

## **A COMPARISON OF PROGRAMMES AND SERVICES ON MENTAL FITNESS FOR SENIORS IN AUSTRIA AND SPAIN**

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### **DIPOSITIVA 1**

Presentación

### **DIPOSITIVA 2**

The research has investigated the programs, services and activities (from now on, PSA) related to the field of the project Menta50+, that is the promotion of mental fitness. This project was founded by the European Union under the Program Longlife Learning - Grundtvig and was the result of the collaboration of 7 institutions from Hungary, Italy, UK, Austria, Spain, Greece, Cyprus and Israel.

In this work we based on the results of Austria and Spain.

### **DIPOSITIVA 3**

General aims of the project:

1. What kind of programmes exist which promote active ageing in the light of maintaining and improving mental fitness?
2. Are providers, community centres and social workers aware of the possibilities and options of improving mental fitness?
3. What kind of activities, forms and courses would providers and end-users welcome to enlarge their knowledge and improve their skills on mental fitness?
4. Examples for good practices in the eight countries

### **DIPOSITIVA 4**

For this work:

1. We will analyse the objectives of the different PSA by using Atlas-ti
2. We will highlight some important aspects related such as objectives by analysing some deep interviews to responsible from some of these PSA

### **DIPOSITIVA 5**

In order to develop this:

- 1) We have gathered descriptive information on the PSA's aimed to mental fitness for people being 50 years old or more and that are presently available in Austria and Spain (Desk research).
- 2) We have gathered qualitative information on the opinion professionals (providers, organisers, trainers,...) have about PSA's (deep interviews).

## DIPOSITIVA 6

### General information of the PSA (en la ppt imagen de una ficha):

- ID of the course
- Full name of the course (In official/national language and English translation)
- URL where the information (material) from the PSA is available: pdf file, website, etc.
- Language or languages in which you can find this material
- Author/s of this material and affiliation
- Contact data and type of organization
- Target population (age range, gender, specific requirements).
- PSA characteristics by choosing in a list (Promoting a healthy lifestyle,...). Should the program, service or activity be included into more than one category, please select a maximum of the 2 most representative category for that PSA; Cost for participation (fees); Duration of the PSA (Begin and end or number of weeks, number of units and hours per unit)
- PSA purposes
- Resources (Which materials / Who conducted?)
- Methodology used
- PSA summary description (Note: in own words or copy/past from homepage, course book, etc.): summary and/or topics taught. General contextualization of the mental fitness activity in the general program if needed
- Additional comments / conclusions / recommendations for our material/course
- Related references.

In Austria we gathered information of 19 different PSA and in Spain also 19. **DIPOSITIVAS 7 Y 8**  
In both cases it is easy to see that we found cases from all over the country, although there is a special concentration in the capital and main cities.

It is important to highlight that we have created a data base with all this information easily available in the website of the project: [www.menta50plus.eu](http://www.menta50plus.eu)

## DIPOSITIVA 9

Based on the search and the description of the courses a qualitative interview with a selection of course trainers/implementers have been done. An (semi-structured) interview form is developed (see Annex 2). The interview form is structured by a number of questions.

## DIPOSITIVA 10

As a first step in the analysis of the objectives we obtained the next charts;

In Austria (see chart):

As shown in the table, the type of activity with the highest frequency (63.6%) among the selected PSAs is related to the category “providing opportunities for learning and studying”. This is mainly because they represent a selection of programmes in the area of senior education. On the second place the PSAs under study “provide cognitive and/or memory training” in 42.1% of the cases.

Approximately every third of the selected PSA (31.6%) fall into the categories: “providing opportunities for physical activity and exercise”, “strengthening positive relationships” or “enhancing community participation”. In addition 15.8% of the cases especially “promote a healthy lifestyle” and 10.5% “help to improve mental fitness/wellbeing by learning digital competencies”. Another 10.5% of the PSA belong to the other category because of a holistic approach towards learning and training of higher age groups.

### **DIAPOSITIVA 11**

However, in Spain (see chart):

As shown in the table, the type of activity with a highest appearance frequency (43,24%) among the selected PSAs is related to “cognitive/memory training”, based on the preservation and stimulation of the memory ability. With a considerable difference in the appearance percentage, the second type PSAs more frequent is the related to “strengthening positive relationships” (18,92%), oriented to the development of social competences and abilities. Close to them we can find the cases related to “Promoting a healthy lifestyle” (16,21%), such as stress management, emotional intelligence or appropriate nutritional guidelines. Behind them, sharing the same appearance percentage (5,41%), “Providing opportunities for physical activity and exercise”, “Enhancing community participation”, as well as “Helping to improve mental fitness/wellbeing by learning digital competences (ICT)” are located. In second place from the last, with a very low appearance frequency (2,7%), we can find those activities “Providing opportunities for learning and studying”. It is also worthy to stress that, among the selected PSAs, none of them is related to “Providing opportunities for creative activities”.

### **DIAPOSITIVA 12**

Afterwards, to analyse in more detail the objectives, we have carried out the following methodology from a perspective mainly qualitative by using the software Atlas.ti in the version 7

The hermeneutic unit was composed of 38 primary documents (PSAs from Austria and Spain) and we have obtained 143 codes in relationship with the objectives of such as activities. In a first step we have classified these objectives in three categories: related to attitudes, to knowledge and to skills.

They were regrouped in families and will be represented in the variables and nets that we are going to analyse in the following Figures.

### **DIAPOSITIVA 13**

#### **Figure 1. Comparison between the types of objectives in PSAs in Austria and Spain**

In general terms, the proposed objectives in the PSA analysed present the same order of preference in both countries. That is, first of all, it is offered a huge relevance to skills, followed by attitudes and knowledge, respectively. However, we can see a more holistic approach in the case of Austria, as the different objectives seems to appear in a more balanced way that in Spain.

Comparing groups of objectives, we can determine that to promote skills for maintaining the cognitive functions in the elderly is an aim with a special attention in Spain more than to (promote) some attitudes and specially to gain some knowledge. On the other hand, we can find in Austria a bigger worry about promoting knowledge and positive attitudes to the maintenance of cognitive functions and a better aging in general terms. This would be coherent as it is understood that skills, attitudes and knowledge are deeply linked to each other.

