

# Attitude to multiculturalism at school scale: validation and psychometric properties on a Chilean sample

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The increasing number of immigrant students on the Chilean educational system stresses the importance of study teachers' attitudes to multiculturalism in schools settings. Nevertheless, there is a lack of adequate measurement instruments to apply on Chilean population. The aim of this work was to validate the Attitude to Multiculturalism at School Scale (León del Barco et al., 2007) on a Chilean sample, composed by N=160 teachers. Confirmatory factor analysis showed that the unifactorial model had the best fit to the data. Correlation analysis revealed significant relations between attitude to multiculturalism at school, perceived out-group threat and prejudice. Linear regression analysis showed that perceived threat and prejudice explained 42% of the attitude to multiculturalism at school variability, supporting criterion validity.

*Keywords:* attitudes; multiculturalism; school; immigrants; teachers

**Escala de actitud hacia la multiculturalidad en la escuela: validación y propiedades psicométricas en una muestra chilena.**

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Aunque el aumento del alumnado inmigrante en Chile subraya la importancia de estudiar actitudes de los docentes hacia la multiculturalidad, existe un déficit de instrumentos de medida para ser aplicados a la población local. El objetivo de este estudio es validar la Escala de Actitudes hacia la Multiculturalidad en la Escuela (León del Barco et al., 2007) en una muestra compuesta por N=160 profesores chilenos. Se estableció que el modelo unifactorial presenta el mejor ajuste a los datos, y se determinó la existencia de relaciones significativas entre la actitud hacia la multiculturalidad, la amenaza exogrupal percibida y el prejuicio. Los análisis de regresión lineal señalan que la amenaza exogrupal percibida y el prejuicio, explican el 42% de la variabilidad de la actitud hacia la multiculturalidad, apoyando la validez de criterio de la escala.

*Palabras clave:* actitudes; multiculturalidad; escuela; inmigrantes; profesores

#### **Escala de atitude face á multiculturalidade na escola: validação e propriedades psicométricas numa amostra chilena**

O incremento dos estudantes imigrantes no sistema educativo chileno enfatiza a importância de pesquisar as atitudes dos docentes face á multiculturalidade em contextos escolares. Porém, existe um déficit de instrumentos de medição a serem aplicados à população local. O objetivo desta pesquisa foi validar a Escala de Atitude face á Multiculturalidade na Escola (León del Barco et al., 2007), numa amostra composta por N = 160 professores chilenos.. O modelo unifatorial apresenta o melhor ajuste aos dados. Os resultados confirmam a existência de relações significativas entre a atitude face á multiculturalidade, a percepção de ameaça exogrupal e o preconceito. As análises de regressão linear indicam que a ameaça exogrupal e o preconceito explicam 42% da variabilidade da atitude face á multiculturalidade, apoiando a validade de critério da escala.

*Palavras chave:* atitudes, multiculturalidade, escola, imigrantes, professores.

#### **Echelle d'attitude envers le multiculturalisme à l'école: validation et propriétés psychométriques dans un échantillon chilien.**

L'augmentation des étudiants immigrants dans le système éducatif chilien souligne l'importance d'études l'attitude des professeurs à l'égard de la multiculturalité en milieu scolaire. Néanmoins, il n'existe pas d'instruments de mesure adéquats à appliquer à la population chilienne. Le but de ce travail était de valider l'échelle d'attitude envers la multiculturalité à l'école (León del Barco et al., 2007) sur un échantillon chilien composé de N = 160 enseignants. Une analyse factorielle confirmatoire a montré que le modèle uni factoriel correspondait le mieux aux données. L'analyse de corrélation a révélé des relations significatives entre l'attitude envers la multiculturalité à l'école, la menace de l'exogroupe et le préjugé. Une analyse de régression linéaire a montré que la menace et le préjugé perçus expliquaient 42% de l'attitude vis-à-vis de la variabilité multiculturelle à l'école, étayant ainsi la validité du critère.

