

School Experiences of Secondary School Students. A Study Proposal in Tenerife, Spain

Las Experiencias Escolares del Alumnado de Secundaria. Una propuesta de estudio en Tenerife, España

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Resumen: Las experiencias escolares son prácticas sociales que aglutinan y configuran complejamente las influencias de los contextos social, cultural, escolar y las particularidades individuales de los estudiantes. Como todo proceso social y educativo, son objeto de estudio dinámico, relacional y multidimensional que se configura en contextos dialécticos de cambio y reproducción. En el campo escolar se articulan fenómenos centrales como la socialización y adaptación, orden social, meritocracia, desigualdades sociales, con lo que las experiencias de los estudiantes son un constructo fundamental para ahondar en la comprensión de dichos fenómenos. Con el objeto de estudiar las experiencias escolares, se diseñó un cuestionario (CEES) sobre las percepciones del estudiantado en torno a las funciones del sistema escolar. El CEES se pasó a una muestra de 848 estudiantes de secundaria en Tenerife (Canarias). Específicamente, el análisis

factorial, arroja la configuración de cinco dimensiones: la adaptación escolar; la cultura del esfuerzo; los modelos ideales del alumnado y del profesorado; y la exclusión entre iguales. La relevancia de estos factores estriba en que permiten rastrear los significados del sistema escolar desde las voces del alumnado, y consecuentemente, su legitimidad; así como medir los aspectos que condicionan el nivel de identificación de los estudiantes con su centro escolar; reconocer las causas de la desafección escolar y los problemas relativos al rendimiento académico.

Palabras clave: Experiencias Escolares. Desigualdad de Oportunidades Educativas. Legitimidad. Identificación Escolar.

Abstract: Students' school experiences agglutinate and shape the influences of their social, cultural and school contexts. These experiences are dynamic, relational, and multidimensional and are configured in dialectical contexts of change and reproduction. In the school environment, central phenomena such as socialization and adaptation, social order, meritocracy, social inequalities are articulated, and students' experiences are a fundamental construct to help deepen our understanding of these phenomena. To study school experiences, we designed a questionnaire (CEES) that collects students' perceptions about the functions of the school system. The CEES was given to a sample of 848 secondary school students in Tenerife (the Canary Islands). Specifically, the factorial analysis yielded five key dimensions: school adaptation; the culture of effort; ideal model for students, ideal model for teachers and exclusion among peers. The relevance of these dimensions is that they allow us to identify the meanings of the school system based on students' voices: consequently, their legitimacy is proven. Additionally, they can measure the aspects that determine students' levels of identification with their school and to recognize the causes of school disaffection and problems related to academic performance.

Keywords: School Experiences. Inequality of Educational Opportunities. Legitimacy. School Identification.

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1. Introduction

School experiences are a wide-ranging subject of study. We can study the perceptions, opinions, and conceptions of these experiences as some of the main builders of meanings conditioned by school and students' peer groups. In addition, further exploration can be conducted of widely studied phenomena in the Sociology of Education such as socialization and school adaptation, reproduction, meritocracy, social order, class *habitus*, and gender differences, among others. Our theoretical framework is based on the work of cultural reproduction theorists¹ and adopts the findings of the resistance model.² Thus, we can better explain the dialectical

¹ The main exponents are Bourdieu and Passeron (1964, 1970), and Bernstein (1975). For Bourdieu and Passeron, pedagogical actions tend to reproduce class structure, imposing the dominant class culture as legitimate (Symbolic Violence). The relationships between schools and working-class families are clearly asymmetric, where students, basically, have two options: distance themselves from school culture (school failure, dropouts; short academic stays; practical routes) or integrate into the school culture, distancing themselves from their own culture (the reward is scholarly success and longer academic stays). For Bernstein, the middle classes end up adopting school language and valued pedagogies.

² The resistance model has works by authors such as Apple 1982 and Willis 1977. They analyze the conflict and the relationships between school and the dominant society. Typically, they dialectically integrate structures and agents, the ideological and the cultural, the objective and the subjective, the overlap between the content and official pedagogical methods, and the active

processes of reproduction and social maintenance. In particular, we start with the concept of *habitus* (Bourdieu 1979), but along with Willis (1977, 2008), we interpret the active sense of students who, conditioned but undetermined by their social origin, construct their own value systems, preferences, and conceptions of life. Dubet and Martuccelli (1998) come close to this approach when they interpret school experiences as a factor that defines situations, develops hierarchies, and constructs self-images. Ultimately, the conceptualization of school experiences that we defend gives visibility to the reproductive as well as the dialectic, dynamic and contradictory senses of the education system. School experiences are defined by school culture and social origin, but at the same time, they also shape the relationships between a school's culture and its students' social origins.

