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# Typologies of student vulnerability in second-chance education programmes

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## ABSTRACT

Students engaged in second-chance education programmes (SCEPs) typically share a common educational trajectory characterised by difficulties and barriers, which hinder their pursuit of other educational pathways. This shared trajectory is associated with various dimensions of vulnerability which shape a heterogeneous group. In this study, we examine 493 young people (ages 19–25) enrolled in three SCEPs in Spain. A cluster analysis with quality indicators of the solution was performed to determine personal, educational, and social vulnerability typologies and compare differentiated response patterns between participants. Moreover, these typologies were compared with other study variables, such as self-perceived physical health, tobacco, alcohol, and other substance use, and mobile phone and Internet addiction. Five vulnerability typologies were defined in this study: Unperceived, Emotionally Fragile, Economically Disadvantaged, Low Achievers, and Highly Unprotected. The study outlines differentiated response patterns and proposes tailored psychosocial educational interventions for each vulnerability profile, offering insights to address the diverse needs of students in SCEPs.

## KEYWORDS

Second-chance education; typologies; vulnerable youth; cluster analysis; personal vulnerability; educational vulnerability; social vulnerability

## 1. Introduction

The literature on young students with low educational levels reveals the adverse impact of early leaving from education and training (ELET) – a term coined by the European Union (EU) to define this structural indicator<sup>1</sup> – on the course of their lives, in general, and on access to employment and lifelong learning opportunities, in particular (Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional, 2023; Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2023a).

According to 2022 data, Spain is one of the EU countries with the highest ELET levels, 13.9% (16.5% men and 11.2% women), in contrast to an EU average of 9.6% (Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional, 2023). Nevertheless, both values

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continue to be far from the EU goal of achieving ELET levels below 9% by 2030 (European Union Council, 2021). These high ELET percentages strongly affect the quality of labour market transitions and career paths of young people, characterised by their instability, precariousness and higher levels of unemployment. Thus, in 2023, the overall unemployment rate of youth aged 16–29 years was 29.3%, and the unemployment rate of youth with a low level of education was 43.4% (Gobierno de España, 2023). In 2022, the share of youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) was 12.9%. This situation primarily affects young people with a low educational level (17%) (Eurostat, 2023).

In this context, dropout prevention strategies involve educational and social programmes (usually implemented within the formal education system) to deter the decision to drop out as well as initiatives (outside the education system) aimed at encouraging re-engagement in education and improving the professional qualification of early school leavers, thus improving their employment prospects. The latter initiatives encompass second-chance education.

Second-chance education programmes (SCEPs) were first implemented in Europe, in the second half of the 1990s, in the context of strategies designed to combat exclusion, the third general objective adopted in the White Paper on Education and Training titled “Teaching and Learning – Towards the Learning Society” (European Commission, 1995). SCEPs refer to new education and training opportunities for young people with an education level which prevents them from continuing their training or finding employment (European Commission, 2001). SCEP is an umbrella term for training options aimed at young people between 16 and 29 years with a qualification lower than post-compulsory upper secondary education (ISCED 3). These educational initiatives help to overcome one of the primary challenges of current education systems – the lack of equity (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2021).

Largely managed by third sector entities,<sup>2</sup> SCEPs entail heterogeneous initiatives for young people with highly different characteristics, except for their low level of education (S. García, 2014; Marhuenda & Chisvert, 2022; Merino et al., 2022; Olmos Rueda et al., 2020; Palomares & López, 2012).

SCEPs provide those students with training based on a holistic development of personal (aimed at personal reconstruction: self-esteem and confidence in their abilities) and professional (accredited vocational training) skills. Simultaneously, SCEPs offer a flexible, tailored and comprehensive curriculum, which promotes their personal, social, educational and labour market inclusion. Consequently, SCEPs contribute to their return to education, improve labour market transitions and enhance employability (Marhuenda & Chisvert, 2022; Paniagua, 2022; Salva-Mut et al., 2016; Soler et al., 2021; Tárraga Mínguez et al., 2022).

Studies on variables which influence the success of these programmes have revealed that their chief element is the holistic intervention combined with continuous and individualised support to students, not only academic but also personal (European Commission, 2013; Marhuenda & Chisvert, 2022; Paniagua, 2022; Pilcher et al., 2020; Salva-Mut et al., 2016; Santos-Brien, 2018; Soler et al., 2021; Tárraga Mínguez et al., 2022).

However, the share of ELET youth, who struggle with returning to and persevering in education and training, remains high (Albert et al., 2008; M. García et al., 2013;

Salvà-Mut et al., 2014) and approximately only 38% of early school leavers return to education (Paniagua, 2022). This point is especially significant in a context with high ELET rates and requires developing preventive actions and compensatory programmes such as SCEPs. Despite this imperative, few scientific studies shed light on the diverse profiles of vulnerable young people participating in such initiatives. Furthermore, there is a notable lack of rigorous evaluations aimed at enhancing the quality of these interventions throughout their implementation, rather than solely at their conclusion (Paniagua, 2022).

In this study we seek an innovative approach to the problem of heterogeneity and the non-existence of any classification of these vulnerable youth by suggesting a typology of students enrolled in second-chance education programmes, taking as reference vulnerability dimensions (personal, educational and social) and their interrelation with other behavioural aspects (mobile phone and Internet addiction, tobacco, alcohol and other substance use, and self-perceived physical health). In order to meet this objective, a cluster analysis is carried out, a methodology that has proven to be the most appropriate for understanding in detail student profiles and analyse how different risk and protective factors interact in specific groups of people (Janosz et al., 2000). Developing a typology through cluster analysis provides detailed insights into the relationships among the variables under study. This approach enhances the understanding of the issue and facilitates the design of interventions tailored to the specific characteristics and needs of the young population (Etzion & Romi, 2015).

Finally, the construction of this typology can yield practical insights for intervention at a level that SCEPs are most capable of addressing directly – through targeted support strategies and personalised resources – thereby making the research directly actionable for educators, programme designers and policymakers.

## 2. Previous research

Young people who participate in SCEPs are a heterogeneous group with a shared characteristic – they are part of the ELET youth group. The approach to this population primarily derives from research on the profiles of early school leavers and on the underlying factors and processes of ELET.

Empirical data highlight three trends in the sociodemographic characteristics of early school leavers. First, early school leavers are more often men than women (Eurostat, 2023; Julià Cano et al., 2015; Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional, 2022; Soler et al., 2021). Second, many of them are born abroad (García Gracia & Sánchez-Gelabert, 2020; Julià Cano et al., 2015; Soler et al., 2021), with foreign-born students accounting for one third of early school leavers in the EU (Carrasco et al., 2018). Third, their parents, particularly the mother, tend to have a low level of education (Albert et al., 2008; Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional, 2022).