*Mots-clé:* attitude, multiculturalité, école, immigrants, professeurs.

During the last two decades, Chile's migratory profile has shown significant changes related to a sustained growth of its immigrant population, and the increasing number of Latin-Americans newcomers, who represent 90.96% of the foreign inhabitants of the country (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, 2020).

One of the most important features of this new migration pattern is the increase of the school age children and adolescents segment, which corresponds to 15% of immigrant population (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas, 2018). In fact, the number of foreign students on Chilean educational system was doubled between 2015 and 2017, representing 2.2% of the total student body. Immigrant students are mainly concentrated on primary education (64%), while 25% is enrolled on secondary schools, and 11% attend to pre-school education. It is also relevant to note that immigrant students tend to study mostly on public schools financed by the State but administered by local municipalities (58%) than Chilean students (36%), who are principally enrolled on subsidized schools (55%), financed by the State but administrated by private organizations. In both cases, only the 9% of the students attend to private centers (Ministerio de Educación de Chile, 2018). These data suggest an educational segregation tendency through which immigrant students are acceding to the schools with lowers socioeconomic profiles (Joiko & Vázquez, 2016),

Immigrant children and adolescents' schooling is an emerging research topic on the local context, and there is growing evidence indicating intergroup conflict dynamics between Chilean and Latin-American students, as well as between them, their families and teachers. These studies have reported, mostly through qualitative designs, the existence of prejudices (Cárdenas, 2006; Navas et al., 2009; Navas & Sánchez, 2010; Salas et al., 2017), discrimination (de la Torre Díaz, 2011; Hein, 2012; Hernández, 2016), exclusion (Pavez, 2012) and

racialization processes (Riedemann & Stefoni, 2015; Tijoux, 2013), which tend to be naturalized on school settings, and might have an important impact on teaching-learning interactions and also on school climate.

This new multicultural scenario is challenging for teaching staffs, who are key actors on cultural diversity management at schools (Gutentag et al., 2017). Teachers' behaviors and attitudes toward multiculturalism have impact on students' intergroup relations by influencing native pupils' perceptions about their foreign peers (Horenczyk & Tatar, 2002). Likewise, educators' beliefs, expectations and valuations about cultural minority students' schooling processes are critical to their well-being and to their academic outcomes (Carter, 2006; Kao & Thompson, 2003; Pajares, 2007; Tyler et al., 2006; Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002; Wong et al., 2003).

In Chile, immigrants' arrival to schools has been faced by educators on a brief period of time, with scarce preparation and lack of resources. Teachers have been educated on a monocultural system and prepared to teach to a homogeneous student body, through a professional training process that rarely involves the development of knowledge and skills related to multicultural education (Barrios-Valenzuela & Palou-Julián, 2014).

Furthermore, even though teachers may have access to establish close relations with immigrant families and get to know their socio-cultural realities, some studies have shown that their perceptions of cultural diversity at schools tend to reflect general population attitudes to immigration on the larger society (Horenczyk & Tatar, 2002; Siqués et al., 2009; Vecina, 2006). Due to their position as members of the majoritarian society, teachers' social identities might be threatened by immigrants groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), triggering ambiguous or negative reactions towards them.

Prejudice has been defined as a negative cognitive or affective response towards groups and their members, and it has a relevant role on the creation or preservation of intergroup hierarchical relations (Dovidio et al., 2010; Yzerbyt & Demoulin, 2010). As well as per-

ceptions, judgments, beliefs and stereotypes about a group, emotions are an important component of prejudice (Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005), which are determined by the effects of social interactions on status and power (Kemper, 1984). Moreover, these feelings contribute to intergroup boundaries' delimitation and maintenance, by reinforcing group identities or preventing the contact between groups (Aberson, 2015; Keltner & Haidt, 1999). Thus, affective prejudice might lead to negative attitudes and behaviors toward cultural diversity (Aberson, 2015; Navas & Rojas, 2010), and it seems to be critical for educators whom emotions have impact on students' affective experiences at school (Frenzel et al., 2017; Hagenauer et al., 2015).

