Resilience in Our Society:
How to Build Opportunities for Growth

Odporność w naszym społeczeństwie.
Jak budować możliwości rozwoju

Contents

Spis treści

Cintia Carreira Zafra
ORCID: 0000-0001-5597-250X
University Abat Oliba CEU, Barcelona

Introduction

Although the concept of resilience seems to have emerged recently in our contemporary society, it invokes one of the elements that most defines us as a species and that has enabled us to survive throughout history: the capacity to face adversity and, in a way, to recover and persevere (Signes 2022). Much progress has been made since the first attempts at a longitudinal outline of the concept carried out by Emmy Werner on the island of Kauai back in the 1970s and the epidemiological studies of the 1980s that followed, which attempted to study the defining elements of this ability. Decades later, research analysed the processes and examined the factors that act as a protector or driver of resilience, understood as a capacity that can be developed. Stefan Vanistendael (1999) identified two components within the construct: the ability to resist destruction, preserving one's integrity under difficult circumstances or pressure, and the ability to react and develop positively despite the difficulties. Thus, we understand resilience as a process of strength in the face of adversity, which implies accepting it and also overcoming it positively, leading to personal growth. At present, progress is being made towards applying the concept in practice, with both preventive and interventive perspectives regardless of the perspective from which it is treated.

Thus, fostering resilience in society is a challenge we face as human beings. We currently see how important it is to know how to get up once we have fallen: this is how humanity prospers and moves on. In a context as competitive—and at the same

time as diffuse and *liquid* (Bauman 2000; Han 2013; Han 2021)—as the current one, the acquisition of this skill is imperative. A proverb attributed to African cultures says that "it takes a village to raise a child"; well, a community or town is nothing more than a pillar of resilience for those children who grow up in it, because the affective support they receive from them motivates them to be better and to keep moving forward. The emotional bond between human beings is an excellent enhancer of resilient capacities (Bowlby 2014). And along with this support we also find more pillars, such as positive thinking, spirituality, an internal centre of control, reasons to fight, commitment to others, a sense of humour, narrative and self-narrative, among others (Kazmierczak, De Carlos-Buján 2022). This gives rise to infinite ways to learn to be resilient and many opportunities thanks to which it is possible to blend a life with attitudes and tools which in turn enable to face adversities. In that way, scars of life are nothing more or less than beautiful memories of difficult times that could have destroyed us but instead made us grow.

Without intending to offer an exhaustive and profound treatise on the concept under study, since for this we already have the research of Cyrulnik and Anaut (2016), Forés and Grané (2011), Puig and Rubio (2011) and Rojas Marcos (2010), among other renowned researchers, this special issue of *Studia Paedagogica Ignatiana* introduces a valuable and interdisciplinary compilation of articles from various fields such as education, psychology, anthropology, sociology and history, which contribute through theory and practice to the enrichment of the notion of resilience. Thanks to these contributions, the value of resilience also continues to be disseminated in the scientific context, especially in this post-pandemic era where resources are needed more than ever to cope with difficulties, whether everyday or deeply traumatic.

From the field of psychoeducation, Magdalena Wędzińska focusses on the potential of resilience as a tool that, together with other social skills, can combat cyberbullying. For her part, Katarzyna Jarosz presents a strategy for developing psychic resilience in children and young people from the concept of noetic qualities. Next, Margarita Fernández-Romero and Francisco Pardo Fabregat address the curriculum of early childhood education from the perspective of resilience, taking into account the new educational legislation in Spain. From

a more anthropological and historical perspective, Andrzej Tarchała discusses philosophical counselling as a tool to support human resilience, while Sergio Rodríguez-López Ros shows resilience as a basis for the birth of the First Past Pupils' Movement of Catholic Schools (Salesians). Finally, in this block we also find contributions from sociology: Roser Serra Florensa analyses the brand content of educational institutions, considering the resilient narrative that they use in their discourses, and Yago Lavandeira Amenedo examines the impact of augmented reality (AR) on fostering the capacity for resilience in the context of dementia and cognitive impairment.

In the research reports section, Iwona Sikorska, Małgorzata Stępień-Nycz and Marta Białecka provide a view of social understanding based on short-term conversation training. Next, in the miscellaneous section, Aleksandra Szczepaniak poses and tries to answer a key question: to punish or educate? Finally, Andrzej Skupień reviews a book from Springer in which the future of learning with artificial intelligence (AI) is investigated.

We hope that the constructive and positive outlook of this issue will allow those of you who are interested to delve deeper into resilience as a driver of human development and, at the same time, be a source of inspiration for your reflection, personal growth and research interests.

Bibliography

Bauman Z. (2000). *Liquid Modernity*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bowlby J. (2014). *Vínculos afectivos. Formación, desarrollo y pérdida*, Madrid: Morata.

Cyrulnik B., Anaut M. (eds.) (2016). *¿Por qué la resiliencia? Lo que nos permite reanudar la vida*, Barcelona: Gedisa.

Forés A., Grané J. (2011). *La resiliencia. Crecer desde la adversidad*, Barcelona: Plataforma.

Han B.-C. (2013). *La sociedad de la transparencia*, Barcelona: Herder.

Han B.-C. (2023). *La sociedad paliativa. El dolor hoy*, Barcelona: Herder.

Kazmierczak M., De Carlos-Buján A. (2022). "Narratividad y otros pilares de resiliencia: un decálogo para la Educación Primaria," [in:] C. Carreira Zafra, M. Kazmierczak (eds.), *Sociedad, literatura y educación: propuestas para el desarrollo de una juventud resiliente*, Barcelona: Octaedro, pp. 47–66.

Puig G., Rubio J.L. (2011). *Manual de resiliencia aplicada*, Barcelona: Gedisa.

Rodríguez-Ponga R. (2020). "Reflexión sobre el impacto de las palabras," [in:] C. Carreira Zafra, M. Kazmierczak, M.T. Signes (eds.), *Inteligencia y tecnología. Retos y propuestas educativas*, Pamplona: EUNSA, pp. 84–91.

Rojas Marcos L. (2010). *Superar la adversidad. El poder de la resiliencia*, Madrid: Espasa.

Signes M.T. (2022). *Del arte de aprender al oficio de enseñar: educación y resiliencia. Apertura del curso académico 2022–2023 de la Universitat Abat Oliba CEU*, Barcelona: CEU Ediciones.

Vanistendael S. (1999). *La resiliencia o el realisme de l'esperança. Ferit, però no vençut*, Barcelona: Claret.

ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE

Cintia Carreira Zafra
University Abat Oliba CEU, Barcelona
Faculty of Communication, Education and Humanities
e-mail: ccarreiraz@uao.es

Cintia Carreira Zafra
ORCID: 0000-0001-5597-250X
University Abat Oliba CEU, Barcelona

Wprowadzenie

Chociaż wydaje się, że koncepcja odporności pojawiła się niedawno w naszym współczesnym społeczeństwie, to jednak odwołuje się ona do jednego z elementów, który w największym stopniu definiuje nas jako gatunek i który umożliwił nam przetrwanie w historii: chodzi o zdolność stawiania czoła przeciwnościom losu i, w pewnym sensie, zdolność powrotu do zdrowia oraz umiejętność przetrwania (Signes 2022). Poczyniono znaczne postępy od czasu pierwszych prób badań podłużnych zarysu tejże koncepcji przeprowadzonych przez Emmy Werner na wyspie Kauai w latach 70. XX wieku oraz późniejszych badań epidemiologicznych z lat 80. XX wieku, które miały na celu zbadanie elementów definiujących tę zdolność. Kilkadziesiąt lat później w badaniach analizowano te procesy i sprawdzano czynniki, których działania mają charakter obronny lub wzmacniający odporność, rozumianą tutaj jako pewna zdolność, która może być rozwijana. Stefan Vanistendael (1999) zidentyfikował dwa elementy tego konstruktu: zdolność przeciwstawienia się zniszczeniu, która pozwala zachować integralność w trudnych okolicznościach lub pod presją, oraz zdolność do pozytywnego reagowania i rozwoju pomimo spotykanych trudności. Odporność rozumiemy zatem jako proces wzmacniania się w obliczu przeciwności losu, co oznacza ich akceptację, a także pozytywne przezwyciężenie, co w konsekwencji prowadzi do rozwoju osobistego. Obecnie jesteśmy świadkami postępu w zastosowaniu tej koncepcji w praktyce, zarówno w ujęciu prewencyjnym, jak i interwencyjnym, niezależnie od perspektywy, z której jest ona traktowana.

Wspieranie odporności w społeczeństwie jest wyzwaniem, przed którym wszyscy jako ludzie stoimy. Obecnie widzimy, jak ważna jest umiejętność powstawania z upadku: to dzięki tej umiejętności ludzkość się rozwija i idzie dalej. W czasach wszechobecnego dzisiaj współzawodnictwa – w społeczeństwach rozproszonych i płynnych (Bauman 2000; Han 2013; Han 2021) – nabycie tej umiejętności jest wręcz konieczne. Przysłowie przypisywane kulturom afrykańskim mówi, że „trzeba całej wioski, żeby wychować dziecko"; cóż, lokalna społeczność czy miasto to nic innego jak podpora odporności dla dzieci, które w nich dorastają, ponieważ wsparcie emocjonalne, jakie od nich otrzymują, motywuje je do bycia lepszymi i do dalszego rozwoju. Więź emocjonalna między ludźmi doskonale wzmacnia odporność (Bowlby 2014). Wraz z tym wsparciem odnajdujemy także kolejne filary, takie jak pozytywne myślenie, duchowość, wewnętrzny ośrodek kontroli, motywację do walki, zaangażowanie na rzecz innych, poczucie humoru, narrację i autonarrację (Kazmierczak, De Carlos-Buján 2022). Dają one niewyczerpane możliwości uczenia się odporności, dzięki czemu możliwe jest połączenie życia z postawami i narzędziami, które z kolei pozwalają stawiać czoła przeciwnościom losu. W ten sposób blizny życiowe są niczym więcej niż pięknymi wspomnieniami trudnych czasów, które mogły nas zniszczyć, ale zamiast tego sprawiły, że się rozwinęliśmy.

Nie ma w tym miejscu potrzeby przedstawiania wyczerpującego i głębokiego traktatu omawianej tutaj koncepcji, ponieważ dysponujemy już w tym zakresie badaniami (Cyrulnik, Anaut 2016; Forés, Grané 2011; Puig, Rubio 2011; Rojas Marcos 2010) oraz innymi uznanymi opracowaniami. W tym zeszycie czasopisma „Studia Paedagogica Ignatiana" umieściliśmy wartościowe i interdyscyplinarne zestawienie artykułów z różnych dziedzin, takich jak edukacja, psychologia, antropologia, socjologia i historia, które poprzez teorię i praktykę przyczyniają się do wzbogacenia rozumienia pojęcia odporności. W ten sposób dzięki tym tekstom znaczenie koncepcji odporności jest rozpowszechniane w kontekście naukowym. Jest to ważne zwłaszcza dzisiaj, w czasie po pandemii, kiedy zasoby odporności są potrzebne bardziej niż kiedykolwiek, aby poradzić sobie z trudnościami, zarówno codziennymi, jak i tymi głęboko traumatycznymi.

Magdalena Wędzińska w swoim tekście skupia się w kontekście psychoedukacji na potencjale odporności rozumianej jako narzędzie,

które wraz z innymi umiejętnościami społecznymi może przeciw-działać cyberprzemocy. Katarzyna Jarosz przedstawia strategię kształtowania odporności psychicznej u dzieci i młodzieży w opar-ciu o koncepcję jakości noetycznych. W kolejnym tekście Margarita Fernández-Romero i Francisco Pardo Fabregat omawiają program nauczania wczesnoszkolnego z perspektywy teorii odporności, biorąc pod uwagę nowe ustawodawstwo edukacyjne w Hiszpanii. Z bardziej antropologicznego i historycznego punktu widzenia Andrzej Tar-chała omawia poradnictwo filozoficzne jako narzędzie wspierające ludzką odporność, podczas gdy Sergio Rodríguez-López Ros przed-stawia odporność jako cechę leżącą u podstaw założenia Stowarzy-szenia Byłych Uczniów Szkół Katolickich (salezjalnie). Również w tym bloku tekstów znajdziemy opracowania z dziedziny socjologii: Roser Serra Florensa analizuje zawartość marki (*brand content*) insty-tucji edukacyjnych, biorąc pod uwagę narrację o odporności, której one używają w swoich dyskursach, a Yago Lavandeira Amenedo bada wpływ rzeczywistości rozszerzonej (AR) na wspieranie zdolności do odporności w kontekście demencji i zaburzeń funkcji poznawczych.

W dziale „Raporty z badań" Iwona Sikorska, Małgorzata Stępień--Nycz i Marta Białecka omawiają kwestię zrozumienia społecznego u młodzieży na podstawie wniosków, jakie płyną z krótkotermino-wego treningu opartego na konwersacji. Natomiast w dziale „Miscel-lanea" Aleksandra Szczepaniak usiłuje odpowiedzieć na kluczowe pytanie: karać czy wychowywać nieletnich sprawców czynów zabro-nionych? Na koniec Andrzej Skupień recenzuje książkę wydaną w wydawnictwie Springer, w której badana jest przyszłość uczenia się z wykorzystaniem sztucznej inteligencji (AI).

Mamy nadzieję, że konstruktywne i pozytywne spojrzenie na poruszaną w tym zeszycie tematykę pozwoli tym z Was, którzy są zainteresowani, jeszcze bardziej pogłębić refleksję nad odpornością rozumianą jako siła napędowa rozwoju człowieka, a jednocześnie będzie inspiracją do przemyśleń, rozwoju osobistego i podejmowania nowych badań.

Bibliografia

Bauman Z. (2000). *Liquid Modernity*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bowlby J. (2014). *Vínculos afectivos. Formación, desarrollo y pérdida*, Madrid: Morata.

Cyrulnik B., Anaut M. (red.) (2016). *¿Por qué la resiliencia? Lo que nos permite reanudar la vida*, Barcelona: Gedisa.

Forés A., Grané J. (2011). *La resiliencia. Crecer desde la adversidad*, Barcelona: Plataforma.

Han B.-C. (2013). *La sociedad de la transparencia*, Barcelona: Herder.

Han B.-C. (2023). *La sociedad paliativa. El dolor hoy*, Barcelona: Herder.

Kazmierczak M., De Carlos-Buján A. (2022). *Narratividad y otros pilares de resiliencia: un decalogo para la Educacion Primaria*, [w:] C. Carreira Zafra, M. Kazmierczak (red.), *Sociedad, literatura y educación: propuestas para el desarrollo de una juventud resiliente*, Barcelona: Octaedro, s. 47–66.

Puig G., Rubio J.L. (2011). *Manual de resiliencia aplicada*, Barcelona: Gedisa.

Rodríguez-Ponga R. (2020). *Reflexion sobre el impacto de las palabras*, [w:] C. Carreira Zafra, M. Kazmierczak, M.T. Signes (red.), *Inteligencia y tecnología. Retos y propuestas educativas*, Pamplona: EUNSA, s. 84–91.

Rojas Marcos L. (2010). *Superar la adversidad. El poder de la resiliencia*, Madrid: Espasa.

Signes M.T. (2022). *Del arte de aprender al oficio de enseñar: educación y resiliencia. Apertura del curso académico 2022–2023 de la Universitat Abat Oliba CEU*, Barcelona: CEU Ediciones.

Vanistendael S. (1999). *La resiliencia o el realisme de l'esperança. Ferit, però no vençut*, Barcelona: Claret.

ADRES DO KORESPONDENCJI

Cintia Carreira Zafra
University Abat Oliba CEU, Barcelona
Wydział Komunikacji, Wychowania i Nauk Humanistycznych
e-mail: ccarreiraz@uao.es

Articles and dissertations

Artykuły
i rozprawy

Magdalena Wędzińska
ORCID: 0000-0002-2515-4845
Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz

Shaping Resilience Against Cyberbullying Through Social Skills Training

Kształtowanie odporności na cyberprzemoc poprzez trening umiejętności społecznych

ABSTRACT

The article aims to present findings on strengthening resilience in the context of cyberbullying through social skills training. The following categories are considered: cyberbullying, resilience, and social skills training. The essay begins by presenting the essence and scale of the cyberbullying phenomenon and the characteristics of resilience as a resource in the event of a cyberbullying threat. Other issues presented in the text are related to preventing cyberbullying and the characteristics of social skills training. The final part of the study is devoted to identifying the areas of social skills that are key to building resilience in the event of being involved in cyberbullying. Based on the analysis of research reports, the key role of self-awareness, working on emotions, empathy and perspective-taking in building resistance to cyberbullying and its effects should be indicated. The text also contains suggestions for the key elements of social skills training in educational practice, especially in the context of cyberbullying prevention.

ABSTRAKT

Celem artykułu jest zaprezentowanie ustaleń dotyczących wzmacniania odporności w kontekście cyberprzemocy poprzez trening umiejętności społecznych. Przedmiotem namysłu są następujące kategorie: cyberprzemoc, odporność oraz trening umiejętności społecznych. Wywód rozpoczyna się od prezentacji istoty zjawiska cyberbullyingu i jego skali oraz charakterystyki rezyliencji jako zasobu w sytuacji zagrożenia cyberbullyingiem. Kolejnymi zagadnieniami prezentowanymi w tekście są kwestie dotyczące prewencji cyberbullyingu i charakterystyki treningu umiejętności społecznych. Końcowa część opracowania poświęcona jest wskazaniu obszarów umiejętności społecznych kluczowych dla budowania odporności w sytuacji bycia zaangażowanym w cyberbullying. Na podstawie analizy doniesień badawczych wskazać należy na kluczową rolę: samoświadomości, pracy nad emocjami, empatii i przyjmowania perspektywy w budowaniu odporności wobec cyberbullyingu i jego skutków. Tekst zawiera także propozycje wskazań kluczowych w praktyce edukacyjnej elementów treningu umiejętności społecznych, zwłaszcza w kontekście profilaktyki cyberbullyingu.

Introduction

These days, one has to face many challenges. Dynamism related to a number of technological changes (practically universal access to the internet and rapidly developing artificial intelligence) or to global security (the COVID-19 pandemic, ongoing military conflicts, and cyberterrorism) are not unrelated to human well-being. The dynamics of large-scale societal changes also entails changing interpersonal relations. One such change that has emerged with the development of new communication technologies (mobile phone, the internet, and social media) is cyberbullying. The purpose of this text is to characterize the possibility of strengthening resilience in the face of cyberbullying through social skills training. The text presents theoretical issues related to cyberbullying and resilience as a disposition that allows one to deal with online violence. This reflection will also refer to social skills training as an essential element of strengthening resilience in the context of cyberbullying. Issues related to cyberbullying and its scale are addressed, the understanding of the concept of resilience are adopted as a framework, and issues regarding social skills are

characterized. The final part of the text is dedicated to those social skills that are crucial for building resilience in the face of cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying and Its Scale

Dan Olweus' works on traditional peer violence contribute to the reflection on the phenomenon of cyberbullying. The traditional understanding of bullying according to Dan Olweus includes saying mean or hurtful things, calling someone names, ignoring or excluding them from a group, hitting, kicking, pushing, or beating them, telling lies, spreading rumors, or contributing to these actions. The characteristics of bullying include intentionality, repetition, and an imbalance of power (Olweus 2013). This understanding of peer aggression has become the basis for defining cyberbullying as a form of violent behavior that is mediated by the use of modern technologies.

The term *cyberbullying*, first used by Bill Belsey in 2004, was defined as the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or a group intended to cause harm to others. According to Dorota Siemienicka, Małgorzata Skibińska, and Kamila Majewska, cyberbullying is most often treated as a type of traditional violence (bullying), the purpose of which is to intentionally harm a weaker person, but this violence uses tools of information and communication technology. Not every violent act carried out with digital tools can be considered cyberbullying. Although many negative phenomena in cyberspace are interrelated and have negative effects, they differ from each other—especially in relation to power imbalances and the desire to cause harm. In the digital environment, a distinction is made between cyberbullying and cyberaggression. Cyber-aggression refers to intentional actions taken to harm others through the use of technology. However, these actions do not include the imbalance of power or repetition characteristic of cyberbullying. Some researchers also distinguish cyber-rudeness and cyber-incivility. These terms encompass rude, impolite behaviors that occur through information and communication technologies, i.e., e-mails or text messages. Despite the fact that these behaviors are deviant, aggressive, and harmful and violate the norms of mutual respect, they are characterized by low intensity and ambiguous intention to harm the victim (Siemienicka et al. 2020).

According to experts Sameer Hinduja and Justin Patchin, cyberbullying is "willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronics devices" (Hinduja, Patchin 2014: 11). These definitions include some keywords, which are inherent in cyberbullying and show that it is *willful* (the behavior has to be deliberate, not accidental) and *repeated* (bullying reflects a pattern of behavior, not just one isolated incident), causes *harm* (the target must perceive that harm was inflicted), and involves computers, cell phones, and other *electronic devices* (this is what differentiates cyberbullying from traditional bullying). Cyberbullying is also called "cyber-aggression, electronic bullying, e-bullying, cyber harassment, text bullying, SMS bullying, mobile bullying, digital bullying, [or] internet bullying" (Hinduja, Patchin 2014: 15).

Jacek Pyżalski, a leading Polish researcher of violence in the virtual realm, states that the concept of electronic aggression applies to all acts of aggression carried out using mobile phones or the internet. Pyżalski categorizes electronic aggression according to the type of victim. Therefore, we can distinguish electronic aggression against an injured person, where the victim is weaker than the perpetrator, e.g., an alcoholic or a homeless person. Another type of aggression is electronic aggression against celebrities. Next, Pyżalski lists electronic bias bullying, directed not at a specific person, but at groups of people, e.g., of a specific nationality or sexual orientation. Another type of aggression is electronic aggression toward strangers, chosen at random while using the internet. Pyżalski also distinguishes electronic mobbing, where the victim belongs to a group of which the perpetrator is also a member (Pyżalski 2011).

According to Łukasz Wojtasik, the following types of cyberbullying can be distinguished: verbal violence via the internet and mobile phones, humiliation and ridicule, intimidation and blackmail, the publication of compromising materials on the internet, and identity theft and impersonation (Wojtasik 2007).

Pyżalski, on the other hand, points to such types of cyberbullying as insults and name-calling in online games; intentional, unpleasant, ridiculing, or threatening comments in online forums; insults during conversations in online chats; malicious comments on social media, malicious, offensive, or threatening messages via instant messaging; offensive, intimidating messages via SMS; intentional exclusion from

a group of friends or communities on social media; fake accounts to ridicule the victim; virus-infected messages; and online lies to annoy or intimidate another person (Pyżalski 2011).

According to Scott Tobias and Taylor Chapanar, "there are some factors that may involve young people in cyberaggression. One of those factors which may engage a youngster in cyberbullying rather than traditional violence, as traditional bullying, is that the interaction between victim and perpetrator is not face to face." As the authors point out, "cyberbullying combines both the anonymity of indirect bullying as well as the targeted attack seen with direct bullying" (Tobias, Chapanar 2016: 9). Moreover, according to them, 5% to 10% of students had been victims of cyberbullying in their last years spent at school (Tobias, Chapnar 2016).

As Arzu Caliskan Demir and Yunus Emre Donmez said, general bullying behaviors (including cyberbullying) were lowest in Wales (13% of girls and 28% of boys were involved in bullying) and highest in Greenland (67% of girls and 78% of boys). Moreover, in a study conducted in the USA, 59% of young people between 13–17 years of age experienced cyberbullying as a perpetrator or victim (Demir, Donmez 2022).

According to the research of Dóra Eszter Várnai and colleagues, cyberbullying is also a serious problem in post-communist countries. In Poland, 16.25% of pupils 10 to 17 years old cyberbullied others (Hungary: 12.82%, Slovakia: 9.52%, and Czechia: 7.36%). Additionally, 18.72% of young Poles have been cyberbullied by others (Hungary: 18.13%, Slovakia: 11.15%, and Czechia: 10.44%) (Várnai et al. 2022).

Interesting results are also provided by the research conducted by Jacek Pyżalski in 2012 among 15-year-olds living in Łódź and its vicinity. Within the past year, 66% of the respondents had experienced various types of electronic aggression, but only 25% of them had experienced repetitive behavior. Aggressors more often attacked people they knew only online, not people from their social environment. Almost 17% of the surveyed aggressors indicated that they insulted their former partner online. One in four aggressors insulted random people online, while another 16% indicated that their victims were members of various groups: fans of a certain band or football team, celebrities, or socially excluded people (e.g., the homeless

or addicts). Young people showed the lowest degree of online aggression toward teachers (Pyżalski 2012).

Another relationship revealed in the research was that between the types of electronic aggression and the gender of the respondents. First of all, boys are more likely than girls to be perpetrators of cyberbullying and, compared to girls, are more likely to attack random people, socially excluded people, members of various groups, and teachers. Girls, on the other hand, more often attacked their former partners or people known to them only via the internet. Among the youths surveyed by Pyżalski, 74.4% were perpetrators of cyberbullying; in this group 4.9% committed cyberbullying more than four times a year (Pyżalski 2012).

Interesting data on the scale of cyberbullying in Poland is also provided by a report on the mental health of young people, called "Young Heads" and published by the Unaweza Foundation. According to them,

> in the last year, almost 2/3 of young people between 10 and 19 years of age (60.9%) declared that they had experienced hate speech in the last year, and more than half of the respondents had experienced hate speech in the last month (50.2%). Statistical analysis showed that this form of online violence is most often experienced by people who described their gender as different (70% in the last year and 61.3% in the last month), and women relatively least often experience hate (55.3% in the last year and 42.9% in the last month. (Flis, Dębski 2023: 72)

Moreover, one in three students hates others.

Resilience and Difficulties in Defining the Concept

The concept of resilience comes from research conducted in the 1960s and 1970s. It was then that pioneering research on children suffering from mental illnesses appeared. Understanding the causes of these illnesses led to the search for risk factors affecting the appearance of mental health disorders in children. Resilience includes attempts to explain the phenomenon of positive adaptation of children and adolescents exposed to various types of adversity or trauma. It refers to a relatively good adaptation to life despite the threats one experiences (Bzymek 2020).

It is very difficult to find a Polish equivalent for the term *resilience*. Wioletta Junik made an attempt to put this issue in order. In her list of possible terms to describe resilience, she evokes such synonyms as flexible, springy, plastic, stretchy, extensible, durable, and resourceful. The research in the area of resilience includes concepts referring to the characteristics of the subject (ego-resilience); the personality elements of resilience; the ability of the individual to cope with stress; their sustainable resources, knowledge, skills, and attitudes; and satisfying social ties that are also a source of positive emotions. The interactive nature of resilience assumes the coexistence of risk factors and protective factors. The result is an interaction of features, competences, and external factors—including both protective and risk factors. It is worth noting the problem of imprecise definitions for resilience, which is very often referred to as *flexibility* in the Polish academic literature. Wioletta Junik points out that this interferes with the correct interpretation of research results. Thus, it has been suggested to create indexes of risk factors and protective factors from research on children and adolescents, which can defend against interpretation errors by analyzing the relationships between individual factors and problem behaviors and by analyzing general constructs regarding the total burden of an individual with such risk and protection (Junik 2011).

The term resilience itself comes from the Latin words *salire* (springing or arising) and *resilire* (recovering or returning to a previous state). In Polish, we cannot find the term resilience. The closest to the existing concept can be such words as flexibility, resistance, or ability to regenerate forces. Initially present in physics, the term for the ability of a material to return to its original form after distortion has spread to wider circles. In the social sciences, the term came into being thanks to Emma Werner's pioneering research on the development of children and adolescents in disadvantaged living conditions. Based on the results of Werner's research, it can be assumed that resilience means a certain kind of efficiency in functioning under difficult conditions or in difficult periods of one's life, but also having skills appropriate to one's age and developing despite adversity. In a broader sense, resilience is a dynamic process that reflects relatively good adaptation despite threats or traumas (Bzymek 2020).

Another meaning attributed to the concept of resilience is bouncing off the bottom, reaching mental health and relatively good functioning after experiencing a highly stressful life event or trauma. It is important that resilience in this sense is not synonymous with good mental health or high social competences, because it takes into account exposure to a number of threatening factors and relatively good mental health of the individual, despite the impact from these factors. Moreover, the interactive nature of resilience should be taken into account. In this sense, the emphasis is on a person's contact with a number of serious factors that threaten their functioning, while they maintain relatively good mental health despite the presence and influence of these factors (Bzymek 2020).

According to Krzysztof Szwajca, the concept of resilience attempts to explain what it means to effectively face adversity and traumatic events. It is understood as "a dynamic process reflecting a relatively good adaptation of an individual despite the threats or traumatic experiences they undergo" (Szwajca 2014: 563). According to him, the main emphasis in this definition is the fact that most victims cope with the consequences of trauma on their own and with the help of a social network; they recover quickly, stay healthy, properly carry out developmental tasks, and function efficiently in life (Szwajca 2014).

In the social sciences, the term resilience is used to describe the process of overcoming negative life events, leading to a relatively good adaptation of the individual despite threats or traumatic experiences in childhood. Resiliency, on the other hand, refers to a property, personality trait, or relatively permanent resource of an individual (Ryś, Trzęsowska-Greszta 2018).

In the early 1950s, Jeanne and Jack Block introduced the concept of ego-resilience. It refers to a characteristic of an individual, to those personality traits that are expressed by bravery in overcoming difficulties and solving problems, as well as the ability to adapt to different living conditions. Ego-resilience is a personality trait that can occur unrelated to difficult life events. However, according to some researchers, this term should not be used in the context of resilience, because using it to describe a person's traits may involve assigning responsibility for whether and how they coped with a highly stressful

situation. If they fail to cope, the person is blamed for the failure (Ryś, Trzęsowska-Greszta 2018).

Edith Grotberg defines resilience as "a universal ability that enables a person, group, or community to prevent, minimize, or overcome the damaging effects of adversity" (Grotberg 2000: 14). This universality raised by Grotberg is very important when dealing with cyberbullying, if only because of its prevalence. Anna Kołodziej-Zaleska and Hanna Przybyła-Basista (2018) describe resilience differently. For them, resilience is understood as a dynamic process involving positive adaptation in unfavorable conditions. It is also a relatively permanent disposition of an individual that determines their process of adaptation to stressful events. Moreover, resilience is considered and defined in the context of chronic stress; it is recognized as a process related to the ability to endure and cope with existing or recurring demands and the ability to maintain healthy functioning in various areas of life. Auxiliary processes in the resilience process include personal resources and personality traits, self and ego-related resources, interpersonal and social resources, worldviews, beliefs and values, behavioral and cognitive skills, and other resources.

Zygfryd Juczyński and Nina Ogińska-Bulik suggest perceiving resilience as the ability to overcome the effects of negative phenomena and life events. As the authors indicate, effective ways of coping with stress in people endowed with the trait of resilience results from strategies associated with positive emotions (such as focusing on a task, giving a positive meaning to ordinary events, or positively re-evaluating a situation). They are also more likely to use problem-focused strategies and less likely to use emotional and avoidance techniques. The role of resilience has been shown by research on occupational burnout. Resilience differentiates people in terms of occupational burnout syndrome. In their research, they showed that women with a high level of resilience experienced significantly less depersonalization and emotional exhaustion. The higher the respondents' resilience, the less likely they were to suffer burnout. Likewise, in studies on compulsive overeating, the results indicate that people who compulsively eat were characterized by low resilience. Developing resilience and other personal and social resources can help reduce obesity (Ogińska-Bulik, Juczyński 2011).

As Natalia Maj and Tomasz Piątek note, resilience is a person's ability to adapt to life in the context of tragedy, trauma, and other significant difficulties. This is an ability to cope with many different significant ongoing difficulties. It is a skill that is connected with many different behaviors, completely ordinary ones that can be learned; hence the postulate that resilience can be shaped. This is particularly important in the face of new, unpredictable threats that may affect large numbers of people (e.g., terrorism). However, "teaching resilience" turns out to be difficult due to individual differences in the ways this feature is built and the multidimensionality of resilience. However, building resilience in people can prevent stress to some extent. It is safe to say that such an approach to resilience allows us to think of this feature as a resource in proactive coping, which is aimed precisely at future, unexpected events (Maj, Piątkowski 2021).

For the author of this study, resilience means the ability to cope with difficult situations, using one's own emotional and social resources. It is also an acquired, learned skill that can be developed and supported in the course of one's life. Accepting the understanding of resilience proposed by Emmy Werner (Bzymek 2020), resilience is treated as a skill that can be developed and is a disposition for coping with difficult situations. Following this understanding of resilience, the author of the study believes that this ability is particularly valuable when struggling with the challenges of modern times, for example, the phenomenon of cyberbullying.

Resilience as a Resource When Engaging in Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is a widespread phenomenon. Research carried out in 2010 by the Cyberbullying Research Center shows that girls are much more likely to experience cyberbullying; they do not "get along" with others and are perceived as irritating, provoking, or inhibiting others. However, even if a child has these risk factors, it does not mean that they will be bullied in the future. There are two types of children who are more likely to bully. Some are well-adjusted to their peers, have strong social relationships, are intensely focused on their popularity, and want to dominate or be responsible for others. Others are more isolated from their peers and may suffer from depression or anxiety, have low self-esteem, are less involved in school life, give in

easily to peer pressure, or do not empathically identify with the emotions and feelings of others (Willard 2007).

The research of Donna Dooley and her team indicates that most often the perpetrators of cyberbullying are young people who are aggressive or easily frustrated, have parents who are less involved and concerned about the fate of their children, think badly of others, have difficulties respecting social norms and rules, evaluate violence positively, perform poorer than average at school, and have friends and classmates who bully others and do not feel an emotional connection with the school environment (Dooley et al. 2009). As Phillip Ryan points out, the perpetrators of cyberbullying are characterized by a low level of social competence, especially in the area of interpersonal communication. Moreover, perpetrators who do not face appropriate consequences for their aggressive online behavior are much more likely to experience long-term problems at school and in interpersonal relationships and to come into conflict with the law. Unfortunately, many perpetrators of cyberbullying fall victim to aggression from parents, siblings, or peers from outside the school environment. Due to the fact that they experience humiliation themselves, they develop negative emotions and low self-esteem. On the basis of these negative personal experiences, cyberbullying becomes a way of discharging their own negative emotions in an action that harms others. For the perpetrator, it is a way of coping with the feelings of powerlessness and humiliation they experience as victims. In this way, a vicious circle of violence is created, in which the original victim becomes the secondary perpetrator. The perpetrator of cyberbullying can be a complete stranger, residing in a distant city or even in another country (Ryan 2012).

Typically, children who are victims of cyberbullying have one or more of the following risk factors: they are perceived as different from their peers by virtue of being overweight or underweight, wearing glasses, wearing out-of-fashion clothing, being new to the school, or not being associated with a particular group. In the perception of their peers, they are considered weak and unable to defend themselves. They are also characterized by low self-esteem, heightened feelings of anxiety and fear, or depressive disorders. Children at risk of being a victim of cyberbullying are also less popular than their peers and have few friends (Waligóra-Huk 2014).

Kamila Knol-Michałowska also analyzed the nature of a third group of people involved in cyberbullying: its witnesses. They can take several positions in the face of electronic violence: from joining the perpetrator, though not by directly attacking the victim but by strengthening the perpetrator (e.g., laughing or liking), which encourages the perpetrator to continue. Other roles that witnesses of cyberbullying can take include giving neither a positive or negative response, but through their passivity giving the perpetrator silent permission. The last role is standing with the victim and, by defending them, stopping the cyber offender. What Knol-Michałowska puts special emphasis on is the fact that the invisible audience is a huge group of people who can play a positive role in stopping cyberbullying, providing support for the victim, and disciplining the perpetrator (Knol-Michałowska 2013). The experience of cyberbullying has numerous consequences and leads to the degradation of mental health. The effects of cyberbullying include higher anxiety and sadness, a significant decrease in self-esteem, depression, suicidal ideation and attempts, and self-harm. Consequences related to withdrawal from social activities are also noticeable: resistance to school combined with truancy, lower school performance and a willingness to drop out of school, and withdrawing from existing peer relationships. Among the consequences, there are also those of a psychosomatic nature, such as a decrease in psychomotor activity, sleep and appetite disorders, and stress-induced abdominal pain (Ryan 2012). The prevalence and effects of cyberbullying force us to reflect on its prevention. Researchers, such as Hinduja and Patchin, indicate that one factor that may help in dealing with cyberbullying is resilience. Hinduja and Patchin found that students with higher levels of resilience were less likely to report online victimization and that among those who did, resilience acted as a buffer, hindering its negative effects at school (Hinduja Patchin 2017).

In a study by David Santos and colleagues on a group of Spanish youths (12 to 17 years old), it was found that

higher levels of resilience were related to fewer depression symptoms and greater satisfaction with life. These results indicate that typical components of resilience, such as social competence, family cohesion, and goal orientation, are associated with better psychological adjustment. More importantly, resilience was shown to be a buffering variable in the

relationship of cyberbullying with depression symptoms and life satisfaction. The relationship between being a victim of cyberbullying and depression was weaker among adolescents with a higher level of resilience. (Santos et al. 2021: 418–419)

Moreover, there is a significant relationship between cyberbullying and life satisfaction among adolescents. The relationship between being a victim of cyberbullying and lower satisfaction in life was weaker among those adolescents with higher levels of resilience—although cyberbullying was associated with less satisfaction in life, high levels of resilience weakened this relationship. These results indicate that "resilience is an important protective factor against the potential negative consequences of cyberbullying, including more depression symptoms and less satisfaction with life" (Santos et al. 2021: 420).

According to Silvia Gabrielli and colleagues, resilience can be a protective factor to help young people cope with bullying and cyberbullying. Certain components of resilience, such as levels of optimism, self-efficacy, adaptability, tolerance, and sensitivity, decrease the probability of students being victimized (Gabrielli et al. 2021).

Preventing Cyberbullying

Wioletta Wróbel-Delegacz, when talking about preventing negative phenomena on the internet, refers to the role that education should play. Due to the threats associated with cyberspace, she distinguishes several functions of education. The first one is the educational and socializing role, which aims to ensure cultural, axiological, linguistic, and moral continuity. Another function is caring. It can ensure the safety of members of society, especially those vulnerable to threats in the world of information technology. The emotional/sexual function is designed to provide children with emotional support and to satisfy their needs for love, so that they do not have to look for fulfillment of these needs in the virtual world. The integration and control function is designed to control the activities of all members of society, checking which websites children visit, which applications they use, blocking websites with dangerous and harmful content, and organizing children's time in accordance with generally accepted rules of conduct. The recreational and social role consists in organizing free

time, entertainment, and relaxation, as well as introducing children to social relations in the real world (Wróbel-Delegacz 2019).

It is also worth paying attention to the issues indicated by young people in relation to assistance activities. Based on research by Julia Barlińska and colleagues, it can be seen that what young people who experience cyberbullying pay attention to is the lack of sufficient support from teachers. According to young people, they do not treat reports of such events seriously enough and their help or advice, also for young people, is insufficient. Young people emphasize that they expect assistance programs not to "threaten them with the internet," but to indicate specific actions for what should be done in a difficult situation. They express a need to learn how to deal with a situation when they become a victim of cyberbullying and how to assess whether a given event is cyberbullying or not. Young people also stressed the lack of clear rules and expectations toward them in terms of how they use the internet at school and at home and issues surrounding helping their parents understand the rules of the virtual world (Barlińska et al. 2018).

Young people also emphasize the fact that adults do not know what young people consider the most severe manifestations of online aggression: the public nature of acts of violence, their duration, and the characteristics of the perpetrators' actions. They also indicate cases of cyberbullying as a painful issue, related to the dynamics of their love relationships. According to the findings of Barlińska and colleagues, a common act of cyberbullying is the dissemination of erotic photos, e.g., when there is a breakup or one of the partners does not reciprocate the other's feelings (ibidem).

Łukasz Tomczyk and Łukasz Srokowski indicate that the most important preventive action is education in the field of social values and skills. Elements specifically relating to the use of mobile phones and the internet should also be added to this. Children and young people should acquire appropriate skills in the use of digital technology and should learn the advantages of electronic communication devices, the potential dangers associated with their use, and ways to prevent these dangers. Training in these areas should be the responsibility of schools, families, and society (Tomczyk, Srokowski 2016).

As noted by Leen d'Haenens and colleagues, strategies for dealing with cyberbullying should focus on increasing the victim's social,

communication, and digital competences and resilience. Resilience is the ability to deal with negative experiences online or offline. According to researchers, online resilience means being equipped with the ability to deal with negative online experiences through active problem-solving, not passivity, avoidance, or even retaliation against the perpetrator (d'Haenens et al. 2013).

Characteristics of Social Skills Training

To paraphrase the title of one of Elliott Aronson's flagship works, it should be pointed out that a human is a social being. What makes people differ in terms of the ability to establish and maintain relationships with others, and to derive satisfaction from them, is the level of social skills. Anna Matczak defines social skills as "complex skills determining the effectiveness of coping in a specific type of social situation, acquired by an individual in the course of social training" (Matczak 2007: 7). Depending on the developmental period, other tasks related to the emotional and social sphere are set for a person. From the point of view of the issues raised in this text, it is important to look at social development at the stages of younger school age, middle school age, and teenage years.

What is particularly important in the social and emotional sphere for the younger school age is the increasing awareness of their roles. The child begins to be more aware of their place in the group and learns to manage their own behavior in order to regulate relationships with their peers. There is also an increasingly better understanding of social norms. At this stage of development, the child's self-esteem is also shaped by experiences and expectations from their social environment (parents, teachers, and peers) (Kamza 2014).

In the middle school age (10–13 years), due to the change in the approach to teaching (a departure from integrated teaching in favor of a subject system and assessment expressed in grades, which starts from the fourth year of elementary school), some children may experience difficulties independently planning their learning or difficulties with social adjustment. During this developmental period, it is important to support the ability to cooperate with others and nurture a sense of competence (including agency and emotional resistance to failure) and self-esteem (Domagała-Zyśk et al. 2017).

Puberty may occur at a slightly different time for each young person. According to the periodization adopted in textbooks of developmental psychology, the beginning of adolescence is usually considered to be the age of 11–12. During this period, apart from dynamic changes in physical appearance, there are also dynamic changes in the mental and social functioning of young people. The key task is to build one's own identity. This period is characterized by disintegration consisting in an internal conflict between the need for closeness and the need for independence, being a child and being an adult, and loyalty to adults. Emotional liability and a sense of ambivalence are also characteristic of this period. At the end of puberty, around the age of 20, a young person should reach a period of stability and increased self-confidence. Adolescence is also a time of youthful idealism and radicalization of thinking. Only what seems logical to a young person is right for them. A young person feels that others, especially the elderly, are wrong and do not understand reality (Piotrowski et al. 2014).

Social skills training is an evidence-based psychological intervention used to develop social skills. According to Joanna Węglarz and Dorota Bentkowska, social skills training should be based on eight skill areas. The first is the realm of emotions. Work in this area is based on recognizing emotions in oneself, dealing with one's emotions, recognizing emotions in others, and constructively dealing with other people's emotions. The second area concerns social norms. According to Węglarz and Bentkowska, the most important thing here is to work on norms of politeness and waiting one's turn, practicing different rules of behavior in different places and rules of interaction with peers. The third area is the sphere of interpersonal communication. Within this area, basic verbal and non-verbal communication skills are developed and communication problems and barriers are identified. The fourth skill area is developing a theory of mind. In this area, skills such as noticing others, developing one's imagination, and understanding another person's perspective are practiced. The fifth area is self-knowledge and self-awareness. Within its scope, the development of such skills as self-description and self-presentation, developing one's own potential, and recognizing the similarities and differences between people should be supported. The sixth skill area is assertiveness. Within this skill area, issues related to understanding

the differences between assertive, aggressive, and submissive attitudes, awareness of one's own personal space (physical and psychological boundaries), and awareness of other people's boundaries should be supported. The seventh area according to Węglarz and Bentkowska is dealing with difficult situations. In this area, the skills of coping with stress, adopting an appropriate cognitive attitude to difficult situations, and problem-solving are strengthened. The last area is cooperation (Węglarz, Bentkowska 2022).

Areas of Social Skills That Develop Resilience in the Face of Cyberbullying

Work to develop resilience in the face of cyberbullying should start at early school age from shaping mindfulness. It is important that young children have the ability to focus attention and control breathing, which is very useful in reducing stress, but also optimizes the ability to learn. These issues can be developed through games or by practicing yoga for children. Being aware of one's own emotional states is crucial to being resilient to life's hardships. In developing resilience against cyberbullying, it is necessary to focus on several competences. Working on emotions as an introduction to actions that shape resilience is crucial. Irrespective of the age of the participants (from preschool children to adolescents), different people have more or fewer problems with emotions, and those participants whose social development was disturbed need in-depth work in this area. Moreover, emotional development is inseparable from social development. Work on emotions can begin even in young children through various types of games and fun—psychoeducation.

The above assumptions may be confirmed by research conducted on Chinese teenagers (10–20 years old) which showed that a high level of competence in mindfulness and empathy makes people involved in cyberbullying more resistant to its effects (Guangzhe et al. 2020). It was confirmed also by the research conducted among Spanish youths aged 11 to 19. Based on research results, it can be concluded that attentive people, when witnessing cyberbullying, take action to provide social and emotional support to the victims of cyberbullying. The opposite tendency was noticed in those witnesses

of cyberbullying who were known for a lack of attentiveness. Their behavior supported the allegations of cyberbullying and encouraged them to escalate their violent actions (Prieto-Fidalgo et al. 2022).

Working on emotions is an introduction to activities to build the competences of self-knowledge and self-awareness, which are also crucial for the development of social interactions. How a person functions in a relationship with another person, how effective they are in establishing relationships, and how satisfying these relationships will be all depend on what the individual thinks about themselves. It is also important to shape the awareness of one's own strengths and weaknesses, interests, and self-confidence. As part of social learning in the school environment, it is crucial to work on this area of social skills. Self-awareness when being a victim of cyberbullying creates space for naming the feelings that accompany this event and discourages treating it as the only measure of personal value. Self-awareness helps one find strategies to proactively deal with this problem by asking for help.

The second area that is very helpful in building resilience in the face of cyberbullying is emotional control, regulation of emotions in order to cope with stress, and endurance in overcoming obstacles. These skills are crucial to not succumb to the experience of cyberbullying. They help in adopting socially accepted ways of solving the problem (seeking help in the family environment or seeking institutional help) and not playing the dual role of a victim who also becomes a secondary perpetrator of cyberbullying in an attempt to relieve tension or to retaliate.

The role of self-awareness in building resistance to cyberbullying was pointed out by Sharlene Chadwick (2014). The author, examining Australian youths involved in cyberbullying as both victims and perpetrators, pointed to the key role of self-awareness as a protective factor. Adequate self-esteem and knowledge of one's strengths and weaknesses lead young people to avoid engaging in cyberbullying, and if they become victims of it, they actively seek help. People with low self-esteem or defensively high self-esteem are more likely to be perpetrators of cyberbullying.

The third area is adopting an empathetic attitude and different perspectives and having the ability to understand and to see similarities and differences between people. Developing this area is also

extremely important in terms of cooperation in the family and the school community. Opening up to another person and their otherness, the desire to understand their life path, can be extremely helpful in building the ability to cope with difficult events by understanding the motives and feelings of other people. Another aspect is the ability to be in a relationship. First of all, it is about basing relationships on cooperation, not competition. It is also the ability to openly oppose manifestations of social injustice, aggression, and harm. In the context of cyberbullying, this is crucial to prevent the silent audience effect. The ability of such social opposition can significantly weaken the activities of cyberbullying perpetrators and can become a source of support for those affected by it. Social conflict resolution and the ability to seek help are also within this area of social skills. Another area is the ability to make responsible decisions. Developed as a result of earlier social skills, it also includes issues related to morality and normative standards of making decisions. This is a set of skills related to ethical sensitivity, the ability to evaluate one's actions through the prism of good and evil.