Until now, research on school experiences in Spain has focused mainly on specific aspects, such as early school leaving and school failure (Marchesi, 2004; Choi and Calero, 2013; García, 2013; Tarabini and Rambla, 2015; Torrents, Merino, García and Valls, 2018; Choi, Gil, Mediavilla and Valbuena, 2018). There have also been several studies on academic choices in post-compulsory education routes (García, Casal, Merino and Sánchez, 2013; Elías and Daza, 2017; Cabrera, Pérez, Santana and Betancort, 2019). The research has mainly followed a theoretical perspective, aiming to reach an interpretation of school experiences with a broad vision of the different variables that shape and define the relationship between the individual and the school space. However, there is less research devoted to measuring school experiences as observable behaviors, perceptions, attitudes, etc., that students develop in their educational contexts (Pérez, 2002; Martín-Criado, 2014; Martínez, 2014). Nor is there much research that measures and calibrates the relevance of the social context (and its use as a measure) on the lives of students in the classroom (González-Montesinos and Backhoff, 2010; De la Orden and Jornet, 2012; González-Such, Sancho-Álvarez and Sánchez-Delgado, 2016). Other works focus on the effects of social inequalities (social class, gender, and immigration) on students' academic performance, on «measuring» adaptation and school identification processes, academic expectations, and models of family implication (Cordero, Crespo and Santín, 2010; Pérez, Betancort and Cabrera, 2013, 2014; Francia, 2015; Cabrera, Betancort and Pérez, 2016; Murillo and Martínez, 2018; Gortazar, 2019).

With these studies as a reference, the need has arisen to propose a model for analyzing school experiences and to design an instrument to measure the central dimensions of school experiences, specifically, those related to institutional identification. The tool, we have designed allows us to obtain dimensions that measure the acceptance levels of the school institution. This implies addressing the assimilation or rejection of legitimacy patterns, an essential ingredient in the reproduction processes.

In Argentina, several empirical studies have focused on school experiences of secondary school students from disadvantaged backgrounds, among others Kessler (2002), Kaplan (2008), Sambucetti (2014), Giovine (2021). By contrast, Tiramonti and Ziegler (2008) analyze the education of the elite, and Meo (2015) studies

responses of teachers and students.

middle-class students, while Nuñez and Litichever (2015) look at those from different social strata. Another important characteristic of most studies is the use of qualitative techniques, except Nuñez and Litichever (2015), who employed mixed techniques.

Thus, this model includes the assumption that school experiences are a dynamic, relational, and multidimensional subject of study, structured around a dialectic framework of change and reproduction. Historically, three areas define an educational system and school experiences (Pérez, 2002): a) the principles of equality of opportunity, justice, and social mobility. b) legitimacy of school knowledge; and c) the school space as an imposed reality that shapes identities. Alongside these, it is assumed that school experiences should be understood contextually and interpreted in light of social changes as well as changes to the characteristics of school institutions.

In contemporary societies, the most widespread and agreed upon vision of the education system is that it acts as an instrument guaranteeing equality of opportunity and, subsequently, is a fundamental piece in the consolidation of democracy. This is due to the system being compulsory and free, as well as there being a (school) culture and practices that prioritize abilities, vocations, and individual aptitudes. School, based on the premise of equality, affects, judges, and places each and everyone within school hierarchies. These are structured around the double function of the education system: socialization of the dominant cultural values in society and the division of labor (Parsons, 1959). School culture teaches pupils that failure is individual and results from a lack of ability. It highlights and interprets differences and hierarchies in terms of academic performance and henceforth in terms of willingness and individual and family effort. The education system transforms extracurricular differences and inequalities into learning inequalities or cultural capital (exemplified by the theories of cultural reproduction). The legitimacy of educational institutions purports to be the guarantee of equality of opportunity (universalization of education), but the fact is that they give value to excellence as a formula for justifying differences. In this sense, academic advancement (and its reward: social mobility) goes hand in hand with the implementation of formal equality. The assimilation and acceptance of these principles by students (and their families) are essential for social cohesion as well as for social reproduction.