Besides, several studies have shown that host societies members attitudes to multiculturalism, are negative related to the degree in which newcomers are perceived as competitors for material or symbolic resources (Sirlopú & Van Oudenhoven, 2013; Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002; Stephan et al., 2005; Vedder et al., 2016; Velasco et al., 2008; Ward & Masgoret, 2008). Realistic threat consists on the idea that immigrant groups represent a risk for natives' access to welfare, job market or housing, and it can be perceived even when host society members' individual interests are not in conflict.

Symbolic threat, in turn, entails the belief that immigrant groups systems of values and norms are incongruent with host society dominant culture, putting cultural homogeneity at risk (Stephan et al., 2005), which may be specially sensible for teaching settings. Threat perceptions lead groups to develop strategies to protect their own material interests and culture, diminishing their acceptance of diversity and avoiding intergroup contact (Bourhis et al., 2009; Florack et al., 2003; González et al., 2010; Montreuil et al., 2004), by their association to prejudice.

In the case of Chilean teachers, there is scarce evidence of their perceptions about multiculturalism at school. A qualitative study conducted by Jimenez & Fardella (2015) found interpretative repertoires which varied from cultural diversity invisibilization, to the perception of cultural diversity as a factor that hinders schooling processes' normal

development, preferring immigrant students' segregation or assimilation to the mainstream culture. A third kind of approach consisted in the idea of multiculturalism at school as a normal consequence of migratory processes, which doesn't require teachers' adaptation but immigrant students' individual efforts to fit in to the new context (Jiménez & Fardella, 2015).

In other research (Salas et al., 2017), conducted by a mixed method design, qualitative results showed that teachers believed that foreign pupils' enrollment had several negative consequences to schools, such as the loss of prestige, Chilean families "scape" from their schools, and the worsening of education quality. Teachers on this study also tended to perceive that immigrant students have fewer learning capabilities than natives because of their cultural origin. As a consequence, they coincided on segregate them on separated groups inside the classrooms as a strategy to avoid Chilean pupils' academic backwardness.

These findings seem to be consistent with results from studies with general Chilean population, which have aware about the construction of negative attitudes, low social recognition, racism and discriminative behaviors towards Latin-American immigrants (Mera et al., 2017; Thayer et al., 2013; Tijoux & Palominos, 2015; Valenzuela et al., 2014; Sirlópú & Van Oudenhoven, 2013).

Nevertheless, due to the importance of teachers' role on immigrant students' sociocultural integration, it is urgent to increase local knowledge production about their particular perceptions of school as a multicultural scenario, which poses the need of counting with adequate measurement instruments. Recently, Salas et al. (2017) made an interesting contribution by applying the Attitude to Multiculturalism at School Scale (León del Barco et al., 2007), originally constructed with a Spanish sample, on 44 Chilean teachers, which results were analyzed and complemented with qualitative data. This work aims to be a new advance on Salas' work, by validating and studying the psychometric properties of the Attitude to Multiculturalism at School Scale (León del Barco et al., 2007) on a Chilean teachers sample.

## Method

### *Participants*

The sample was composed by  $N= 160$  Chilean teachers, with ages between 23 and 65 years ( $M=40.40$ ;  $SD=11.35$ ). 70.6% were women and 29.4% had pedagogy degree studies, while 35.4% had postgraduate studies. 57.7% of the participants were primary education teachers, and 42.3% were teachers on secondary education.

### *Variables and Instruments*

Attitude to Multiculturalism at School: Attitude to Multiculturalism at School Scale (León del Barco et al., 2007) was applied. This instrument was constructed with a Spanish sample, and it is composed by 8 items on a 5-point Likert scale (Completely disagree=1, Completely agree=5). Items are grouped on 3 dimensions: positive attitudes towards multiculturalism at school (items 1, 2 and 3), negative attitudes towards multiculturalism at school (items 4, 5, 7 and 8), and immigrant students' aptitude versus natives (item 6). In the original study of León del Barco et al. (2007), the alphas reported were of .88 for the dimension negative attitudes towards multiculturalism at school, and .83 for positive attitudes towards multiculturalism at school dimension, while the general internal consistency of the instrument was  $\alpha=.81$ .

