



# Importance of Improving Resilience in Teaching-Learning Process of Students with Disabilities



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## Abstract

The objective of the work focuses on determining the importance of resilience in the teaching-learning process of students with disabilities at the Technical University of Manabí, for this purpose an exploration is carried out to verify the criterion on this concept students group. The work deals with contemporary contextual aspects that may favor a psychosocial approach to resilience. The article is based on qualitative research based on the qualitative interpretative-hermeneutic paradigm. The theoretical referents were consigned from the bibliographic review, with the purpose of confronting them with the empirical phase that allowed to unravel the individual representations of the interviewees about the resilience. The results of the research show that resilience is widely known, although an important bias is maintained in its representation related to a more individual than the social view, which could limit its influence as a pedagogical factor.

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## 1. Introduction

Resilience is currently spoken of as a phenomenon that highlights human capacities in the face of adversity, a fact that is not accidental in modern societies or that live in modernity, due to the value they give to autonomy and individual rights [1]. It can be affirmed that studies on resilience have followed the line of positive psychology, a branch for which the human psyche not only helps to solve the mental health problems of individuals but also favors a better quality of life and wellness [2].

The studies that address this topic have focused their attention preferably on the individual psychological perspective, which explains how the concept has been worked on. However, it is necessary to broaden the conception of this construct to new perspectives that diversify the vision of the world, reality, society and subject,

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thereby providing elements of balance between group and individual responsibilities, in the same way as they become acuter. The complex relationships that interweave social influences in personal conditions and vice versa. Among the advances that socially and economically reported in recent years with the opening of the Citizen Revolution in Ecuador, it is worth noting the increase in the standard of living of citizens in the economic, social and cultural, among which stands out access to public health and education; But there are still sectors of society that live in poverty and extreme poverty, where there are various risk factors that put at stake the resilience of important social groups [3].

In the educational field, the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador endorses in article 46, paragraph 3: "Preferential attention for the full social integration of those with disabilities. The State will guarantee its incorporation in the system of regular education and society "[4]. Later, the Constitution itself in Article 47, literal 7, recognizes people with disabilities, the right to: "An education that develops their potential and skills for their integration and participation in equal conditions. Its education will be guaranteed within the regular education. The regular schools will incorporate differentiated treatment and those of special attention specialized education. Educational establishments will comply with accessibility standards for people with disabilities and will implement a scholarship system that responds to the economic conditions of this group [4].

## 2. Research Methods

The research is framed within the interpretive or hermeneutic paradigm since it seeks to know from the same subjects, the representation of the object that is studied. It represents an exploratory study, not experimental, structured by a qualitative methodology and with a level of phenomenological analysis. Although these studies traditionally correspond to a descriptive perspective and developed from the same actors, it also sometimes incorporates the reconstruction of the structures that base the aspect studied, establishing categories and relationships between them. Due to the flexibility, it offers in its application, the technique used to collect the information used in the research was the semi-structured interview. The questions asked were related to the concept that the interviewee or respondent handled about resilience, the importance that he or she attributed to him, the personal qualities that a resilient person has and the role that, according to his perception, fits the society on the issue of resilience. The analysis of the data was made based on the content analysis of these interviews, thus structuring the body of information that is part of the study, based on the categories that were emerging from the data. The sample was intentional and was determined from the relationship of the subjects with the educational field, selecting disabled students to contribute their perception of the object under study. The total number of interviewees was nine students.

## 3. Results and Analysis

### 3.1 Origins and definition of Resilience

Etymologically, the term resilience comes from the Latin "Resiliens" and is used for the first time in the year 1626 as *resilire*; compound term meaning "re": back, and "salire": jump; that is, "jump back" or bounce, alluding to the flexibility of the objects [5]. However, its meanings have been associated with the area of health and education, from where psychology has adapted it to make it part of their work, but in each of them retains its essence [6]. This term has been defined from this perspective by several authors, the one proposed by [7] being one of the first that refers to personal abilities. This author points out that resilience appears in young people who are at social risk and manage to get out of stress situations. The theme arises from the observation made by this scientist, who along with a team of researchers worked with children exposed to highly stressful living conditions and managed to overcome constructively in these situations, while others ended up being injured adults.