The culture, which could be defined as compulsory, is the one that is normalized in school, the one that schools «propose» for individuals. This includes the culture and the knowledge that are considered valuable and the standards by which all the individuals will be evaluated and measured (Ade and Duckworth, 2019, p. 340). In school, academic knowledge is the valid knowledge, endorsed by experts who select that knowledge based on rational and scientific proposals among others. The curriculum in secondary education encompasses the knowledge necessary to obtain a minimum level to enter adult life. It is also the knowledge required for further studies.

Nevertheless, as previously stated by Durkheim, school by nature should obviously not only assist social cohesion (cultural homogenization) but also social differentiation. Curricula diversity is justified by varying performance levels and social roles in adult life. The school system also proposes socialization and training along different routes and networks through a process of, ostensibly, freely made

choices limited only by abilities, intelligence, preferences, and individual skills that help replicate instrumental leadership functions.

Time in schools is planned in blocks defined by academic subjects and their corresponding activities. It is quantified in terms of gains and losses. Schools are also spaces where power is distributed among teachers, who have moral authority over students and where knowledge transmission is closely linked to discipline. The organizational and relational framework is structured around a system of double imposition: knowledge and discipline (Parsons, 1959). These elements contain, up to a certain point, a contradictory relationship between institutionally required attributes such as patience, submission, or resignation, and the demands of knowledge that are based on opposing attitudes such as curiosity, organization, and planning of the intellectual study. For the most part, doing good work means carrying out imposed, fragmented, repetitive, and supervised tasks (Perrenoud, 1990, p. 226).

The classroom is the sphere where student to student and student to teacher relationships are formed. These relationships are based on perceptions, values, and visions that each party has of their respective roles. How each student responds to performance demands determines their social position within the classroom through a process of differentiation and specialization of roles and functions. Analysis of student positioning has been widely studied in Sociology of Education through the attitudes of identification and rejection of the institution (Willis, 1977; Elffers, 2012; Chiang, 2019).

These aforementioned three general dimensions traverse the school field³ and should be understood in the framework of internal and external changes that affect schools and that we summarize in the following seven aspects:

1. Market logic is currently considered the norm in social, educational, and cultural activities. Academic performance is at the center of diagnostics and interpretations that seek the magic «formula», within a political framework that accepts, with little resistance, an economic rationale based on clichés such as efficiency and effectiveness (Angus, 1993; Ball, 1997). Currently, the logic of the market is considered normal and natural within the spectrum of social, educational, and cultural activities.
2. Twenty-first-century reforms consider that we have achieved equality of opportunity (through the universalization of compulsory education⁴), substituting it for equity (Breen and Jonsson, 2005; Dubet, 2014; Cabrera, 2016), and developing processes of diversification and selection within the

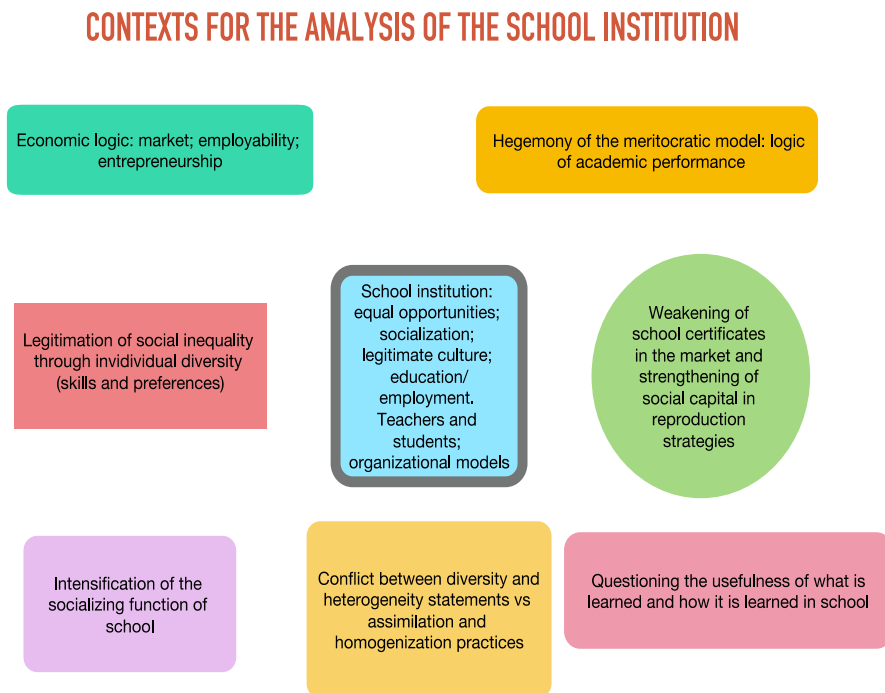
³ «The structure of the school field is the *state* of the power relations among the agents or institutions engaged in the struggle, or, to put it another way, the state of the distribution of the specific capital which has accumulated in the course of previous struggles and which orients subsequent strategies. This structure, which governs the strategies aimed at transforming it, is itself always at stake. The struggles which take place within schools are about the monopoly of the legitimate violence (specific authority) which is characteristic of schools and which means, ultimately, the conservation or subversion of the structure of the distribution of the specific capital» (Bourdieu, 1995, p. 73).

