities (Sandoval *et al.*, 2020). In fact, there is an increase in these students in higher education institutions. As an example, in Spain, in 2011 there were 12 775 students, which increased in 2018 to 21 435 (Fundación Universia, 2018).

As for studies on conceptions<sup>2</sup> about disability at the university, a work conducted by Baker *et al.* (2012), explored the conceptions of both students with disabilities and without disabilities. The data suggest conceptions based on the social model, showing signs of educational inclusion. Regarding the conceptions of students with disabilities, it is highlighted that they felt welcome and included at the university. Another study analyzed that university students demonstrate a positive attitude towards disability and that their conceptions approximated the social model of disability (Leiva *et al.*, 2019).

On the other hand, the systematic review on conceptions of disability of the teachers and students conducted by Moríña and Carnerero (2020) studied that the conceptions mainly rely on the medical model, i.e., organic conception. Therefore, disability is considered as an inherent problem of the person (Eleftheriou *et al.*, 2013; González and Cortés, 2016). One conclusion of this study is that conceptions determine attitudes and practices towards an inclusive educational response towards people with disabilities (Hockings *et al.*, 2012; Van Jaarsveldt and Ndeya-Ndereya, 2015). Other research has found that attitude towards disability is related to variables such as gender, education or relationships with people with disabilities and professional experience (Graça *et al.*, 2018; Polo *et al.*, 2020). In this regard, women appear to have more positive attitudes towards disability than men (Li *et al.*, 2012; Novo-Corti *et al.*, 2015).

A correlation has also been found between training and conception of disability, i.e., the attitude is more positive at a higher academic level. Specifically, Goddard and Evans (2018) noted that university students in the last years of their training were more sensitized towards their classmates, suggesting that training favors inclusive responses to disability. In this line, it has been considered that the information and training on disability offered at the university seems to determine attitudes towards them (Diego, 2017).

In addition, Bain and Hasio (2011) mention that direct experience with students with disabilities helps college students analyze their own belief to work with these classmates. Gibbons *et al.* (2015) and Polo *et al.* (2020), say that university students who have frequent contacts with people with disabilities show a more positive attitude towards them. Likewise, other

1 Students who traditionally have not had access to university, such as: women, mature students, students from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, as well as those with disabilities and many others.

2 Conception is defined as a way of "... understanding or interpreting some phenomenon that can guide the actions of the subjects against a certain object or situation. Therefore, the concept of disability is defined as a concept based on a theoretical-practical construct that guides actions based on it" (Leite *et al.*, 2021, p. 574).



studies indicate that having relationships with family or friends with disabilities fosters a positive attitude towards inclusion in future teachers (Barr and Bracchitta, 2015; Goddard and Evans, 2018). Polo *et al.* (2020) mention the importance of previous experiences with people with disabilities to improve the attitudes of students at the university towards them.

Regarding professional experience, it seems that the positive attitude for inclusion is related to the teaching experience, so that more experienced teachers, usually older teachers, show more positive attitude about inclusion (Çagran and Schmidt, 2011; Forlin *et al.*, 2011).

In short, the different studies analyzed relate conceptions of disability and more participation of people with disabilities in the educational context (Varcoe and Boyle, 2013). These findings reveal the need for inclusive universities (Moriña, 2017). This way of understanding disability as constitutive of the human being can be the “antidote” to fight the deficient conceptions of disability (Liasidou, 2014) and exclusion practices; promote the elimination of barriers that prevent students from accessing knowledge and participation; recognize and value diversity (Ainscow, 2020).

Because of the latter and understanding that the presence of students with disabilities is increasing in higher education in different university contexts (Carballo *et al.*, 2019), this study aims to present and analyze the conceptions of disability in students in a University of Spain. The article is part of a broader research on an international network<sup>3</sup>, of which the University of Seville is a collaborator. The study aims to analyze the relationships according to some variables, such as area of specialization and/or academic background, enrollment periods (freshmen and/or graduates), age group and gender.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Instruments and participants

Data collection was carried out by applying the Intercultural Scale of Disability Concepts-EICD,<sup>4</sup> composed of statements referring to the three main aspects of the concepts of disability: biological, social and metaphysical (religious). The scale is composed of 43 items, distributed in 17 items for biological conception, 15 for social conception and 11 for metaphysics, followed by five alternative answers (Likert type), of which only one could be marked by the participant. Each item is sorted with values: totally disagree (1), disagree (2), neither disagree nor agree (3), agree (4), and totally agree (5).