A study on Hungarian adolescents provides interesting conclusions in this regard. Adolescents aged 11–19 who were involved in cyberbullying as victims or perpetrators of online violence were examined in terms of emotional control, the ability to recognize emotions, and socially approved ways of expressing their emotions. The results indicate that negative and socially unacceptable emotion regulation strategies (such as aggression or using psychoactive substances) contribute to an increased risk of being both a perpetrator and a victim of cyberbullying. Moreover, the authors point out that there is a specific feedback loop. Young people who are victims of cyberbullying, if they do not recognize their emotions and cannot control or deal with them—e.g., after incidents of cyberbullying—begin to use cyberbullying against their peers. Moreover, researchers have proven that emotion regulation is related to taking another person's perspective, maintaining positive peer relationships, and accessing social support. Cyberbullying perpetrators have difficulty not only with emotional control, but also with understanding the emotions of their victims. A common motive for their actions is to direct their own unregulated emotions toward an external entity (Arato et al. 2022).

The areas of social skills indicated herein can be developed even at a young age through social skills training. Moreover, such activities should become an element of the school curriculum, especially among adolescents. Developing the aforementioned areas of social skills (self-awareness, coping with stress, empathizing and adopting perspectives, building social relationships, finding socially acceptable ways of resolving conflicts, and taking social and moral responsibility) is a key element in the prevention of cyberbullying. Following Anna Szuster (2021), it can be pointed out that research on the effectiveness of cyberbullying prevention programs prove that empathy and taking the perspective of another person limit digital aggression. Research on the effectiveness of the IMPACT preventive program conducted among 13–16-year-olds from all over Poland also indicated the role of empathy and openness in reducing stereotypical perceptions and egocentric distortions among young people.

Summary

To sum up, by contributing to resilience, social skills training is a key element of cyberbullying prevention. Combined with expanding digital competences and knowledge about cyberbullying, it can become an effective way to prevent it, but also to deal with its consequences. Moreover, developing social skills can be crucial so that in a situation of frustration or conflict, one does not resort to forms of online violence as a way to deal with one's own difficulties. Social skills training is not the only element of prevention, but in my opinion it is crucial because deficiencies in social skills translate into both the tendency to cause cyberbullying and the risk of being a victim. Resilience against cyberbullying can be strengthened during social skills training among various constellations, including difficult conditions, so that people affected by such activities will be able to cope with challenges to a greater or lesser extent—even in high-risk groups. Moreover, after a period of overwhelming and debilitating pressure of various influences that are the essence of cyberbullying, one can notice regulation or recovery—and even the return of normal functioning or growth—due to building resilience among young people.

A key issue regarding educational activities is the universal prevention of cyberbullying. Preventive actions should be based on

social skills training, with a particular emphasis on elements such as mindfulness, self-awareness, empathy, and the ability to take another person's perspective. Working on recognizing one's own and other people's emotions, emotional control, and socially acceptable ways of regulating emotions also play an important role. These basic social skills are crucial for building resilience when involved in cyberbullying. They may constitute a protective factor against being a victim or perpetrator of online violence. Moreover, they also contribute to presenting proactive, supportive attitudes toward victims of cyberbullying when witnessing it.

Future research perspectives concern the development, implementation, and evaluation of cyberbullying prevention programs. Building resilience against cyberbullying by developing social skills should be considered a key element of these programs. The implementation of preventive programs based on social skills training should be universal prevention. Moreover, at the level of secondary prevention, programs dedicated to victims, witnesses, and perpetrators of cyberbullying should be preceded by a thorough diagnosis of the participants' social competences. A functional diagnosis of social competences should place special emphasis on the social skills in which the participants require support. Moreover, cyberbullying prevention programs should be implemented at the stage of early school education. Supporting social competences and building students' resilience should be based on the knowledge of the regularities of the psychosocial development of children and adolescents.

Bibliography

Arató N., Zsidó A.N., Rivnyák A. (2022). "Risk and Protective Factors in Cyberbullying: the Role of Family, Social Support and Emotion Regulation," *International Journal of Bullying Prevention*, no. 4, pp. 160–173.

Barlińska J., Plichta P., Pyżalski J., Szuster A. (2018). "Ich słowami – obraz pomocy w sytuacjach cyberprzemocy rówieśniczej z perspektywy uczniów," *Dziecko Krzywdzone. Teorie, Badania, Praktyka*", vol. 17, no. 4, pp. 82–115.

Bzymek A. (2020). *Wymiary resilience w naukach o wychowaniu*, Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek.

Chadwick S. (2014). *Impacts of Cyberbullying, Building Social and Emotional Resilience in Schools*, New York–Dordrecht–London: Springer.

d' Haenens L., Vandoninck S., Donoso V. (2013). "How to Cope and Build Online Resilience?" *EU Kids Online*, pp. 1–15, https://www.research-gate.net/publication/273130678_How_to_cope_and_build_online_resilience [access: 12.10.2021].

Demir A.C., Donmez Y.E. (2022). "The Relationship between Traditional Bullying/Cyberbullying with Resilience, Anxiety and Depression in Adolescent," *Annals of Medical Research*, vol. 29, no. 9, pp. 1031–1037.

Domagała-Zyśk E., Knopik T., Oszwa U., (2017). *Diagnoza funkcjonalna rozwoju społeczno-emocjonalnego uczniów w wieku 9–13 lat*, Lublin–Warszawa: Ośrodek Rozwoju Edukacji.

Dooley J.J., Cross D., Hearn L., Treyvaud R. (2009). *Review of Existing Australian and International Cyber-safety Research*, Perth: Child Health Promotion Research Centre, Edith Cowan University.

Flis J., Dębski M. (2023*). Młode głowy. Raport z badania dotyczącego zdrowia psychicznego, poczucia własnej wartości i sprawczości wśród młodych ludzi*, Warszawa: Fundacja Unaweza.

Gabrielli S., Rizzi S., Carbone S., Piras E.M. (2021). "School Interventions for Bullying-Cyberbullying Prevention in Adolescence: Insight from the UPRIGHT and CREEP Projects," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, vol. 18, no. 21, pp. 1–13.

Grotberg E. (2000). *Zwiększanie odporności psychicznej. Wzmacnianie sił duchowych*, trans. M. Karwowska-Struczyk, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Akademickie Żak.

Guangzhe Y., Zhen L., Yuanyuan A. (2020). "Machiavellianism, Mindfulness and Cyberbullying among Chinese Junior High School Students: The Mediating Role of Empathy," *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, vol. 29, no. 9, pp. 1047–1058.

Hinduja S., Patchin J. (2015). *Bullying Beyond the Schoolyard: Preventing and Responding to Cyberbullying*, Thousand Oaks (CA): Corwin.

Hinduja S., Patchin J., (2017). "Cultivating Youth Resilience to Prevent Bullying and Cyberbullying Victimization," *Child Abused and Neglected*, vol. 73, pp. 51–62.

Junik W. (2011). *Zjawisko rezyliencji – wybrane problemy metodologiczne*, [in:] W. Junik (ed.) *Resilience. Teoria – badania – praktyka*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Parpamedia, pp. 47–65.

Kamza A. (2014). *Rozwój dziecka. Wczesny wiek szkolny* (Niezbędnik dobrego nauczyciela. Rozwój w okresie dzieciństwa i dorastania, vol. 3), Warszawa: Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych.

Knol-Michałowska K. (2013). "Świadkowie cyberbullyingu – między obojętnością a reakcją," *Dziecko Krzywdzone. Teorie, Badania, Praktyka*, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 111–120.

Kołodziej-Zaleska A., Przybyła-Basista H. (2018). "Ego-resiliency jako zasób osobisty – narzędzie pomiaru i wykorzystanie w badaniach interdyscyplinarnych," *Czasopismo Psychologiczne – Psychological Journal*, vol. 21, no. 1, p. 159–170.

Maj N., Piątkowski T. (2021). "Prężność psychiczna jako moderator adaptacji w sytuacji stresu ekstremalnego. Analiza na podstawie przypadków chorych z wyłonioną stomią – badania pilotażowe," *Pielęgniarstwo Chirurgiczne i Angiologiczne*, vol. 15, no. 4, pp. 193–198.

Matczak A. (2007). *Kwestionariusz Kompetencji Społecznych KKS. Podręcznik*, Warszawa: Pracownia Testów Psychologicznych.

Ogińska-Bulik N., Juczyński Z. (2011). "Prężność u dzieci i młodzieży: charakterystyka i pomiar – Polska skala SPP 18," *Polskie Forum Psychologiczne*, vol. 1, no. 16, pp. 7–28.

Olweus D. (2013). "School Bullying: Development and Some Important Challenges," *The Annual Review of Clinical Psychology*, vol. 9, pp. 751–780.

Piotrowski K., Wojciechowska J., Ziółkowska B. (2014). *Rozwój nastolatka. Późna faza dorastania* (Niezbędnik dobrego nauczyciela. Rozwój w okresie dzieciństwa i dorastania, vol. 6), Warszawa: Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych.

Prieto-Fidalgo A., Orue I., González-Cabrera J.M., Machimbarrena J.M., Calvete E. (2022). "Relationship between Trait Maindfulness and the Roles of Cyberbullying Bystanders among Adolescents," *Behavioral Psychology*, vol. 30, no. 3, pp. 663–675.

Pyżalski J. (2011). *Agresja elektroniczna wśród dzieci i młodzieży*, Sopot: Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne.

Pyżalski J. (2012). "From Cyberbullying to Electronic Aggression: Typology of the Phenomenon," *Emotional and Behavioral Difficulties*, vol. 17, no. 3–4, pp. 305–317.

Ryan P. (2012). *Online Bullying*, New York: The Rosen Publishing Group.

Ryś M., Trzęsowska-Greszta E. (2018). "Kształtowanie się i rozwój odporności psychicznej," *Kwartalnik Naukowy Fides et Ratio*, vol. 2, no. 34, pp. 164–188.

Santos D., Mateos-Perez E., Cantero M., Gamez-Gaudix M. (2021). "Cyberbullying in Adolescents: Resilience as a Protective Factor of Mental Health Outcomes," *Cyberpsychology. Behavior, and Social Networking*, vol. 24, no. 6, pp. 414–420.

Siemieniecka D., Skibińska M., Majewska K. (2020). *Cyberagresja. Zjawisko, skutki, zapobieganie*, Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UMK.

Szuster A. (2021). "IMPACT: 10 lekcji ograniczających cyberprzemoc rówieśniczą – aspekt psychologiczny," *Przegląd Psychologiczny*, vol. 64, no. 2, pp. 35–51.

Szwajca K. (2014). "Sprężystość (*resilience*) i odpowiedzi na doświadczenia urazowe – fascynujący i trudny obszar badań," *Psychiatria Polska*, vol. 48, no. 3, pp. 563–572.

Tobias S., Chapanar T. (2016). "Predicting Resilience after Cyberbully Victimization among High School Students," *Journal of Psychological and Educational Research*, vol. 24, no. 1, pp. 7–26.

Tomczyk Ł., Srokowski Ł. (2016). *Kompetencje w zakresie bezpieczeństwa cyfrowego w polskiej szkole*, Tarnów: Stowarzyszenie Miast w Internecie.

Várnai D.E., Malinowska-Cieślik M., Madarasová Gecková A.M., Csémy L. (2022). "Do Neighbors Have More Peaceful Students? Youth Violence Profiles among Adolescents in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, vol. 19, no. 7964, pp. 1–17.

Waligóra-Huk A. (2014). "Teachers of Rural Junior High Schools and Preventive Actions in the Area of Cyberbullying," *Kultura i Edukacja*, no. 5(105), pp. 101–116.

Węglarz J., Bentkowska D. (2022). *Trening umiejętności społecznych dzieci i młodzieży*, Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Harmonia.

Willard N.E. (2007*). Cyberbullying and Cyberthreats: Responding to the Challenge of Online Social Aggression, Threats, and Distress*, Champaign (IL): Research Press.

Wojtasik Ł. (2007). *Przemoc rówieśnicza a media elektroniczne*, Warszawa: Fundacja Dzieci Niczyje.

Wróbel-Delegacz W. (2019). "Edukacyjno-wychowawcza rola rodziny w kształtowaniu kultury i poczucia bezpieczeństwa w cyberprzestrzeni," *Journal of Modern Science*, vol. 1, no. 13, pp. 9–30.

ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE

Magdalena Wędzińska
Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz
Faculty of Pedagogy
e-mail: magdaw@ukw.edu.pl

Katarzyna Jarosz
ORCID: 0000-0002-0878-9013
University of Opole

The Concept of a Strategy for Nooetic Qualities as an Example of Designing the Development of Psychic Resilience in Children and Adolescents

Koncepcja strategii jakości noetycznych jako przykład metody projektowania wsparcia rozwoju odporności psychicznej dzieci i młodzieży

ABSTRACT

The aim of the article is to present the original concept of a strategy for nooetic qualities as a way of supporting the development of psychic resilience in children and young people. The research questions are "Can the strategy of nooetic qualities be used in prevention as a method for supporting the development of psychic resilience in children and adolescents, and if so how?" and "What practical implications result from the assumptions of this strategy?" The analytical-synthetic method was used on the literature on the subject to create the article.

On the basis of the literature on the subject, the dependence between the nooetic dimension of personality and psychic resilience is analyzed and the process of conceptualizing a strategy for nooetic qualities is discussed. The place and significance of the original

Articles and dissertations

strategy in prophylaxis are presented and practical implications resulting from its assumptions are determined.

It follows from the analysis that qualities of the nooetic dimension of personality are protective factors for individuals in difficult situations. The goals which are set and the mechanism of this strategy's functioning are founded on the theory of noodynamics of Kazimierz Popielski. The concept of the strategy for nooetic qualities provides theoretical foundations to look for practical implementations in prophylaxis and logoprophylaxis. It presents methods for strengthening and developing personalities in a nooetic dimension, which can considerably contribute to the development of individuals' psychic resistance. It can be used to build preventive programs designed for children and adolescents.

ABSTRAKT

Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie autorskiej koncepcji strategii jakości noetycznych jako metody wsparcia rozwoju odporności psychicznej dzieci i młodzieży. Problem badawczy dotyczy odpowiedzi na pytanie: czy i w jaki sposób strategię jakości noetycznych można wykorzystać w profilaktyce jako metodę wsparcia rozwoju odporności psychicznej dzieci i młodzieży oraz jakie praktyczne implikacje wynikają z założeń strategii. W artykule zastosowano metodę analityczno-syntetyczną badania literatury przedmiotu.

Na podstawie opracowań literatury przedmiotu przeprowadzono analizę zależności pomiędzy noetycznym wymiarem osobowości a odpornością psychiczną oraz dokonano procesu konceptualizacji strategii jakości noetycznych. Przedstawiono miejsce i znaczenie autorskiej strategii w profilaktyce oraz określono praktyczne implikacje wynikające z jej założeń.

Z przeprowadzonych analiz wynika, iż jakości noetycznego wymiaru osobowości są czynnikami chroniącymi dla jednostek w sytuacjach trudnych. Wyznaczone cele oraz mechanizm działania strategii jakości noetycznych opiera się na strukturze noodynamiki Kazimierza Popielskiego. Koncepcja strategii jakości noetycznych daje teoretyczne podstawy do poszukiwania wdrożeń praktycznych dla profilaktyki i logoprofilaktyki. Ukazuje ona sposoby wzmacniania i rozwoju osobowości w noetycznym wymiarze, co w znaczący sposób może przyczyniać się do wspierania rozwoju odporności psychicznej jednostek. Może być ona wykorzystywana do budowy programów profilaktycznych skierowanych do dzieci i młodzieży.

Introduction

Difficult situations, crises, and suffering are inseparable elements of each individual's existence. They occur with different intensity and frequency at various stages of our lives. Their causes are both events of a global nature and conditions closely linked to the individual—and thus to the environments in which individuals grow and develop—and their predispositions based on biology or personality. Role models and authority presented by culture and the manner of transmitting values in the process of life education are not without significance in this regard, either.

Experiencing unfavorable events in our lives involves behavioral strategies which we choose and present, thus adopting an attitude toward them. It is important to emphasize the fact that humans—as multifaceted beings capable of solving problems—always have the possibility of adopting an attitude toward the situations that life has brought about and posed to the individual (Frankl 1978: 288). The first form of behavior that a person can choose in response to a situation is resignation; this is destructive, worsening the unfavorable situation and leading to an escalation of the given occurrences. The other one is creative behaviors—those that enable people to overcome difficult situations and the conditions behind them, as well as to experience suffering as a challenge to human existence, a force to broaden one's possibilities, and the road to "being and becoming" (Popielski 2008a: 202–203).

People have the right to choose an attitude toward the pain and suffering that results from the necessity of fate. It is vital that one should be prepared to make this choice through actions intended to deepen one's self-awareness with reference to the essence of humanity: spirituality and the ways it is realized. Thanks to this, humans are able to overcome the existing conditions, since "if man, as a unity and physical-psychical-spiritual whole, is conditioned 'bottom-up' through a psychophysical factor, he is formed and determined 'in advance' by a spirit" (Frankl 1978: 277).

Psychic Resilience and the Nooetic Dimension of Personality

Equipping individuals with skills that improve their chances of overcoming difficult situations that threaten their proper development and health is part of prophylaxis (Gaś 2004: 33). The essence of prophylactic actions is thus prevention of dangers and striving to maintain the desired or satisfactory state of things (Jarosz 2019: 11). It is worth noting that prophylaxis is an anticipatory process, which means that these actions are taken before they occur. Its main task comes down to limiting and removing risk factors that disturb proper development and disorganize a healthy life by strengthening the development of protective factors (Gaś 2004: 32).

Protective factors are individual properties, situations, and conditions (relationships with loved ones and features of the family and social environment) which can neutralize the negative impact of risk factors, augmenting the individual's overall resistance. In the majority of cases, their influence does not remove negative factors from the individual's life or the life of a given social group, but allows individuals to cope with them successfully (Jarosz 2019: 44). Studies in prophylaxis aim to identify universal protective factors of high potency, on the basis of which prophylactic programs are designed.

The significance of protective factors in the development of adaptive possibilities among individuals, families, or whole communities—in the face of adversities of fate or traumatic events—was addressed by research on the concept of resilience. As part of the investigation, researchers undertook to diagnose the mechanisms that enable proper development despite the occurrence of numerous unfavorable conditions that form a system of risk factor sequences (Ostaszewski 2014: 69–71).

In the literature on the subject, the term *resilience* most often refers to psychic resistance, immunity to being injured, or vigor; it is used with reference to a set of protective factors, processes, and mechanisms which favor the positive functioning of the individual and social groups, despite adversity or traumatic experience in the present or the past (Junik 2011: 12, 49–50). Thus, the processes explain the functioning of protective factors and an individual's resources in confrontation with negative events or threats.

At present, the concept of resilience combines knowledge of biology, social psychology, developmental psychology, and the health sciences. It contributes considerably to the development of research aimed at working out effective ways of assisting children, adolescents, and families in groups at higher risk. In connection with this, special significance is attributed to strategies that strengthen the impact of protective factors that enrich individual, familial, and environmental resources (Jarosz 2019: 48).

An important step in research on protective factors and health was the inclusion of the nooetic dimension in studies on human beings by V. E. Frankl (Popielski 1994, 2008; Klamut 2002; Benard 2004). Its attributes—the sense of focusing on life, goals, and values—constitute the most significant properties of an individual's resilience (Frankl 1986; Werner, Smith 1992; Antonovsky 1995).

Frankl's deeply analyzed personal experience of the Holocaust contributed to him creating therapeutic and prophylactic strategies based on spirituality (Gąsior 2012: 118–119). Spirituality is an element of freedom in a person (Frankl 1978: 284), which enables them to assume a standpoint in each situation and maintain distance, make a decision, or even affirm an urge or oppose it: "I have undertaken to testify to man's being not only a physical and psychical being, but also to his being a spiritual creation, free and responsible" (Frankl 1978: 310). Thanks to spiritual freedom, individuals are able to control every situation and acquire the ability to rise above themselves by assuming a personal spiritual attitude (Frankl 1978: 285, 294).

The power of spirituality is defined by the term "noodynamics," which refers to a state of increased tension resulting from looking for meaning in life. As an inseparable feature of human nature, it constitutes the basic condition of psychic health (Frankl 1978: 295). Frankl illustrates this state as "a dichotomy between what we have accomplished and what we still have to achieve, or between who we are and who we should be" (Frankl 2009: 158). This is a force that drives humans to endeavor to achieve valuable goals and be able to find the potential meaning contained in every situation in life, difficult though it may be (Frankl 2010: 94).

The spiritual dimension of existence includes nooetic qualities, which are a source of activity of each person who can can react with spiritual activities and raise over necessities, even if the person itself

does not fully reach their potential (Frankl 1978: 280). The traits were distinguished in the process of operationalizing the nooetic dimension of personality by Frankl's disciple, Kazimierz Popielski. According to him, the nooetic dimension manifests itself by means of the following elements that constitute it:

- nooetic qualities (the subjective potential innate to every human being—freedom, dignity, suffering, hope, and subjectivity—which allow being and materializing existence, co-forming an experience of the meaning of life) (Popielski 1994: 100–102)
- temporal orientations (consisting of the individual feeling their existence within a "time optimum," which protects the person from excessively focusing on only one of the possible times: the past, the present, and the future) (Popielski 1994: 103)
- nooetic activities (which brings about the realization of subjective traits and personal existence; they include such skills as self-confirmation, self-transcendence, self-distance, life acceptance, creativity, and acceptance of others) (Popielski 1994: 103–105)
- nooetic attitudes (make manifestations of worked-out ways of person's being, assuming subjective attitudes toward reality in the form of general activity and actions, attitudes toward success and death, the attitudes of engaging, and intellectual and emotional attitudes) (Popielski 1994: 105–106).

The above list formulates and expresses the essence of the idea of humans as multi-dimensional and spiritual beings. Moreover, it served to construct the Test of Noodynamics (Popielski 1994: 99). Noodynamics, as many studies have proven, is of considerable significance to the individual's ability to cope with illness, stress, or trauma (Klamut 2002; Suchocka 2008, 2011; Popielski, Mamcarz 2015), or other adverse conditions in life—for instance, being raised in a family with alcohol problems (Gąsior 2012).

The dependences mentioned above, which occur between psychic resilience and the nooetic dimension of existence, point to the need to conceptualize a new prophylactic strategy directed at nooetic qualities.

Concept of a Strategy for Nooetic Qualities in Prophylaxis

Strategies in prophylaxis are ways of acting through which we strive to achieve our intended goals. Prophylactic strategies derive from theoretical models that explain the functioning and development of the individual (Okulicz-Kozaryn 2003: 36–37). Thus, they are manners of conduct, in line with a theory, meant to weaken the power of risk factors and to strengthen protective factors, which—as a result—is expected to prevent potential threats. We make use of strategies to construct and implement prophylactic programs. The main prophylactic strategies include the information strategy, educational strategy, strategy of alternatives, intervention strategy, strategy of normative education, and strategy of diminishing damage (Ostaszewski 2010: 85–92).

The original concept of nooetic qualities strategy is based on the above-mentioned concept of noodynamics outlined by Popielski. Its main goals are to support the multidimensional development of children and adolescents, with particular attention paid to the nooetic dimension of the personality and preparing the individual to cope with adversities of fate through discovering the meaning of life and putting into practice the internalized values.

In turn, the first particular aim of the strategy of nooetic qualities is to broaden the individual's knowledge of their personal potential, thanks to which they can realize the state of their personal way of being. With reference to these resources, the individual is capable of optimal personal development, which differs from that which is the effect of circumstances or is connected with "possessing" something. This results from the fact that nooetic qualities are innate to each human being and flow out of human nature. Taking advantage of this potential is especially important in difficult or extreme situations, when a person can be deprived—to varying degrees—of their biological and psychic resources as a consequence of adversity (Popielski 2008b: 17–20).

Thus, as part of prophylactic programs based on a strategy for nooetic qualities, actions should be undertaken to broaden the knowledge of typically human resources and potential, which include directing individuals and groups of society toward such values as freedom, responsibility, dignity, love, hope, trust, openness,

self-acceptance, subjectiveness, and focusing on goals, since these allow one to feel that one is the subject of one's own existence and is managing one's own life. This is possible through accepting the value of an attitude, ranging from what can limit the functioning of the individual in a given situation to striving for and discovering meaning in this situation.

The second specific aim of such a strategy is to support the development of nooetic activities, which make it possible for the individual to assume such attitudes as the attitude toward life as a task, the attitude of overcoming difficulties and making effort, or the attitude of acceptance and kindness toward others (Popielski 1994: 103). The activities that facilitate one's assumption of the attitude toward life as a task are self-confirmation, satisfaction with achievements, trust in life, being directed by conscience in life, and one's own evaluation of the sense of meaning (and significance) of life (Popielski 1994: 104–105). Accordingly, the frameworks of prophylactic programs based on knowledge of nooetic qualities, which were outlined above, should include activities that support developing skills, undertaking tasks, solving problems, carrying out commitments, and engaging and making an effort, with particular attention paid to being directed in life by conscience.

The next group of skills whose development ought to be supported within the framework of prophylactic activities founded on the strategy for nooetic qualities concerns crossing over conditions and assuming an attitude of distance toward oneself, one's problems, and the obstacles in life that occur on the path of creative solutions, efforts, and actions. When striving to develop nooetic activities, it is necessary to also take into account the process of building relationships with other people, relationships based on a kind and active approach to other people's needs and acceptance of them. An important skill which should be paid attention to while constructing and implementing prophylactic actions is self-transcendence, which consists in going beyond conditions by the ability to make reference to extra- and supra-personal values (Popielski 1994: 103–106).

The third particular goal which should be realized within the framework of the strategy being described is connected with nooetic temporality and consists in supporting the development of "the ability to construct 'temporal optimum' in children and youths, that is, such

a placement of existence in time, or such a manner of the individual's communicating with reality, that are to serve the most advantageous realization of man" (Popielski 1994: 103). In prophylactic programs, this issue can be addressed by developing the skill of concentrating on possibilities contained in the past, present, and future. This follows as a consequence of building a sense of being able to influence one's own future and caring for one's prosperity.

The mechanism of functioning of the strategy for nooetic qualities is founded on the principle of the individual's creative being and becoming, defined by Popielski as a reference, a tendency "to…" This is a subjective principle of an active, creative, and reflective way of being and becoming a human being. It is based on the assumption that a person is pushed and drawn by needs and values, still as an active subject, and refers "to…" somebody or something that is valuable to them. Thanks to this, the person functions not only on the principle of needs, but makes reference to the values and meaning which become the foundation of their motivations, choices, and decisions, as well as continuous being and becoming (Popielski 1994: 59–60).

In prophylactic practice, this allows actions, skills of satisfying and regulating—or even of deferring—needs to be developed in the individual by reference "to…" values. The result is mature existence perceived as an effect of a conscious choice, reflection, decision, endeavoring, and referring. Reference "to…" values which are subjectively important is possible even in an individually unfavorable situation—for instance, one demanding renunciation or suffering—and to a considerable degree supports the development of psychic resilience by taking advantage of the potential of nooetic qualities (cf. Popielski 2008: 20–22).

Referring in the prophylactic work to the tendency of directing the individual "to…" values should encompass the following thematic areas: kinds, functions, and ways of making values in existence, forming skills of distinguishing and discovering values, from existentially meaningful to those that typically sustain life, and absolutizing values and quasi-values (cf. Popielski 2008a: 67–75).

The strategy of nooetic qualities combines elements of the information and educational strategies, enriching prophylactic activity with a tendency toward the individual's attitude "to…" values. This corresponds to the fourth lever of effective prophylaxis, put forward

by Szymon Grzelak (2015)—"Build on values and dreams held on to by the young"—the concept of positive prophylaxis proposed by Krzysztof Ostaszewski (2006), and the model of positive prophylaxis by Katarzyna Jarosz (2019).

The particular place and significance of the nooetic qualities strategy are perceptible within the area of logoprophylaxis, defined as "a concept of applying the philosophy of Prof. Frankl to integrated prophylaxis, which is universal, contains a rational, coherent, and bold vision, and offers more than just preventing addictions or propagating a healthy lifestyle. It is all about us, adults, being able to effectively support young people in building a mature world of values and realizing their profoundest dreams and life aims" (Solecki quoted by Gubała 2022: 13). The strategy in question—due to the above-listed goals and its mechanism of functioning—makes a vital element in expanding the concept of logoprophylaxis.

Moreover, the strategy of nooetic qualities can be used as prophylaxis, not only universally but also selectively, within the framework of which there are organized actions directed at children and adolescents in groups at increased risk, those who because of their social or family situation are in danger of a higher than average occurrence of problematic behavior. Showing this group of recipients the possibilities and resources provided by existence, despite unfavorable conditions, can prove a significant protective process for their further development.

Strategy of Nooetic Qualities in Prophylaxis — Instances of Good Practices

Taking into account selected assumptions behind Frankl's logotherapy and the ways of coping with crises, the "Archezja" Foundation of Support of Rearing elaborated on a prophylactic program called "Cuder – live sensibly." The program is addressed to children and youths and its main aim is to support the development of skills for coping with developmental crises by inspiring young people to reflect on the spiritual and moral potential of humankind. This is accomplished through creative ways of organizing activities during which the assumptions of Frakl's personalistic anthropology are presented

and the large-format prophylactic game "Cuder" is played. The program's activities are intended to prepare the youths "to be ready to confront hardships of living by ordering their relations, emotions, spirituality, minds and physicality" (Gubała 2022: 14). Moreover, the Foundation materializes a series of actions based on the concept of discovering the meaning of life and realizing values. The activities include integrational and prophylactic workshops in Ojców National Park and the all-Polish educational/prophylactic projects "Let's Be Authority Seekers" and "Let's Seek Love in the Family" (Kmiecik-Jusięga 2022: 27–28).

Another prophylactic program which is based on Frankl's concept of the multidimensional human is called "Support of the Multidimensional Development of Youths" proposed by Jarosz. It takes the form of structuralized educational/social/therapeutic activities, whose themes refer to the potentials in individual dimensions of existence, that is, biological, social, subjective, and spiritual—those deemed to be protective factors. The selection of protective factors in a given dimension of existence is based on specific theories, including Aaron Antonovsky's salutogenetic conception (biological dimension), Stephen Greenspan's conception of social intelligence (social dimension), Jack Mayer and Peter Saloveya's conception of emotional intelligence, Józef Kozielecki's conception of transgressive behaviors (subjective dimension), and V. E. Frankl's conception of the meaning of life (spiritual dimension) (Jarosz 2019: 8–9).

The program starts with an activity called "Who Is Man?" which is meant to assist the young people in answering this question by showing the relationship between the qualities of the individual dimensions of existence. The subsequent activities concentrate on supporting protective factors in the given dimension, as a result of which the participants are provided with ways of taking advantage of the possibilities of existence, with special attention being paid to discovering the meaning of life and materializing values (Jarosz 2022: 86–87).

Conclusion

To sum up, the strategy of nooetic qualities—due to the accepted aims connected with the structure of the human dimension of personality—to a considerable degree expands the range of prophylactic

activities. The proposed strategy refers to motivations of the nooetic dimension of existence, that is, discovering the meaning of life through materializing values. In this way, it significantly extends and complements the main strategies used to build prophylactic programs.

Consequently, the strategy presented herein enables actions to be designed which support the development of attitudes which encourage perception and taking advantage of the potential inherent in existence, despite unfavorable occurrences and conditions that children and youths can face, since "the whole of the potential of our 'I' is satisfaction of the sense and making values real, as well as possibilities which follow in a non-direct way in the confrontation between man and necessities of fate" (Frankl 1978: 18).

Implementing the above-mentioned actions is of paramount importance, since they allow for pro-development motivations which inspire the individual to say "yes" to living, despite all adversities. They are a way of opposing despair, resignation, withdrawal from active living, or merely awaiting chances in life. They also enhance acceptance of oneself and one's life as they are through acceptance of the way they are and how they can be realized.

Bibliography

Antonovsky A. (1995). *Rozwikłanie tajemnicy zdrowia. Jak radzić sobie ze stresem i nie zachorować*, trans. H. Grzegołowska-Klarkowska, Warszawa: Instytut Psychiatrii i Neurologii.

Benard B. (2004). *Resiliency: What We Have Learned*, San Francisco (CA): WestEnd.

Frankl V.E. (1978). *Homo patiens*, trans. R. Czernecki, J. Morawski, Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy Pax.

Frankl V.E. (2009). *Człowiek w poszukiwaniu sensu*, trans. A. Wolnicka, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Czarna Owca.

Frankl V.E. (2010). *Wola sensu. Założenie i zastosowanie logoterapii*, trans. A. Wolnicka, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Czarna Owca.

Gaś Z.B. (2004). *Szkolny program profilaktyki: istota, konstruowanie, ewaluacja. Poradnik metodyczny*, Lublin: Pracownia Wydawnicza Fundacji „Masz Szansę".

Gąsior K. (2012). *Funkcjonowanie noo-psychospołeczne i problemy psychiczne dorosłych dzieci alkoholików*, Warszawa: Difin SA.

Gubała T. (2022). "CUDER czyli jak pokazać integrację osoby," *Wychowawca*, July–August 2022, pp. 12–13.

Grzelak S. (2015). *Vademecum skutecznej profilaktyki problemów młodzieży. Przewodnik dla samorządowców i praktyków oparty na wynikach badań naukowych. Jak wspierać młodzież w podróży życia?*, Warszawa: Ośrodek Rozwoju Edukacji.

Jarosz K. (2019). *Profilaktyka pozytywna w teorii i praktyce pedagogicznej*, Opole: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Opolskiego.

Jarosz K. (2022). "Model wielowymiarowej profilaktyki pozytywnej jako przykład narzędzia projektowania wsparcia rozwoju duchowości dzieci i młodzieży," *Horyzonty Wychowania*, vol. 21, no. 58, pp. 78–89.

Junik W. (2011). "Zjawisko rezyliencji – wybrane problemy metodologiczne," [in:] W. Junik (ed.), *Resilience*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Edukacyjne Parpamedia, pp. 89–99.

Klamut R. (2002). *Cel, czas, sens życia*, Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL.

Kmiecik-Jusięga K. (2022). "Logoprevention: A New Concept of Prevention of Risky Behaviors in Children and Adolescents Based on the Assumptions of Victor E. Frankl's Logotherapy," *Studia Paedagogica Ignatiana*", vol. 25, no. 4. pp. 19–32.

Okulicz-Kozaryn K. (2003). "Teorie psychologiczne w praktyce profilaktycznej," *Remedium*, no. 12(120), pp. 36–37.

Ostaszewski K. (2006). "Profilaktyka pozytywna," *Świat Problemów*, vol. 3, no. 158, pp. 6–10.

Ostaszewski K. (2010). "Kompendium wiedzy o profilaktyce," [w:] J. Szymańska (ed.), *Przewodnik metodyczny po programach promocji zdrowia psychicznego i profilaktyki*, Warszawa: Etoh Fundacja Rozwoju Profilaktyki, Edukacji i Terapii Problemów Alkoholowych, pp. 73–97.

Ostaszewski K. (2014). *Zachowania ryzykowne młodzieży w perspektywie mechanizmów resilience*, Warszawa: Instytut Psychiatrii i Neurologii.

Popielski K. (1994). *Noetyczny wymiar osobowości. Psychologiczna analiza poczucia sensu życia*, Lublin: Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL.

Popielski K. (2008a). *Psychologia egzystencji. Wartości w życiu*, Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL.

Popielski K. (2008b). "Noetyczne jakości życia i ich znaczenie w procesie 'bycia i stawania się' egzystencji," *Chowanna*, no. 1, pp. 9–25.

Popielski K., Mamcarz P. (2015). *Trauma egzystencjalna a wartości*, Warszawa: Difin SA.

Solecki R. (2022). "Logoprofilaktyka," *Wychowawca*, July–August 2022, pp. 13–14.

Suchocka L. (2007). *Psychologiczna analiza cierpienia w chorobie przewlekłej*, Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL.

Werner E., Smith R. (1992). *Overcoming the Odds: High Risk Children from Birth to Adulthood*, New York: Cornell University Press.

ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE

Katarzyna Jarosz
University of Opole
Institute od Pedagogical Sciences
e-mail: kjarosz@uni.opole.pl

M a r g a r i t a   F e r n á n d e z - R o m e r o
ORCID: 0009-0001-3630-2057
CEU Cardenal Herrera University

F r a n c i s c o   P a r d o   F a b r e g a t
ORCID: 0000-0002-8678-4621
CEU Cardenal Herrera University

Analysis of the Early Childhood Education Curriculum from a Resilience Perspective

Analiza programu nauczania wczesnoszkolnego z perspektywy teorii odporności

ABSTRACT

As resilience refers to the human capacity to overcome challenging situations and quickly recover from them, fostering it from an early age in an educational context will enable children to be more efficient at both the cognitive and emotional levels. Therefore, the main objective of this study is to analyze the presence of resilience pillars in the current Spanish educational legislation, focusing on Early Childhood Education. In Spain, the new Education Law (LOMLOE) Organic Law 3/2020, amending Organic Law 2/2006, aims to enhance autonomy, initiative, and conflict resolution in children. In Royal Decree 95/2022 on Early Childhood Education, the three areas of knowledge (harmonious growth, discovery and exploration of the environment, and communication and representation of reality) are examined in relation to Steven J. Wolin and Sybil Wolin's seven resilience pillars. In the second

cycle of early childhood education, emphasis is placed on the development of specific competences for learning and doing, contributing to the comprehensive development of the child. Although the LOMLOE does not explicitly mention resilience, the curriculum reflects these resilience pillars—except for humor—highlighting the importance of understanding the individual characteristics and contexts of children. In summary, the promotion of resilience in early childhood education aligns with educational regulations in Spain, contributing to the comprehensive development of children and preparing them for future challenges.

ABSTRAKT

Ponieważ odporność odnosi się do ludzkiej zdolności do przezwyciężania trudnych sytuacji i szybkiego powrotu do równowagi, rozwijanie jej od najmłodszych lat w kontekście edukacyjnym pozwoli dzieciom efektywniej funkcjonować na poziomie poznawczym i emocjonalnym. Dlatego głównym celem tego badania jest analiza obecności filarów odporności w obowiązującym obecnie hiszpańskim prawie oświatowym, skupiając się na etapie edukacji wczesnoszkolnej. W Hiszpanii nowe prawo edukacyjne (LOMLOE), tj. Ustawa Organiczna 3/2020 zmieniająca Ustawę Organiczną 2/2006, dąży do wzmocnienia autonomii, inicjatywy i rozwiązywania konfliktów u dzieci. W Rozporządzeniu Królewskim 95/2022 dotyczącym edukacji wczesnoszkolnej badane są trzy obszary wiedzy (wzrost w harmonii, odkrywanie i eksploracja otoczenia oraz komunikacja i reprezentacja rzeczywistości), łącząc je z siedmioma filarami odporności według koncepcji Stevena J. Wolina i Sybil Wolin. W drugim cyklu edukacji wczesnoszkolnej kładzie się nacisk na rozwój konkretnych umiejętności nauki i działania, przyczyniając się do wszechstronnego rozwoju dziecka. Chociaż LOMLOE nie wspomina bezpośrednio o odporności, elementy programowe odzwierciedlają filary odporności, z wyjątkiem humoru, podkreślając znaczenie zrozumienia indywidualnych cech dzieci i ich kontekstów. Podsumowując, promowanie odporności w edukacji wczesnoszkolnej jest zgodne z przepisami edukacyjnymi w Hiszpanii, przyczyniając się do wszechstronnego rozwoju dzieci i przygotowując je na przyszłe wyzwania.

Introduction

On a day-to-day basis, individuals encounter a variety of challenges and setbacks that they must overcome in order to progress in life

and achieve success and happiness. Taking into account that resilience refers to the human capacity to overcome problematic situations and quickly recover from them despite exposure to adversity, as asserted by Chmitorz et al. (2018), there is no doubt that developing resilience from an early age within an educational context will enable children to be more efficient at both the cognitive and emotional levels.

Currently in Spain, education is regulated by Organic Law 3/2020 of December 29, which modifies Organic Law 2/2006 of May 3 on Education (LOMLOE) and is detailed in Royal Decree 95/2022 of February 1, which establishes the organization and minimum teaching of early childhood education. However, does the current Spanish legislation consider the development of resilience at this stage?

It is worth noting that the term *resilience* is not explicitly mentioned in the regulations. However, there are elements within the legislation that could be considered important for developing skills and values related to resilience. Therefore, promoting resilience within the legislative framework of early childhood education is a crucial, strategic aspect in the comprehensive development of children, significantly influencing their future lives, even if the term itself may not be explicitly referenced.

This study aims to delve deeper into this topic, pursuing the following main objective:

- analyze the current Spanish educational legislation, specifically in early childhood education, to assess the presence of resilience pillars.

In pursuit of the main objective, the following specific objectives were proposed:

- review the state of the art of the construct of resilience and the individual characteristics of resilient individuals
- describe the primary models for promoting resilience applicable to educational contexts.

Theoretical Framework

Definition of resilience

The term "resilience" derives from the Latin *resilere*, meaning to bounce back or spring back. Initially used in physics to describe

a material's ability to return to its original shape after undergoing extreme stress (Del Rincón 2016; Tebar 2014; Uriarte 2005), the concept transitioned to the field of psychology in the 1970s. However, it gained popularity in the 1980s and 1990s thanks to research by psychologists such as Emmy Werner, Ruth Smith, Edith Grotberg, and Michael Rutter. These scholars explored the ability of children to overcome adverse situations and develop positive adaptations (Grotberg 1995; Rutter 1985; Werner, Smith 1982).

Werner and Smith's (1982) groundbreaking study, conducted on a large group of children born in 1955 under unfavorable conditions in Kauai, Hawaii, is considered pioneering. Despite the negative context, many participants in the study, without any external intervention, managed to overcome difficulties and thrive. These individuals were termed "resilient." Across all studies, children living in extreme situations of poverty, vulnerability, or adversity stand out for maintaining motivation, optimism, and expectations compared to their peers. The individual differences among them determine whether or not this resilient response occurs. These longitudinal studies have analyzed the characteristics that contribute to building resilience processes, differentiating between personal/individual, familial, and social factors. This marks a stage where authors studied not only the qualities of resilient individuals, but also the processes that enable them.

All these aspects contribute to a constant evolution of the definition of resilience without achieving a unified definition. Therefore, as per Ruiz-Román et al. (2020), the concept of resilience has evolved from the psychological approach of individual characteristics of the resilient subject toward a socio-educational focus that considers the social and cultural context converging in resilient educational processes.

Uriarte (2005) asserts that in developed societies, the school context of the individual is crucial due to its socializing component contributing to their full development. The family and social context of the child will determine their development—though the importance of personal autonomy is not to be overlooked. Schools should be seen as places where teaching and learning processes are combined with spaces that promote communication, creating positive bonds that enhance personal growth and counteract negative or adverse experiences.

Individual characteristics of the resilient person

Initially, researchers interested in the study of resilience focused on the personal characteristics exhibited by participants in their research. These characteristics enabled individuals to confront, overcome, and even emerge stronger from various adverse, traumatic, or socially vulnerable situations. As a result of their research on resilience, authors such as Rutter (1979, 1985), Werner and Smith (1982), Garmezy et al. (1984), and Wolin and Wolin (1993) published their findings on the main characteristics observed in resilient individuals, as outlined in Table 1 (as cited in Ruiz-Román et al. 2020).

Table 1. Key Qualities in Resilient Individuals According to Early Research on the Topic

MAJOR INVESTIGATIONS ON RESILIENCE			
Werner and Smith (1982)	**Rutter (1979, 1985)**	**Garmezy et al. (1984)**	**Wolin and Wolin (1993)**
KEY QUALITIES IN RESILIENT INDIVIDUALS			
• Social responsibility • Tolerance • Communication skills • Self-esteem • Enthusiasm for new goals and objectives	• Self-efficacy • Self-control • Relationship-building skills • Seeking resilient mentors	• Introspection and self-awareness • Self-control • Effectiveness in relationships • Critical thinking ability • Sense of humour • Self-esteem • Conflict resolution skills • Positive outlooks	• Introspection • Independence • Relationship-building skills • Morality • Humour • Creativity • Initiative

Note: source Ruiz-Román et al. (2020).

Werner and Smith (1982) highlighted qualities in resilient individuals such as social responsibility, tolerance, communication skills, self-esteem, and enthusiasm for new goals and objectives. These aspects are clearly linked to the ability to relate, self-efficacy, and the search for resilient mentors mentioned by Rutter (1979, 1985). In the promotion of resilience, the ability to relate, communicate effectively, and seek support in adverse situations is essential.

Research by Garmezy et al. (1984) described introspection, self-control, critical thinking, a sense of humor, self-esteem, conflict resolution skills, and positive outlooks as fundamental aspects of resilience.

Through their research, Wolin and Wolin (1993) identified introspection, independence, relationship-building skills, morality, humor, and initiative as relevant characteristics in resilient individuals. Additionally, they added creativity as a necessary quality for the development of resilience (as cited in Ruiz-Román et al. 2020).

Although some variations can be observed, there are significant commonalities among the different investigations presented in Table 1. These characteristics are known as pillars of resilience, with the most representative ones being those contributed by Wolin and Wolin (1993):

- Introspection is defined as the ability to ask oneself questions and answer them honestly. Resilient individuals can critically examine their reactions to difficult situations, getting to know themselves better and learning from their own experiences.
- Independence is the capacity of an individual to maintain emotional and physical distance to a problem without falling into isolation. Resilient individuals exhibit a high level of autonomy and confidence in their own abilities, facing adversities with determination and personal responsibility.
- Relationship-building skills refer to the ability to establish and maintain healthy, meaningful relationships with others. Resilient individuals can establish and develop strong interpersonal emotional supports to lean on in difficult times.
- Morality refers to the understanding and implementation of moral and ethical principles. Resilient individuals have a solid moral foundation that helps them overcome life's adversities while remaining consistent with their principles and values.
- Humor is the ability to find the humorous side of life in adverse situations. Resilient individuals use humor as a coping mechanism that provides positive attitudes in difficult or problematic moments.
- Creativity is the capacity to find novel or different answers. Resilient individuals are creative in their responses and flexible in adapting to problematic situations, finding new solutions to adversities.
- Initiative is the ability to demand from oneself and take on progressively more demanding tasks. Resilient individuals are proactive and face challenges with determination.

The combination of introspection, independence, relationship-building skills, morality, humor, creativity, and initiative provides a solid foundation for personal resilience (Wolin, Wolin 1993). The contributions of these authors not only enhance the understanding of resilience, but also offer a comprehensive framework for developing strategies or models that promote resilience in individuals and communities.

Main Models for Promoting Resilience

Progress in resilience promotion research has led to the development of different models that can be applicable in social and educational contexts. The following presents a selection of the most representative ones, primarily focusing on those recommended for education.

Resilience Mandala

In the model by Wolin and Wolin (1993), also known as the Seven Pillars of Resilience (previously defined), the authors present the qualities of resilient individuals. This model focuses solely on the individual (Figure 1). Suárez (2004) groups these pillars into four components that help illustrate the qualities described by Wolin and Wolin:

- Social competence primarily encompasses social skills such as morality, creativity, humor, and relationship-building.
- Problem-solving is related to the ability to seek solutions with initiative and creativity.
- Autonomy requires the ability to respond independently.
- Sense of purpose and future is related to the pursuit of a positive approach that develops organizational and planning skills (as cited in Fernández-Romero et al. 2023).

