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Failure of the school project: the role of social, material, behavioural, physical and mental resources among multi-cultural students

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Background & objectives

- Youth situation requires social-material-behavioral-mental resources to realize school achievement and social participation
  (Stecker, Med Educ 2004; Baumann et al., BMC Psychiatry 2011).

- These are lacking or altered for many adolescents.
- With increasing migration into/within an already culturally diverse EU, school is a multi-cultural setting.
- The roles of social-material-behavioral-mental resources may be exacerbated among European and non-European immigrants, compared with Frenchs.

Objectives:

- To study the associations between nationality (European and non-European immigrant students vs. French counterparts) and:
- repeating a school-year,
- low-summer-term school performance (<10/20),
- and quitting-school thinking at 16 years.

and the roles in explaining these associations of socioeconomic, health related, behavioural, and violence factors.

Population

- Students from three middle-school from the Nancy urban area (410,000 inhabitants, Capital of Lorraine region (2.34 millions inhabitants in north-eastern France) :
  - 63 classes, 1666 subjects
  - Participation rate: 94%
  - Sample retained for analysis: 1559 subjects
- Self-administered questionnaire measuring socioeconomic, health related, behavioural, and violence factors.
- Study approved by the regional education authority and the national review board.

social, material, behavioural, physical and mental resources

Socioeconomic characteristics: sex, age, family structure, parental education, father's occupation, and family income:

- Family structure
- Intact
- Reconstructed
- Parents divorced/separated
- Single parent
- Others

- Family income:
- Comfortable
- Well off
- Earning just enough
- Coping but with difficulties
- Getting into debt

- Father's occupation:
- Manager & professional
- Craftsman, tradesman, head of firm
- Intermediate professional
- Clerk
- Manual worker
- Other actives
- Unemployed/inactive

social, material, behavioural, physical and mental resources

- WHOQoL measuring:

(Skevington et al., Qual Life Res 2004).

  - General health (1 item)
  - Physical heath (7 items)
  - Psychological health (6 items)
  - Social relationships (3 items)
  - Environment (8 items)

Score defined as the sum of items - range: 0 to 100 (best value)

Cutoff value used: <25th percentile value

Unhealthy behaviours, violence, suicidai ideation, and social supports

- Unhealthy behaviours:
  - Last-month use *(None=1, 1-5 times=2, 6+=3):*
    - Tobacco
    - Alcohol
    - Cannabis use
    - Hard drugs
- Lack of regular sports/physical activities

(last-year, at school & elsewhere)

- Victim of violence (lifetime),
- Victim of sexual abuse (lifetime),
- Involvement in violence (lifetime),
- Suicidal ideation (lifetime).

Statistical analysis

The data were analyzed using logistic models. Three models were used to assess the associations between school difficulties and nationality:

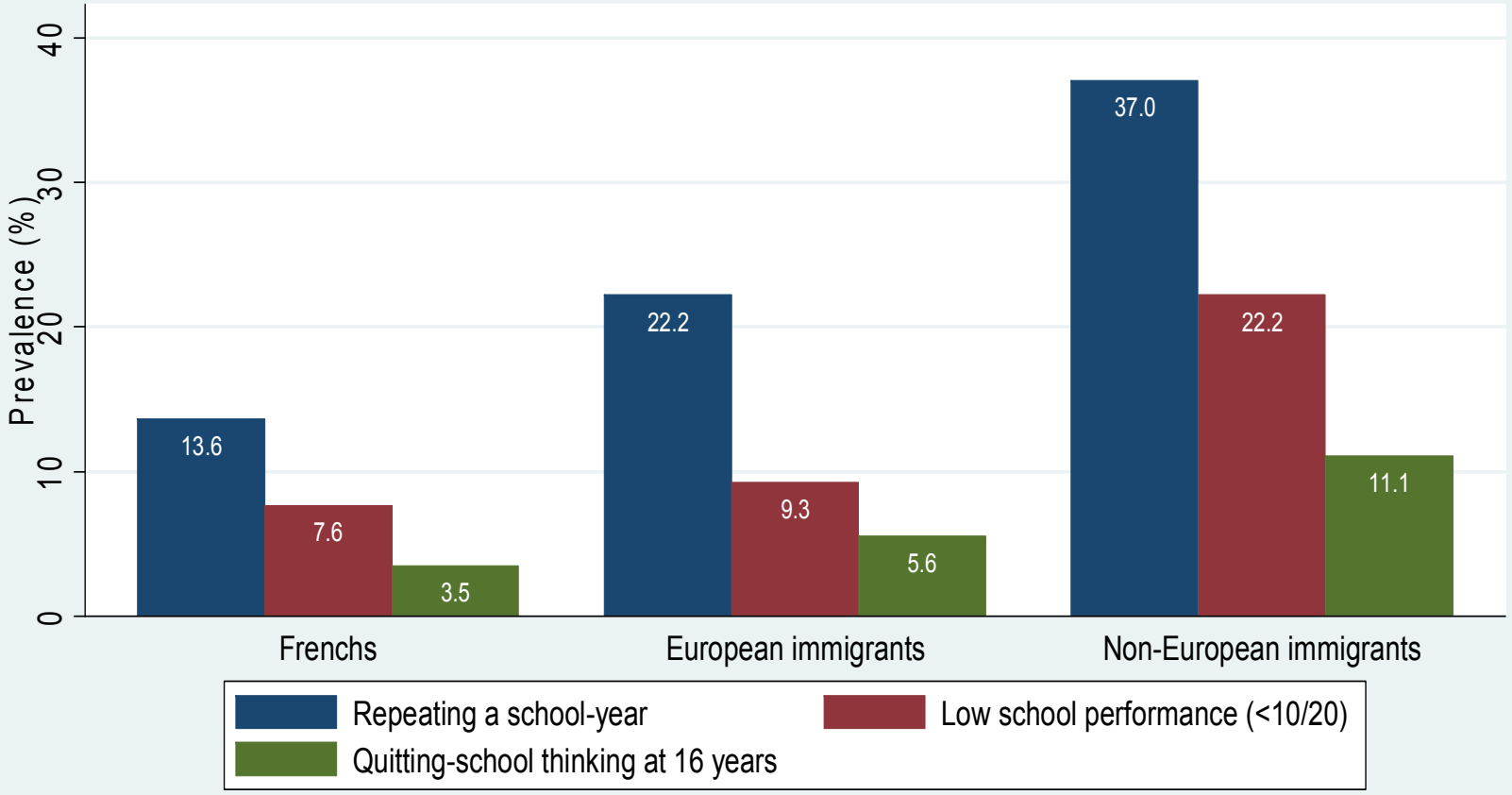
- Model 1: Computed the odds ratios adjusted for gender and age (ORga)
- Model 2: with further adjustment for socioeconomic characteristics (OR2)
- Model 3: With further adjustment for health related, behavioural, and violence factors (OR3)

Contribution (%) = Reduction in OR computed with the following formula:

(ORga – ORi)/(ORga – 1) (calculated for ORga significant only).

Results

Figure 1. Prevalence of school difficulties according to nationality



The differences were significant with p<0.001 for repeating a school-year and low school performance, and with p=0.014 for quitting-school thinking

Results

Table 1. Associations between nationality and socioeconomic factors: % or mean (SD)

	French	European immigrants	Non-European immigrants	p-value
Number of subjects	1,451	54	54	
Boys	50.0	44.4	51.8	NS
Age : Mean (SD) (yr)	13.0 (1.3)	12.8 (1.1)	13.4 (1.7)	NS
Family structure				<0.01
Intact	63.8	57.4	46.3	
Reconstructed	14.5	25.9	13.0	
Parents divorced or separated	10.2	9.3	13.0	
Single parent	6.3	5.6	13.0	
Others	5.2	1.8	14.8	
Father's occupation				<0.001
Managers and professionals	29.1	18.5	13.0	
Craftsmen, tradesmen, and firm heads	19.9	24.1	22.2	
Intermediate professionals	10.4	3.7	5.6	
Service workers/clerks	9.2	5.6	13.0	
Manual workers	17.0	29.6	20.4	
Other occupations	7.5	9.3	3.7	
Inactive people	6.9	9.3	22.2	
Insufficient income	16.9	25.9	31.5	<0.01

Results

Table 2. Associations between nationality and unhealthy behaviours: %

	French	European immigrants	Non-European immigrants	p-value
Unhealthy behaviours				
Last-30-day substance use				
Tobacco	10.5	16.7	24.1	<0.01
Alcohol	35.6	31.5	29.6	NS
Cannabis	5.1	9.3	14.8	<0.01
Other illicit drugs	2.3	7.4	11.1	<0.001
Age at initiation for users: Mean (SD) (yr)				
Tobacco	12.1 (2.0)	11.6 (1.6)	10.8 (2.9)	<0.05
Alcohol	10.7 (2.2)	10.6 (2.3)	10.1 (3.0)	NS
Cannabis	12.9 (1.7)	12.8 (1.3)	10.7 (3.7)	<0.01
Other illicit drugs	12.4 (2.6)	12.7 (1.6)	11.0 (3.5)	NS
Lack regular sports/physical activity	11.4	14.8	16.7	NS

Results

Table 3. Associations between nationality and health related factors and violences: %

