MY FAMILY MATTERS: ALTRUISTIC, MIXED AND SELF-ORIENTED PURPOSES FOR LEARNING AMONG CHILEAN STUDENTS[1][2][3]

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ABSTRACT

This work analyzes the purposes declared by a small sample of Chilean students, categorizing them according to their self-oriented, altruistic or hybrid characteristics, going beyond the dichotomy that is common in the literature, which includes only extrinsic and intrinsic purposes, or self-oriented and prosocial purposes. As an emerging category, it delves into family purposes, discussing factors that could influence the relevance of the family as a determinant of purpose. In addition, the importance given to the family in the purpose of Chilean students is compared with international literature, which tends to relegate the family environment to a second place with respect to other purposes. This comparison is intended to inspire future analyzes that delve into the contextual determinants of the definition of purpose in education. Finally, this work aims to contribute to future research on purpose in Latin American students, since it is likely that in the region there is a similar pattern, which relieves the family as a crucial element for the construction of the purpose and motivations of the students.

Key concepts: purpose, education, motivation, family, academic performance.

MI FAMILIA IMPORTA: PROPÓSITOS ALTRUISTAS, MIXTOS Y AUTO-ORIENTADOS DE APRENDIZAJE ENTRE ESTUDIANTES CHILENOS

RESUMEN

Este trabajo analiza los propósitos declarados por una pequeña muestra de estudiantes chilenos, categorizándolos según sus características auto-orientadas, altruistas o híbridas, superando la dicotomía que es común en la literatura, que incluye solo propósitos extrínsecos

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e intrínsecos, o fines auto-orientados y prosociales. Como categoría emergente, profundiza en los propósitos familiares, discutiendo factores que podrían influir en la relevancia de la familia como determinante del propósito. Además, se compara la importancia otorgada a la familia en el propósito de los estudiantes chilenos con la literatura internacional, que tiende a relegar el ámbito familiar a un segundo plano respecto de otros propósitos. Esta comparación pretende inspirar futuros análisis que profundicen en los determinantes contextuales de la definición de finalidad en la educación. Finalmente, este trabajo pretende contribuir a futuras investigaciones sobre el propósito en estudiantes latinoamericanos, ya que es probable que en la región exista un patrón similar, que releve a la familia como elemento crucial para la construcción del propósito y motivaciones de los estudiantes.

Conceptos clave: propósito, educación, motivación, familia, rendimiento académico.

An overview of purpose in school education

Educational analysis rarely considers how the perceptions, choices and mindsets of students influence indicators of achievement and quality, which are decisive factors in the performance of educational management. Research usually focuses on the way in which students play a passive role in their own performance, and ignores the relevance of the agency they have with regard to their own processes of commitment, learning and development. This is especially the case in pre-school and primary education contexts, where students appear to be less responsible for their contribution to educational quality (Volante, 2010).

This tendency has led to an underestimation of the impact of the role that students play in their own learning processes, with efforts concentrating instead on the search for reasons and explanations from distinct sources, processes and mechanisms beyond the young person or people in question. However, research has been clear in proposing several explanations for academic performance and achievement that stem precisely from the role that students play in their learning processes. These include taking into account their prior knowledge, aspirations, openness to experience, belief in the value of being invested in their studies, academic engagement, and their ability to construct a sense of self from their involvement in learning, in addition to their reputation (Hattie, 2008).

In modern society, people value the role of education in the acquisition of core and fundamental learning for long-term, future success in life. This includes its role in the development, social mobility and trajectories of individuals (Kuha & Goldthorpe, 2010). Nevertheless, as adults we rarely spend time genuinely explaining the meaning and purpose of education to our children and young people (Moran, 2016). We discuss its importance with them, but rarely tell them why it is important and, even less often, help them to make the connection between education and the formation of their own identities, meaning and purposes in life (Moran, 2016). In general, adults take the relevance of education for granted and instead they advocate the processes of instruction, teaching and

learning and expect students to connect with these concepts without providing further context, guidance or inspiration with which they can acquire, understand and make sense of their own life projects in an authentic manner. Accordingly, research in Chile has shown that personal performance goals set by students themselves have a significant impact on individual academic performance, accounting for up to 70% of the difference in terms of achievement between educational establishments (Volante, 2010).

The construction of purpose is crucial in terms of several aspects of our lives. Knowing why, or for whom, we do what we do and understanding clearly what our sources of inspiration are helps us to provide meaning to the way we work, learn and lead our daily lives.

All around us, people strive to muster the energy and effort on a daily basis to fulfill the tasks that life and work constitute, and this is true for parents, teachers, family members, friends or strangers. Individuals are often driven by external factors such as reward systems, qualifications, evaluations or the opinions of others (Ryan & Deci, 2000). However, people are equally motivated from within, by interests, curiosity, concern or enduring values linked to the individual self. These purposes connect to intrinsic motivations that are not necessarily rewarded or supported externally and are capable of sustaining passions, creativity and ongoing effort.

In terms of the literature, it is on this basis that different research has been undertaken into and theories formulated about the motivations and intentions that guide our daily actions, with a particular focus placed on the interplay between psychology and education. Indeed, several studies have been conducted in the field of education, especially in the school sector, to identify how students construct their motivations and to characterize their related sources of inspiration and energy.

Due to their complexity and intensity, as well as their importance in the lives of students, schools are an excellent source of information for researchers seeking to understand the different

ways in which children and young people shape their life aims and objectives (Malin et al., 2013). Underlying each of the motives, initiatives and objectives of the school for teaching and learning are deep-rooted motivations, which comprise traditional, cultural and productive elements of a society and that, in turn, are full of meaning. There is no subject without meaning, and no meaning without a subject (Hopmann, 2007). Schools provide young people with mentors, role models and concrete opportunities to ensure students adopt and achieve purposeful pathways in life (Moran et al., 2012).