The total sample consisted of 676 students who completed the entire form. The details of the participants are described in Section 3 of the Results.

### 2.2 Data collection

Respecting the ethical procedures of human research, data collection was carried out with the consent and participation of the group surveyed. A form was requested through the Google Forms platform, first asking for information about the course, studies, campus, country of origin, year of birth, gender, if the person has a disability and other variables to profile the sample. The second part of the form presented an initial description with guidelines for its completion.

The online collection was available on the website of the University of Seville, after being approved by the different faculties. We contacted the team of all faculties to inform and distribute the survey to the students. They were all postgraduate students of the institution. Data

3 Research entitled “Conceptions of disability in university students: studies in different international contexts”, funded by FAPESP/Brazil, Proc. 2017/12721-5. It is international research and presents a favorable opinion of the Ethics Committee in Research, registered in the Brazilian Platform, under the protocol CAAE 84374018.2.1001.5398.

4 Validation processes and reliability of the instrument, through psychometric studies, were published in Leite *et al.* (2021)



collection began at the end of March and ended in October 2019. This period was extended due to the summer holidays of the university.

### 2.3 Data analysis

Data was initially tabulated and coded in Excel, and later introduced to IBM SPSS version 20 statistical analysis software. The data were processed by the software and general descriptive analyzes and parametric inferential analyzes were performed, such as Pearson’s corrections, the Student’s T-test and the ANOVA.

### 3. Results

This research is a mixed study, which included statistical treatment, descriptive and inferential analysis, as well as interpretative analysis of the results obtained. The total sample consisted of 676 students who completed the entire form, and who are between 17 and 55 years old (year of birth, minimum 1964 and maximum 2002). The gender distribution was not homogeneous, 485 (71.7%) of the students mentioned they were women, 181 (26.8%) said they were men, 2 (0.3%) declared themselves “other” and 8 (1.2%) “preferred not to respond”.

Of the overall sample, 20 (3%) declared themselves disabled and 656 (97%) were non-disabled. Among the types of disability were Asperger’s, auditory, physical, visual and others. Most students 634 (93.8%) were studying

at the university and 42 (6.2%) in post-graduate school. The sample of participants came from 38 different courses, distributed in the main areas of knowledge, being 529 (78.3%) of the human area, followed by 87 (12.9%) of the exact area and 60 (8.9%) related to the biological area.

As for the year of admission, 187 (27.7%) participants entered university in 2019, in a range from 2011 to 2019. Around the year in which the students were part of the research, almost half, i.e., 321 (47.5%) were freshmen. It is reported that the largest number of participants, 569 (84.2%), were enrolled in four-year courses.

The Intercultural Scale of Conceptions of Disabilities (EICD) has the following ranges of disagreement or agreement. The number of items, the minimum and maximum values and the cut-off value in each of the three conceptions are: i) social conception (15 items, with values ranging from 15 to 30 —disagreement, 31 to 37.4 —tendency to disagree, 37.5 to 59 —tendency to agree and 60 to 75 —agreement with 37.5 as cut-off); ii) biological conception (17 items, values ranging from 17 to 34 —disagreement 35 to 42.4 —tendency to disagree 42.5 to 67 —tendency to agree and 68.5 —agreement, with a cutoff value of 42.5); iii) metaphysical conception (11 items, values from 11 to 22 —disagreement, 23 to 27.4 —tendency to disagree, 27.5 to 43 —tendency to agree and 44 to 55 —agreement, with a cutoff value of 27.5).

Table 1  
*Disability score and descriptive concepts*

	Social	Metaphysical	Biological
Mean	47.45	14.44	49.42
Median	48.00	11.00	50.00
Mode	45	11	51
Standard deviation	11.535	6.730	11.808
Minimum	17	11	19
Maximum	74	55	81



The high standard deviation indicated a heterogeneous sample in all conceptions, mainly in the social and biological conception. Another relevant data from Table 1 is that participants tend to agree with the statements of these conceptions when analyzing means, but there was no mean indicating full agreement with any of the three conceptions investigated. For the statements of the metaphysical conception, there is a position indicating disagreement with this factor.