Figure 1. Resilience Mandala according to Wolin and Wolin (1993)
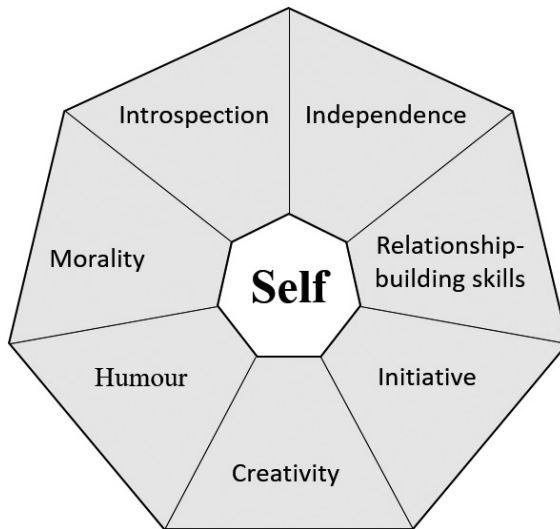
Note: source Wolin and Wolin (1993).

The Vanistendael Model

The concept of resilience proposed by Vanistendael (1994) emphasizes the ability to protect one's identity by responding positively despite difficulties, introducing a moral dimension to the idea of resilience. The author uses the metaphor of a house to explain how to develop the capacity to overcome adversity. In the foundations, we find basic material needs (food, rest, etc.). On the ground floor, there is self-acceptance as a person. Moving up one level, we find daily interactions that give meaning to life (family, friends, etc.), while the top floor hosts three rooms for self-esteem and values, the development of life skills, and a sense of humor and creativity. Finally, in the attic, there are other experiences to discover (Figure 2).

Figure 2. House Model according to Vanistendael (1994)

ATTIC	Discoverable experiences
SECOND FLOOR	Self-esteem and Values / Life Skills / Humour and Creativity
FIRST FLOOR	Social interactions (family, friends, support networks) Ability to make sense of life. Coherence
FOUNDATION	Acceptance of oneself as a person
FLOOR	Basic material needs
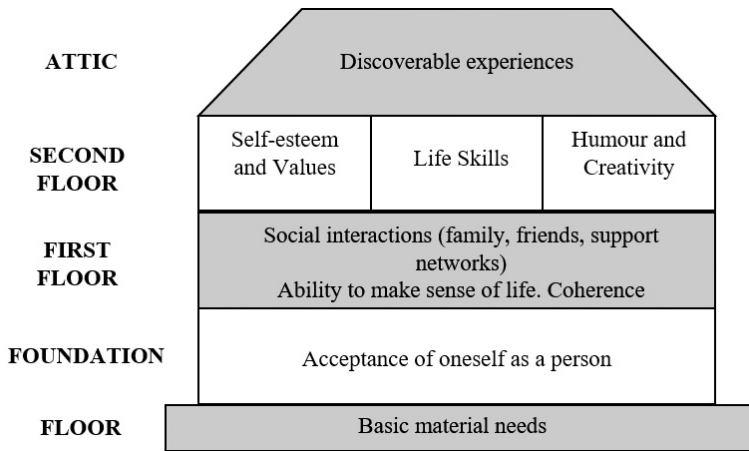
Note: source Vanistendael (1994).

The Grotberg Model

This model outlines the attitudes necessary to promote the development of resilience in an individual. Initially, Grotberg (1995) considered three different aspects of promoting resilience that interacted with each other: I am, I have, and I can. However, later on a fourth aspect was taken into consideration, differentiating between being and being predisposed to something. The interaction of all these aspects and their resilience factors enables the promotion and development of resilience (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Representation of the Grotberg Model (1995)

I HAVE (social support)	I CAN (abilities)
I AM (inner strength to be)	I AM (inner strength to be predisposed)
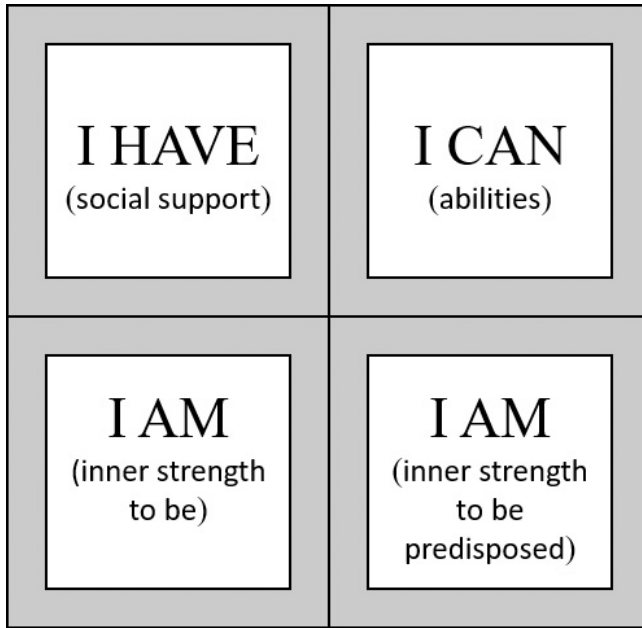
Note: source Grotberg (1995).

The Resilience Wheel

Another model, developed for the school context by Henderson and Milstein (2003), is presented as a wheel with six elements, in which each element reinforces the others to promote resilience development. The model has two dimensions, each with three elements. The first dimension aims to mitigate individual and environmental risks by taking three clear actions: enriching emotional bonds in school, setting clear, firm boundaries (rules), and teaching life skills. The second dimension involves promoting resilience by providing support and affection, setting and conveying realistic expectations of success, and providing opportunities for participation.

These six actions, initially designed to promote resilience among pupils in an educational setting, are also perfectly applicable to teachers. However, according to Werner (2003), the need to complement this intervention model with personalized adaptations that take into account the particularities of each individual and context should be considered (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Representation of the Resilience Wheel
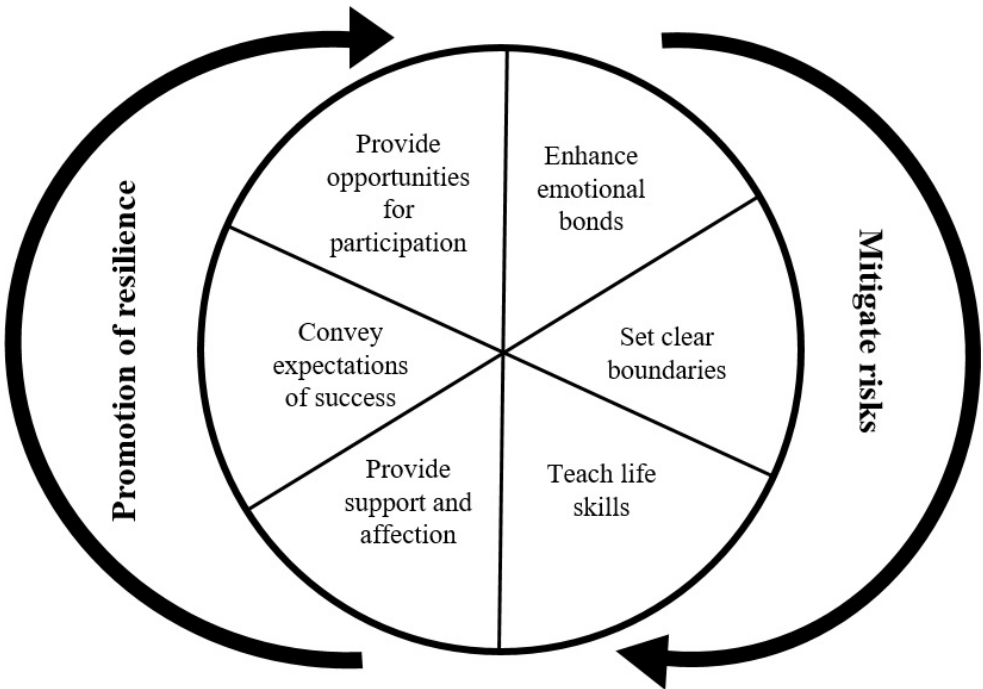
Note: Model developed by Henderson and Milstein (2003).

This model, which focuses on community aspects, allows for the promotion of resilience and aligns with Cyrulnik (1999) in emphasizing the importance of the teacher as a resilience tutor or guide who provides the necessary support to help students overcome traumatic situations.

Finally, it is necessary to mention Aldo Melillo, who advocates for resilience promotion programs that focus on group support and participatory construction of resilience. Melillo (2001) advocates for the promotion of resilience in an educational context and positively emphasizes all relationships that arise among all participants in the process—students, teachers, and families—thereby significantly enriching it (as cited in Gil 2010).

Risk Factors and Protective Factors in Resilience

In previous sections, there was a noticeable shift in the concept of resilience, evolving from the study of individual characteristics of resilient individuals to the dynamic process of constructing resilience, in which it is essential to consider both the individual and their context or environment (Masten 1999). For the development of these processes to be meaningful, there needs to be an interaction between the so-called protective factors and risk factors.

Protective factors refer to circumstances or conditions that enhance an individual's or group's capacity to positively confront adverse situations, promoting effective adaptation and emotional well-being (Masten, Powell 2003; Rutter 1985). However, Rutter also stipulates that neither protective nor risk factors can be generalized, as they are determined by the environment of the individual or group in question. Thus, it becomes necessary to advance the concept of resilience toward that of a process of construction, applying resilience models valid for different fields and, above all, for the one in question: the educational context.

Luthar et al. (2000) state that risk factors are conditions, characteristics, or qualities of an individual or group that can increase the likelihood of experiencing difficulties or negative outcomes when facing adverse situations. Masten and Powell (2003) assert that risk factors can make the individual or group more vulnerable to stress and the negative consequences of adverse situations.

Risk factors can be classified into four categories according to Theis (2003). The first includes what can be considered a disruptive situation for the child, for example, the death of a parent (or both) or a parent's psychological disorder or addiction. The second includes social or environmental factors that can be determined by poverty in the home. The third includes chronic health problems in the child's environment, while the fourth and final category includes natural and social catastrophes (as cited in Mateu et al. 2010).

However, García-Vesga and Domínguez-de la Ossa (2013) state that identifying protective factors and risk factors can be very complex, since they will vary depending on the nature of the event, the individual or group affected, the context or environment, and the timeframe in which it unfolds.

Advances in research and contributions from various authors have led to a shift in the terminology, from protective and risk factors to resilience and non-resilience factors. It is logical to think that if protective factors fulfilled their purpose of protecting a person from risk, the concept of resilience would be redundant (Gil 2010). It is here that Vanistendael (2015) emphasizes the importance of considering that factors—being part of life—can be reversed, transforming a protective or resilience factor into a risk or non-resilience factor, and vice versa.

One of the main contributions is that of Edith Grotberg, who associates different factors with the aspects I Am, I Have and I Can in her model.

I Have…
- people around me whom I can trust and who love me unconditionally
- people who set limits for me to learn to avoid dangers
- people who serve as role models for me to learn the correct way to behave
- people who want me to learn to fend for myself
- people who help me when I am sick or in danger, or when I need to learn

I Am…
- someone whom others appreciate and love
- happy when I do something good for others and show them my affection
- respectful of myself and others

I Am…
- willing to take responsibility for my actions
- confident that everything will be fine

I Can…
- talk about things that scare or worry me
- find ways to solve my problems
- control myself when I feel like doing something dangerous or wrong
- find the right time to talk to someone or take action
- find someone to help me when I need it

Therefore, it can be inferred from these investigations that among the resilience factors, those referring to internal strengths in the "I Am" categories can be distinguished from the abilities and skills that enable conflict resolution in the "I Can" category and external support from people or groups in the "I Have" category.

It should be clarified that a resilient person does not necessarily need to possess all these abilities, but having only one would not be sufficient. For example, having social tools for relationships (I Am) but lacking a supportive environment in which to utilize them (I Have) would hinder the construction of resilience. Therefore, meaningful combinations of these factors are necessary, containing at least one ability from each factor (Grotberg 1995).

Analysis of LOMLOE in Early Childhood Education From the Perspective of Resilience

Organic Law 3/2020 of December 29, which amends Organic Law 2/2006 of May 3 on Education (LOMLOE), is the latest legislation in force in the field of education in Spain. This law is specified in Royal Decree 95/2022 of February 1, which establishes the organization and minimum teaching of early childhood education and includes among its purposes and objectives the enhancement of autonomy, initiative, curiosity, creativity, and conflict resolution in young children. Thus, a close relationship is observed between these objectives and, according to Wolin and Wolin (1993), the qualities that a resilient person should develop.

It is considered appropriate to present a detailed analysis that relates the current Spanish legislation in early childhood education to the pillars of resilience according to Wolin and Wolin. For this purpose, each of the knowledge areas (Area 1: harmonious growth, Area 2: discovery and exploration of the environment, and Area 3: communication and representation of reality) organized in Royal Decree 95/2022 on early childhood education will be analyzed, taking into account the main curricular elements of the law itself. These elements include key competences, specific competences, evaluation criteria, and basic knowledge.

Table 2 shows how the different curricular elements of the three knowledge areas relate to Wolin and Wolin's (1993) seven pillars of resilience, considered to be the main characteristics that a resilient person should possess. The first two columns of Table 2 relate the pillars of resilience to the eight key competences defined in Royal Decree 95/2022 as 'performances considered essential for students to progress with guarantees of success in their educational itinerary, and face the main global and local challenges and demands' (p. 14563):

- linguistic communication competence (LCC)
- plurilingual competence (PC)
- mathematical competence and competence in science, technology, and engineering (STEM)
- digital competence (DC)
- personal, social, and learning to learn competence (PSLLC)
- citizenship competence (CC)
- entrepreneurial competence (EC)
- competence in cultural awareness and expression (CCAE)

It can be observed in Table 2 that there is no defined hierarchy among the key competences, because all of them are considered equally important. This presents a distinctive cross-cutting nature in early childhood education. This is why they are presented in a separate column and not within each knowledge area, as the rest of the curricular elements are.

To further detail the study, specific reference is made to the second cycle of early childhood education, since this is where prior learning is expanded and skills related to learning to be and learning to do are developed, contributing to the overall development of the child. According to Royal Decree 95/2022, the key competences are perceived in both curricular elements and pedagogical principles, specifically those related to promoting the integral development of children. For this process to be meaningful, the individual characteristics of boys and girls, as well as their context, must be known.

Table 2. The relationship between the 7 pillars of resilience Wolin, Wolin 1993 and the main curricular elements of Royal Decree 95/2022

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PILLARS OF RESILIENCE BY WOLIN AND WOLIN AND THE CURRICULAR ELEMENTS OF THE SECOND CYCLE OF THE ROYAL DECREE 95/2022										
7 PILLARS OF RESILIENCE (Wolin & Wolin, 1993)	Key Competences	AREA 1 (Harmonious Growth)			AREA 2 (Discovery and Exploration of the Environment)			AREA 3 (Communication and Representation of Reality)		
		Specific Competences	Assessment Criteria	Basic Knowledge	Specific Competences	Assessment Criteria	Basic Knowledge	Specific Competences	Assessment Criteria	Basic Knowledge
Introspection	EC, PSLLC	SC2		Block B		2.2		SC2		
Independence	PSLLC, EC	SC3, SC1		Block A						
Relationship-building skills	CCAE, CC, PSLLC, LCC, PC, EC	SC4, SC2	3.2, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3	Block D	SC1	1.2, 2.1, 2.6	Block B	SC1, SC2, SC3, SC5,	1.1, 2.1, 2.2, 3.2, 5.2	Block A Block C Block H
Initiative capacity	EC, STEM	SC2	1.2, 3.1, 4.1	Block B	SC2	2.1	Block B	SC4	3.6	
Humour										
Creativity	CCAE, EC, PSLLC	SC2	4.4		SC2	2.2, 2.4	Block A Block B	SC2, SC3, SC5	3.4, 3.7, 5.4	Block F Block I
Morality or personal ideology	CC	SC4			SC3	3.1	Block C	SC5	2.2, 5.1	Block A Block E

Note: source – authors' own elaboration.

In Royal Decree 95/2022, Area 1: Harmonious Growth focuses on the personal and social dimensions of the child, which are considered inseparable and complementary. These dimensions develop progressively, jointly, and harmoniously, acquiring significance through their complementarity with the other two areas of knowledge. This occurs within a specific physical and natural environment and through the use of different languages and representations of reality.

Regarding the specific competences, it can be observed that the first three refer to aspects related to the personal development of the child: the progressive self-control acquired during the construction of their own identity, the beginning of affective relationships with others, and becoming more independent and gaining greater confidence in their abilities while respecting others. The fourth specific competence addresses the relationship between the construction of one's own identity and interactions in the sociocultural environment, emphasizing the importance of healthy, equal, and respectful interactions.

The basic knowledge area is organized into four main blocks, with the first two addressing the identity of children from a physical and emotional perspective. The third block focuses on self-care and caring for the environment, while the fourth block addresses the individual's interaction with the civic and social environment.

Area 2: Discovery and Exploration of the Environment is designed to promote the discovery process of the physical and natural elements of the environment. It aims for children to acquire and develop attitudes of respect and to understand the need to care for and protect it.

On the other hand, the specific competences of this area are aimed at developing thinking and cognitive strategies through discovery of the physical and natural environment. At all times, the intention is to promote in children an attitude of initiative, encouraging them to ask questions and come up with diverse and creative solutions, aspects closely related to problem-solving. Of the three specific competences of Area 2, the second one deserves to be highlighted for its direct relationship with the construction of resilience, as it focuses on fostering critical and creative attitudes to identify different challenges or problems and to propose possible solutions.

According to Royal Decree 95/2022, the development of this area allows for a progression from the individual to the collective,

enabling the child to become aware of the importance of both personal interests and the interests of the group to which they belong.

Taking into account the basic knowledge specific to this area, Block B: Experimentation in the Environment deserves special mention. Curiosity, scientific thinking, logical reasoning, and creativity are particularly relevant due to their close connection to the processes of building resilience.

Finally, Area 3: Communication and Representation of Reality, as described in Royal Decree 95/2022, emphasizes the integral and harmonious development of children. It will be essential to develop the capacity for communication and expression to build their identity, relate to others, and represent their surrounding reality.

The specific competences, five in this case, are primarily related to the ability to communicate meaningfully with others in a respectful, ethical, appropriate, and creative manner—characteristics of resilient individuals as outlined by Wolin and Wolin (1993).

Block C of basic knowledge, Verbal Oral Communication: Expression, Comprehension, Dialogue, gains particular relevance because it addresses content related to the development of early conversations, as well as the expression of experiences and needs, collective discussions, and other aspects.

One fact observed during the analysis of Royal Decree 95/2022 is that one of the resilience pillars is not addressed in any of the three areas of knowledge: humor. Taking into account that the three areas of knowledge must be understood from a global perspective and developed together to make sense and be significant, it is essential to consider the role of the teacher as a necessary element to ensure the development and acquisition of all the skills and competences needed for the formation of resilient individuals. This is where the idea of the resilience tutor becomes meaningful, as stated by Cyrulnik (2002), and is crucial for the development of resilience in childhood. Pino et al. (2020) assert that teachers, along with families, are the main support for children during this educational stage due to the time they spend with them, being fundamental in supporting and fostering resilience in students.

Methodology

After the subject was selected and the objectives to be achieved were established, a literature review was conducted. For this purpose, the process was organized into two main phases, as detailed below.

Phase 1 focused on the literature review of the subject in question, establishing the following points:

1. To ensure a meaningful investigation focused on the literature on the subject, keywords were carefully selected: resilience, early childhood education, resilience models, resilience factors, and LOMLOE. These keywords were searched for in Spanish, French, and English across databases and search engines such as Web of Science, ERIC, Scopus, and Google Scholar.

2. A search strategy was developed by combining the keywords with Boolean operators AND, OR, and NOT to ensure the comprehensiveness and relevance of the results.

3. The titles, abstracts, and keywords of the results were evaluated to determine their applicability to the study's objectives; those that did not meet the inclusion criteria were discarded.

4. The selected documents were reviewed and analyzed in more depth to advance the writing of this study, assessing the quality of the sources, extracting relevant data, and identifying trends and patterns in the literature. Subsequently, the results were synthesized and coherently organized to advance the writing of this research.

Phase 2 focused on the analysis of the current Spanish educational legislation regarding the presence of resilience pillars, considering the ideas reflected in the literature. To achieve this, the elements of the early childhood education curriculum were studied and compared with the main qualities found in resilient individuals according to different researchers.

Finally, clear and coherent conclusions were drawn based on the results of the literature review and the analysis of the current Spanish legislation on early childhood education.

Conclusions

To develop resilience, it is essential to emphasize the importance of socio-emotional, cognitive, relational, and personal skills. These qualities form a broad spectrum that highlights the relevance of emotional self-regulation, the ability to establish meaningful relationships, autonomy, a sense of humor, critical thinking, and the ability to adapt in order to face and overcome adversity creatively.

After studying the contributions of different authors and in relation to the objective—to review the state of the art of the construct of resilience and the individual characteristics of resilient individuals—it can be stated that establishing a universal definition of the term resilience is complex. This complexity arises from both individual factors, such as the personality of each individual and their personal experiences, and external factors, including family, social, and cultural contexts. Therefore, the concept of resilience, initially focused on the personal characteristics of the individual, has evolved over time to understand resilience as a dynamic process with social, cultural, and educational contexts being essential elements of its construction.

As a result of this evolution and to promote resilience in educational contexts, various models have emerged that consider the idea of a dynamic process. These models have been studied in the present research to address the objective: to describe the main models for promoting resilience that are applicable to educational contexts. The models described because of their application in educational settings are the Wolin and Wolin Mandala, the Vanistendael Model, the Grotberg Model, and Henderson and Milstein's Resilience Wheel. These models offer a variety of approaches, ranging from individual to community-oriented, emphasizing the multidimensionality of resilience. Additionally, they highlight the significance of the school environment and the role of the teacher, suggesting that the promotion of resilience makes sense within the educational context. These resilience promotion models provide a solid foundation for understanding resilience from multiple perspectives, considering various resilience factors—individual, social, and contextual—to enable the development of meaningful strategies in its promotion.

Addressing the main objective of this study—to analyze the current Spanish educational legislation, particularly for early childhood education, for the presence of resilience pillars—it can be stated that the term "resilience" is not explicitly mentioned in Royal Decree 95/2022, which establishes the organization and minimum content for early childhood education. However, clear references to almost all the pillars of resilience can be found in various curricular elements. It is noteworthy that one resilience pillar, humor, is not explicitly addressed in the Royal Decree. This aspect should be considered by educators in order to achieve a comprehensive, meaningful development of resilience in children.

The focus on resilience in early childhood education was observed to center around strengthening emotional, social, and cognitive skills in young children. These skills enable them to manage stress, regulate their emotions, build positive relationships, solve problems, and maintain a positive attitude toward life and learning. It is essential to achieve these objectives in order to consider the role of the teacher as a resilience tutor, who, in the educational context, guides and supports pupils in this process of personal development.

In summary, the promotion of resilience in the early education of children is clearly aligned with current educational regulations in Spain for this stage of education. This approach not only promotes the comprehensive development of children, but also supports the principles of equal opportunities and inclusive education, which are considered essential aspects in the legislation. Therefore, the construction of resilience in the early years, in the educational context, is considered a key element for the well-being and success of children in their education and life in general. This perspective, in addition to benefiting children, will contribute to the construction of a much more solid society that is prepared to face the challenges of the future.

Bibliography

Chmitorz A., Kunzler A., Helmreich I., Tüscher O., Kalisch R., Kubiak T., Wessa M. Lieb K. (2018). "Intervention Studies to Foster Resilience: A Systematic Review and Proposal for a Resilience Framework in Future Intervention Studies," *Clinical Psychology Review*, vol. 59, pp. 78–100, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2017.11.002

Cyrulnik B. (1999). *Un merveilleux malheur*, Paris: Odile Jacob.

Cyrulnik B. (2002). *Los patitos feos. La resiliencia: una infancia infeliz no determina la vida*, Barceolna: Gedisa.

Del Rincón B. (2016). "Resiliencia y educación social," *Revista Iberoamericana de Educación*, vol. 70, no. 2, pp. 79–94.

García-Vesga M.C., Domínguez-de la Ossa E. (2013). "Desarrollo teórico de la Resiliencia y su aplicación en situaciones adversas: Una revisión analítica," *Revista Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, Niñez y Juventud*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 63–77, https://doi.org/10.11600/169271 5x.1113300812

Fernández-Romero M., Pardo F., Fayos R. (2023). "La resiliencia en el sistema educativo español (LOMLOE) en la etapa de Educación Infantil," *Acta Científica y Tecnológica*, no. 32, pp. 22–24.

Gil E. (2010). "La Resiliencia: conceptos y modelos aplicables al entorno escolar," *El Guiniguada*, no.19, pp. 27-42, https://ojsspdc.ulpgc.es/ojs/index.php/ElGuiniguada/article/view/421 [access: 21.11.2023].

Grotberg E. (1995). *A Guide to Promoting Resilience in Children: Strengthening the Human Spirit* (Early Childhood Development: Practice and Reflections, no. 8), The Hague: Bernard van Leer Foundation.

Henderson N., Milstein M. (2003). *Resiliencia en la escuela*, Buenos Aires: Paidós.

Ley Orgánica 3/2020, de 29 de diciembre, por la que se modifica la Ley Orgánica 2/2006, de 3 de mayo de Educación. *Boletín Oficial del Estado*, no. 340, 30 December 2020, pp. 122868–122953.

Luthar S.S., Cicchetti D., Becker, B. (2000). "The Construct of Resilience: A Critical Evaluation and Guidelines for Future Work," *Child Development*, vol. 71, no. 3, pp. 543–562, https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8624.00164

Masten A.S. (1999). "Resilience Comes of Age: Reflections on the Past and Outlooks for the Next Generation of Researchers," [in:] M. Glantz, J. Johnson (eds.), *Resilience and Development: Positive Life Adaptations*, New York: Plenum, pp. 281–296.

Masten A.S., Powell J.L. (2003). "A Resilience Framework for Research, Policy, and Practice," [in:] S.S. Luthar (ed.), *Resilience and Vulnerability: Adaptation in the Context of Childhood Adversities*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1–25.

Mateu Pérez R., García-Renedo M., Gil Beltrán J.M., Caballer Miedes A. (2010). "¿Qué es la resiliencia? Hacia un modelo integrador," *Fòrum de Recerca*, no. 15, pp. 231–248.

Pino J., Restrepo Y., Tobón L., Arroyave L. (2020). "El Maestro como formador en resiliencia para la primera infancia: Un aporte desde la escuela en la construcción de habilidades sociales," *Cultura, Educación y Sociedad*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 55–70, http://dx.doi. org/10.17981/cultedusoc.11.1.2020.04

Real Decreto 95/2022, de 1 de febrero, por el que se establece la ordenación y las enseñanzas mínimas de la Educación Infantil. *Boletín Oficial del Estado*, no. 28, 2 February 2022, pp. 14561–14595.

Ruiz-Román C., Juárez J., Molina L. (2020). "Evolución y nuevas perspectivas del concepto resiliencia: de lo individual a los contextos y a las relaciones socioeducativas," *Educatio siglo XXI*, vol. 38, no. 2, pp. 213–232, https://doi.org/10.6018/educatio.432981

Rutter M. (1985). "Resilience in the Face of Adversity: Protective Factors and Resistance to Psychiatric Disorder," *British Journal of Psychiatry*, vol. 147, no. 6, pp. 598–611, https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.147.6.598

Tebar L. (2014). "Resiliencia y educación: principios y estrategias," *Revista Conhecimento e Diversidade*, vol. 6, no. 11, pp. 41–64, https://doi.org/10.18316/1761

Uriarte J.D. (2005). "La resiliencia. Una nueva perspectiva en psicopatología del desarrollo," *Revista de Psicodidáctica*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 61–80.

Vanistendael S. (1994). *La resiliencia: un concepto largo tiempo ignorado*, Montevideo: BICE.

Vanistendael S. (2015). *La Résilience ou le réalisme de l'espérance: Blessé, mais pas vaincu*. Updated ed., Genève: Les Cahiers du BICE.

Werner E.E., Smith R.S. (1982). *Vulnerable But Invincible: A Longitudinal Study of Resilient Children and Youth*, London: McGraw Hill.

Werner E.E. (2003). "Prologue," [in:] N. Henderson, M. Milstein, *Resiliencia en la escuela*, Buenos Aires: Paidós, pp. 15–17.

Wolin S.J, Wolin S. (1993). *The Resilient Self: How Survivors of Troubled Families Arise Above Adversity*, New York: Villard Books.

ADDRESSES FOR CORRESPONDENCE

Margarita Fernández-Romero
CEU Cardenal Herrera University
Department of Education Sciences
e-mail: margarita.fernandez@uchceu.es

Francisco Pardo Fabregat
CEU Cardenal Herrera University
Department of Education Sciences
e-mail: francisco.pardo@uchceu.es

A n d r z e j   T a r c h a ł a
ORCID: 0009-0001-7348-7724
The Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow

Philosophical Counseling as a Form of Supporting Human Resilience

Poradnictwo filozoficzne jako forma wspierania odporności człowieka

ABSTRACT

The topic of this article is philosophical counseling as an effective tool to support human resilience. Philosophical counseling encourages individuals to become aware of their beliefs and values, develop critical thinking skills, and find essential meaning in life. However, it may not work for everyone and should be used as a complementary tool alongside other forms of support, such as humanistic psychotherapy. Undoubtedly, it is also important to consider systematic research on the potential benefits and limitations of philosophical counseling in supporting, for example, individual mental health, well-being, and broadly understood human resilience.

ABSTRAKT

Tematem niniejszego artykułu jest zagadnienie doradztwa filozoficznego jako skutecznego narzędzia wsparcia ludzkiej odporności. Doradztwo filozoficzne zachęca jednostki do uświadomienia sobie swoich przekonań i wartości, rozwijania umiejętności krytycznego myślenia i odnajdywania zasadniczego sensu w życiu. Może jednak nie być odpowiednie dla każdego i powinno być stosowane jako

narzędzie uzupełniające wraz z innymi formami wsparcia, takimi jak np. psychoterapia humanistyczna. Niewątpliwie ważne jest także rozważenie systematycznych badań nad potencjalnymi korzyściami i ograniczeniami doradztwa filozoficznego we wspieraniu np. indywidualnego zdrowia psychicznego, dobrego samopoczucia oraz szeroko rozumianej odporności człowieka.

Evolution of the Meaning of Philosophical Counseling

In the modern world, professional philosophers are mainly concerned with research and teaching, that is, they create, discover, and disseminate a particular kind of reflective knowledge. For this reason, philosophy is included in the group of subjects called the "humanities." These disciplines reflect the general nature of the human condition. The methods, tools, and means used within their fields of activity and interest differ from each other (Padin 2013: 23). While these reflections are often considered valuable in themselves—"beautiful," "profound," and "inspiring" are words used to express this value—they are also considered to have little or no practical value at all. Moreover, it is assumed that their intrinsic value is "timeless" because they should be attractive to all people with sufficiently mature abilities, sensitivity, and reflection throughout adult life. This means that the desire for self-reflective knowledge is not a function of any specific life situation or problem, but is a completely universal need. Those who excel at detailed, abstract descriptions of the human condition—or those who have an extraordinary talent for conceptual analysis or logical argument—become philosophers. Traditional philosophy can therefore be defined as a subdiscipline of the humanities that seeks to develop and disseminate a specific type of self-reflective knowledge. This knowledge, inherently valuable, is commonly thought to be useless in a practical or applied sense (Padin 2013: 24).

In the first half of the 20th century, it was rare to turn to a philosopher for support regarding one's difficulties in life. This is because many philosophers limited philosophy to the analysis of language (Cohen, Sinaich 2013: 1–11). This linguistic approach held that the philosopher's role was not to solve the personal, social, life, moral, or political problems that people faced. Rather, the philosopher's role was to examine the language used to express terms such as "good,"

"bad," "ought," and "ought not." This limited approach to philosophy resulted in the belief that philosophy had no practical application. In contrast to this position, it is believed that philosophy can be useful in solving existential problems. The possibility that philosophers could offer help in managing one's affairs also began to be recognized.

The development of the literature on practical philosophy was a gradual process, reflecting changes in the social, political, technological, and moral landscapes. As a result, philosophers have been able to explore novel topics such as cyber ethics, cloning, genetic engineering, and nanotechnology (Cohen, Sinaich 2013). Moreover, the field of professional ethics has provided a platform for philosophers to engage in various fields such as medicine, law, engineering, journalism, business, and social services. Despite progress in applied ethics, there are still critical opinions in the philosophical community according to which philosophy should not deal with practical aspects of life, because this area—in this understanding—is reserved for psychology.

Although it is generally assumed, referring to its history, that psychology has its roots in philosophy, the fields of psychology and psychotherapy should be treated as separate from philosophy. Philosophy can nonetheless play a significant role in counseling focused on supporting a person's mental resilience in the face of difficulties, thus becoming a more practical philosophy that can be applied in everyday life—and not only in academically (Stefaniak 2023: IX–XV). Some philosophers see their role as helping people solve life's problems through philosophical means, maintaining that psychological practices should differ from philosophical practices. In this understanding, philosophical counseling is a separate field from its psychological counterpart. A similar position is held by Elliot D. Cohen and Jon Mills, who claim that philosophy, counseling, and psychotherapy play mutually interdependent and supportive roles (Cohen, Sinaich 2013: 1–11; Mills 2013). They support this view with the need for cooperation between practitioners and theoreticians of philosophy and psychology, which is also characterized by mutual benefits (Cohen, Sinaich 2013).

Philosophical Counseling Compared to Other Forms of Human Support

Philosophical counseling can be a way to aid and strengthen mental resilience, which as a type of counseling is a relatively new discipline. Its contemporary roots are often traced to the work of Gerd Achenbach, who in 1981 founded the first modern philosophical practice near Cologne, Germany (Achenbach 1995; Padin 2013: 16–17). Some, however, associate this modern practice with the works of various ancient Greek philosophers, such as the Cynics, Stoics, and even Socrates himself (Hadot 1995; Taylor 2013: 71–72). Nowadays, philosophical advisors work with individual and institutional clients, e.g. the Polish Philosophical Counseling Society's project at the Youth Educational Center for boys in Kalety (2018/2019) (Woszczyk 2020). In Poland, interest in the subject of philosophical psychotherapy is growing more and more. In practical terms as well, philosophical consulting offices are being established more and more often and there is a growing interest in using the achievements of philosophy in other disciplines and areas of social functioning. Examples of such initiatives include the conference organized in 2013 by the Pedagogical University of Łódź called "Philosophical Psychotherapy in Education" (Stefaniak 2023: 131). Another initiative was the 6th National "Psychiatry and Spirituality" Conference in November 2023, organized by the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow in cooperation with the Department of Psychiatry, Collegium Medicum of the Jagiellonian University, the University Hospital in Krakow, the Department of Psychology of Religion and Spirituality at Ignatianum University in Krakow, Dr. Józef Babiński Clinical Hospital in Krakow, and the Krakow Institute of Logotherapy (https://wf.upjp2.edu.pl/aktualnosci/vi-ogolnopolska-konferencja-psychiatria-i-duchowosc-2425-xi-2023-331.html, n.d.).

Philosophical advisors use techniques inspired by various philosophical trends and practical experiences, sowing the seeds of professional structures. Such structures will be needed if philosophical counseling is to survive and develop in contemporary societies (Padin 2013: 17). Despite this progress, the discipline still lacks an established paradigm, which hinders its development.

It is worth emphasizing that philosophical counseling belongs to a broader category of disciplines, often referred to as "helping professions" (Padin 2013: 18). An attempt to define the scope of philosophical counseling will be an outline of the distinction between philosophical counseling and other forms of human support.

Philosophical counselors try to help their clients solve life problems, that is, problems that result in a general inability to, for example, work, take care of themselves, interact with people, or maintain long-term relationships. According to this hypothesis, the professions most closely associated with philosophical counseling are psychotherapy and pastoral counseling. As a consequence, they are defined in more detail below.

The difficulty in defining psychotherapy arises from the fact that there are many different types, each with its own assumptions, methods, and goals. A look at the history of psychotherapy can bring order to this seemingly chaotic phenomenon. Psychotherapy developed in the context of the medical community, which in the late 19th century began to base its treatment methods on a scientific understanding of the person. As a result, traditional psychotherapy is modeled on medical practice, which aims to provide causal or scientific explanations for "mental illness" and its treatment. According to this view, scientific explanations of mental illness must be viewed in terms of causal psychological laws, which in turn must be discovered through empirical research similar, in most of the important aspects, to empirical research in other sciences. Furthermore, treatments for diseases/disorders discovered as a result of these scientific efforts are expected to be based on so-called "medical models" (Padin 2013).

Depending on the patient's diagnosis, the role of the doctor or psychotherapist is to help the patient maintain or restore health. Of course, in this model, the concepts of "illness" and "health" play a key role in defining the goals and practice of psychotherapy (Padin 2013: 19). According to an extensive analysis first formalized by Charles Culver and Bernard Gert, the category of "disease" also includes injury, disability, and even death itself. What all of these conditions have in common is that they are considered a particular "evil," distinguished by the fact that they cause a loss of function and may be accompanied by painful and/or life-threatening conditions. In this context, disease should be understood in relation to concepts

such as "health" or functioning within normal limits (Culver, Gert 1982). This means that traditional psychotherapy aims to cure the client's existing mental illness by removing its underlying causes, thereby enabling the individual to function at a socially acceptable level (Padin 2013).

Historically, the nature of psychotherapy has been criticized mainly from two sides. On the one hand, Thomas Szasz and the radical psychology movement criticized the concept of mental illness. One of the most effective aspects of their critique was the attack on the idea of "normality." Szasz argued that "normality" is socially defined and therefore socially significant. Moreover, it is essentially a normative or evaluative concept that does not specify any objective conditions (Szasz 1991: 79–97). Instead, it refers to a range of distinct behaviors grouped by a dominant society concerned only with creating wealth and maintaining social order. Thus, Szasz argued, the concept of mental illness falsely defines "deviance"—that is, failure to meet minimum social standards—and often leads to the serious mistreatment and even oppression and stigmatization of people defined as mentally ill (Szasz 1991). Therefore, Szasz argued that the concept of mental illness should be rejected altogether.

Behaviorists also attack the concept of mental illness, arguing from a philosophical and observational point of view that the actual causes behind all mental disorders lie entirely outside the individual. This line of thinking led to an interest in causal states rather than individual psychological processes, giving rise to the view that mental illness should be treated by changing the social environment. From this perspective, behavior that goes beyond accepted norms is a symptom of a dysfunctional social situation (Padin 2013). Collectively, these lines of attack led to a decline in the influence of the medical model, which in turn paved the way for many changes, including the development of humanistic psychotherapy. The uniqueness of this approach is that it rejects the exclusive focus on disease that characterizes the medical model. Humanistic psychology is not only concerned with helping people maintain health, but also explores the possibility of expanding human potential. Starting with Maslow, many humanistic psychologists believe that every person has an internal drive that pushes them toward self-actualization and self-transcendence (Gibas 2017: 17). Another characteristic feature of this approach is the focus on

"reflective awareness" rather than on unconscious processes. Describing humanistic psychotherapy, W.C. Tageson argued that regardless of the preferred terminology, all humanistic psychologists seem to agree on the uniqueness of human consciousness (Tageson 1982: 33, see also Padin 2013: 20). Because of these ideas, humanistic psychotherapists adopt what Carl Rogers called a "client-centered" (or "person-centered") approach to therapy, which emphasizes the client's autonomy (Rogers 1973; Padin 2013: 21). Humanistic psychotherapy therefore differs from psychotherapy based on the medical model in that it aims not to overcome illness, but rather to expand human potential, allowing the client to become aware of the innate new possibilities of their mind, thus facilitating the process of self-actualization (Padin 2013). In this respect, philosophical counseling shows certain analogies to the trend of humanistic psychotherapy presented above.

Another form of human support is pastoral counseling. Pastoral counseling developed in specific institutional contexts, namely, the various Christian churches. Its task is often interpreted as striving for some basic, religiously defined goal (Steckel 1993: 28, see also Padin 2013: 22).

However, the significant increase in psychological problems in the modern world, combined with the decline of the authority of traditional institutions—including the Church (undoubtedly caused by a combination of technological progress, urbanization, secularization, and the unrestrained growth of capitalism, as well as intra-church scandals)—has caused the clergy to notice the need to strengthen their skills in dealing with the challenges of today. This has led to the widespread uncritical adoption of traditional psychotherapeutic tools. Recently, however, pastoral counseling has begun to return to its religious roots. Pastoral counseling can therefore be defined as a form of ethical counseling that seeks to help its clients achieve a religiously defined overarching goal, using both religious hermeneutics and some psychotherapy techniques to help resolve its clients' life problems by helping them gain insight into the nature of both themselves and their problems. Ultimately, this approach assumes that these problems result from voluntary actions rooted in "fallen," sinful human nature. Resolving them will, in part, involve adopting

a religiously sanctioned and institutionalized understanding of the approach to life (Padin 2013: 22).

In the context of the positions presented above, it is clear that the goal of philosophical counseling is not to provide a general philosophical education to all interested parties, but rather to provide specific philosophical insights that may be useful in helping individuals (or institutions) overcome the specific problems they encounter. That is, the goal of philosophical counseling is to help clients reflect critically on ideas and worldviews relevant to specific, practical life problems that may emerge using philosophical methods. Due to the focus on supporting clients in their difficulties, the institutional setting for the practice of philosophical counseling must also differ from traditional philosophy. Philosophical counselors do not teach specific courses to a general audience, but must respond to the individual concerns of their clients (Padin 2013: 24–25). Although a philosophical advisor will use the same set of tools as a traditional philosopher and will seek to generate self-reflective knowledge, the focus is on the client, who is interested in these tools and knowledge because they are relevant to a particular problem, not because they are general knowledge.

Philosophical counseling, unlike traditional philosophy, should be classified as a helping profession, as it most closely resembles helping professions such as psychotherapy and pastoral counseling (Padin 2013: 25). However, philosophical counseling must also be different from other helping professions. Philosophical counseling must differ from psychotherapy in that it does not attempt to cure "mental illness" and, in particular, it cannot be based on a medical model. This has two consequences. Firstly, philosophical counseling is a philosophical endeavor and therefore cannot address the causes of life problems if they are understood in terms of a psychodynamic, social, or organic process. Philosophical counseling focuses on the causes of problematic beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. Therefore, if we distinguish philosophical counseling from psychotherapy, it must be assumed that problematic ideas, beliefs, and worldviews often contribute to life problems and that critical analysis and revision of these ideas can help solve these problems. Philosophical counseling should be characterized by a critical analysis of the client's hidden worldview (Padin 2013). The second consequence is that if philosophical

counseling cannot be based on a medical model, it must reject "health" as a normative ideal. The aim of philosophical counseling cannot be to restore the client to some minimal, socially (biologically) determined level of functioning, nor can it be used to treat disorders. Therefore, philosophical counseling seems to be very similar to ethical and worldview counseling. Philosophical counseling focuses on the client's conscious choices and is particularly interested in the moral and axiological aspects of the client's beliefs—understanding the client's life goals in relation to their values.

However, if philosophical counseling is to be distinct, it must also differ from pastoral counseling. The difference is that philosophical counseling is independent of any religious institutions. As such, it does not have to be bound by any religious worldview or to assume that any particular (religiously sanctioned) way of life is necessarily superior to all other ways of life. Therefore, philosophical counseling cannot impose on the client a view of a good life based on a given denomination. Moreover, it does not have to accept a religious interpretation of the world or the sources of life's problems, and therefore does not have to use religious hermeneutics as a central tool (Padin 2013: 26–27).

Philosophical counseling provides clients with an initial definition of a good life. This means that the philosophical counselor does not impose on the client their substantive views on the nature of a good life. Instead, they allow clients to set their own initial goals (and thus define their own problems); although these goals may require philosophical reflection, the counselor cannot set them except through critical reflection on the client's ideas. In this respect, the practice of philosophical counseling is very similar to the practice of humanistic psychotherapy. Moreover, it is also "client-centric" in the sense that it respects the client's autonomy in defining the original problem. A philosophical counselor is interested in helping clients clarify and evaluate their ideas and worldviews related to current issues. Unlike humanistic psychotherapy, philosophical counseling understands its clients as beings who act primarily on the basis of a potentially valid worldview (Padin 2013).

Taking into account the similarities and differences outlined above, the meaning of philosophical counseling can be further defined. Philosophical counseling is a helping profession that seeks

to critically understand ideas and worldviews relevant to clients' life problems. Therefore, philosophical counseling does not deal with problems resulting from unconscious, social, or organic causes, but is interested in life problems related to or resulting from the client's ideas and worldview (Padin 2013: 27–28). Philosophical counseling is a process in which a counselor works with a client to critically reflect on ideas and worldviews related to specific life issues that are raised in counseling sessions or have been defined by the client. For these life problems to be appropriate topics for philosophical counseling, they must arise from philosophical issues motivated by the client's implicit worldview. The process of philosophical counseling therefore involves the clarification of the client's life goals and life problems, as well as the relevant aspects of the client's worldview (which are believed to underlie the client's problems); a critical analysis of this worldview, in which deeper layers can be uncovered through philosophical questions, analyzes these questions and "fixes" the worldview (Padin 2013).

Due to the nature of philosophical counseling, there is no doubt that clients should be provided with emotional support. The customer must be able to feel comfortable and safe. However, the client must also be viewed as a rational partner who must make statements about the world, understand that these statements may be true or false, and value truth (Meier 1989: 78). If the client fails to adopt this mindset, they need special attention to help them do so. If the client is unable or unwilling to adopt this attitude, they will not benefit from philosophical counseling and should be referred to another type of counselor. Therefore, although a client's ideas may be wrong or confusing, each client should be respected as a reasonable person.

Finally, it is important for counselors to explain to clients the boundaries of philosophical counseling. Many life problems result from circumstances beyond the client's control and beyond effective counseling. Advisors are not always able to find a "cure for a sick society" and should make their clients aware of this. Moreover, the goal of philosophical counseling is not just to make clients happy and satisfied, but rather to clarify and refine the clients' ideas and worldviews through a process of critical reflection. It is believed—although not guaranteed—that such reflection can often solve the client's problems and may even lead to happiness, but the philosophical counselor

must focus on the analysis of the worldview relevant to the client's life problems, not on the life problems themselves. Clarifying and refining these ideas and worldviews is often beneficial in itself. Moreover, such an explanation may solve some existing problems. However, taking into account the definition of philosophical counseling that I defend in this article, philosophical counseling should be understood in a rather modest way. Philosophical counselors can provide a unique and valuable service—critical analysis of problematic ideas and worldviews—but philosophical counseling is not psychotherapy. It may therefore promise some practical life wisdom (Waller 2013).

Philosophical Counseling as a Tool to Support Human Resilience

Philosophical counseling, as mentioned above, is a relatively new form of counseling that uses philosophical concepts and practices to help individuals develop resilience. Resilience is the ability to cope with difficult situations, overcome adversity, and adapt to changes (Stradomska 2018). Resilience is also defined as a dynamic process of positive adaptation that occurs in the context of significant adversity. This definition means that in order to talk about mental resilience, two conditions must be met: firstly, the life difficulty that occurs must be in the form of a threatening environment or various other adversities, and secondly, despite these disadvantages, the individual should achieve a state of positive adaptation and balance (Luthar et al. 2000: 543).

Philosophical counseling encourages individuals to examine their beliefs and values, develop critical thinking skills, and find the essential meaning of life. This can lead to greater self-awareness as individuals become more aware of their own thought processes and motivations (Stradomska 2018). By examining their beliefs and values, individuals can identify areas in their lives that need improvement. This can help them develop a stronger sense of purpose and direction in life. By better understanding themselves, individuals can become more resilient and better able to cope with difficult situations.

