Resilience and School Success of Young Immigrants

Resiliencia y éxito escolar en jóvenes inmigrantes

María Paz Sandín-Esteban,[1] Universidad de Barcelona, mpsandin@ub.edu

Angelina Sánchez-Martí,[2] Universidad de Barcelona, angelinasanchez@ub.edu

María Paz Sandín Esteban, mpsandin@ub.edu, Universitat de Barcelona

Dirección postal: Departament de Mètodes d'Investigació i Diagnòstic en Educació; Passeig Vall d'Hebron, 171, Edifici Llevant (2ª planta); 08035, Barcelona, Spain.

Autora responsable de la correspondencia.

Angelina Sánchez Martí, angelinasanchez@ub.edu, Universitat de Barcelona

Dirección postal: Departament de Mètodes d'Investigació i Diagnòstic en Educació; Passeig Vall d'Hebron, 171, Edifici Llevant (2ª planta); 08035, Barcelona, Spain.

[1] **María Paz Sandín Esteban** is a tenured university lecturer at the Department of Research Methods and Diagnostics in Education, University of Barcelona (UB). Since 1992, she has been a member of the Research Group in Intercultural Education (*GREDI*): www.ub.edu/gredi. Her current research projects analyse resilience and young people's networks in connection with school completion.

[2] **Angelina Sánchez Martí** is a research scholar at the Faculty of Education (UB) and a beneficiary of the National Programme for Training University Lecturers (FPU). She is also part of the Department of Research Methods and Diagnostics in Education and a member of *GREDI*. She is currently developing her doctoral dissertation focusing on the school success of immigrant youth population.

Abstract: Secondary school is a high-risk academic period for young immigrants from disadvantaged environments. Despite this, some students are successful in their transition to Post-16 Education. The present study examines the relationship between resilience and completing school in immigrant young people in Spain. A mixed method design was followed. Ninety-four students in their fourth year of compulsory education participated; they included 19 different nationalities. Results of this study suggest that students who continue their studies beyond obligatory education have higher levels of resilience. The findings also suggest the activation of the relational dimension of "social capital" in young people. Factors such as academic self-concept, the presence of peers as models of school success and the social capital available in their networks are also relevant.

Keywords: resilience, school success, young immigrants, academic transition

Resumen: La enseñanza secundaria es un período académico de alto riesgo para los jóvenes inmigrantes de entornos desfavorecidos. Sin embargo, algunos tienen éxito en su transición a la Educación Postobligatoria. El presente estudio examina la relación existente entre la resiliencia y el hecho de que los jóvenes inmigrantes logren completar sus estudios en España. Se siguió para ello un diseño de método mixto. Participaron noventa y cuatro estudiantes del cuarto año de la enseñanza obligatoria (4º ESO), de 19 nacionalidades diferentes. Los resultados de este estudio indican que el alumnado que continúa sus estudios más allá de la educación obligatoria presenta niveles más altos de resiliencia. Factores como el autoconcepto académico, la presencia

de iguales como modelos de éxito escolar y el capital social disponible en sus redes son también relevantes.

Palabras clave: resiliencia, éxito escolar, jóvenes inmigrantes, transición académica

Introduction

Secondary school is a high-risk or vulnerable academic period for young foreign people from disadvantaged environments. According to the Labour Force Survey (Roca, 2010), this occurs in all countries among non-national students and has been confirmed by studies at international (OECD, 2012; Nusche, 2009) as well as national (CTESC, 2011; Martínez & Albaigés, 2012; Moreno & Bruquetas, 2011) level. All the studies show that young people from abroad are more likely to abandon school prematurely and not continue to Post-16 Education. Dropout rates[3] in the last year of Compulsory Secondary Education (*ESO*)[4] and in the first year of Post-16 Education[5] are significantly higher; the number of dropouts doubles among the immigrant population (Serra & Palaudàrias, 2010). However, despite the difficult and disadvantaged backgrounds of these groups, it has also been observed that certain students successfully complete Post-16 Education (Reynoso, 2008).

Resilience and School Success

Over the last few years, the analysis and understanding of these successful processes under unfavourable situations has focused on the worldwide emerging perspective of "*resilience*". Explanations are being sought to understand why some young people

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[3] For a further analysis of high school dropouts in Spain in comparative terms with Europe, see Casquero, Sanjuán & Antúnez (2012).

[4] Compulsory Secondary Education (known as «*ESO*», 4 years), refers to the Spanish secondary education (since 1996) and aims to prepare students between 12 and 16 years of age for subsequent studies and/or integration into the workforce.