	French	European immigrants	Non-European immigrants	p-value
WHOQoL-Brèf (<25th percentile value)				
Physical	21.7	35.2	50.0	<0.001
Psychological	26.1	35.2	42.6	<0.01
Social relationships	25.6	25.9	53.7	<0.001
Environment	23.6	37.0	53.7	<0.001
Violences				
Victim of violence	21.7	35.2	50.0	<0.001
Victim of sexual abuse	26.1	35.2	42.6	<0.01
Involvement in violence	25.6	25.9	53.7	<0.001
Suicidal ideation	23.6	37.0	53.7	<0.001

Results

Table 4. Reliability of WHOQoL- Bref

	Mean (SD)	*Range*	*Minimum*	*Maximum*	*α r*
Physical health	**76,3 (15,5)**	**0-100**	**0**	**5.2**	**0,72**
	0,81				
Psychological health	**62,8 (19,3)**	**0-100**	**0.2**	**1.3**	**0,70**
	0,82				
Social relationships	**78,0 (21,1)**	**0-100**	**1.0**	**29.1**	**0,62**
	0,78				
Environment	**75,4 (17,8)**	**0-100**	**0.3**	**9,2**	**0,78**
	0,83				
Global score [a]	**73,1 (14,9)**	**0-100**	**0**	**0.3**	**0,89**

α: Cronbach α for each domain
r: Pearson correlation coefficient between each domain and the global score
[a] ***For all items of the 4 domains together.***

Results

Table 5. Associations between nationality and school absenteeism: %

	French	European immigrants	Non-European immigrants	p-value
School absenteeism				
Heath problems	79.1	79.6	74.1	NS
Vacation	5.3	7.4	13.0	<0.05
Family problems	9.0	20.4	14.8	<0.01
Skipping school	5.6	11.1	22.2	<0.001
Others	11.8	6.3	27.8	<0.01
Number of days during the school year				<0.01
0	11.6	7.4	5.6	
1-7	70.7	61.1	64.8	
8-14	12.3	18.5	14.8	
> 14	5.4	13.0	14.9	
School absenteeism				
Heath problems	79.1	79.6	74.1	NS
Vacation	5.3	7.4	13.0	<0.05
Family problems	9.0	20.4	14.8	<0.01
Skipping school	5.6	11.1	22.2	<0.001
Others	11.8	6.3	27.8	<0.01

Findings

Table 6. Associations between school difficulties and nationality, and contributions of socioeconomic factors: odds ratio and 95% CI

	European Immigrants		%	*Non-European Immigrants*		%
Gender-age adjusted odds ratios (ORga)						
Repeating a school-year	2,44**	1,22-4,91	100	3,29***	1,71-6,33	100
Low-school-performance	1,34	0,52-3,45	–	3,02**	1,52-6,02	100
Quitting-school-thinking	1,75	0,52-5,88	–	3,42**	1,38-8,48	100
With further adjustment for socioeconomic factors						
Repeating a school-year	2,20*	1,07-4,53	17	2,41*	1,20-4,85	38
Low-school-performance	1,08	0,41-2,87	–	2,21*	1,06-4,62	40
Quitting-school-thinking	1,70	0,49-5,87	–	2,49	0,95-6,49	38

**p<0,05, **p<0,01, ***p<0,001.*

%: Contribution of socioeconomic factors for significant ORga.

Findings

Table 7. Associations between school difficulties and nationality, and contributions of health related, unhealthy behavioural, and violence factors: odds ratio and 95% CI

	European Immigrants		%	*Non-European Immigrants*		%
With further adjustment for health related, behavioural, and violence factors						
Repeating a school-year	**1,82**	**0,86-3,85**	**43**	**1,80**	**0,87-3,73**	**65**
Low-school-performance	**0,80**	**0,29-2,20**	**–**	**1,55**	**0,68-3,53**	**73**
Quitting-school-thinking	**1,51**	**0,41-5,52**	**–**	**1,41**	**0,44-4,55**	**83**

%: Contribution of covariates

Conclusion

- Immigrant students have substantially higher school difficulties depending on their origin:
  - European immigrants: Repeating a school-year
  - Non-European immigrants: Repeating a school-year, low-school-performance, Quitting-school-thinking
- Contributions of socioeconomic factors:
  - European immigrants: 17%
  - Non-European immigrants: 38-40%
- Contributions of health related, behavioral, and violence factors:
  - European immigrants: 43%
  - Non-European immigrants: 65% to 83%

Conclusion

Public policy for improving school achievement

should focus on:

- improvement of environment, living conditions, well-being,
- monitoring physical and mental health and unhealthy behaviours,
- services to reduce school difficulties.

- Re-engaging disconnected students requires interventions to promote the positive perception of learning and learning environment, motivation, and benefit in later life.