Theoretical conceptualizations of purpose for learning

Psychology has assigned increasing importance to purpose in the development of children and young people. Following the work of Damon et al. (2003), purpose is defined as a stable and generalized intention to accomplish something that is meaningful both to oneself and to the outside world. The aforementioned research characterizes purpose on the basis of certain fundamental conditions, which are a result of it being a stable, far-reaching goal and part of one's own search for meaning. The study also argues that purpose simultaneously implies a desire to contribute to the world and constitutes a goal which shapes and influences the actions of the purpose-holder.

While purpose has traditionally been understood as a personal and inward-looking concept, it can also be regarded as being linked to the desire to influence and change the world. Rather than being understood merely as a means of adaptation and a motivator of individual good practice, the nature of purpose is also externally oriented, aligned directly with the desire to bring about change across wider society.

One important characterization of the types of motivation in education that has been highlighted in the literature concerns intrinsic and extrinsic purpose. Kruglanski et. al. (2021) sustain that there are generally two main strategies used to motivate learning among students: interest or obligation. An intrinsic motivation is one that comes from within. Hence, when a learner finds a subject interesting, the purpose to learn more about it comes naturally.

Conversely, an extrinsic motivation comes from the outside. In the
school context, the most common extrinsic purpose is the grade
because it is an external concept and independent of self-interest: the
student completes the task out of fear of receiving a poor result or,
on the contrary, in order to obtain a positive result, i.e., the action is
not necessarily motivated by something internal (Vallerand, 1997).

Lepper (2005) found that students whose motivation to learn
was intrinsic showed significantly greater interest in studying, while
those who responded only to external rewards or incentives showed
less interest. Consequently, Lepper points out that the misuse or
overuse of rewards, or the use of superfluous rewards, undermines
intrinsic interest and turns an otherwise engaging activity into one
the child only wants to complete if it is accompanied with a reward.

However, this does not suggest that extrinsic rewards should
never be used. Lepper contends that rewards in themselves are
neither good nor bad; rather, there are certain ways of using them
that are better than others. In addition, their success depends on the
context in which they are used. Specifically in learning, the author
points out that students are more interested and learn more when
studying is performed through a game or activity that intrinsically
motivates them, rather than when it is viewed as an obligation.
Furthermore, experiments have shown that extrinsic motivation,
or rewards, interfere with learning and prevent the emergence of
genuine interest in tasks. Indeed, young people who are intrinsically
motivated to learn show higher levels of self-efficacy, which makes
them want to perform more difficult tasks or take on new challenges,
and the learning process is therefore transferred to other contexts
(Lepper, 2005).

Contrary to what Lepper (2005) points out, the findings of
Diseth et al. (2020) show a positive correlation between intrinsic and
extrinsic motivation. The authors' explanation for this divergence
with previous research is that it could be due to cultural differences,
since in Norway, which is where this study is carried out, there is
a more independent social culture, which means that there is not
necessarily such a marked discrepancy between extrinsic and intrinsic

motivation (Iyengar & Lepper, 1999). Furthermore, Norway, unlike the US and the UK, is characterized as a "female" society (Hofstede, 2020). Therefore, students may perceive "teacher dependency" and "teacher pleasing" (extrinsic motivation) as interactions through dialogue, rather than undermining intrinsic motivation (Diseth et al., 2020).

Cultural factors are relevant when we talk about motivation, because societies vary in their ways of seeing learning. For example, for Chinese students, learning is seen as their duty and obligation to society and their parents. Thus, unlike Western students, the effects of extrinsic motivation on academic performance may not necessarily always be negative (Liu et al., 2019), as pointed out by other authors reviewed in this study.

Liu et al. (2019) show that extrinsic motivation is detrimental to the academic performance of students with high intrinsic motivation. However, for students with low intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation helps improve academic performance. This shows that culture can be a determining factor when it comes to defining interest as the only key reason for learning. In the case of Chinese students, extrinsic reasons could make it easier for students to learn when they are not interested in the subject.

Following on from the research conducted by Lepper, Dweck (2017) describes student motivation in education as a matter of attitude. She argues that when students genuinely believe they can learn something through their own effort, they are able to retain their focus and energy in order to achieve that goal. Dweck defines this as an attitude or growth mindset, and this contrasts with the belief that learning ability is fixed, in which students limit themselves. This can be complemented by the theories around intrinsic motivation, since while extrinsic sources can motivate learning, having a positive mindset that facilitates an understanding of education as an end in itself, as well as possessing a taste for learning, is more sustainable than pursuing the learning process for a reward or due to fear of punishment.

An additional theory that examines purpose in education and motivation in learning is the expectancy value theory, which states that expectations and values directly influence student performance and choice of tasks, which in turn strongly impact their levels of perseverance. In this sense, young people set themselves a challenge or purpose and perform according to their expectations of success or failure, the difficulty of the tasks and their beliefs about their self-efficacy (Atkinson, 1964). The theory also emphasizes how these expectations and beliefs of students are heavily influenced by the perceptions and attitudes of other people towards them and their achievements, especially those of their parents, family and teachers.

In parallel to theoretical efforts to conceptualize purpose in line with motivational theories, self-determination affords an educational perspective of purpose. Self-determination theory represents a framework for the study of human motivation and personality, and has guided several motivational studies in psychology which define intrinsic and extrinsic sources of purpose that impact both cognitive and social development (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The theory provides a description of the interaction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, and it examines how social and cultural factors facilitate or undermine one's own sense of volition and initiative, as well as general well-being and quality of performance. It contends that the conditions which support an individual's experience of autonomy, competence and relatedness promote improved forms of motivation and engagement in activities, including in performance, persistence and creativity.

Current approaches to purpose for learning

A further line of research in relation to learning purposes is introduced by Yaeger et al. (2014), who address purpose as an important component in the improvement of academic self-regulation and motivation in terms of academic tasks which are usually identified as boring by students. These authors maintain that having a prosocial and self-transcendent purpose can generate greater persistence and perseverance at the school level. This type of motivation, which goes beyond simple concepts of the self, may also help to ensure that certain

activities previously viewed as uninspiring are, instead, regarded as challenging and engaging. Consequently, the authors define learning purpose as a goal that is motivated both by the opportunity to benefit oneself and by the potential to create a certain impact or a connection with the world beyond the self (Yaeger et al., 2014).