⁴ Keep in mind that there is a high percentage of students who do not finish compulsory secondary school in Spain, particularly, in the Canary Islands (Fernández and Martínez, 2017).

- education system based on competence and individual preferences. This has broadened the legitimizing function of the education system, pushing social selection into it.
3. Social-economic transformations have deepened inequalities and weakened the economic function of the education system as a guarantee of social intergenerational mobility and access to the labor market (OECD, 2018). School qualifications continue to be a necessary yet insufficient instrument. Social reproduction mechanisms and strategies have faltered, reinforcing the importance of social capital (Davis-Kean, 2005). The middle class finds itself more vulnerable and unsure of reproduction through school (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2002, p. 25). Poorer sections of society continue to find it harder to capitalize on their studies despite a clear rapprochement with the values and forms represented by school culture (Vincent, 2001; Alonso, 2014; Pérez, Betancort and Cabrera, 2014; Martín and Bruquetas, 2014; OECD, 2014, 2016).
 4. The strengthening of the socializing function of schooling, particularly that of secondary education, as a result of both external and internal forces (Dubet, 2007), is met with resistance by disruptive students (Rujas, 2020) and teaching staff who perceive it as yet another example of the devaluation of their profession (Zamora and Cabrera, 2015). Furthermore, teachers consider academic results are largely dependent on students (effort, motivation, the implication in their education...) and their families (dedication to offspring, involvement in their education....) (Cabrera, Cabrera, Pérez and Zamora, 2012).
 5. Family socialization processes have also been transformed (Domina, 2005; Bolívar, 2006). They are weaker and traversed by the individualism characteristic of a risky (Beck, 1998) and liquid society (Bauman, 2007, 2008). In this context, the aim of family socialization among the hegemonic classes (Biblarz and Raftery, 1999; Collet-Sabé, 2013) is to ensure their offspring can self-regulate their behavior, attitudes, and values, to build their own lives in an unstable and flexible world. To achieve this, a whole range of unevenly distributed agents and resources are employed.
 6. Educational discourse considers, at least formally, that students are active subjects with a particular identity and not products of obedience and the passive assimilation of school culture (Willis, 1977; Ball, 1997). Thus, the school institution, and particularly in secondary education, falls into a contradictory area: advocating diversity and heterogeneity yet by nature and structure tending towards assimilation and homogenization (Bolívar, 2006; Dubet, 2007; Elffers, 2012; Francia, 2015; Chiang, 2019).
 7. The growth of communication technologies has affected everyone, but above all young people. They become actors connected to multiple networks, which give them simultaneous access to different possible worlds (Reguillo, 2012, p. 48) and they can be exposed to discourses and learning styles that are often incompatible with the school institution.

We present a scheme showing a synthesis of the above in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Contexts for the analysis of a school institution



The functions of the educational system in an unequal society are therefore contradictory. They fluctuate ambivalently between reproduction and change; between democratization and legitimization of sociocultural inequalities; between individualism and collectivism; between homogenization and diversification, etc. In this framework, it is necessary to understand how students in compulsory secondary education (taking their social, cultural, and gender origins as a reference) position themselves (through their behavior, perceptions, and attitudes). Moreover, this is vital at a time when schools seek efficiency and are losing social and economic utility because studies do not guarantee social mobility.