Threat perception: To assess perceived threat we used a scale based on the Basque Observatory of Immigration Questionnaire (Aierdi et al., 2004), previously adapted to the Chilean context (Mera et al., 2017). It consists on 7 items with a 5 point Likert-scale (1=totally disagree; 5= totally agree), where 6 items evaluated realistic threat, while 1 item assessed symbolic threat ( $\alpha(\text{Cronbach}) = .93$ ;  $\omega(\text{McDonald})= .93$ ).

Prejudice: Navas & Rojas (2010) Affective Prejudice Scale was applied, which consists on 11 items: 4 items including traditional negative emotions (fear, hate, disregard, irritation), 4 items including subtle negative emotions (indifference, distrust, insecurity, discomfort), and 3 items comprising positive emotions (respect, admiration, sympathy).

Participants had to indicate, using a 5 point Likert-scale (1=nothing, 5=a lot), the degree in which they had felt each of these emotions towards Latin-American immigrants. In this study, the disregard's item presented a low correlation with the total scale, thus, we opted to not include it on data analysis ( $\alpha$ (Cronbach) = .87;  $\omega$ (McDonald)= .87).

### ***Procedure***

Participants' selection was conducted using a convenience sampling, according to schools availability and teachers' voluntary participation. Eight schools agreed to participate in the study. All participants were informed about the goals and confidentiality conditions of the research, in order to comply with ethical and legal frameworks of informed consent. Questionnaire administration was done individually on schools, and had an average length of 20 minutes.

### ***Data Analysis***

The dimensional structure of the original model proposed by León del Barco et al. (2007), which is composed by 8 items, was examined through a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Different indices were used to evaluate the goodness-of-fit of the model: a) Chi-square, which must be not significant. Due to its sensitivity to the sample size, we also used b) Chi-square divided by degrees of freedom ( $\chi^2 / df$ ), accepting values lower than 5 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1996); (c) Comparative Fit Index (*CFI*); (d) Tucker-Lewis Index (*TLI*); and (e) Bentler-Bonett Normed Fit Index (*NFI*). For those indices, values equal and over .90 are considered acceptable, while values equal or over .95 indicate a good fit of the model. We also used (f) Parsimony normed fit index (*PNFI*), at which values above .50 are considered adequate; (g) Akaike's information criterion (*AIC*), which is a comparative measure of fit between different models. Lower values indicate a better fit, thus, the model with the lowest *AIC* is the best fitting mode; (h) Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (*RMSEA*) at which values lower than .08 are accepted; and (i) Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (*SRMR*), where values



lower than .05 indicates an adequate fit (Bentler & Bonett, 1980; Hu & Bentler, 1999; Yu, 2002). In order to study the criterion validity of the Attitude to Multiculturalism at School Scale (León del Barco et al., 2007), Pearson's correlations analysis were calculated. Data analyses were conducted with the statistical software JASP V.9.9.

## Results

### Structural Validity

The original model (figure 1), which consists on 8 items and 3 dimensions (figure 1), was tested. The dimension “positive attitudes to multiculturalism at school” is composed by items 1, 2 and 3, dimension “negative attitudes to multiculturalism at school” includes the inverse items 4, 5, 7 and 8, and the third dimension, “immigrant students’ aptitude versus natives”, is composed only by the inverse item 6 (León del Barco et al., 2007). This model didn't present adequate fit indices ( $\chi^2_{(17, N=160)} = 45.525, p. < .001; \chi^2/gl = 2.678; CFI = .948; TLI = .914; NFI = .921; PNNFI = .559; SRMR = .046; RMSEA = .102$  (90% CI [.067, .139])), as can be seen on table 1.