The Pearson correlation test was performed to identify if there was a significant correlation for the dimensions of disability with the year of birth of the participants. Table 2 indicates that there was an inverse proportional

correlation of the year of birth (older age) of participants with the social dimension, i.e., a greater tendency to agreement was observed as age increased. It was also tried to identify if there was a significant correlation of the conceptions also with the academic year of the students, and a significant correlation directly proportional to the social conception was identified, i.e., more advanced students usually present a social conception of the disability and inversely proportional correlations were identified in the biological and metaphysical conceptions, indicating that the students of the first years tend to be more in agreement with these conceptions.

Table 2  
*Correlation of conceptions with year of birth and academic year*

Year of birth	Social	Metaphysical	Biological
<b>Pearson correlation</b>	-.121	.066	-.003
<b>p</b>	<b>.002</b>	.087	.945
<b>N</b>	676	676	676
<b>Pearson correlation</b>	.136 <sup>**</sup>	-.075 <sup>*</sup>	-.081 <sup>*</sup>
<b>p</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>.050</b>	<b>.036</b>
<b>N</b>	676	676	676

In Table 3, the sample was divided into two groups, undergraduate and graduate students, and scores were compared according to these subgroups. The analysis of the data shows significant differences between both groups.

Specifically, it has been found that social conception is more present in postgraduate students and biological and metaphysical in undergraduate students.

Table 3  
*Comparison of means between undergraduate and graduate students*

	Groups	N	Mean	Typical deviation	Student T (p)
Social	Degree	634	46.89	11.422	0.000
	Master	42	<b>55.93</b>	9.898	
Metaphysical	Degree	634	<b>14.62</b>	6.868	0.000
	Master	42	11.71	3.055	



	Groups	N	Mean	Typical deviation	Student T (p)
Biological	Degree	634	<b>49.77</b>	11.662	0.000
	Master	42	44.12	12.843	

Regarding gender, only statistically significant differences were found in the biological conception of disability. This conception was more present in men than in women (Table 4).

Table 4  
*Comparison of means according to gender*

	Groups	N	Mean	Typical deviation	p	T
Social	Female	485	47.94	11.767	0.138	1.48
	Male	181	46.44	10.963		
Metaphysical	Female	485	14.43	6.854	0.703	-0.38
	Male	181	14.65	6.553		
Biological	Female	485	48.52	11.571	0.000	-0.35
	Male	181	52.14	11.927		

Another objective of this work was to compare the conceptions of disability presented by students with and without disability. The data collected in Table 5 show that students with disabilities have a higher average in social and biological dimensions, although these differences were not statistically significant.

It is interesting to note the results of Table 5, where it is observed that the difference

between the responses was very narrow for the two subgroups, students with and without disabilities. Specifically, the highest recurrence rate was found in the social dimension, followed by the biological and metaphysical dimensions. These data suggest that students with disabilities, in proportion to the sample investigated, understand disability in a scaled vision similar to those who do not have any disability.

Table 5  
*Comparison of means between students with and without disabilities*

	Groups	N	Mean	Typical deviation	P	T
Social	Disability	20	32.90	11.369	0.874	-0.12
	Without disability	656	28.42	11.753		
Metaphysical	Disability	20	14.60	8.127	0.234	1.22
	Without disability	656	11.90	3.403		
Biological	Disability	20	31.30	16.887	0.181	1.33
	Without disability	656	26.56	11.290		

Finally, the ANOVA test was applied to verify possible differences in mean between the participants according to the areas of knowledge: exact sciences, human and biological. As seen in

Table 6, significant differences were identified in the social and biological conceptions according to the different areas of knowledge.



Table 6

*Comparisons of means among participants according to the area of knowledge*

	Groups	N	Mean	Typical deviation	P	F
Social	Human	529	47.75	11.851	<b>0.006</b>	5.23
	Biological	60	<b>49.78</b>	8.477		
	Exact	87	44.06	10.803		
Metaphysical	Human	529	14.56	6.709	0.555	0.58
	Biological	60	14.48	6.806		
	Exact	87	13.71	6.839		
Biological	Human	529	48.64	11.750	<b>0.003</b>	5.79
	Biological	60	51.28	11.348		
	Exact	87	<b>52.91</b>	11.824		

On the one hand, it was found that the social conception was more present in participants belonging to the biological sciences, followed by those who were part of the human sciences and exact, respectively. On the other hand, biological conception, linked to the medical model of disability was more present in students of the area of exact sciences.

Therefore, the data reveal that not necessarily students of the biological area are the ones who support a coherent conception with the biological model, medical model, and that it is also not the context of the study of the human sciences that reveals a social conception.