However, philosophical counseling may not work for everyone. Some people may not be interested in philosophical inquiry and philosophical concepts may not be helpful in solving their problems. Additionally, some people may prefer other forms of counseling or

may not have access to philosophical counseling due to a lack of qualified practitioners in their field.

Philosophical counseling can help individuals develop critical thinking skills, which are essential for dealing with complex situations and making good decisions. By developing these skills, individuals can become more resilient and better able to cope with challenges. Critical thinking skills can also help individuals develop a greater sense of confidence and independence.

However, philosophical counseling may not be appropriate in all situations. Some people may need immediate intervention that philosophical counseling cannot provide, for example, in the case of severe mental illness or trauma. Additionally, some people may need more specialized forms of counseling, such as cognitive behavioral therapy or group therapy.

Philosophical counseling can help individuals develop a greater sense of meaning. A greater sense of meaning can help individuals cope with difficult situations and find joy and satisfaction in life. By exploring philosophical concepts such as ethics, morality, and spirituality, individuals can deepen their understanding of their place in the world and purpose in life. This will help them overcome adversity.

In summary, philosophical counseling can be an effective tool in supporting human resilience, encouraging individuals to become aware of their beliefs and values, develop critical thinking skills, and find essential meaning in life. However, it may not work for everyone and should be used as a complementary tool alongside other forms of support.

Despite the challenges facing philosophical counselors, the philosophical counseling movement is gradually growing. Associations and practitioners can be found in many countries around the world. In Poland, there is the Polish Society for Philosophical Consulting, which was established to promote the idea of philosophical practice, professional consolidation of advisors, to improve professional skills, and to ensure high ethical standards in the industry (Polish Society for Philosophical Consulting, n.d.). Undoubtedly, it is also important to consider research on the potential benefits and limitations of philosophical counseling in supporting individuals' mental health, well-being, and resilience (Stefaniak 2023: 129–138).

Bibliography

Achenbach G.B. (1995). "Philosophy, Philosophical Practice and Psychotherapy," [in:] R. Lahav, M. da Venza Tillmanns (eds.), *Essays on Philosophical Counseling*, Lanham (MD): University Press of America, pp. 61–74.

Cohen E.D., Sinaich S. (eds.). (2013). "Introduction," [in:] *Philosophy, Counseling, and Psychotherapy*, Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars, pp. 1–11.

Culver C.M., Gert B. (1982). *Philosophy in Medicine: Conceptual and Ethical Issues in Medicine and Psychiatry*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gibas J. (2017). *Model transpersonalny: Podręcznik warsztatowy*, Katowice: Instytut Tathata; Fundacja Hinc Sapientia.

Hadot P. (1995). *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, Oxford: Blackwell.

https://wf.upjp2.edu.pl/aktualnosci/vi-ogolnopolska-konferencja-psychiatria-i-duchowosc-2425-xi-2023-331.html.

Luthar S., Cicchetti D., Becker B. (2000). "The Construct of Resilience: A Critical Evaluation and Guidelines for Future Work," *Child Development*, vol. 73, no. 3, pp. 543–562.

Meier G. (1989). *Philosophieren – Wie geht das? Wege zum selbständigen Denken*, Frankfurt am Main: Josef Knecht.

Mills J. (2013). "Philosophical Counseling as Psychotherapy," [in:] E.D. Cohen (ed.), *Philosophy, Counseling, and Psychotherapy*, Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars, pp. 100–111.

Padin R. (2013). "Defining Philosophical Counseling," [in:] E.D. Cohen (ed.), *Philosophy, Counseling, and Psychotherapy*, Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars, pp. 16–33.

Polskie Towarzystwo Doradztwa Filozoficznego. (n.d.). Retrieved 4 December 2023, from https://doradztwofilozoficzneptdf.wordpress.com/.

Rogers C.R. (1973). *Client-centered Therapy: Its Current Practice, Implications, and Theory*, London: Constable.

Steckel C. (1993). "Directions in Pastoral Counseling," [in:] R.J. Wicks, R.D. Parsons, D. Capps (eds.), *Clinical Handbook of Pastoral Counseling*, Mahwah (NJ): Paulist Press, pp. 26–36.

Stefaniak W. (2023). *Psychoterapia odczytana na nowo. Konteksty filozoficzne*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

Stradomska M. (2018). "Aksjologiczne uwarunkowania odporności psychicznej i zdrowia," *Kultura i Wartości*, no. 26, pp. 435–440.

Szasz T. (1991). *Ideology and Insanity: Essays on the Psychiatric Dehumanization of Man*, Syracuse (NY): Syracuse University Press.

Tageson C.W. (1982). *Humanistic Psychology: A Synthesis*, Homewood (IL): Dorsey Press.

Taylor J.S. (2013). "The Central Value of Philosophical Counseling," [in:] E.D. Cohen (ed.), *Philosophy, Counseling, and Psychotherapy*, Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars, pp. 70–79.

Waller S. (2013). "How Does Philosophical Counseling Work? Judgment and Interpretation," [in:] E.D. Cohen (ed.), *Philosophy, Counseling, and Psychotherapy*, Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars, pp. 34–43.

Woszczyk A. (2020). "Doradztwo filozoficzne jako forma wsparcia osób przebywających w ośrodkach penitencjarnych," [in:] D. Lipski, M. Malinowski (eds.), *Pedagogiczne aspekty edukacji filozoficznej z uwzględnieniem systemów penitencjarnych*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo DiG: Wyższa Szkoła Kryminologii i Penitencjarystyki w Warszawie, pp. 115–124.

ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE

Andrzej Tarchała
The Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow
Faculty of Philosophy
e-mail: galileogalileo87@gmail.com

S e r g i o   R o d r í g u e z   L ó p e z - R o s
ORCID: 0000-0001-7444-3574
Abat Oliba CEU University, Barcelona

Resilience as a Basis for the Birth of the First Past Pupils' Movement of Catholic Schools

Odporność jako cecha leżąca u podstaw założenia Stowarzyszenia Byłych Uczniów Szkół Katolickich

ABSTRACT

Despite being the largest group in the Salesian Family, with 100,000 affiliated members worldwide, the Past Pupils of Don Bosco Movement has to date lacked a biography of their charismatic founder, the Turin-born Carlo Gastini (1833–1902), the 120th anniversary of whose death was commemorated in 2022. A family man, bookbinder and teacher, as well as occasional poet and actor, he was the first boarder at the Oratory of Saint Francis de Sales. Little was known about him, beyond three specific anecdotes. However, from 1847 to 1902, he was linked to Valdocco as a pupil (first as a day pupil and then as a boarder), seminarian, parishioner, worker and entertainer. His life was parallel to that of Don Bosco himself, who was a second father to him, and to the development of his own congregation, the Salesian Family and even Italy as a nation. The culmination of his gratitude since 1849 was the charismatic foundation, in 1870, of the Past Pupils of Don Bosco Movement, which celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2020. Its basis was simple: create an instrument of mutual

help among his former colleagues, just as Don Bosco had taught them to do when they were students at the Oratory. Creating a cohesive group centred on values is a proposal for facing difficulties together. In Spain, the Movement found one of its deepest-rooted abodes.

ABSTRAKT

Mimo że wychowankowie Stowarzyszenia Byłych Uczniów Ks. Bosko stanowią największą grupę w rodzinie salezjańskiej, liczącą sto tysięcy członków zrzeszonych na całym świecie, to jednak jak dotąd brakowało im biografii swojego charyzmatycznego założyciela, urodzonego w Turynie Carla Gastiniego (1833–1902), którego 120. rocznicę śmierci uczczono w 2022 roku. Człowiek rodzinny, introligator i nauczyciel, a także okazjonalnie poeta i aktor, był pierwszym wychowankiem Oratorium św. Franciszka Salezego. Niewiele o nim wiadomo, poza pewnymi trzema anegdotami. W latach 1847–1902 był związany z Valdocco jako uczeń (najpierw jako uczeń dzienny, a następnie jako osoba mieszkająca w internacie), seminarzysta, parafianin, robotnik i artysta. Jego życie było przypadło na czasy, w których żył ks. Bosko, a którego on traktował jako swego drugiego ojca; to także okres powstania i rozwoju rodziny salezjańskiej, a nawet Włoch jako narodu. Wyrazem jego wdzięczności wobec salezjanów było założenie w 1870 roku charyzmatycznej fundacji – Stowarzyszenia Byłych Uczniów Ks. Bosko, które w 2020 roku obchodziło 150-lecie swego istnienia. Jego założenia były proste: stworzyć środowisko wzajemnej pomocy między byłymi kolegami, tak jak nauczył ich tego ks. Bosko, gdy byli studentami Oratorium. Stworzenie spójnej grupy wokół wartości było więc propozycją wspólnego stawiania czoła trudnościom. Stowarzyszenie to znalazło w Hiszpanii podatny grunt i szybko się zakorzeniło.

Introduction

Practically all Catholic educational entities, whether schools or universities, have some organisation of past pupils, former students or alumni. For some, it is just an external body that energises its members as an autonomous entity; for others, it is an internal department that encourages its members without their participation or autonomy. The difference between the two is notable, since the charismatic identity is radically different. The former would be constituted as a transfer to public associations of the faithful which appeal to a founder; the

latter, on the other hand, would not even be an association of faithful or even a civil one, but rather people grouped together by a moral bond in which no appeal is made to a founder or charism. Therefore, the former constitute an ecclesial reality based on affiliation, i.e. the free, conscious granting of a commitment that materialises in participation, solidarity and communion, whilst the latter lack their own initiatives and carry out a gregarious activity with respect to the institution to which they belong.

This distinction is the reason why to date few studies have been devoted to the phenomenon of sociology of religion that alumni movements constitute, despite their almost universal spread. Our research is dedicated to the first of them, the Past Pupils of Don Bosco, founded in Italy in 1840, whose members are also the most numerous in the Church today.

The Unconditional Welcome

Turin, Year Zero

The history of Turin is an example of the upheavals that affected Europe in the 19th century resulting from the rupture of the hegemony of the Christian faith in Western culture following the French Revolution, the new liberal model that was to gradually replace class societies and the socioeconomic changes caused by the Industrial Revolution. By the time the young Giovanni Bosco arrived in Turin in 1841, the city had doubled its population from 1800. The arrival of steam power had expanded its traditional craft of steel forging, giving rise to the mechanical industry that at the end of the 19th century would see the birth of Fiat and Lancia. The walls had just been demolished and, in front of the elegant bourgeois centre, built in imitation of Paris, suburbs would be built along the two rivers—Valdocco along the Dora and Vanchiglia along the Po—to take advantage of the rivers' power.

In addition to water, that huge industry needed capital (from French banks) and labour (from the Piedmont countryside). As is the case today, the dream soon turned sour when it was realised that there was not enough work to go round, that the work was precarious

and that life in the city led to overcrowding in the suburbs and the mutation of the values of natural society: the rural society of nature, faith and solidarity was countered by the urban reality of mercantilism, freemasonry and individual freedom.

In the year of Don Bosco's ordination to the priesthood, 7,148 children under the age of 10 years (*Stato civile Comune di Torino 1814–1836*)[1] were employed in Turin as builders, tailors, carpenters, painters, chimney sweeps and in many other trades, working up to 14 hours a day. Marginalisation in the suburbs and the harsh working conditions led to alcoholism, abuse and illness, leaving many of them orphaned. The lack of work drove them to commit crime, filling Turin's prisons with young people kept in overcrowded conditions. The majority were incarcerated in the correctional centre known as La Generala (1847–1944), and many of them were executed in the Rondò della Forca.

The young priest, walking the streets, visiting the prisons and accompanying Fr Cafasso in assisting the dying, was deeply moved. He could not help but identify himself with those young people who, like him but for different reasons, had left the Piedmontese countryside to go to the regional capital. He had to find a way to help them.

An orphaned child

In the same context in which Don Bosco began to develop his mission in Turin, in 1828 the Gastini family arrived in the capital of Piedmont from Casale Monferrato. Antonio Gastini and Maria Pernigotti settled next to the parish of San Dalmazzo, on the outskirts of the centre. Antonio Gastini had found work in the Turin municipal police force. It was during this period in Turin that his three children would be born: two boys and a girl. The first to be born was Marco, in 1830; Carlo was born on 23 January 1833 and was baptised on 25 January in the parish of San Dalmazzo (*Registro degli Atti di Nascita…* 1833: 2).[2] No trace of their sister's birth has been found, despite the other members of the Gastini family revering her.

---

1   I thank Mr Luigi Balice for the information.
2   I thank the diocesan archivist, Fr Alessandro Giraudo, for the information.

The family's happiness would be cut short a few years later. The father of the family died in 1847, probably after an illness,[3] leaving Maria in charge of their three children, two of whom had to work. Fourteen-year-old Carlo, known in the family as Carlino or Carluccio, found work as an apprentice in a neighbourhood barber's shop, near number 11 Via San Francesco d'Assisi, where he met Don Bosco. The unexpected change which forced him to seek work was common to children and young people of that time. Without any doubt, it created a state of anxiety due to the fragility of their circumstances, that is, the feeling that we can all go from a structured, stable situation to an unstructured, unstable one unexpectedly.

The teenager at the Oratory

Carlo Gastini's life changed providentially during the first half of 1847. On a Saturday in June of that year, the young priest Giovanni Bosco—who only a year earlier had settled in Valdocco with his mother, Margherita Occhiena, in a simple shed rented from Filippo Pinardi—entered the barber's shop. Just a month earlier, with the welcome of a young man from Valsesia, he had begun his mission in an Oratory. One day, Don Bosco went to a barber's shop to get a shave. There he met an apprentice and, despite the owner's opposition, asked that young man be the one to shave him. Don Bosco's face suffered, but the following day Carlo went to the Oratory which was opened on holidays, basically on Sundays (Bosco 1903: 269–270). Carlo would integrate well into the Oratory (p. 270).

At the end of that year, Gastini, who was 14 years old,[4] lost his mother, Maria to illness. His brother Marco was doing military service, fighting with the Piedmontese army in the First War of Independence (1848–1849). Carlo and his sister had been left alone in the world—or almost. One night that winter, when he was returning to Valdocco, Don Bosco providentially found him with his sister. She

---

3   It is therefore strange that, at 14 years old, he had not yet received his First Communion, even though the custom at that time in Italy was to do so at the age of 11.

4   Don Bosco thought he remembered him being 11, as he says in his *Biographical Memoirs*, but the various accounts of the date of Antonio Gastini's death unequivocally fixes his age at 14 years.

was crying by an elm tree on Viale San Massimo (today Corso Regina Margherita), near the Rondò della Forca. Carlo explained to him that, as their mother had died and had not been able to pay the rent on the house during her illness, the landlord had evicted them and left them on the street. Without a doubt, Don Bosco saw in Gastini the opportunity to help young people survive misfortunes.

His sister was temporarily entrusted to a widowed woman of limited means but with strong Christian values; however, because she was unable to take care of the girl, she ended up in the Casale Monferrato orphanage, where she died shortly afterwards. Sometime before, on 1 January 1848, Carlo had become a boarder at the Oratory as a craftsman (*Censimento dei giovani 1847–1869*). Felice Reviglio and Giacinto Arnaud were already there. Gastini was younger than Reviglio (1831) and Buzzetti (1832), but the same age as Giacomo Bellia (1833) and older than Michele Rua (1837), Giovanni Francesia (1838) and Giovanni Cagliero (1838).

Don Bosco applied what he had experienced at home, and it helped him survive his orphanhood. After the morning mass and rosary, they would go out to work in the city with a bread roll in their pocket; they returned for lunch and dinner. Their meagre diet, consisting of vegetable stew and vegetables from Don Bosco's mother's garden, was infinitely better than what they had been fed in their previous life. The young boys spent the day with Don Bosco and provided for all their daily needs, as he himself had experienced with his first mentor, Don Calosso, in 1829–1830. One Sunday in 1848, the year in which Don Bosco was shot through a window in Valdocco, Carlo Gastini had a severe toothache, which Don Bosco cured by laying his hands on him (Bosco 1903: 383). Those young boys were so grateful to Don Bosco that they considered him their true father. Gastini and Reviglio wanted to convey their admiration of, gratitude to and affection for Don Bosco on 24 June 1849, giving him two silver hearts that they had bought in the best jewellery store in the city.

Don Bosco's seminarian

Don Bosco was already thinking about the possibility of founding a religious institute, which would later become the Salesian Congregation, to give greater scope, freedom and continuity to his works.

He did not forget the political and media persecutions of 1848, nor the desertions of some of his assistants that same year at the Oratory. Therefore, on 23 July 1849 he organised two one-week retreats to train new catechists. Among the more than 800 young people who attended the two oratories, he chose 71; among them was Gastini, who was finally chosen along with Buzzetti, Bellia and Reviglio.

Don Bosco worked hard and patiently with them to give them a personal structure (Bosco 1903: 423–424). He began to help them reform their moral conduct, making them attend sacraments more frequently, teaching them Italian and Latin grammar and providing them with lodging, clothing and food. They helped Don Bosco in Valdocco and on Sundays accompanied him to Porta Nuova or Vanchiglia. Gastini would be one of the witnesses, on 1 November 1849, of the miracle of the multiplication of the chestnuts.

Carlo was finally able to wear the cassock on 2 February 1851. It was imposed on him by Don Bosco himself, who was "radiant. It seems that the first lambs are finally becoming shepherds" (Bosco 1980: 230). The following day the new clerics began their philosophy classes. He also promoted the setting up of the Salesian theatre, which Don Bosco entrusted to Gastini and Tomatis, as well as catechesis for day pupils. One pupil, in a letter to his parents, considered Gastini an excellent teacher (Bosco 1904: 185). However, Carlo would leave the diocesan seminary that same year (p. 379), specifically between 12 October and 24 November 1851, since for reasons unknown to us he did not take the exams (*Elenco dei giovani aspirant… 1852*).

For the next four years, Carlo Gastini continued to live in the Oratory as a boarder, and from 1854 he was an assistant at the printing press. It seems as if he was not yet ready to go out again and live alone in the harsh reality of Turin. In fact, that year a cholera epidemic broke out in the city; whilst Don Bosco helped the sick, Gastini stayed in Valdocco praying that none of them would become infected. Printing and theatre were Carlo Gastini's two occupations in Valdocco during this new stage of his life, in which he grew a beard (his previous clerical status did not allow him to do so), giving him a half-venerable, half-comical appearance.

Personal evolution would progressively lead Carlo Gastini to develop his new life. Although he would always be linked to Don Bosco and Valdocco, he already had a trade that allowed him to earn

a living. In October 1857 he left the Oratory (*Censimento dei giovani 1847–1869*) and married Giuseppa Lora. Despite his new family, his new house and his new work, Gastini maintained his bond with the institution that had welcomed him: he never missed festivities and was always available to help.

Gastini, like the rest of his companions, had witnessed numerous examples of how Don Bosco had the gift of prophecy. At the beginning of May 1860, Carlo went to ask him how long he would live. "Until you are 70 years old", he told him (Gastini 1902).

In 1861 the Oratory suffered a new series of public persecutions. Gastini left his well-paid job and returned to Valdocco to work as chief bookbinder, a job he would never leave. His goal was to be as close as possible to his second father, as he would admit years later (Gastini 1883). The new printing works was launched on 31 December. That same year, for his name day, Carlo brought Don Bosco some elegantly bound books with an even better dedication: "So that, after having bound so many books for you, I too may be bound with you in the book of life" (*Carlo Gastini, primo presidente Exallievi…* 1970: 8). In 1863 his daughter Felisa was born, whom Don Bosco baptised himself and who would be known to all in Valdocco as Felicina.

Despite his consolidated family life, he never left Don Bosco's house, which was once his refuge. Gastini was chief bookbinder of the Salesian Publishers and Press until his retirement (Bosco 1905: 143). He produced more than 200 works, which formed one of the most important Italian-language catalogues of its time. From 1877 he published the *Salesian Bulletin*, founded by Don Bosco, who actively participated in the editorial work until 1887, a year before his death. Thanks to its prestige in Gastini's time, the Salesian Publishers and Press was invited to the Universal Exhibition in Barcelona (1886).

Gastini's death

Carlo continued to be the soul of the Oratory's internal celebrations even in 1873. Almost 20 years had passed since his departure from Valdocco, but he was still part of the daily life of *papa Giovanni*; it was no accident that Gastini and Buzzetti would appear in the dream *The Mysterious Steed* that Don Bosco had in 1875 (Bosco 1930: 257–260).

On 29 April 1876, Giuseppina died at the age of 36. Felicina would go on to train with the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians and would marry her first cousin Eugenio (Stato civile 1893: 22), the youngest of Marco Gastini's five children, on 7 May 1893.

Gastini and Reviglio were almost an institution in Valdocco. In 1894, his former companion Giuseppe Rollini painted him in the chapel of Saint Francis de Sales in the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians.

Just a year later his granddaughter Rosa would be born (Stato civile 1895: 20). Everyone was aware that Gastini was getting old, and in some way, they tried to pay tribute to him during his lifetime. On 23 June 1898, he still took part in the Oratory's internal celebration, but the end was near. Since Don Bosco's death things had not been the same: once again, he felt like an orphan. His capacity for resilience seemed linked to having a moral reference.

In mid-January 1902 Carlo fell ill. Aware of Don Bosco's prophecy, he wanted to prepare himself for death. Numerous visitors tried to cheer him up, but one day he said to Fr Rua: "I'm 70 years old now and I must die. I have nothing to do down here anymore. I hope that Don Bosco helps me join him in heaven" (Gastini 1902: 61). At his interlocutor's insistence, he replied: "No, no! I won't get out of bed anymore. I'm 70 years old and I must die" (p. 62). And so, it was. After being anointed by his good friend Michele, Carlo died on 28 January 1902, one day after turning 70, just as *papa Giovanni* had predicted.

Maintaining the Spirit of the Oratory Beyond the Oratory

The great work of Carlo Gastini, in addition to his family, was the founding of the Past Pupils of Don Bosco movement. In that foundation is its proposal of resilience: in the face of the fragility of the street, the security of a home (in the Oratory) and the safety of a group (outside the Oratory).

As mentioned above, on 24 June 1849 Gastini and Reviglio gave two silver hearts to Don Bosco. In the following years, a commission was established to collect funds from the boarders and day pupils to present Don Bosco with a gift. In 1850 they gathered at the foot of his rooms to congratulate him with a short concert; afterwards, they

sent representatives up to take him the gift, which he thanked them for from the balcony to great applause.

The following year, the music was accompanied by the reading of letters and the reciting of poems, some of them composed for the occasion as a token of gratitude. This effort was undoubtedly the result of the rhetoric, Latin and Italian classes they had received at the Oratory. Don Bosco wanted his pupils to be able to behave in a dignified manner, without anyone laughing at them because of their education. Many took the opportunity to ask for his advice or ask him questions. His guidance continued to give them security. From 1858 onwards, these events took place in the dining room built under the church of Saint Francis de Sales, until in 1866 they were held on the third floor of the former *Casa Filippi*; in 1886 they began to take place in the theatre.

On 7 March 1869, Pope Pius IX approved the Salesian Congregation. This is why the celebration of 1870 was special: Carlo Gastini spread the word to summon the former pupils to a location in Valdocco on the corner of Piazza Statuto and Via San Donato; they met on 24 June to express their gratitude to Don Bosco for the education they had received, and they brought him a coffee set as a gift. From 1871 onwards, past pupils would gather every year to celebrate Don Bosco's name day. They had finally found a stable group bond with their former preceptor.

That first era was coming to an end. The tributes had gone from being something personal (1849), through a collective act (1850–1870) of the current pupils, to something no longer internal, but external (1870–1873) of the older pupils or, as they were known, the *antichi allievi* or former pupils.[5] They had not stopped being students: they had only become the oldest students.

From 1874 until the year of his death in 1888, Don Bosco reciprocated the tribute on his name day with a fraternal lunch, which meant that he reserved an entire day to be with his past pupils. Let us not forget that the Salesian Congregation had been founded in 1859, the Association of Mary Help of Christians would be established in 1869 and the Salesian Cooperators would become a reality

---

5   The expression has been maintained in Spanish, but not in Italian, where the expression *antichi allievi* has been replaced by *ex allievi*.

in 1876. The year 1875 was special, as the first missionary expedition to Patagonia, led by Giovanni Cagliero—who was later appointed Cardinal—set off in that year. That year the gift from the attendees was a golden monstrance.

In 1876 a reference to Gastini as president of the Past Pupils appears for the first time. In a communication to Fr Rua and Fr Lazzero dated 24 April, Don Bosco mentions him as "from outside, master of the bookbinders and president of the past pupils" (Bosco 1938: 198). Two days later, in another letter to them, he elaborated on this when talking about "Gastini with his friends" (ibidem). The word is not coincidental: it is referring to a united, compact group.

In 1877, the Archbishop of Buenos Aires was present at the celebration and gave Carlo a coin, which he gave to Don Bosco. At the insistence of García Zúñiga, Gastini replied with a phrase that has gone down in history: "We all belong to Don Bosco here. Nothing is ours, everything is his" (Bosco 1948: 80). It is particularly relevant that in the speech of a former student priest, Giovanni Turchi, mention was made of the existence of a commission, which we know Gastini presided over, at the head of a society of past pupils of the Oratory, and which had been established eight years earlier, as for the first time there was talk of the Society of Past Pupils of the Salesian Oratory, just as in 1888 there would be official talk of the Committee of Past Pupils of the Oratory for the Demonstrations to the Rev. Don Bosco (Archivio Centrale Salesiano 1888).

Giving Legal Personality to a Movement

The initiative to bring together the Past Pupils in 1870 had worked: meetings were held regularly, and more and more people attended. In 1894 that group became a legal entity. The annual lunch with Don Bosco was consolidated. In 1878 it took place on 4 August under the porticos of Valdocco, with 194 Past Pupils in attendance. Don Bosco addressed a few words to them, encouraging them to legally establish themselves as an entity.

> What else is there left to tell you? Cheer up! Cheer up! Cheer up! It is enough that the spirit be maintained that each now be a missionary among his companions; later, in his own homes, or wherever he lives, giving good examples, good advice and doing good to his own soul.

Nowadays everyone is looking for unions and mutual aid societies. We must try to establish one among ourselves. All of you, some more so, some less so, are able to save so that you can meet your needs in the event of an illness or lack of work. Well then, see to it that this help is not limited to you alone, but that it is also extended to those young people of good conduct who leave the Oratory, or to those companions that you already know.

We will still be able to meet at these family celebrations —which I hope will be many times— won't we? And afterwards, we will be able to form beautiful, compact, numerous families, all together in Heaven, giving each other a word from now on, signing a pact that none of us will break, won't we? (Bosco 1932: 757–759)

This oral, occasional address in 1878 was the authentic mission charter of the Past Pupils of Don Bosco. He gave this new reality a distinctly lay nature, unlike the mixed clerical-lay nature of the Salesian Cooperators, from which he seemed to separate the Past Pupils. But he also gave it a clearly social nature, unlike the religious nature of the Archconfraternity of Mary Help of Christians. The aim was clear: to continue the Oratory beyond the Oratory to allow these young people to retain the same values in adulthood. That was his method to resist an adverse society outside the Oratory. To achieve this, he established a fourfold mission: the maintenance of the values received (faith, honesty, industriousness and commitment), the testimony of those same values (in the family, work and society), mutual solidarity among Past Pupils and the support for Salesian works in its mission with young people. In this case, the order of the items does affect the result.

It was evident that Don Bosco, who had just returned from Barcelona, was ageing and the feeling that the end was approaching was also clear from his almost testamentary words of 13 July: "Meanwhile, wherever you go and wherever you are, always remember that you are sons of Don Bosco, sons of the Oratory …. Blessed are you if you never forget the truths that I strove to engrave in your hearts when you were young" (Bosco 1936: 489). "You were a little flock. You have grown much and will grow yet more. You will be a light shining forth upon the world, and by your example you will teach others how to do good and how to hate and flee from evil. My dear sons, may God help us with His grace, so that one day we may all meet in Heaven" (Bosco 1936: 173–174). He seemed to want to reveal to them the method he had used on them.

On 16 August 1887, the Past Pupils decided to also congratulate Don Bosco on his birthday. Then the words that he had addressed to them on a previous occasion echoed: "Above all I ask you one thing, my dear sons: wherever you may be, always conduct yourselves as good Christians and upright citizens …. Many of you already have a family. Well, share that education that you have received at the Oratory of Don Bosco with your loved ones" (Bosco 1933: 511–512). This time it was more explicit: what helped them overcome a traumatic past was making the Oratory feel like a home and a family.

During his last years, Fr Rua, Don Bosco's first successor, insisted on adding the former day pupils to the association of the former boarders of Valdocco in order to avoid limiting everything to the small circle of the pupils of the first Oratory, who due to their age were to suffer the same fate as Don Bosco in a few years. Consequently, on 8 December 1894, under the guidance of Giovanni Garbellone, the entity that brought together the former day pupils of the Oratory was founded (*Statute* 1894). The Salesians did not want everything to end with Don Bosco.

In 1896, the annual meeting was held on 12 and 16 July, presided over by Fr Rua. "The Past Pupils of Don Bosco: who could count them today? They are scattered all over the world" (Gli antichi allievi 1896: 202), comments the Salesian bulletin. That year the collection was used to try to free their companions who were imprisoned in Africa due to the first Italo-Ethiopian war (1895–1896). At that same time, they launched a mutual aid association (*mutuo soccorso*) to unite in the context of the post-war economy and the subsequent crisis of 1929. Indeed, let us not forget that in 1878 Don Bosco himself had proposed a mutual aid society to address the difficulties of the young people who were leaving the Oratory—hence the name they adopted: the Past Pupils are organised at the local level as unions, not associations, as a Catholic alternative to syndicates, as Pope Leo XIII had rightly encouraged in *Rerum Novarum*. In fact, when the second entity was created in Lille, France in 1893, its statute specifies that it was created as a form of "Mutual Aid Association." It is no coincidence that the phrase "mutual help" is repeated: it is the key to resistance. Eight years later, when the Combes law took effect in France, which ordered the confiscation of religious property, he did

not hesitate to make his energetic protest heard in the Senate of the Republic in favour of the Salesians.

On 20 January 1900 Fr Rua wrote a letter to the Salesians for the first time about the importance of the Past Pupils in the Congregation: "In some cities in Europe, America and Africa, the Association of Past Pupils is already established in imitation of what we can call the initial one founded years ago in Turin"; he considered it a "branch of Salesian activity", concluding: "with these associations (we Salesians) continue to act as guardian angels for our pupils as we did for them when they were young" (XXXVII Viaggio… 1900). His words speak for themselves. Today, in Latin America, the Salinas Savings and Credit Cooperative (Ecuador), the Scrap Metal Workers' Cooperative (Peru), the Antonio Polo Cooperative to Implement Cooperativism (Venezuela), the San Medardo Salesian Comprehensive Youth Cooperative for Continuing Education (Timor) and, in Spain, the Poblanchina Salesian Youth Cooperative for Mentoring between New and Past Pupils and the Royal Vega Cooperative for Agricultural Purposes are well known.

It is in this context that the work of Fr Rinaldi, who became Don Bosco's second successor, should be distinguished from that of Gastini. The latter was the charismatic founder of the Past Pupils of Don Bosco Movement (1870), since he was in charge of bringing together the former pupils of the first Oratory, providing them two occasions a year on which to meet, encouraging them to channel their gratitude for the education they had received, instilling in them a spirit of fraternity and entrusting them with a mission of mutual help, all lived with the vital optimism and Christian hope that he himself transmitted in his written circulars and speeches. Once again, the keys to the Salesian method of resilience appear: spirit of fraternity and mutual help. Fr Rinaldi, on the other hand, as General Prefect of Fr Rua, was responsible for encouraging the creation of the International Federation of Past Pupils of Don Bosco (1908) and of the Past Pupils of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (1911), which Felicina Gastini would preside over until 1920, as well as convening the 1st International Congress of Past Pupils of Don Bosco (1911). Fr Rinaldi, familiar with the recent encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891), believed in the role of the laity in society, which would later be strengthened by the Second Vatican Council. In 1920 he even included a memento

to them in the recitation of the Hail Mary that was recited every day in the Salesian works and, in 1926, in a meeting with all the inspectors in Valsalice, he told them the following, which is no small thing:

> Some believe that the Past Pupils organisation is a useless work, and that is why they neglect it. I would remind them that they are the fruit of our labours. This organisation is a work of perseverance; with it we wish to reclaim them if they have strayed so that there is no-one in the world, educated by us, who has ideas contrary to ours. We have sacrificed ourselves for them and our sacrifice must not be lost. (Resoconto dei convegni… 1926)

The outbreak of the First World War postponed their activities until 1920, when the Second Congress was held, from which the Italian Piero Gribaudi (1919–1921) was elected, followed by his compatriot Felice Masera (1922–1938). That year the Past Pupils inaugurated a monument to Don Bosco, the work of Gaetano Cellini, in front of the Basilica of Mary Help of Christians.

During the third presidency, that of Arturo Poesio (1938–1964), the International Federation became the World Confederation in 1954, whose first statutes would be approved in 1956 (*La nuova stampa* 1956: 8). It was no accident that this was in the years leading up to the Second Vatican Council, which, among other things, would highlight the value of the laity. At the head of the new entity would be the Spaniard José María Taboada Lago (1964–1973), later to be succeeded by the Mexican José González Torres (1974–1980), the Swiss Giuseppe Castelli (1980–1992), the Portuguese António G. Pires (1992–2004), the Italian Francesco Muceo (2004–2013), the Slovak Michal Hort (2013–2022) and the Maltese Bryan Magro (2022–).

In 1967 they were one of the founders of the World Organization of Alumni of Catholic Education (OMAEC), and in 1969, because of the reorganisation of the Domingo Savio Circles, the groups of Young Alumni (GEX) emerged. The Italian Domingo Savio was the first Past Pupil to become a saint, in 1954. Another Past Pupil, the Timorese Carlos Ximenes Belo, won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1996. In 2013, the Argentine Past Pupil Jorge Bergoglio was elected Supreme Pontiff of the Catholic Church under the name Francis. Today the spiritual descendants of Carlo Gastini are a reality spread across 100 countries and made up of 50 million people.

Establishment of the Movement in Spain

Arrival of the Salesians in Spain

The Salesian Congregation arrived in Spain at the invitation of Cardinal Joaquim Lluch, O. Carm. (1816–1882), at the time Archbishop of Seville. Catalan by birth (he was great-grandfather to the later minister Ernest Lluch) and a contemporary of Don Bosco (1815–1888), he had seen the ravages that industrialisation had wrought in his homeland. Masses of peasants from the interior of Catalonia began to live in substandard housing, suffer from illness, fall into crime and lose values, as was happening in Manchester, Turin and Lyon. Two years after taking possession of the see of Seville, the Cardinal wrote to Don Bosco on 7 June 1879 (Cartas del Arzobispo Lluch… 1879). Two years later, on 16 February 1881, the first group of six Salesians arrived in Utrera, led by Fr Giovanni Branda; by the following year he had already founded the San Diego Schools with day and evening classes as well as a school canteen. The financial support of Diego M. de Santiago, Marquis of Casa Ulloa, who would become the first Salesian Cooperator in Spain, was essential (Cartas del marqués… 1880a, 1880b).

The second Salesian foundation would be in Barcelona. This time its precursor would be the diocesan theologian Fèlix Sardà, who through his writings in the Revista Popular began to speak of the Salesian works. This resonated with Dorotea de Chopitea (declared venerable in 1983), widow of the banker Josep Maria Serra following his death in 1882, who wrote to Don Bosco on 20 September 1882 requesting a Salesian foundation. The Turinese saint did not wait and on 15 February 1884, with the financial support of the Serra-Chopitea family, a group of seven Salesians arrived from Utrera to Sarrià, then a neighbouring town of Barcelona, again headed by Fr Branda. That same year they founded the Salesian School of Santo Ángel Custodio, with a boarding and day school, and the Salesian Workshops of Sarrià, with day and evening classes.

The consolidation of those two works in Spain motivated Don Bosco himself to visit Barcelona between 8 April and 6 May 1886, at the request of Dorotea de Chopitea. During the 29 days that he stayed in the city, among many other things, the Turinese saint

visited the nascent Salesian work in Sarrià (Alberdi 1966: 229), indicated that in that same municipality the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians—known as the Salesian Sisters—found their first presence in Spain, received land from the Catalan bourgeoisie to found the future Tibidabo basilica and celebrated two masses in the Parròquia de la Mare de Déu de Betlem in Barcelona. The masses were held on 30 April and 1 May in the heart of the Rambla, seeing the need to also found in the centre of the city—as would happen on 19 March 1980 with the Salesian Schools of San José—daytime and evening classes and a festive oratory, that is, an Oratory on the weekend (Alberdi 1986: 146).

As a result of that visit, on 23 October 1886 the first four Salesian Sisters arrived in Barcelona to start founding the Schools of Saint Dorotea, based on the name of their benefactor, Dorotea de Chopitea. On 26 February 1880 the Marquis of Casa Ulloa would become the first of the Salesian Cooperators in Spain (Alberdi 1983: 102). Both seemed to wanted to replicate in the Spanish Manchester the system that had worked in the Italian Manchester. From that moment the seed of the Salesian charism was planted, because Spain boasted three of the four religious institutions founded by Saint John Bosco: the Congregation of Saint Francis de Sales (1859), the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (1872), the Salesian Cooperators (1876) and the Association of Devotees of Mary Help of Christians (1869). Only the Past Pupils were missing.

The establishment of the Past Pupils in Spain

Following Don Bosco's visit, at an unspecified time students graduating from the Salesian works in Sarrià began to meet occasionally at their old school or workshop to help each other and show their gratitude to the Salesians. Its promoter was another printer, Josep Durán Seuba, a pupil of the school who, during Don Bosco's visit, had had the opportunity to help him at Mass (Artuch 2011: 6).

The first confirmation of the existence of this group of the Salesian Family in Spain came in May 1899, when, during a canonical visit that the Rector Major of the Salesian Congregation, Fr Rua, made to the Salesian works in Spain, it was claimed that "in the house in Sarriá he was met with a very pleasant surprise: a meeting

of former pupils" (Fierro 1966: 3). The meeting had been organised by the recently appointed Major Superior of the Salesian houses of Spain and Portugal, Fr Rinaldi. At the end, the Rector Major encouraged them to lay the foundations for a permanent association (Ceria 1945: 22–23).

The official constitution of the organisation took place on 8 December 1904 in Sarriá. Earlier, in March, the new Prefect General, Fr Rinaldi, during his canonical visit to the Salesian houses in Spain met with a group of them at the Salesian works of Rocafort, in the centre of the city, headquarters of the Salesian Schools of Saint Joseph. At the meeting, a commitment was made to draft statutes and to propagate the new entity among Past Pupils (Fierro 1966: 4).

The board comprised students who attended Salesian schools and workshops, since the president, the printer Josep Duran Seuba, and the vice president, Josep Cubells, were appointed, along with a secretary and a treasurer and several members, including the Congressional deputy, Marià Bordas Flaquer (1879–1938), and the secretary of the Social Defence Committee, the lawyer Gaietà Pareja Novelles. Once again, rich or poor, they felt like brothers, like when they had studied together.

After that first entity, others would emerge throughout Spain, until in 1917 a congress was held in Valencia in which all of them participated and from which the Federation of Salesian Past Pupils of Spain would be founded, with Durán himself being elected president (Fierro 1968: 184). In addition to the terminology, it unified the emblem and the banner and established in Spain the magazine *Don Bosco*, which still exists and whose collections are currently online. Even more important was the creation of a Don Bosco Housing Cooperative for the construction of homes and a mutual society so that orphans could finish their studies, the Saint John Bosco Provident Mutuality. Faced with a lack of housing, the basis for structuring a life (like family or work), mutual aid emerged again in the form of cooperatives. Durán's national work continued until 1922, when engineer Ángel García de Vinuesa y Díaz, a Past Pupil of Utrera, was elected president; his term lasted until 1955.

The parallels are remarkable: the initiative for the foundation came from the laity, the motives were once again gratitude for the education Past Pupils had received and mutual help among them,

and the promoter was once again a printer; to this we could add the urban context, since the first association did not emerge in Utrera but in Barcelona, which, like Turin, was also industrialised.

Today this ecclesial phenomenon includes a total of 6,000 people in Spain, with 55 associations and six federations that are grouped around the Spanish Confederation of Past Pupils of Don Bosco, based in Madrid. Among those Spanish Past Pupils are four of the 14 Spanish cardinals of the Catholic Church: Carlos Osoro, José Cobo, Cristóbal López and Ángel Fernández Artime.

Conferring a Charism on the Movement in Addition to a Mission

Faith: Trust in Don Bosco

Alessandro Fabre, who knew Carlo Gastini extremely well, tried to define his personality in 1902, the year after his death: faith in Don Bosco, love for Don Bosco and work with Don Bosco (Gastini 1902: 61). This trinity would seem like a compass for today's Past Pupils: trust in Don Bosco, Salesian joy and co-responsibility in the mission.

Carlo had an assertive personality. He was "moderate" (Bosco 1903: 345–346), "good" (pp. 549–550) and "pleasant" (Commemorazione di Don Bosco… 1894: 167); in short, he had a "good spirit" (La celebrazione… 1929: 6). Don Bosco was for Carlo Gastini a "father", "good" (Bosco 1937: 368), "understanding" (*Atti del Consiglio Generale…* 1926: 518) and "patient" (Bosco 1903: 621). Thus, he was "a very good friend of Don Bosco" (p. 345) and "completely obedient" (p. 550), to the point that he and his friends asked him one day "what they could do to give him the greatest pleasure" (p. 620).

The relationship between the two had begun under adverse circumstances when Carlo was 14 years old: after being orphaned, he went from the street to being taken in by the Oratory, from losing his parents to having *papa Don Bosco*, from having a brother fighting in the war to belonging to a large spiritual family. At the Oratory he was educated in transcendence, industriousness, creativity and solidarity. "He grew up pious and of good mannerisms" (p. 345). Valdocco would be his home from 1847 to 1856. He was a both moral reference and a strong protector.

It is from these traits of Gastini's personality that his complete trust in Don Bosco stems. A reading of his literary production and the testimonies of the time reveal the sincere and deep affection between Carlino and *papa Giovanni*. In 1890 his companion Luigi Fumero asked him, "Do you remember ever noticing in Don Bosco a gesture, a word, a look, even if distant or indirect, that could be in some way inconvenient or even less improper?" He answered without hesitation: "Never!" (p. 592).

Professional activity was an additional link between the two. Carlo was key to a fundamental dimension of Don Bosco's evangelising mission: the use of communication. The relationship between teacher and pupil, as well as that of father and son, grew. The founding of his own family was not done to the detriment of the previous one, but rather by integrating it.

He paid homage to Don Bosco with the two hearts (1849), the books (1861) and the coffee cups (1870); he organised the annual celebrations between 1870 and 1888. Also, through and for Don Bosco he created the Past Pupils of Don Bosco: "The call to carry out this filial demonstration had come naturally from Gastini" (Bosco 1930: 229). That protection was exercised from affection, not from severity.

He completely trusted Don Bosco, whom he turned to when he had lost his parents, when his teeth hurt, when he wanted to know how long he was going to live. Even in the face of death he did not hesitate for a moment: "I'm now 70 and I must die. I have nothing to do down here anymore. I hope that Don Bosco will help me join him in heaven" (Gastini 1902: 61). A trust until death.

That relationship of trust, gratitude and affection was forged and would be maintained for 41 years, during which time Gastini would also witness how Don Bosco was persecuted, slandered, threatened and attacked, treated as crazy, abandoned by many and impoverished by all, working to the point of exhaustion. Thus, in 1861 Carlo decided to return to work in Valdocco, to move his family to the neighbourhood and to convert the basilica into his parish: he would never abandon the person who had welcomed him into his home and shaped him as a person. His loyalty to Don Bosco was beyond doubt when, on the eve of his death, Fr Rua asked him if he was very fond of Don Bosco. "Are these things to ask me?" (Bosco 1936: 532), he replied.

It is true that Carlo saw his deceased father in Don Bosco, but Bosco had him as one of his children among the great Valdocco family. In 1885, he himself gave him the nickname *il menestrello dei Salesiani*, which would accompany him throughout his life. Carlo appeared in two of his prophetic dreams, *The Dream of Roses* (1847) and *The Mysterious Steed* (1875), and witnessed two of his miracles: that of the teeth (1848) and that of the chestnuts (1849). Furthermore, Don Bosco's prediction of how long Carlo would live appeared in the beatification process of Don Bosco and helped him become a saint (Sacra Rituum Congregatio 1934: *Pars XVII, Summarium 7*).

The spiritual brotherhood was such that, in 1861, when he returned to Valdocco to work at the printing press, he gave him some bound books with this dedication: "So that, after having bound so many books for you, I too may be bound with you in the book of the life". In 1877 he would go on to say that "we all belong to Don Bosco here. Nothing is ours; everything is his" (Bosco 1948: 80). The statement demonstrates the extent to which sharing goods makes up communities, as in religious life.

Gastini contemplates Christ with the gaze of Don Bosco. It is no accident that one of *papa Giovanni*'s favourite books was Tomás de Kempis' *Imitation of Christ* (1441). Carlo, imitating Don Bosco, learnt to be the good shepherd—in this case in his family, among his companions and with young people. It is not enough, then, to be admirers, but to be imitators. Don Bosco did not intend to exalt a cult surrounding his own figure, but rather only to transmit a safe path. In 1848 he had told Gastini shortly after meeting him: "Help me save many souls, and yours first" (Bosco 1903: 620).

Carlo was a person of action. Yes, he was creative, but not intellectual: he preached through testimony, experience and emotion. Søren Kierkegaard said in 1850 that whilst an imitator aspires to be what he admires, an admirer remains personally outside (Kierkegaard 1971: 298). Trusting in Don Bosco, Carlo configured himself with Christ and helped others to configure themselves with him and to build the kingdom of God. This was not in vain, according to the Salesian Constitutions: "The purpose of this Society is to bring together its members … to perfect themselves by imitating the virtues of our Divine Saviour" (Bosco 1905: 663). Carlo Gastini was an imitator of Don Bosco, as he was of Christ.

Throughout his life Carlo Gastini was sincere, spontaneous, optimistic, friendly and pleasant. The starting point was his assertive and empathetic personality. He was "intelligent and cheerful" (Bosco 1903: 549–550) and "pleasant" (Commemorazione di Don Bosco… 1894: 166); in short, he had a "good spirit[,] … was discreetly cultured … [and] always in good humour" (La celebrazione… 1929: 6). In his obituary they referred to him as "a friend to everyone, especially to the pupils of the Oratory" (Gastini 1902: 62).

From these traits he derived his deep joy, surely the result of inner peace and the tranquillity of conscience. His friend Luigi Fumero spoke of "his semi-comic seriousness or his semi-serious comedy"; he always carried "a happy and spirited note" (L'amore dei figli 1898: 167); he was "as a child a minister at those family celebrations" (Bosco 1936: 172). Between 1949 and 1901 he was the soul of the annual celebrations for Saint Francis de Sales, Saint Aloysius Gonzaga, Saint John the Baptist and Saint Peter—first for the pupils, and then for them and the Past Pupils.

In 1894 Petroncini called him a *poeta maggiore*. He was creative, as he knew how to create; he was empathetic, as he knew how to act; and he was spontaneous, as he knew how to improvise. A Past Pupil described him as an unequalled artist "in the art of improvisation", which he exercised on walks, at celebrations, at lunches and on stages. Moreover, he did it in his own style—hence the "Gastinianas" (Due nuovi oratorii salesiani 1899: 301), short, improvised theatrical moments that combined paradoxical joy in sad situations. To this he added "a beautiful voice" (Bosco 1904: 466). In 1894 Petroncini spoke of his noble presence, his imposing voice, his admirable declamation and his dramatic art—hence the talk of "Gastini's amenity" (Bosco 1930: 229).