For this reason, we have designed a study that combines questionnaires and discussion groups. The combination of both techniques allows us to cover in greater depth a wide range of dimensions that traverse the school experiences in the last three years of compulsory secondary education. In this article, we focus on the presentation of the CEES questionnaire (Questionnaire on Secondary School Experiences). This instrument includes dimensions that form a part of school experiences, without limiting the field of study.

2. CEES Instrument

2.1. Design

The CEES questionnaire is an instrument designed to measure different aspects of school experiences through students' perceptions in compulsory secondary education (ESO in Spain) of several dimensions that define an important part of experiences in a school. To collate and understand the dimensions of school experiences, we initially focused on the tools used up till now. In particular, three previous questionnaires were considered. These were the Regional Government of the Canary Islands' Department of Education ESO Questionnaire 2007; the Spanish Ministry of Education's General Diagnostic Questionnaire (EGD in Spain, 2010); the OECD 2015 PISA Questionnaire. In the table below, we compare these three questionnaires with the final isolated dimensions of our questionnaire.

Table 1. Dimensions of study. Comparison between CEE 2017/ PISA 2015/EGD 2010/ AESO 2007

CEES 2017 DIMENSIONS	PISA 2015	EGD 2010	AESO 2007
Family social profile	YES	YES	NO
Reasons for choosing the school	NO	YES	NO
School career	YES	YES	NO
Mid and long-term expectations	YES	YES	YES
Self-image of abilities, effort, and schoolwork	YES	YES	YES
Motivation to learn	YES	YES	YES
Perceptions of scholastic achievement	NO	NO	NO
Instrumental significance of studies	NO	NO	YES
Relationships with peers: classroom	YES	YES	YES
Characteristics of the ideal pupil	NO	NO	NO
Assessment of teaching	YES	YES	YES
Characteristics of the ideal teacher	NO	NO	NO
Family models	YES	YES	YES

Source: compiled by the authors

CEES contains dimensions that are not present in the other questionnaires. In our opinion, these are fundamental to the understanding of students' experiences. On the one hand, the perceptions of scholastic achievement allow us to observe the general level of acceptance of what is taught at school and the significance given to it in the current context by students. On the other hand, the perceptions of the ideal student and teacher are important to compare visions of the real and expected. These three areas make an important contribution to our instrument. The other dimensions have been covered in some cases in all of the questionnaires, and

other cases only partially as can be seen in Table 1. In any case, our questionnaire's potential lies in its ability to identify the levels of acceptance, criticism, or questioning of the crucial factors that emanate from the functions of the education system⁵. It contains 59 closed questions aimed at obtaining students' opinions with respect to the different dimensions of their life within the school system.

2.2. Sample

The study was carried out in Tenerife, one of the Canary Islands, Spain. The Canary Island archipelago is a European outermost region consisting of seven islands, two capital islands, and five peripheral ones. Although institutions in the archipelago are comparable to those in the rest of Spain. The islands have an income per inhabitant that is 82% of that in Spain, nearly the highest rates of unemployment (21.9%), youth unemployment (40.9%), long-term unemployment (38.1%) and relative poverty (35%), and the highest rate of the population at risk of social exclusion in the entire country with an AROPE (At Risk of poverty and/or exclusion) index of 44.6% in 2016 (Betancort, Darías, Marrero, Pérez, Rodríguez and Sánchez, 2019).

According to the State System of Education Indicators (MEFP 2019): in the 2016/17 academic year, the enrollment rate of children under 3 years old was 26% compared to 58.7% of the Spanish average; The school dropout rate was 20.9% compared to 17.9% in Spain. Concerning the «proportion of students who study the level expected for their age» in 2017, the percentage reached 63% in the Canary Islands in contrast to 69% for the whole of the Spanish territory. In 2018, the percentage of young people who did not continue their academic studies after finishing secondary school was 20.9%, three percentage points above the Spanish average and 10% above the rest of the EU (10.6%). The data from the last PISA report (2019) draws a similar picture: 15-year-old Canary Island students obtain lower scores than the average in the rest of Spain, both in mathematics and science (21 and 13 points, respectively). In our view, these data are a clear indicator of the situation in the Canary Islands.