#### **DIAPOSITIVA 14**

##### **Figure 2. Comparison between subtypes of objectives related attitudes in Austria and Spain**

In a similar way how it happened in the last figure, the objectives subtypes related to attitudes seems to be more balanced in Austria than in Spain. Empowerment of the elderly has a bigger importance in Austria, meanwhile it seems not to be relevant in the Spanish cases. We speak more in detail about this later on.

In Austria, it prevails the promotion of the empowerment and after that the attitudes related to the welfare and quality of live improvement. Other aspects such as integration, participation, fight against loneliness and autonomy increase are also followed.

In Spain, however, it prevails first of all the self-esteem promotion, followed, similarly to Austria, the quality of life. In a third place and far away from these, we can find the identity strengthening. Solitude decrease and autonomy increase are also present like in Austria, appearing also the ability of adaption to changes. The more we can integrate socially and subsequently adapt to social changes, the less we can suffer from loneliness.

#### **DIAPOSITIVA 15**

##### **Figure 3. Network of objectives related attitudes**

The connections established in the network of objectives related attitudes show basically how important the creation of more positive attitudes in order to ease the empowerment of the elderly is, acting on one of their principal fundamentals, the increase of the self-esteem, as main promoter of the welfare and quality of life.

Moreover, contributing to the empowerment of the seniors helps to generate attitudes tending to the participation and social integration, both of them quite interrelated to each other. Participation is the way of creating a more positive perception of the personal and social identity and favouring the self perception of autonomy.

#### **DIAPOSITIVA 16**

##### **Figure 4. Comparison between subtypes of objectives related knowledge in Austria and Spain**

What we have mentioned before about the different balance of objectives in both countries, seems to be more visible by analysing this figure.

Although both in Austria and Spain we can find in equal terms the inclusion of objectives related knowledge on mental health maintenance, it seems to be a prior worry in Austria, but with much less attention paid in Spain.

In Austria, besides this, it is also relevant equally to inform and teach about the changes due to ageing, the need of empowerment and social inclusion and also of learning in general terms. On the other hand, we can see in Spain a stronger focus on the feelings. In this case, learning how to recognise their own feelings, positive and negative, and also the feelings of the people around seems to be a very high priority. After this, it is also important, but much less in comparison with the first aspect, the information on how to promote the mental health and the learning processes in general (specially in the field of the ICT).

### **DIAPOSITIVA 17**

#### **Figure 5. Network of objectives related knowledge**

We can analyse now the connections between the objectives related knowledge. In this sense, the promotion of learning related to how the own feelings and the feelings of the others develop and knowledge about the key action for maintaining the mental health optimally are directly connected to the longline learning. In the analysed documents this is also linked to the information about which the main changes due to ageing are and to learning to be aware of the importance of their empowerment in order to increase their social inclusion as as significant population target for the social progress.

### **DIAPOSITIVA 18**

#### **Figura 6. Comparison between subtypes of objectives related skills in Austria and Spain**

Attending this figure, once again we find a more balanced distribution of objectives in Austria than in Spain.

In Austria, its appear in the first place the promotion of skills for the maintenance of the psicosocial health, but it is closely followed by the skills for the maintenance of the mental and cognitive activity, the physical activity, the sociability and the quality of life (with the same presence in the number of cites), the learning, the autonomy and the competencies for the emotional self-control. In Spain, however, the main objective is promoting the abilities for the maintenance of the mental and cognitive activity. Abilities to social relationships, the emotional management, the physical activity and the autonomy and general welfare seem to be much less important. The main objective in Austria, the maintenance of the psicosocial health, is not present here. A more holistic approach when designing programs for mental health and active ageing for seniors in Austria, as we have already seen before, could be the reason for this difference.

### **DIAPOSITIVA 19**

#### **Figure 7. Network of objectives related skills**

As the PSA analysed in this project were focused specially on the promotion of mental activity, to learn skills develop a central role, reinforced by the skills for increasing the physical activity and

the social relationships, reaching all together an improvement of the psychosocial health from an holistic approach. In this sense, by promoting the mental and physical health and the integration in the social environment, the elderly can take advantage from learning how to recognise and analyse their feelings, from using the tools for going on learning and from recognising, in last instance, that the welfare and quality of life improvement is based on the development of competences that increase their psychosocial health.

## **DIAPOSITIVA 20. DEEP INTERVIEWS CONCLUSIONS**

The main conclusions resulting from the deep interviews are:

In Austria:

- It was mentioned several times, that a PSA that “only” promotes one aspect of health does not have the same positive effects than a holistic concept with multi-faceted contents. The PSAs under study built not on mental health aspects alone (mental fitness, memory and cognitive trainings) but was a combination also of physical (physical exercise) and social aspects of health (participation, social exchange).
- The process of a good PSA. Especially helpful is a developmental approach – which builds on the existing (health) resources – and which empowers the older learners for increased participation and active ageing.
- Talking about the trainers, a special tenor, specific culture and positive attitude, as well as a respectful orientation and appraisal towards the older learners and their rich/valued source of (lifetime) experiences and knowledge which takes the needs and wishes of them into account is needed.

## **DIAPOSITIVA 21**

In Spain:

- The features that made the PSAs especially effective with regard to the participants’ mental health are: they directly have a bearing on the increase of positive feelings such as higher self-esteem, a greater sense of usefulness, of belonging to a group; they improve the awareness to face aging in a safe and healthy way; they provide training to all the cognitive areas; the importance of the attitude of the person conducting the program;
- On the contrary, the features that have not been so positively assessed are: contents that are unfamiliar thus unrelated to the participants’ previous experience or very extensive; the poor dissemination of the PSAs by the authorities; or the lack of continuity of the programs.

## **DIAPOSITIVA 22**

- Trainers consider to be important to improve mental ability and that they think that must be taken into account are: they should promote that older people assume social responsibilities and increase their sense of usefulness; teaching methods should be constantly adapted; funds should be provided; and our brain should be exercised through varied activities, not only by

mental exercises, but with other exercises that involve the development of positive feelings and better wellbeing in life.