He had a great command of the stage, although he focussed on comedic roles, which were not without their difficulties. During his lifetime he wrote 39 theatrical texts and 15 musical works, in addition to performing some of the great works of his time. His favourite role was that of the protagonist in the classic tragedy of San Eustachio and in the comedy *Tonio, A Moral Lesson*, as well as the well scene in the melodrama *Crispin and the Midwife* (1850); *Don Procopio* (1859),

The Shoemaker Happy with His Profession (1755) and *The Sane Man in the Choir of Fools* were also part of his repertoire (*Carlo Gastini, primo presidente Exallievi…* 1970: 8). Therefore, it was said that "he entertained the people with his antics" (Bosco 1905: 351).

Don Bosco soon noticed his qualities. Thus, in 1851 he entrusted him with the theatrical productions at Valdocco, together with Carlo Tomatis. Gastini participated in the inauguration of the new theatres in Valdocco in 1885 and 1894. He was naturally funny; one example is the following anecdote that occurred in 1860:

> Gastini slept with a companion in a room. At a certain hour, as usual, Gastini got up, left the room and went downstairs to breathe the fresh night air. Tomatis jumped out of bed and ran to wake up his companion; they took the two beds and the bedside table and left only the chairs in the middle of the room. Everything was dark. Gastini came in, tripped over the chairs and began to grumble; he went to where the bed was and couldn't find it; he thought he had the wrong room; he walked around, looked for his roommate and couldn't find him. He struck a match and didn't recognise the place. He talked to himself, expressing his feelings of doubt and strangeness. His companions, huddled together in the room, could no longer hold back their laughter. (Bosco 1907: 272)

Other memorable Gastinian antics are also remembered: also in 1860, Tomatis one day pretended that his head had got stuck in a top hat and Gastini, amidst applause, came out to help him take it off; in 1864, "Carlos Gastini appeared dressed as a clown to play the role of a beggar; and, singing and reciting, he aroused the hilarity of the guests" (Bosco 1909: 768); "he ate our oranges to make the spectators laugh, and … Piumatti, to punish him, grabbed him, put him in a jug, carried him on his back and began to parade him around the stage" (Bosco 1903: 603).

Petroncini remarked in 1894 on his noble presence, his imposing voice, his admirable recitation and his dramatic art, and jokingly called him *Salesianorum Menestrellum Magnus*. He was funny, but not harsh; he was comical, but not crude. He also had control over the tragic register. In 1884, memories prompted Gastini to recite a six-part poem, which he read by unrolling an almost infinite scroll of paper in which he sang of past times, of the dead and of the absent, which brought to tears even Cardinal Gaetano Alimonda, Archbishop of Turin. In 1889, speaking of Don Bosco, "he unleashed a great flood of tears with the tender story of his adventures and then with

song: he sang with a sweet expression and then, without accepting anything offered to him, he disappeared singing and filling every heart with a sweet melancholy" (Bosco 1903: 603).

His poetry was simple and commonplace, with a few metaphors and appeals to virtue. For example: "This party that awakens in us / so many feelings of joy and love, / that you remember the proofs of affection / that your egregious heart gave us". Or these other two, whose words "move us and make us love Don Bosco more strongly" (L'amore dei figli… 1898: 169): "How many thanks we must humiliate you with / for the traits of your goodness! / How many offers should we make you / for the favours your hand provides!" and "But we are poor, though of heart, / we cannot honour your merits. / Bah, be content, beloved Shepherd / of the good heart, accept the offer".

The starting point is always everyday life: "Of Saint John the desired festival / we can finally celebrate! / this feast so coveted / that made us sigh this way". In 1872, for the feast of Saint Francis de Sales, Gastini had all his poems rhyme with -is: *amis*, *barbis*, *Ausiliatris*… instead of *amici*, *baffi*, *Ausiliatrice* (Bosco 1929: 307). The poems, dialogues and speeches he composed are full of hope and appeal to emotions rather than intellect. Two other compositions of indeterminate date are illustrative: "Let the mediator come from the air / Olympus with the Muses / if they want to criticise / my abstruse laughter. / It will be from the coming / the cube of the arcane meter / that now dissolves in the verb / of the whole Gastinian. / And I speak with easy rhymes / in verses a little course / but the accents are simple / and well-nourished with love" and "This is the troubadour of Don Bosco: he speaks in Latin, Greek and pure Tuscan. / He is a marvel of art on stage. / He always goes willingly to lunch and dinner".

None of the difficult situations he went through in Valdocco dampened his joy nor aged him. He took the edge off every situation with his "allegra sua note" (L'amore dei figli… 1898: 167): "It trembles the strings, memory / of Gastini, songs / of laurels conquered / by sonorous transformations. / But even undaunted / I continue my life / if the meter never changes / my old lyre". That joy was undoubtedly based on deep hope, as evidenced by the certainty that he would not die until he was 70 years old.

Charity: Concentric solidarity

We have already seen that Carlo Gastini had an empathetic and generous personality. He knew how to be grateful. But he was also "pious" (Bosco 1903: 345) and "good" (p. 549). Gastini always tried to do good for others, starting with his immediate circle: companions, family and work. There is a gradation in this search for good, which he directs first to Don Bosco, then to his family and finally to the Past Pupils. The structure of his personality is evident.

We have also spoken of his gratitude to Don Bosco, for whom he sacrificed his savings (1849), entered the seminary (1851) and even changed jobs (1861). He then channelled it towards his family and, after his daughter Felisa was born (1863), towards his pupils: "Once again, dear Father, / praying for you to the eternal God / will be my duty every moment / until I go to heaven. / Communions in exact fulfilment of my duties in my workshop with such generosity towards my young people. / Long live Don Bosco / Carlo Gastini" (1851).

Finally, he focussed his vocation on the Past Pupils, for whom he aimed to move from the emotion of reunion to the definition of a mission. First he brought them together (1870), created a commission (1876), organised the annual celebrations (1870–1888), assumed a mission (1878) and promoted specific initiatives: he gifted bound books (since 1861), donated liturgical subsidies (since 1876), gave gifts (cups, portfolios and liturgical objects) and placed plaques (Valsalice, Turin, I Becchi), and even promoted the restoration of Don Bosco's house in his hometown.[6] It seems evident that they would begin to feel like members of his family.

Gastini, aware of the need to continue helping, promoted an entity that updated the values its members had received (faith, honesty, industriousness and commitment), witnessed them socially (in the family, work or society) and supported in solidarity the Past Pupils and, through Salesian works, young pupils. He did it without any protagonism: "We all belong to Don Bosco here. Nothing is ours; everything is his" (Bosco 1948: 80) (1877).

---

6   The plaque was removed around 1988, when Don Bosco's house in I Becchi was restored.

Conclusions

We live in a world that is increasingly shaped by a dual contradictory dynamic: individualism, which since 1950 has led to atomisation in urban areas with the consequent competitive selfishness and loneliness despite massification, and collectivism, typical of the Californian hippie movements of the 1950s, attempts to create collaborative communities as demonstrated by digital socialisation and the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Gastini was a person of his time, aware of the problems and opportunities, who, using the means of his time (those of popular entertainment and social solidarity), tried to go as far as possible. With a long-term, far-sighted vision, he proposed a theology of the laity before the Second Vatican Council, because until *Lumen Gentium* (1964) the role of the laity would be secondary to the clergy in the Church. It must also be noted that he promoted collective collaboration prior to today's forms of collaborative work, shared ownership, shared mobility and collective knowledge. He made it clear in 1877 that no-one was more than anyone else ("We all belong to Don Bosco here") and that everything belongs to everyone ("Nothing is ours, everything is his"). Home and community are the bases of the Salesian preventive system.

Gastini's life was full of providential moments that led him towards a life of trust, joy and solidarity, sensing the role that corresponded to the pupils in the post-industrial world. "You will be a light shining forth upon the world, and by your example you will teach others how to do good and how to hate and flee from evil" (Bosco 1936: 173–174). It is an invitation to live in the world through Christian commitment. Today, like yesterday, he challenges us with a disturbing question, which is indeed quite a challenge: What are you willing to do for others?

Bibliography

Alberdi R. (1966). *Una ciudad para un santo. Los orígenes de la Obra Salesiana en Barcelona*, Barcelona: Tibidabo.

Alberdi R. (1983). "La vocación del cooperador salesiano en la antigua literatura salesiana en España (1879–1899)," *Ricerche storiche salesiane*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 97–122.

Alberdi R. (1986). *Don Bosco en Barcelona. Itinerario. En el centenario de su visita (1886–1986)*, Barcelona: Edebé.

Archivio Centrale Salesiano (1888). A0380901, 31.01.1888.

Artuch J. (2011). "Memoria de un centenario [I]. Don Bosco en España," *Revista de los antiguos alumnos de Don Bosco*, no. 702, p. 6.

Atti del Consiglio Generale della congregazione Salesiana (24 June 1926).

Bosco G. (1903). *Memorias biográficas*, vol. III, https://archive.sdb.org/Documenti/Don_Bosco/DB_MB/es/MB_ESP_3.pdf

Bosco G. (1904). *Memorias biográficas*, vol. IV, https://archive.sdb.org/Documenti/Don_Bosco/DB_MB/es/MB_ESP_4.pdf

Bosco G. (1905). *Memorias biográficas*, vol. V, https://archive.sdb.org/Documenti/Don_Bosco/DB_MB/es/MB_ESP_5.pdf

Bosco G. (1907). *Memorias biográficas*, vol. VI, https://archive.sdb.org/Documenti/Don_Bosco/DB_MB/es/MB_ESP_6.pdf

Bosco, G. (1909). *Memorias biográficas*, vol. VII. https://archive.sdb.org/Documenti/Don_Bosco/DB_MB/es/MB_ESP_7.pdf

Bosco G. (1929). *Memorias biográficas*, vol. X, https://archive.sdb.org/Documenti/Don_Bosco/DB_MB/es/MB_ESP_10.pdf

Bosco G. (1930). *Memorias biográficas*, vol. XI, https://archive.sdb.org/Documenti/Don_Bosco/DB_MB/es/MB_ESP_11.pdf

Bosco G. (1931). *Memorias biográficas*, vol. XII, https://archive.sdb.org/Documenti/Don_Bosco/DB_MB/es/MB_ESP_12.pdf

Bosco G. (1932). *Memorias biográficas*, vol. XIII, https://archive.sdb.org/Documenti/Don_Bosco/DB_MB/es/MB_ESP_13.pdf

Bosco G. (1936). *Memorias biográficas*, vol. XVII, https://archive.sdb.org/Documenti/Don_Bosco/DB_MB/es/MB_ESP_17.pdf

Bosco G. (1937). *Memorias biográficas*, vol. XVIII, https://archive.sdb.org/Documenti/Don_Bosco/DB_MB/es/MB_ESP_18.pdf

Bosco G. (1948). *Memorias biográficas*, vol. XX, https://archive.sdb.org/Documenti/Don_Bosco/DB_MB/es/MB_ESP_20.pdf

Bosco T. (1980). *Don Bosco, una biografia nuova*, Torino: Elledici.

"Carlo Gastini, primo presidente Exallievi: un personaggio ibseniano e un autentico maestro della rilegatura del libro (august 1970)," *Bollettino salesiano*, vol. 94, no. 15, pp. 8–9. Archivio Salesiano Centrale, A1200908, https://bollettinosalesiano.it/archivio/1970/197015.htm.

Cartas del arzobispo Lluch y Garriga a Don Bosco (1979). Richieste di fondazioni, 07.06.1879. Archivio Salesiano Centrale, A1200908.

Cartas del marqués de Casa-Ulloa a Don Bosco (1880a), 12.03.1880. Archivio Salesiano Centrale, A 145.

Cartas del marqués de Casa-Ulloa a don M. Rúa (1880b), 30.01.1880. Archivio Salesiano Centrale, A 428.

Censimento dei giovani 1847–1869. Archivio Salesiano Centrale, E720.

Ceria E. (1945). *Annali della Società Salesiana*, Vol. III, Torino: Società Editrice Internazionale.

"Commemorazione di Don Bosco e omaggio a Don Rua (august 1894)," *Bollettino salesiano*, vol. 18, no. 8, pp. 166–168, https://bollettinosalesiano.it/archivio/1894/189408.htm.

"Due nuovi oratorii festivi salesiani (November 1899)," *Bollettino salesiano* (Sommario di novembre), p. 301, https://bollettinosalesiano.it/archivio/1899/189911.htm.

Elenco dei giovani aspiranti allo stato ecclesiastico chiericale dal 1843 al 1855, anno 1851 e 1852 (1852). Archivio Arcivescovile di Torino, 12.17.23.

Fierro R. (1966). *Historia del movimiento de los AA.AA. en España (1899–1922)*, Madrid: Central Catequística Salesiana.

Fierro R. (1968). *Memorias*, Barcelona: Ediciones Don Bosco.

Gastini C. (february 1902). "Necrologia," *Bollettino salesiano*, vol. 26, no. 2, pp. 61–62, https://bollettinosalesiano.it/archivio/openResource.php?res=1902/190202.pdf.

Gastini C. (1883). *Lettera a Giulio Barberis* [17 January 1883]. Archivio Salesiano Centrale, A1200908.

"Gli antichi allievi di Don Bosco (august 1896)," *Bollettino salesiano*, vol. 20, no. 8, pp. 202–203, https://bollettinosalesiano.it/archivio/1896/189608.htm.

Kierkegaard S. (1971). *Esercizio del cristianesimo*, Roma: Studium.

"L'amore dei figli e le glorie del padre (july 1898)," *Bollettino salesiano* (Sommario do luglio), pp. 167–169, https://bollettinosalesiano.it/archivio/1898/189807.htm.

"La celebrazione di Don Bosco assumerà proporzioni eccezionali (04.06.1929)," *La Stampa*, p. 6. http://www.archiviolastampa.it/component/option,com_lastampa/task,search/mod,libera/action,viewer/Itemid,3/page,6/articleid,1155_01_1929_0133_0006_24882259.

La nuova stampa (1956), 21.12.1956. p. 8.

"XXXVII Viaggio di D. Rua in Ispagna (1900) [4. Attività degli Antichi Allievi]," *Lettere Circolari di Don Michele Rua ai Salesiani 1898–1906*, https://www.sdb.org/it/RM_Risorse/ACG_Lettere/Don_Rua/Circolari_Don_Rua_1898_1906.

Registro degli Atti di Nascita e Battesimo della Parrocchia San Dalmazzo Martire, 1833 (1833). Archivio Arcivescovile di Torino.

"Resoconto dei convegni tenuti dai Direttori Salesiani a Valsalice nell'estate del 1926 (1926) [§ Sesto tema – Cooperatori ed ex-allievi]," *Lettere di Don Filippo Rinaldi Rettor Maggiore 1926–1927*, https://www.sdb.org/es/RM_Recursos/ACG_Lettere/Don_Rinaldi/Filippo_Rinaldi_Rettor_Maggiore_1926_1927.

Sacra Rituum Congregatio (1934). Taurine, *Beatificationis et canonizationis Servi Dei Joannis Bosco Sacerdotis Fundatoris Piae Societatis Salesianae, Decretum de validitate processum, in Positio Super Virtutibus, Pars XVII, Summarium 7*, Romae: Schola Typographica Salesiana, s.d.

Stato civile (1893). *Gazzetta Piemontese*, 16.04.1893.

Stato civile (1895). *Gazzetta Piemontese*, 11.05.1895.

Stato Civile Comune di Torino 1814–1836. Archivio Storico della Città di To-
    rino, Carte sciolte nº 5.406. http://www.comune.torino.it/archiviostori-
    co/cons_online/carte_sciolte.pdf.

Statute (1894). Archivio della Confederazione Mondiale degli Ex Allievi di
    Don Bosco.

ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE

Sergio Rodríguez López-Ros
Abat Oliba CEU University, Barcelona
e-mail: srodriguezl@uao.es

Roser Serra Florensa
ORCID: 0009-0005-0623-0952
Abat Oliba CEU University, Barcelona

The Brand Purpose of Educational Institutions: When the Resilience Story Does Matter

Cel marki instytucji edukacyjnych: kiedy historia odporności ma znaczenie

ABSTRACT

Since its inception, corporate social responsibility has been associated with the corporate world: a socially responsible company. This concept has evolved and is now applied to brands; brands with a purpose have emerged. To continue having a positive impact on society, these brands must build a story, a narrative, that transmits and demonstrates these values. We are moving from storytelling to storydoing, from words to deeds. This model is applied in many sectors, but we focus on the field of education. Therefore, we analyze how educational centers, like companies, have a narrative purpose and explore the values that dominate their story. Can the value of resilience be found in the construction of the narrative of educational centers?

ABSTRAKT

Od samego początku społeczna odpowiedzialność biznesu kojarzona jest ze światem korporacji – firmą odpowiedzialną społecznie. Koncepcja ta ewoluowała i jest obecnie stosowana w odniesieniu do

marek: pojawiają się dziś marki mające określony cel. Aby nadal wywierać pozytywny wpływ na społeczeństwo, marki te muszą zbudować opowiadanie, narrację, która przekazuje pewne wartości, a także je demonstruje: przechodzimy tu od opowiadania do tworzenia, od słów do czynów. Model ten ma zastosowanie w wielu sektorach, my jednak skupimy się na obszarze edukacji. Dlatego przeanalizujemy, w jaki sposób centra edukacyjne, podobnie jak firmy, mają cel narracyjny i zbadamy wartości, które dominują w ich narracji. Czy wartość odporności (*resilience*) odnajduje się w konstruowaniu narracji przez ośrodki edukacyjne?

From Corporate Social Responsibility to Brand Purpose

Evolution of corporate social responsibility

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a concept that dates back to the 19th century, when a number of companies became concerned about the welfare of their workers. However, it was in the 1950s that the term "social responsibility" started to be used more frequently. One of the main authors to study this term academically was Howard R. Bowen in *Social Responsibilities of the Businessman.*

Bowen defines CSR as "the obligations of businessmen to pursue policies of action, make decisions and adopt desirable courses of action in terms of the goals and values of society" (Bowen 1953: 6). CSR is thus understood to be the responsibility of the company and those who control it—a control that, over the years, has been diluted by the introduction of stakeholders. Stakeholders are groups or individuals who can be impacted by or affect the achievement of business objectives (Donaldson, Preston 1995). In this sense, companies can no longer operate in isolation, as their actions affect not only their inner circle, but also society at large. Therefore, the company goes from being an entity separate from society to being part of an ecosystem that will be affected by the decisions made by the company.

In the early 1990s, Carroll (1991) created the CSR pyramid by dividing corporate responsibility into four dimensions:

1. *Economic Responsibility*: The aim of business is to generate maximum profit from providing customers with goods or services that meet their needs in exchange for a fair price.

2. *Legal Responsibility*: The company must obey and act in accordance with the principles, rules, and laws that regulate the functioning of the market and the society of which it is a part.
3. *Ethical Responsibility*: This groups together the aspirations of stakeholders (shareholders, workers, customers, and society in general) regarding companies' conduct under the criteria of justice and the moral principles that govern the society in which they operate.
4. *Philanthropic Responsibility*: It is society's desire that companies act as good citizens, committing part of their resources to improving the welfare of others.

Figure 1. Corporate social responsibility pyramid

Source: Carroll (1991).

At the top of the CSR pyramid is philanthropic responsibility, by which Carroll states that a company has to act for the welfare of others, thus confirming that companies have to be good corporate citizens.

In this way, CSR has evolved and become a concept that is not only part of the business universe, but also an integral part of society—which, according to the 2015 Forética Report on the state of CSR in Spain, "for the first time in history, … states that it values CSR attributes (employees, ethics, environment, etc.) above market

attributes (quality, customer service, or economic results) when considering a company "a good company" (Silos et al. 2015: 7). Supporting this idea, the Organization of Consumers and Users, in collaboration with the NESI Forum for New Economy and Social Innovation, claims that 73% of the Spanish population takes into account ethical and ecological aspects in their consumption decisions (OCU 2018). Therefore, companies must address the economic, social, and environmental challenges of today's society and must not forget that they have a responsibility toward all related stakeholders (De la Cuesta González 2004).

CSR was established to impact internally on the company and, thanks to the penetration of stakeholders, it has expanded, impacting fully on society. This evolution means that CSR has moved beyond the strictly corporate (company) arena into the brand (society) arena, creating a new category: brands with a social conscience.

Brand purpose

The evolution of CSR has enabled, and at the same time forced, companies to become not just a profit-making bodies, but companies that have come to have a name with a voice of their own. We are entering the realm of brands—not just any brands, but brands that want to and must change or improve the world: we are talking about brands with a purpose.

Brands with purpose are a key trend in the world of marketing and advertising. According to Kotler and Keller (2009), a purposeful brand is one that goes beyond simply selling products and services and seeks to have a positive impact on society and the world at large. Purposeful brands can have multiple social and environmental objectives, such as reducing their carbon footprint, promoting gender equality, or supporting marginalized communities. According to Montague (2013), a company's purpose refers to its higher goals, which go beyond mere profit generation. Montague argues that, by properly defining its purpose, a company can seek to make an economic difference while making a relevant difference in people's lives. In other words, the purpose is to create value for both the company and society at large.

In a recent study, San Miguel (2020) found that purpose-driven brands are increasingly popular among consumers, especially Generation Z and Millennials. These consumers are looking for brands that align with their own values and social concerns and they are willing to pay more for products and services that support a cause they care about (Sicilia et al. 2022).

Another point to emphasize is the importance of authenticity in purposeful branding. Brands that simply try to capitalize on a social cause without a real commitment to it run the risk of being perceived as opportunistic and manipulative, which can damage their reputation in the long run (Tran et al. 2020). It is important that brand communication conveys the company's CSR commitments and values (Corredera, González 2011), but it must also show that what they say is genuine and that they do not pretend to want to improve society just to benefit their brand image. To demonstrate this real involvement, brands have used different communication tools, but one in particular stands out: storytelling.

The Story in Brand Purpose — Storytelling

As concepts such as CSR and the role of brands in society have evolved, so has brand communication. External factors have led brands to adopt new ways of communicating. In fact, a recent study by Meaningful Brands (2021) revealed that 75% of brand content lacks meaning. As communication in the Internet era is saturated with messages, brands have had to develop new strategies to stand out. We are talking about storytelling. Storytelling is comprised of two components: the content or story and the process of telling or narration. "Storytelling is the art of communicating ideas, emotions and knowledge through the telling of stories" (McKee, Fryer 2003: 51). Furthermore, according to Scolari (2014), storytelling can be used for a variety of purposes, from entertainment and education to the promotion of cultural identity and brand building.

This art of storytelling has made it possible, since its inception, to connect different worlds and achieve the longed-for cultural unity (Snowden 1999), thus allowing brands to rebuild their connection with the human essence (Costa Sánchez 2014), a human essence that is defined in consumers who are evolving and who have a different

relationship with brands, as Marcos and Fernández (2018) argue. It is worth noting that today's consumers are much more demanding with brands, as they are aware that brands must have a responsibility to the world in general and to them in particular. Consumers are thus moving from being mere spectators to being protagonists of change: demanding that brands engage.

Once the brand identity and brand story is established, its transmission both internally and externally must be addressed (Cavender, Kincade 2014). Scolari (2014) defines transmedia storytelling as the process of creating and sharing a story across different media and platforms, which may include elements such as text, video, images, sounds, etc. These elements work together to immerse the audience in the story and to create a participatory, interactive experience.

Today, what characterizes the communication process is the multitude of platforms and channels on which brands can interact with their customers. In order to achieve effective transmission, channels need to be integrated. As Lara (2015) points out, omni-channeling seeks to eliminate differences in the relationship with customers across all channels. The goal is to engage the customer in the brand universe, telling the same story consistently across all channels. Jenkins (2010) coined the term "transmedia storytelling" to describe this phenomenon, which he later defined as "a transmedia narrative that unfolds across multiple media platforms with the specific, valuable contribution of each new message" (Jenkins 2006: 95–96).

Scolari (2009) clarifies that transmedia storytelling is not about adapting a story from one medium to another, but that each medium contributes to the construction of the narrative universe with its own language. It is important to stress that this phenomenon should not be confused with cross-media communication, which consists of directing the user from one channel to another to complete the message.

This omni-channel approach has allowed brands to generate myriad content in line with their brand objectives. The increasing ineffectiveness of conventional advertising has prompted the creation of strong narratives that can be delivered through transmedia storytelling. Different market reports highlight certain guidelines to achieve differentiation and audience loyalty, such as social involvement and coherence between discourse and action (Castelló-Martínez 2018).

Given this reality, there is general agreement on the need to unify approaches to brand storytelling.

The art of storytelling has become widely used by brands. Brands have moved toward storydoing, where they aim to carry out what they tell in their stories, i.e. from storytelling to action. Advertising, like storytelling, uses this technique to raise awareness of brands and to demonstrate their importance in society. In this chapter, in light of the above, we focus on the education sector.

Brand Commitment of Schools

Storytelling in education

From an early age, our parents introduce us to the world of stories through characters in specific spaces with a plot and resolution. However, we long for these stories to contain our own reality as well, so that we can identify with them. Bettelheim and Furió (1977) corroborate that when a child identifies with the various characters in stories, they begin to experience for themselves feelings of justice, fidelity, love, courage, etc.—not as an imposed lesson, but as a discovery, as an organic part of the adventure of living.

According to Herranz (2005), stories are a useful tool for those seeking self-knowledge and learning about vital issues such as power, loss, envy, death, illness, family relationships, sexual identity, fear, and complexes, among others. Reading children's literature in childhood allows children to explore fictional worlds that present diverse realities and emotions and to work through fictional characters. Therefore, reading children's literature can contribute to children's emotional and social development. For this, a "mediated reading" technique can be used (Riquelme, Munita 2011), in which the educator acts as a mediator between the emotions of the characters in the narrative and the children's lived experiences. Since its beginnings, storytelling has been linked to the world of education. Thanks to it, children learn about the values that prevail in society. As we have seen, storytelling is present as a technique of advertising as well as education. Therefore, bringing these two universes together is not counterproductive, but rather synergistic.

Private companies have a commitment to society and, in fact, have the power to improve it. To communicate this global commitment, institutions use storytelling techniques, thus making a more positive impact on consumers. When it comes to the academic world, it is also necessary to understand that educational institutions have this responsibility toward society because they are no longer centers that educate new generations, but are also companies that play an important role in society. Therefore, it is legitimate to require them to be consistent with their actions and to implement CSR. Educational centers can not only achieve changes from the inside (education), but also from the outside (being socially responsible). In line with what has been stated above, CSR has evolved and has turned companies into organizations committed to the planet in terms of equality or environmental issues. We understand that when we talk about companies we are talking about companies from all sectors and, of course, the education sector cannot be ignored. According to a CSR report called "Sustainable Development and the Education and Training System" (CERSE 2010),

> the environmental education initiatives promoted by universities and by the Working Group for Environmental Quality and Sustainable Development created in 2002 by the Conference of Rectors of Spanish Universities (CRUE) must also be evaluated with the global perspective provided by the paradigm of sustainable development and the requirements of corporate social responsibility (CSR). (CERSE 2010: 15)

The integration of CSR in the field of education is considered a priority objective. In this respect, one of the most important long-term goals of the CRUE (2023) is to promote lifelong learning in order to foster the acquisition of values, knowledge, and skills that enable people to find innovative solutions to the social, economic, and environmental problems that affect them.

If we look at the 2030 Agenda set out by the UN, this commitment is reflected in the goal of "global education for sustainable development: ensuring that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development" (UNESCO 2023).

Therefore, educational institutions are positioned as brands with purpose because, as previously explained, a committed company is a body that must be aware of the economic, social, and environmental

challenges posed by today's society. It must be aware that it has a responsibility toward all stakeholders related to it (De la Cuesta González 2004). In order to communicate and involve society, educational centers have also made use of the storytelling technique that allows brands to rebuild their connection with the human essence (Costa Sánchez 2014).

Schools – The value of resilience in their narrative

If we follow what the authors of storytelling defined as storytelling (Vine, Richards 2022) as a combination of story and tale, we must first look at who the protagonist of the narrative is. In the educational universe, the protagonist is the student, who, as we will see below, is at the center of the narratives created by educational institutions. Indeed, the student is the main focus of attention and reflection in all educational activity. The fundamental motive that drives the development of any educational project is the recognition of the student as a protagonist in school capable of learning and developing their personality. Below, we analyze how the San Pablo CEU University Foundation, known as CEU, positions itself through Instagram as a committed brand focused on the value of resilience in its narrative.

In this study we focus on social media communication because in recent years, higher education institutions have become increasingly aware of the importance of social media platforms in strengthening their institutional identities. The fact that virtually all of the world's top-ranked universities have an active social media profile reflects this (Valerio-Ureña et al. 2020). These social networks are presented as allies for universities, as they enable interaction with different stakeholders regardless of their geographical proximity. From the students' perspective, they follow this type of account to check whether they fit in with the university environment they are shown. To focus the study more, we concentrate on Instagram. This social network is an important communication channel for universities due to its visual and audiovisual nature. Instagram has become an important tool for brand construction and management (Góngora Díaz, Lavilla Muñoz 2020) and is positioned as the fifth most used social network by international universities in the QS World University ranking (Valerio-Ureña et al. 2020).

The Instagram profile of the San Pablo CEU University Foundation (@fundacion_ceu) has 12,000 followers. Next, we analyze some of the campaigns that the CEU Foundation has carried out, to establish whether they meet the objectives of purposeful branding: the value of resilience in the story. First, it is important to define what resilience is in order to know whether these stories meet their objective: to be more resilient. For some researchers, such as Wolin and Wolin (1993: 65), the seven factors that characterize resilience are as follows:

1. the ability to observe oneself and one's surroundings simultaneously, to ask difficult questions and give oneself honest answers
2. the ability to maintain physical and emotional distance from problems without becoming isolated
3. the ability to create strong, intimate bonds with other people
4. the capacity for the self-regulation and personal responsibility necessary to achieve autonomy and independence
5. humor and creativity, understood as the ability to see the funny side of tragedy and to create order, beauty, and purpose out of chaos and disorder—usually a manifestation that adversity has been overcome
6. the ability to wish others the same good that one wishes for oneself and to commit oneself to specific values
7. the ability to give meaning to one's own life.

Resilience is thus defined as the "capacity of a living being to adapt to a disturbing agent or an adverse state or situation" (RAE 2023). Therefore,

the school builds resilience in pupils by creating an environment of caring personal relationships …. Adults working in schools must look for the strengths of individual pupils as carefully as they look for their problems, and show them. (Henderson, Milstein 2003: 26)

Case studies

Methodology

The methodology chosen to approach the research problem, in correspondence with the nature of the object of investigation, follows a qualitative methodological perspective through the analysis of content published on Instagram. The qualitative method is popular and effective when it comes to analyzing media content through concrete applications (Berelson 1952). For this analysis, we have used different authors to establish a relationship between the content that is published and the story that is told, based on what McKee and Fryer (2003), Scolari (2014), and Jenkins (2010) understand by *storytelling*. In order to achieve the proposed objectives of determining whether resilience forms a part of the narrative of educational centers, we followed the seven factors of resilience identified by Wolin and Wolin (1993) and analyzed whether they are present in the publications of the CEU Foundation.

Campaign #MiradasAtentas

#MiradasAtentas is a campaign that the San Pablo CEU University Foundation launched in April 2023 to raise awareness of the problem of bullying in Spain.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) and the non-governmental organization Bullying Without Borders, bullying is any form of physical, psychological, or sexual intimidation or aggression against a person of school age repeatedly in such a way as to cause harm, fear, and/or distress to the victim or victims (2023). The latest data provided by the WHO and the Bullying Without Borders show that bullying leads to around 200,000 suicides of young people between the ages of 14 and 28 every year; in Europe up to 24 million children and young people are victims of bullying and bullying-related abuse every year (World Health Organization 2023). In Spain, between January 2021 and February 2022, 11,229 serious cases of bullying were identified; suicide in Spain is the leading cause of death from external causes in minors.

Image 1. Screenshot from the #MiradasAtentas campaign against bullying

Source: San Pablo CEU Foundation's Instagram account (April 2023).

As can be seen, the CEU Foundation is positioning itself as a purposeful brand with a resilient story, as it uses Instagram to communicate its concern for a problem in society using messages of overcoming (resilience).

Additionally, in this campaign, the institution invites different personalities to be protagonists of its story: Vicente Vallés, Toni Nadal, Ángeles Blanco, Antonio Resines, and others have joined this campaign to amplify the message of the CEU Foundation.

As pointed out by Mangold and Faulds (2009), human communication primarily seeks to establish connections with people who share similar interests. In this respect, social networks have become the ideal channel to achieve such a connection, as they provide greater connectivity and opportunities to build strong, lasting relationships between brands and their customers. This type of campaign achieves this union that Mangold and Faulds studied, because an analysis of the comments of this post shows that the followers of the CEU Foundation praise this initiative, thus getting the user to empathize with the communication of the educational institution.

Image 2. Screenshot of users' comments on the #MiradasAtentas campaign against bullying

impopularesbook Apoyo 100% esta causa! @impopulares es una historia que trata este tema y quiere ayudar a muchos adolescentes! #MiradasAtentas

6 días   2 Me gusta   Responder

fernando_vega_de_seoane Brutal iniciativa!!!!!

1 sem   2 Me gusta   Responder

pilargarcialuna 😎 yo me las pongo, frente al acoso escolar

1 sem   3 Me gusta   Responder
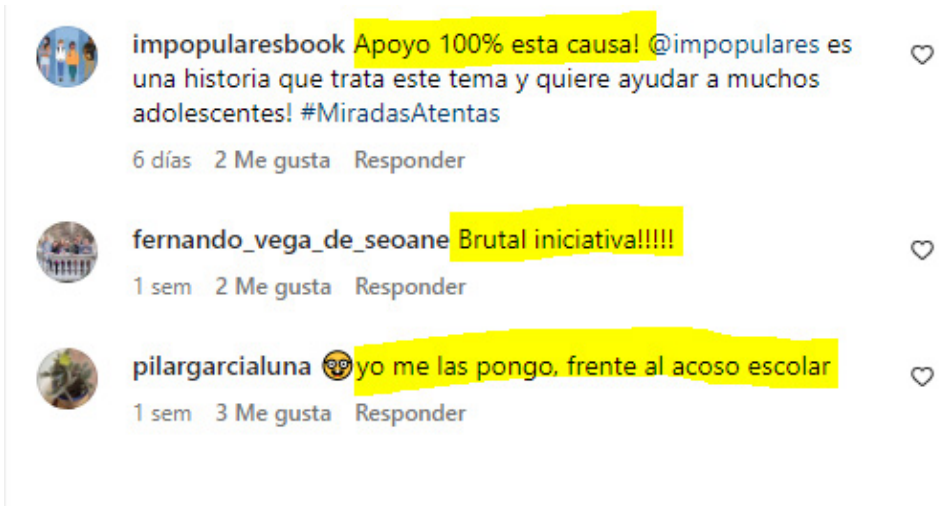
Source: San Pablo CEU Foundation's Instagram account.

Campaign "CEU Talks, el valor de los valores"

Another section worth highlighting is "CEU Talks, el valor de los valores" ["CEU Talks, the value of values"], a space where journalist Marta Barroso talks about values with different personalities. In this section, the protagonists explain their personal stories of self-improvement or share their vision of life. To shed light on this, we analyzed the content of this section in order to determine whether the CEU Foundation also, in this case, has a clear purpose of storytelling and resilience. For this reason, we studied three campaigns: the first, in which the protagonist is an example of overcoming, the second, where the protagonist is a prominent member of the CEU community, and the third, where the protagonist is a public figure.

Image 3. Screenshot of "CEU Talks, el valor de los valores" with Andrés Marcio

Source: San Pablo CEU Foundation's Instagram account (March 2023).

An example of self-improvement: This time, the protagonist in this section is Andrés Marcio Olona. Andrés is a football coach and high school student. He suffers from laminopathy, a very rare disease that affects about ten people in Spain. In the course of the video, Andrés recounts what it is like to live with his illness. We identify in his story signs of resilience when he declares: "I have never had the feeling of being sick, I lead a very normal life" and "I am in my chair without being able to be physically independent, and as I can't change anything, I have to be happy."

According to Wolin and Wolin (1993), resilience is "the capacity to give meaning to life." According to Andrés' story, he searches for that meaning day by day: "I'm more afraid of not living than dying." In this piece, Marta Barroso, who acts as a journalist and spokesperson for the CEU, also uses a discourse based on the values of resilience by assuring the audience that "you are the smile in the face of challenge and the sense of humor that you have" and that a symbol of resilience is "humor and creativity, understood as the capacity to find the funny side of a tragedy, and to create order, beauty, and objectives from chaos and disorder. They are usually a manifestation that

adversity has been overcome." The values in this piece are palpable in every second of the story, which is why giving a voice to Andrés is sharing with the world the values of the CEU Foundation—an institution that is committed to effort, resilience, and family. These values can be summed up in the protagonist's words: "my parents have taught me to make an effort, to overcome, to be happy no matter what happens …. without them nothing would be impossible."

Image 4. Screenshot of "CEU Talks, el valor de los valores" with Rosa Visiedo

Source: San Pablo CEU Foundation's Instagram account (April 2023).

Protagonist of the CEU: To give visibility to those who are part of the educational group, in this section they also give a voice to people who make up the CEU group. This technique makes it possible to put the employee at the center of the communication, which is technically known as *inbranding* (Cabré, Trepat 2021: 15).

> The employees of the brand, not of the company, are the company's first customers. When we talk about the employee customer, we mean that he/she must understand and share the essential values of the brand, feel proud of it, and finally, be predisposed to recommend it to his/her friends and family; a fact that, paradoxically, does not occur in most companies.

139

Rosa Visiedo is the rector of San Pablo CEU University, and appears in this piece to talk about education and values. Here, the protagonist becomes the voice of the institution, managing to convey messages through narrative. "One of our missions is to take care of our students," declares Rosa Visiedo, who states that "educating is also caring." The rector shares the values of the institution during this talk, making these values penetrate the viewer's mind. In fact, according to Castelló-Martínez (2018), the loyalty of audiences in relation to companies is based on seeing coherence between discourse and action. The rector's story is reinforced in the consumer's mind because what the protagonist explains is felt every day in the classroom. Therefore, what the institution does inside (in the classroom), of course, has educational implications for outside (society).

Image 5. Screenshot of "CEU Talks, el valor de los valores" with Tomás Páramo

Source: San Pablo CEU Foundation's Instagram account (April 2022).

A public voice: On this occasion, the protagonist of the section is Tomás Páramo, an influencer and entrepreneur who has more than 365,000 followers on Instagram. Tomás says that on this network "we transmit what we are, our way of seeing life, we transmit

what we feel." On his profile he talks about values and his faith. As he says, "to speak of faith is to speak of love." As in the case of Rosa Visiedo, Tomás acts as a spokesperson for the institution by sharing the same values. It is worth highlighting the definition that the San Pablo CEU Foundation gives on its website, which is linked to the influencer's discourse. The San Pablo CEU University Foundation was created with the intention of contributing

> … to the improvement of society through teaching at its facilities, by offering an educational model consistent with Christian principles, the values conveyed by the Gospel, and playing a role in public life that defends justice and the human being.

> The institution's goals include the search for academic and professional excellence, innovation in educational projects, and the education of its students in the values and virtues. (CEU 2023)

With Tomás Páramo as the protagonist of this episode, the San Pablo CEU Foundation brings its values closer to young people (Tomás is 26 years old) and, in addition, manages to amplify its message due to the impact of this influencer. In this campaign, the CEU Foundation's objective of transmitting its values is achieved thanks to the fact that the influencer has the necessary credibility to bring its values closer to users, which—according to Martín García (2021)—allows the influencer to become an interesting prescriber for the brand.

This content from the San Pablo CEU Foundation is a clear example of communicating a brand committed to society. The educational center aims to offer a quality education to its students, while at the same time assuming its obligation to improve society, or at least to be a brand that uses its platforms to offer a story of resilience that we can identify with.

Conclusions

Brand purpose is a mission that concerns and occupies companies. Thanks to their CSR actions and their communication channels, they have the power to change and improve society. Educational centers have a dual mission: being responsible for education, they must educate with awareness and, as a company, they must be a brand

with purpose. Among different communication and marketing techniques, this chapter has focused on storytelling as a way of communicating. Examining the subject in greater detail, we have analyzed how the CEU Foundation communicates on its Instagram channel. From the case studies we have detailed above, we have created the summary in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of the presence of Wolin and Wolin's (1993) seven resilience factors in the stories of the San Pablo CEU University Foundation campaigns

	Capa–city for personal responsi-bility	Humor and creativity to create order	Wishing others well	Giving meaning to life	Observing oneself and asking difficult questions	Maintain-ing physi-cal and emotional distance	Creating connec-tions with other people
Campaign (#Mirada-sAtentas)	×		×	×	×		×
Campaign CEU Talks Overcom-ing)	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
Campaign CEU Talks (Protagonist CEU)	×		×	×	×		×
Campaign CEU Talks (Public voice)	×		×	×	×	×	×

Source: own elaboration.

According to Wolin and Wolin (1993) and as shown in the summary table, the seven resilience factors are present in the campaigns we selected for this study. We can thus confirm that the San Pablo CEU University Foundation is committed to a narrative that highlights the values of resilience. These values, as we have analyzed, form part of the discourse of purposeful brands. This is why, through the content analysis of the campaigns, we have been able to define whether the San Pablo CEU Foundation uses storytelling as a technique to reach its public.

Table 2. Content analysis related to storytelling in the campaigns of the San Pablo CEU University Foundation

	Brand purpose: to change the world	Presence of a protagonist	There is a story behind	Action is taken
Campaign (#MiradasAtentas)	×	×		
Campaign CEU Talks Overcoming)	×	×	×	
Campaign CEU Talks (Protagonist CEU)	×	×	×	
Campaign CEU Talks (Public voice)	×	×	×	

Source: own elaboration.

In relation to the previous summary table, we see that the San Pablo CEU University Foundation uses the storytelling technique in its communication on Instagram, since one can observe the presence of a protagonist telling their story to convey the brand's values—values linked to resilience that travel and reach users through the story, because without a story there are no values and without values there can be no resilience. This table also reveals that this educational center acts as a spokesperson for powerful stories, but in its communication we can observe that they do not take action. Today, brands from different sectors are putting storydoing into practice, a concept that does not conflict with storytelling, but is part of its own strategic evolution.

Storydoing strives to ensure that the stories told become reality, i.e. that brands do what they say they do (Argency 2015). It is not enough to merely comply with what is said; storydoing also consists of adapting a coherent story to the brand's praxis (Freire 2017) so that, according to Barrio Fraile (2019), this evolution in advertising narrative models achieves engagement on the part of the digital audience.

Nevertheless, the San Pablo CEU University Foundation acts as a purposeful brand with a clear resilience story that, in the future, could carry out actions that highlight its values, thus becoming a brand that counts and acts in equal parts.

Bibliography

Barrio Fraile E. (2019). *Responsabilidad social corporativa: de la noción a la gestión*, Barcelona: Editorial UOC.

Berelson B. (1952). *Content Analysis in Communication Research*, Glencoe (IL): The Free Press.

Bettelheim B., Furió S. (1977). *Psicoanálisis de los cuentos de hadas*, Barcelona: Crítica.

Bowen H.R. (2013). *Social Responsibilities of the Businessman*, Iowa City (IA): University of Iowa Press.

Cabré A., Trepat M. (2021). *Inbranding: cómo impulsar la marca desde el interior de la organización*, Hilatura Estudio Editorial.

Carroll A. (1991). "Teoría de la Pirámide de Carroll," https://es. scribd.com/ document/71054185/S6-Teoria-de-la-piramide-de-Carroll [access: 4.12.2023].

Castelló-Martínez A. (2018). "Campañas publicitarias exitosas y tendencias publicitarias: una relación simbiótica," [in:] V. Tur Viñes, I. Garcia Medina, T. Hidalgo Mari (eds.), *Creative Industries Global Conference: Libro de Actas*, Alicante: Universidad de Alicante, pp. 293–309.

Cavender R., Kincade D.H. (2014). "Management of a Luxury Brand: Dimensions and Sub-variables from a Case Study of LVMH," *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management*, vol. 18, no. 2, 231–248, doi:10.1108/ IJRDM-07-2014-0103

CEU (2023), *Mission, Vision and Values*, https://www.uchceu.com/en/about-us/mission-vision-values [access: 4.12.2023].

CERSE (2010). *La Responsabilidad Social de las Empresas (RSE), el Desarrollo Sostenible y el Sistema de Educación y Formación*. Documento final del grupo de trabajo sobre Educación, Formación y Divulgación de la RSE, Madrid: Gobierno de España.

Corredera J., González M. (2011). *Diccionario LID. Responsabilidad y sostenibilidad*, Barcelona: LID Editorial.

CRUE (2023). "El papel de la Universidad como espacio clave para el cumplimiento de la Agenda 2030," https://www.crue.org/wp-content/ uploads/2020/02/2019.05.10-Manifiesto-Crue-Sostenibilidad-Valladolid_VD.pdf [access: 4.12.2023].

De la Cuesta González M. (2004). "El porqué de la responsabilidad social corporativa," *Boletín Económico De ICE*, no. 2813, pp. 45–58.

De Marcos J.L., Fernández A.B. (2018). "Nuevas tendencias en la construcción de marcas: una aproximación al storydoing," *Revista Prisma Social*, no. 23, pp. 435–458, https://revistaprismasocial.es/article/view/2745 [access: 4.12.2023].

Donaldson T., Preston L.E. (1995). "The Stakeholder Theory of the Corporation: Concepts, Evidence, and Implications," *Academy of Management Review*, vol. 20, no. 1, pp. 65–91.

Freire Sánchez A. (2017). *¿Cómo crear un storytelling de marca?: de la teoría a la práctica profesional*, Barcelona: Editorial UOC.

Góngora Díaz G., Lavilla Muñoz D.J. (2020). "La importancia de la construcción de marca en Instagram para las empresas periodísticas," [in:] J.C. Figuereo Benítez (ed.), *Estudios multidisciplinarios en comunicación audiovisual, interactividad y marca en la red*, Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla, pp. 129–138.

Henderson N., Milstein M.M. (2003). *Resiliency in Schools: Making It Happen for Students and Educators*, Thousand Oaks (CA): Corwin Press.

Herranz I. (2005). "Cuentoterapia: el poder sanador de los cuentos," *Más Allá*, no. 370, pp. 34–37.

Jenkins H. (2006). *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*, New York: New York University Press.

Jenkins H. (2010). "Transmedia Storytelling and Entertainment: An Annotated Syllabus," *Continuum*, vol. 24, no. 6, pp. 943–958, doi:10.1080/10304312.2010.510599

Jenkins H., Lashley M.C., Creech B. (2017). "A Forum on Digital Storytelling: Interview with Henry Jenkins," *International Journal of Communication*, vol. 11, no. 8, Forum 1061–1068. Article ID: 1932–8036/2017FRM0002.

Kotler P., Keller K.L. (2009). *Marketing Management*, Upper Saddle River (NJ): Pearson Prentice Hall.

Mangold W.G., Faulds D.J. (2009). "Social Media: The New Hybrid Element of the Promotion Mix," *Business Horizons*, vol. 52, no. 4, pp. 357–365, doi:10.1016/j.bushor.2009.03.002

Martín García A. (2021). "Percepción de los estudiantes del grado de publicidad y RR. PP. Sobre la relación entre marcas e influencers en Instagram," *Vivat Academia*, no. 154, pp. 57–78, https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=7931403 [access: 10.11.2023].