We recruited 848 students in the second year of compulsory secondary education (ESO in Spain) in 22 state and private secondary schools during the 2016/2017 academic year (April and May 2017). There were 447 students from state schools and 371 from private schools. The 848 subjects surveyed represent 47% of the total number of students in the La Laguna region and approximately 8% of the total number of students on the island of Tenerife⁶. The sampling points were 11 private

⁵ A similar study but focused on students' perceptions of school justice: Gorard, 2012.

⁶ According to data provided by the Office for Planning and Statistics, Department of Education and Universities, Regional government of the Canary Islands, there were 1,852 students in the La Laguna region in the 2016/2017 academic year (1,099 in private schools and 753 in state schools). The sample has a 59.4% representation of students in state schools and 33.8% in private schools. There were 22,656 students in Year 2 of Secondary Education in the Canary Islands during the 2015-16 academic year (12,415 in Las Palmas region and 10,241 (7,313 in state schools and 2,928 in private schools) in Santa Cruz de Tenerife) See: <http://estadisticas.mecd.gob.es/EducaJaxiPx/Datos.htm?path=/Educacion/Alumnado/Matriculado/2015-2016RD/RGEso//10/andfile=ESO1>.

secondary schools (of a total of 20 in La Laguna and 47 on the whole of Tenerife) and 11 state secondary schools (of the 14 in La Laguna and 75 on Tenerife). The intraschool sampling procedure was carried out in clusters (classes). Students completed the self-administered questionnaires online in a school classroom under the supervision of a teacher and a member of the research team.

3. Data analysis

The instrument's initial items were generated from three prior qualitative studies carried out by the research team. Other items arose from experiences with earlier, non-validated instruments. Finally, some items came from papers by experts in the field of education. A linguistic validation was conducted to adapt the statements to students. The initial instrument consisted of 59 items that measured different aspects of school experiences.

An initial parallel analysis was carried out to determine the number of components or factors that had values greater than those expected from randomly obtained data (Horn, 1965). This analysis complements the Kaiser Rule criterion (Kaiser, 1970) in the selection of factors or dimensions of the measuring instrument (Costello and Osborne, 2005). An exploratory factor analysis with orthogonal quartimax rotation revealed seven dimensions with an explained percentage variance of 47%.

Only those items with a correlation equal to or greater than 0.30 between factors were considered. Each item was attributed to the factor with which it has the strongest correlation. Only factors with values equal to or greater than 1 were retained (Kaiser, 1970). Once items had been assigned to the instrument's different factors or dimensions, the capacity of each item to sample the school experiences' construct independently of the reference population was studied. To do this, an instrument adjustment was carried out based on the model of Item Response Theory (IRT). This allowed us to eliminate those items, which had limited capacity to discriminate their assigned construct or dimension. The criterion for elimination was the low discrimination of the item when measuring the construct and the non-adaptation of the item to the complete scale of responses.

Consequently, excessively polarized items on the scale of responses were eliminated from the final questionnaire. Once the items had been refined via the IRT model, exploratory factor analysis was run and the Bartlett test gave significant results [$\chi^2(561) = 11911, p < 0.05$], and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure was 0.86, which placed both the sample and the inter-item correlation at satisfactory levels for the exploratory factor analysis of the instrument, obtaining a fit of 0.88 (RMS 0.02). The total explained variance for the five factors isolated after the rotation was 52% with an overall Cronbach's alpha value of 0.85 (0.83 – 0.86). The final instrument led us to a five-factor solution with Cronbach's Alpha for each sub-scale lying within the range 0.75-0.83, except for the ideal student subscale, which had a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.68. A confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on the final instrument to test internal and construct validity. Confirmatory factor analysis showed values within acceptable parameters for this five-factor solution [$\chi^2(481) = 1234.7, p < 0.05$;

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cfi=0.90; rmsea=0.046 (0.042 – 0.049)]. The final instrument was composed of 34 items in five dimensions: school adaptation (F1, 9 items), the ideal model of teacher (F2, 6 items), exclusions among peers (F3, 6 items), identification with effort and competition (F4, 6 items) and ideal student (F5, 7items). (See Table 2).