[5] Post-16 Education refers to four independent areas of education; the student must obtain the certificate of ESO before continuing to one of the Post-16 Education options: high school (2 years), mid-level vocational training, mid-level arts and design, and mid-level sports training.

succeed at school, while others in the same context, social community, or in unfavourable economic situations do not.

In this paper we hypothesised that young immigrants who overcome the transition risk period between *ESO* and Post-16 Education, and are likely to continue to higher education, show specific resilience characteristics that combine certain individual features and social-educational support. On this basis, the main objectives of the study were: to explore the relationship between resilience and educational success (understood as remaining in the education system) among foreign youth; to validate a diagnostic instrument to determine the degree of resilience among students; and to provide further insight that would help determine appropriate educational interventions from the perspective of resilience.

The theoretical framework of the study uses the concept of resilience as a focus to analyse school success. The term resilience comes from physics and describes materials capable of regaining their original state after being exposed to extreme conditions (erosion, aggression, etc.). In Social, Psychological, and Health Sciences, the term began to be used to describe individuals or social groups who, after having gone through adverse situations, are not only safe but are also transformed positively by the experience. The term was widely used in scientific literature in the United States of America at the beginning of the 90s (Werner & Smith, 1982) and was later introduced in Europe, having a great impact in France, mainly through the BICE (*Bureau Internacional Catholique de l'Enfance*). More recently, the conceptual and empirical research on resilience, as well as events and international conferences, has suggested many different lines of intervention (children with disabilities, victims of domestic

violence, families affected by a wide range of health issues, etc.), all of which target vulnerable populations.

Resilience is not a static feature; on the contrary, it can change throughout the life of an individual in various situations and contexts and can become evident through various patterns (Chi, 2010). This has led to some confusion as to whether it refers to the result of the adaptation or to the process in itself (Olsson, Bond, Burns, Vella-Brodrick & Sawyer, 2003). Over the years, the concept has been approached from various perspectives. Some theoretical considerations focus on the "risk factor versus protective factor" duality (Fullana, 1998), while others on the relative weight of "external (micro-macro-social, economic, political, etc.) and internal (intrinsic qualities and resources of every individual) factors" (Kotliarenco, Cáceres & Fontecilla, 1997). Other discourses have supported resilience as a social construction where its factors are unique to each context (Ungar, 2004). However, there has always been certain consensus in considering it as an "effective coping mechanism" in response to a risky or adverse situation (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005; Luthar, 2003; Masten, 2001; Kaplan, 1999; Rutter, 1987).

Despite social inequality and educational disadvantages associated with the migratory process itself, some of these young people achieve the national academic average compared with others under similar circumstances. Furthermore, the career pathway of these individuals is often quite superior (Chavkin & González, 2000).

The causes of school failure among immigrants have been studied, whilst research on the successes in these populations is yet scarce, particularly when focused on the resiliency associated with immigration.

Materials and Methods

Following the predominance of a more quantitative approach to research methods in the past, in recent years more mixed methods have emerged with a qualitative and quantitative view of reality, and this is leading to a deeper understanding of youth resilience across contexts and cultures (Este, Sitter & Maclaurin, 2009). In this research, a mixed method design was followed (Table 1) combining quantitative and qualitative data in a longitudinal study. Participating students were characterised according to several relevant variables during the last year of ESO (phase 1). Then, they were followed up until their enrolment and incorporation to the first year of Post-16 Education (phase 2) and for the duration of half the school year. Up to this point, students who had not dropped out of the system were considered as students with academic persistence for the purpose of the statistical comparison and the selection procedure. The purpose was to explore how students managed the high-risk transition period and to identify the characteristics of those who continued at school.

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Participants

The study was carried out in three public secondary schools with a high immigrant population from socioeconomic disadvantaged backgrounds in Barcelona (Spain) and

provincial towns. In these schools, from a total of 360 students enrolled in the last year of ESO (2010-2011), 26.1% were students of foreign origin. Regarding the type of participants, it was decided not to focus on specific groups. The sample included all foreign students of all cultural origins (n=94), aged between 15 and 18 years; the male/female ratio was 55/45. Participants came from 19 different countries, implying diverse cultural and geographical backgrounds. The origin was classified according to the following four geographical regions: Latin America (59.6%), Southern Asia (14.6%), Maghreb (12.4%) and Rest of Asia (9%).

Coordination with directors, educational coordinators, and head teachers was essential for the effective development of the fieldwork. The school informed all the families involved and participation was voluntary. Explicit ethical considerations were taken regarding the confidentiality of data, according to the "*Code of Good Research Practices*" (*Universitat de Barcelona*, 2010).