  
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Learning to take actions for  
mental fitness and wellbeing in  
older age



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## General aims of the project:

- 1. What kind of programmes exist which promote active ageing in the light of maintaining and improving mental fitness?**
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- 4. Examples for good practices in the 8 countries**



## General aims of this work:

- 1. We will analyse the objectives of the different PSAs (Programs, Services and Activities) by using Atlas-ti**
- 2. We will highlight some important aspects related such as objectives by analysing some deep interviews to responsible from some of these PSAs**



## In order to develop this...

1. Gathered descriptive information on the PSA's aimed to mental fitness for people being 50 years old or more and that are presently available in Austria and Spain (**Desk Research**)
2. Gathered qualitative information on the opinion professionals (providers, organisers, trainers,...) have about PSA's (**Deep Interviews**)



**1 - MIND FITNESS PROGRAM / SERVICE / ACTIVITY NAME**

INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE:  
ENGLISH TRANSLATION:  
ID Code:

**2 - AFFILIATION**

ORGANIZATION (NAME, URL):

ADDRESS:

TELEPHONE:

E-MAIL:

PRIVATE

PUBLIC

In this case, please indicate the territorial scope of the organization:

Local  Regional

National  International

**3 - TARGET POPULATION**

Age range:

From: ..... to ..... years Older than: ..... years

Gender: Males  Females  Unisex

SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS:

**4 - CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MIND FITNESS PROGRAM / SERVICE / ACTIVITY**  
(NB: Should the program, service or activity be included into more than one category, please select the most representative category for the PSA)

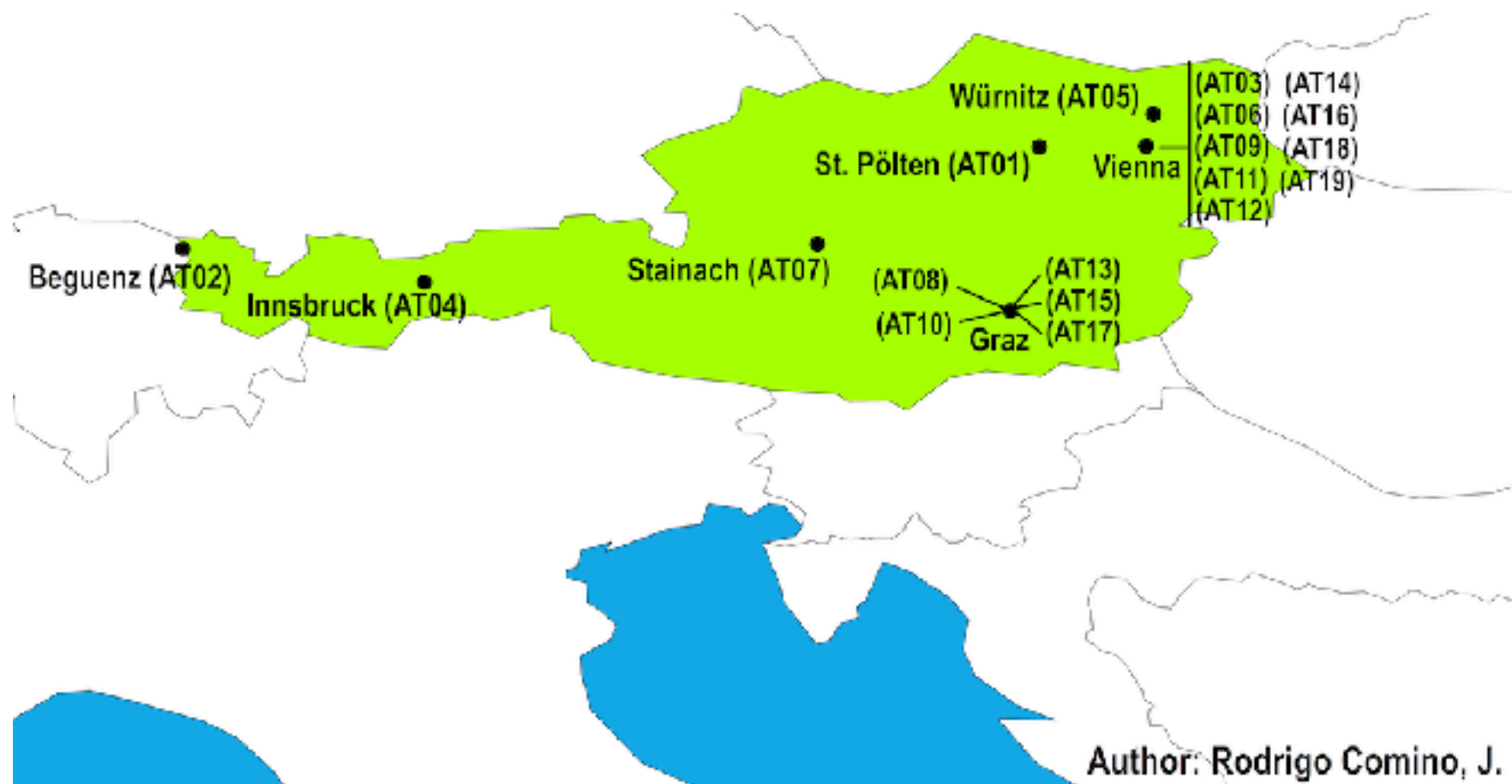
Memory training  Academic learning  Leisure workshops  Volunteering   
Social skills training  Use of ICT  Cultural activities  Coping with retirement   
Emotional intelligence training  Stress management  Serious games   
Sports activities  Nutrition  Other: .....

COST FOR PARTICIPATION, FEES (in Euros):

**5 - PROGRAM / SERVICE / ACTIVITY PURPOSES**







Author: Rodrigo Comino, J.







