

## **E-EMPORIO**

***Increase SMEs export skills through e-learning***

LLP-LdV/TOI/2013/RO/012

### **TITLE**

**WP 2 Research and Analysis**

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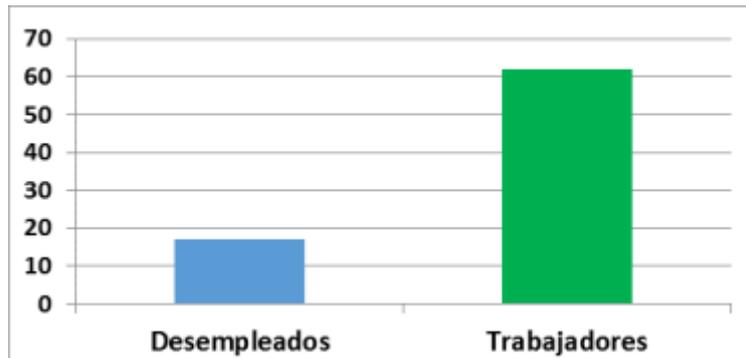
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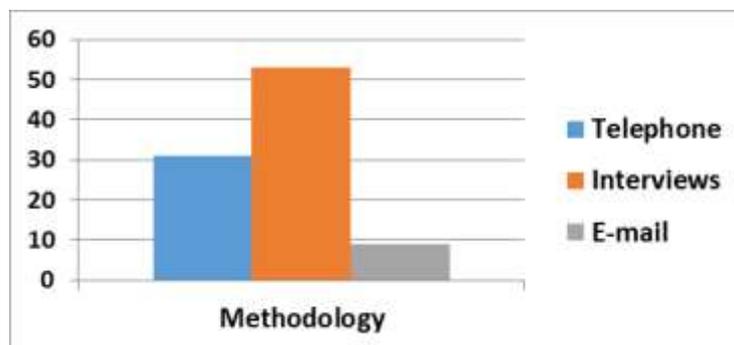
## 1. Introduction

Our research was conducted during the period **28/03/2014 - 9/04/2014**.

A variety of organizations and individuals were asked to answer this survey for the carrying out of the research on "the lack of training of workers in export companies". A total of 79 surveys have been carried out in the research, most of them by SMEs and some large company, but also by some unemployed people. The data are as follows: 17 unemployed people and 62 workers from 62 different companies.



The methods that have been used to carry out the surveys have been various. The most used one has been personal interviews with workers or unemployed people (42 surveys), interviews by phone (35 surveys) and via e-mail (2 surveys).



## 2. Characteristics of the sample

In this research, as we said before, both workers from different companies and unemployed people have participated. There were 17 unemployed people (21.51% of total) of which 10 were men and 7 were women, and 62 workers (78.49%) of which 45 were men and 17 were women. The number of men was 55 (69.62%) and the number of women was 24 (30.38%). In detail the participants were:

- 67 companies that usually export (84.81%)
- 12 companies that do not export but that intend to export (15.18%)

Participants	Workers	Unemployed People	Total
Sex			
Men	45	10	55
Women	17	7	24
Total	62	17	79



The average number of employees of all the participating organizations is 552, where the lowest number of employees was 1 and the highest was 25000. The total number of workers was 34215.

The average number of years of experience in exporting of the companies is 9 years, with the minimum years of experience being 1 year and the maximum being 60. The total number of years of experience in exporting was 500 years.

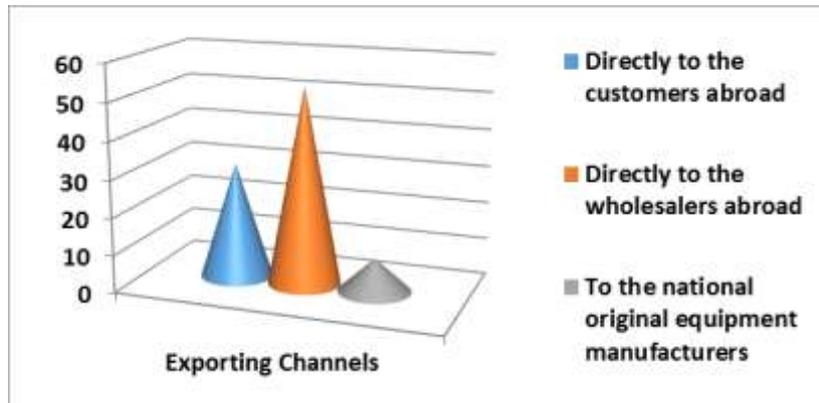
53.16% of the participants had participated in export activities at some point and 46.83% of the participants had never participated in them.



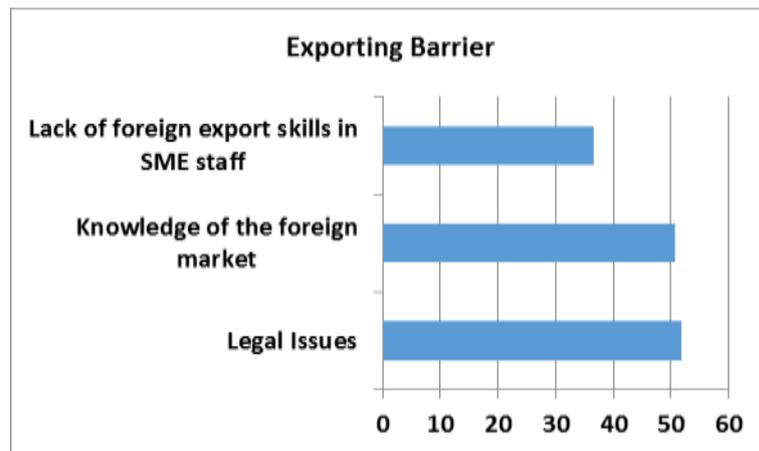
Most of the answers to the question "to which countries you have (or you wish to have) exporting activities" were very diverse, but the main answers were: to the EU, South America, North America (U.S. and Canada), Central America and Asia (China, Japan , Qatar, etc.) and some African countries like South Africa or Morocco. Although the answers were varied, mostly, the companies surveyed exported to neighbouring countries of the European Union since export costs are lower and barriers when exporting are minimal.