Measures - Phase 1

a) *Sociodemographic and Academic Questionnaire.* This instrument was used to collect basic information regarding the participants. The following items were included, among other variables: place of origin, time living in Spain, sense of belonging, educational level, profession of parents, identification and characterisation of friends, support resources used, school years repeated, academic expectations, and self-evaluation of academic situation.

b) *Resilience scale.* The SV-RES scale (Saavedra & Villalta, 2008) was adapted in terms of language, characteristics of the sample, and aims of the research. In its original version (Spanish), the scale has a high reliability (Cronbach's alpha=0.96,

split-half Spearman-Brown coefficient=0.97). The final questionnaire included 61 items, each with four response options from "strongly agree" to "disagree entirely". The results of the Cronbach's alpha test showed a high reliability of the scale (0.95).

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Measures - Phase 2

c) *Interviews.* A semi-structured interview was developed to analyse how second year students with some of the highest scores on the SV-RES scale had navigated through their school pathways and had resolved any tensions they might have perceived. In total, thirteen interviews were conducted. The dimensions investigated were: migratory process, the adversity experienced, risk and adversity coping mechanisms, types and sources of support received, academic and professional expectations, and relational environment. Over the course of the interviews, the catalyst questions6 as suggested by the Resilience Research Centre (2009) were introduced. Such questions are considered helpful in eliciting stories that seek to address the construct of "resilience", particularly with children and young people. The purpose of these questions is to explore the particular meaning that certain concepts such as "success" or "risk" may take from a personal, familiar or cultural standpoint.

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[6] Some examples of such questions are: "What do you do when you face difficulties in your life?", "What does it mean to you, to your family, and to your community, when bad things happen?" or "Can you share a story about how you have managed to overcome challenges you face personally, in your family, or outside your home in your community?".

Resilience results from quantitative data

The data obtained from the *Sociodemographic and Academic Questionnaire* and the *Resilience Scale* were analysed using the "R" statistical package, version 2.12.1, based on parametric and non-parametric tests, such as Student's t-test, the Wilcoxon test, the Kruskal-Wallis test, and the Pearson's chi-square test. It is important to note that no significant differences were found in resilience values in terms of each school, sex, age, period of residence in the country, and year at which the student entered the school ladder system, among others variables measured. However, significant differences did appear regarding cultural groups and certain variables associated with academic self-perception as detailed below.

Resilience and academic perceptions

Students were asked how their studies were going. Their answers revealed that the students who think their studies are going well obtained significantly higher scores in the *Resilience Scale* than those who see themselves as falling behind and with poorer educational development (x^2 (3, *n*=88) = 8.8279, *p* =.032) (Figure 1). A more specific analysis of the SV-RES scale showed a significant difference in "Identity" (x^2 (3, *n*=88) = 11.0277, *p* =.012).

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Insert Figure 1

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Regarding expectations of passing the school year, differences were observed in the mean resilience regarding the perception of students towards satisfactorily completing the last year of ESO (Kruskal-Wallis chi-square = 12.1134, df = 2, p = .002) (Figure 2). A strong association exists between having higher scores and being confident of passing the year. Resilience does not appear to be associated with the student's belief of passing the year or not, but with his or her future academic projection.

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Immigrant acquaintances who have completed Post-16 Education

Research participants who believe they are doing well or very well in their studies seem to know more foreign people who have completed their Post-16 Education; on the other hand, those who think they are doing badly do not know or know very few people who have finished Post-16 Education (x^2 (6, n=89) = 17.46316, p =.008). In addition, there are significant differences in resilience among students based on the number of their acquaintances who have completed Post-16 Education (x^2 (2, n=88) = 10.0391, p =.007). Students who had high levels of resilience have a larger number of acquaintances who have completed ESO.

Resilience and continuing with Post-16 Education

The results confirmed the hypothesis that young people who continue beyond compulsory education have a higher degree of resilience measured using the SV-RES scale (Kruskal-Wallis chi-square = 6.7123, df = 2, p =.035) (Figure 3). From the 94

participants, 14 were dropouts[7], 17 repeated the last year of ESO, and 54 continued to Post-16 Education. For nine participants, such information was not available.

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A more in-depth analysis of students' resilience profiles was made following the factorial structure proposed by the authors of the SV-RES scale (Saavedra & Villalta, 2008). In this regard, a significant association was found between remaining in the education system and the factors of the Resilience Scale: "Autonomy" (F2), "Ties" (F5), "Networks" (F6), "Models" (F7), and "Goals" (F8), as shown in Table 2.