McKee R., Fryer B. (2003). "Storytelling That Moves People," *Harvard Business Review*, vol. 81, no. 6, pp. 51–55.

Meaningful Brands (2021). "Global Report," https://meaningful-brands.com/2021report.php [access: 9.06.2023].

Montague T. (2013). *True Story: How to Combine Story and Action to Transform Your Business*, Brighton (MA): Harvard Business Review Press.

OCU (2018). *El 73% de los españoles ya toma decisiones de consumo por motivos éticos o sostenibilidad*, https://www.ocu.org/organizacion/prensa/notas-de-prensa/2019/informeconsumosostenible070219 [access: 10.11.2023].

RAE (2023). "Resiliencia," https://dle.rae.es/resiliencia?m=form [access: 6.12.2023].

Riquelme E., Munita F. (2011). "La lectura mediada de literatura infantil como herramienta para la alfabetización emocional," *Estudios Pedagógicos (Valdivia)*, vol. 37, no. 1, pp. 269–277, doi:10.4067/S0718-07052011000100015

San Miguel P. (2020). *Influencer Marketing: Conecta tu marca con tu público*, Madrid: Lid Editorial Almuzara.

Scolari C. (2009). "Transmedia Storytelling: Implicit Consumers, Narrative Worlds, and Branding in Contemporary Media Production," *International Journal of Communication*, vol. 3, pp. 586–606, http://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/477/336.

Scolari C. (2014). "Narrativas transmedia: nuevas formas de comunicar en la era digital," *Anuario AC/E de cultura digital*, vol. 1, pp. 71–81, https://www.academia.edu/download/52211715/6Transmedia_CScolari.pdf [access: 10.11.2023].

Sicilia M., Palazón M., López I., López M. (2022). *Marketing en redes sociales*, Madrid: ESIC Editorial.

Silos J., Ruiz P., Granda G. (2015). *Informe Forética 2015 sobre el estado de la RSE en España*, https://foretica.org/wp-content/uploads/publicaciones/informes-foretica/informe_foretica_2015.pdf [access: 10.11.2023].

Snowden D. (1999). "Story Telling: An Old Skill in a New Context," *Business Information Review*, vol. 16, no. 1, pp. 30–37, https://doi.org/10.1177/02663829942370

Tran V.D., Vo T.N.L., Dinh T.Q. (2020). "The Relationship Between Brand Authenticity, Brand Equity and Customer Satisfaction," *The Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business*, vol. 7, no. 4, pp. 213–221, doi:10.13106/jafeb.2020.vol7.no4.213

UNESCO (2023). *Education for sustainable development*, https://www.unesco.org/en/sustainable-development/education [access: 4.12.2023].

Valerio-Ureña G., Herrera-Murillo D., Madero-Gómez S. (2020). "Analysis of the Presence of Most Best-ranked Universities on Social Networking Sites," *Informatics*, vol. 7, no. 1, 9, doi:10.3390/informatics7010009

Vine T., Richards S. (eds.) (2022). *Stories, Storytellers, and Storytelling*, Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Wolin S.J., Wolin S. (1993). *The Resilient Self: How Survivors of Troubled Families Arise Above Adversity*, New York: Villard Books.

World Health Organization (2023). *Youth violence*, 11 October 2023, https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/youth-violence [access: 4.12.2023].

ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE

Roser Serra Florensa
Abat Oliba CEU University, Barcelona
CEU International Doctoral School (CEINDO)
e-mail: rserraf@uao.es

Yago Lavandeira Amenedo
ORCID: 0000-0001-8530-0528
Abat Oliba CEU University, Barcelona

Technology as an Ally: Renewed Resilience and Spirituality Through the Impact of Augmented Reality (AR) in the Context of Dementia and Cognitive Impairment

Technologia jako sojusznik: odnowiona odporność i duchowość dzięki wpływowi rzeczywistości rozszerzonej (AR) w kontekście demencji i zaburzeń poznawczych

ABSTRACT

Augmented reality (AR) is a resource that, when applied to people with dementia and cognitive impairment, reduces the latency of response to stimuli and facilitates the development of personal abilities, with greater autonomy and quality of life.

Broadening the range of an individual's functioning has an impact not only on an operational level, but also on a spiritual level. The autonomy provided by AR impacts the person's self-awareness and allows them to recognize themselves as an agent of change capable of actively and consciously triggering cognitive processes. In other words,

it strengthens their internal control center, which is referred to in the scientific literature as a pillar of resilience. At the same time, identity empowerment benefits the spiritual health of the person, linked to resilience and referred to as a factor in health and emotional well-being.

ABSTRAKT

Rzeczywistość rozszerzona (AR) to narzędzie, które zastosowane u osób z demencją i zaburzeniami poznawczymi zmniejsza opóźnienie reakcji na bodźce, umożliwiając rozwój zdolności osobistych przy zachowaniu większej autonomii i jakości życia.

Poszerzenie zakresu tych funkcji ma wpływ nie tylko na poziomie operacyjnym, ale także na poziomie duchowym. Autonomia, jaką zapewnia AR, wpływa na samoświadomość człowieka i pozwala mu uznać siebie samego za sprawcę zmian w swoim życiu, który jest w stanie aktywnie i świadomie uruchamiać procesy poznawcze. Inaczej mówiąc, AR wzmacnia wewnętrzny ośrodek kontroli tychże procesów, który w literaturze naukowej określany jest jako podstawa odporności.

Jednocześnie wzmocnienie tożsamości osoby przynosi korzyści w aspekcie duchowym, co jest powiązane z odpornością i określane jako czynnik zdrowia i dobrego samopoczucia emocjonalnego.

Introduction

In the challenging context of the treatment and care of dementia and cognitive impairment, augmented reality (AR) emerges as a promising technological advance with the capacity to transcend traditional barriers and address not only functional needs, but also critical psychosocial aspects such as resilience and spirituality. This theoretical study seeks to explore how AR, by promoting autonomy and providing enriching experiences, acts as a catalyst for positive change in dementia care. By going beyond cognitive rehabilitation in its analysis of the application of AR to include fostering deep connections with the environment and others, this study aims to elucidate how technological developments can be effectively implemented in clinical practice. Through this analysis, we seek to comprehensively understand how technological advances in AR can be effectively applied not only to support the recovery of lost abilities,

but also to enrich the life experience of those facing the challenges of dementia and cognitive impairment, thus marking a step forward in the search for more holistic, humanized therapies.

Methodology

The complexity and multidisciplinarity inherent in the study of the impact of augmented reality on resilience and spirituality in the context of dementia and cognitive impairment require a methodological approach that allows for the exploration of interrelated concepts and established theories. The present study adopts a theoretical procedure to deepen this theoretical approach to research, drawing on psychological and neuroscientific theories that link autonomy and personal control with well-being and resilience. The premise that spirituality, conceptualized as the capacity to transcend the individual self toward the formation of meaningful relationships with others and the environment, plays a crucial role in the attribution of meaning to life. Such capacity for transcendence is closely linked to the perception of control over one's being and, by extension, over one's life, thus constituting the core of resilience.

In this theoretical framework, AR emerges as a tool that enables individuals affected by dementia to interact intentionally with their environment. Through literature review and conceptual analysis, we assess how these AR-facilitated improvements in autonomy and resilience contribute to greater spirituality and thus to a better quality of life for patients and their caregivers.

Examining AR from a holistic approach broadens the current perspective in empirical research and clinical practice, suggesting a paradigm shift toward treatments that embrace human complexity and thereby supporting resilience and spirituality. This approach underscores the need for a humanistic and multidimensional approach to technology in dementia care, thus promoting a significant improvement in the quality of life of patients and caregivers.

Strength in the Face of Adversity

Resilience as a key factor in the well-being of both people with dementia or cognitive impairment and their caregivers

The dictionary of the Real Academia Española defines resilience as deriving from the Latin *resiliens, –entis*, part. pres. act. of *resilīre*, meaning "to jump backwards, to bounce back," or "to withdraw," with the following meanings:

1. the adaptive capacity of a living being in the face of a disturbing agent or adverse state or situation
2. the ability of a material, mechanism, or system to recover its initial state when the disturbance to which it was subjected has ceased.

Over the past few decades, we have frequently used the concept of resilience to understand how certain people manage to overcome difficult situations and develop the ability to adapt and recover from adversity. Resilience has become a relevant research topic in the case of those suffering from dementia or cognitive impairment, as these people constantly face challenges and changes in their daily lives.

Resilience is defined as "a dynamic process that involves the ability to recover from adversity and to maintain or recover a satisfactory level of psychological and functional well-being" (Fletcher, Sarkar 2013: 98). It is important to note that resilience is not a static quality of a person, but a process influenced by various factors, such as social setting, cognitive capacity, emotional support, and personality. Rutter (1985) describes it as an individual's ability to adapt and recover from challenging or stressful situations. According to Vanistendael (1997), resilience encompasses five dimensions: (1) informal social networks, (2) sense of life and transcendence, (3) positive self-esteem, (4) skills and competencies, and (5) sense of humor. Resilience involves cognitive, emotional, and behavioral processes that enable a person to adapt to and recover from adverse situations (Luthar, Cicchetti, Becker 2000). These processes include the ability to regulate emotions, find meaning and purpose in life, establish positive social relationships, and use internal and external resources to cope with stressful situations (Richardson 2002).

Research has shown that resilience is influenced by both innate and learned factors. The innate component refers to an individual trait or personal characteristic, known as innate resilience, which drives a person to deal with adversity positively. On the other hand, the aspect of resilience that is learned is defined as a set of variables that provide protection against stressful or dangerous situations, promoting adaptation and being amenable to development and learning (Jiménez 2011).

In the context of people with dementia or cognitive impairment, resilience has been associated with the ability to maintain a good quality of life despite the symptoms and difficulties encountered throughout the disease. According to Brodaty and Arasaratnam (2012), resilience in such individuals can be expressed through the ability to adapt to change, maintain autonomy, find new meaning in life, and have satisfying relationships with others.

In this situation, a clearly defined correlation is established that also includes caregivers as a fundamental part. According to a study by Fernández-Lansac et al. (2012), caregivers who showed higher levels of resilience also had a better emotional and physical state. Furthermore, resilience was associated more with the personal characteristics of the caregiver (such as how they perceive and manage the caregiving situation) than with situational variables (such as the severity of the patient's illness). The authors conclude that strengthening caregivers' resilience may be an effective way to improve their health and the psychological well-being of the patient.

Importance of cognitive resilience in people with dementia or cognitive impairment

Cognitive resilience refers to a person's ability to maintain optimal cognitive functioning despite the presence of risk factors for cognitive decline such as aging, illness, and stress (Abellaneda-Pérez et al. 2023). Cognitive resilience has been linked to improved quality of life and reduced risk of dementia and cognitive decline in older adults (Kivipelto et al. 2018). Casaletto et al. (2020) reported that physical and cognitive activities in older age independently contribute to cognitive resilience and may reduce the risk of cognitive decline in older adults. Another study found that meditation and yoga may

improve cognitive resilience and reduce the risk of cognitive decline in older adults (Chételat et al. 2017). In addition, other factors such as a Mediterranean diet, a sense of coherence, and the ability to cope with stress and psychological well-being are also linked to cognitive resilience in older people (Charisis et al. 2021; Cattaneo et al. 2022; Arenaza-Urquijo et al. 2020; Ryff et al. 1995; Friedman et al. 2007; Boylan et al. 2017).

A sense of coherence, which refers to a person's ability to find meaning and understanding in their life, may also be related to cognitive resilience. A study by Cattaneo et al. (2022) found that sense of coherence mediated the relationship between cognitive reserve and cognitive performance in middle-aged adults. It may therefore influence the cognitive resilience of people with dementia or cognitive impairment. On the one hand, intelligibility makes it possible to adapt to cognitive changes and to understand the necessary strategies and supports. On the other hand, belief in one's own ability to cope with cognitive challenges increases resilience, encouraging active pursuit of strategies and support in order to maintain adequate functioning. In addition, the perception of purpose and meaning in life helps individuals to face cognitive challenges with a more positive attitude, motivating them to stay cognitively active and to seek alternatives and dynamics that improve their quality of life.

Recent research has revealed an interesting connection between the ability to handle stress and cognitive resilience. A study conducted by Arenaza-Urquijo et al. (2020) found that a better ability to cope with stress was associated with lower levels of tau, a protein associated with Alzheimer's disease, in cognitively healthy older adults with elevated levels of amyloid.

The connection between psychological well-being and cognitive resilience is a relevant research topic. Several studies have found that good psychological well-being is associated with a lower risk of dementia and cognitive decline in older adults (Ryff et al. 2006; Friedman et al. 2007; Boylan et al. 2017). These findings suggest that maintaining emotional balance and good mental health may have positive effects on cognitive health as we age.

The importance of education in cognitive resilience and the prevention of cognitive decline has been supported by recent studies. For example, a study conducted by the University of California over

20 years found that more education is associated with greater cognitive resilience and a reduced risk of dementia (Valenzuela, Sachdev 2006). These findings emphasize the relevance of cognitive stimulation and lifelong learning to maintain and strengthen our cognitive abilities, even in the presence of risk factors associated with cognitive decline. In more recent research conducted by Columbia University in New York, the cognitive functioning of nearly 3,000 people was analyzed to examine mild cognitive impairment (Angevaare et al. 2021). Several determinants affecting the chances of minimizing the development of such deterioration were identified, one of which was education (Angevaare et al. 2021). The results showed that time spent in education was associated with a lower risk of mild cognitive impairment (Angevaare et al. 2021). These findings further support the idea that education plays a crucial role in protecting our cognitive health. Investing in lifelong learning may be an effective strategy to keep our minds sharp and reduce the risk of cognitive decline.

In conclusion, cognitive resilience is an important capacity for maintaining optimal cognitive functioning and reducing the risk of dementia and cognitive decline in older adults.

Inner center of control as a key pillar of resilience in people with dementia or cognitive impairment

A person's belief in their ability to control life events is related to an internal center of control (Rotter 1966). This belief can be internal or external, meaning that a person may believe that they have control over their life or that events are controlled by external factors, such as luck or fate. The relationship between an internal center of control and resilience has been extensively studied. According to Ionescu et al. (2013), people with an inner center of control tend to be more resilient in the face of social pressure and have a more positive evaluation of themselves. They are also more creative and flexible in finding solutions to problems.

In people with dementia and cognitive impairment, an internal center of control may be particularly important because of its link to resilience. According to a study by Chang and Etnier (2009), physical exercise is particularly beneficial in positively influencing the level of self-esteem, general disposition, and certain cognitive

functions. Furthermore, according to Reich, Zautra, and Hall (2010), social support and observation of resilience models may be especially important for people with dementia and cognitive impairment.

The concept of an internal center of control has been explored in different assessment instruments, such as the Personal Behavior Inventory from Collins et al. (1973), which proposes different dimensions relevant to how we see the world. The first dimension is "orientation toward others"; people with high scores in it feel pressure to conform to the expectations of others and have low self-esteem, which makes them feel powerless to control the direction of their lives. The second dimension is "internal orientation," in which people have an internal plan or "psychological gyroscope" that guides their behavior and a clear idea of the direction they want their lives to take. The third dimension is "unconstraint," in which people are creative and free-spirited, allowing them to be spontaneous and adaptive to changes in their environment (Collins et al. 1973). On the other hand, a lack of constraints can be seen as a positive dimension of the internal center of control, as people who are less constrained in their behavior may be more creative and flexible in finding solutions to problems.

Troy and Mauss (2011) noted that resilience is a multidimensional characteristic that varies by context, age, gender, culture, and individual life. The ability to dissociate from negative stimuli, including one's own negative feelings, is an important protective factor against long-term negative outcomes. Rotter's Social Learning Theory argues that human behavior is influenced by constant interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental factors. Consequently, the way in which a person perceives their own control or lack thereof over events around them is relevant to the direction their life takes. According to Rojas Marcos (2010), "a fundamental element of resilience is locating and maintaining the center of control within oneself" (p. 74).

Perception of control can affect resilience, which is people's ability to cope with and overcome difficult situations. According to Smith, Dobbins, and Wallston (1991), a high perception of control can help people adapt better to chronic illness and can be especially helpful when the threat is moderate or severe. This is because perceived control can effectively influence the coping process and can have a beneficial effect on coping with adverse situations.

As previous studies have shown, there is a relationship between the locus of control and resilience: it has been found that people with an internal locus tend to be more resilient and less dependent than those with an external locus. A person's belief in their ability to control the events in their life can be internal or external and has been linked to resilience, creativity, and flexibility in problem-solving. In addition, it has been found that an internal locus of control may be especially important in people with dementia and cognitive impairment and that physical exercise and social support may increase resilience in these people.

The ability to dissociate from negative stimuli has been identified as an important protective factor against long-term negative outcomes, further highlighting the importance of an internal locus of control as a key variable in building and enhancing resilience (Wallston B.D., Wallston K.A. 1978; Troy, Mauss 2011).

Impact of resilience on physical and mental health in people with dementia or cognitive impairment

Resilience has been identified as an important factor in the physical and mental health of people with dementia or cognitive impairment according to Clare et al. (2011). Challenges and changes in their daily lives may be diverse, but resilience can help them cope and maintain good physical and mental health. In relation to mental health, Rickenbach et al. (2015) found that people with cognitive impairment who had higher levels of resilience also had lower levels of depression and a better overall quality of life. Resilience can also help people maintain social relationships and emotional support, which can have a positive impact on their mental health, according to Cohen (2004).

In a recent study, Meléndez et al. (2018) compared resilience, coping, and psychological well-being in healthy older adults, patients with mild cognitive impairment, and patients with Alzheimer's disease (AD). The results showed that resilience decreases as the disease progresses, with AD patients having significantly lower levels of resilience than healthy older adults and mild cognitive impairment patients. In addition, significant differences in psychological

well-being were found between the groups, with AD patients showing a significant decrease in the dimension of positive relationships.

Resilience has been linked to an improved ability to cope with stressful and traumatic situations, which may be beneficial for mental health, according to Campbell-Sills et al. (2006), Fumaz et al. (2015), and Hildon et al. (2010). Furthermore, resilient individuals tend to have stronger social relationships and perceive greater social support, as noted by Hildon et al. (2010) and Pidgeon et al. (2014). In general, enhancing resilience factors and resilience capacity could help both in preventing and coping with various pathologies and personal situations at any point in the developmental process, as suggested by Pidgeon et al. (2014).

Transcending Boundaries

Spirituality as a driver of resilience in people with dementia or cognitive impairment

In 1998, the World Health Organization (WHO) amended its definition of health in its constitution to include the spiritual aspect alongside the physical, mental, and social aspects. Since then, it has been widely recognized that spirituality plays a fundamental role in adapting to difficult or stressful situations, as it contributes to the development of human skills and competencies for care and preservation of life.

In general, spirituality can be understood as a complex concept that can be influenced by culture, religion, upbringing, family, and personal experiences—factors that certainly are not alien to any of us. Furthermore, spirituality can be a source of resilience and faith can be an important component of it. Spirituality can become an important and valuable source of strength, associated with improved quality of life and adaptation and resilience in the face of illness (Navas, Villegas 2006). The assessment of spirituality and its role are highly relevant elements in the comprehensive care of patients facing serious health problems or life-threatening illnesses (Radbruch, Payne 2009). Martínez, Méndez, and Ballesteros (2004) highlight the importance of spiritual well-being in reducing stress and symptoms.

Resilience is related to spirituality insofar as the latter can become a way of managing ailments, as an anchor in the midst of difficulty and illness (Martinez, Mendez, Ballesteros 2004).

Spiritual care is both a personal responsibility and the responsibility of health professionals, who have the task of attending to the spiritual dimension of the patient (Torralba 2004).

A broader definition of spirituality should encompass feelings of connectedness to self, community, and nature, as well as a sense of purpose in life (Mytko, Knight 1999: 439–450). Thoresen (1998) points out that the term *religious* refers to a person's adherence to the beliefs, values, and practices put forward by a community, which establishes ways of perceiving and experiencing life. It is also related to the ability to find satisfactory answers about life, illness, and death (Brady et al. 1999: 417–428). In this sense, spirituality can inspire people to seek connection and understanding of others, as it enables them to transcend the boundaries that separate individuals and helps them to seek a common purpose. By being aware that we are all connected and that our actions can have an impact on ourselves and others, people who have a sense of spirituality can seek ways to live and act in a more considerate and empathetic way toward others. Certainly, this is particularly relevant in people with dementia or cognitive impairment, as we can develop a greater sense of connection and purpose in life, which can help us to overcome adversity and challenges more effectively.

Innovation for Reconnection

Augmented reality: Key features

Knowing the importance of factors such as cognitive resilience and spirituality and their impact on quality of life, we can find in technology an ally capable of providing new means to enhance these concepts and adapt them to the requirements and needs of people with dementia or cognitive impairment.

Augmented reality (AR) is a burgeoning technology that has gained popularity in recent years. Unlike virtual reality technology, where the user is immersed in a software-generated virtual

environment and interacts with it through peripheral devices, AR extends the individual's interactive capabilities by establishing a connection between the real world and software-generated digital objects. These digital objects are overlaid or combined with elements of the real world, providing the user with an enriched and extended experience. AR offers a new level of immersion by allowing users to interact with the physical environment in a more dynamic and engaging way.

Basogain et al. (2007) state that AR is not intended to replace the real world with a virtual one, but rather to maintain the tangible reality that the user experiences by complementing it with virtual information. In this way, the user never loses contact with the real, physical environment in front of their eyes, while being able to interact with the digital information presented to them.

According to Azuma (1994), AR is an environment that includes elements of virtual reality and aspects of the real world. There is a combination of different stimuli from the real context and the virtual context that impact on the user, thus modifying and amplifying the possibilities for assimilation and learning. Having this continuous presence of the real world can provide people with dementia or cognitive impairment with reinforcement that facilitates this cognitive reconnection.

In order to be able to establish a connection between the real world and virtual objects or environments, AR can be applied using different methods. The pattern recognition method in AR consists of adding specific shapes or markers to the objects the user interacts with, which allows the AR system to recognize these markers and accurately overlay digital objects and their functionalities on top of the real objects, as mentioned by Kato and Billinghurst (1999).

The contour recognition method in AR involves identifying the outline of an object or part of an object and combining it with digital objects to create a more integrated AR experience between the real world and virtual elements. This approach allows for a more seamless integration between the real world and virtual elements.

The surface recognition method involves using touch screens or projections on flat surfaces, such as walls or floors, to interact with projected digital objects in real time. The application uses image recognition to allow for a more immersive, realistic interaction with the

virtual environment. This method allows the user to interact with digital objects in a more natural and fluid way, providing a more immersive and engaging AR experience.

The location recognition method is based on identifying the user's location using geolocation systems such as GPS. From this information, a virtual environment is generated that is able to relate to the user's real environment, allowing the superimposition of digital objects in the physical space in a precise and contextualized manner. This method allows for a more integrated AR experience with the real world and may present a viable alternative in the context of dementia or cognitive impairment with orientation problems.

The implementation of these recognition methods plays a key role in creating immersive, accurate AR experiences. Thanks to them, a seamless interaction between the physical environment and the digital elements is achieved, providing a seamless integration between the real and virtual worlds.

In addition to these methods, different authors categorize different levels of AR according to their complexity and the technologies involved (Estebanell et al. 2012; Lens-Fitzgerald 2009; Rice 2009):

- Level 0 uses the technique of hyperlinking the physical world. This is achieved through the use of barcodes, QR codes, or other image recognition methods. At this level, the codes act as links to other content without any 3D registration or marker tracking. It is similar to an HTML hyperlink, but without the need for manual typing.
- In AR Level 1, the marker technique is used as a basis. This involves 2D and 3D pattern recognition. According to Estebanell et al. (2012), markers are mainly square black-and-white images with simple, asymmetric designs. This type of marker can clearly be useful in patients with dementia or cognitive impairment, as they allow us to parameterize specific triggers associated with different cognitive stimuli and to generate work patterns and sequences adapted to each patient.
- Level 2, markerless AR, uses the GPS coordinates of electronic devices to geolocate and superimpose points of interest on real-world images. Lens-Fitzgerald (2009) defines it as GPS-compass-based AR.

- Level 3 is augmented vision. Rice (2009) argues that it is necessary to transcend the monitor or display in order to adapt to different formats of wearable displays (such as glasses). Once AR becomes AV (augmented vision), it becomes immersive. The overall experience becomes more relevant and impactful on a contextual and personal level.

Consequently, this mixed reality—in which coherent integration is achieved between the elements of the physical world and a layer of digital information—is integrated in real time with the physical environment, allowing a richer and more enriching interaction with the reality in which the user finds themselves. In short, an alteration and/or enrichment of the information of the physical reality is achieved through the integration of the digital layer in the AR experience.

Therapeutic potential of augmented reality in dementia care and cognitive impairment

Augmented reality has been explored as a therapeutic tool in dementia care and cognitive impairment. According to Corregidor-Sánchez et al. (2020), AR can improve activities of daily living in older people, including those with dementia. Furthermore, Lee et al. (2019) suggest that AR has the potential to promote well-being in older adults by providing immersive and enriching experiences. In a systematic review study, Zheng et al. (2020) found that AR video games can improve the emotional well-being of older adults. Furthermore, in a meta-analysis by Ng et al. (2019), AR was found to improve physical performance and psychological outcomes in older adults.

Regarding cognitive therapy, Irazoki et al. (2020) found that cognitive training technologies, including AR, can improve cognitive function in people with mild cognitive impairment and dementia. It has also been shown that AR can improve memory in older adults (Cao 2019). According to Quintana and Favela (2012), AR applications can provide real-time visual annotations to help dementia patients perform everyday tasks, such as identifying objects and remembering names. In addition, AR can also help improve spatial orientation and memory, as demonstrated in a study by Corrêa et al. (2007) that used the GenVirtual application for cognitive and motor

rehabilitation. In another study, Chapoulie et al. (2014) used reminiscence therapy in AR to improve the quality of life of patients with dementia. The therapy consisted of presenting patients with images of familiar places and objects, which allowed them to recall past events and stimulate memory. In addition, AR can also be used for the assessment and diagnosis of dementia, as discussed in an article by García-Betances et al. (2015) which reviews the use of VR and AR in the assessment and treatment of Alzheimer's disease.

According to Dishman (2004), AR can be used to create welfare systems that allow people with this type of impairment to delay their hospitalization. Undoubtedly, prolonging as much as possible the autonomy and independence of people with dementia or cognitive impairment brings about an improvement in their quality of life. We can even consider the use of this technology from a preventive point of view, as it can be used for activities that mentally stimulate the patient, such as reading the newspaper and playing computer games, which can reduce the risk of Alzheimer's disease (Papastefanakis et al. 2011).

It is difficult to dissociate one profile of dementia or cognitive impairment from another, such as that of a caregiver, whether a professional or family member. A profound relationship is established in which AR can be an important tool to reduce the efforts and stress associated with caring for patients with Alzheimer's disease (Al-Khafaji et al. 2013). In the same vein, AR is also effective as a communication tool between patients and caregivers, as demonstrated by the CIRCA software used in research in Scotland (Dishman, Carrillo 2007).

We can affirm that AR offers a broad therapeutic potential in care for dementia and cognitive impairment patients. By enabling mental stimulation, improving communication, strengthening memory, and reducing caregiver stress, AR is positioned as an effective tool in improving activities of daily living, emotional well-being, cognitive function, and memory in older adults. Moreover, its usefulness ranges from rehabilitation and reminiscence therapy to assessment and diagnosis. However, more research is needed to fully exploit its potential in this field and to develop more effective, personalized applications tailored to the specific needs of patients with dementia or cognitive impairment.

The personalization of augmented reality is especially important in the context of interaction with patients with dementia or cognitive impairment. The use of colors and high contrast that are more visible and easier for the patient to distinguish, or the use of gamification tools that more actively and playfully involve the patient in the AR experience, can be considered. It is also recommended to adapt the quantity and complexity of the digital elements to the patient's cognitive abilities and attention span, in order to avoid mental and information overload that may hinder interaction and planned stimulation.

According to Pensosi and Villamía (2012), AR makes it possible to create different scenarios that personalize a suitable environment for the patient and, depending on their changes, increase the difficulties of this reality and thus allow the medical team to make different evaluations according to the results.

We can conclude that the capabilities and functionalities of AR can be customized for patients with different cognitive needs. It can be adapted to different scenarios and levels of cognitive impairment and it can provide a learning experience more tailored to the individual patient's needs. This demonstrates the potential of AR in the treatment of cognitive impairment and dementia.

Evaluation of the effectiveness of augmented reality in the treatment of patients with dementia or cognitive impairment

One of the great challenges may be evaluating the effectiveness of augmented reality in the treatment of patients with dementia or cognitive impairment, which is undoubtedly a highly complex issue due to the different situations that may arise. We must focus on quality of life as a referent outcome variable to study the effectiveness of possible interventions in people with dementia or cognitive impairment without ignoring the difficulty involved in evaluating it, which stems from the fact that it is a complex construct for which there is no single theoretical or conceptual approach.

To assess the effectiveness of AR in the treatment of patients with dementia or cognitive impairment, self-report measures and scales

can be used to collect the direct assessment of the subject, as well as proxy information provided by caregivers through interviews. In addition, systematic observations through tools such as Dementia Care Mapping (DCM) can be used to assess the observed behavior of patients during treatment. Specific instruments such as the Quality of Life in Alzheimer's Disease (QOL-AD) can also be used to assess the quality of life of patients.

We can therefore consider that the evaluation of the effectiveness of augmented reality in the treatment of patients with dementia or cognitive impairment is a complex issue that requires specific measurement instruments adapted to the needs of each patient.

Conclusions

Spirituality is achieved through transcendence, understood as the ability to transcend the self and turn toward others, thus establishing personal and material relationships that give meaning to life. Fundamental to achieving this is the perception of having some control over oneself and thus over one's own life. This self-perception is closely linked to our inner center of control, which acts as a fundamental pillar of resilience.

In this context, augmented reality technology plays a relevant role in enabling people with dementia or cognitive impairment to experience the feeling of intentionally interacting with their environment. This not only promotes improved autonomy, but also has a positive impact on the quality of life of both the person with dementia or cognitive impairment and their caregivers.

When people with dementia or cognitive impairment are able to have more control over their lives through augmented reality, it opens a path toward regaining their lost autonomy. This translates into an improvement in their quality of life, as they can actively participate in daily activities, interact with their environment, and establish meaningful connections with others. In turn, this improved autonomy also has a positive impact on the lives of caregivers, who experience lower stress levels as they see their loved ones regain some independence and well-being.

In short, not only does the perception that they are linked to the internal center of control revitalize their resilience, which—together

with the improved autonomy facilitated by augmented reality—contributes to transcendence toward others, but it is precisely this transcendence that we can associate with spirituality, generating a positive impact on the quality of life of both people with dementia or cognitive impairment and their caregivers.

Bibliography

Abellaneda-Pérez K., Cattaneo G., Cabello-Toscano M., Solana-Sánchez J., Mulet-Pons L., Vaqué-Alcázar L., Perellón-Alfonso R., Solé-Padullés C., Bargalló N., Tormos J.M., Pascual-Leone A., Bartrés-Faz D. (2023). "Purpose in Life Promotes Resilience to Age-related Brain Burden in Middle-aged Adults," *Alzheimer's Research & Therapy*, vol. 15, no. 1, art. 49, doi:10.1186/s13195-023-01198-6

Al-Khafaji N.J., Al Shaher M.A., Al-Khafaji M.J., Ahmed Asmail M.A. (2013). "Use BuildAR to Help the Alzheimer's Disease Patients." Paper presented at The International Conference on E-Technologies and Business on the Web (EBW2013), pp. 280–284.

Angevaare Milou J., Vonk Jet M.J., Bertola L., Zahodne L., Watson C.W.-M., Boehme A., Schupf N., Mayeux R., Geerlings M.I., Manly J.J. (2022). "Predictors of Incident Mild Cognitive Impairment and Its Course in a Diverse Community-Based Population," *Neurology*, vol. 98, no. 1, e15-e26, doi:10.1212/WNL.0000000000013017

Arenaza-Urquijo E.M., Przybelski S.A., Machulda M.M., Knopman D.S., Lowe V.J., Mielke M.M., Reddy A.L., Geda Y.E., Jack C.R., Petersen R.C. (2020). "Better Stress Coping Associated with Lower Tau in Amyloid-positive Cognitively Unimpaired Older Adults," *Neurology*, vol. 94, no. 15, e1571-e1579.

Azuma R.T. (1997). "A Survey of Augmented Reality," *Presence: Teleoperators and Virtual Environment*, vol. 6, no. 4, pp. 355–385, https://doi.org/10.1162/pres.1997.6.4.355

Basogain X., Olabe M., Espinosa K., Rouèche C., Olabe J.C. (2007). "Realidad Aumentada en la Educación: Una tecnología emergente." Communication presented in Online Educa Madrid 2007: 7ª Conferencia Internacional de la Educación y la Formación basada en las Tecnologías, Madrid.

Boylan J.M., Tsenkova V.K., Miyamoto Y., Ryff C.D. (2017). "Psychological Resources and Glucoregulation in Japanese Adults: Findings from MIDJA," *Health Psychology*, vol. 36, no. 5, pp. 449–457, https://doi.org/10.1037/hea0000455.

Brady M.J., Peterman A.H., Fitchett G., Mo M., Cella D. (1999). "A Case for Including Spirituality in Quality of Life Measurement in Oncology," *Psycho-Oncology*, vol. 8, no. 5, pp. 417–428, doi:10.1002/(SICI)1099-1611(199909/10)8:5

Brodaty H., Arasaratnam C. (2012). "Meta-analysis of Nonpharmacological Interventions for Neuropsychiatric Symptoms of Dementia," *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, vol. 169, no. 9, pp. 946–953, doi:10.1176/appi.ajp.2012.11101529

Campbell-Sills L., Cohan S.L., Stein M.B. (2006). "Relationship of Resilience to Personality, Coping, and Psychiatric Symptoms in Young Adults," *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, vol. 44, no. 4, pp. 585–599, doi:10.1016/j.brat.2005.05.001

Cao Y. (2019). "The Influence of Video Game Intervention on the Memory of the Elderly," *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research (ASSEHR)*, vol. 300, pp. 206–211, doi:10.2991/erss-18.2019.41

Casaletto K.B., Rentería M.A., Pa J., Tom S.E., Harrati A., Armstrong N.M., Rajan K.B., Mungas D., Walters S., Kramer J., Zahodne L.B. (2020). "Late-life Physical and Cognitive Activities Independently Contribute to Brain and Cognitive Resilience," *Journal of Alzheimer's Disease*, vol. 74, no. 1, pp. 363–376, doi:10.3233/JAD-191114

Cattaneo G., Bartrés-Faz D., Morris T.P., Sánchez J.S., Macià D., Tarrero C., Tormos J.M., Pascual-Leone A. (2018). "The Barcelona Brain Health Initiative: A Cohort Study to Define and Promote Determinants of Brain Health," *Frontiers in Aging Neuroscience*, vol. 10, art. 321, https://doi.org/10.3389/fnagi.2018.00321

Chang Y., Etnier J.L. (2009). "Effects of an Acute Bout of Localized Resistance Exercise on Cognitive Performance in Middle-aged Adults: A Randomized Controlled Trial Study," *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 19–24, doi:10.1016/j.psychsport.2008.05.004

Chapoulie E., Guerchouche R., Petit P., Chaurasia G., Robert P., Drettakis G. (2014). "Reminiscence Therapy Using Image-based Rendering in VR," [in:] *2014 IEEE Virtual Reality (VR)*, Minneapolis (MN): IEEE Computer Society, pp. 45–50, doi:10.1109/VR.2014.6802049

Charisis S., Ntanasi E., Yannakoulia M., Anastasiou C.A., Kosmidis M.H., Dardiotis E., Hadjigeorgiou G., Sakka P., Scarmeas N. (2021). "Mediterranean Diet and Risk for Dementia and Cognitive Decline in a Mediterranean Population," *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, vol. 69, no. 6, pp. 1548–1559, https://doi.org/10.1111/jgs.17072

Chételat G., Mézenge F., Tomadesso C., Landeau B., Arenaza-Urquijo E., Rauchs G., André C., de Flores R., Egret S., Gonneaud J., Poisnel G., Chocat A., Quillard A., Desgranges B., Bloch J., Ricard M., Lutz A. (2017). "Reduced Age-associated Brain Changes in Expert Meditators: A Multimodal Neuroimaging Pilot Study," *Scientific Reports*, vol. 7, no. 1, art. 10160, doi:10.1038/s41598-017-07764-x

Clare L., Kinsella G., Logsdon R., Whitlatch C., Zarit S. (2011). "Building Resilience in Mild Cognitive Impairment and Early-Stage Dementia: Innovative Approaches to Intervention and Outcome Evaluation," [in:] B. Resnick, L. Gwyther, K. Roberto (eds.), *Resilience in Aging:*

Concepts, Research, and Outcomes, New York: Springer, pp. 245–259, doi:10.1007/978-1-4419-0232-0_16

Cohen S. (2004). "Social Relationships and Health," *The American Psychologist*, vol. 59, no. 8, pp. 676–684, doi:10.1037/0003-066X.59.8.676

Collins B.E., Martin J.C., Ashmore R.D., Ross L. (1973). "Some Dimensions of the Internal-external Metaphor in Theories of Personality," *Journal of Personality*, vol. 41, no. 4, pp. 471–492, doi:10.1111/j.1467-6494.1973.tb00107.x

Corrêa A.G., Assis G., Nascimento M., Ficheman I., de Deus Lopes R. (2007). "GenVirtual: An Augmented Reality Musical Game for Cognitive and Motor Rehabilitation," *Virtual Rehabilitation*, pp. 1–6, doi:10.1109/ICVR.2007.4362120

Corregidor-Sánchez A., Segura-Fragoso A., Criado-Álvarez J., Rodríguez-Hernández M., Mohedano-Moriano A., Polonio-López B. (2020). "Effectiveness of Virtual Reality Systems to Improve the Activities of Daily Life in Older People," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, vol. 17, no. 17, art. 6283. doi:10.3390/ijerph17176283. 10.3390/ijerph17176283

Dishman E. (2004). "Inventing Wellness Systems for Aging in Place," *Computer*, vol. 37, no. 5, pp. 34–41, doi:10.1109/MC.2004.1297237

Dishman E., Carrillo M.C. (2007). "Perspective on Everyday Technologies for Alzheimer's Care: Research Findings, Directions, and Challenges," *Alzheimer's & Dementia: The Journal of the Alzheimer's Association*, vol. 3, no. 3, pp. 227–234, doi:10.1016/j.jalz.2007.04.387

Estebanell M., Ferrés J., Cornellà P., Codina D. (2012). "Realidad aumentada y códigos QR en educación," [in:] J. Hernández, M. Pennesi, D. Sobrino, A. Vázquez (eds.), *Tendencias emergentes en educación con TIC*, Barcelona: Editorial Espiral, pp. 277–320.

Fernández-Lansac V., Crespo López M., Cáceres R., Rodríguez-Poyo M. (2012). "Resiliencia en cuidadores de personas con demencia: estudio preliminar," *Revista Española de Deriatría y Gerontología*, vol. 47, no. 3, pp. 102–109, doi:10.1016/j.regg.2011.11.004

Fletcher D., Sarkar M. (2013). "Psychological Resilience: A Review and Critique of Definitions, Concepts, and Theory," *European Psychologist*, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 12–23, doi:10.1027/1016-9040/a000124.

Friedman E.M., Hayney M., Love G.D., Singer B.H., Ryff C.D. (2007). "Plasma Interleukin-6 and Soluble IL-6 Receptors Are Associated with Psychological Well-being in Aging Women," *Health Psychology*, vol. 26, no. 3, pp. 305–313, https://doi.org/10.1037/0278-6133.26.3.305

Fumaz C.R., Ayestaran A., Perez-Alvarez N., Muñoz-Moreno J.A., Moltó J., Ferrer M.J., Clotet B. (2015). "Resilience, Ageing, and Quality of Life in Long-term Diagnosed HIV-infected Patients," *AIDS Care*, vol. 27, no. 11, pp. 1396–1403, doi:10.1080/09540121.2015.1114989

García-Betances R.I., Arredondo Waldmeyer M.T., Fico G., Cabrera-Umpiérrez M.F. (2015). "A Succinct Overview of Virtual Reality Technology Use in Alzheimer's Disease," *Frontiers in Aging Neuroscience*, vol. 7, art. 80, doi:10.3389/fnagi.2015.00080

Hildon Z., Montgomery S.M., Blane D., Wiggins R.D., Netuveli G. (2009). "Examining Resilience of Quality of Life in the Face of Health-related and Psychosocial Adversity at Older Ages: What is "Right" About the Way We Age?" *The Gerontologist*, vol. 50, no. 1, pp. 36–47, doi:10.1093/geront/gnp067

Ionescu D.F., Niciu M.J., Mathews D.C., Richards E.M., Zarate Jr, C.A. (2013). "Neurobiology of Anxious Depression: A Review," *Depression and Anxiety*, vol. 30, no. 4, pp. 374–385, doi:10.1002/da.22095

Irazoki E., Contreras-Somoza L.-M., Toribio-Guzmán J.-M., Jenaro-Río C., van der Roest H., Franco-Martín M.A. (2020). "Technologies for Cognitive Training and Cognitive Rehabilitation for People With Mild Cognitive Impairment and Dementia: A Systematic Review," *Frontiers in Psychology*, vo. 11, pp. 1–17, doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00648

Jiménez Ambriz M.G. (2011). "La resiliencia, el tesoro de las personas mayors," *Revista Española de Geriatría y Gerontología*, vol. 46, no. 2, pp. 59–60, doi:10.1016/j.regg.2010.12.002

Kato H., Billinghurst M. (1999). "Marker Tracking and HMD Calibration for a Video-based Augmented Reality Conferencing System," [in:] *Proceedings 2nd IEEE and ACM International Workshop on Augmented Reality (IWAR'99)*, Los Alamitos (CA): IEEE Computer Society, pp. 85–94, doi:10.1109/IWAR.1999.803809

Kivipelto M., Mangialasche F., Ngandu T. (2018). "Lifestyle Interventions to Prevent Cognitive Impairment, Dementia and Alzheimer Disease," *Nature Reviews Neurology*, vol. 14, no. 11, pp. 653–666, doi:10.1038/s41582-018-0070-3

Lee L., Kim M.J., Hwang W. (2019). "Potential of Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality Technologies to Promote Wellbeing in Older Adults," *Applied Sciences*, vol. 9, no. 17, art. 3556, doi:10.3390/app9173556

Lens-Fitzgerald M. (2009). "Augmented Reality Hyper Cycle," https://www.perey.com/MobileARSummit/Layar-Was-there-movement-on-the-AR-Hype-Cycle.pdf [access: 10.01.2024].

Luthar S.S., Cicchetti D., Becker B. (2000). "The Construct of Resilience: A Critical Evaluation and Guidelines for Future Work," *Child Development*, vol. 71, no. 3, pp. 543–562, doi:10.1111/1467-8624.00164

Martínez M., Méndez C., Ballesteros B. (2004). "Características espirituales y religiosas de pacientes con cáncer que asisten al Centro Javeriano de Oncología," *Universitas Psychologica*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 231–246.

Meléndez J.C., Satorres E., Redondo R., Escudero J., Pitarque A. (2018). "Wellbeing, Resilience, and Coping: Are There Differences between Healthy Older Adults, Adults with Mild Cognitive Impairment, and

Adults with Alzheimer-type Dementia?" *Archives of Gerontology and Geriatrics*, vol. 77, pp. 38–43, doi:10.1016/j.archger.2018.04.004

Mytko J.J., Knight S.J. (1999). "Body, Mind and Spirit: Towards the Integration of Religiosity and Spirituality in Cancer Quality of Life Research," *Psycho-Oncology*, vol. 8, no. 5, pp. 439–450, doi:10.1002/(sici)1099-1611(199909/10)8:5<439::aid-pon421>3.0.co;2-l

Navas C., Villegas H. (2006). "Espiritualidad y salud," *Revista Ciencias de la Educación*, vol. 1, no. 27, pp. 29–45.

Ng Y., Flora M., Ho F., Ip P., Fu K. (2019). "Effectiveness of Virtual and Augmented Reality-enhanced Exercise on Physical Activity, Psychological Outcomes, and Physical Performance: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis of Randomized Controlled Trials," *Computers in Human Behavior*, vol. 99, pp. 278–291, doi:10.1016/j.chb.2019.05.026

Papastefanakis E., Miliotis T., Perissinaki I., Kyriklaki A., Gargeraki A., Peteinaraki E., Simos P., Panagiotakis S., Maniorou K., Vgontzas A. (2011). "Savion: an interactive cognitive enhancement software for the elderly," [in:] *PETRA '11: Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on PErvasive Technologies Related to Assistive Environments, May 2011*, art. 49, pp. 1–7, doi:10.1145/2141622.2141680

Pensosi V., Villamía B. (2012). *Proyectos de la Fundación Orange a favor de las personas con barreras de comunicación*. Repositorio Universidade da Coruña, http://hdl.handle.net/2183/13211

Pidgeon A., Rowe N., Magyar H., Stapleton P., Lo B. (2014). "Examining Characteristics of Resilience among University Students: An International Study," *Journal of Social Sciences*, vol. 2, no. 11, pp. 14–22, doi:10.4236/jss.2014.211003

Quintana E., Favela J. (2012). "Augmented Reality Annotations to Assist Persons With Alzheimer's and Their Caregivers," *Personal and Ubiquitous Computing*, vol. 17, pp. 1105–1116, doi:10.1007/s00779-012-0558-6

Radbruch L., Payne S. (2009). "White Paper on Standards and Norms for Hospice and Palliative Care in Europe: Part 1," *European Journal of Palliative Care*, vol. 16, no. 6, pp. 278–289.

Reich J.W., Zautra A.J., Hall J.S. (eds.) (2020). *Handbook of Adult Resilience*, New York: Guilford Press.

Rice R. (2009). "Augmented Vision and the Decade of Ubiquity," http://curiousraven.com/future-vision/2009/3/20/augmented-visionand-the-decade-ofubiquity.html

Richardson G.E. (2002). "The Metatheory of Resilience and Resiliency," *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, vol. 58, no. 3, pp. 307–321, doi:10.1002/jclp.10020

Rickenbach E.H., Condeelis K.L., Haley W.E. (2015). "Daily Stressors and Emotional Reactivity in Individuals with Mild Cognitive Impairment and Cognitively Healthy Controls," *Psychology and Aging*, vol. 30, no. 2, pp. 420–431, doi:10.1037/a0038973

Rojas Marcos L. (2010). *Superar la adversidad. El poder de la resiliencia*, Madrid: Espasa.

Rotter J.B. (1966). "Generalized Expectancies for Internal versus External Control of Reinforcement," *Psychological Monographs. General and Applied*, vol. 80, no. 1, pp. 1–28, https://doi.org/10.1037/h0092976

Rutter M. (1985). "Resilience in the Face of Adversity: Protective Factors and Resistance to Psychiatric Disorder," *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, vol. 147, no. 6, pp. 598–611, doi:10.1192/bjp.147.6.598

Ryff C.D., Keyes C.L.M. (1995). "The Structure of Psychological Well-being Revisited," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 69. no. 4, pp. 719–727, https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.69.4.719

Smith C., Dobbins C., Wallston K. (1991). "The Mediational Role of Perceived Competence in Psychological Adjustment to Rheumatoid Arthritis," *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, vol. 21, pp. 1218–1244, doi:10.1111/j.1559-1816.1991.tb00467.x

Thoresen C.E. (1998). "Spirituality, Health, and Science: The Coming Revival?" [in:] S. Roth-Roemer, S.R. Kurpius, C. Carmin (eds.), *The Emerging Role of Counseling Psychology in Health Care*, New York: W.W. Norton & Co., pp. 409–431.