Based on this definition, the same authors separate the purpose of learning into two types. The first consists of individual-oriented purposes or the pursuit of one's own goal, such as learning, going to university, obtaining a job or earning money, among others. These motivations are called self-oriented purposes and embedded within this definition is a focus on the content of the goal (learning something for the sake of learning, rather than learning something in order to achieve a different goal). In this way, the individual purpose is the overriding goal, the motivation itself, rather than a means to some other end.

The second type of learning purpose consists of self-transcendent purposes, which relate to motivations that go beyond the individual and concentrate on a third party, or which are based on the individual but pursue a goal that transcends that individual. Examples of these purposes include helping people, caring for the environment, fighting poverty and providing for one's family, among others. Within these types of motivation, the focus of the purpose is no longer on the content of the purpose per se, but rather on the justification thereof (for example, to become an engineer in order to help people). It should be noted that students can frequently hold both types simultaneously, thereby working in conjunction to shape the motivations of students.

Nevertheless, Yaeger et al. (2014) introduce a difference at this stage by adding purposes that go beyond the self to individual-oriented purposes. They label these "learning purposes" and their adoption may lead to benefits that self-oriented motives alone could not achieve. In short, this type of purpose is defined as a goal that is motivated both by the opportunity to benefit oneself and by the potential to generate an effect or connection with the world beyond the self (Yaeger et al.; 2014, Damon et al., 2003).

The work undertaken by Yaeger et al. (2014), including its definitions and classifications, supports the research described in this paper. This is not only because their work reflects current understanding, but also because it illustrates the distinction between self-oriented and self-transcendent purposes, which will be utilized in this paper as self-oriented purpose and altruistic purpose. Therefore, self-oriented purposes will be understood herein as those that relate to the self, to one's own motivations that represent the end goal of learning. Examples include having a professional career, studying, working or becoming more intelligent. Conversely, altruistic purposes will be understood as those that go beyond the self, such as making the world a better place, helping the poor, caring for the environment or providing for one's family.

It is important to note the emphasis that Yaeger et al. (2014) place on the impact of self-transcendent purposes with regard to academic perseverance. Having a broader purpose in education, beyond merely learning, having a job or earning money, is a crucial factor in remaining motivated to pursue long-term goals. It is equally important to want to do things for others and to want to make the world a better place. As human beings, we find these self-transcendent goals highly motivating (Yaeger et al., 2014).

As a result of the contribution of Yaeger et al. (2014), a third category has been theoretically developed, which corresponds to a fusion between the two aforementioned types of purpose. Accordingly, certain purposes or motivations will be classified as belonging to a category that combines self-oriented elements with other self-transcendent or altruistic ones. This third subset has emerged in response to the need to look beyond a binary classification of student motivations, as well as to adapt the categories proposed by Yaeger et al. (2014) to the Chilean case. The latter point is due to the fact that the literature on this subject reports a strong predominance of family-oriented and friend-centric purposes and ties for Hispanic, and particularly Chilean, cases which, in itself, represents mixed purposes according to the nomenclature of the authors. Consequently, the subsequent section provides a literature review of the Latin American perspective of purposes for learning of students in the region. The

review aims to facilitate understanding of the particular case to which the introduction of a new mixed category, which consists of self-oriented and self-transcendent purposes, responds.

Purpose among Latin American students

In the work by Fuligni (2001), the author discusses certain components of Latin American culture and its outlook towards the family, as well as the correlation thereof with regards to the future purposes of students. The author points out that many Asian traditions emphasize values such as solidarity, respect and commitment to and within the family. Something similar can also be observed in Latin American cultures, a kind of devotion and loyalty to the family, although this is often perceived as an obligation (Chilman, 1993), in contrast to Asian countries, where it is seen as an act of love and solidarity. The commonality between the two traditions is the expectation that children and young people will be able to financially support and sustain their families once they have the means to do so, by contributing money to the household and helping to care for the home in which they were raised. In that sense, the needs of the family usually take precedence over the needs of the young people themselves, who, when asked about their wishes, often demonstrate internal conflicts caused by a certain collusion between intrinsic and family goals (Fuligni, 2001).

An important aspect highlighted by Fuligni (2001) is that this sense of belonging and obligation to the family does not tend to diminish over time and is maintained into adulthood. In terms of life purposes, the same author contends that education plays a highly important role given that studying and succeeding academically is one of the most significant ways that young Latin Americans can help their families. This suggests that the idea of obligation towards the family could generate a utilitarian perception of education, whereby young people in Latin America perceive education as a means to a greater end, i.e., to maintain or help the family unit, rather than to view it as an end in itself, as a source of intrinsic motivation to learn, or by being genuinely interested in studying. Education for young people in Latin American matters because it provides them with a

means to an extremely important end, which is to support the family (Fuligni, 2001).

Lor (2019) also studied the effect of perceived family obligation on students in Asia and the Americas, placing his investigatory focus beyond the positive impact on perseverance or academic performance and concentrating on the constraints that family ties create on their educational efforts. Drawing on a study of low-income young people and high school students in the United States, Lor argues that poverty can create conditions in which the family generates expectations and obligations that prevent students from achieving greater degrees of social mobility. When students were interviewed, their responses revealed that they referred to their families as the main barrier to upward social mobility, given their perceived obligations, particularly in relation to the need to provide social and economic support to their relatives.

Similarly, research by Kim et al. (2020) examined the role of family orientations in the intrinsic motivations of immigrant and non-immigrant secondary school students in the United States. The authors found that family context, specifically parental goals and family orientations, plays a complex role in the intrinsic purposes and motivations of children of immigrant parents. Indeed, students from immigrant families were shown to feel increased pressure from parental expectations compared to those from non-immigrant families.