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Resilience and origin

Although the objectives of this study did not include a comparison of the level of resilience by cultural groups, exploratory analyses were conducted taking into account that these outcomes might be further explored using a larger sample. The study sample

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[7] Definitions of "school dropout", "repetition" or "continuity" may differ from country to country since they are determined by the structure of each education system. Herein, "school dropout" is understood as not receiving a high school graduation diploma as student had already left school; while "repetition" is seen as retaking the last year of secondary education with the purpose of graduating. Finally, "continuity" refers to those students who complete secondary education and transfer to upper secondary education or equivalents in vocational education and training.

was divided into various cultural groups (Latin America, 59.6%; Southern Asia, 14.6%; Maghreb, 12.4% and the Rest of Asia, 9%) for the purpose of the statistical comparisons.

The Kruskal-Wallis test revealed a statistically significant difference in resilience across the four cultural groups (x^2 (3, n=83) = 14.60, p =.002). Statistical differences were mainly observed in Latin American youths, followed by those from the Maghreb, with considerably higher scores in comparison with those from Asia and southern Asia. It would be of interest to further explore resilience changes of different cultural groups in future research.

Results from qualitative approach: stories of academic persistence

Thirteen students who achieved a successful transition into and through the first year of Post-16 Education were interviewed. The following table (Table 4) shows the main characteristics of these students, all of whom showed medium or high levels of resilience according to the SV-RES scale (ranging from 0 to 3).

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All interviews were transcribed and analysed with the software programme ATLAS.ti 6.0.15. Two approaches were adopted for the data analysis: the first strategy was based on the use of substantive categories arising from the theory; and the second followed an

induction procedure. For the interpretation of the results, multiple sessions were devoted to the validation of categories, indicators and properties; discussion and consensus; establishment of emerging issues; and, the conceptual elaboration of the findings. Both procedures are described below.

Firstly, an *intra-case analysis* was conducted seeking the resilience categories, as defined by Saavedra & Villalta (2008), of each of the interviewees (baseline conditions, self-perception, view of the problem and resilient response) (Table 2 and 3). The general phases of the analysis, following the Miles & Huberman (1994) model, consisted of data reduction and organisation through the coding of meaning units, graphical layouts (matrix and concept maps, etc.) and drawing conclusions.

By way of an example of the procedure used for the analysis, Table 5 shows extracts of some of the interviews in the section referring to the "resilient response" dimension, which includes the "pragmatism", "goals" and "generativity" factors. The research team evaluated the indicators for each category and each case, establishing for each factor the level of relevance (+/-) and the overall assessment.

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The analytical approach with these factors proved to be an interesting exploratory study on the resilient processes of each case. However, we decided to complement this analysis with a deductive approach since the categorical analysis revealed that:

- As these factors are interrelated, the life events reported cannot be easily assigned to a single factor.

- The interpretation and understanding of each factor often need to take other factors into account.

- The presence or absence of each factor does not solely explain the processes of resilience in these young people.

- The presence of additional or fewer factors, while important, is not decisive.

- The factors are combined synergistically, forming a global and specific model for each student's history of academic persistence.

The second analytical strategy, with a primarily inductive approach, consisted of a cross-sectional thematic analysis, guided by the dimensions of the interview. A cross-case synthesis (Yin, 2002) was conducted in order to identify similarities and differences in all stories of school success, and to ensure a holistic understanding of the experiences of success and vulnerability in these young people. The central categories used to explain and organise this process are described below, with examples drawn from the interviews.

Adversity experienced

The study shows that the young people who underwent a migratory process had to face many complex situations: loss of life roles (as a grandchild, nephew, niece, etc.),

separation from loved ones, adaptation to a new culture and academic reality, and the reconstruction of their social networks, among others.

> *Adaptation is vital. You cannot live with the same old customs, but must adapt to the new land without forgetting your origin. You must not lose your identity but include aspects from here, your new reality. (I-11)*

In relation to the academic life, there is the belief that the main challenges faced are more social than educational. Testimonies refer to the fact that their emotional and personal well-being affects their academic performance and attitudes towards school learning. Such well-being is closely related to their integration process and social adaptation.

In addition, young people perceive that not all immigrant students face the same adaptation process, since they do not share the same native language and culture. Students from China or Pakistan encounter more difficulties than, for example, those from Latin America. The differences between native and new host academic programmes are also considered as another potential adverse factor.

Supportive relationships

All the interviews demonstrate the presence of "significant" people who play an important role in the academic development of these young people. The social support from family, friends and teachers acts, in many cases, as a promoter factor as well as a protective one. Close relatives (grandparents, uncles, cousins...) are specially mentioned and, above all, the figure of the mother. The presence of strong ties with family and friends left in the native country is also visible.