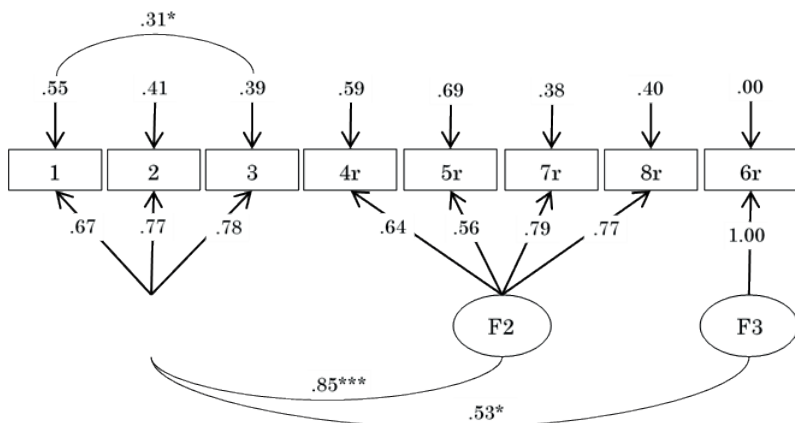


Figure 1. Original Trifactorial Model (León del Barco et al., 2007)

Due to the inadequate fit of the original model, a bifactorial model was tested. The item which composed dimension 3 on the original model was included on dimension 2, affecting the goodness-of-fit of the model, with unacceptable results on the different indices ( $\chi^2(17, N=160) = 50.476, p. < .001; \chi^2/df = 2.985; CFI = .939; TLI = .899; NFI = .912; PNFI = .554; SRMR = .051 ;RMSEA = .111 (90\% CI [.076, .147])$ ).

**Table 1**

*Fit indices: Confirmatory Factorial Analysis*

	Nº ítems	$\chi^2$	df	$\chi^2/df$	CFI	TLI	NFI	PNFI	AIC	SRMR	RMSEA	90% CI RMSEA
Model 1	8	45.525	17	2.678	.948	.914	.921	.559	2257.935	.046	.102	[.067-.139]
Model 2	8	50.476	17	2.985	.939	.899	.912	.554	2262.886	.051	.111	[.076-.147]
Model 3	8	27.079	15	1.805	.978	.959	.953	.511	2243.489	.038	.071	[.023-.113]

Consequently, a unifactorial solution was tested (figure 2). The third model presented satisfactory levels of goodness-of-fit ( $\chi^2(15, N=160) = 27.079, p. = .028; \chi^2/df = 1.805; CFI = .978; TLI = .959; NFI = .953; PNFI = .511; SRMR = .038; RMSEA = .071 (90\% CI [.023, .113])$ ). Scale's reliability ( $\alpha(\text{Cronbach}) = .865; \omega(\text{McDonald}) = .876$ ), assures its capability to differentiate between individuals who present a high attitude to multiculturalism at school from those who show a low attitude to multiculturalism at school. Table 2 shows descriptive data and reliability indices for each of the items.

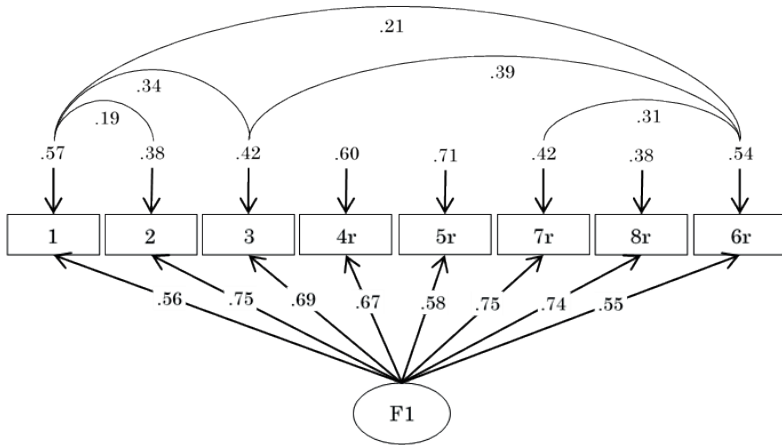


Figure 2. Unifactorial Model.