The main export channels used by the companies that have participated in the research are "Directly to the wholesalers abroad" (53 selections, 67%), followed by "Directly to the customers abroad" (31

selections, 39.24%), "To the national original equipment manufacturers national" (9 selections, 11.39%), and finally "Others", whose answer was "to retailers" (2 Selections, 2.53%)



The main barriers for the companies when performing export activities are "Legal Issues" (41 selections, 51.89%), followed by "Knowledge of the foreign market" (40 selections, 50.63%) and "Lack of foreign export skills in SME staff" (29 selections, 36.70%)



### 3. Training

#### 3.1 Limitations of the existing training material

Slightly less than half of the people surveyed (34 people; 43.03%) answered that they had done a course on export. The rest of them (45 people; 56.96%) had never done a course on export. The main organizations that had delivered these courses were the company itself, the Chamber of Commerce of Seville, MIBO and some private organizations. For the participants, the advantages of these courses were primarily the convenience when taking the course. Most people expressed their satisfaction for taking the course and said that the content was very helpful and that it had been useful for their training. One of the few disadvantages was the lack of communication between the trainers and the students.

#### 3.2 Training Needs

The first five points that the participants think they need to know better when performing the export activity are as follows:

#	Statement	Score
1.	The foreign trade documents and certificates	263
2.	Participating in international Fairs and exhibitions and business travelling	151
3.	International Business cultures	144
4.	Payments, terms and transport obligations	129
5.	Marketing Strategies in Foreign Trade	110

### 3.3 Learning Methods/Pedagogies

The first five points that the participants would like to find in an e-learning course are:

#	Statement	Score
1.	Theory	241
2.	Real life examples	239
3.	Best Practices/Success Stories	234
4.	Projects	200
5.	Interactive Exercises	148

### 3.4 Added value of the E-EMPORIO course

The majority of the participants (65.07%) think that an e-learning course on export would not improve their exporting abilities because they think that export is too complicated and important to be taught by means of an e-learning course. That is why most people prefer a face-to-face course instead of an e-learning one. 34.92% of participants think that an e-learning course would improve their abilities to export. For that, according to their opinion of how these courses could improve their export abilities, these courses should be delivered by export professionals, they should be focused on SMEs rather than large companies, and with practical cases and great interactivity between the teachers and the students.



### 3.5 Specific training needs for the partner countries

Much of the participants in the research answered that there was not anything in particular they wanted to know about exports to the following countries: Greece, Romania, Cyprus, Turkey, Latvia or Spain. 26.86% of the participants indicated that they would like to know something about exports to these countries, especially to Turkey and Romania. About these countries, they wanted to know what the legal risks, tariffs, treaties, export barriers, financial risk, homeland security, payments, charges and legal security were.

### 4. ICT and Language skills

Only 19 participants (24.05%) had done any e-learning course before. They had done so both because they were made to take them by the company they were working for or in order to gain more knowledge. Regarding the advantages, the majority answered that these courses have the advantage that they are more convenient since they do not have to leave home to take them. On the other hand, most of them said that they learned less in an e-learning course than they did in a face-to-face one, that they did not practise enough, and that they did not feel motivated to take them. 75.94% of the participants (60 people) answered that they had never taken an e-learning course.

The vast majority of participants (86.07%) is able to take a course over the Internet with no problem, and 13.92% answered that they were not able to do so.

Regarding the question "What would help the participants to successfully follow a course through the Internet" the answers were varied. The main ones were:

- ❖ Having time to do it
- ❖ Understandable Contents
- ❖ Interesting contents
- ❖ Practical contents
- ❖ Daily interaction with the teachers
- ❖ Examples with videos and tutorials
- ❖ Motivation

Most respondents knew some language. The most common languages were English (72.15% of the participants), French (22.78%) and German (11.39%). 21.51% of the people surveyed answered that they did not know any language and 58.22% answered that they would be able to take a course in English, but 41.77% would be unable to do so.

## 5. Conclusion

My conclusions from the research are that most workers and unemployed people have never taken an e-learning course, so the companies that offer these services must make a greater effort to show their offers and develop these courses with a more attractive and more practical content to make the course more interesting for students so that they learn as much as possible. Most respondents answered that they would be able to take a course over the Internet. These courses can be both in English and in Spanish as most workers know a second language.

Most companies carry out export activities, although they should make an effort to involve workers because more than half of them had never participated in any export activity. In order to do this, it is necessary that more courses on export, either in person or online, are conducted. This will improve their skills, which is one of main problems when exporting, and it would improve the efficiency of the company regarding its export activity.

We must also try to remove the barriers that the companies find when exporting, try to focus on the most important ones, and try to solve them or train the companies so that these barriers become less problematic for their export activity.