#### 4. Discussion

The data generally allow inferring that either in general or when noted in the subgroups investigated (gender, age, academic year, area of knowledge, students with or without disability), there is a tendency according to statements that explain disability from a social and/or biological model, and disagreement with the metaphysical conception to understand disability.

Regarding gender, Rosado-Nunes (2005) stresses that men throughout the history of

humanity seem to invest more in the production of the “sacred” in different societies, being responsible for the norms, rules, doctrines and beliefs of religions, while women are responsible for transmitting these religious beliefs and rituals, and in the context of the Spanish university, these differences are not observed.

In this regard, it should be noted that [...] “We face different identities (each of them representing different parts of us), from which it is possible to choose” (Hall, 2006, p. 75). The results problematize the correlation between gender and the conception of male students who have greater concordance with biological factors. In other words, they understand deficiency as an organic and individual phenomenon.

In general, women have played and continue to play secondary roles in the symbolic imaginary of the different peoples of society, such as those responsible for the surveillance of homes, motherhood, basic care of children and the family, and care for the unprotected, facts that may explain the differences observed.

In the results found on the conceptions of disability among university students, there are similarities between students with and without disability. When reviewing the studies dealing





with this topic (Ciantelli and Leite, 2020; Gesser *et al.*, 2012; Leite *et al.*, 2019), it is necessary to consider the role and contribution of social psychology in the debates on understanding the phenomenon of disability and its constitution in relation to the social, political, economic inclusion/exclusion processes of the sample. In this sense, it can be said that participants with disabilities in the Spanish university context, analogous to the other participants of the study, pointed to the social model as being the most recurrent. In this regard, social psychology can reduce the reductionist conceptions imposed on people with disabilities in our society.

To this reflection is added the role of society in the development of public policies that allow the access and participation of people with disabilities in the different academic spaces, and the services offered by those who study at the university. Studies in this regard have revealed that the role of future teachers or university students in the field of education is a key element in the development of inclusive practices with students with disabilities (Forlin, 2013; Kraska and Boyle, 2014).

The concordance of the social model of disability is more present in postgraduate students compared to undergraduate students. Similar findings were found by Gràcia *et al.* (2022), who identified attitudes towards disability of students of higher education at the University of Barcelona.

When comparing the results among the participants according to the areas of knowledge of their careers, it is observed that diverse conceptions are built in all the areas investigated (social, biological and metaphysical). On the other hand, the idea of a model initially proposed by the field of human and social sciences, i.e., the social model, is deconstructed; for example, nowadays it extrapolates to the different areas of knowledge (Diniz, 2013; Nepomuceno, 2019; Palacios, 2008; Santos, 2016). These differences may be related to the experiences lived by people with disabilities, family members, peers

and friends with disabilities, which generate a more positive attitude for inclusion.

In this way, universities must move towards change and the development of strong, sustainable, flexible and inclusive curricula that address the needs of students with disabilities. Above all, they should promote the development of positive attitudes towards disability in future teachers. In this sense, it is important to highlight the need to review the curricula of education, paying special attention to the development of competencies and positive attitudes to achieve quality educational practices for all students (Kent and Giles, 2016). As concluded in some studies, having contact with people with disabilities has positive effects on attitudes regarding disability (Goddard and Evans, 2018).

Ultimately, universities should promote practical work experiences, especially with future teachers and students with disabilities, as such experiences promote a more positive attitude about people and students with disabilities (Barton-Arwood *et al.*, 2016).

## 5. Conclusions

As indicated by Barton (2009) or Gesser *et al.* (2012), ignoring disability in public policies related to leisure, housing, education, work and health is a major obstacle to understanding disability as a present reality in our society.

Therefore, to pursue the ideals of the struggle for a just, equitable and inclusive society, it is necessary to create policies that support and set the course for society, in which education is discussed as an inalienable right of all people in society.

In this scenario, we refer to the understanding of disability as a social phenomenon located in the historical-cultural context, based on fairer and more equal patterns for the distribution of world wealth, in favor of transformations, the material demands of infrastructure and human capital that aim to fulfill the rights of sustainable social, economic and cultural par-



ticipation of each state or nation, including the participation of people with disabilities.

It can be said, then, that the contemporary movement for an inclusive society indicates a revision of social paradigms, which allows resignifying concepts in the social conception of disability. In other words, it means accommodating all those who enter the educational system, promoting quality education, adapting to the needs of students, respecting the pace and processes of learning, thus opposing this society that disables and highlights the limitations to academic progress.