A further study that should be noted is that of Urdan et. al. (2007), which explores student perceptions of how families influence their academic motivation. Distinct types and sources of family influences on student motivation were identified through interviews with young people in their final year of secondary school. The research revealed five patterns of family influence. The first and most common was the Family Pleasing pattern, characterized by the desire to make the family proud by means of high academic achievement. The second was the Family Obligation pattern, which included students who felt a sense of indebtedness towards their parents for past sacrifices made in order to provide them with the

opportunity to study. This pattern represented a more specific type of desire to please family members by achieving good academic results. The third pattern was Family Support, which is related to more authoritarian parents with high academic expectations of their children. The fourth pattern was Aversive Influence, which included students who described negative family role models and a strong desire to refute the low expectations of family members. The fifth pattern is related to a small group of participants who stated that their families had little influence on their academic motivation, and this corresponds to the No Influence pattern.

The main contribution of the research undertaken by Urdan et. al. (2007), in terms of its relevance to this study, is the discovery of the variety of ways in which the family can influence the academic motivation and purpose of students. In contrast to traditional literature on motivation and purpose, the paper goes beyond the mere impact of parents in generating a perception of obligation in young people, by considering the family as one single, broader core of influences.

Sáenz et al. (2017) attempt to understand how Latin American students balance family obligations with academic life throughout their educational journeys. Their findings demonstrate the important role that family members play in the education of young students, who rely heavily on family capital and ties as a valuable source of support. This study contrasts with other contributions to the body of literature in that, contrary to evidence that shows that the family can be an obstacle to the education of young people, Sáenz et al. (2017) claim that, for young Latin Americans, family units do not impose limitations on educational trajectories. Conversely, these students assert that their families provide them with motivation and a key support mechanism that, in conjunction, serve to strengthen their aspirations to continue with academic studies.

Henry (2011) addresses the influence of the family on the academic motivations and perseverance levels of young Latin Americans, while also taking account of the distinct types of existing family structures. In this regard, significant differences were found

in the participation of fathers, but not mothers, depending on the family structure. This can be explained fundamentally by the limited presence or complete absence of fathers in certain family units, in which mothers end up playing a critical and predominant role in the generation, or lack thereof, of academic motivation among students.

The study by Leal-Soto et al. (2013) also investigated family factors that affect the academic achievement goals and motivation of Latin American students. It should be noted that a pertinent issue behind such research in the region has been the assertion by students themselves of a lack of motivation due to the family, particularly in terms of a prevailing sense of obligation perceived towards parents or guardians. Moreover, given that this lack of motivation represents a problem for teachers, research into the impact of the family environment on students and how this may be modified to avoid the generation of negative effects thereon is critical, and represents a subject that has not been widely explored. The results of the Leal-Soto et al. (2013) study showed that family environment, the socialization style of the family, and its achievement orientations significantly influenced the academic goals and motivation of students. Crucially, the findings of this research demonstrate the importance of conducting a more in-depth investigation into the impact of family ties and how the pressures they exert on students influence their academic goals.

In turn, Gavotto (2015) analyzes the circumstances and expectations of families as indispensable factors for the educational development and learning of students in Latin America. He points out that, given the low number of students who manage to finish university and uncertainties regarding future employment, many young people choose to drop out of school. According to the author, the main factor that causes school dropout in Latin America is the lack of economic resources, and this element takes precedence over others associated with learning motivations, including teachers, the school, parents, family, community, and food and diet, among others. Gavotto claims this is associated with a syndrome that is highly peculiar to young Latin Americans and which consists of educational apathy, a lack of motivation, discouragement and low expectations.

In turn, this is related to the characteristic vulnerability of many families in the region.

From the aforementioned, it can be concluded that the motivation to learn and the construction of a purpose depend to a large extent on the living conditions not only of the student, but also of their family. In this sense, if the family of the student experiences socio-economic deprivation, the young person will tend to construct a purpose that is in line with helping to overcome this problem. Therefore, by following the argument proposed by Gavotto (2015), it is unlikely that a Latin American student whose family is socio-economically vulnerable will choose to continue studying for reasons that go beyond helping the family, i.e., to pursue more individual motivations or ones that are unrelated to contributing to the household. This is in line with the utilitarian perception of education proposed by Fuligni (2001), i.e., that education is a means to a greater end, in this case to support or help the family. Education is useful to the extent that it serves that purpose, but there is no intrinsic motivation to learn, which is why many young people stop studying when they finish secondary school, or even before, as soon as they feel that education no longer contributes anything to the purpose of directly helping the family unit.

The idea introduced by Gavotto (2015) is reaffirmed in the work of Peña et al. (2016), which studies the influence of the family on school dropout and learning motivations of Chilean students. The authors conclude that the family can be an important source of motivation for young people in Chile to learn, given the strong influence of the nuclear family in the country, but that it can also trigger school dropout. As with other studies (Espinoza et al., 2012; Manzano & Ramírez, 2012), Peña et al. (2016) emphasize the significance of the socio-economic situation of families as a determinant in the decision-making of students. This is confirmed when looking at national statistics, which indicate that dropout rates among 16-19 year olds in Chile averages 12% in the three lowest quintiles of the population (Sapelli & Torche, 2004). This could be explained by poverty levels among affected families which encourage their children to work, in line with the trend discussed by Gavotto

(2015). Work represents a more concrete promise of obtaining money with which to help the family; more so than education, which is perceived as a long-term project.

Peña et al. (2016) describe an additional factor with regard to Chilean families that is directly associated with socio-economic status and which, therefore, impacts on the motivation of students to learn. This factor is the level of education of the parents, which is usually low, and there is a correlation between their level of education and the tendency for their children to drop out of school (Espinoza et al., 2012 and 2014a). Parents with low levels of formal schooling have a direct influence in this regard since they act as role models for their children, and this results in young people dropping out of education rather than continuing with their studies (Peña et al., 2016).

Methodology[8]

Participants

The instrument of analysis was applied to 344 students in a school in the Metropolitan Region of Santiago, Chile, with the consent of the parents of all participants. As part of a larger experimental investigation, work was carried out with two groups: a motivation course group (n=158), which was provided with a growth mindset intervention, and a brain functions course group (n=186). Within the motivation course group, a total of 149 students completed the activities, which included an open-ended question and a set of closed-ended questions. Overall, 7 cases were missing, due to individuals who failed to answer the question or answered a question out of context and which therefore could not be categorized. Students in the brain functions course group were not surveyed on the questions of interest, so they were not considered in this study. Consequently, a final sample of 142 students was considered, consisting of 79 males and 63 females between 6th and 11th grade, all of whom had completed the open-ended question and were assigned to the motivation course.