Table 2. Factors and Items

Item	Factor	L.EFA	L. CFA	D.Index	M	SD	E.V.	Alpha
F1	School Adaptation				3.40	0.68	13%	0.83
it30	I receive help from teachers when I need it.	0.80	0.7	2.58				
it29	The teaching staff show concern for us.	0.79	0.69	2.56				
it32	Teachers treat us fairly	0.70	0.63	1.69				
it6	I like coming because of the teachers.	0.69	0.59	1.44				
it2	I like coming to school.	0.61	0.6	1.37				
it31	My teachers do not understand me.	-0.61	-0.55	1.34				
it19	The things I learn are useless.	-0.57	-0.52	1.15				
it7	My parents are happy with the school.	0.52	0.51	1.13				
it5	I like coming because I learn.	0.51	0.5	1.07				
F2	Ideal Model of Teacher				4.28	0.6	12%	0.8
it50	The best teachers motivate	0.83	0.72	2.75				
it52	A good teacher guides	0.80	0.73	2.57				
it51	The best teachers explain things well	0.79	0.71	2.48				
it54	A good teacher treats us all equally	0.75	0.56	1.72				
it49	A good teacher understands us	0.73	0.55	1.53				
it53	The best teachers maintain discipline	0.60	0.52	1.25				
F3	Exclusion among peers				2.01	0.8	11%	0.82
it20	I feel marginalized.	0.85	0.79	2.94				
it24	I feel comfortable in my class.	-0.78	-0.71	2.15				
it21	I have friends.	-0.76	-0.65	2.04				

it23	I find it difficult to interact	0.756	0.62	1.66				
it25	I feel that nobody likes me	0.73	0.6	1.64				
it26	I would like to change class	0.68	0.54	1.38				
F4	Identification effort-competition				3.38	0.8	9%	0.75
it15	I try hard to get good grades.	0.78	0.79	2.74				
it12	I think I spend a lot of time studying and preparing assignments.	0.77	0.65	2.01				
it13	I'm given homework but a lot of the time, I do not do it.	-0.66	-0.53	1.33				
it16	Sometimes I sacrifice other things to get good grades.	0.69	0.59	1.53				
it43	I'm interested in studying so that I can get good grades.	0.50	0.55	1.26				
it27	My classmates who don't study disappoint me.	0.43	0.37	0.72				
F5	Ideal student				3.83	0.6	8%	0.68
it56	To live well, you need a high level of studies.	0.68	0.27	1.67				
it38	I want to succeed so that I don't disappoint my parents.	0.57	0.47	0.81				
it10	I am worried about not getting good grades.	0.42	0.6	1.07				
it44	A good student studies hard.	0.64	0.53	1.47				
it55	You can't get a job without qualifications.	0.55	0.46	0.93				
it45	A good student does what the teacher says.	0.43	0.3	1.37				
it47	The best students are concerned about their grades	0.48	0.6	1.06				

Source: Compiled by the authors. Definitive items in five factor solutions. L.EFA: loadings in the exploratory factor analysis. L.CFA: standardized estimated parameter for the confirmatory factor analysis. D.Index: discrimination index for items in the IRT model. TRI. Mean Average of the item on the response scale. SD: Typical deviation. E.V. Explained variance for the factor. Alpha: Cronbach's Alpha value for the subscale.

4. Results

The five isolated dimensions configure the concept of school experiences around school adaptation, the ideal model of teacher, peer exclusion, effort-competition identification and ideal student. Below, we explain the different dimensions:

- *School adaptation* implies acceptance of the role of the teacher as agents who help, show concern and understanding, and treat students fairly. Furthermore, it indicates that school is a place of learning, and that school knowledge is useful. At the same time, it is worth mentioning that in school adaptation, students perceive as important the positive emotion that school arouses in their families and in the students themselves.
- The *ideal teacher* dimension plays a significant role in confirming the analysis on the dynamics and relational practices between teachers and students. The qualities present in the *ideal teacher* point to a combination of attributes related to the classic role: treating students fairly, giving clear explanations and maintaining discipline, and attributes, which lean towards an emotional implication: motivating, guiding and understanding students. The motivational-affective component is particularly relevant and confirms to a certain extent the predictability of this factor.
- The *exclusion among peers* dimension clearly defines the situation of the students who feel marginalized in the classroom: they do not feel comfortable and would like to change class; they do not have friends, find it difficult to interact and feel that nobody likes them. Coexistence and the feeling of being a part of the class or not can lead students to particular strategies and actions that may cause adaptation problems in their school practices. This perception of group exclusion induces academic exclusion (and social exclusion) upon leaving school.
- The *effort discourse* based on the logic of performance, linked to the achievement of the highest possible grades. This willingness to make an effort is consequently tied to achieving good grades. As a result, students' perceptions of this dimension (Santana, Cabrera, Pérez and Betancort, 2018), where the subjects dedicate a significant amount of their time learning through study and assignments, show a high level of responsibility when undertaking work set by the teacher. This level of responsibility means sacrificing certain «pleasures» in their daily life because the profile of the student who fits this type of perception is that of someone who wants to achieve good grades. In the logic of good grades, being «the best» or at least «one of the best» is where we identify a greater perception of competitiveness. We observe that these students are disappointed by the profile of a student who does not comply with the ideal vision of behavior and responsibilities that the school institution sets out.
- Finally, the *ideal student* dimension accepts the authority of the teacher and defines him or herself in terms of identification keys that are fundamental to school– schoolwork and are interpreted as necessary to live well and get a