**MIND FITNESS PROGRAM / SERVICE / ACTIVITY NAME:**

IN NATIONAL LANGUAGE:  
ENGLISH TRANSLATION:  
ID Code:



**ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

NAME OF THE INTERVIEWER:

CONTACT (TELEPHONE AND/OR E-MAIL):

NAME OF THE INTERVIEWER:

DATE OF THE INTERVIEW:

BEGIN/END OF THE INTERVIEW (TIME) FROM TO

FORM OF THE INTERVIEW:

FACE TO FACE  TELEPHONE

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

**1 - WHAT DO YOU THINK THAT MAKES THIS PROGRAM / SERVICE / ACTIVITY PARTICULARLY EFFECTIVE?**

**NOTES BY INTERVIEWER:**



# AUSTRIA

	Promoting a healthy lifestyle (stress Management, emotional intelligence, nutrition...)	Providing opportunities for physical activity and exercise	Strengthening positive relationships (socialising)	Enhancing community participation (engaging with society)	Providing opportunities for learning and studying (learning)	Providing opportunities for creative activities	Providing cognitive/memory training	Helping to improve mental fitness / wellbeing by learning digital competences (ICT)	Other: Activities based on reminiscence method
Percentage:									
Number of specific PSA	15.8	31.6	31.6	31.6	63.2	31.6	42.1	10.5	10.5
----- x100	(3)	(6)	(6)	(6)	(12)	(6)	(8)	(2)	(2)
Number of total PSA									

(\* PSA = Programs, services, activities of mental fitness)



# SPAIN

	Promoting a healthy lifestyle (stress Management, emotional intelligence, nutrition...)	Providing opportunities for physical activity and exercise	Strengthening positive relationships (socialising)	Enhancing community participation (engaging with society)	Providing opportunities for learning and studying (learning)	Providing opportunities for creative activities	Providing cognitive/memory training	Helping to improve mental fitness / wellbeing by learning digital competences (TIC)	Other: Activities based on reminiscence method
Percentage:									
$\frac{\text{Number of specific PSA}}{\text{Number of total PSA}} \times 100$	16,21 (6)	5,41 (2)	18,92 (7)	5,41 (2)	2,7 (1)	0 (0)	43,24 (16)	5,41 (2)	2,7 (1)

(\*) PSA = Programs, services, activities of mental fitness

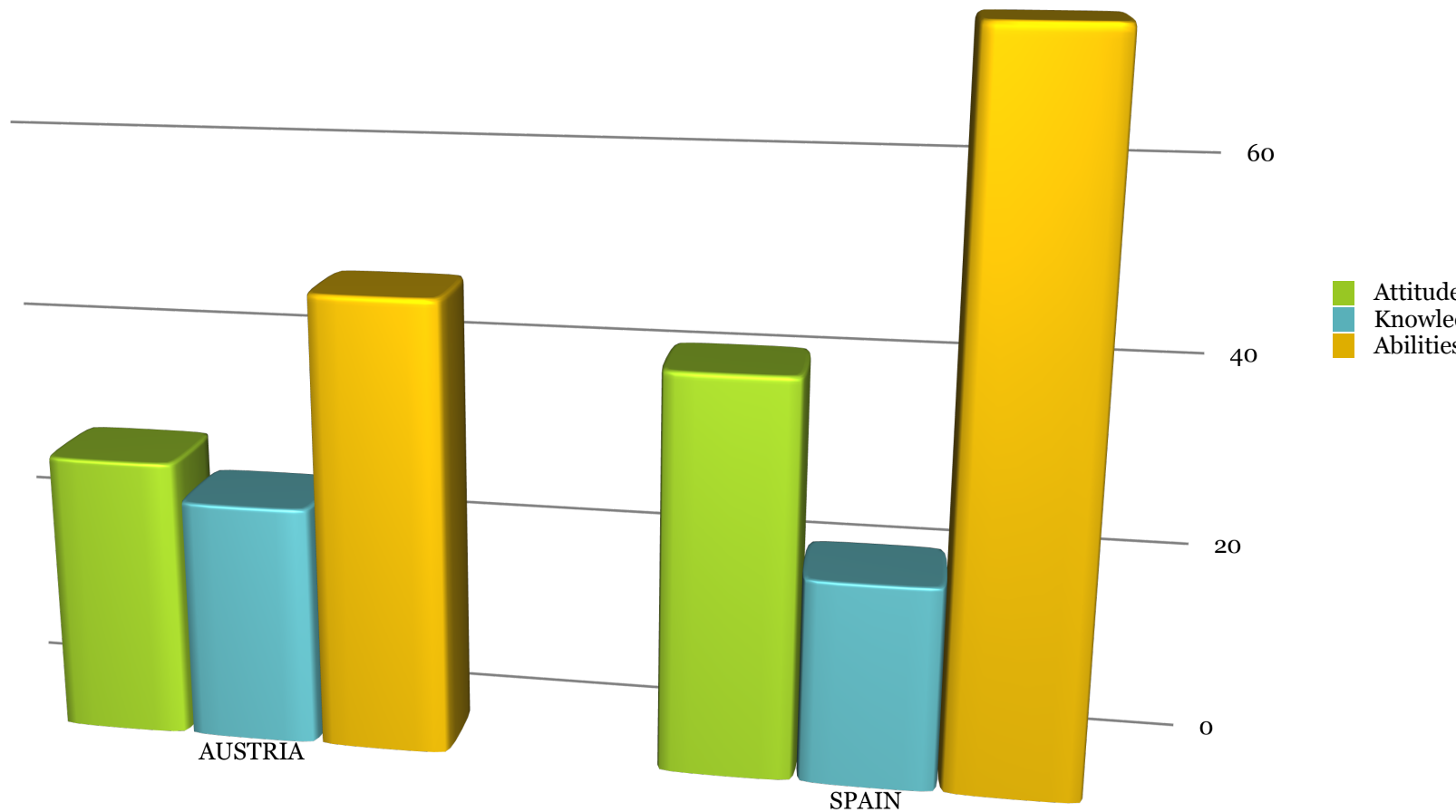


# Methodology for analysis of objectives

- **Qualitative**
- **Analysis used program: ATLAS.ti., version 7**
- **Hermeneutic unit composed of 38 primary documents (PSAS from Austria and Spain)**
- **Number of obtained codes: 143 codes, relating to objective of attitude, knowledge, and skills and subsequently regrouped in families**