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8   Databases cannot be shared due to IRB restrictions, though if interested in collaborating please contact authors.

The data used in this paper come from the answers provided by students from a fee paying semi-private school with a large enrollment. During the second session of the intervention, the students were asked about the things that were important to them and urged to write about what drives them to help make things better.

Method

Information was collected using a mixed method content analysis based on categories which was applied to student responses. This enabled an understanding of the meaning (content and structure) of the purpose for learning (Taylor & Bogdan, 2000). The interesting point about using a mixed method is that it allows for the use of the inductive approach, i.e., to address the set of empirical observations and identify relevant themes or dimensions, while simultaneously ensuring a deductive approach, in which a theory is used and applied on the basis of distinct categories.

During the analysis procedure, coding was carried out based on the units of meaning detected in the student responses. Researcher triangulation, depth and transparency (Krause, 1995) were considered as criteria to ensure research rigor by means of the judgment and validation of three expert pairs. The coding yielded three inductive-deductive order categories, which are upheld by the contributions of Yaeger et al. (2014), as mentioned previously. The categories of analysis are non-exclusive, i.e., there may be more than one mention per student in these categories.

The categories that constitute the matrix analysis correspond to the following: first, to the categories that group self-oriented purposes; second, to altruistic purposes; and third, to those of a mixed nature, which encompass statements that may be considered as belonging to both self-oriented and self-transcendent/altruistic purposes. Table 1 provides a breakdown of the purposes by category.

Table 1.
Purposes by category

Category	Purposes
Self-oriented	Learning; Work; University; Study; Future; Performance; Personal well-being and happiness.
Self-transcendent/ Altruistic	Environment; Poverty; Animals; Crime; Abuse/Violence; Educational opportunity and right to education; Helping others and society; Happiness of others; World peace; Helping people to learn; Equal treatment and non-discrimination.
Mixed	People around me or who matter to me; Friends and classmates; Helping my family; My family.

Source. In-house research

Instruments

In order to answer the question "How are the self-oriented and altruistic purposes of Chilean students distributed?" an analysis was undertaken of answers to a questionnaire consisting of open-ended questions. This instrument forms part of a Fondecyt project entitled Estudio Estrategia Online de Desarrollo Motivación Escolar y Mentalidad [Study into Online Strategy Development of School Motivation and Mindset]. The answers to this specific question were quantified through qualitative categories via a methodology that is explained in the following section.

Similarly, data characterizing the students are provided, including the educational levels of the mothers of the students. This allows for correlations to be made regarding distinct factors, such as the results achieved by students and the socio-economic levels of their families, among others. This is important because in countries with high levels of social inequality, maternal educational levels are positively associated with socio-economic status as well as parental expectations regarding the education of their children.

The specific question used to generate the purpose coding and subsequent analysis was as follows:

"When people have a strong mindset they are better equipped to do all the things that are important to them. If we want to explain this to next year's students, we need to know what kinds of things interest

you. Please answer the following question: What kinds of things are important to you?"

This question, which was asked under the framework of the survey described in previous sections, aimed to obtain information regarding the purposes for learning of the younger participants, thus fulfilling the objective of answering the main question of this paper: How are the self-oriented and altruistic purposes of Chilean students distributed?

Results

By considering the research question in relation to the distribution of the purposes for learning of Chilean students, and based on the responses of the sample participants to the question regarding their own particular purposes and the things that are important to them, the following results were obtained. As previously mentioned, three analytical categories were defined and quantified in terms of presence (frequency). The data derived from these categories are shown in Table 2.

Table 2.
Number of analytical categories identified per student

Number of categories	Frequency	Percent (%)
1 type of purpose	101	67.8
2 types of purpose	27	18.1
3 types of purpose	6	4.0
The student did not answer the question	7	4.7
Answer without category	8	5.3

A first finding relates to the number of possible purposes that can be categorized from the student answers. Accordingly, almost 68% of students stated having only one purpose, regardless of the category type; 18% of students reported combining two types of purpose; and 4% detailed having purposes in which all three types of categories were accounted for, thus indicating a higher level of complexity.

By examining the categories of the stated purposes, it was found that 67% of the students stated having an Altruistic purpose, 20% a Self-oriented purpose and 33% a Mixed purpose. It should be reiterated that some students reported having more than one purpose.

Given the distribution of the purposes for learning reported by the students, and due to the considerable number of mentions of the importance of the family in the Latin American context, the decision was taken to observe the categories that involve this theme separately, regardless of the typology to which it corresponded. This was done in order to quantify the extent of the group of students whose stated purpose had some relation to the family, whether that was to help it financially or simply to depict it as a relevant sphere of their life and purpose. Specifically, two types of purpose were regrouped into a new category called "Family". These two purposes were: "Helping my family", which is part of the mixed typology; and "My family", part of the self-oriented typology.

It should be noted that this was done with the aim to compare the number of students who referred to family with other categories of purpose, particularly the altruistic type. As a result of this comparison, nearly 30% of students referred to the family in their responses, which indicates that approximately one third of respondents have a stated purpose that involves the family in one way or another. On the other hand, altruistic purposes accounted for 67% of responses, which suggests that the vast majority of respondents are inclined towards other-oriented purposes. When comparing the difference between altruistic purposes and family, the difference is statistically significant, in favor of altruistic purposes ($p<0.001$).