It is necessary to broaden the debate that seeks to shorten the perceptions of disability and its implications in the university context, since the university has a main role in the training of professionals committed to public policies aimed at guaranteeing social rights for all.

This approach is consistent with the principle and advocacy of an education system capable of promoting lifelong learning at all education levels, so that they can achieve the maximum possible development of their physical, sensory, intellectual and social talents and abilities. This is related to the claim that the inclusion of people with disabilities in higher education has been a recent fact in different countries, and it follows the prerogatives of those who claim and need differentiated support for the permanence and satisfactory completion of university studies.

Based on the constructs of the theory of critical social psychology, this research alludes to the understanding of disability as a social phenomenon in a way to offer inclusive psychosocial and psychoeducational practices. Disability will be understood from the person who lives it, along with those who favor the fight for fundamental rights, the exercise of citizenship and respect for human uniqueness(s).

The findings of this study allow to infer that the way in which society conceives disability can influence social relations and planned actions in relation to a person with a disability. Thus, it is important to conduct research

that can promote more participation of these individuals in different social contexts, through actions that reduce the stigma, prejudice and social discrimination often conferred on them.

It is worth mentioning that this study has its limitations, since it included a sample of students from a university in Spain. Therefore, it is suggested to carry out other studies that can be supported in samples composed by different universities of the country to expand the conclusions.

## References

- Ainscow, M. (2020). Promoting inclusion and equity in education: lessons from international experiences, *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy*, 6(1), 7-16.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/20020317.2020.1729587>
- Bain, C. and Hasio, C. (2011). Authentic learning experience prepares preservice students to teach art to children with special needs. *Art Education*, 64(2), 33-39.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00043125.2011.11519118>
- Baker, K. Q., Boland, K. and Nowik, C. M. (2012). A Campus survey of faculty and student perceptions of persons with disabilities. *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*, 25(4), 309-329. <https://bit.ly/3ey7z0M>
- Barr, J. J. and Bracchitta, K. (2015). Attitudes toward individuals with disabilities: The effects of contact with different disability types. *Current Psychology*, 34, 223-238.  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-014-9253-2>
- Barton, L. (1996). *Disability and Society: Emerging Issues and Insights*. Longman.
- Barton, L. (2009). Estudios sobre discapacidad y la búsqueda de la inclusividad: observaciones [Studies on disability and the quest for inclusivity: Some observations]. *Revista de Education*, (349), 137-152.  
<https://bit.ly/2M3zNRy>
- Barton-Arwood, S., Lauren, L. and Shree, S. (2016). University-community partnerships in teacher preparation: changing attitudes about students with disabilities. *Journal of Public Scholarship in Higher Education*, 6, 4-20.  
<https://bit.ly/3BvW9Uq>