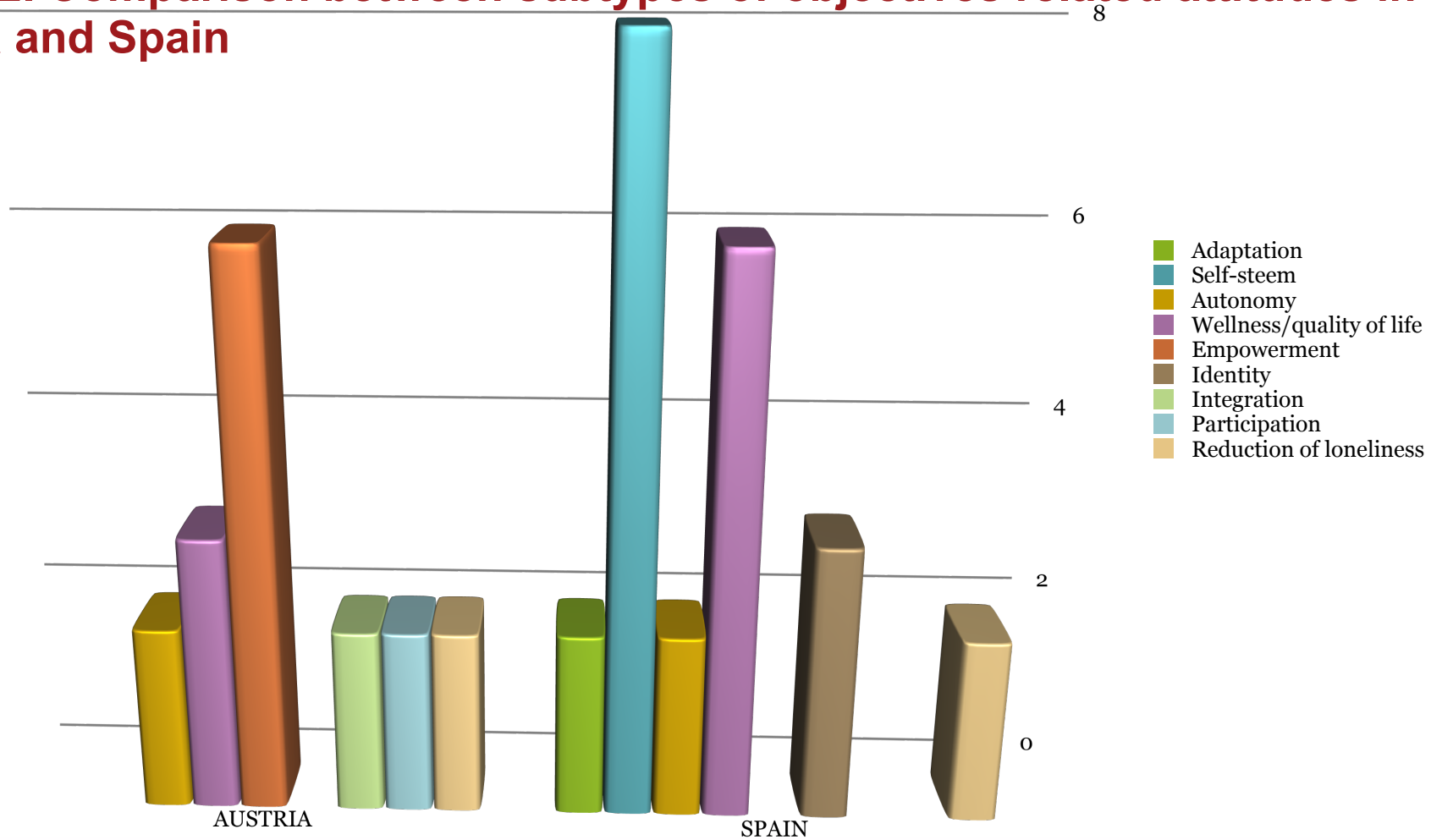
**Figure 1. Comparison between the types of objectives in PSAs in Austria and Spain**