Analysis by socio-economic level

Given the interest in evaluating the distribution of student purposes across the different categories and whether there was an impact related to the socio-economic level (SES) of the respondents, a proxy for the latter variable was used to cross-reference the purpose categories. This proxy is the educational level of the mother, which takes the value 0 if the mother has completed secondary education or less (n=11); 1 if

she has completed two years or less of higher education (n=21); 2 if she has completed higher vocational education (n=58); and 3 if she has completed postgraduate education (n=19). Figure 1 shows the distribution of the purposes, in their respective categories, according to socio-economic level for a sample of 109 students, corresponding to the total sample for which data is available. It can be seen that the proportion of students declaring self-oriented purposes decreases as the socio-economic level of the respondent increases, although there is no clear trend in relation to altruistic or mixed purposes. In general, the proportion of altruistic purposes is significantly higher across all socio-economic levels (chi- square tests ΔAltruistic-Mixed$_{SEL=3, Highest\ SEL}$ and ΔAltruistic-Self-oriented$_{SEL=2,\ Highest\ SEL}$ significant at the 1% level; ΔAltruistic-Self-oriented$_{SEL=3}$ significant at the 5% level; and ΔAltruistic-Mixed$_{SEL=Lowest\ SEL,\ 2}$ and ΔAltruistic-Self-oriented$_{SEL=Lowest\ SEL}$ non-significant), which is in line with what the literature reports regarding the preference of Latin American students for this type of purpose.

Subsequently, a sub-analysis was conducted for the newly created category "Family". The aim of this sub-analysis was to observe how the category behaves according to the socio-economic level of students. The same proxy of the educational level of the mother was used, and it was found that the purpose for learning linked to the Family category decreases as the socio-economic level increases. Figure 1 shows the different categories and includes Family as a separate category in order to account for all criteria considered.
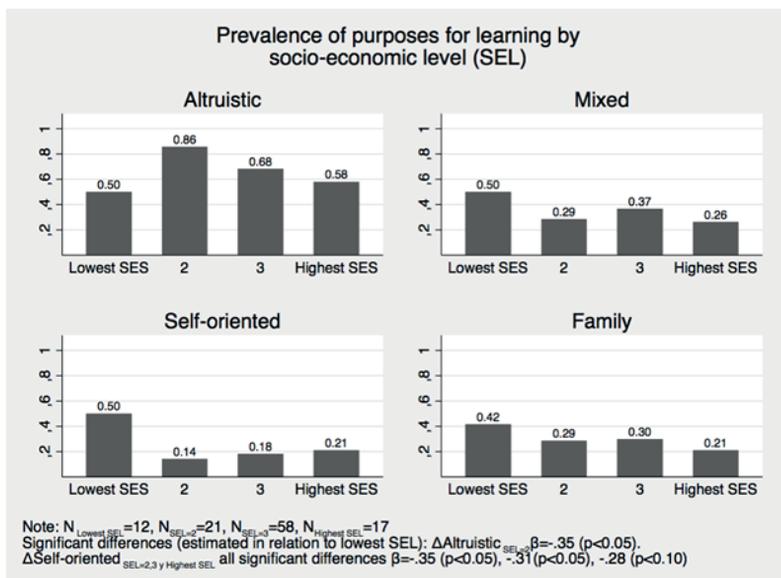
Note: $N_{Lowest\ SEL}$=12, $N_{SEL=2}$=21, $N_{SEL=3}$=58, $N_{Highest\ SEL}$=17
Significant differences (estimated in relation to lowest SEL): ΔAltruistic$_{SEL=2}$β=-.35 (p<0.05).
ΔSelf-oriented$_{SEL=2,3\ y\ Highest\ SEL}$ all significant differences β=-.35 (p<0.05), -.31 (p<0.05), -.28 (p<0.10)

Figure 1.
Purposes for learning by socio-economic level (SEL)

Analysis by gender

Figure 2 provides a breakdown of the distribution of purposes
by gender for the three initial categories and the extra sub-
category (Altruistic, Mixed, Self-oriented; and Family). It shows a
predominance of women in the Altruistic category and an almost
equal distribution in the Mixed category, albeit with a slightly higher
proportion of men. Similarly, men are more predominant in the
self-oriented category than women. With respect to the statistical
significance of these differences, it is possible to conclude that, in
the case of Altruistic purposes, there is marginal significance in
favor of women (p < 0.10). However, this trend differs regarding
Self-oriented (p=0.20) and Mixed (p=0.28) purposes, where no
significant differences are found. Finally, it can be observed that
there is a predominance of men over women in the Family purpose
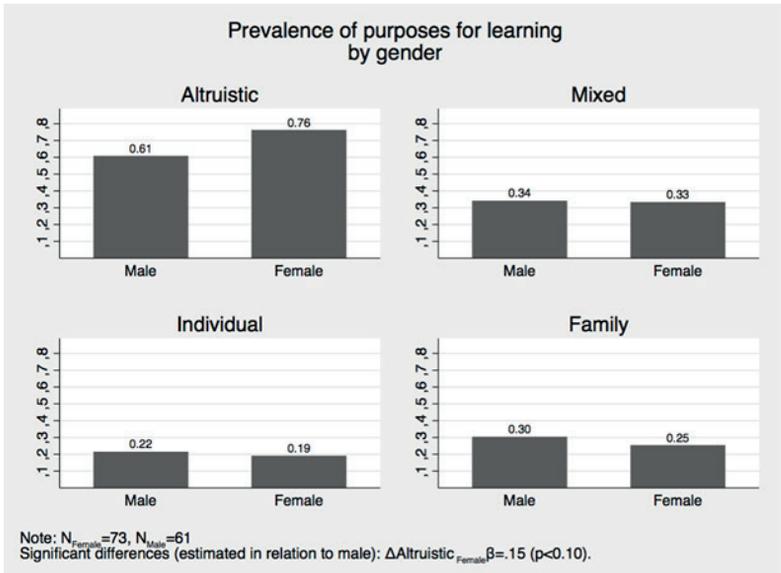category.

Figure 2.
Purposes for learning by gender

Analysis by educational level

The distribution of purposes was compared according to the educational level of the students: primary or secondary. Figure 3 shows that the percentage of altruistic purposes remains the same between primary and secondary education, while the prevalence of Self-oriented and mixed purposes increases in secondary education. However, no significant differences were found in the three main observed types, i.e., Altruistic, Self-oriented and Mixed, (p=0.50, p=0.26, p=0.10, respectively).