Torralba F. (2004). "Necesidades espirituales del ser humano. Cuestiones preliminares," *Labor Hospitalaria*, no. 271, pp. 7–16.

Troy A.S., Mauss I.B. (2011). "Resilience in the Face of Stress: Emotion Regulation as a Protective Factor," [in:] S.M. Southwick, B.T. Litz, D. Charney, M.J. Friedman (eds.), *Resilience and Mental Health: Challenges Across the Lifespan*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 30–44.

Valenzuela M.J., Sachdev P. (2006). "Brain Reserve and Dementia: A Systematic Review," *Psychological Medicine*, vol. 36, no. 4, pp. 441–454, doi:10.1017/S0033291705006264

Vanistendael S. (1997). *La resiliència o el realisme de l'esperança*, Barcelona: Claret.

Wallston B.D., Wallston K.A. (1978). "Locus of Control and Health: A Review of the Literature," *Health Education Monographs*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 107–117, doi:10.1177/109019817800600102

Zheng H., Li J., Salmon C., Theng Y. (2020). "The Effects of Exergames on Emotional Well-being of Older Adults," *Computers in Human Behavior*, vol. 110, art. 106383, doi:10.1016/j.chb.2020.106383

ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE

Yago Lavandeira Amenedo
Abat Oliba CEU University, Barcelona
CEU International Doctoral School (CEINDO)
e-mail: ylavandeiraa@uao.es

Iwona Sikorska
ORCID: 0000-0002-1309-8065
Jagiellonian University

Małgorzata Stępień-Nycz
ORCID: 0000-0002-5470-0083
Jagiellonian University

Marta Białecka
ORCID: 0000-0002-0909-7123
Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń

How Can Social Understanding in Adolescence Be Enhanced? Observations Based on Short-Term Conversation-Based Training

Jak rozwijać rozumienie społeczne u młodzieży? Wnioski z krótkoterminowego treningu opartego na konwersacji

ABSTRACT

Adolescence is a developmental period characterized by significant changes and intensified social interactions. The role of parents decreases and the importance of peer groups increases. Peers, especially friends, may deliver instrumental aid and emotional support; they may also promote a sense of security and be a significant source of affection and intimacy. Additionally, peer relations provide a testing ground for exercising many competencies necessary in complex

social situations, such as social problem-solving, conflict resolution, and negotiation. The intensified contact with peers may also enhance adolescents' social understanding skills. Therefore, practicing social understanding skills within a peer group may enhance one's social functioning in adolescence. For these practical and educational reasons, we aimed to confirm the effectiveness of conversation-based training in these skills and identify what factors potentially support or hinder its effectiveness.

Social understanding, the ability to understand oneself and others in various social situations, develops in childhood and adolescence. As this ability impacts satisfactory social functioning in adolescence and develops in a social context, a training process was proposed with the aim of enhancing the development of this ability based on the social-constructivist approach to social understanding. The efficacy of the training to enhance the understanding of one's own and others' mental states was verified using a sample of 65 Polish adolescents (mean age: 14.6 years). They participated in nine one-hour sessions and were divided into an experimental group (social understanding, $n = 26$) and two control groups: attention/perception ($n = 17$) and film/text literacy ($n = 22$). Although no direct effect of the theory of mind training was found, the results provided important observations for further work on adolescent social understanding training programs.

ABSTRAKT

Adolescencja to okres rozwojowy charakteryzujący się intensyfikacją i znaczącymi zmianami w obszarze kontaktów społecznych. W okresie tym maleje rola rodziców, wzrasta natomiast znaczenie grup rówieśniczych. Rówieśnicy, a zwłaszcza przyjaciele, mogą zapewniać wsparcie instrumentalne i emocjonalne oraz być znaczącym źródłem poczucia bezpieczeństwa, uczuć i intymności. Dodatkowo relacje rówieśnicze stanowią swego rodzaju poligon doświadczalny dla ćwiczenia wielu kompetencji niezbędnych w złożonych sytuacjach społecznych, takich jak radzenie sobie z problemami społecznymi, rozwiązywanie konfliktów czy negocjacje. Większa intensyfikacja kontaktów z rówieśnikami może również zwiększyć zdolność nastolatków w zakresie rozumienia społecznego. Z tego powodu ćwiczenie umiejętności rozumienia społecznego w grupie rówieśniczej może poprawić funkcjonowanie społeczne młodzieży. Mając na uwadze powyższe założenia praktyczne i edukacyjne, podjęto próbę potwierdzenia skuteczności treningu opartego na konwersacji w zakresie rozumienia społecznego z intencją

zidentyfikowania czynników potencjalnie wspierających lub zmniejszających tę skuteczność.

Rozumienie społeczne, czyli umiejętność rozumienia siebie i innych w różnych sytuacjach społecznych, rozwija się w dzieciństwie i okresie dojrzewania. Ponieważ umiejętność ta wpływa na efektywne funkcjonowanie społeczne nastolatków i rozwija się w kontekście społecznym, zaproponowano trening, którego celem jest stymulowanie rozwoju tej umiejętności w oparciu o społeczno-konstruktywistyczne podejście do rozumienia społecznego. Skuteczność treningu doskonalącego rozumienie własnych i cudzych stanów mentalnych zbadano na próbie polskiej młodzieży (N = 65, średni wiek = 14,6 lat). Adolescenci wzięli udział w dziewięciu półtoragodzinnych sesjach, w podziale na trzy grupy: jedną eksperymentalną (rozumienie społeczne, n = 26) i dwie grupy kontrolne – percepcja–uwaga (n = 17) i literatura–film (n = 22). Pomimo że nie stwierdzono bezpośredniego wpływu treningu teorii umysłu, wyniki dostarczyły ważnych obserwacji do dalszych prac nad treningiem rozumienia społecznego wśród młodzieży.

Social Understanding and Social Functioning in Adolescence

Social understanding (SU) is a broad concept that describes a person's understanding of the social and psychological world (Carpendale, Lewis 2006). The first signs of such understanding are observed early in life (Astington, Hughes 2013; Białecka-Pikul et al. 2022). For instance, when children come to understand false beliefs—usually at the age of four years (Wellman et al. 2001)—it is considered a significant milestone in the development of this ability. Nonetheless, SU develops far beyond the preschool years into middle childhood and adolescence (Devine, Lecce 2021). As children age, their theory of mind develops from an intuitive to a reflective understanding of self and others and transforms into an ability based on a recursive, interpretative understanding of minds (Astington, Hughes 2013).

SU enables one to understand and deal with ambiguity in social situations (Białecka-Pikul et al. 2017), to make flexible and differentiated interpretations of situations or information (Weimer et al. 2017), understand non-literal language (e.g., jokes, sarcasm, metaphors or hints; see Happé 1995; Hauptman et al. 2023), and to persuade others (Kołodziejczyk, Bosacki 2016). The development of SU can be advanced through interactions with others and through

language, which entails communication and understanding (Carpendale, Lewis 2020). Indeed, many lines of research confirm the significance of social influence on the development of theory of mind in children (Hughes, Devine 2015b) and adolescents (Bosacki 2021; Hughes, Devine 2015a).

Research also indicates the positive reciprocal dependency between SU in children and their social functioning. For example, children who are better at SU can successfully join peer groups, harmoniously lead them (Peterson et al. 2007), and defend their opinions of others (Peterson et al. 2016) and they tend to be popular in their groups (Slaughter et al. 2002). More advanced SU seems particularly important in adolescents' navigation of the increasingly complex social world (Bosacki 2021). For example, adolescents need to understand persuasive messages because it enables them to resist information that is inconsistent with their values and needs or to guard against attempts at manipulation (Castonguay 2022). They also need to understand non-literal language (an ability based on both linguistic and social cognitive mechanisms; see Hauptman et al. 2023), which is commonly used in many social situations and is crucial to communicative success.

Perspective-taking, the cognitive process of understanding another's point of view, enables individuals to engage in more flexible social behavior and to moderate their social relationships (Van der Graaff et al. 2018; Derksen et al. 2018). Engaging in social perspective-taking can promote high-quality relationships and successful friendships (Flannery, Smith 2017). Moreover, higher SU abilities are related to building friendships among adolescent girls (Gazelle et al. 2022), satisfactory relationships with peers in adolescent boys (conceptualized as higher peer attachment) (Białecka-Pikul et al. 2021), and lower social dissatisfaction and loneliness in both genders (Bosacki et al. 2020; Caputi et al. 2017).

Additionally, lower levels of SU may be associated with adverse outcomes. For example, in adolescents who have been exposed to violence, lower SU was related to externalizing problems (Heleniak, McLaughlin 2020). A recent meta-analysis revealed that theory of mind deficits are associated with higher suicidality in clinical samples of adults and adolescents (Nestor, Sutherland 2022). Not forejudging the direction or nature of this relationship (causal or merely

correlational), the authors suggest that theory of mind may be targeted and modified with interventions to reduce this risk in vulnerable populations.

Social understanding is critical to navigating the increasingly complex social world of adolescents (Weimer et al. 2021) and dealing with the higher vulnerability to mental health problems stemming from hormonal, neurological, social, and psychological changes that cumulate in adolescence (Blakemore 2019). Therefore, it is reasonable to attempt to support adolescents in developing SU, not only in atypically developing or especially vulnerable groups, but also in typically developing youths representative of the general population. Such training could be a protective factor in this exceptionally dynamic period of life rich in affective-social engagement (Crone, Dahl 2012).

Moreover, there is convincing evidence that adolescence is a time of further improvement of SU, as illustrated by both cross-sectional (Gabriel et al. 2021) and longitudinal studies (Białecka-Pikul et al. 2020), even though this progress is sometimes very subtle (Stępień-Nycz et al. 2021). Furthermore, an analysis of adolescents' performance level in different measures of advanced theory of mind shows that there is still room for improvement, as no ceiling effect was observed in many commonly used tasks measuring different aspects of social cognition (Białecka-Pikul et al. 2016). Therefore, it seems plausible to ask how such interventions should be prepared to enhance adolescents' abilities and what kind of training is effective regarding SU.

How Should Social Understanding Be Practiced in Adolescence?

Even though SU develops naturally through social contact with one's family, school, and peer groups, strong evidence indicates the effectiveness of theory of mind training in different groups. A meta-analysis of theory of mind training programs for children (both typically developing children and those with autistic spectrum disorder) tested in controlled studies (Hofmann et al. 2016) showed a moderate positive effect on children's theory of mind. Notably, the positive effect of social cognition training was observed not only during early childhood, but also during middle childhood and adulthood, as

indicated by a recent meta-analysis of studies with healthy participants (Roheger et al. 2022).

The training programs included in the meta-analyses covered many procedures (e.g., narratives, conversations, discussions, videos, role-playing, corrective feedback, and sociodramatic play). It was impossible to analyze differences in efficacy according to the specific content of the training program. However, many studies have confirmed the effectiveness of programs based on conversation and reflecting on or discussing the mental states of oneself and others. For example, Lecce et al. (2014) found that the exposure to conversations rich in mental states improved SU in 9–10-year-old children. Meanwhile, Bianco et al. (2016) aimed to identify the mechanism underlying this improvement and concluded that providing scaffolding for a more mature understanding of social situations is essential. This claim aligns with the socio-constructivist approach to social understanding development, emphasizing the significance of conversations that raise the opportunity to share thoughts and differentiate, confront, and coordinate one's perspective with that of others (Carpendale, Lewis 2015).

The above-mentioned meta-analyses (Roheger et al. 2022) did not include training programs for healthy adolescents due to the scarcity of studies on this age group. Indeed, research on SU development and its enhancement is mainly conducted on children or preadolescents; studies that have assessed the influence of social skill training programs on SU in adolescents with autistic spectrum disorder are an exception (Lecheler et al. 2021; Zheng et al. 2021). This scarcity may be related to the fact that researchers' interest in adolescence in the context of SU development only recently started to grow (Devine, Lecce 2021). However, the significance of SU for adolescents' social functioning and mental health makes promoting and training SU abilities in this age group very reasonable.

The Current Study

Short-term group workshops are an effective and attractive form of training for adolescents. Active participation in training sessions, discussions, narratives and shared reflections on issues related to mental life allow for the shared construction of SU by the attendees,

thus reflecting the socio-constructivist view of social understanding development (Carpendale, Lewis 2006). The formal aspects of the sessions conducted for the present study relied on the assumption that the natural school environment would be adolescent-friendly and would guarantee the ecological validity of the study. The content of the sessions was mainly based on the authors' experience and the results of many previous studies (following evidence-based practice). However, the content was also inspired by three programs: the proposal of Bosacki (2008), which aims to stimulate the youths' social reflectivity and understanding of themselves and others; the Penn Resiliency Program (Brunwasser et al. 2009), which aims to promote optimism and realistic attitude toward discomfort or failure; and the Freiburger Anti-Gewalt-Training (Fröhlich-Gildhoff 2006), which aims to prevent aggressive behavior among adolescents by enhancing their social and emotional competence.

Our research tested the efficacy of social understanding training in adolescents. We adopted a research design with one experimental group (social understanding group) and two control groups, which participated in training focused on other processes (attention/perception in one group and text/film literacy in the second). All adolescents participated in the pre-test, training sessions, and post-test. We hypothesized that in the post-test, the training group participants would present a higher level of social understanding than students from either control group, even if some progress was observed in all groups.

Method

Participants

A total of 100 students from a junior high school in Krakow, Poland were recruited to participate in the study. However, the final post-test data were unavailable for 35 students, so we excluded them from the analysis. Little's MCAR test revealed that the missing data were missing completely at random (chi^2 = 11.92, *df* = 11, *p* = .370); thus, we suppose that these post-test results were not inevitably related to the distribution of other variables. Moreover, the groups with complete and incomplete data did not differ at T1 in any variable

related to social understanding (Wilks' lambda = .92; $F_{(6,90)}$ = 1.29; p = .269), gender (chi^2 = 0.02, df = 1, p = .766), or age ($F_{(1,98)}$ = 1.90; p = .171).

All subsequent analyses are reported for the limited group (N = 65; 37 girls and 28 boys), aged 12.67–15.33 years at T1 (M = 14.31, SD = 0.53) and 13.08–15.67 years at T2 (M = 14.68, SD = 0.52). The participants were randomly divided into three subgroups with three training programs: one experimental group and two control groups. The training was conducted and post-test data were provided by 17 participants in the first control group (C1: attention/perception workshop), 22 participants in the second control group (C2: literacy/film workshop), and 26 participants in the experimental group (E: social understanding workshop).

Procedure

This study was part of a larger longitudinal project (*Psychological Selves in Social Worlds: Attachment, Theory of Mind, and Self-Concept in Adolescence*) conducted at the Institute of Psychology and the Institute of Applied Psychology at Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland. The project received the approval of the Research Ethics Committee of the Institute of Psychology, Jagiellonian University.

The study was planned as a natural experiment, with two measurement time-points separated by the training sessions. T1, which included the pre-test assessment, took place in February 2018. T2, which included the post-test, was conducted in June 2018.

An initial meeting was conducted to present the purpose of the training as promoting skills that young people need in the 21st century. Next, written consent was obtained from parents and students. The pre-test and post-test measures (see below for details) were administered in group form during school. Each of the testing sessions lasted about 45 minutes. During the second meeting, all participants were randomly assigned to one of three training groups (students drew lots from a box). Each group participated in nine one-hour sessions at approximately one-week intervals (following the organization of the school year).

In each group, the training sessions took a similar course. Each session started with a short warm-up aimed at activating the group

and creating a positive atmosphere, which was followed by the main activity; each session ended with a summary. All training sessions took place in school during regular school classes. The sessions and pre- and post-test assessments were conducted by trained fourth- and fifth-year psychology students and were supervised by the expert from the project group.

The training provided to Group C1 (attention/perception workshop) involved cognitive processes such as perception, attention, memory, and motor coordination skills. Group C2 (literacy/film workshop) participated in meetings for improving the ability to analyze literary texts and films. Both control groups therefore practiced competencies necessary for young people, but not related directly to social understanding. Group E (the experimental group) participated in a social understanding workshop and practiced skills such as understanding oneself and others, perspective-taking, empathic sensitivity, persuasion, and perceiving and understanding ambiguity.

In the experimental group, the main part of each session included active scenarios preceded by a short introduction to the session's main topic. Each scenario required the active participation of all students (supervised and assisted by the trainer), followed by a discussion of and reflection on their experience, feelings, and thoughts (moderated by the trainer). The full content of all scenarios is available in Polish (Białecka-Pikul et al. 2016).

Measures

In the pre-test and post-test, three measures of social understanding ability were used: the Self-Persuasion Story Task (Kołodziejczyk, Bosacki 2016), the Flexibility and Automaticity of Social Cognition (FASC; Hayward, Homer 2016), and the Modified Hinting Task (MHT; Corcoran et al. 1995; Polish version: Maciurzyńska et al. 2011). All the participants' responses were collected by a paper-and-pencil method during the group sessions. A detailed description of all tasks, including reliability values, model stories, and coding systems, can be found in Białecka-Pikul et al. (2021).

The Self-Persuasion Story Task consists of four stories that describe situations in which the main character needs to change their attitude toward a particular situation, person, or activity and to

convince themselves of something (e.g., learning French or eating less sweets). After reading each story, the participants were asked to provide possible strategies for self-persuasion (i.e., how the character could convince themselves to change their attitude) and to explain how the proposed strategies could be effective. All answers were analyzed in terms of psychological complexity (i.e., whether they referred to behaviors or mental states that differed in complexity, such as perception, desires, motives, emotions, or beliefs) and were scored on a scale from 0 to 3 points. Two indices were calculated: the psychological complexity of the proposed strategies (SPPS) and the psychological complexity of the explanations (SPES). Two randomly selected stories were used in the pre-test, and the other two were used in the post-test. The mean value calculated for the two stories was used in the analysis for both indices.

The Flexibility and Automaticity of Social Cognition utilizes comic-style cartoons that depict ambiguous social stories, sometimes accompanied by written dialogues and narrator's comments. The participant follows the cartoon stories and explains the behavior of the protagonist(s). In this study, we used only the indicators for the flexibility of social cognition, understood as the ability to perceive many different aspects of social situations, as indicated by mental state reasoning. The number and complexity of mental terms used in the task are related to the multidimensionality and depth of social reasoning (Hayward, Homer 2016).

The analyses took two indices into account: the number of mental state responses (FAMSR; i.e., the number of utterances containing unique mental states) and the number of mental state terms (FAMST). As the length of the answers was unlimited, each person could use any number of state terms and the possible scores in both indices had no upper limit. Three randomly selected stories were used in the pre-test, while two different stories were used in the post-test. For each index, the mean number of mental state terms/mental state responses from all the stories at a given time-point was calculated and used in the analysis.

The Modified Hinting Task includes short stories that describe a social situation and a statement by the protagonist that contains an indirect request for information. The original individual, interview-based procedure was modified into a paper-and-pencil

version that can be used in a group format. After reading each story, the participant is asked to explain the exact meaning of the non-literal utterance. This requires the participant to think about the protagonist's thoughts. The psychological complexity of the answers is scored on a scale of 0–4 points, considering both the appropriateness of the answer and the perspective expressed (egocentric/realistic vs. complex/interpersonal). In the pre-test, three stories were randomly selected; in the post-test, three different stories were used. At both time-points, the mean of the scores from all three stories was calculated and used in the analysis.

Results

Analytical Strategy

As mentioned above, data from students who did not participate in the post-test were removed from the analysis. The remaining data contained some missing items in specific tasks (one observation with one missing datum, five with two missing data, and two with three missing). The result of Little's MCAR test was not significant (chi^2 = 46.29, df = 39, p = .197); therefore, we may conclude that the missing data were random. The single missing datum was imputed using the expectation-maximization algorithm.

In the preliminary step, we conducted an exploratory factor analysis to explore the structure of the social understanding measures. The principal axis method for extraction and an eigenvalue of 1 were used as criteria for the number of factors. The analysis of tasks at T1 revealed four factors, mainly grouping items related to specific measures. As this analysis is not central to the training issue, we do not present it here in detail. However, based on the result, we decided to use separate indices from the tasks without grouping them into factors.

In the main analysis, we calculated descriptive statistics for the measures of social understanding used at T1 and T2, while also exploring gender differences and group differences (the experimental group vs. the two control groups) with MANOVA. Next, we conducted a series of repeated-measure ANOVA (2 × 3, time of assessment × group) to analyze the developmental change between T1 and T2 and the differences in the changes between the three groups.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics for all social understanding indices were calculated separately for each training group and both genders. The results are provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Means for social understanding indices at the two time-points (SD in parentheses)

Group	SPPS		SPES		FAMSR		FAMST		MHT	
	T1	T2	T1	T2	T1	T2	T1	T2	T1	T2
Girls (n = 37)	1.53 (0.56)	1.30 (0.62)	1.55 (0.57)	1.14 (0.64)	1.19 (0.66)	1.16 (0.39)	1.63 (0.97)	1.65 (0.81)	2.40 (0.88)	2.54 (0.79)
Boys (n = 28)	1.54 (0.51)	1.17 (0.38)	1.41 (0.64)	0.93 (0.56)	0.83 (0.51)	0.93 (0.43)	1.23 (0.88)	1.29 (0.76)	2.35 (1.04)	2.09 (1.03)
Training group E (n = 26)	1.60 (0.58)	1.31 (0.45)	1.44 (0.65)	1.05 (0.57)	1.13 (0.72)	1.08 (0.40)	1.53 (1.11)	1.42 (0.81)	2.37 (0.95)	2.48 (0.82)
Training group C1 (n = 17)	1.62 (0.60)	1.24 (0.53)	1.53 (0.51)	1.00 (0.56)	0.86 (0.52)	1.12 (0.42)	1.23 (0.84)	1.76 (0.85)	2.21 (0.86)	2.20 (1.18)
Training group C2 (n = 22)	1.39 (0.41)	1.16 (0.62)	1.52 (0.63)	1.07 (0.71)	1.08 (0.56)	0.98 (0.45)	1.55 (0.82)	1.39 (0.77)	2.52 (1.02)	2.30 (0.83)
Total	1.53 (0.54)	1.24 (0.53)	1.49 (0.60)	1.05 (0.61)	1.04 (0.62)	1.06 (0.42)	1.46 (0.95)	1.50 (0.81)	2.38 (0.94)	2.35 (0.92)

Abbreviations: E – social understanding workshop; C1 – attention/concentration workshop; C2 – literacy/film workshop; SPPS – psychological complexity of the proposed strategies in the Self-Persuasion Story Task; SPES – psychological complexity of the explanations in the Self-Persuasion Story Task; FAMSR – number of utterances containing unique mental states in the FASC test; FAMST – number of mental state terms in the FASC; HT – understanding of hints

The 2 × 3 (gender × training group) MANOVA for the T1 measures of social understanding revealed no significant main effect of the training group (Wilks' lambda = .87; $F_{(10,110)}$ = 0.83; p = .603) and no significant main effect of gender (Wilks' lambda = .88; $F_{(5,55)}$ = 1.48; p = .212). However, contrast analysis for single variables revealed a significant difference between boys and girls in FAMSR ($F_{(1,59)}$ = 4.95; p = .030, η_{p2} = .08), with the girls producing more such utterances in their answers than the boys.

The 2 × 3 (gender × training group) MANOVA of the T2 measures of social understanding revealed no significant main effect of the

training group (Wilks' lambda = .90; $F_{(10,110)}$ = 0.62; p = .795) and no significant main effect of gender (Wilks' lambda = .85; $F_{(5,55)}$ = 2.00; p = .093). However, contrast analysis for single variables revealed a significant difference between boys and girls in two indices of SU: again in FAMSR ($F_{(1,59)}$ = 4.42; p = .040, η_{p2} = .07) and in the understanding of hints (MHT; $F_{(1,59)}$ = 4.30; p = .043, η_{p2} = .07). The girls scored higher than the boys in both indices.

The repeated-measure ANOVA included the two assessment times as a within-subject factor and the three training groups as a between-subject factor. The outcomes revealed a significant effect of the time of measurement for two SU indices related to self-persuasion: SPPS ($F_{(1,62)}$ = 12.73; p < .001, η_{p2} = .17) and SPES ($F_{(1,62)}$ = 23.77; p < .001, η_{p2} = .28). A decrease from T1 to T2 was observed in both indices. For the three remaining SU indices, the main effect of the time of assessment was not significant for FAMSR ($F_{(1,62)}$ = 0.22; p = .640), FAMST ($F_{(1,62)}$ = 0.48; p = .492), or MHT ($F_{(1,62)}$ = 0.06; p = .803). Therefore, the hypotheses that social understanding would develop over time and that the positive change in the SU training group would be more pronounced were not confirmed. On the contrary, a decrease was observed in the two indices of SU over time, regardless of the type of training.

No significant interaction effect (group × time) was observed for any of the SU indices. However, pairwise comparisons revealed that for SPPS, a significant decrease was observed in Groups C1 ($F_{(1,62)}$ = 5.67; p = .020, η_{p2} = .08) and E ($F_{(1,62)}$ = 4.74; p = .033, η_{p2} = .07). Additionally, there was a significant increase in FAMST scores from T1 to T2 in Group C1 only ($F_{(1,62)}$ = 4.54; p = .037, η_{p2} = .07), with no significant changes in the other groups.

Discussion

Summary of Results

The aim of this intervention study was to determine whether social understanding training is an efficient method to support SU development during adolescence. The outcomes did not confirm the hypothesis that students who receive SU training demonstrate a higher level of SU than students from control groups (attending

attention/perception and text/film literacy training). In other words, the efficacy of the applied program was not validated.

The first step of analysis confirmed the absence of differences in the level of social understanding between students assigned to the different types of training during the pre-test, thus confirming the random selection for each group. However, contrary to expectations, no significant differences were observed between the groups in the post-test, indicating that students attending different types of training presented similar levels of social understanding before and after the training. Therefore, the students could not be differentiated regarding their level of social understanding based on the type of training they received.

Possible Explanations for the Lack of Effectiveness of Social Understanding Training

The lack of differences between the three types of training may be related to the characteristics of the training procedures used. The conversation-based SU training has been found to be efficient in children (Bianco et al. 2016; Lecce et al. 2014) and preadolescents (Caputi et al. 2021); therefore, we expected its efficacy to also be demonstrated among adolescents. Through sharing and discussing one's feelings and beliefs, adolescents may learn to understand their own and others' mental states, recognize others' perspectives, and understand ambiguity and complex emotions as motives for behavior. These abilities fall within the general concept of social competencies regarding societal rules and standards, social perception, self-reflection, and receiving feedback—and we cannot exclude the possibility that social competence played a role here (Gómez-López et al. 2022).

Firstly, the participants' social competencies were not measured; they could have mediated the development of social understanding, thus influencing the efficacy of the intervention. Secondly, the types of training planned in the control groups were not free of social aspects. For example, the text/film literacy group also discussed social issues connected with the stories, which may have influenced their social understanding. Evidence suggests that reading literary fiction enhances social understanding (Mumper, Gerrig 2017), even with a rapid onset of positive effects (Van Kuijk et al. 2018). The attention/

perception group participated in many exercises demanding cooperation within a group and competition between two or three small groups. Thus, all three training activities referred to general social competencies, including SU. We now understand that metacognitive training was presented in the experimental group, social skills training in the attention/perception group, and indirect SU training in the text/film literacy group.

Thirdly, if engaging in social interactions during training sessions increases SU, we should expect to observe an increase in the whole group. However, for the whole group, the analysis not only revealed no increase in any SU measures between the pre-test and the post-test, but in fact showed a significant decrease in self-persuasion understanding between T1 and T2. We could perhaps attribute this decrease to the specific circumstances of the post-test measurement likely biasing the results. The second measurement (in June) was conducted at the end of the school year, when students' attendance is lower (approximately one third of the participants did not provide data during the post-test assessment). Moreover, the coming summer vacation visibly influenced students' moods and motivation to participate in the post-test session. We noticed more illegible or frivolous answers in the post-test than in the pre-test. Moreover, as the post-test was provided by the same researchers who led the training sessions, the adolescents might not have thought of this last meeting as a serious test, but instead as another training session.

Other factors that could have influenced the efficacy of the training and post-test results are the participants' characteristics and group dynamics during the sessions that the trainers observed in all groups. The youths sometimes presented oppositional behavior typical of this developmental period, showing negativism or an intentional lack of cooperation with adults (Twenge 2017). At the group level, resistance (understood as actions showing disapproval and discord for suggested activities) may have been responsible for the effectiveness of the training. Resistance during a training session was manifested passively (as a low level of activity or silence) and actively (as questioning or undermining the trainer's competence) (see also Branka 2010). We observed such behaviors during the sessions and found that several participants (randomly assigned to the training groups) were in conflict with each other, as confirmed later by their teachers.

This situation could have impacted the group dynamics in all three training groups.

The last issue that should be considered relates to the measures of SU. All such measures were related to different aspects of social cognition, and they did not converge in a common underlying factor. This is similar to the findings of an analysis employing the same methods with a larger group of adolescents (Białecka-Pikul et al. 2021). Indeed, despite the availability of many measures to assess SU in middle childhood and adolescence (usually referred to as advanced theory of mind measures), convincing evidence is still lacking regarding their correlation to some higher-order factors of advanced theory of mind (Białecka-Piku et al. 2021; Osterhaus, Bosacki 2022; Warnell, Redcay 2019).

Furthermore, there remains a need to analyze the methods that assess not only their underlying constructs, but also their reliability and developmental sensitivity (Białecka-Pikul et al. 2021; Stępień-Nycz et al. 2021), as it seems plausible that different aspects of social understanding may present different developmental trajectories—later in life as well as in childhood (Osterhaus et al. 2016; Wellman, Liu 2004). Therefore, the measures we used, combined with the other factors, might not have been sensitive enough to capture SU changes over only five months.

Importance of Social Understanding Training for Mental Health in Adolescents

Social understanding is an important factor in adolescents' social lives, and it has practical implications for their daily functioning. The first practical aspect of social understanding is sharing emotions and giving consolation. Many studies on mental health in adolescents conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic show the importance of social relations and social support (e.g., Jones et al. 2021). A lack of such support might be related to the large decrease in adolescents' social wellbeing in Poland and worldwide during this time (Racine et al. 2021; Sikorska et al. 2021). Social contact during the pandemic was considered a supporting factor for adolescents' resilience and wellbeing, as it buffered against psychopathology (Rodman et al. 2022) and reduced feelings of loneliness (Nearchou et al. 2020).

The second practical aspect of using one's social understanding ability is conflict resolution. The social cognitive perspective in research underscores parents' and adolescents' interpretations of and justifications for disputes (Smetana 2011). Identifying one's own and others' intentions in peer conflicts may buffer against aggressive behavior during social conflicts (Dunn et al. 2022), as advanced theory of mind enables adolescents to adequately understand others' intentions and behaviors and to solve social conflicts without violence.

The significance of SU for social support of friends and peaceful conflict-solving behavior with peers and adults emphasizes the importance of social understanding training. Therefore, further efforts should be undertaken to devise more efficient SU training programs for adolescents. Taking into account the results of our study and the confounding factors that we observed, one way to increase the efficacy of SU training could involve working harder to control such factors. This could be done, for example, by considering external circumstances that may influence the process, such as the organization of the school year and school work, the management of group processes during training sessions, the elimination of distracting factors during assessments, and efforts to increase students' motivation and engagement in this process (e.g., through individual rather than group assessment or forming smaller groups for the pre- and post-tests).

Additionally, as the previous meta-analysis related to training efficacy suggests (Roheger et al. 2022), lengthening single sessions and condensing the whole process chronologically—in other words, using longer and more frequent training sessions, thereby making the entire process more intense and shorter—might also increase the efficacy of the training. Furthermore, as the components of social understanding are highly differentiated, focusing on a narrower range of components might allow for a better description of them instead of discussing many different issues related to SU.

Moreover, the control groups should be more differentiated so that the specific influence of social understanding can be assessed more precisely. For example, one group could engage in social interactions related to SU, another group could engage in social interactions and discussions that are not related to social understanding,

and yet another group could not engage in additional social inter-actions (e.g., a group with individual cognitive training or with no training before the post-test). Finally, considering additional factors that could potentially influence the efficacy of training for individual participants (e.g., social competence, cognitive factors, or motivation level) could further enhance the assessment of the efficacy of training and analysis of the confounding factors in more detail.

As directions for future research, we propose to improve our pre-vious research plan. First of all, the program should be a minimum of one school year long in order to develop social understanding in adolescents, because this would provide a greater possibility for sig-nificantly increasing this competence. Secondly, the project leaders should be more strictly prepared in order to achieve a unified method of training. And lastly, the efficacy of training should be analyzed using assessment of individual level of social understanding at the beginning of the project.

Conclusions

Although our study failed to enhance adolescents' social under-standing through the training program, we cannot conclude that all such training programs are fruitless and unnecessary. Considering the growing prevalence of mental health problems in adolescence and the importance of social understanding for youths' social lives, we should continue attempting to construct effective training programs. The failure in the current study may be a valuable lesson for future studies in this field.

Bibliography

Astington J.W., Hughes C. (2013). "Theory of Mind: Self-reflection and Social Understanding," [in:] P.D. Zelazo (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Developmental Psychology*, vol. 2: *Self and Others*, New York: Oxford Uni-versity Press, pp. 398–424.

Białecka-Pikul M., Białek A., Kosno M., Stępień-Nycz M., Blukacz M., Zubek J. (2022). "Early Mindreading Scale: From Joint Attention to False-belief Understanding," *European Journal of Developmental Psycho-logy*, vol. 19, no. 2, pp. 301–318, https://doi.org/10.1080/17405629.20 21.1911799

Białecka-Pikul M., Kołodziejczyk A., Bosacki S. (2017). "Advanced Theory of Mind in Adolescence: Do Age, Gender and Friendship Style Play a Role?" *Journal of Adolescence*, vol. 56, no. 1, pp. 145–156, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2017.02.009

Białecka-Pikul M., Kołodziejczyk A., Stępień-Nycz M., Sikorska I., Nęcki S., Jackiewicz M., Filip A. (2016). *Jak rozwijać rozumienie społeczne? Program warsztatów dla młodzieży*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Edukacyjne.

Białecka-Pikul M., Stępień-Nycz M., Szpak M., Grygiel P., Bosacki S., Devine R.T., Hughes C. (2021). "Theory of Mind and Peer Attachment in Adolescence," *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, vol. 31, no. 4, pp. 1202–1217, https://doi.org/10.1111/jora.12630

Białecka-Pikul M., Szpak M., Zubek J., Bosacki S., Kołodziejczyk A. (2020). "The Psychological Self and Advanced Theory of Mind in Adolescence," *Self and Identity*, vol. 19, no. 1, pp. 85–104, https://doi.org/10.1080/15298868.2018.1538900

Bianco F., Lecce S., Banerjee R. (2016). "Conversations about Mental States and Theory of Mind Development during Middle Childhood: A Training Study," *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, vol. 149, pp. 41–61, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jecp.2015.11.006

Blakemore S.J. (2019). "Adolescence and Mental Health," *The Lancet*, vol. 393, no. 10185, pp. 2030–2031, https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(19)31013-X

Bosacki S. (2008). *Children's Emotional Lives: Sensitive Shadows in the Classroom*, Berlin: Peter Lang.

Bosacki, S. (2021). "Theory of Mind and Peer Relationships in Middle Childhood and Adolescence," [in:] R.T. Devine, S. Lecce (eds.), *Theory of Mind in Middle Childhood and Adolescence: Integrating Multiple Perspectives*, New York–London: Routledge, pp. 142–168.

Branka M. (2010). "Opór," [in:] M. Branka, D. Cieślikowska (eds.), *Edukacja antydyskryminacyjna. Podręcznik trenerski*, Kraków: Stowarzyszenie Willa Decjusza.

Brunwasser S.M., Gillham J.E., Kim E.S. (2009). "A Meta-analytic Review of the Penn Resiliency Program's Effect on Depressive Symptoms," *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, vol. 77, no. 6, p. 1042–1054, https://doi.org/10.1037/a0017671

Caputi M., Cugnata F., Brombin C. (2021). "Theory of Mind and Loneliness: Effects of a Conversation-based Training at School," *International Journal of Psychology*, vol. 56, no. 2, pp. 257–265, https://doi.org/10.1002/ijop.12707

Caputi M., Pantaleo G., Scaini S. (2017). "Do Feelings of Loneliness Mediate the Relationship Between Socio-cognitive Understanding and Depressive Symptoms during Late Childhood and Early Adolescence?" *The Journal of Genetic Psychology*, vol. 178, no. 4, pp. 207–216, https://doi.org/10.1080/00221325.2017.1317629

Carpendale J., Lewis C. (2006). *How Children Develop Social Understanding*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Carpendale J., Lewis C. (2015). "The Development of Social Understanding," [in:] L.S. Liben, U. Müller, R.M. Lerner (eds.), *Handbook of Child Psychology and Developmental Science: Cognitive Processes*, New York: John Wiley & Sons, pp. 381–424, https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118963418.childpsy210

Carpendale J., Lewis C. (2020). *What Makes Us Human: How Minds Develop Through Social Interactions*, New York–London: Routledge.

Castonguay J. (2022). "Influencers' Disclosures of Advertising and Responses from Youth with Varying Levels of Theory of Mind," *Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising*, vol. 43, no. 3, pp. 237–255, https://doi.org/10.1080/10641734.2021.1973928

Corcoran R., Mercer G., Frith C.D. (1995). "Schizophrenia, Symptomatology and Social Inference: Investigating 'Theory of Mind' in People with Schizophrenia," *Schizophrenia Research*, vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 5–13, https://doi.org/10.1016/0920-9964(95)00024-G

Crone E.A., Dahl R.E. (2012). "Understanding Adolescence as a Period of Social Affective Engagement and Goal Flexibility," *Nature Reviews. Neuroscience*, vol. 13, no. 9, 636e650. http://dx.doi.org/10.1038/nrn3313

Derksen D.G., Hunsche M C., Giroux M.E., Connolly D.A., Bernstein D.M. (2018). "A Systematic Review of Theory of Mind's Precursors and Functions," *Zeitschrift für Psychologie*, vol. 226, no. 2, pp. 87–97, https://doi.org/10.1027/2151-2604/a000325

Devine R.T., Lecce S. (2021). "Introduction: Why Study Theory of Mind in Middle Childhood and Adolescence?" [in:] R.T. Devine, S. Lecce (eds.), *Theory of Mind in Middle Childhood and Adolescence: Integrating multiple perspectives*, New York–London: Routledge, pp. 1–12, https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429326899

Dunn C.B., Pittman S.K., Mehari K.R., Titchner D., Farrell A.D. (2022). "Early Adolescents' Social Goals in Peer Conflict Situations: A Mixed Methods Study," *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, vol. 42, no. 5, pp. 647–670, https://doi.org/10.1177/02724316211064516

Erdley C.A., Day H.J. (2017). "Friendship in Childhood and Adolescence," [in:] M. Hojjat, A. Moyer (eds.), *The Psychology of Friendship*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 3–19, https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190222024.003.0001

Flannery K.M., Smith R.L. (2017). "Are Peer Status, Friendship Quality, and Friendship Stability Equivalent Markers of Social Competence?" *Adolescent Research Review*, vol. 2, pp. 331–340, https://doi.org/10.1007/s40894-016-0042-z

Fröhlich-Gildhoff K. (2006). *Gewalt begegnen: Konzepte und Projekte zur Prävention und Intervention*, Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer.

Gabriel E.T., Oberger R., Schmoeger M., Deckert M., Vockh S., Auff E., Willinger U. (2021). "Cognitive and Affective Theory of Mind in Adolescence: Developmental Aspects and Associated Neuropsychological Variables," *Psychological Research*, vol. 85, pp. 533–553, https://doi.org/10.1007/s00426-019-01263-6

Gazelle H., Lundin J.K.S., Bosacki S.L. (2022). "Theory of Mind, Gender, Gains in Friendships versus Peer Acceptance, and Anxious Solitude from Middle Childhood through Early Adolescence," *Social Development*, vol. 32, no. 1, pp. 651–671, https://doi.org/10.1111/sode.12654

Gómez-López M., Viejo C., Romera E.M., Ortega-Ruiz R. (2022). "Psychological Well-Being and Social Competence during Adolescence: Longitudinal Association Between the Two Phenomena," *Child Indicators Research*, vol. 15, no. 3, pp. 1043–1061, https://doi.org/10.1007/s12187-021-09899-w

Happé F.G. (1995). "Understanding Minds and Metaphors: Insights from the Study of Figurative Language in Autism," *Metaphor and Symbol*, vol. 10, no. 4, pp. 275–295, https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327868ms1004_3

Hauptman M., Blank I., Fedorenko E. (2023). "Non-literal Language Processing is Jointly Supported by the Language and Theory of Mind Networks: Evidence from a Novel Meta-analytic fMRI Approach," *Cortex*, vol. 162, pp. 96–11, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cortex.2023.01.013

Hayward E.O., Homer B.D. (2017). "Reliability and Validity of Advanced Theory-of-Mind Measures in Middle Childhood and Adolescence," *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, vol. 35, no. 3, pp. 454–462, https://doi.org/10.1111/bjdp.12186

Heleniak C., McLaughlin K.A. (2020). "Social-cognitive Mechanisms in the Cycle of Violence: Cognitive and Affective Theory of Mind, and Externalizing Psychopathology in Children and Adolescents," *Development and Psychopathology*, vol. 32, no. 2, pp. 735–750, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0954579419000725

Hofmann S.G., Doan S.N., Sprung M., Wilson A., Ebesutani, C., Andrews L.A., Curtiss J., Harris P.L. (2016). "Training Children's Theory-of-Mind: A Meta-analysis of Controlled Studies," *Cognition*, vol. 150, pp. 200–212, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cognition.2016.01.006

Hughes C., Devine R.T. (2015a). "A Social Perspective on Theory of Mind," [in:] M.E. Lamb, R.M. Lerner (eds.), *Handbook of Child Psychology and Developmental Science: Socioemotional Processes*, New York–London: John Wiley & Sons, pp. 564–609, https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118963418.childpsy314

Hughes C., Devine R.T. (2015b). "Individual Differences in Theory of Mind from Preschool to Adolescence: Achievements and Directions," *Child Development Perspectives*, vol. 9, no. 3, pp. 149–153, https://doi.org/10.1111/cdep.12124

Jones E.A., Mitra A.K., Bhuiyan A.R. (2021). "Impact of COVID-19 on Mental Health in Adolescents: A Systematic Review," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, vol. 18, no. 5, 2470, https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18052470

Junge C., Valkenburg P.M., Deković M., Branje S. (2020). "The Building Blocks of Social Competence: Contributions of the Consortium of Individual Development," *Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience*, vol. 45, 100861, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcn.2020.100861

Kilford E.J., Garrett E., Blakemore S.-J. (2016). "The Development of Social Cognition in Adolescence: An Integrated Perspective," *Neuroscience and Biobehavioral Reviews*, vol. 70, pp. 106–120, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neubiorev.2016.08.016

Kołodziejczyk A.M., Bosacki S.L. (2016). "Young-school-aged Children's Use of Direct and Indirect Persuasion: Role of Intentionality Understanding," *Psychology of Language and Communication*, vol. 20, no. 3, pp. 292–315, https://doi.org/10.1515/plc-2016-0018

Lecce S., Bianco F., Devine R.T., Hughes C., Banerjee R. (2014). "Promoting Theory of Mind during Middle Childhood: A Training Program," *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, vol. 126, pp. 52–67, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jecp.2014.03.002

Lecheler M., Lasser J., Vaughan P.W., Leal J., Ordetx K., Bischofberger M. (2021). "A Matter of Perspective: An Exploratory Study of a Theory of Mind Autism Intervention for Adolescents," *Psychological Reports*, vol. 124, no. 1, pp. 39–53, https://doi.org/10.1177/0033294119898120

Maciurzyńska P., Białecka-Pikul M., Kuś K. (2011). *Zmodyfikowana wersja Testu Aluzji.* Materiał niepublikowany [The modified version of the Hinting Task. Unpublished materials].

Meeus W. (2016). "Adolescent Psychosocial Development: A Review of Longitudinal Models and Research," *Developmental Psychology*, vol. 52, no. 12, pp. 1969–1993, https://doi.org/10.1037/dev0000243

Mumper M.L., Gerrig R.J. (2017). "Leisure Reading and Social Cognition: A meta-analysis," *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 109–120, https://doi.org/10.1037/aca0000089

Nearchou F., Flinn C., Niland R., Subramaniam S.S., Hennessy E. (2020). "Exploring the Impact of COVID-19 on Mental Health Outcomes in Children and Adolescents: A Systematic Review," *International Journal of Environmental Research in Public Health*, vol. 17, no. 22, 8479, https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17228479

Nestor B.A., Sutherland S. (2022). "Theory of Mind and Suicidality: A Meta-analysis," *Archives of Suicide Research*, vol. 26, no. 4, pp. 1666–1687, https://doi.org/10.1080/13811118.2021.1939209

Osterhaus C., Bosacki S.L. (2022). "Looking for the Lighthouse: A Systematic Review of Advanced Theory-of-Mind Tests beyond Preschool,"

Developmental Review, vol. 64, 101021, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dr.2022.101021

Osterhaus C., Koerber S., Sodian B. (2016). "Scaling of Advanced Theory-of-Mind Tasks," *Child Development*, vol. 87, no. 6, pp. 1971–1991, https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12566

Peterson C., Slaughter V., Moore C., Wellman H.M. (2016). "Peer Social Skills and Theory of Mind in Children with Autism, Deafness, or Typical Development," *Developmental Psychology*, vo. 52, no. 1, 46–57, https://doi.org/10.1037/a0039833

Peterson C., Slaughter V., Paynter, J. (2007). "Social Maturity and Theory of Mind in Typically Developing Children and Those on the Autism Spectrum," *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, vol. 48, no. 12, pp. 1243–1250, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-7610.2007.01810.x

Racine N., McArthur B.A., Cooke J.E., Eirich R., Zhu J., Madigan S. (2021). "Global Prevalence of Depressive and Anxiety Symptoms in Children and Adolescents during COVID-19: A Meta-analysis," *JAMA Pediatrics*, vol. 175, no. 11, pp. 1142-1150, https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapediatrics.2021.2482

Rodman A.M., Rosen M.L., Kasparek S.W., Mayes M., Lengua L., Meltzoff A.N., McLaughlin K.A. (2022). "Social Behavior and Youth Psychopathology during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Longitudinal Study," *Development & Psychopathology*, vol. 36, no. 1, pp. 1–13, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0954579422001250

Roheger M., Hranovska K., Martin A.K., Meinzer M. (2022). "A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis of Social Cognition Training Success across the Healthy Lifespan," *Scientific Reports*, vol. 12, no. 1, 3544, https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-022-07420-z

Sikorska I., Lipp N., Wróbel P., Wyra M. (2021). "Activity and Mental Health of Adolescents in a Period of Social Isolation Caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Advances in Psychiatry and Neurology*, vol. 30, no. 2, pp. 79–95, https://doi.org/10.5114/ppn.2021.108472

Slaughter V., Dennis M.J., Pritchard M. (2002). "Theory of Mind and Peer Acceptance in Preschool Children," *British Journal of Developmental Psychology*, vol. 20, no. 4, pp. 545–564, https://doi.org/10.1348/026151002760390945

Smetana J.G. (2011). "Adolescents' Social Reasoning and Relationships with Parents: Conflicts and Coordinations within and across Domains," [in:] E. Amsel, J.G. Smetana (eds.), *Adolescent Vulnerabilities and Opportunities: Developmental and Constructivist Perspectives*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 139–158.

