

Resilience and Self-regulation: A Study of Spanish Youth at Risk of Social Exclusion

KEYWORDS

resilience, self-regulation, positive youth development

RESEARCH SUMMARY

DESCRIPTION

Social exclusion refers to the extent to which one lacks a place in society. One of the main risk factors associated with social exclusion is not completing one's education, as this can impede access to the labour market. In order to decrease the risk of social exclusion it is important to better understand how people can develop resilience. Self-regulation is a primary aspect of the resilient personality, and it has also been associated with good academic performance.

The objectives of this study were to:

- 1) Examine any associations between scores in resilience and in self-regulation, and identify which self-regulation factor is most associated with and predictive of resilience;
- 2) Determine the interdependent relationship between levels (high, medium, and low) of self-regulation and resilience.

365 Spanish students enrolled in Initial Vocational Qualification Programs (IVQPs) participated in the study. IVQPs are preventive programs for students who have not completed compulsory secondary education. All 365 students completed a measure of self-regulation and resilience.

Linear association analyses and non-linear interdependence analyses showed that an aspect of self-regulation (learning from mistakes) predicted several aspects of resilience, and that low, medium, and high levels of each construct were correlated. These results contribute to the theoretical knowledge and measurement of self-regulation and resilience, and also have implications for education and positive youth development.

METHODOLOGY

All 31 institutions offering IVPQs in a region of northern

Spain were invited to participate. Interviews were conducted with the 27 institutions that chose to participate in the study.

Nearly 85% of youth enrolled in IVQPs in the 2011-2012 academic year participated in the study, indicating a highly representative sample. The 365 participating students were nearly 75% male and ranged in age from 14 to 21 years old, with 70% between the ages of 16 and 17.

Two personal visits were made to each student to administer two tests: first a self-regulation measure (the SSRQ) and, a few weeks later, a resilience measure (the CD-RISC). The resilience measure had the following subscales: coping and confidence, tenacity and adaptation to change, perception of control and achievement, perception of support, and tolerance of negative situations. The self-regulation measure was composed of the following dimensions: goals, perseverance, learning from mistakes, and decision making.

A pilot study was conducted with 9 students to ensure the test questions and administration order were appropriate.

The data was first analyzed with a structural analysis consisting of an association and prediction analysis. Next, to determine the level of interdependence between self-regulation and resilience, inferential analyses were performed. To classify students as low, medium, or high in terms of self-regulation and resilience, a cluster analysis was carried out.

A limitation of the study is that although the sample is broad and representative, it is not uniform in age, gender, and cultural background.

KEY FINDINGS

The self-regulation factors of goals and learning from mistakes were significantly associated with factors of the resilience scale. The self-regulation factor of learning from mistakes significantly predicted 3 out of the 5 resilience scale factors: coping and confidence, tenacity and adaptation to change, and tolerance of negative situations. The factors of resilience that were most associated with self-regulation were coping and confidence, and tenacity and adaptation to change. As expected, low, medium, and high levels of self-regulation were correlated with corresponding levels of resilience. These findings are aligned with prior research.

WHY THIS MATTERS

This study provides empirical support for the relationship between self-regulation and resilience. It provides data to validate measures for each, which will help to advance the study of these

ABOUT THIS SUMMARY

Youth who do not complete high school are at higher risk of social exclusion. This study examined the relationship between young people's self-regulation skills and resilience in order to better understand how to foster resilience in youth at risk of social exclusion.

constructs. The results have implications for education by contributing to the knowledge of how to foster a resilient mindset in youth living in contexts of disadvantage. The study also contributes to positive youth development by suggesting that working on building the self-regulation skills of marginalized students will strengthen their resilience. This can be done by helping students set realistic goals and understand how to learn from mistakes.

"These results show the importance of working on student strengths that go beyond the academic or technical areas and which can help them cope positively with the adverse situations in which they live, so that they can build an optimistic life plan, based on competencies of resilience such as self-regulation.."

(Artuch-Garde, González-Torres, de la Fuente, Vera, Fernández-Cabezas, & López-García, 2017, p. 9).

RECAP

To understand the relationship between self-regulation and resilience, this study examined whether or not self-regulation acts as a protective influence on young people's resilience. The study found that self-regulation and resilience are correlated, and that learning from one's mistakes — a key element of self-regulation — is predictive of certain aspects of resilience.

APA CITATION

Artuch-Garde, R., González-Torres, M. D. C., de la Fuente, J., Vera, M. M., Fernández-Cabezas, M., & López-García, M. (2017). Relationship between Resilience and Self-regulation: A Study of Spanish Youth at Risk of Social Exclusion. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.00612>