The distribution between primary and secondary education was also evaluated for the functional category of Family, with 26% of student purposes referring to the family in primary education and 31% in secondary education. This difference is not significant, but an **increasing pattern** is observed in the transition from the former to the latter.
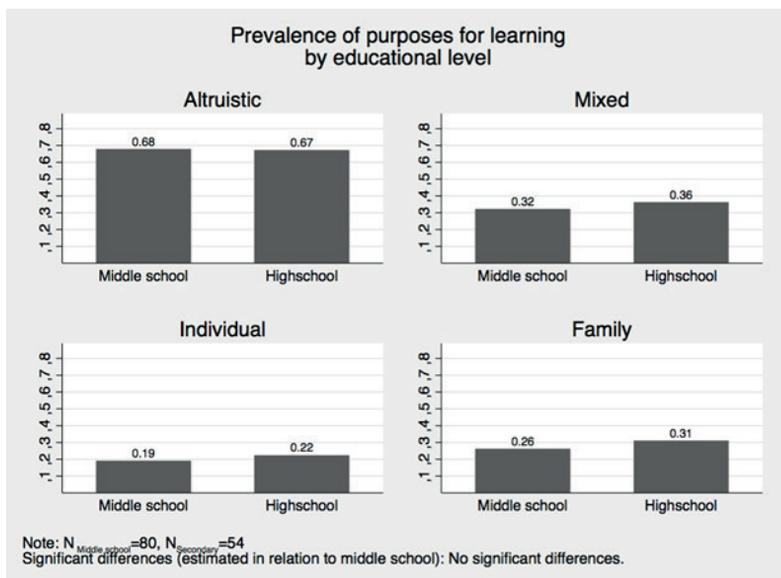
Figure 3.
Purpose for learning by educational level

Analysis by course grade average

Finally, the distribution of purposes was analyzed according to the overall course grade average of the students in the sample, with results shown in Figure 4. No significant differences were found between the overall average grades of students from the below-the-median-of-their-course group or those from the above-the-median group in relation to any of the categories (Altruistic $p=0.36$, Self-oriented $p=0.34$, Mixed $p=0.21$).
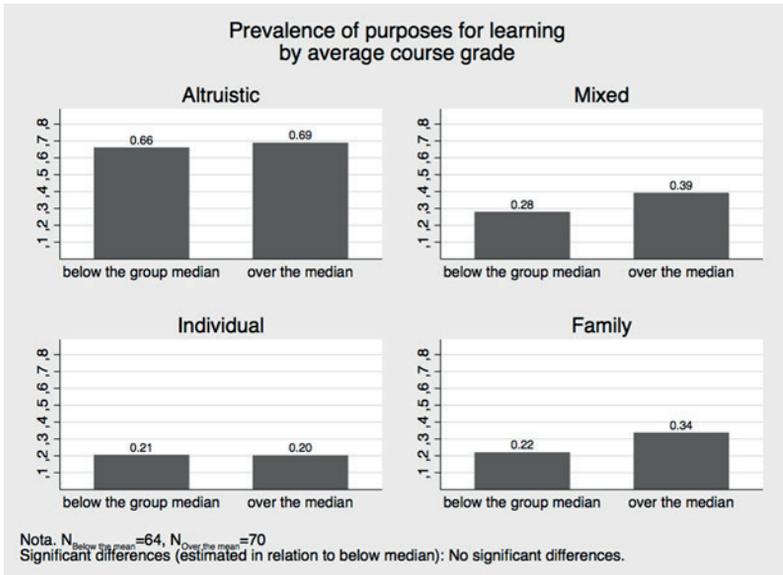
Figure 4.
Purpose for learning by average course grade

A sub-analysis was also performed within the functional category of family purposes. Accordingly, it was found that 22% of students who declared having this type of purpose were below the median average for their course, while 34% were above that median. No significant differences were obtained for the Family category during the sub-analysis.

Discussion

The aforementioned results reveal at least two major points that are often overlooked in education and subsequent policy design: education based on purpose, and the collaboration, role and basis of the family-school relationship.

Regarding the design of education based on the idea of a purpose for learning, the findings of this research are conclusive, since students in their final years of schooling are, primarily, able to identify the "why" of their learning while simultaneously capable

of recognizing the "what for" (Moran, 2016). This is significant, particularly in societies that emphasize a highly technological education with a practical functionality. Hence, inquiring about the purpose for learning of Chilean students represents a valuable contribution to thinking about education in terms of meaning.

By examining the evidence, it can be seen that a significant percentage, more than a third, of students declares having a purpose for learning of an altruistic nature. This type of purpose has been pointed out as the one that most impacts academic performance (Yaeger et al., 2014). Because we couldn't confirm this claim it would be appropriate to explore further this relation. Interestingly, there is a great female prevalence in this category, which reflects the fact that helping behaviors are more clearly associated with women, due to parental patterns and socialization models based on stereotypes. In terms of mixed purposes, an important percentage of students perceive the function of learning. To a certain extent, this places them in a context external to themselves, i.e., one that is transcendent. The literature reviewed supports the relationship between student purposes that go beyond the level of the self-oriented and their feelings of well-being, improved school attendance and better academic performance, among other factors (Yaeger et al., 2014, Damon et al., 2003). Consequently, the contribution of this research is to lay the foundations for a pedagogical proposal that promotes the search for meaning and purpose in students.

The majority of the students surveyed (67%) referred to having an altruistic purpose for learning. Even when compared to the Family category, the idea of an altruistic purpose goes further and represents a statistically significant difference. In general, the proportion of altruistic purposes is higher regardless of socio-economic level, which indicates its transversal relevance. Indeed, this point is corroborated by broader research on the subject in Latin America (Fuligni, 2001; Gavotto, 2015).

This particular finding could help to inform the work of schools, from at least two perspectives. First, related to the evolutionary value that prosocial and transcendent behaviors have

in the overall development of students and, second, in terms of the demands of educational institutions to build life projects in young people.

The evolutionary value of an altruistic purpose is based on the helping behaviors or prosocial behavior that education should seek to promote, i.e., how it can generate learning experiences that make the needs of others visible and also channel the needs and motives of the subjects of that education. The evolutionary value of this type of behavior stems from the potential development of socio-emotional skills that are crucial to what certain citizenship theorists have termed "living together". This includes the examples of empathy and perspective, among others, and these qualities help to facilitate the incorporation of young people into diverse and heterogeneous lives.