My mother, for example, is a determined person. She works and brings home a salary, even though she has no studies. My mother is a good example of a courageous, hard-working person. (I-5)

Yes, I have quite a few people [who help me to go forward]. My mum helps me a lot, and a friend of mine who helps me study when I go wrong in some subjects... [Also] our support teacher who gives us moral support and helps us. (I-1)

Once in the host country, these young people consider initial contact with their peers as the means to access already established supportive social networks. In this regard, they affirm that their degree of adaptation and integration to the new reality depends largely on their ability to avoid endogamous cultural groups. In other words, the more heterogeneous and diverse the social network (in terms of nationality, origin…), the higher the level of integration into the destination community. Consequently, they indicate that their network of friends consists of people of different cultural origins.

Moreover, it is noticeable that they have a tendency to use their personal relations to help them overcome all situations of personal and academic adversity that they might face.

Then, the very first thing is coming here, getting to know people, integrating, asking them for help if needed, also asking teachers for help… I do believe that this is how you can keep moving forward. (I-3)

Successful models for young people and the existence of mentors

Among their friendships and family relationships, these young people highlight the presence of persons who are studying or have already finished a higher degree. These

are seen as successful models for the students and, altogether, are a positive influence towards continue studying.

> *All my uncles have studied. They are teachers and teach. My dad went to the university, and now he is a policeman. Others studied too, and also went to the university. Then, why should I not go? (I-5)*

> *[These older friends] are from another high school. They are enrolled in some years above me. They are my brother's friends who help me. (I-1)*

They also mention people who, instead of being successful models, act as a negative influence that they want to avoid. These people represent all the actions that lead to social vulnerability, academic failure and other issues related to drug consumption and vandalism. Youth gangs are particularly relevant in their testimonies.

> *I had a really bad time there. Then, I saw sense, I decided to stop, and I left these people. I started to study more and that's all. (I-3)*

In some cases, the presence of one adult among their relationships is very significant. It is often a teacher who has high expectations for the students and who, according to the students, shows a special interest and concern for them and believes in their capacity to succeed.

Looking towards the future

A key element of resilience is future projection. These young people are optimistic about their future and foresee upward career paths. Interestingly, this future projection appears to be strongly linked to the stages that have been challenging for them and,

specially, when they evaluate the present situation as unsatisfactory. The future is understood as a driving force for change and motivation in the present.

The students appear to show high expectations for the future both academically and professionally, linking the desire for success with effort, dedication and perseverance. Such expectations are connected to the fact that they imagine themselves as university students and qualified professionals –psychologists, teachers, lawyers, etc. The studies they would like to embark on are seen not only as a way to guarantee certain standards of living, but to achieve personal satisfaction and pride. Some even view their studies as a mechanism to improve life in general and, in particular, to meet other people, share knowledge, be self-sufficient and gain freedom.

> *I want to become a Catalan teacher, by studying philology, or maybe become a translator and interpreter. Yes, I plan to go to the university, do a MA and be a teacher. (I-5)*

Continuing to Post-16 Education

Once faced with the question of why they should continue studying, their testimonies refer to intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Amongst the intrinsic factors, some interviewees said that the decision to continue was due to previous successful experiences which they had accumulated throughout their education. Others believed that the central element in their decision is their confidence in their abilities and skills, and especially their effort and autonomy (e.g. *I do it by myself; I do it because I want to do it…*). In other words, the balance between realism and optimism is thought to play the key role.

I will finish high school. I will not drop out, and let alone now. If I managed to get through ESO, now I will keep studying. (I-4)

I think of that as a challenge. I want to get there, trying harder, much harder, and end up getting what I want. (I-2)

Amongst the extrinsic factors, students stress aspects such as the importance and value of education within the family circle. They also highlight the successful figures they have around them, who they see as positive examples, and who orientate and support their schooling paths on a daily basis. Finally, in the current political, economic and social context, these students see education as the means to face the lack of job opportunities and high unemployment.

Because of the current situation in Spain, I have chosen to continue my studies. Now with the crisis, we cannot do anything else, right? (I-11)

Learning, growth and transformation

These young people and their families have undergone a process of immigration and integration, with constant confrontations and difficult circumstances. Nevertheless, their stories denote personal growth based on pride in overcoming hardships and a growing awareness of their potential and self-efficacy in achieving their goals. Their life experiences are seen as a reference in addressing new challenges and problem solving. They rely on their learning as a mechanism to transform their current situation and glimpse future prospects.

In life, everything is a learning process, because it has an influence on you, [it has] a good or a bad consequence for you. [...] If I do things in a specific way and they go well,

then I keep doing things in that way. Otherwise, you just do it differently, right? You can

always learn; this is what I think. (I-7)

Discussion

The young people interviewed for this study have faced many challenging situations. However, they value their life experiences positively, find new ways of facing difficulties and new strategies in the way they relate to others. These young people show attitudes of constant learning, amongst others. Their voices are true examples of individuals and families overcoming adversity.