ELET should be understood as a complex, dynamic and gradual process involving individual, institutional and contextual factors. Extensive research has been conducted on the chief ELET risk factors (OECD, 2023a; Rumberger, 2011; Salvà-Mut et al., 2014; Soler et al., 2021). Moreover, models have been proposed that attempt to understand this phenomenon from a holistic perspective, including micro-, meso- and macrostructural factors and their interaction and interplay with each other. This is the case of the

model developed by Brown et al. (2021), which distinguishes five categories of risk factors analysis (personal challenges, family circumstances, social relationships, institutional features of school and workplace and structural factors) that allow us to understand the complexity of ELET processes.

Various risk factors interact in different ways throughout life, however, specific risk factors are associated with adolescence and youth (Morris & Pullen, 2007; Salvà-Mut et al., 2014). In addition, risk factors can be combined with different types and degrees of vulnerability (Brown et al., 2021; Etzion & Romi, 2015; Salva-Mut et al., 2016).

Vulnerability is a multidimensional and multifactorial concept. The condition of vulnerability – as a product of interrelated dimensions and factors – can disrupt individuals, social groups or communities. Vulnerable students struggle to develop their personal well-being and to participate in social, economic, political, educational and cultural contexts, which determine their sense of belonging and integration in society (Gairín & Suárez, 2014). Therefore, the condition of vulnerability should be understood as a dynamic, intersectional and context-specific construct (Kuran et al., 2020).

According to the literature, personal vulnerability reflects an individual's degree of adaptation to and type of strategies for coping with conflict situations. More specifically, perceived self-efficacy and social support from family, peers and teachers are important variables for understanding personal adaptation and mental well-being (Geuzaine et al., 2000; Lipschitz-Elhawi & Itzhaky, 2005). Perceived self-efficacy and control over educational achievements may enhance student motivation, performance and persistence (Fall & Roberts, 2012; Samuel & Burger, 2020). However, perceived social support, that is, the individuals' perception that significant others care about and are interested in their educational activities, decisions and trajectories plays a key role in dropout intention and predicts perceived control and identification with school, which, in turn, foster commitment and academic performance (Elffers et al., 2012; Fall & Roberts, 2012; Lagana, 2004; Samuel & Burger, 2020). Furthermore, students who perceive a greater social support from family, peers and teachers spend more time studying, avoid anti-social behaviours, and report higher levels of sense of belonging to the school and self-efficacy (Etzion & Romi, 2015; Nouwen & Clycq, 2019; Rosenfeld et al., 2000).

The risk factors of educational vulnerability are associated with the level of education and previous school experiences (Salva-Mut et al., 2016). Accordingly, early school leaver may be more educationally vulnerable (Salva-Mut et al., 2016) and less likely to return to education (García Gracia & Sánchez-Gelabert, 2020). Concomitantly, educational pathways characterised by low academic performance, grade repetition or expulsions are the most important ELET predictor owing to their degree of influence on all other factors (Bernard, 2019; Brown et al., 2022; Fortin et al., 2006; García Gracia & Sánchez-Gelabert, 2020; Janosz et al., 2000; McDermott et al., 2018; OECD, 2023b; Soler et al., 2021). These repercussions are more negative among ELET youth with a qualification lower than upper secondary education (in the Spanish context, they refer to young people who have not completed Compulsory Secondary Education (Educación Secundaria Obligatoria – ESO- or equivalent) leading to higher levels of unemployment, less linear and more precarious employment pathways and a higher probability of being NEET and less motivation towards training (Salvà-Mut et al., 2016, 2017) resulting in a situation of greater vulnerability.

Social vulnerability is defined as material deprivation and family economic difficulties which influence students' academic performance. This concept extends beyond material limitations, encompassing a range of factors that interact in young people's lives, ultimately shaping their capacity for personal and academic development. Material deprivation, understood as the absence of essential resources to meet basic needs, is linked with lower chances of educational success, as young people from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds face additional barriers that restrict their learning and development opportunities and presenting lower graduation rates and self-esteem and self-concept levels and are more likely to repeat a grade (Marí-Klose, 2020; OECD, 2023b; Soler et al., 2021). Material deprivation extends beyond financial poverty, also encompassing limited access to educational resources and support opportunities that might otherwise mitigate economic hardships (European Commission, 2011).

A further dimension of social vulnerability is the financial struggle of families to "make ends meet", a phenomenon that negatively impacts academic performance and heightens the risk of early school leaving. Research highlights that financial constraints translate into lower rates of progression into post-compulsory education and, in many cases, result in youth exclusion from the formal education system. Financial hardship within families fosters a stressful environment, affecting students' emotional well-being, their academic engagement and their educational aspirations and opportunities (Eccles & Roeser, 2011; Marhuenda & Chisvert, 2022; Soler et al., 2021).

Finally, other behavioural aspects and health-risk behaviours, such as addiction to mobile phone and Internet; tobacco, alcohol and other substance use; low levels of physical activity and insufficient hours of sleep are associated with ELET (Brown et al., 2021; Etzion & Romi, 2015). Méndez Mateo and Cerezo Ramírez (2018) have revealed that substance use influences grade retention in compulsory secondary education. In turn, Marí-Klose (2020) has highlighted the association between risk behaviours, such as tobacco and alcohol consumption, and material deprivation and economic difficulties.

Based on the studies discussed above, we conclude that early school leavers do not fit a single profile or pattern. Instead, they form a heterogeneous and complex group resulting from the interaction and interrelation of various risk factors and dimensions of vulnerability. Thus, the lack of studies on the profiles and typologies of second-chance students underlines the importance of conducting research in this field.

### 3. Method

#### 3.1. Sample

The sample comprised 493 young people (70.6% men) between 14 and 25 years with a low educational level engaged in state-funded professional training programmes managed by third sector entities or local corporations in Spain. In relation to the level of education, 80.9% do not have an ESO certificate (education level lower than ISCED-2), while 19.1% have an ESO certificate (ISCED-2) a representative sample of the ELET population in the SCPEs which stands at 72.9% and 13% respectively (Marhuenda & Chisvert, 2022). In addition, 27% are of foreign born, 84% live at

home with their parents and 56.5% have mothers with a low level of education, a population representative of the overall total of ELET young people in Spain showing percentages of 31.4%, 75.6% and 53% respectively (Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional, 2024). More specifically, the participants were enrolled in one of the following three programmes: (a) Initial Professional Qualification Programme (*Programa de Cualificación Profesional Inicial – PCPI*), (b) a foundation learning workshop titled Training and Employment Programme for Young People with low educational levels and vulnerable groups (*Programa de Formación y Empleo para Jóvenes con bajo nivel de educación y colectivos vulnerables – PFEJ*), and (c) an active labour market programme aimed at promoting labour market inclusion termed Vocational Guidance, Training and Employment Pathways Programme (*Programa de Itinerarios de Orientación, Formación y Empleo – PIOFE*).