- Čagran, B. and Schmidt, M. (2011). Attitudes of Slovene teachers towards the inclusion of pupils with different types of special needs in primary school. *Educational Studies*, 37, 171-195. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03055698.2010.506319>
- Carballo, R., Cotán, A. and Spínola, Y. (2019). An inclusive pedagogy in Arts and Humanities university classrooms: What faculty members do. *Art and Humanities in Higher Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1474022219884281>
- Ciantelli, A. P. C. and Leite, L. P. (2020). Implicações históricas para a educação da pessoa com deficiência no Brasil: articulação entre Educação Inclusiva e Psicologia. In C. Luísa y M. L. Borges (orgs.), *Construindo a educação inclusiva* (pp.143-154). Papa-Letras.
- Cunnah, W. (2015). Disabled students: identity, inclusion and work- based placements, *Disability & Society*, 30(2), 213-226. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2014.996282>
- Diego, P. (2017). *Actitudes de los futuros profesionales de la educación hacia la discapacidad. Necesidades formativas* [Master's Thesis, University of Salamanca]. <https://bit.ly/3xh8WaT>
- Diniz, D. (2013). Disabilities and Social Policy- Interview with Colin Barnes. *Ser Social*, 15(32), 237-251. [https://doi.org/10.26512/ser\\_social.v15i32.13043](https://doi.org/10.26512/ser_social.v15i32.13043)
- Eleftheriou, P., Stamou, A. G., Alevriadou, A. and Tsakiridou, E. (2013). A comparative study of representations about disability in primary school children's drawings: a sociosemiotic approach. *Social Semiotics*, 23(5), 663-674. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2013.808620>
- Forlin, C. (2013). Issues of inclusive education in the 21st century. *Journal of Learning Science*, 6, 67-81. <https://bit.ly/3DjuBmk>
- Forlin, C., Earle, C., Loreman, T. and Sharma, U. (2011). The sentiments, attitudes, and concerns about inclusive education revised (SACIE-R). Scale for measuring pre-service teachers' perceptions about inclusion. *Exceptionality Education International*, 21(3), 50-65. <https://doi.org/10.5206/eei.v21i3.7682>
- Fundación Universia. (2018). *IV estudio sobre grado de inclusión del sistema universitario respecto a la discapacidad*. Fundación Universia. <https://bit.ly/3QKU2k8>
- Gallagher, D. J., Connor, D. J. and Ferri, B. A. (2014). Beyond the far too incessant schism: special education and the social model of disability. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 18(11), 1120-1142. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603116.2013.875599>
- Gesser, M., Nuernberg, A. H. and Toneli, M. J. (2012). The contribution of the social model of disability to the social psychology. *Psicologia & Sociedade*, 24(3), 557-566. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0102-71822012000300009>
- Gibbons, M. M., Cihak, D. F., Mynatt, B. and Wilhoit, B. E. (2015). Faculty and student attitudes toward postsecondary education for students with intellectual disabilities and autism. *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*, 28(2), 149-162. <https://bit.ly/3Dj3CHz>
- Goddard, C. and Evans, D. (2018). Primary pre-service teachers' attitudes towards inclusion across the training years. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 43(6). <https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2018v43n6.8>
- González, J. and Cortés, R. (2016). Attitudes and beliefs towards disability in physical education classes. An educational question. *Psychology Society & Education*, 8(2), 105-120. <https://doi.org/10.25115/psye.v8i2.454>
- Graça, J., Calheiros, M. M., Oliveira, A. and Milfont, T. L. (2018). Why are women less likely to support animal exploitation than men? The mediating roles of social dominance orientation and empathy. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 129(15), 66-69. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2018.03.007>
- Gràcia, M., Leite, L. and Cañete-Massé, C. (2022). Attitudes towards disability in Higher Education. *Anuario de Psicología/the UB Journal of Psychology*, 52(2). <https://doi.org/10.1344/ANPSIC2022.52/2.37061>
- Hall, S. (2006). *A identidade cultural na pós-modernidade* (11a ed., Tomaz Tadeu da Silva y Guaracira Lopes Louro, trad.). DP&A.
- Hockings, C., Brett, P. and Terentjevs, M. (2012). Making a difference-inclusive learning and teaching in higher education through open