The qualitative and quantitative results suggest that "I have models, ties and networks" factors from the Grotberg's model (1995) are essential for these students to remain in the education system. Their ability to resist school dropout is related to the resources they have in their social environment, such as external support from family (García Castaño, Rubio, & Bouachra, 2008), associations, or institutional services or social protection (Elias & Haynes, 2008). Family members who they consider as models of success in their constant struggle against adversity acquire vital importance. "Peer social capital" (Ream & Rumberger, 2008; Swenson, Nordstrom, & Hiester, 2008) appears as a protective factor against school dropout, and "personal networks" as an expression of the level of integration and an opportunity for social participation (Sandín & Pavón, 2011; Sánchez & Sandín, 2013).

In our study "future aspirations" or "goals" are also key in the educational transition of young immigrants who have overcome the ESO/Post-16 Education transition risk. However, data on immigrant population post-compulsory education continuity still show a high percentage of dropouts, despite high expectations for continuity (Palou,

2011; Figuera, Freixa, Massot, Torrado, & Rodríguez, 2008). Therefore, we could say that having personal and/or professional vision seems to be necessary although not sufficient for resilience; future goals and aspirations combine in a synergic and unique way with other resilience variables to obtain school success.

From a cross-cultural approach (Gunnestad, 2006), data from this study suggest that resilience is developed in a unique way in every group. Nowadays, recognising the cultural nature of resilience is a growing trend in this type of research (Ungar, 2010).

A number of important practical implications arise from this study. It has proved that the concept of *resilience can and should be used as a diagnostic tool* to explore helpful and encouraging ways to stimulate successful schooling. Teachers and related educational professionals should seek to identify young people with a *low academic self-concept,* as these students are much more likely to have a low level of resilience. Then, *supportive adults and teachers* occupy a pivotal role to youth resilience and are vital to academic engagement for immigrant youth.

Both initial and continuing training programs should provide professionals with the skills, knowledge and ability to become *deliberated caring teachers* that nurture resilience (Theron & Engelbrecht, 2012). Most teachers have a limited understanding of this construct and do not have neither diagnostic nor intervention skills to cope with it (Green, Oswald & Spears, 2007). Strengthen resilient characteristics in students requires *new teaching approaches and methods*, it requires rethinking educational experiences by providing youth with a meaningful connection to their classroom and school setting and a concrete set of career goals which buffer against dropping out of school.

In addition, young immigrants need to *establish relationships with peers* who can serve as *models of school success* (Pàmies, 2013); these positive models may be schoolmates, friends, or acquaintances who are also immigrants, have completed Post-16 Education, and have thus overcome the high-risk dropout period.

Finally, schools should be understood as meso-systemic resources that are, or can be, instrumental to the process of resilience, which involves designing interventions, plans, and programs to foster *resilient environments* (Henderson, 2007; Uriarte, 2006).

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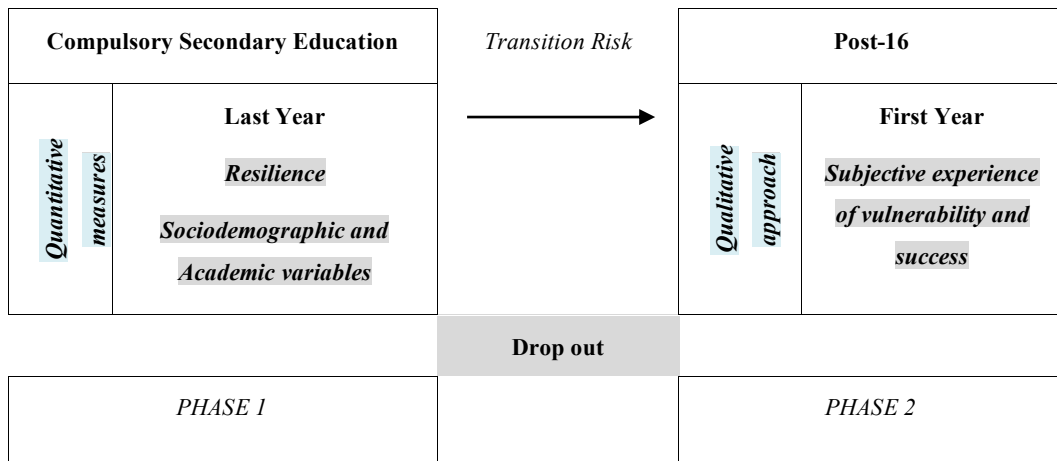
Table 1: Data Collection Phase

Compulsory Secondary Education		Transition Risk	Post-16	
Quantitative measures	**Last Year** *Resilience* *Sociodemographic and Academic variables*	→	*Qualitative approach*	**First Year** *Subjective experience of vulnerability and success*
		Drop out		
PHASE 1			*PHASE 2*	