### 3.2. Instrument and procedure

The instruments used in this study (Table 1) included questions about: (a) sociodemographic, educational and family characteristics, such as age, gender, place of birth, level of education, mother's and father's level of education; (b) personal, educational and social vulnerability; and (c) mobile phone and Internet addiction, substance use and physical health.

The following characteristics were assessed using the instruments set in Table 1:

(a) Personal vulnerability:

- (1) Perceived self-efficacy: Spanish version of the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE) by Baessler and Schwarzer (1996). General self-efficacy is a global construct that refers to individuals' strong belief in their ability to effectively manage a wide range of stressors in their daily lives. The questionnaire comprises 10 items with four Likert-type response options, ranging from correct (4 points) to incorrect (1 point). The scale has an internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) of 0.81.
- (2) Perceived social support: Spanish version of the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) adapted and validated by Landeta and Calvete (2002) and titled Escala Multidimensional de Apoyo Social Percibido (EMASP). This scale assesses the respondents' subjective perception of the informal social support that they receive. This questionnaire comprises 12 items with four Likert-type response options, ranging from always (4 points) to never (1 point). The internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) of the subscales is: family  $\alpha = 0.89$ , friends  $\alpha = 0.92$  and significant others  $\alpha = 0.89$ .
- (3) Psychological well-being: 12-item general health questionnaire (GHQ -12) developed by Goldberg and Williams (1988). This questionnaire evaluates the general dimension of the subject's self-perceived health and enables us to distinguish two subdimensions, that is, psychological well-being and social functioning, and coping strategies. The questionnaire comprises 12 items with four Likert-type response options, ranging from always (0 points) to never (3 points). The internal consistency of the scale (Cronbach's alpha) ranges from 0.82 to 0.86.

**Table 1.** Type of measurement, variables and data collection tools.

| Type of measurement           | Variables                                                             | Instruments                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (a) Personal vulnerability    | Perceived self-efficacy                                               | (1) Spanish version of the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE) adapted and validated by (Baessler & Schwarzer, 1996)                                                                                                    |
|                               | Perceived social support                                              | (2) Spanish version of the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) adapted and validated by (Landeta & Calvete, 2002) and titled <i>Escala Multidimensional del Apoyo Social Percibido</i> (EMASP) |
|                               | Psychological well-being                                              | (3) 12-item General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12) (Goldberg & Williams, 1988)                                                                                                                                         |
| (b) Educational vulnerability | Level of education                                                    | (4) <i>Ad hoc</i> questionnaire on social inclusion based on <i>EU indicators in the field of youth</i> (European Commission, 2011)                                                                                   |
| (c) Social vulnerability      | Severe material deprivation                                           | (5) <i>EU indicators in the field of youth</i> (European Commission, 2011);                                                                                                                                           |
|                               | Struggling to make ends meet                                          | (6) <i>Encuesta de condiciones de vida</i> [Life conditions survey] (Instituto Nacional de Estadística [INE], 2013)<br><i>Encuesta de condiciones de vida</i> [Life conditions survey] (INE, 2014)                    |
| (d) Behavioural aspects       | Mobile phone addiction                                                | (7) Questionnaire of Experiences Related to the Mobile Phone ( <i>Cuestionario de Experiencias Relacionadas con el Móvil</i> – CERM) (Beranuy et al., 2009)                                                           |
|                               | Internet addiction                                                    | (8) Questionnaire of Experiences Related to the Internet ( <i>Cuestionario de Experiencias Relacionadas con Internet</i> – CERI) (Beranuy et al., 2009)                                                               |
|                               | Tobacco, alcohol, and other substance use                             | (9) European Health Interview Survey (EHIS; EUROSTAT, 2014).                                                                                                                                                          |
|                               | Self-perceived physical health (physical activity and hours of sleep) | (10) Catalan Health Survey ( <i>Enquesta de Salut de Catalunya</i> – ESCA; O. García & Medina-Bustos, 2014)                                                                                                           |

**(b) Educational vulnerability:**

4. Level of education: *Ad hoc* questionnaire. This questionnaire comprises questions about the subject's highest qualification, years of schooling, performance at various educational stages and path to their Certificate of Compulsory Secondary Education (Grado de Educación Secundaria Obligatoria – GESO), equivalent to the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in the United Kingdom. According to *EU indicators in the field of youth* (European Commission, 2011), data analysis suggests a student body ranging from the lowest to the highest level of vulnerability, that is, ISCED Level 2 for students with a GESO, some of whom with significant academic accommodations and failed subjects, and ISCED Levels 1 and 0 for students without a GESO and who may also experience academic failure in primary education.

**(c) Social vulnerability:**

- (1) Severe material deprivation: *Encuesta de condiciones de vida* [Life conditions survey]. According to *EU indicators*, this section is specified by assessing if students are deprived of basic needs equivalent to the risk of poverty. A score of 4 (high deprivation) is assigned if four or more of a total of nine basic needs are not met; 3, if three or two needs are not met; 2, if 1 need is not met; and 1 (low deprivation), if 0 needs are not met (European Commission, 2011, INE, 2013).

- (2) Struggling to make ends meet: According to the *Encuesta de Condiciones de Vida* [Life conditions survey] (INE, 2014), this parameter is evaluated using a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 to 4, that is, from very difficult (4 points) to very easy (1 point) to make ends meet based on household income.

(d) Behavioural aspects:

- (1) Mobile phone addiction: Questionnaire of Experiences Related to the Mobile Phone (Cuestionario de Experiencias Relacionadas con el Móvil – CERM; Beranuy et al., 2009). This instrument comprises 10 items with four Likert-type response options ranging from most of the time (4 points) to never (1 point). This questionnaire analyses two factors, that is, communication conflicts and emotional conflicts in mobile phone use. The internal consistency of the test (Cronbach's alpha) is 0.805.
- (2) Internet addiction: Questionnaire of Experiences Related to the Internet (Cuestionario de Experiencias Relacionadas con Internet – CERI; Beranuy et al., 2009). This instrument comprises 10 items with four Likert-type response options ranging from most of the time (4 points) to never (1 point). This questionnaire presents two analysis factors, that is, intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts. The internal consistency of the test (Cronbach's alpha) is 0.776.
- (3) Tobacco, alcohol, other substance use: European Health Interview Survey (EHIS; Eurostat, 2014). Tobacco consumption is assessed with the question “Do you smoke at all nowadays?” with three Likert-type response options, (1) yes, daily; (2) yes, occasionally; and (3) not at all. Alcohol and other substance use is assessed with the question “During the past 12 months, how often have you had an alcoholic drink of any type (beer, wine, spirits, liqueurs, or other alcoholic beverages)?” with the following Likert-type response options: (1) every day, (2), 5-6 days a week, (3), 3-4 days a week, (4), 1-2 days a week, (5) 2-3 days a month, (6) once a month, (7) less than once a month, (8) I have not used any substance in the last 12 months, (9) I have never or rarely used substances in my life.
- (4) Self-perceived physical health (physical activity and hours of sleep): Catalan Health Survey (Enquesta de Salut de Catalunya – ESCA; Garcia & Medina-Bustos, 2014). In this section, we analysed the self-perceived general health status with four Likert-type response options ranging from very poor (4 points) to very good (1 point) and the practice of physical activity with two response options, yes (1 point) or no (2 points). Another question addressed the average hours of sleep.