- educational resources, *Distance Education*, 33(2), 237-252.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01587919.2012.692066>
- Hutcheon, E. and Wolbring, G. (2013). Deconstructing the resilience concept using an ableism lens: Implications for people with diverse abilities. *Dilemata International Journal of Applied Ethics*, 11, 235-252. <https://bit.ly/3qup4lo>
- Kent, A. M. and Giles, R. M. (2016). Dual certification in general and special education: What is the role of field experience in preservice teacher preparation? *The Professional Educator*, 40(2), 1-14. <https://bit.ly/3BwW7f4>
- Kraska, J. and Boyle, C. (2014). Attitudes of preschool and primary school pre-service teachers towards inclusive education. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 42, 228-246.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1359866X.2014.926307>
- Leite, L. and Lacerda, C. (2018). The construction of a scale on the conceptions of disability: methodological procedures. *Psicologia USP*, 29(3), 432-441.  
<https://doi.org/10.1590/0103-65642018109>
- Leite, L. P., Cardoso, H. F. and Oliveira, T. de. (2021). Intercultural scale of conceptions of disability: constructions and psychometric studies. *Revista Brasileira de Educação Especial*, 27, e0208.  
<https://doi.org/10.1590/1980-54702021v27e0208>
- Leite, L. P., Oliveira, T. de y Cardoso, H. F. (2019). Conceptions of disabilities in professionals of a São Paulo's countryside university. *Barbarói*, 153-170.  
<https://doi.org/10.17058/barbaroi.v0i0.11309>
- Leiva, J., Isequilla, E. and Matas, A. (2019). La Universidad de Málaga ante la inclusión educativa de los estudiantes con diversidad funcional: ideas y actitudes del alumnado universitario [The University of Malaga and the educational inclusion of students with functional diversity: ideas and attitudes of university students]. *Revista Interuniversitaria de Formación del Profesorado*, 33(2), 11-28.  
<https://doi.org/10.47553/rifop.v33i2.72835>
- Li, C., Tsoi, E. W. S. and Wang, J. C. K. (2012). Chinese college students' attitudes toward people with intellectual disabilities: differences by study major, gender, contact, and knowledge. *International Journal of Developmental Disabilities*, 58, 137-144.  
<https://doi.org/10.1179/2047386912Z.00000000014>
- Liasidou, A. (2014). Critical disability studies and socially just change in higher education. *British Journal of Special Education*. 41(2), 120-135.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8578.12063>
- Martins, C. B. (2013). In defense of the concept of society. *Revista Brasileira de Ciências Sociais*, 28(82), 229-246.  
<https://doi.org/10.1590/S0102-69092013000200014>
- Moriña, A. (2017). "We aren't Heroes, we're Survivors:" Higher Education as an opportunity for students with disabilities to reinvent an identity. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 41(2), 215-226.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2015.1070402>
- Moriña, A. and Carnerero, F. (2020). Conceptions of disability in education: a systematic review. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1034912X.2020.1749239>
- Nepomuceno, M. F. (2019). *Apropriação no Brasil dos estudos sobre deficiência: uma análise sobre o modelo social* [Tese de Doutorado]. Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais. <https://bit.ly/3xdOaJ2>
- Novo-Corti, I., Muñoz-Cantero, J. M. and Calvo-Babío, N. (2015). Los futuros docentes y su actitud hacia la inclusión de personas con discapacidad: Una perspectiva de género [Future teachers and their attitude towards the inclusion of people with disabilities: A gender perspective]. *Anales de Psicología*, 31, 155-171. <https://doi.org/10.6018/analesps.31.1.163631>
- O'Byrne, C., Jagoe, C. and Lawler, M. (2019). Experiences of dyslexia and the transition to university: A case study of five students at different stages of study. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 38(5), 1031-1045.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2019.1602595>
- Ochoa, A. (2019). The type of participation promoted in schools is a constraint factor for inclusive education. *Alteridad*, 14(2), 184-194.  
<https://doi.org/10.17163/alt.v14n2.2019.03>
- Oliver, M. (1990). *The politics of disablement*. Macmillan.



- Organización Mundial de Salud. (2018). *Discapacidad y Salud*. <https://bit.ly/2LAcVGt>
- Palacios, A. (2008). Plasmación del modelo social en la Convención Internacional sobre los Derechos de las Personas con Discapacidad. En A. Palacios, *El modelo social de discapacidad: orígenes, caracterización y plasmación en la Convención Internacional sobre los Derechos de las Personas con Discapacidad* (pp. 204-462). Cermi Ediciones Cinca.
- Pessotti, I. (1984). *Deficiência mental: da superstição à ciência*. T. A. Queiroz.
- Polo, T., Chacón-López, H., Caurcel, M. J. and Valenzuela, B. (2020). Attitudes towards persons with disabilities by educational science students: importance of contact, its frequency and the type of disability. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, 68(5). <https://doi.org/10.1080/1034912X.2020.1716960>
- Rosado-Nunes, M. J. (2005). Gender and religion. *Revista Estudos Feministas*, 13(02), 363-365. <https://bit.ly/3Y4TALx>
- Sandoval, M., Morgado, B. and Domenech, A. (2020). University students with disabilities in Spain: faculty beliefs, practices and support in providing reasonable adjustments. *Disability & Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2020.1751078>
- Santos, W. (2016). Disability as a restriction on social participation: challenges in evaluation since the Brazilian Inclusion of People with Disabilities Act. *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva*, 21(10), 3007-3015. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1413-812320152110.15262016>
- Strelhow, T. (2018). The conceptual influences of Christianity on disability: the role of Religious Education in the construction of subjects of rights. *Revista Educação Especial*, 31(61), 275-284. <https://doi.org/10.5902/1984686X25002>
- Van Jaarsveldt, D. E. and Ndeya-Ndereya, C. N. (2015). 'It's not my problem': exploring lecturers' distancing behaviour towards students with disabilities. *Disability & Society*, 30(2), 199-212. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2014.994701>
- Varcoe, L. and Boyle, Ch. (2013). Pre-service primary teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education. *Educational Psychology: An International Journal of Experimental Educational Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01443410.2013.785061>