In a second strand of analysis, the promotion of altruistic purposes in students places the meaning of learning in line with a life project. This is essential to ensuring greater meaning while simultaneously underpinning the work of the educational institution in question, insofar as it is capable of training people who not only provide a function to a system or society, but who are also capable of building utopias and transforming projects in their immediate and distant surroundings. In this regard, understanding self-oriented purposes in relation to altruistic ones and their relationship with the socio-economic level of the respondent is critical. The proportion of students who declare having self-oriented purposes decreases significantly in relation to the lowest SES and the prevalence of those who focus towards others by means of an altruistic perspective appears to increase for the income groups in the middle and be feebler in the extremes. In other words, to the extent that one is able to free oneself from structural conditioning that are characteristic of the most extreme socioeconomic levels, it is possible to project purposes that go beyond the self-oriented.

Regarding the latter, although the percentage of altruistic purposes remains the same between primary and secondary education, the presence of self-oriented and mixed purposes seems to

slightly increase in secondary school. However, we cannot ensure that these observed differences are not due to pure chance and, therefore, future studies should verify whether these patterns are maintained in larger and more diverse samples. With respect to the mixed purpose, it is possible to argue in line with the literature that it makes sense for the construction of purposes to become more complex as students get older, whereby they adopt both self-oriented and altruistic aspects as time progresses. The reason for this is that during adolescence, the stage in question for this study, young people undergo progressive and increasingly complex sub-stages where, during the initial phases, the construction of identity is marked by a concern for acceptance and belonging, of feeling like a "normal child". This may involve self-oriented purposes oriented to satisfy the needs of others, in conjunction with the construction of rigorous and self-demanding requirements that aim to reach self-imposed standards of good and evil during a stage of "feeling worthy" (Barrett, 1996).

Finally, regarding the construction and validation of a mixed category, an approach is needed that goes beyond the dichotomy proposed by Yaeger in the construction of purpose. It is crucial that this approach should include broader considerations that incorporate both self-oriented and altruistic components of purpose.

The second aspect to discuss is the inclusion of families in the construction of purpose for learning, thus building a direct link between the education system and families themselves. The rationale for this approach in the construction of purpose is based on the response rate of students questioned in this study that indicated their family as part of this process, either as a cause or justification thereof. To summarize, roughly one third of respondents reported having a learning purpose that directly involved their family in one way or another.

The inverse relationship between this type of stated purpose related to the family and socio-economic levels, as measured by the educational level of the mother, suggested by this data is noticeable: as the educational level of the mother increases, and respective families have a higher socio-economic level as a result, family-

related purposes seem to decrease. While our data shows that half as much family purpose in the highest SES as in the lowest SES, we cannot confirm that there is a real difference. As mentioned above, it is necessary to extend this study along with including students from a wider range of social and ethnic backgrounds, and see if the differences are significant and the patterns remain. Whether these patterns remain, it would be possible to conclude that the aspirational character of education as a source of social mobility pertains to young people from more socio-economically disadvantaged levels. Furthermore, as reported in the literature, the purpose of learning among young people from more deprived sectors is linked to the possibility of supporting their families and reducing the circle of poverty in which they live. This is corroborated by the significance of grades for students with family-related purposes, but not in the other purpose typologies surveyed in which academic grades do not play a role. This is because the reporting of family-related purposes is significantly higher for students with an overall grade average above the course median.

The importance of grades is reflected in educational systems, such as that in Chile and much of Latin America, in which there is a tendency to reduce and homologate grades to good performance. This represents a restrictive perspective of academic achievement which is constrained to the accreditation provided by grades as a means of verifying the competences the educational institution wishes to promote. This is confirmed to the extent that the purposes linked to the family tend to increase in the transition from primary to secondary education. Accordingly, as students from more deprived sectors progress through their formal schooling, they seem to be more aware of family demands and the needs of their immediate surroundings. In turn, they experience a sense of responsibility to help reverse situations of poverty or disadvantage using the skills provided to them by education. This crystallizes a purpose within these students with a focus on the family, insofar as education can be a factor of change and promotion of well-being.

Conclusion

As the findings report, it can be seen that there is a significant
prevalence of family-oriented purposes among Chilean students.
Since findings from the literature show that this prevalence may be
a pattern repeated across the Latin American region, it would be
an interesting topic to analyze further in future research. Moreover,
there is evidence of a predominance of altruistic purposes over self-
oriented ones, which could also be a distinctive feature of Latin
America in comparison with other regions, such as Europe, in which
self-oriented purposes tend to dominate.

It should be noted that this study used a small sample that
was limited to a particular local reality and, therefore, may not be
generalizable to other areas or countries. The authors fully understand
that the sample herein relates to students from the same school and
city and, thus, respondents with similar characteristics. As such, it
lacks data from additional types of educational establishments which
would afford researchers specifics on other educational dependencies
with distinct socio-economic levels. Broader sampling such as this
would also ensure possession of characterization variables that could
be used to analyze data from diverse and demographically disparate
populations. Consequently, this restricted sample is a limitation.
Nevertheless, thanks to the particularities of a small sample, it is
possible to approach the issue from distinct perspectives, thereby
achieving a certain saturation of qualitative information that could
constitute a case study for future research.

Given the foregoing, it would be interesting to conduct a
comparative study among Latin American countries. In addition, it
would be useful to relate the purpose of learning to other variables
associated with academic performance, such as retention and
attendance, among others. Finally, the predominance of altruistic
motivations is an invitation to perform a more in-depth analysis
of their sources and justifications. This includes evaluating the
disconnection of these purposes with what is historically understood
as constituting a good student, such the connection these may have
with the moral and religious views of young people, and their general

emotional well-being, among others. Studying the mechanisms that manage to connect the abstract nature of an altruistic purpose with concrete practices and actions could contribute to enhancing the understanding of how more complex purposes are constructed and therefore move beyond the more traditional self-oriented/altruistic or intrinsic/extrinsic dichotomous categorizations.

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