In relation to the procedure, participants enrolled in one of the specified programmes and completed the questionnaire during training hours. The instrument was administered by members of the research group.

Students were informed that their participation would be anonymous, confidential, and voluntary. The average time required to complete the questionnaire was 30 minutes. The survey was conducted over a period of two to three months after the commencement of the school year.

To guarantee ethical principles, the instrument was submitted to the University's Committee on Research, which made it possible to create an encrypted file of personal data managed by the university and research group.

### 3.3. Data processing

The data received from the questionnaires were coded and statistically analysed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). We conducted cluster analysis (K-means) using the Orange toolbox (Demšar et al., 2013) to discover differentiated response patterns (typologies) on the target variables (personal, educational, and social vulnerabilities).

The three dimensions of vulnerability originally had the same ordinal coding (1–4) and interpretative direction (a lower value indicates higher vulnerability). However, to more easily detect typologies by cluster analysis, we reduced the original scale (1–4) to a 1–3 scale (with inverted order) for each variable. Therefore, the final coding in each dimension was defined as follows: 1 (low vulnerability), 2 (medium vulnerability) and 3 (high vulnerability). The recoding criterion for the personal and social dimensions was based on position indices (percentiles) to distribute the ordinal scores into three similar zones of vulnerability.

In the educational dimension, a normative recoding criterion was used to establish the following three vulnerability zones: low (with a GESO), medium (without a GESO and with school difficulties from secondary education), high (without a GESO and with an educational pathway marked by brief schooling in another country, chronic absenteeism, erratic trajectory since primary school, and last consolidated year prior to primary school).

By cluster analysis of the three dimensions (personal, educational and social) of the new vulnerability scale (low, medium, and high), we identified five typologies (or profiles) of vulnerability: Profile 1 (low personal and medium-low social and educational vulnerability); Profile 2 (medium-high personal and medium-low social and educational vulnerability); Profile 3 (medium-low personal, high social, and medium-low educational vulnerability); Profile 4 (medium-low personal and social and high educational vulnerability); Profile 5 (medium-high personal, social and educational vulnerability).

Once the five profiles were identified, the degree of adjustment of each student to each profile was analysed. Subsequently, 31 cases whose response combinations (vulnerability level in the three dimensions) did not fit within their assigned group (nor within other groups) were excluded, accounting for 6.3% of the sample (the combination of low, medium and high values in the three dimensions of these students differ from the definition of any of the detected profiles). The final sample of cases that fit one of the five potential typologies comprised 462 students.

Specifically, the Silhouette score (quality of clustering results, from  $-1$  to  $+1$ ) of this solution was 0.445 (higher than the 0.400 score from the full sample), indicating a low-moderate but acceptable level of cluster cohesion and separation for these five groups. In fact, potential typologies ( $k$  groups) lower than 5 diminish the quality of the clustering assignment: 0.399 ( $k = 4$ ), 0.343 ( $k = 3$ ), 0.306 ( $k = 2$ ). Finally, the mean Silhouette scores for final profiles ( $k = 5$ ) are the following:  $M = 0.473$  ( $SD = 0.073$ ,  $\min = 0.320$ ,  $\max = 0.535$ ,  $n = 91$ ) for Profile

1;  $M = 0.360$  ( $SD = 0.182$ ,  $\min = 0.097$ ,  $\max = 0.571$ ,  $n = 97$ ) for Profile 2;  $M = 0.508$  ( $SD = 0.065$ ,  $\min = 0.380$ ,  $\max = 0.563$ ,  $n = 90$ ) for Profile 3;  $M = 0.430$  ( $SD = 0.035$ ,  $\min = 0.370$ ,  $\max = 0.462$ ,  $n = 71$ ) for Profile 4; and  $M = 0.453$  ( $SD = 0.143$ ,  $\min = 0.200$ ,  $\max = 0.607$ ,  $n = 113$ ) for Profile 5.

Once the profiles had been specified and analysed for each dimension of vulnerability, they were labelled. Finally, these profiles were compared across the study's sociodemographic, educational, and behavioural variables. Bivariate analyses, employing both ANOVA and  $\chi^2$  tests, were performed for this comparison.

4. Results

4.1. Dimensional analysis and vulnerability profiles

Table 2 outlines the percentages of cases in each vulnerability zone (low, medium, and high) associated with each dimension (personal, educational, and social vulnerability), as well as the means and standard deviations of the original scores of the scale (1–4).

Pearson's product-moment correlation analysis ( $r$ ) indicates a significant correlation between social and personal vulnerability (Table 3).

Cluster analysis has allowed us to identify five profiles involving various combinations of vulnerability dimensions. Table 4 presents the mean and standard deviation of each profile. Figure 1 presents the graphical representation of response patterns of vulnerability profiles.

The profile with the highest vulnerability (medium-high in all three dimensions), which accounts for 24.5% of the population (Profile 5), and the profile with the lowest vulnerability (low or medium-low vulnerability in all three areas), which accounts for 19.7% of the population (Profile 1) lie at the extremes. Between them, three other subgroups are located at intermediate positions, with two medium-low dimensions and one high or medium-high dimension: (a) medium-high personal vulnerability and medium-low social and educational vulnerability (21%) (Profile 2); (b) high social vulnerability and low personal vulnerability and medium-low educational vulnerability (19.5%) (Profile 3); (c) high educational vulnerability and medium-low personal and social vulnerability (15.4%) (Profile 4).

Table 2. Description of vulnerability zones in each dimension ( $N = 493$ ).

| Vulnerability | Personal |            | Social |            | Educational |            |
|---------------|----------|------------|--------|------------|-------------|------------|
|               | %        | $M(SD)$    | %      | $M(SD)$    | %           | $M(SD)$    |
| Low           | 33.1     | 3.48(0.15) | 25.4   | 4.00(0.00) | 19.3        | 3.68(0.47) |
| Medium        | 33.7     | 3.07(0.11) | 32.5   | 3.23(0.25) | 50.7        | 2.00(0.00) |
| High          | 33.3     | 2.60(0.25) | 42.2   | 2.04(0.49) | 30.0        | 1.00(0.00) |

In the three dimensions, a lower value indicates higher vulnerability (range 1–4)

Table 3. Correlations between personal, social and educational vulnerability ( $N = 493$ ).

| Vulnerability | Social | Educational |
|---------------|--------|-------------|
| Personal      | .302*  | .038        |
| Social        |        | -.030       |

\* $p < .001$ .