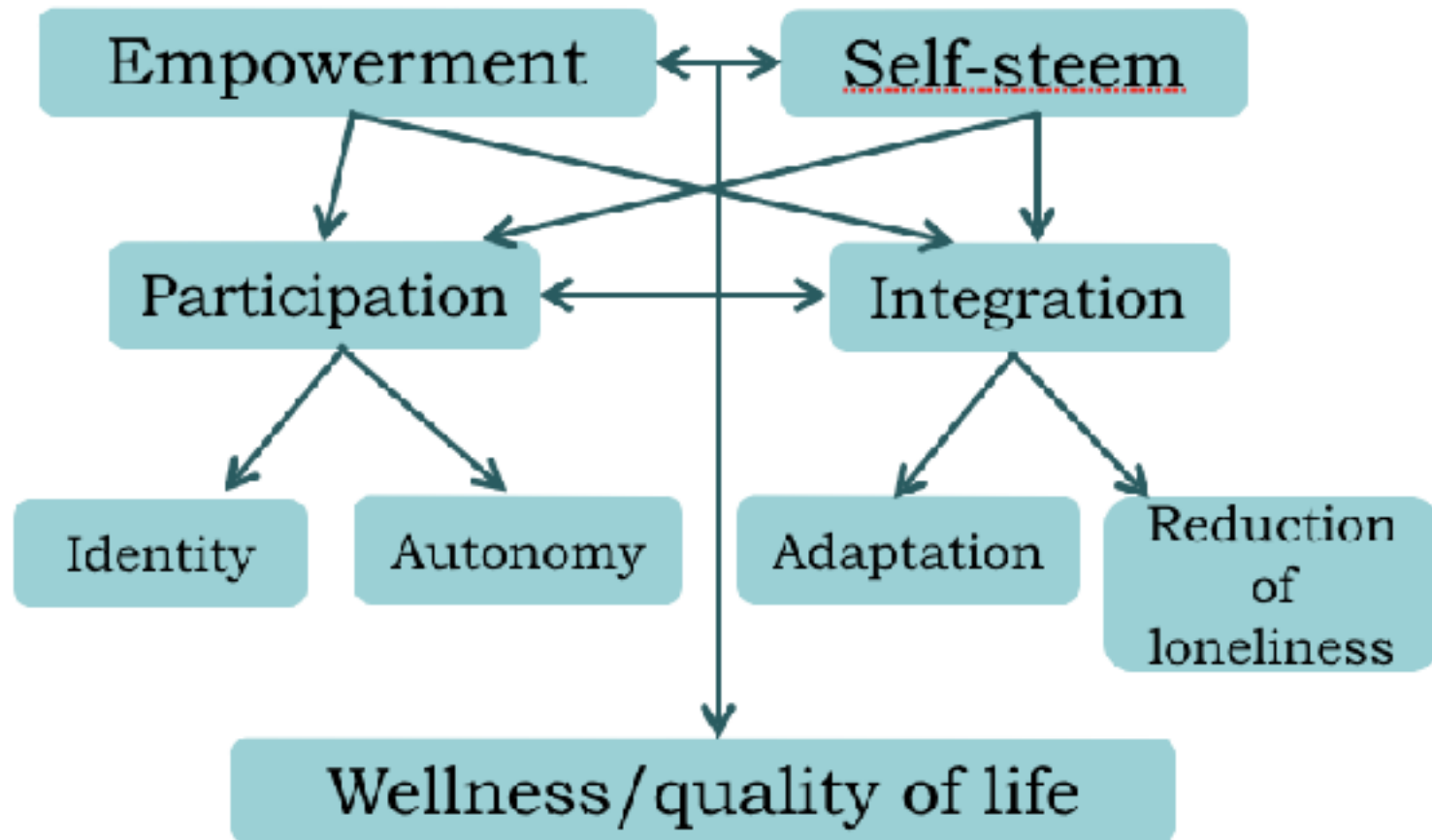


**Figure 2. Comparison between subtypes of objectives related attitudes in Austria and Spain**





**Figure 3. Network of objectives related