Table 2: Factors defining resilience

Factors	Description[8]
F1: Identity	Judgments built on cultural values which define the subject in a relatively stable manner over time. These personal judgments lead to particular ways of interpreting events and actions throughout one's personal history.
F2: Autonomy	Judgments on the links that subjects establish with themselves to define their particular contribution to the sociocultural environment. It refers to the sense of competence when facing problems, a good self-image and independence in action.
F3: Satisfaction	Judgments that reveal a state of personal satisfaction, feelings of success and self-worth from which the individual approaches a problem situation.
F4: Pragmatism	Judgments which reveal pragmatism when interpreting the actions performed. It refers to a positive orientation toward action.
F5: Ties	Judgments that highlight the value of primary socialization and social networks rooted in personal history. It refers to close and intense relationships linked to childhood, which define attachment structures that guide belief systems.
F6: Networks	Judgments related to the affective bonds that the person establishes with his/her close social environment. It refers to the social and family conditions that serve as a support.
F7: Models	Judgments related to people and situations that serve as a guide when addressing one's problems. Previous experiences serve as a reference when approaching problem-solving.
F8: Goals	Judgments related to the sense of action to address a problematic situation. It refers to the coherency of the objectives and actions in pursuing a clear and realistic goal. It involves projecting the future, and not giving up without finishing what has been started. It has to do with behaviour such as working without being distracted, being resistant, methodical and organised.
F9: Affectivity	Judgments related to self-recognition and positive evaluation of emotional life that promotes flexibility in methods, habits and preferences in adapting to new situations with humour and

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[8] The descriptions of each of the factors have been taken from Saavedra & Villalta (2008).

	empathy.
F10: Self-sufficiency	Judgments about the likelihood of success that the person recognises in himself/herself when facing a difficult situation. It involves our perception of the ability to set limits, to control our impulses, to take responsibility for our actions and to manage our stress levels.
F11: Learning	Judgments that evaluate the problematic situation as an opportunity for learning. It involves taking advantage of the experience lived, learning from mistakes, evaluating one's own action and corrective action (Saavedra, 2003).
F12: Generativity	Judgments related to the ability to ask others for help in order to solve difficult situations. It refers to the ability to find alternative solution to problems, promoting cooperation or seeking support.

Table 3: Statistically significant differences in the SV-RES Scale Factors versus Academic Persistence

Grotberg's interactional competence (1995)	Consciousness structures (Saavedra & Villalta, 2008)			
	Baseline conditions	Self-perception	View of the problem	Resilient response
I am	F1: Identity	F2: Autonomy	F3: Satisfaction	F4: Pragmatism
I have	F5: Ties	F6: Networks	F7: Models	F8: Goals
I can	F9: Affectivity	F10: Self-sufficiency	F11: Learning	F12: Generativity

▢ p≤0.05

Table 4: Students interviewed by level of resilience

Interview	Sex	Country of origin	Years in Catalonia	Resilience level
I-1	Female	Bolivia	From 5 to 7	2.5
I-2	Female	Peru	From 5 to 7	2.5
I-3	Female	Ecuador	From 2 to 4	2.4
I-4	Male	Bolivia	From 8 to 10	2.3
I-5	Male	Bolivia	From 5 to 7	2.2
I-6	Female	Ecuador	From 8 to 10	2.0
I-7	Female	Ecuador	From 8 to 10	1.7
I-8	Male	Ecuador	From 8 to 10	2.7
I-9	Female	Bolivia	From 5 to 7	2.9
I-10	Male	Venezuela	From 2 to 4	2.7
I-11	Male	Bolivia	From 2 to 4	2.9

| I-12 | Male | Romania | From 8 to 10 | 2.5 |
| I-13 | Female | Dominican Republic | From 5 to 7 | 2.4 |

Table 5: Interview Analysis Sample

Resilient response dimension SV-RES
This consists of the following factors: **Pragmatism (F4),** Pragmatism when interpreting actions performed; **Goals (F8),** Sense of action to address a problematic situation; and, **Generativity (F12):** Ability to ask others for help in order to solve difficult situations.