**Table 4.** Mean and standard deviation of each profile by vulnerability dimension.

|               | Profile 1<br>(n = 91) | Profile 2 (n = 97) | Profile 3<br>(n = 90) | Profile 4 (n = 71) | Profile 5 (n = 113) | Total<br>(N = 462) |
|---------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Vulnerability | M(SD)                 | M(SD)              | M(SD)                 | M(SD)              | M(SD)               | M(SD)              |
| Personal      | 3.49(0.15)            | 2.88(0.32)         | 3.19(0.23)            | 3.29(0.23)         | 2.67(0.26)          | 3.07(0.39)         |
| Social        | 3.65(0.41)            | 3.53(0.44)         | 2.03(0.49)            | 3.56(0.41)         | 2.22(0.65)          | 2.94(0.88)         |
| Educational   | 2.51(0.85)            | 2.44(0.78)         | 2.44(0.77)            | 1.0(0.00)          | 1.42(0.50)          | 1.98(0.90)         |

In the three dimensions, a lower value indicates higher vulnerability (range 1–4). Profile labels: Unperceived (1), Emotionally Fragile (2), Economically Disadvantaged (3), Low Achievers (4), Highly Unprotected (5)

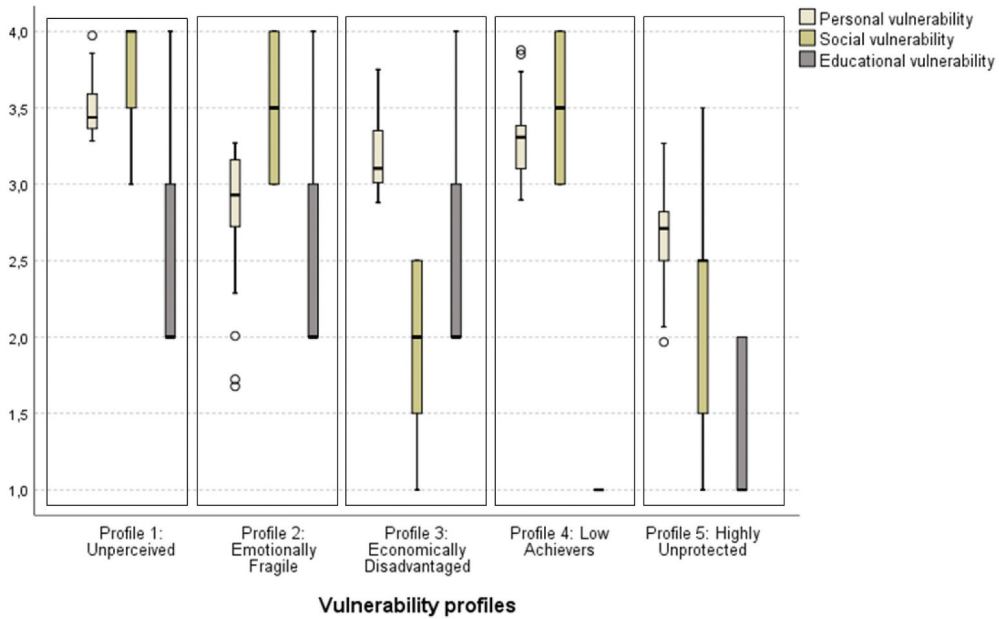


**Figure 1.** Vulnerability profiles (range 1–4, a lower value indicates higher vulnerability)

### Profile 1. Unperceived

Profile 1 (Unperceived) is the group with the lowest vulnerability. This group comprises young people with low personal vulnerability and medium-low educational and social vulnerability. Self-esteem, perceived self-efficacy, and mental health may not reverse problems, however, they pose difficulties in making ends meet or facing material deprivation. Despite some difficulties, students with this profile do not have significant problems with academic performance, accounting for 19.7% of the participants in this study.

### Profile 2. Emotionally fragile

This group is characterised by medium-high personal vulnerability. Therefore, the greatest deficits are found in perceived self-efficacy (feeling self-confident), social support (self-perceived support from family, friends and significant others) and psychological well-being. This profile demonstrates medium-low levels of social vulnerability, regarding family economic conditions, and educational vulnerability, accounting for 21% of the participants.

### *Profile 3. Economically disadvantaged*

This group is characterised by high social vulnerability, a risk of extreme poverty and difficulties making ends meet based on household income, with medium-low personal and educational vulnerability. This profile accounts for 19.5% of the sample.

### *Profile 4. Low achievers*

These students demonstrate high educational vulnerability, do not have a GESO, and may repeat a grade and struggle in school, among other aspects indicated above, with medium-low personal and social vulnerability. This profile accounts for 15.4% of the participants.

### *Profile 5. Highly unprotected*

These students demonstrate high personal, social and educational vulnerability. This profile includes the students with the highest risk and greatest problems, accounting for 24.5% of the participants.

## **4.2. Comparison of profiles**

The study of vulnerability profiles was complemented by a bivariate analysis of sociodemographic, educational (Table 5) and behavioural (Table 6) data collected in this study. ANOVA F-test was used to compare the profiles on quantitative variables, with Tukey's HSD correction of  $p$ -value for multiple comparisons. And  $\chi^2$  test was used to compare the profiles on categorical variables, with Bonferroni's correction of  $p$ -value for multiple comparisons. The Eta-squared ( $\eta^2$ ) effect size is reported for significant F-test values and the Cramer's V ( $\Phi_c$ ) association measure for significant  $\chi^2$  values.

### *Sociodemographic characteristics*

As indicated by statistical analysis, the vulnerability profiles variable reflects significant differences in age ( $F(4, 456) = 4.76, p < .001, \eta^2 = .04$ ). Table 5 presents these differences (corrected  $p$ -value for multiple comparison testing) between Profile 4 (with the highest educational vulnerability) with a mean age of 17.25 years and Profiles 2, 3 and 5 with significantly higher mean ages. Despite these significant differences, the strength of the correlation between both variables is small based on the coefficient of determination ( $R^2 = \eta^2 = .04$ ). This profile variable only explains 4% of the variability in age.

### *Training*

The type of training is significantly ( $\chi^2 (8, N = 462) = 25.66, p = .001$ ) associated with vulnerability profiles, albeit weakly ( $\Phi_c = .167$ ), but acceptable, nonetheless. More specifically, the analysis of percentage distributions by profile (Table 5) demonstrates significant (corrected  $p$ -value  $< .05$ ) differences by type of training. In PCPI, the high percentage of Low Achievers (Profile 4) and the low percentage of Economically Disadvantaged stand out (Profile 3).