job. The ideal student does not disappoint his or her family and accepts the principles of performance and effort.

The five factors connect with the three institutional spheres mentioned above, which are the principles of equal opportunities, school justice and social mobility; the legitimacy of school knowledge; and the school space as a configurator of identities. Therefore, the designed instrument allows us to measure and interpret the integration of institutional principles in students, to know their level of acceptance of these different aspects. In the following table, we can see the institutional meanings of the school experience, the result of the articulation between the perceptions of school life and the institutional principles of the educational system.

Table 3. Factors and principles

item	Factor	Equal Opportu- nities	Legitimacy of school knowl- edge	School iden- tities
F1	School Adaptation			
it30	I receive help from teachers when I need it.	X		X
it29	The teaching staff show concern for us.	X		X
it32	Teachers treat us fairly.	X	X	X
it6	I like coming because of the teachers.			X
it2	I like coming to school.			X
it31	My teachers do not understand me.			X
it19	The things I learn are useless.		X	
it7	My parents are happy with the school.	X		X
it5	I like coming because I learn.		X	X
F2	Ideal Model of Teacher			
it50	The best teachers motivate.			X
it52	A good teacher guides.		X	X
it51	The best teachers explain things well.		X	X
it54	A good teacher treats us all equally.	X		X
it49	A good teacher understands us.			X
it53	The best teachers maintain discipline.		X	X

F3	Exclusion among peers			
it20	I feel marginalized.			X
it24	I feel comfortable in my class.			X
it21	I have friends.			X
it23	I find it difficult to interact.			X
it25	I feel that nobody likes me.			X
it26	I would like to change class.			X
F4	Identification effort-competition			
it15	I try hard to get good grades.	X	X	X
it12	I think I spend a lot of time studying and preparing assignments.	X	X	X
it13	I'm given homework but a lot of the time, I do not do it.	X	X	X
it16	Sometimes I sacrifice other things in order to get good grades.	X	X	X
it43	I'm interested in studying so that I can get good grades.	X	X	X
it27	My classmates who don't study disappoint me.	X	X	X
F5	Ideal student			
it56	To live well, you need a high level of studies.	X	X	
it38	I want to succeed so that I don't disappoint my parents.			X
it10	I am worried about not getting good grades.	X	X	X
it44	A good student studies hard.	X	X	X
it55	You can't get a job without qualifications.	X	X	
it45	A good student does what the teacher says.			X
it47	The best students are concerned about their grades.		X	X

Source: compiled by the authors

5. Conclusion

The model of school experiences that we propose analyzes students' perceptions as responses to the contradictory functions of the education system, within a context of economic and social transformation. The CEES questionnaire addresses the senses and meanings that students give to school adaptation, the

values of excellence and effort, the models of ideal student and teacher, and school exclusion. Therefore, the model has been designed to address the legitimacy of the school system by students in a context of change, in a clearly unequal region.

Registering and interpreting how these aspects are conditioned or not by social position, gender, academic performance, and the type of education institution is a challenge for future studies. Such studies would allow us to compare data from responses with different concerns and theoretical references, accompanied by qualitative studies.

Finally, it should be highlighted that this model helps to capture students' thoughts and perceptions. This approach overcomes simplistic explanations of educational realities, constrained by narratives about low or high educational performance. Complex explanations highlighting the intricacies of actions carried out by students in the school environment regarding their own school practices and experiences can clarify the characteristics of different and at times unequal school cultures. These explanations and analyses could help in decision-making when designing contextualized educational and political interventions.

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