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Curriculum, family and others influential factors in second generation immigrants in Portugal

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Abstract

We realize a quantitative study based on an extensive questionnaire spent in all secondary schools in two large districts, such as Faro and Setubal, which have more than twenty five percent of total immigration to Portugal. For variables of sociological characterization of the students and their families were used frequencies to test the descriptive level and appropriated variables to inferential level. The other topics were subjected to several exploratory analysis factorial. The results presented here refer to the following factors: characteristics related to social and family environment of students, their academic routes, support and aid received by students and attributions of academic success. Finally, the data led us to discover relationships between factors influencing the improvement of the compulsory education of second generation immigrants in Portugal.

*Keywords:*second generation migrant, compulsory education, inclusion, academic success;

1. Introduction

Portugal has always been a country of intercultural vocation, from exploration brewing and maritime expansion of the 16[th]century the Portuguese came into contact with cultures from other continents. From the 70's of the 20[th]century, Portugal, which until then was a country of emigration, became a recipient of immigrants. We can identify "three waves" of immigration. In the first phase, the immigrants began to flow, mostly from the former Portuguese colonies like Cape Verde, Sao Tome and Principe, Guinea-Bissau, Angola, Mozambique and Timor. This migration continues and now Portugal is receiving the third generation of this wave. In a second phase, many individuals displaced from Eastern Europe (Ukraine, Romania, Moldova and Russia in particular) have been taken in, and, more recently, the third wave is identified by the population from the Americas, such as Brazil.

This rise in socio-cultural diversity in the constant immigration from Portugal has served as a for this article. Certainly, the number of officially recognized immigrants has risen from 207,587 in 2000 to 440,277 in 2008, a considerable number and increase in a population of approximately 10 million of inhabitants (National Statistics Institute, 2009 and 2010).

According to data from *Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras*(2010), about 50% of immigration to Portugal has an African origin. However, nowadays,the most representative nationalities in Portugal are Brazil, Ukraine, Cape Verde, Angola, Romania, Guinea Bissau and Moldova, which represent about two thirds of the foreign population with regular permanence.

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Most immigrants choose major cities along the coast where it is supposed to be easier to find work either in the building industry or in the service sector. As noted by Silva (2005), this tendency of immigrants to concentrate in specific areas is natural, since they have more opportunities due to the support networks that are created. It also represents a context in which they can protect their cultural identity and to build linking bridges with the native society. Initially, the concerns of immigrants focus on housing and livelihoods. In a second step, their interests are linked to the inclusion of children in school. Schooling for immigrants is considered as essential in order to obtain a better future that fosters better life and a good social status to their children (Portes&Rumbaut, 2005; Rodríguez, 2010).

The research that gives rise to this paper aims to explore and understand the processes of integration and inclusion that, immigrants of a second generation from Portuguese-speaking African Countries (PALOP), are present in the context of Portuguese society from the perspective of educative and professional success.

This study aims to identify factors that influence the second-generation immigrant youth inmaking academic decisions which can be successful from the perspective of personal fulfillment and social and labour integration, or, conversely, life paths that lead to exclusion and marginalization. According to the latest educational and social statistics (INE, 2010), in a near future, these young people will constitute the majority of the school population in many centres in Portugal and, at the same time, many of them will contribute to high dropout rates and school failure. In this context it seems appropriate that studies like this one will be carried out in order to better understand the students of the second generation of PALOP, and their learning processes and social and school integration (OECD, 2006, Rumbaut, 2004).

In our research we focus on Setúbal and Faro, two coastal cities that have the most significant representation of immigrants in Portugal, after Lisbon. The district of Setúbal is home to 49,309 immigrants, representing 10.8% of all immigrants at national level; the district of Faro is home to 73,277, representing 16% of the country, both cities are receiving more than a quarter of the immigrants in Portugal (Service de Estrangeira and Fronteiras, 2010). Furthermore, within this geographical context we study the specific population of Portuguese-African students of the second generation, who are in secondary education, both in public and private institutions.