**Table 5.** Descriptors of sociodemographic and educational variables in each vulnerability profile.

| Variables by profile                                  | Unperceived<br>(n = 91) | Emotionally Fragile<br>(n = 97) | Economically Disadvantaged<br>(n = 90) | Low Achievers<br>(n = 71) | Highly Unprotected<br>(n = 113) | Total<br>(N = 462) |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|
|                                                       | M(SD)                   | M(SD)                           | M(SD)                                  | M(SD)                     | M(SD)                           | M(SD)              |
| Age<br>( $p < .001$ , $\eta^2 = .040$ )               | 17.77<br>(2.02)         | <b>18.46a</b> (2.63)            | <b>18.58b</b> (2.49)                   | <b>17.25abc</b> (1.79)    | <b>18.50c</b> (2.72)            | 18.17<br>(2.44)    |
|                                                       | %                       | %                               | %                                      | %                         | %                               | %                  |
| Gender:<br>( $p = .070$ )                             | 78.0                    | 70.1                            | 78.9                                   | 66.2                      | 63.7                            | 71.2               |
| Birth place: ( $p = .662$ )                           | 22.0                    | 29.9                            | 21.1                                   | 33.8                      | 36.3                            | 28.8               |
| Living with parents<br>( $p = .234$ )                 | 56.7                    | 66.0                            | 48.9                                   | 53.5                      | 53.1                            | 55.7               |
|                                                       | 93.4                    | 84.2                            | 84.4                                   | 90.1                      | 85.0                            | 87.2               |
| Father's level of education: ( $p = .485$ )           |                         |                                 |                                        |                           |                                 |                    |
| Illiterate                                            | 11.1                    | 12.8                            | 24.7                                   | 14.1                      | 16.2                            | 15.8               |
| Primary education                                     | 42.2                    | 35.1                            | 32.6                                   | 28.2                      | 32.4                            | 34.3               |
| Unknown                                               | 22.2                    | 24.5                            | 18.0                                   | 36.6                      | 29.7                            | 25.9               |
| Higher education                                      | 5.6                     | 4.3                             | 1.1                                    | 4.2                       | 3.6                             | 3.7                |
| Mother's level of education: ( $p = .130$ )           |                         |                                 |                                        |                           |                                 |                    |
| Illiterate                                            | 14.3                    | 16.7                            | 22.2                                   | 11.3                      | 20.4                            | 17.4               |
| Primary education                                     | 41.8                    | 39.6                            | 44.4                                   | 31.0                      | 35.4                            | 38.6               |
| Unknown                                               | 16.5                    | 18.8                            | 12.2                                   | 29.6                      | 27.4                            | 20.8               |
| Higher education                                      | 7.7                     | 4.2                             | 5.6                                    | 5.6                       | 3.5                             | 5.2                |
| Type of Training:<br>( $p = .001$ , $\Phi_c = .167$ ) |                         |                                 |                                        |                           |                                 |                    |
| PAP (PCPI)                                            | 48.4                    | 50.5                            | <b>38.9a</b>                           | <b>69a</b>                | 54.9                            | 51.7               |
| Workshop (PFEJ)                                       | <b>37.4a</b>            | 25.8                            | <b>37.8b</b>                           | <b>12.7ab</b>             | 20.4                            | 27.1               |
| ALMP (PIOFE)                                          | 14.3                    | 23.7                            | 23.3                                   | 18.3                      | 24.8                            | 21.2               |

Values with the same letter (subscript) significantly differ (corrected  $p$ -value  $< .05$ ) in the row variable. PAP (PCPI): pre-apprenticeship programme officially known as Initial Professional Qualification Programme (*Programa de Cualificación Profesional Inicial*). Workshop (PFEJ): Foundation learning workshop entitled Training and Employment Programme for Young People with low educational levels and vulnerable groups (*Programa de Formación y Empleo para Jóvenes con bajo nivel de educación y colectivos vulnerables* – PFEJ). ALMP (PIOFE): active labour market programme (ALMP) aimed at promoting labour market inclusion termed Vocational Guidance, Training and Employment Pathways Programme (*Programa de Itinerarios de Orientación, Formación y Empleo* – PIOFE).

**Table 6.** Descriptors of behavioural variables in each vulnerability profile.

| Variables<br>by profile                                                                     | Economically<br>Disadvantaged<br>(n = 90) |                                 |                              | Low Achievers<br>(n = 71) |                               | Highly Unprotected (n = 113) |   | Total<br>(N = 462)   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|---|----------------------|
|                                                                                             | Unperceived<br>(n = 91)                   | Emotionally<br>Fragile (n = 97) | %                            | %                         | %                             | %                            | % |                      |
| Physical activity ( $p = .009$ , $\Phi_c = .172$ )                                          | <b>84.6a</b><br><i>M(SD)</i>              | 72.2<br><i>M(SD)</i>            | <b>83.1b</b><br><i>M(SD)</i> | 74.3<br><i>M(SD)</i>      | <b>65.5ab</b><br><i>M(SD)</i> |                              |   | 75.4<br><i>M(SD)</i> |
| Self-perceived health status ( $p < .001$ , $\eta^2 = .048$ )<br>[range: 1(high) to 4(low)] | <b>1.56ab</b><br>(0.50)                   | <b>1.81a</b><br>(0.57)          | 1.78<br>(0.58)               | <b>1.69c</b><br>(0.62)    | <b>1.93bc</b><br>(0.59)       |                              |   | 1.77<br>(0.58)       |
| Weekday hours of sleep ( $p = .059$ )                                                       | 7.32<br>(1.59)                            | 7.20<br>(1.46)                  | 6.86<br>(1.86)               | 7.25<br>(1.44)            | 6.76<br>(1.69)                |                              |   | 7.06<br>(1.63)       |
| Weekend hours of sleep ( $p = .166$ )                                                       | 8.98<br>(3.44)                            | 8.66<br>(2.50)                  | 8.37<br>(2.35)               | 9.03<br>(2.84)            | 8.21<br>(2.44)                |                              |   | 8.61<br>(2.73)       |
| Smoking daily ( $p = .807$ )                                                                | 35.2<br><i>M(SD)</i>                      | 32<br><i>M(SD)</i>              | 34.4<br><i>M(SD)</i>         | 38<br><i>M(SD)</i>        | 38.9<br><i>M(SD)</i>          |                              |   | 35.7<br><i>M(SD)</i> |
| Range: 1(low) to 9(high)                                                                    | 3.53<br>(2.29)                            | 3.27<br>(1.96)                  | 3.39<br>(2.16)               | 3.28<br>(2.39)            | 3.31<br>(2.03)                |                              |   | 3.36<br>(2.14)       |
| Alcohol use ( $p = .925$ )                                                                  | 2.74<br>(2.80)                            | 2.63<br>(2.74)                  | 3.03<br>(2.99)               | 3.55<br>(3.48)            | 3.59<br>(3.28)                |                              |   | 3.11<br>(3.07)       |
| Cannabis use ( $p = .090$ )                                                                 | <b>1.18a</b><br>(0.88)                    | 1.30<br>(1.08)                  | <b>1.17b</b><br>(0.63)       | 1.23<br>(0.91)            | <b>1.65ab</b><br>(1.62)       |                              |   | 1.33<br>(1.13)       |
| Other drug use ( $p = .008$ , $\eta^2 = .030$ )                                             | 4.76<br>(2.65)                            | 4.77<br>(2.85)                  | 4.79<br>(2.65)               | 5.30<br>(2.69)            | 4.54<br>(2.76)                |                              |   | 4.80<br>(2.73)       |
| Energy drink consumption ( $p = .493$ )                                                     | <i>M(SD)</i>                              | <i>M(SD)</i>                    | <i>M(SD)</i>                 | <i>M(SD)</i>              | <i>M(SD)</i>                  |                              |   | <i>M(SD)</i>         |
| Range: 1(low) to 4(high)                                                                    | 1.57<br>(0.39)                            | 1.72<br>(0.46)                  | 1.66<br>(0.46)               | 1.58<br>(0.38)            | 1.74<br>(0.51)                |                              |   | 1.66<br>(0.45)       |
| Mobile phone addiction<br>( $p = .027$ , $\eta^2 = .024$ )                                  | 1.71<br>(0.52)                            | 1.85<br>(0.59)                  | 1.77<br>(0.55)               | 1.70<br>(0.51)            | 1.75<br>(0.56)                |                              |   | 1.76<br>(0.55)       |
| Internet addiction<br>( $p = .397$ )                                                        |                                           |                                 |                              |                           |                               |                              |   |                      |