For some authors [8] is defined as the ability of people or the social system to live well and develop positively despite the difficult living conditions that they have to live and in a socially acceptable way. This supposes a capacity of resistance that allows preserving the integrity in front of adverse situations and, at the same time, the capacity of development and positive construction in spite of living difficult circumstances. In this definition, it is possible to see that for the author, the conditions that society can offer do not exist or are not considered necessary at the time of growth and development. This emphasizes what young people have to endure and overcome for the benefit of their well-being and that of others. Another author [9] describes resilience as "the human capacity to face the adversities of life, overcome them or even leave transformed." From this perspective, it can be seen as a message addressed to those who are constantly confronted with situations of precariousness and social helplessness.

Other authors [10] point out that the term includes a set of intrapsychic social processes that make it possible to have a "healthy" life living in an "insane" environment. These processes would take place over time, from combinations of attributes of the person with their family, social and cultural environment. The position of these researchers continues to maintain a unilateral vision concerning individuals and the society in which they develop, since it is the person who, based on their internal skills, must overcome the obstacles presented by the environment.

The presence of the skills proposed by these authors is considered essential due to the social demands and the complexity in which human beings develop in everyday relationships. The term skill can be understood here as skill, ability, competence or aptitude; its joint relationship with the social term reveals an imprint of interaction actions, a mutual action or reciprocity, that is, that develops between several people, a situation that offers the possibility of feedback. Thus the notion of social ability enters the realm of the reciprocal and the continuum of interaction. An interaction that bases the response of other people in a combination of the action initiated; so that the social skill does not end without mutual action, that is, the social skill means benefits for those involved.

It can be assured that the correct path would be to promote resilience to overcome traumas and free ourselves from stress. Here it is important for the family, the school and the social action programs, which must devise ways of fostering resilience based on a training of skills and abilities that facilitate ways of acting in the face of eventualities, providing the necessary support, believing and strengthening individual strengths in order to promote resilience aiming to improve the quality of life of people based on their own meaning, in the way they perceive and face the world at a certain time and context [10].

Returning to the meaning of positive psychology, resilience is the personal ability to continue projecting in the future despite destabilizing events, difficult living conditions and traumas sometimes serious, all this, counting on internal forces that only take responsibility for their success or failure to the same subject. This concept includes two relevant aspects; resist the event and remake it, tasks that are certainly attributable to each individual. In this same line, it is added that a resilient person, even manages to live at a higher level after the trauma, since in this process unsuspected latent resources are developed [11].

Considering what has been analyzed above, it can be affirmed that the concept of resilience arises from the heat of modern concepts and is applicable, mainly in contexts in which the social and/or economic reality tends to surpass the internal forces of individuals, being the object of study of psychology and applied in many social investigations, but not yet based on the psychosocial approach that society demands; that is, it has been studied almost exclusively under the prism of individual psychology, or in general considering elements such as individual strengths, obviating important characteristics of the social structure and the historical moment in which these events occur. Taking into account the social characteristics that occur in a certain high-risk environment, the study of resilience plays a key role, as it seeks to facilitate the society involved to develop their potential fully, enrich their lives and prevent malfunctions that put resilience at stake at the social group level [12].

### 3.2 Resilience in the Educational Context

Some authors say [13] that the best educational strategy is a social policy that improves the living conditions of the entire population, which guarantees the families 'possibilities to feed, clothe, cure and transmit the basic elements of their daughters' education, and sons. It is obvious that it refers to improving the conditions of educability and adopting strategies that allow learning in situations of multiple materials and affective deficiencies does not exhaust the educational problems of a country. However, facing these emergencies can also be very educational for those who do not suffer from these deficiencies, since only improving educational conditions would imply accepting that the whole problem is outside of school.