Continuing in education beyond compulsory education provides a clear context of school integration, in a broad sense, as an opportunity for social integration and individual professional projects for the youth (Apple, 2007; Rodriguez, 2011). Therefore, it is a paper that takes into account the school schedule of students that are currently in secondary education, either general or professional,as social and labourinclusion factor;students who, for operational reasons are called "successful" in our research. The **specific objectives** of our research are:

• To identify second-generation immigrant students /Portuguese-Africans attending secondary school, and to develop a socio-educative profile.

• To identify the factors that, from thepoint of view of students, was crucial to their school success.

2. Method

Here we provide some essential elements of the investigation. This way, we are presenting the characteristics of our research, the methodological strategies and the progress made in statistical processes.

2.1. Sample and population

Our sample coincides with the scope of the research, as we took the questionnaires to all 571 students of African origin present in the school year 2009-2010, attending secondary education in the cities of Setúbal and Faro. In some tables, the frequency does not reach the total figure for the existence of missing values (non-complete answers, two marked options and other events). The largest group is made up of 17-year-old individuals (130 students), which translates into an actual rate of 22,9%, followed closely by 18-year-old students (18,5%) and 16-year-old (18,1%), as shown in the following table:

TABLE I. The birth of the students and their parents (n = 571)

Origin	Student		Father		Mother	
Countries	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Angola	49	8,8	176	31,2	239	42,1
Cape Verde	20	3,6	60	10,6	53	9,3

Guinea-Bissau	7	1,3	17	3,0	17	3,0
Mozambique	15	2,7	88	15,6	82	14,4
Sao Tome y Príncipe	2	0,4	6	1,1	7	1,2
Other African countries	4	0,7	3	0,5	1	0,2
Portugal	450	80,6	208	36,8	160	28,2
Other contries in the EU	1	0,2	3	0,5	1	0,2
Rest of Europa	2	0,4	2	0,4	4	0,7
The Americas	5	0,9	1	0,2	1	0,2
Asia or Autralasia	3	0,5	1	0,2	3	0,5
Total	**558**	**100,0**	**565**	**100**	**568**	**100**

With regard to the gender of those polled, we found that there are more women (55.1%) than men (44.9%). The nationality of the students and their parents is very enlightening. Most of the students were born in Portugal (80.6% of total) and of African-born students, Angolans are those who have a higher percentage (8.8%), followed by Cape Verde students (3 , 6%), Mozambique (2.7%), Guinea (1.3%) and Sao Tome (0.4%).

The fathers, in their majority, have Portuguese origin (36.8%). Of those born in Africa (62%) we can highlight the Angolans with 31.2%, other representative countries of birth are Mozambique (15.6%), Cape Verde (10.6%), Guinea-Bissau (3%) and Sao Tome and Principe (1.1%). In connection with the mother, the trend varies, because 42.1% of the polled students indicated that the mother is native from Angola. Portuguese mothers are the 28.2%, and other leading countries, as in the case of fathers with similar percentages are Mozambique (14.4%), Cape Verde (9.3%), Guinea -Bissau (3%) and Sao Tome and Principe (1.2%).

2.2. Procedure

This questionnaire was completed by students in their own classroom, the researchers went for each school and high school classes of Faro and Setúbal. All statistical treatments in this study were performed with the aid of SPSS 18.0. For characterization sociological variables of students and their families at the frequencies used and the appropriate test description of these variables ($\chi 2$) inferential level. For all other topics discussed, the responses of subjects to groups of questions were subjected to several exploratory factor analysis, which aimed to reduce the initially collected data on factors or dimensions. It was also necessary to psychometric evaluation of the different categories of the questionnaire to check their reliability.

Data collection was carried out using a questionnaire composed of a large number of items (86). The response scale was elaborated from 1 to 5. The items were grouped into the following factors / categories: support / aid that students receive to study, the motivation to continue their studies, the assessment in their educational context, their self-esteem, expectations and responsibilities of academic success in compulsory education. This grouping favors the factor analysis for each of the topics, which could subsequently perform other statistical processing, including verification of the determinant factors of academic success of students from the PALOP.