Values with the same letter (subscript) significantly differ (corrected  $p$ -value  $< .05$ ) in the row variable.

By contrast, in PFEJ, the low percentage of Low Achievers (Profile 4) and the high percentages of Unperceived (Profile 1) and Economically Disadvantaged (Profile 3) students stand out.

### Health

When analysing health-related behavioural variables (Table 6), we observed significant differences in two response variables, that is, practice of physical activity ( $\chi^2(4, N = 460) = 13.64, p = .009, \Phi_c = .172$ ) and self-perceived health status ( $F(4, 457) = 5.74, p < .001, \eta^2 = .048$ ) between profiles. More specifically, the highest significant difference (corrected  $p$ -value  $< .05$ ) in the percentage of participants who practice physical activity was found between Highly Unprotected (65.5%, the lowest percentage) and Unperceived (84.6%, the highest percentage) and Economically Disadvantaged (83.1%) profiles.

Self-perceived health indicates a similar pattern, reaching the worst score (1–4 range; a higher value indicates a lower perception of health) in the Highly Unprotected profile ( $M = 1.93$ ), entailing the highest difference (corrected  $p$ -value  $< .05$ ) from Unperceived ( $M = 1.56$ ). Significant differences were also found between Unperceived and Emotionally Fragile ( $M = 1.81$ ) and between Low Achievers ( $M = 1.69$ ) and Highly Unprotected profiles.

### Substance use

In the comparison of substance use by profile (Table 6), no significant differences were observed in tobacco, alcohol, or cannabis use or in energy drink consumption (range 1–9, a higher value indicates higher consumption; inverted order from the original scale). Significant differences were only found in “other substance use” ( $F(4, 456) = 3.47, p = .008$ ), however, this relationship is linked to a very low use frequency across all profiles, therefore, we must be cautious in interpreting these results. Furthermore, the correlation between the two variables is weak ( $\eta^2 = .03$ ) as the type of profile only explains 3% of the variability in substance use. The highest significant differences (corrected  $p$ -value  $< .05$ ) in this variable were identified between Highly Unprotected ( $M = 1.65$ , the highest substance use value), Unperceived ( $M = 1.18$ ) and Economically Disadvantaged ( $M = 1.17$ ) profiles.

### Mobile phone and internet addiction

As presented in Table 6, despite the significant relationship between mobile phone addiction and vulnerability profile ( $F(4, 457) = 2.77, p = .027$ ), the strength of the relationship (degree of association) between the two variables is very weak ( $\eta^2 = .024$ ) as the type of vulnerability profile explains only 2.4% of the variability in mobile phone addiction. Moreover, this overall significance is not found (corrected  $p$ -value  $> .05$ ) in pairwise multiple comparison analysis of vulnerability profiles. Not even the highest difference observed between Unperceived ( $M = 1.57$ , the lowest addiction score) and Highly Unprotected ( $M = 1.74$ , the highest addiction score) profiles is significant after applying Type I error ( $\alpha$  risk) correction using Tukey’s HSD test (corrected  $p$ -value = .056), nor is any difference in Internet addiction between profiles ( $F(4, 457) = 1.02, p = .397$ ).

## 5. Discussion

This study assessed the heterogeneity of students engaged in SCEPs programmes and defined five vulnerability profiles. Some of the results of this study corroborate the findings of previous studies (Marhuenda & Chisvert, 2022; Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional, 2024) about the profile of students enrolled in SCEPs. With a mean age of 18.27 years, most (70.6%) students are men, living with their parents (84%) and whose mother is “illiterate” or has completed “primary education” (56.5%). In addition, 27.2% students are foreign-born and primarily with a level of education below ISCED 2, 80.9%. The profiles specified (from the lowest to the highest vulnerability) are Unperceived, Emotionally Fragile, Economically Disadvantaged, Low Achievers and Highly Unprotected. These profiles enable us to identify the type of psychoeducational intervention most conducive to successful educational trajectories in each profile (Etzion & Romi, 2015; Fortin et al., 2006; Janosz et al., 2000).

### *Unperceived*

This profile demonstrates lower (personal, social and educational) vulnerability values and higher values of protection variables than all other profiles. Most of these students live with their parents, and according to the literature and to the results from this study, they may have optimal economic and socioemotional conditions for studying as they perceive help and interest from friends and parents (Samuel & Burger, 2020). The supplementary behavioural indicators highlighted differences compared with the other profiles. The differences from the most vulnerable profile were highly significant, with a more positive perception of their health status (all students reported good or very good health), healthier practices (this group had the highest percentage of physical activity and the highest average number of hours of sleep), and lower substance use. As this is the least vulnerable profile, its outcomes may be relatively easily improved by an intervention which provides students with a useful training experience, linked to specific job opportunities, they can relate to and which motivates them (Elffers et al., 2012; Nielsen & Tanggaard, 2015). Voluntary participation in community services at the school may promote positive self-expression and educational commitment among these students (Etzion & Romi, 2015).