attitudes**







**Figure 4. Comparison between subtypes of objectives related knowledge in Austria and Spain**

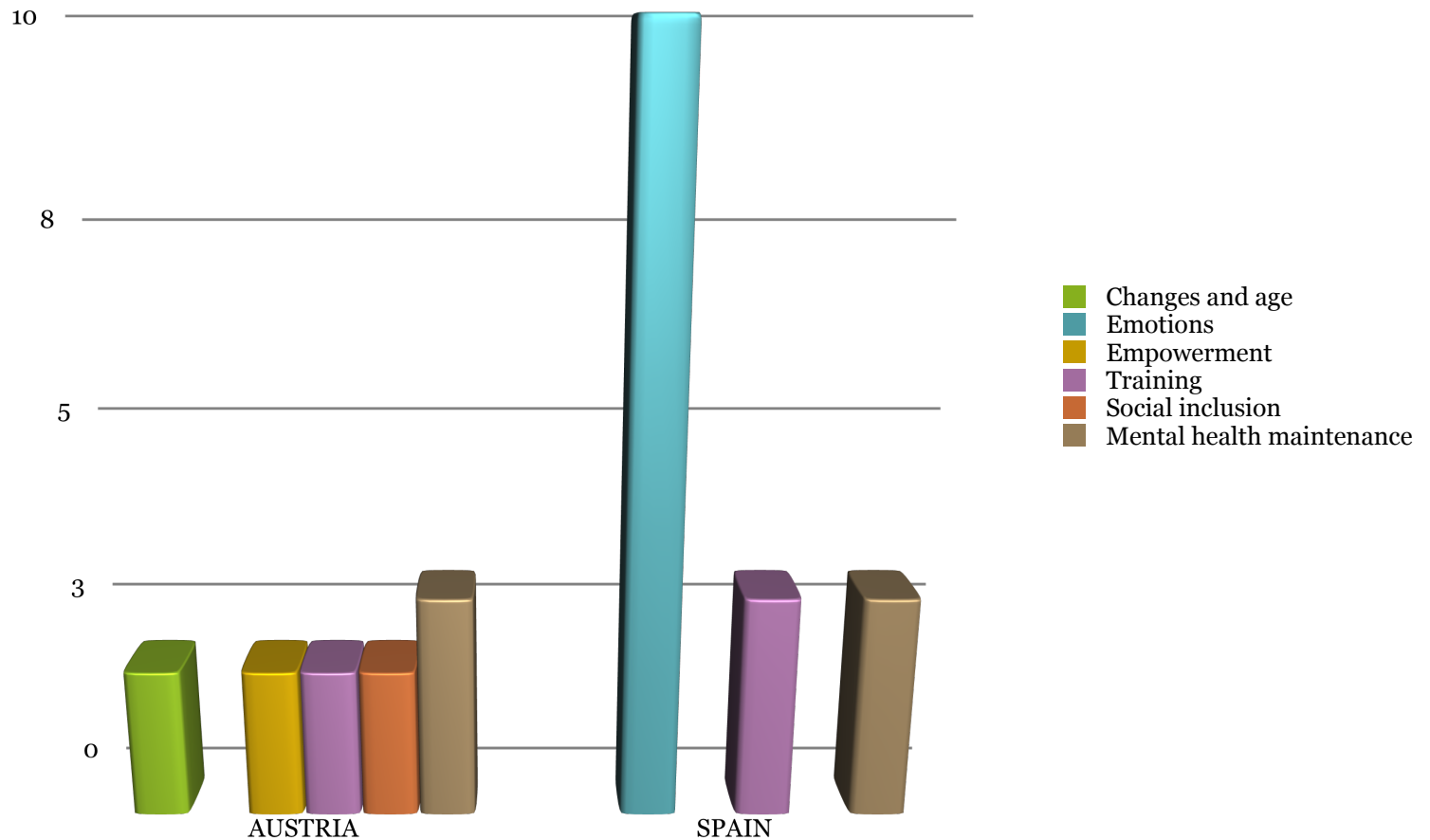
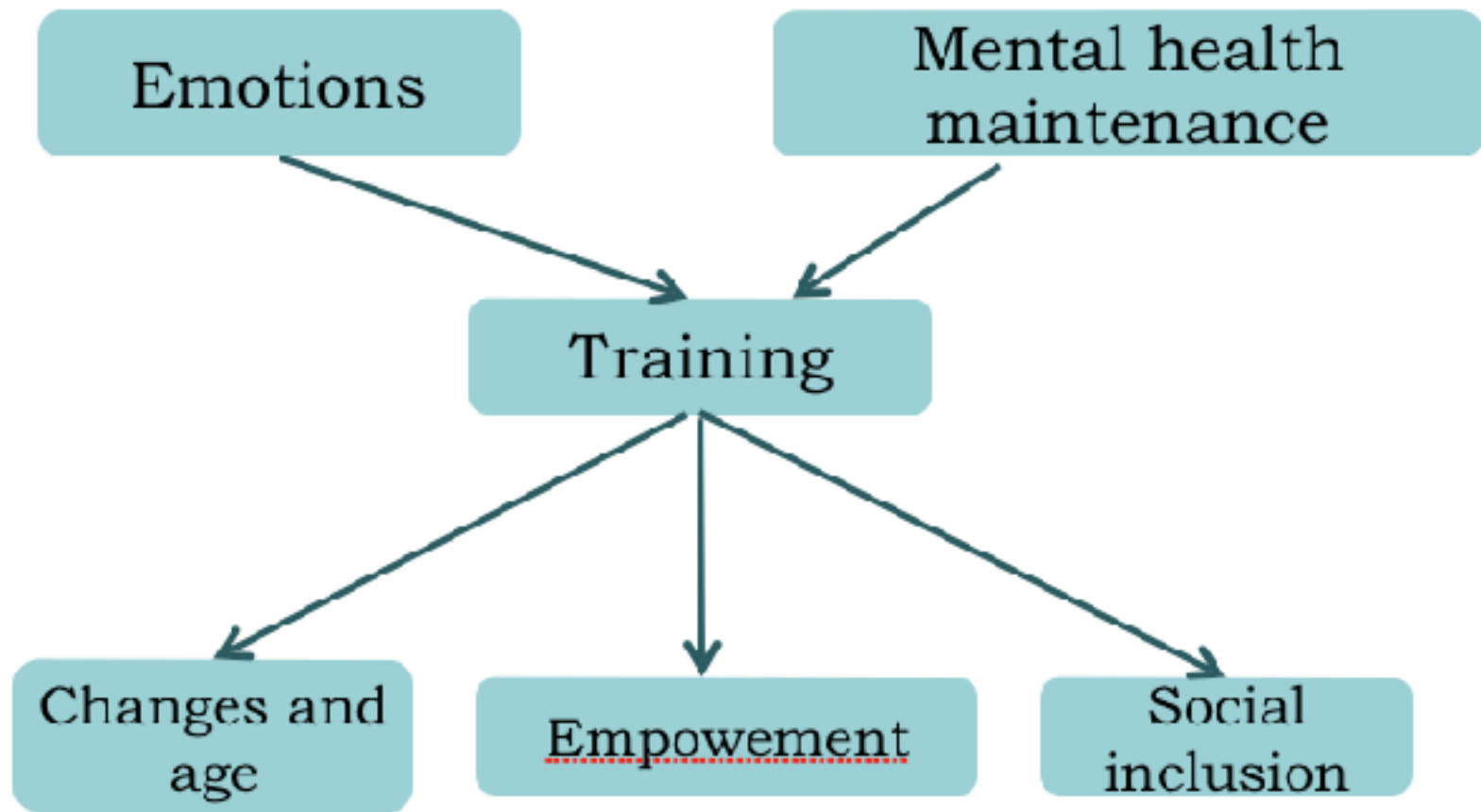