Inter-view	Analytical extracts of each case	Weighting factors			Overall assessment
		F4	F8	F12	
I-1	*Setting of goals, some specific such as studying Law, is observed. But doubts ("if I get into law school...") and a lack of specificity ("to get to where I want to go" [...] "and whatever") are also observed.* *The choice of one career over another is made taking into account an evaluation of their capabilities and opportunities ("if I see that I can't, I'll do something else like social work").* *Pragmatic assessment of their current situation ("right now I can't do much, or there is not much you can do with just the ESO").*	+	-	-	Although the "generativity" and "goals" factors are present, they do not appear to be decisive in the process of resilience: They are not expressed with sufficient conviction, due to doubts about the possibility of achieving these goals and the lack of specificity in the long term. A pragmatic evaluation of their present and future projection prevails.
I-3	*A plan of action on how to achieve goals as well as alternative solutions to problems is reported ("the first thing is arriving, meeting people, integrating, asking people and also teachers for help, and that is how you can always get ahead", "I took the 4th year of ESO as a game –to enjoy the year learning").* *Clear goals are present ("I want to study psychology", "I want to open my own practice and be with my family", "helping other", "I can make things happen, for example, with people who are afraid to do something, help them not to be afraid".)*	-	+	+	There are no evident indicators of a predominant pragmatism in the interpretation of their actions. The "goals" and "generativity" factors are expressed in relation to aspects of personal and professional development. A clear formulation of aims and goals, expressed proactively, is evident.
I-4	*Specific goals such as "finishing school" and "staying here" are clearly expressed. Regarding the future projection, stimulating scenarios associated with the relational field (studying with friends, living with*	+	-	+	The "generativity" factor is a good construct when facing resilient processes; it is seen in the seeking of alternatives and in turn formulating these in a practical way in order to achieve goals. The

	parents) are imagined. *Studies are associated with getting a job, not so much the content, but learning that which implies least effort and obtaining a qualification in order to enter the job market ("if I don't do well in high school, then I'll choose another school, or go to a mid-cycle, they say you learn faster there", "do one or the other, if I don't get one, then the other".* *Generativity is seen in their initiative and ability to seek alternatives, as well as in their planning of actions to achieve goals.*			priority of the short term goal of "finishing school" could be significant; although in the longer term there is some lack of specificity in their future projection, making it less likely that the "goals action" factor is a catalyst for resilience.

Figure 1: Mean Identity Factor (Resilience) and Self-evaluation of Studies
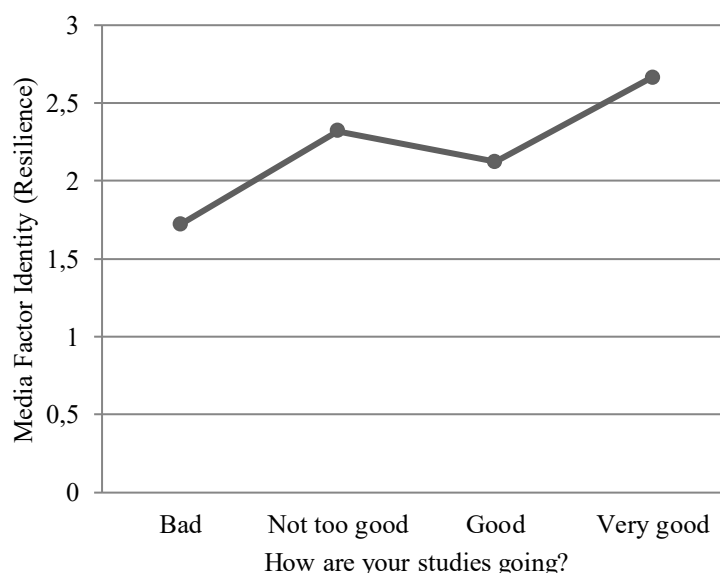

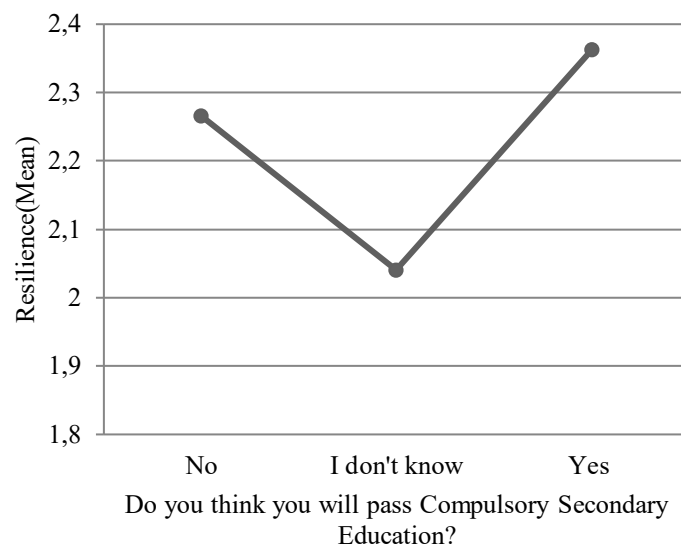**Figure 2: Mean Resilience versus Expectations to Pass the Fourth Year of ESO**

Figure 3: Resilience and Continuing on to Post-16 Education