### *Emotionally fragile*

This profile is characterised by personal vulnerability, including low self-esteem, weak emotional attachment to family, friends, and significant others, and poor psychological well-being (lack of coping strategies). The supplementary behavioural indicators significantly differed between this and the least vulnerable profile, Unperceived. As in the Highly Unprotected profile, students in this profile report a poor self-perceived health status. This emotional distress could have repercussions on their general health and, more specifically, on their negative perception of their health.

In this case, any intervention should provide psycho-emotional support throughout the educational process, strengthening the teacher-student bond as the chief tool to increase student self-efficacy, self-esteem and decision-making with an empathetic and

approachable teaching staff (Schmid et al., 2021). In particular, such an intervention requires continuous and individualised support, both in the academic and particularly, in the personal area to improve their emotional and social skills (Marhuenda & Chisvert, 2022; Santos-Brien, 2018).

### ***Economically disadvantaged***

This profile demonstrates the most unfavourable socioeconomic conditions. These students are, on average, significantly older than Low Achievers and tend to select training programmes which combine training and employment, initially opting for mixed training involving practical work and subsequent job placement for older students. This is also one of the most independent profiles in terms of living away from the family home. Studies on the chief causes of dropout in vocational training have concluded that economic need, particularly among older students, is among the chief causes of ELET (Cerdà-Navarro et al., 2022). In this group, intervention requires high-quality training which facilitates subsequent employment and the collaboration of public administration and community services to provide financial aid throughout the training process for a group with less family financial support (Salvà et al., 2019). A timely option, for these students, may be to undertake a paid apprenticeship towards a professional certificate (Paniagua, 2022).

### ***Low achievers***

This profile stands out for its higher academic vulnerability. In this profile, the students are significantly younger than all other profiles, except for the least vulnerable group. The young people in this group primarily undergo basic training in PCPI, with limited participation in the other two training programmes. Based on the results from this and previous studies (Elffers, 2012; Niittylahti et al., 2019), these students have had negative experiences in prior educational stages (suspensions, expulsions, and poor performance), which can lead to strong frustration, lack of motivation and disinterest in studying. In this case, intervention requires promoting basic vocational training with a flexible curriculum, formative evaluation, restorative practices, and innovative pedagogical methods, which enhance student engagement and positive professional expectations (Martínez Morales et al., 2021; Salvà-Mut et al., 2014). In this profile, the teachers must be approachable and available and trust in the academic abilities of their students to avoid training dropout (Nielsen & Tanggaard, 2015; Niittylahti et al., 2019).

### ***Highly unprotected***

This profile has high (personal, social and educational) vulnerability values. These students are, on average, older than those of three of the other four profiles, with significant differences from Low Achievers. This difference and the remaining data suggest that these students arrive at second-chance programmes with greater disengagement from school, including more negative school experiences, less social support, and lower levels of self-esteem and confidence in their academic skills

(Nielsen & Tanggaard, 2015; Niittylahti et al., 2019). The supplementary behavioural indicators highlighted differences from the other profiles, with a more negative perception of their health status, significantly differing from the more preventive profile – Unperceived. Moreover, these students demonstrate significantly higher percentages of substance use (other than alcohol and tobacco) than the Unperceived and Economically Disadvantaged students. According to the literature, substance use, poor health perception, greater mobile phone addiction (more frequent in this profile, albeit non-significantly), and limited perception of social help may promote more complex ELET processes (Etzion & Romi, 2015) which may be associated with greater material deprivation or economic difficulties (Marí-Klose, 2020).

In this profile, intervention requires comprehensive, multi-professional training including dropout prevention measures and labour market inclusion, according to other studies (Merino et al., 2022). In this case, intervention programmes must consider situations within the educational centre as well as relationships between each student and their environment, inside and outside the training context (Nielsen, 2016; Nouwen & Clycq, 2019). This profile requires continued support in all its key spheres and flexible training in professional and personal skills (Tárraga Mínguez et al., 2022). Accordingly, Paniagua (2022) highlights the importance of providing individualised mentoring or coaching sessions for promoting psychosocial support and specifically developing interpersonal skills, motivation, self-confidence, emotional well-being, and practical training for job search and workplace adjustment.

The vulnerability profiles indicated in this study are centred on aspects related to the student's personal, social, and academic vulnerability. However, other social, institutional, and structural factors also significantly impact personal and professional success opportunities, according to the analysis of different international studies in second-chance education programmes (Paniagua, 2022).

Accordingly, further research could analyse the social factors affecting the students' relationships with their reference group. The group's greater or lesser acceptance of the student will strengthen their incredible feeling of belonging and connection with their peers and the education programme. Also, it will be necessary to study if the Institution promotes a community environment that emphasises student security, limits expulsions, and encourages reflection and discussion among young people or if the education programme facilitates the tutor's mentoring and social support service, one essential factor to improve questions about low self-concept, insecurity and rejection among peers (Kluve et al., 2017).

Macrostructural factors such as the health of the economy, the laws of the educational system, the policies of social aid, or the regulation of the labour market are also considered factors influencing the development of each profile. For example, to know if the government or Institution gives economic incentives when the student completes the programme and finishes his formation, incentivising the same (Newton et al., 2020).

Finally, further research should complete the information with qualitative studies on the respondents' experience and narrative.

This study presents key educational implications for intervention proposals and guidelines for each profile. Despite the limited literature on this subject, the present study analyses the population of SCEPs and identifies five typologies requiring specific psychological and socio-educational interventions for these training programmes to ensure professional success.

## Notes

1. Percentage of people between 18 and 24 years with a qualification lower than Upper Secondary Education (International Standard Classification of Education [ISCED] 0, 1 and 2) classified as early school leavers from education and training (Ministerio de Educación y Formación Profesional, 2022).
2. “The entities of the Third Sector of Social Action are those organisations of private nature, arising from the citizen or social initiative, under different modalities, that respond to criteria of solidarity and social participation, for purposes of interest general and non-profit making, which promote the recognition and exercise of civil rights, as well as the economic, social or cultural rights of the people and groups who suffer from vulnerable conditions or who are at risk of social exclusion” (Law 43/2015, of October 9, of the Third Sector of Social Action, Chapter I, Article 2).

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## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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Conceptualisation, I.S.-G., F.S.-M. and E.Q.-M.; methodology, I.S.-G. and R.J.-L.; software, R.J.-L. and I.S.-G.; validation, R.J.-L. and I.S.-G.; formal analysis, R.J.-L. and I.S.-G.; data curation, R.J.-L. and I.S.-G.; resources, R.J.-L., I.S.-G. and E.Q.-M.; writing – original draft preparation, I.S.-G., R.J.-L., F.S.-M. and E.Q.-M.; writing – review and editing, I.S.-G., R.J.-L., F.S.-M. and E.Q.-M. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

## Data availability statement

The final data set can be found on <https://doi.org/10.34810/data1091>

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