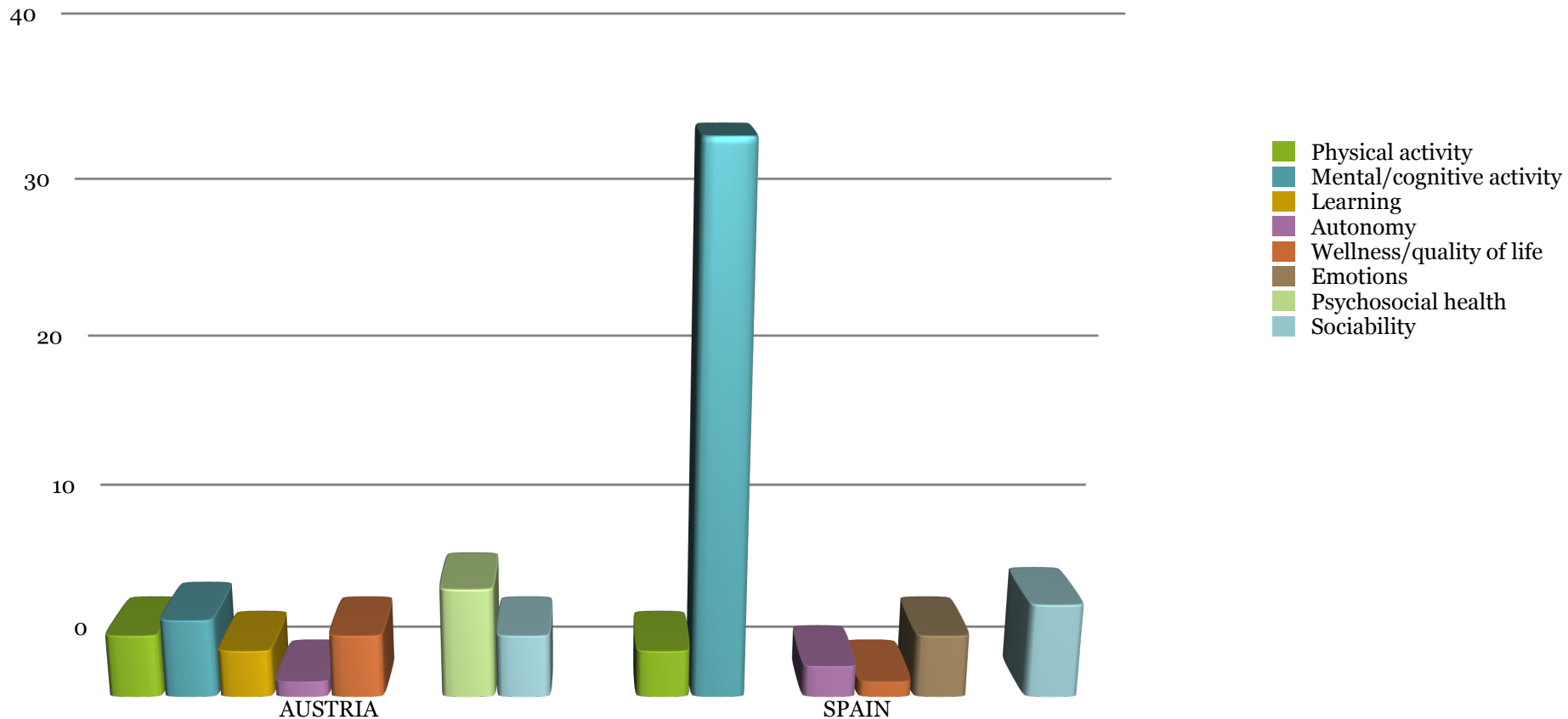


Figure 5. Network of objectives related knowledge



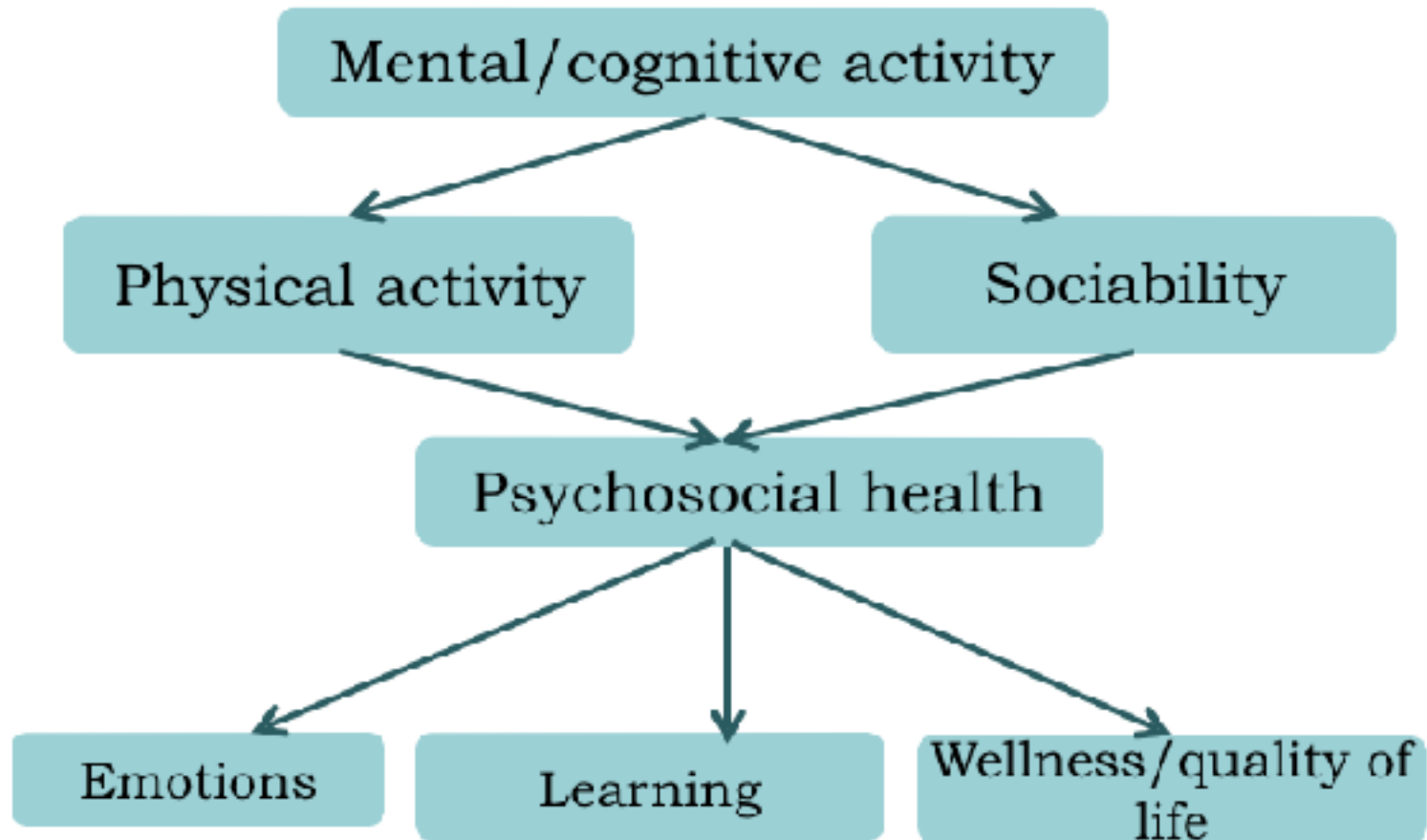


**Figura 6. Comparison between subtypes of objectives related skills in Austria and Spain**





**Figure 7. Network of objectives related skills**





## Deep interviews conclusions - Austria

- **PSA effective: based on a holistic concept with multi-faceted contents. Mental fitness, memory and cognitive trainings plus physical exercise, participation, social exchange**
- **PSA helpful: based on a developmental approach which builds on the existing (health) resources & empowers the older learners for increased participation and active ageing**
- **About the trainer: A special tenor, specific culture and positive attitude, respectful orientation and appraisal towards the older learners and their rich/valued source of (lifetime) experiences and knowledge which takes the needs and wishes of them into account is needed**





## Deep interviews conclusions - Spain

- **PSA effective:** increase of positive feelings (higher self-esteem, usefulness, of belonging to a group); improvement of the awareness to face aging in a safe and healthy way; they provide training to all the cognitive areas; the importance of the attitude of the person conducting the program
- **PSA helpful:** contents that are familiar thus related to the participants' previous experience or very extensive; the poor dissemination of the PSAs by the authorities; or the lack of continuity of the programs



## Deep interviews conclusions - Spain

- **About the trainer: they should promote that older people assume social responsibilities and increase their sense of usefulness; teaching methods should be constantly adapted; funds should be provided; and our brain should be exercised through varied activities, not only by mental exercises, but with other exercises that involve the development of positive feelings and better wellbeing in life**





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