This is not valid from the political point of view, nor from the technical point of view; poverty, violence, the absence of a father figure, etc. objective situations that have a different subjective representation in each of the people who suffer them. To change these representations, the concept of resilience provides some clues that, while not new to many educators, can acquire a renewed momentum in the context of poverty and exclusion. According to some authors [14], those young people who have shown a resilient behavior, that is to say, who have been able to overcome these negative experiences by strengthening themselves in the process, have had some person from either the extended family or the community, with whom they managed to establish a positive link. It is in this aspect where the role of the school and in particular of the teachers, acquires all its value and complexity.

The school context can provide the conditions for children to complete their development, in a positive social school climate. In this sense, it is proposed as a concept closely linked to the social climate at school, regarding whether the school context is an environment that specifically promotes the development of protective factors in the face of difficult situations [15]. Thus, a community of teachers can be transformed, both for young people and

for themselves, into a support network that helps face conflicting situations, in two concrete ways; one way is to work with them the different ways of dealing with stress and the other, to become a protective factor for these children and young people, becoming a social support network.

Considering what has been analyzed above, it can be defined that teachers become influential figures in the development of young people, they are true models of behavior with which there may be an effectively significant attunement, which in some cases can only be teachers who will strengthen or modify the image that young people have formed of themselves will strengthen or weaken basic trust, promote competitive or supportive styles, create protective environments or precipitate situations of risk, promote positive expectations, create hope or succumb to despair.

The traditional approaches associated with resilience point to the importance of training young people in coping skills and behaviors that allow them to develop resilient attitudes, especially in marginal realities [16]; [17] which entails a resignification of collaboration and positive thinking, both of one's own and of the surrounding community. In this line you can also find experiences that rescue the adaptive value of parental figures within their environments (psycho and socio-education), noting that these figures would provide behavioral models and emotional support necessary for children and youth to develop resilient behaviors [18].

The results obtained in the study are presented through two analyzes, one descriptive and the other hypothetical-relational. First of all, a descriptive analysis of the information is carried out, grouped into categories, obtained from the information of the interviews carried out, finding four categories:

1. *Definition of resilience*: Refers to the way in which the concept is defined from the interviewees. It is possible to affirm that there is homogeneous general knowledge on the subject, collecting notions such as overcoming, confronting problems, and overcoming adversities. It should be noted that these notions observed in the definitions of the participants coincide closely with what is established in theory.
2. *Components of resilience*: This category refers to the elements that compose or structure the resilience in the opinion of the participants. Personal factors and, to a lesser extent, the environment are perceived. The aforementioned personal factors are related to cognitive and affective-attitudinal abilities, although the latter predominantly predominate, within which self-esteem, good humor, perseverance, and positive self-esteem would be present. Another of the elements addressed would have to do with cognitive and planning factors such as personal goals. The environmental factors would be the family and in particular the parents. The social environment, the creation of social networks, social skills, are agents that appear to a lesser extent in the stories because resilience is considered more as individual capacity. However, one of the participants points out that there would be only external factors and not internal in the constitution of resilience, this opinion corresponds to a response that escapes the whole.
3. *Evaluation of importance*: This category refers to the perception of the participants about the importance of resilience for people or society in general. It is appreciated that the concept has a positive connotation and is highly valued by the participants, both as a personal resource of themselves and as a factor of personal improvement. It is also possible to appreciate that in addition to this positive assessment, some participants have a critical view of the concept of resilience, perceiving a very individualistic view of the concept that leaves aside the responsibility of society over the individual. It is pointed out that society should give greater opportunities to the individual and he does not. That is why people would react with resilience strategies, as this would be related to negative results of the prevailing economic system.
4. *Importance of education*: This category focuses on analyzing the influence and value of resilience in the educational field. It can be pointed out that the interviewees state that education is a fundamental element for resilience because, thanks to it, there is a means to get ahead and not fall into the difficulties that society faces. It is observed that some people focus on the importance of the figure of the teacher as a motivator and guide so that they can move forward and face the difficulties. On the other hand, it is also possible to appreciate a critical view regarding education, in the sense of its responsibility in the scarce development of policies and mechanisms that ensure the well-being of people or their personal developmental.

In Figure 1 you can see the scheme with the hypothetical-relational model.