Stępień-Nycz M., Bosacki S., Białecka-Pikul M. (2021). "Theory of Mind in Adolescence: Developmental Change and Gender Differences," *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, vol. 41, no. 3, pp. 424–436, https://doi.org/10.1177/0272431620919164

Twenge J.M. (2017). *iGen: Why Today's Super-connected Kids Are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood*, New York: Atria.

Van der Graaff J., Carlo G., Crocetti E., Koot H.M., Branje S. (2018). "Prosocial Behavior in Adolescence: Gender Differences in Development and Links with Empathy," *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, vol. 47, no. 5, pp. 1086–1099, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-017-0786-1

Van Kuijk I., Verkoeijen P., Dijkstra K., Zwaan R.A. (2018). "The Effect of Reading a Short Passage of Literary Fiction on Theory of Mind: A Replication of Kidd and Castano (2013)," *Collabra: Psychology*, vol. 4, no. 1, p. 7, https://doi.org/10.1525/collabra.117

Warnell K.R., Redcay E. (2019). "Minimal Coherence among Varied Theory of Mind Measures in Childhood and Adulthood," *Cognition*, vol. 191, 103997, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cognition.2019.06.009

Weimer A.A., Parault Dowds S.J., Fabricius W.V., Schwanenflugel P.J., Go W.S. (2017). "Development of Constructivist Theory of Mind from Middle Childhood to Early Adulthood and Its Relation to Social Cognition and Behavior," *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology*, vol. 154, pp. 28–45, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jecp.2016.10.002

Weimer A.A., Warnell K.R., Ettekal I., Cartwright K.B., Guajardo N.R., Liew J. (2021). "Correlates and Antecedents of Theory of Mind Development during Middle Childhood and Adolescence: An Integrated Model," *Developmental Review*, vol. 59, 100945, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dr.2020.100945

Wellman H.M., Cross D., Watson J. (2001). "Meta-analysis of Theory-of-Mind Development: The Truth about False Belief," *Child Development*, vol. 72, no. 3, pp. 655–684, https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8624.00304

Wellman H.M., Liu D. (2004). "Scaling of Theory-of-Mind Tasks," *Child development*, vol. 75, no. 2, pp. 523–541, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2004.00691.x

Zheng S., Kim H., Salzman E., Ankenman K., Bent S. (2021). "Improving Social Knowledge and Skills among Adolescents with Autism: Systematic Review and Meta-analysis of UCLA PEERS® for Adolescents," *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, vol. 51, pp. 4488–4503, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-021-04885-1

ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE:

Iwona Sikorska
Jagiellonian University
Institute of Applied Psychology
e-mail: i.sikorska@uj.edu.pl

Miscellanea

A l e k s a n d r a   S z c z e p a n i a k
ORCID: 0009-0001-8489-0658
University of Łódź

To Punish or Educate? Female Students of Law and Resocialization on the Corruption of Minors

Karać czy wychowywać? Studentki prawa
i resocjalizacji wobec demoralizacji nieletnich

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the article is to present the opinions of female students of law and resocialization pedagogy regarding hypothetical situations involving juvenile offenders. The study used "the vignette method." Ninety-six female students were included. They evaluated six episodes depicting hypothetical situations in which the corruption of minors was shown. It turns out that the female law students were slightly more likely to formulate assessments that correspond to the letter of the law, while the assessments of female pedagogy students showed their flexibility, which was expressed in the fact that they were more willing to give "a second chance" to juvenile offenders.

ABSTRAKT

Celem artykułu jest prezentacja ocen formułowanych przez studentki prawa i pedagogiki resocjalizacyjnej wobec hipotetycznych sytuacji odnoszących się do różnych aspektów związanych z nieletnimi sprawcami czynów zabronionych. W badaniach zastosowano metodę

vignette. Objęto nimi 96 studentek. Studentki oceniały sześć epizodów przedstawiających hipotetyczne sytuacje, w których ukazana została demoralizacja nieletnich. Okazuje się, że studentki prawa nieznacznie częściej formułowały oceny, które pokrywają się z literą prawa, podczas gdy w ocenach studentek pedagogiki widać było elastyczność, która wyraża się w tym, że były one bardziej skłonne do dawania „drugiej szansy" nieletnim sprawcom czynów zabronionych.

Introduction

An area that unites the professions of a lawyer—especially those specializing in criminal and family law—and a resocialization educator is crime and preventing the problems it entails. Obviously, lawyers take preventive action by using specific tools of the law, while resocialization educators create the educational conditions that foster positive changes for those who break moral and legal norms. It is therefore to be expected that lawyers and educators are also trained in this spirit. The aspect of crime prevention and bearing the consequences for breaking the law is emphasized during law students' education, while prevention, upbringing, and resocialization is emphasized during pedagogical studies.

Of particular importance in the prevention of moral corruption and crime, in both legal and educational terms, is the treatment of children and adolescents. Polish legislation stipulates that an adolescent who is not yet fully formed socially and psychologically and who commits criminal acts requires special upbringing, not punishment *sensu stricto* (Konopczyński 2015; Włodarczyk-Madejska 2019; Kusztal 2021). The basic document regulating the treatment of juvenile offenders is the Act of June 9, 2022 on the Support and Resocialization of Juveniles (Journal of Laws 2022, item 1700). The latest Act (as well as the previous one) gives family judges many possibilities when it comes to individualized interactions with "sub-judice" youths (Klaus 2008; Szczepanik et al. 2018), despite a clear tightening of the policy for dealing with juveniles (Wojnicz, Mościcka 2023).

While lawyers first and foremost have to uphold the law and interpret and apply it appropriately, educators have the task of educating for compliance with the law and forming beliefs about its validity. Proper upbringing is geared toward internalizing the values

that create them, rather than creating fearful attitudes of the conse-
quences of breaking the law (cf. Wołodkiewicz 2015; Falba 2019).
Regardless of the methods and tools of a lawyer and an educator,
it is clear that the issue of morality is extremely important in both
professions. Most legal and criminal norms are either covered by or
strongly based on moral norms (Szczepanik 2008). In the field of
pedagogy, morality is already manifested in the very idea of moral
education (Nowak 2019).

This raises the question of what assessments of punishment and
reactions of formal social control in cases of youths who break legal
and moral norms are formed by those studying law and resocializa-
tion pedagogy. It can be assumed that the field of study will clearly
differentiate these evaluations: legal candidates will evaluate the
behavior of a minor primarily in strictly normative terms, while those
studying pedagogy will be guided by a certain flexibility. This article
presents the results of a study aimed at answering such a question.
The research involved 96 female students of law and resocialization
pedagogy who were at a similar stage of their studies at the time
the research was conducted. They were presented with hypothetical
situations involving minors and the formal response to their repre-
hensible behavior. Are law students more focused on legal references
in their assessments of hypothetical situations? Are resocialization
pedagogy students more inclined to withhold harsh judgements with
a view to helping them improve their lives?

The results of the research lead us to the conclusion that evalu-
ations of juvenile behavior indicating moral corruption or criminal
acts are not the same. The law students were more likely to form
assessments coinciding with the letter of the law, while the peda-
gogy students' assessments were more likely to be marked by flexibil-
ity, leaving space for the young person to improve and giving them
a "second chance."

The starting point for the research was the sphere of moral val-
ues and the attitudes of law and pedagogy students toward minors.
Therefore, the presentation of the results will be preceded by the
moral context of law and resocialization pedagogy.

Moral Values and the Law

The coexistence of law and morality is not in doubt. The extent to which moral behavior, attitudes, and actions can be sanctioned is debatable (Wielgus 2006). The issue of the relationship between law and morality is related to the search for criteria with which to justify and evaluate the law. These issues are inextricably linked to the ideal of the state and the specifics of its action (Michalik 2005). The mere observance of the law can often lead to destructive consequences. The relationship between morality and law is considered on three levels: the formal similarities and differences between legal norms and moral norms, the scopes of applicability of legal and moral norms (whether they overlap, are separate, or contradict each other), the content of this relationship and structural/axiological, possibly evaluative dependencies (Michalik 2005).

We can distinguish between law and morality by referring to the duties that exist toward them. Corresponding duties that form bilateral relationships are legal relationships. Duties without obligations that are free in relation to others are moral duties (Petrażycki 1985). What we consider moral is determined by our own internal beliefs about what is right and wrong. Morality is shaped by many factors such as upbringing, education, and worldview.

Jan Woleński cites a lecture by Leon Petrażycki, who argued that law is a set of imperative-attributive experiences, whereas morality is only imperative (Woleński 2016/2017). Petrażycki also distinguished the so-called ethical emotions, consisting in the fact that a given sensation results in a sense of duty or obligation and entitlement (ibidem). Law and morality are also differentiated by Stanisław Wielgus, who writes that "law and morality neither completely overlap nor can they be separated from each other" (Wielgus 2006: 21).

Morality is undoubtedly one of the factors that influences the process of creating and applying the law, just as the law influences morality and shapes judgements, norms, and the moral consciousness of society (Parchomiuk 2010). According to Czarnecki, professional morality is conduct and behavior based on principles that are considered appropriate in a given profession or work environment (Czarnecki 2006: 157). Ethics in the legal profession is inextricably linked to the concept of public trust, formulated toward all legal

professionals who work on the values of justice, freedom, and dignity (Pieniążek 2008). Law as a tool to regulate societal relations should invariably refer to ethics and morality.

Moral Values and Resocialization Pedagogy

Those working as a resocialization educator are required to be effective, responsible, efficient, and highly competent (Becker-Pestka 2014). Resocialization practitioners carry out multiple tasks, such as taking care of the safety of their charges, organizing the conditions of upbringing (and resocialization), and carrying out the tasks of the institution itself in which they work. This multitasking makes the work of a resocialization educator unique; it is often said that those in such a profession should have a vocation or passion (Becker-Pestka 2014).

It is difficult to imagine that tasks as responsible as those performed by resocialization educators would be performed by people without the appropriate moral qualifications. Resocialization educators enter into direct and close relations with offenders who are suffering the consequences of their actions. It is for this reason that there should be no doubt as to the morals and principles of these professionals. For resocialization personnel, adherence to the principles of professional ethics is particularly important. Adherence to these principles is evidence of reliability and commitment and protects against abuse of those with whom social workers work. It is very important how resocialization staff communicate, what words they use, and how they build their authority (Machel 2001).

In the work of a resocialization educator, tolerance and human dignity are also important concepts alongside morality. Lesław Pytka (2013) wonders to what extent the notions of moral responsibility, guilt, and shame can be applied to the children and adolescents that resocialization pedagogues work with. After all, due to their age, minors require special support that takes into account their level of physical, social, and mental development.

Pedagogy looks for the positive sides of human nature and seeks positive methods of enhancing potential. The best evidence of this is the latest paradigm of resocialization pedagogy, according to which the upbringing of a minor is not to be based on correcting their flaws

and teaching them to bear the consequences, but on releasing and developing their potential (Konopczyński 2014; Michel 2017).

Students of Law and Resocialization Pedagogy Toward the Law According to Research

No studies comparing the opinions of law and resocialization students toward law and punishment have been conducted in Poland. Some light is shed on these issues by other studies, which show that law students are characterized by a more positive attitude toward the highest penalty: the death penalty.

Thus, Ewa Radomska's (2016) survey of Jagiellonian University law students on penal populism shows that thinking in terms typical of penal populists was not characteristic of the study group. The students strongly opposed demands to reinstate the death penalty, tighten criminal repression, and admit a citizens' initiative as a substitute for punishment. They also do not support the publication in the media of an image of the victim with a description of the act committed. In addition, students with more seniority in their studies and who have passed more examinations show a much higher resistance to populist slogans. Students manifest the view that a custodial sentence should primarily fulfil the purpose of crime prevention (here it is also noteworthy that almost a quarter of students believe that the most important purpose of a sentence is resocialization). Nevertheless, a quarter of them indicated that isolation of the offender from society was essential. It also appeared that a return to certain populist beliefs could be seen in students at the very end of their law studies. Radomska's (2016) research suggests that being further along in one's studies and having passed more exams are associated with lower levels of penal populism. Interestingly, men studying law manifested retaliatory behavior, while women preferred less drastic measures.

As far as students of resocialization pedagogy are concerned, the research carried out by Teresa Zubrzycka-Maciąg and Justyna Rak (2019) is noteworthy. The authors examined the opinions of students of resocialization pedagogy at two universities in Lublin—a secular one (UMCS) and a Catholic one (KUL)—on the use of the death penalty. Nearly half of the students at the secular university expressed the belief that the death penalty should be applied in Poland, while

the Catholic university students were overwhelmingly opposed to it. Half of the students at the secular university and one in three students at the Catholic university claimed that people who commit the most serious crimes have no chance of being rehabilitated. The very negative attitude toward perpetrators of serious crimes is evidenced by the fact that as many as three fourths of the students of resocialization pedagogy at the Catholic university and just under 65% at the secular university were convinced that such persons should not be allowed to live.

The Research: Methodological Notes

The aim of the research was to obtain the assessments of female students of law and resocialization pedagogy about the punishments applied to juvenile offenders and adolescents with symptoms of moral corruption. The aim was to answer research questions centered around three issues. Firstly, there is the legitimacy of referring children's and adolescents' cases to the courts and the evaluation of the results of this intervention. (What evaluations of the court's intervention with children with behavioral difficulties at school are given by female students of resocialization pedagogy versus law? How do these groups of students assess the validity of the use of mediation as an alternative means of resolving peer conflicts? How do they assess the severity of court-imposed punishment of youths who use the internet against their peers?) The second issue was assessments regarding the labelling of the behavior in question as moral corruption. (What assessments do female students of educational pedagogy for resocialization give to the sexual behavior of adolescent children, and what assessments do their female peers studying law give to it? How do these two groups assess the legitimacy of court intervention in cases of animal abuse by minors?) The final field of interest was their assessment of referring juvenile cases to adult courts. (How do female law and resocialization pedagogy students assess the legitimacy of trying teenage parent abusers as adults?)

The research used the vignette method, otherwise known as the episode method, which is situated between projective methods and psychological scales (Tłuściak-Deliowska 2018). It consists of presenting a specific element of reality (a description, scenario, or

episode) to the subject and asking them to express their opinion in its context. The respondents were presented with six episodes related to the punishments applied to juvenile offenders. The episodes were structured to briefly describe the story concerning the different offences and the punishments applied to them. The protagonists of the episodes were girls and boys in early adolescence. After reading the story, the respondents were asked questions for each episode using a modified Likert scale, from which the answer "I have no opinion" was removed. The respondents were informed of the procedure at the beginning of the survey.

The research was carried out from June to July 2023 and involved 96 female students (49 of resocialization pedagogy and 47 of law). The selection criteria for the research were female gender and being in the first or second year of the first degree of law or resocialization pedagogy. The group of respondents was selected using the snowball method. The vast majority of the participants (68.8%) were second-year students. Just over a third (31.2%) were in their third year of study. This selection was deliberate for two reasons. The aim was to ensure that the respondents were of a similar age and that their level of education was similar. The first year was deliberately omitted because at the beginning of a university program, one's views on the related topics are still relatively unformed.

As far as the gender criterion is concerned, previous research indicates that this is an important modifier of moral attitudes and judgements (cf. Radomska 2016). Furthermore, it was decided to examine only women because pedagogy departments in particular primarily contain women and it would have been difficult to collect a suitable group of students otherwise.

The participants' motivations for choosing the course of study were also of interest. When asked about this, the most frequently chosen answers were the desire to develop in a particular field (63.8%) and curiosity (42.6%). The law students also chose options related to financial issues (36.2%) and the social prestige of the profession (40.4%). It is noticeable that the law students were primarily guided by financial aspects and the social prestige of the legal profession. On the other hand, among the students of resocialization pedagogy, the reasons related to curiosity and the desire to develop were definitely predominant. It is also noteworthy that more than one third of

the respondents chose this path because they were not accepted by a department in another field of study.

Table 1. Percentage Distribution of Motivations for Choice of Studies

Motivation	Students of resocialization pedagogy (N=49)	Students of law (N=47)	Total (N=96)
Curiosity	61.2	42.6	51.9
Desire to develop in this area	53.1	63.8	58.5
Failure to get into another course	34.1	8.5	21.3
Pressure from parents/family	4.1	12.8	8.5
Financial issues	0	36.2	18.1
Social prestige of the profession	2	40.4	21.2
Case	14.3	14.9	14.6
Other	2	8.4	5.2

Source: own elaboration.
The data do not add up to 100% because the respondents were able to select more than one answer.

Analysis of Results

In the following section, the episodes presented to the respondents are presented along with a short introduction, an opinion question addressed to the respondents, and an analysis of the results. The situations in relation to which the students were asked to form an opinion concerned referring a "difficult teenager" to family court, the use of mediation, bullying and cyberbullying and the severity of the punishment applied to the perpetrators, the criminal act of animal abuse, and the deprivation of a parent's life.

Referral to family court

The first episode is an example of a teenager who creates problems with his behavior both at home and at school, but so far has not suffered consequences for his behavior. The story presents a cross-section

of behaviors that are not in line with social norms and involve aggression and ultimately a description of a criminal act.

> Sebastian recently turned 16. The boy manifests educational problems. He is regularly caught smoking cigarettes, is notoriously truant, and gets into fights with other students. Parents and educators have tried to help him in many ways, but without success. Sebastian has been labelled a "bully" and everyone turns a blind eye to his antics. Any conflicts the boy is party to are resolved within the school community. The situation changes when the pupil is caught stealing money from the school shop. A discussion begins among the teachers on how to deal with the situation.

> Do you agree that the situation and previous incidents indicate that Sebastian's case should be referred to family court?

Table 2. Percentage Distribution of Responses to Episode: Family Court Referral

Answer	Students of resocialization pedagogy (N=49)	Students of law (N=47)	Total (N=96)
I strongly disagree	10.2	2.1	9.4
I rather disagree	32.7	17	25
I rather agree	36.7	51.1	43.7
I strongly agree	20.4	29.8	25

Source: own elaboration.

The students of both faculties most often answered "I rather agree" (36.7% of those studying resocialization pedagogy and 51.1% of law students). Those studying resocialization pedagogy equally often chose the option "I rather disagree" (32.7%). The same option among law students gathered slightly fewer responses (17%). The third option most frequently chosen by the respondents was "I strongly agree"; it was chosen slightly more often by law students (29.8%), while among pedagogy students it comprised just over one fifth of the responses (20.4%). "I strongly disagree" was chosen least often, but it is evident that the students of social pedagogy more strongly disagreed with referring the case to family court (10.2%). Only one law student chose this answer (2.1%).

Mediation

In the next episode, a situation related to physical violence caused by a conflict between two teenage girls was presented. In this case, the respondents were asked to evaluate the use of mediation as an alternative way of resolving disputes between teenagers.

Zuzia and Maja have been friends since kindergarten. The girls are now 14 years old and in the same class. The relationship between them starts to deteriorate when a boy who Zuzia likes shows significant interest in Maja. When Zuzia finds out that her friend has gone to the cinema with her boyfriend, she is furious. A serious argument breaks out between the girls. The conflict escalates with each passing day, culminating in a fight after a P.E. lesson, which results in Maja's arm being broken and Zuzia being slightly injured. The case is referred to juvenile court. The educator's report clearly indicates that, given the girls' previous relationship, the best solution is to refer the case to mediation. However, the judge decides to grant the girls probationary supervision.

Do you agree that mediation would indeed be the best solution in this case?

Table 3. Percentage Distribution of Responses to Episode: Mediation

Answer	Students of resocialization pedagogy (N=49)	Students of law (N=47)	Total (N=96)
I strongly disagree	8.2	4.3	6.2
I rather disagree	10.2	8.5	9.4
I rather agree	36.7	40.4	38.6
I strongly agree	44.9	46.8	45.8

Source: own elaboration.

For the second episode, the opinions of the two groups were very similar. Almost half of the students of both law (46.8%) and resocialization pedagogy (44.9%) strongly agreed that mediation would be the best solution in this situation. It was slightly less common for the respondents to select "I rather agree." This answer received 36.7% of responses among the resocialization pedagogy students and 40.4% among the law students. The opinion that mediation would not be a good way to resolve a conflict received far fewer supporters. "I rather disagree" was chosen by only 10.2% of the students of

resocialization pedagogy and by 8.5% of the law students. It was even less common for respondents to select "I strongly disagree," which received 8.2% of all responses from resocialization pedagogy students and only 4.3% of responses from the respondents studying law.

Severity of punishment

In the next episode, the situation concerned the bullying and cyberbullying of a student by a group of teenagers. Peer violence is a common phenomenon in schools and, as below, it can be caused by the material situation of or various difficulties faced by teenagers. The episode shows an escalation of violence toward a new classmate, which moves from the internet into the real world.

> Janek, Karolina, and Kuba are each 13 years old. They come from good homes and attend a prestigious private school. At the beginning of the new school year, a new classmate joins their class. The pupils are informed that the boy has arrived at their school on a scholarship he earned for winning a mathematics competition. Piotr is noticeably different from the group, with no expensive clothes or gadgets. In addition, he has a slight speech impediment, which makes him very shy and insecure in new relationships. Janek, Karolina, and Kuba decide that it will be fun to create a Facebook group where they can add doctored photos of their new classmate. The initially innocent jokes become more serious and move from the virtual to the real world. The intervention of Piotr's mother leads to a referral to family court. The young people are contrite and apologize for their behavior. They remove the group, publicly admitting that their behavior was inappropriate. The judge remains adamant and decides that the consequence for the teenagers for their behavior will be 50 hours of community service at the botanical garden.

> Do you agree that the punishment awarded to the teenagers was too harsh?

Table 4. Percentage Distribution of Responses to Episode: Severity of Punishment

Answer	Students of resocialization pedagogy (N=49)	Students of law (N=47)	Total (N=96)
I strongly disagree	26.5	27.7	27
I rather disagree	38.8	44.7	41.7
I rather agree	26.5	14.9	20.8
I strongly agree	8.2	12.8	10.5

Source: own elaboration.

More than half of the respondents viewed the court's decision positively. Thus, it can be concluded that they are in favor of imposing obligations as a punishment for inappropriate behavior. The respondents in both groups most often chose the answer "I rather disagree" (38.8% of those studying resocialization pedagogy and 44.7% of law students). Nevertheless, a frequent answer was "I strongly disagree," selected by 27.7% of law students and 26.5% of resocialization students.

The disproportion was noticeable in the next two responses, leaning toward the opinion that the punishment given to the teenagers was too harsh. While "I rather agree" garnered 26.5% of the responses from those studying resocialization, only 14.9% of the law students chose this option. In contrast, the answer "I strongly agree" was slightly more popular among the law students (12.8%) than the pedagogy students (8.2%).

Moral corruption

The following episode deals with the issue of sexual intercourse between two young people. Although it is clearly stated that the act was consensual, the girl is younger than the accepted age of consent (15), which makes the act morally and legally questionable.

> David and Patrycja are a couple. The girl is 12 years old and the boy is four years older than her. The lovers have been dating for more than six months and have decided that they want to experience their first time with each other. They intend to do this when Patrycja's parents are not at home. To this end, they leave school early. They have intercourse with each other, during which they are caught by the girl's father. Despite assurances from both his daughter and her boyfriend that everything was consensual, the angry man decides to call the police.

> Do you agree that the situation is indicative of David's moral corruption and should be dealt with by a juvenile court?

Table 5. Percentage Distribution of Responses to Episode: Moral Corruption

Answer	Students of resocialization pedagogy (N=49)	Students of law (N=47)	Total (N=96)
I strongly disagree	14.3	8.5	11.5
I rather disagree	32.7	12.8	22.9
I rather agree	22.4	40.4	31.3
I strongly agree	30.6	38.3	34.3

Source: own elaboration.

It can be noted that the law students were more likely to agree that David is morally corrupt. The option "I rather agree" was chosen by 40.4% of the law students and "I strongly agree" by 38.3%. The same responses in the resocialization pedagogy group were chosen by 22.4% and 30.6%, respectively. The students of resocialization education, on the other hand, most often chose the answer "I rather disagree" (32.7%). The same answer was chosen by only 12.8% of the law students. They were least likely to answer "I strongly disagree." Here, too, the disproportion in responses is apparent. The students of resocialization chose this option slightly more often (14.3%) than the law students (8.5%).

Criminal act

This episode depicts a situation of intentional abuse of an animal with particular cruelty. Animal rights are now receiving much attention, and outrage is aroused by crimes against animals, especially when committed by young people. Violence by children or adolescents from a psychological point of view stems from mechanisms of displaced aggression directed at more accessible targets (Helios, Jedlecka 2017).

Roxana and Michał have published a video online in which they abuse their dog. They repeatedly kick, throw stones, and drag it by its paws and tail. In the video, the animal makes terrified squeaks accompanied by the laughter of the abusers. The footage quickly goes viral online, with enraged internet users demanding that the perpetrators be punished. Even more shocking is the fact that the perpetrators are only 15 years old.

In addition, the teenagers write on portals that they do not regret their behavior and would have no problem repeating it.

Do you agree that Michał and Roxana committed a criminal act and that their case should be referred to family court?

Table 6. Percentage Distribution of Responses to Episode: Criminal Act

Answer	Students of resocialization pedagogy (N=49)	Students of law (N=47)	Total (N=96)
I strongly disagree	0	0	0
I rather disagree	0	0	0
I rather agree	4.1	2.1	3.1
I strongly agree	95.9	97.9	96.9

Source: own elaboration.

In the above scenario, the respondents in both groups were almost completely in agreement in their opinions. Almost all respondents from both groups (96.9% of all responses) strongly agreed that the teenagers had committed a criminal act and that their case should be referred to family court. Only 4.1% of the students of resocialization and 2.1% of the students of law chose the answer "I rather agree," thus showing incomplete certainty in dealing with teenagers.

Being tried as an adult

The final episode concerns the murder of a parent. In the following episode, the situation is particularly difficult because it concerns one of the most serious crimes, which was committed by a very young person, and because her parent—the person closest to her—lost her life. The episode shows the manipulation, anger, and aggression of the girl. In the case of minors, however, it happens that the desire to satisfy the sense of justice is abandoned and, given their young age, educational considerations come to the fore.

Eliza recently turned 15. The girl is being raised by her single mother. Their relationship has so far been good, but has been deteriorating steadily for some time. On the internet, the girl met Jacek, ten years her senior, with whom she fell in love. After a short acquaintance, he proposed that they go to the seaside together. Eliza's mother is adamant that her daughter should end her relationship with Jacek. She claims that the man could be dangerous. The difference of opinion leads to more and more frequent arguments between mother and daughter. The teenager is heavily influenced by the man she met online. Jacek keeps saying that the girl's mother is damaging their chances of meeting. Eliza is very afraid of losing her boyfriend; she comes to the conclusion that the only way for them to be together is to get rid of her mother. During the next argument, Eliza carries out her plan and uses a knife to kill her mother.

Do you agree that Eliza should be held accountable as an adult for the act she committed?

Table 7. Percentage Distribution of Responses to Episode: Being Tried as an Adult

Answer	Students of resocialization pedagogy (N=49)	Students of law (N=47)	Total (N=96)
I strongly disagree	8.2	6.4	7.3
I rather disagree	24.5	6.4	15.6
I rather agree	28.6	19.1	24
I strongly agree	38.8	68.1	53.1

Source: own elaboration.

A significant disparity in the responses from both groups is apparent. More than half of the law students (68.1%) strongly agreed that Eliza should be tried as an adult. Among the resocialization students, the same answer was given by 38.8%, which still makes it the most frequent answer in this group. In turn, 28.6% of the resocialization students and 19.1% of the law students tended to agree with the statement. Nearly one quarter of the resocialization students tended to disagree with Eliza being tried as an adult, while among the law students, the same answer was chosen by only 6.4%. The option "I strongly disagree" was the least common response in both groups—among students of resocialization it was 8.2% and among law students only 6.4%.

Summary

The majority of the female students surveyed positively assessed the validity of the school handing over the case of a teenager notorious for causing behavioral problems to the intervention of the court. However, it is noteworthy that slightly more students of resocialization pedagogy than of law were in favor of delaying a formal reaction toward such a teenager. Perhaps this is why the results regarding the resolution of conflicts between students by means of mediation are surprising. Comparing the responses of the two groups, it can be observed that slightly more respondents studying pedagogy indicated that mediation is not the best solution. These results may come as a surprise, all the more so as the story in question emphasized the opinion of the school pedagogue, who was in favor of such a solution. Previous research shows that, in Poland, juvenile mediation is still an undervalued tool for the resocialization of minors, and that the opinions of school pedagogues are not at all taken into account by judges in their decision-making (Szczepanik et al. 2018). On the other hand, the data are in line with the findings of Radomska (2016), which show that, although law students do not succumb to penal populism, they also believe that the law should be upheld primarily by the courts and not by citizen initiatives.

It is true that the students in both fields of study were in favor of the court imposing community service as a punishment for young people's misbehavior, but slightly more students of resocialization pedagogy than their peers studying law negatively assessed the decision of the court to punish adolescents for violent behavior despite their expression of remorse. Undoubtedly, this is a moral dilemma: Should one ruthlessly punish a child for bad behavior or should they consider that remorse and a promise to improve is a sufficient way to close the case? An additional element that may raise moral doubts about this story is the type of "punishment." Should forced labor be a punishment in itself? Can it fulfill an educational role or, as Michel Foucault (2009) suggests, does it take the form primarily of "training"? The story assessed by the respondents relates to research on the educational measures used by courts against juveniles (Szczepanik et al. 2018). They found that directing children to work in a botanical garden was almost a standard response of one court to juveniles,

regardless of the symptoms of their moral corruption or types of criminal acts. The researchers were critical of the upbringing measures used by the courts against juveniles due to the automatic nature of their application and the failure to exploit the educational values inherent in them. The upbringing measures applied by the court, especially the obligation to perform socially useful work, were completely detached from the nature of the upbringing difficulties.

Issues related to the sexual sphere of adolescents aroused rather unequivocal and negative evaluations from the respondents. Three quarters of the law students surveyed (78.7%) were more or less negative about the risk of sexual contact between adolescents. The women agreed that such a case should be subject to a judicial review for moral corruption. A similar assessment was expressed by half of the resocialization students (53%). The story presented for assessment contained an essential element that raised moral and legal questions. It was not the age of the children, but the age difference of the couple "interested" in sex (a 12-year-old girl and a 16-year-old boy); this was probably what came to the fore in the law students' assessment of the situation.

The research also showed that animal abuse is viewed in an unqualifiedly negative light by the respondents. Almost all of them were of the opinion that such behavior is a symptom of moral corruption and that the teenagers' case should go to court. It is not clear what prompted those surveyed to be so unanimous—whether sensitivity to the harm to the animal and the desire to punish the perpetrators of violence or the intuitive belief that animal abuse in childhood creates a very serious risk of violence and aggression toward people later in life (Longobardi, Badenes-Ribera 2019). Therefore, the behavior of adolescents requires an absolute and firm response of formal control.

Half of the respondents rated the 15-year-old girl's murder of her mother as an act that should be judged with absolute severity. Most of them believed that she should be treated by the court as an adult, not a teenager. In practice, this means punishing the girl rather than placing her in an educational center. The resocialization pedagogy students were more divided in their assessments. It is true that most of them formulated similar assessments to their law school peers, but a quarter of them expressed doubts about whether the teenaged killer should be held accountable as an adult for her act.

Comparing the assessments by students of resocialization pedagogy and law, it is possible to draw the conclusion that the assessments of the former were characterized by faith in the young person and their ability to change (upbringing), while the assessments of juvenile behavior by the latter coincided with the legal assessment of the situation (punishment). However, it should be emphasized that this statement should be treated as a starting point for further research and that it should be verified with a larger research sample and statistical analysis. Our own research was carried out with a very small research group and with a simplified procedure for selecting people for the study (non-representative group). The results can lead to the formulation of hypotheses that can be verified in further research and the research itself expanded.

The first context within which the results can be interpreted is knowledge of the developmental rights of the young person and the mechanisms and consequences of violence. When talking about episodes related to referral to family court, moral corruption, or being tried as an adult, the more lenient assessments of the resocialization pedagogy students may be related to their wider knowledge of human psychosocial development. Similarly, an attempt can be made to explain the results in the case of the bullying and cyberbullying episode: the students of resocialization pedagogy may have been harsher in their responses because of the fact that bullying is repeatedly addressed during their university program, often in the context of the consequences that it can have on the victims of violence.

It is noteworthy that by far the most shocking, and at the same time the most harshly assessed, situation for both groups of students was that concerning animals. Thinking in terms of a moral obligation for the welfare of animals and the numerous campaigns against animal abuse (including the enactment of stricter laws in this regard) undoubtedly influenced the moral assessments formulated by young people (cf. Górnicka-Kalinowska 2017; Cynk 2019).

It is certainly surprising to see greater recognition of mediation as a method of dispute resolution by the law school students. Mediation, after all, means that lawyers "hand over" the conflict to the victim and the perpetrator. The lesser popularity of mediation among the students of pedagogy is surprising, especially since research with students of resocialization pedagogy shows that they regard the

resolution of conflicts by means of mediation as very helpful in their educational work with children and adolescents (Urbańska 2019). Perhaps the students of resocialization identified it as a method for less serious conflicts between students. On the other hand, bearing in mind the evaluations of the episode involving a much more serious crime (the murder of the mother), the same students were more in favor of giving a second chance to the young offender.

Bibliography

Becker-Pestka D. (2014). "Etos służby w pracy personelu resocjalizacyjnego," *Colloquium WNHiS*, vol. 6, no. 4, pp. 43–60.

Czarnecki K. (2006). *Psychologia zawodowej pracy człowieka*, Sosnowiec: Wyższa Szkoła Zarządzania i Marketingu.

Cynk K. (2019). "Opinie studentów z wybranych państw Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej na temat stosunku do zwierząt," *Studia Interkulturowe Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, vol. 12, pp. 18–37.

Falba K. (2019). "Próby wyjaśnienia zjawiska przestępczości i kary," *Człowiek w Kulturze*, no. 29, pp. 328–354.

Foucault M. (2009). *Nadzorować i karać. Narodziny więzienia*, trans. T. Komendant, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Aletheia.

Górnicka-Kalinowska J. (2017). "Cierpienie i krzywda zwierząt a moralne obowiązki człowieka," *Życie Weterynaryjne*, vol. 92, no. 6, pp. 409–411.

Helios J., Jedlecka W. (2017). "Okrucieństwo wobec zwierząt z punktu widzenia psychologii i filozofii – zarys problemu," *Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis. Przegląd Prawa i Administracji*, vol. 108, pp. 31–44.

Klaus W. (2007/2008). "Działalność wychowawcza sądu rodzinnego wobec nieletnich – pomiędzy ideami a praktyką," *Archiwum Kryminologii*, vol. 29–30, pp. 331–347.

Konopczyński M. (2014). "Twórcza resocjalizacja zarys koncepcji rozwijania potencjałów," *Resocjalizacja Polska*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 13–28.

Konopczyński M. (2015). "Quo vadis resocjalizacjo?" *Resocjalizacja Polska*, vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 9–12.

Kusztal J. (2021). "Zasada dobra dziecka w polskim systemie opieki nad dzieckiem," *Studia Paedagogica Ignatiana*, vol. 24, no. 2, pp. 88–104.

Longobardi C., Badenes-Ribera L. (2019). "The Relationship Between Animal Cruelty in Children and Adolescent and Interpersonal Violence: A Systematic Review," *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, vol. 46, pp. 201–211.

Machel H. (2001). *Psychospołeczne uwarunkowania pracy resocjalizacyjnej personelu więziennego*, Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego.

Michalik M. (2005). "Moralność a prawo – przegląd typowych ujęć relacji," *Doctrina. Studia Społeczno-Polityczne*, no. 2, pp. 377–388.

Michel M. (2017). "Zmiana myślenia o procesie resocjalizacji i osobach niedostosowanych społecznie w świetle zmian paradygmatów w polskiej myśli resocjalizacyjnej. Nurt 'nowej resocjalizacji'," *Polska Myśl Pedagogiczna*, vol. 3, no. 3, pp. 95–110.

Nowak M. (2019). "Aksjologia współczesnej pedagogiki resocjalizacyjnej jako podstawa jej sukcesu," *Roczniki Pedagogiczne*, no. 11(47), special issue, pp. 17–28.

Parchomiuk M. (2010). "Prawo a moralność: dylematy moralne sfery zawodowej w ocenie adeptów prawniczych," *Studia Iuridica Lublinensia*, vol. 13. pp. 91–109.

Petrażycki L. (1985). *O nauce, prawie i moralności. Pisma wybrane*, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe.

Pieniążek M. (2008). *Etyka sytuacyjna prawnika*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Prawnicze LexisNexis.

Przeperski J. (2018). "Metoda epizodów (*vignettes*) w badaniach społecznych i familiologicznych. Konteksty teoretyczne i praktyczne," *Problemy Polityki Społecznej. Studia i Dyskusje*, vol. 42, no. 3, pp. 53–67.

Pytka L. (2013). "O karze, tolerancji i dobroczynności w pedagogice resocjalizacyjnej," *Student Niepełnosprawny. Szkice i Rozprawy*, no. 13(6), pp. 13–32.

Radomska E. (2016). *Penalny populizm wśród studentów prawa: wnioski z badań*, [in:] J. Czapska, M. Szafrańska, D. Wójcik (eds.), *Penalny populizm. Perspektywa polityczna i społeczna*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, pp. 387–406.

Szczepanik R. (2008). "Płeć jako zmienna różnicująca orzeczenie stopnia demoralizacji nieletnich dziewcząt i chłopców," [in:] M. Chomczyńska-Rubacha (ed.), *Role płciowe. Socjalizacja i rozwój*, Łódź: Wydawnictwo WSHE w Łodzi, pp. 161–172.

Szczepanik R., Jaros A., Staniaszek M. (2018). *Sąd nad demoralizacją nieletnich. Konteksty wychowawcze*, Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego.

Tłuściak-Deliowska A. (2018). "Przyszli nauczyciele wobec hipotetycznych epizodów przemocy rówieśniczej wśród uczniów," *Studia Edukacyjne*, no. 3(49), pp. 231–256.

Urbańska M. (2019). "Mediacje jako narzędzie rozwiązywania konfliktów szkolnych i rodzinnych z perspektywy młodzieży studenckiej," *Zeszyty Naukowe Wyższej Szkoły Humanitas. Pedagogika*, vol. 20, pp. 157–164.

Wielgus S. (2006). *Prawo a moralność*, Płock: Płocki Instytut Wydawniczy.

Włodarczyk-Madejska J. (2019). *Skazani na wychowanie. Stosowanie środków izolacyjnych wobec nieletnich*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Instytutu Nauk Prawnych PAN.

Wołodkiewicz W. (2015). "Nauczanie prawa czy przepisów prawnych?" *Czasopismo Prawno-Historyczne*, vol. 67, no. 1, pp. 233–248.

Wojnicz P., Mościcka D. (2023). "Demoralizacja i czyny karalne według Ustawy o wspieraniu i resocjalizacji nieletnich – wybrane zagadnienia," *Civitas et Lex*, vol. 39, no. 3, pp. 33–46.

Woleński J. (2016/2017). "Leon Petrażycki o prawie i moralności," *Rocznik Polskiej Akademii Umiejętności*, pp. 171–182.

Zubrzycka-Maciąg T., Rak J. (2019). "Kara śmierci versus prawo do życia w opinii przyszłych pedagogów," *Roczniki Teologiczne*, vol. 66, no. 11, pp. 123–134.

ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE

Aleksandra Szczepaniak
University of Łódź
Faculty of Educational Sciences
e-mail: UL0242317@edu.uni.lodz.pl

Reviews | Recenzje

A n d r z e j   S k u p i e ń
ORCID: 0000-0003-0432-8444
University Ignatianum in Cracow

A Revolution in Education: The Transformative Role of Artificial Intelligence in Shaping the Future of Learning

AI in Learning: Designing the Future,
edited by Hannele Niemi, Roy D. Pea,
and Yu Lu, Springer, Cham 2023, pp. 354

A multi-author monograph entitled *AI in Learning: Designing the Future* was written in 2022, edited by Hannele Niemi, Roy D. Pea and Yu Lu, representing three academic centres—the University of Helsinki, Beijing Normal University and Stanford University. The authors' research interests are issues arising at the intersection of artificial intelligence (AI) and education.

The book explores artificial intelligence's potential to have a significant impact on education. It highlights the need for further research and understanding of the roles and responsibilities for integrating AI into learning environments and education systems. By addressing these issues, the book contributes to the ongoing discussions and debates regarding the use of artificial intelligence in education in many countries around the world. Furthermore, the book addresses ethical challenges, such as concerns about privacy, the bias of algorithms and the impact on human agency. By raising
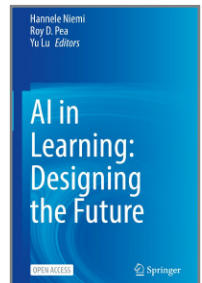
these issues, the book contributes to the ongoing dialogue on the responsible implementation of AI in educational settings.

The collective work is theoretical and empirical in nature, runs to 354 pages and consists of a 13-page introduction, four thematic blocks and a ten-page summary written by an editorial team of three. Throughout the book we can see the contributions of some 60 authors. The first part of the monograph is devoted to the broad topic of exploring learning and wellbeing in life, and it consists of six articles. The second part of the book focusses on the use of artificial intelligence in games and simulations; four articles can be found there. The authors devoted the next part of the collective work to AI technologies for education and intelligent learning systems. You will find the contributions of several authors in the four papers here. The last, and in my opinion the most important, part of the whole book takes up the extremely important topic of AI and ethical challenges. In this section we can peruse four philosophical considerations.

The style of the book is clear, consistent and accessible. The authors effectively communicate complex concepts and ideas. The book also adheres to the standards of academic integrity by providing complete and numerous citations and references to support their claims. Another advantage of this work is its index, which allows the reader to find a phrase of interest in different parts of the book and to explore various aspects of the topic of interest. Only an English-language version has appeared on the market, but this publication's contribution is so important that a Polish translation will certainly be published soon.

The book's authors discuss a variety of research methods that address the future of artificial intelligence in education. One of the research methods mentioned is learning analytics, which uses AI to measure student performance during complex learning tasks and provides insight into the study of student activity. This method provides a deeper understanding of how students engage and focus on learning materials, which can help in designing more effective teaching methods. In addition, the authors discuss the use of classroom learning analysis as a research method. This includes analysing classroom interactions and instructional practices using AI-based technologies. By examining the effectiveness of different instructional strategies and identifying areas for improvement, this research method aims

to improve the quality of classroom instruction and student learning outcomes under normal teaching conditions in institutions for all age groups. AI can significantly improve and facilitate children's learning by piquing their curiosity and providing interactive experiences. The authors highlight the potential of artificial intelligence to personalise education and tailor recommendations to individual students, thereby optimising learning. Using an analysis of home learning, classroom learning and advances in AI-based learning technologies, the authors contribute to the understanding of how AI can be effectively integrated with educational requirements to improve learning outcomes and shape educational requirements and curricula.

In the book's introduction, the authors highlight the key advances of the last decade in the field of artificial intelligence. They deftly identify AI's profound impact on learning, indicating its evolution beyond traditional analytics to include interaction with natural language, emotion detection and speech recognition. The authors meticulously navigate the landscape of artificial intelligence in education, from orchestrating complex learning activities to augmenting human skills. Chief among the promising subject matter seems to be Hannele Niemi's call for an urgent examination of the ethical challenges posed by artificial intelligence in education, which seems to resonate throughout the book. Given the increasing pace of technological development, the authors rightly highlight the need for extensive research to understand the intricate implications of artificial intelligence for learning, making a compelling case for ethical considerations of its increasingly ubiquitous role in the educational sphere.

In part one, the authors investigate the revolutionary potential of artificial intelligence in education, focussing on both formal and informal environments. The articles in this section discuss novel ways that AI-based tools and environments can promote human learning by increasing student engagement, curiosity and positive social and emotional wellbeing. Explorations include how artificial intelligence assists instructors in diagnosing behavioural and learning issues, as well as providing useful insights into classroom dynamics through multimodal data collection. An exceedingly fascinating issue among the articles in this part appears to be the presentation of an automated scoring system for modelling student wellness, with a focus on real-time assessments. The study providing AI-based teacher

aides for behavioural diagnosis to improve classroom instruction through the merging of human and AI technology may be considered contentious.

In part two, the authors propose a cross-disciplinary and multi-method investigation into AI-supported games and simulation-based learning. The segment starts with an informative discussion with Professor James Lester about narrative-centred learning environments that can be creatively built as engaging learning games for students. Subsequent authors use narrative and metaphor theories to examine the function of characters and narrative threads in AI-based learning. The section examines the various metaphors that underpin AI-based learning, drawing on new materialist and posthumanist viewpoints. Another article worth reading explores the significance of artificial intelligence in improving clinical reasoning skills for health care professionals through game-based nursing education. The adaptive functionalities and customisation of simulation games are investigated, emphasising the possibility for meaningful learning experiences.

The following chapter focusses on novel methods that leverage AI technology to train professionals in virtual reality (VR). The articles discuss VR-based learning technology, contextual learning and the function of AI tutors in virtual learning environments. Automated scoring tools and e-books are offered to improve teaching and learning approaches. Shuanghong Jenny Niu, Xiaoqing Li and Jiutong Luo present a chapter on the Smart-Learning Partner (SLP) learning platform, explaining how AI technology enables personalised learning experiences for students through diagnostic feedback and assessments, real-time reports for teachers and informed decision-making by school administrators. This chapter discusses the influence of smart textbooks on student learning and potential difficulties in this changing educational landscape. It highlights the integration of AI technologies in different educational contexts, pushing the boundaries of traditional teaching methods and paving the way for personalised, effective learning experiences.

As I mentioned at the beginning, the breakthrough seems to be chapter four, where we find ethical considerations from both Chinese and European perspectives, shedding light on the multifaceted ethical challenges facing teachers, students and parents. The authors

examine the problem in depth, showing rising challenges such as fairness, openness, autonomy, location tracking, facial identification, automatic speech recognition and social media mining—emphasising the need to protect students' data privacy. In an intriguing thought experiment, the authors contemplate the use of AI in education and propose remedies to the algorithms' challenges regarding transparency and fairness.

In the book's conclusion, the authors highlight the potential of AI as a powerful tool in education whilst emphasising the crucial role of ethics, which will be reflected in future research on the trajectory of AI-enhanced learning.

In terms of its contribution to the field of pedagogy, the book brings a fresh perspective to existing research, offering a comprehensive analysis of the potential benefits and challenges of artificial intelligence in shaping the future of learning. With its accessible style and interdisciplinary approach, the book has the potential to shape the future of learning and set the direction for further research in this rapidly evolving field. Certainly, the work of some 60 authors on this book has had the desired effect, and indeed fills an important post in understanding today's world by exploring the topic of artificial intelligence in such a sensitive area: education.

ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE:

Andrzej Skupień
University Ignatianum in Cracow
Institute of Philosophy
e-mail: andrzej.skupien@interia.eu

Editorial plans

- 2024, vol. 27, no. 2: Badania pedeutologiczne.
  Problemy teoretyczne i metodologiczne
  [Pedeutological Studies: Theoretical
  and Methodological Problems]
  Papers submission deadline: 28.02.2024

- 2024, vol. 27, no. 3: Wielowymiarowość relacji
  człowieka we współczesnym świecie: relacje ja–ja,
  ja–inni, ja–świat
  [Multidimensionality of Human Relations in the Modern
  World: Me-Me, Me-Others, Me–World]
  Papers submission deadline: 30.04.2024