3. Analysis and Conclusions

The analysis of the results obtained in this paper provides significant data, which also could be taken into consideration for future developments in this area.After the analysis of the survey we highlight several findings:

The factors that, from the perspective of students, contributed most to theirsuccess in school are the intrinsic ones, being motivation and the feeling of self-efficacy the most relevant and significant; resultsconsistent with current research, which highlightthe active involvement in the teaching-learning processes of students when they have confidence in their abilities and a high degree of self-efficacy (Alonso, 2005).

After the interpretation and analysis of extracted data, we conclude that the influential factors that contribute most to the improvement of compulsory education (considered in the paper as school success), according to students, are the intrinsic factors related to self-motivation of the individual and feelings of higher self-efficacy relevant to this achievement, where school-related factors and, in particular, related with teachers are also considered sources of motivation since they can raise self-esteem and increase student interest (Entwistle, TaitKozeki& 1989; Sleeter, 2008). However, it is true that the influence of teachers is significant as perceived by

students –though in a lesser grade than other variables-, a situation evidenced in the investigation of Aguadoet al (2007). In this sense, we can highlight that their classmates can also cause the development of a sense of self-efficacy (Alonso, 2005), either by establishing relations of friendship and supportor by establishing discriminatory social relations (such as colour of the skin), which lead us to believe the student to be able to achieve the same success as their peers.

Another influencing factor in school success of students of the second generation in Portuguese secondary education is the interest of parents, regarding the education of children (Rodriguez and Valdivieso, 2008). Nevertheless, the involvement of parents in the education of their children in this case is even more key. In fact, this concern of parents is directly related to their level of studies (Carrasco, Pàmies and Bertran, 2009). Also, according to data compiled we can confirm that the higher the qualification of the parents (in our research there is only one significant relationship with male parent), the higher the children's school success (relative to the number of failures).

We emphasize that the family plays a key role in the success of students. The educational level of fathers is an important factor in the success of Portuguese-African students, the higher the educational level of fathers, the higher their educational level will be (measured by the number of failures). This is due to the expectations of fathers on children's education (Coklar & Bagci, 2010; Rodriguez and Valdivieso, 2008; Rodriguez, 2011): the higher the educational level of parents, the greater the tendency of students to study in higher education , and the lower the educational level of parents, the greater the tendency of children to enter the labour market.

This finding is consistent with Machado (2007), who assumes the influence of the origin or status of the parents in the development of students; stressing that the effect of "social class" prevails largely on the effect of "culture" as long as we avoid a hasty and one-dimensional reading of the school-immigration relationship, since children of parents with low skills have more difficulty in school.

This inequality explains – and this is one explanation, among others – the fact that the use of Portuguese language skills is a very important factor for success in school. The native language proficiency is considered an important part in the integration of the foreign population (Vila, Esteban and Oller, 2010), and so the subject of our investigation show it. We should remember that these learners do not represent the school community of Portuguese-African students of all educational levels and age groups, because they are already well into the school system, students are expected to study at other educational levels (in any of the Basic Education courses, for example), since the reality observed is about students who have passed compulsory education, whose parents are from the PALOP and are socially well integrated. This limitation also makes way for new research, based on the change of the characteristics of the learners, such as educational level or their countries of origin or their parents, especially Brazil and Eastern Europe that are now marking the new generations of Portuguese society; this way, undoubtedly it would offer other results, which presumably would facilitate very significant and interesting comparisons.

As Rodriguez (2011) claims, there are factors related to the school and its environment dynamics influencing the processes of inclusion / exclusion and, therefore, school success and social integration of students. In this vein, Miller (1995) referred to the expectations, practices and other elements of the educational context as critical issues for the adequate educational development of students. Thus, in our research we have included different sections that attempt to gather information in this regard from the perceptions of the individuals, since we know that the monolingual and monocultural habit in schools, although it includes good and positive intentions, tends to the discrimination and misunderstanding against immigrant children (Sleeter, 2008). Therefore, in this work we bring knowledge that promote the visibility, understanding and influencing factors in the educational processes of the Portuguese-Africans in Portugal, since it is extremely important to consider cultural diversity in all educational dimensions to promote academic success of the various ethnic minorities.

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