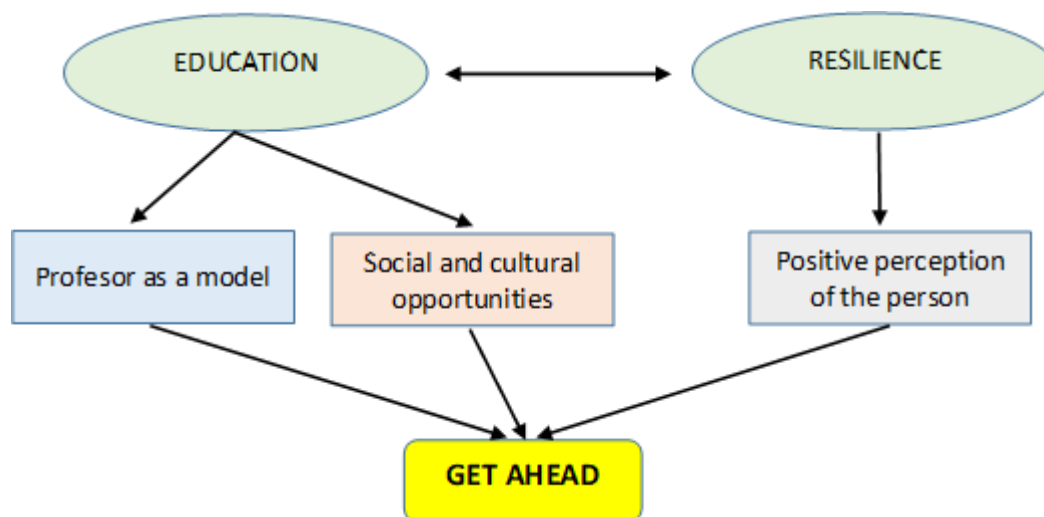


Figure 1. Relational hypothetical model

Source: [1]

The relational analysis shows the hypothetical relationships between the factors studied, based on the characteristics indicated by the study participants. It can be noted that, on the one hand, education gives a set of knowledge to the person that would allow them to have social and cultural opportunities that make it possible to get ahead in life; On the other hand, the teacher is one of the important figures for some of the participants, as an effective model that supports the motivation to improve. Also, resilience is seen as a positive element for the person that allows him to improve self-esteem and face difficulties with strength.

In this way, resilience and school have an indirect relationship as factors that allow the person to improve and develop positively. It is observed that the participants perceive that education would have an influence on resilience as an element that would allow achieving the positive development of the person, but that resilience would not necessarily influence education

#### 4. Conclusion

The concept of resilience has been maintained as a traditional clinical concept, focused on individual capacities and that therefore transfers responsibility for success or failure to people. Once this concept is analyzed in the light of theories of great contingency, it is given a social nuance, and as an effect, the counterproposal is made based on a reformulation that also represents a challenge to society.

The spontaneous mention of the participants remains within that same logic, it is possible to detect, from the found categories, a fairly homogeneous vision that understands it as an individual process, which allows the confrontation of the difficulties, and which requires rather of effective personal traits such as self-esteem and humor. In the results of the interview it can be noticed that the importance assigned to the concept of resilience is high, but always within the individual perspective, being the society (and the primary groups such as the family) important elements but not in a unanimous way.

It was found that for the interviewees the social component is secondary and therefore a compliment that accompanies the process of resilience, rather than a determining factor or cause of it. The social elements would be important means to achieve the skills that make it up, with education being one of the most indicated means as important in it. Modern societies have demanded autonomy as an essential condition of individuals; this situation has resulted in the overvaluation of their responsibilities over those of the social structure. Under this discourse, modern doctrines have characterized the subjects as free beings to determine their destinies, beings with individual capacities, autonomous and self-sufficient beings. Education should stop seeing resilience as an individual condition and begin to see it as an axis of the educational center to work together and the collective values of the community as a whole.

In this sense, there is the possibility of a reformulation, a new look at the concept of resilience in which the conceptions of a more complex society can be incorporated; where there is no talk of overdetermination of the

person over the responsibility of society, especially when we know that the canons for which people may or may not be successful are socially imposed. A look where the person is part of a collective and symbolically reorganize inequalities rather than continue with them, assuming the person all responsibility.

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