**Table 2**

*Descriptive statistics and items' reliability*

Items	M	SD	Item-Test correlation	If the item is discarded	
				McDonald $\omega$	Cronbach $\alpha$
1. A multicultural school would be good	4.200	.867	.602	.864	.852
2. Every immigrant student have right to education	4.800	.580	.709	.853	.843
3. Ethnic diversity at schools supposes a positive and enriching experience	4.475	.760	.735	.852	.835
4. Immigrant students' presence at a school has a negative impact on student body achievement	4.625	.759	.570	.866	.854

Items	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Item-Test correlation	If the item is discarded	
				McDonald $\omega$	Cronbach $\alpha$
5. Immigrant students' presence has a negative impact on school's prestige..	4.737	.649	.477	.875	.863
6. Immigrant students are worse prepared than natives students.	4.206	.946	.606	.864	.855
7- Immigrant students' presence at a school difficult development of activities in the classroom	4.662	.603	.681	.856	.844
8. To have immigrant students is a serious problem for schools	4.719	.606	.665	.858	.846

### ***Criterion validity***

The literature review, previously presented on this paper, strongly suggests that attitudes to multiculturalism at school are related to teachers' prejudices towards immigrants, and also to the degree in which they perceived them as threatening both on realistic and symbolic terms. In order to study the instrument criterion validity, correlation analyses between attitude to multiculturalism at school, prejudice and perceived threat were performed.

Results showed high negative significant relations between the attitude to multiculturalism at school and perceived threat ( $r = -.60$ ;  $p < .001$ ), and also among attitudes to multiculturalism at school and prejudice ( $r = -.61$ ;  $p < .001$ ). Thus, positive attitude to multiculturalism at school was associated with low threat perception and low prejudice.

A two-stage hierarchical multiple regression analysis was also conducted, with attitude to multiculturalism at school as the dependent variable. Results revealed that at stage one, perceived out-group threat contributed significantly to the regression model ( $F(1,159) = 89.175$ ,

$p < .001$ ) and accounted for 36% of the variation of the attitude to multiculturalism at school. Affective prejudice was introduced at stage two, explaining an additional 7% of the attitude to multiculturalism at school variance ( $F(2,159) = 58.836$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Together, these two variables explained a 42% of the variability of participants' attitude to multiculturalism at school.

**Table 3**

*Multiple regression analysis predicting Attitude to Multiculturalism at School*

	Stage 1			Stage 2		
	B	SE B	$\beta$	B	SE B	$\beta$
Perceived Threat	-.32	.03	-.60***	-.18	.05	-.34***
Affective Prejudice				-.31	.07	-.37***
R <sup>2</sup>	.36			.42		
F	89,17***			58,84***		
$\Delta R^2$				.07		
$\Delta F$				18,58***		

Note. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

## Discussion

The aim of this work was to validate the Attitude to Multiculturalism at School Scale (León del Barco et al., 2007) on a Chilean sample. Through a confirmatory factor analysis, we tested different structural models of the original instrument, confirming that the unifactorial model had the best fit to the data, and the internal consistency estimators presented adequate values.

Also, correlational analysis showed that consistently with precedents studies, the attitude to multiculturalism at school presented high negative significant relations with threat perception (Sirlopú & Van Oudenhoven, 2013; Spencer-Rodgers & McGovern, 2002; Stephan et al., 2005) and prejudice (Vedder et al., 2016; Velasco et al., 2008; Ward & Masgoret, 2008). Moreover, the hierarchical regression analysis revealed that threat perception together with prejudice explained a 42% of the attitude to multiculturalism at school variability, supporting the scale criterion validity.

It is relevant to note that the convenience sampling and sample size utilized in this study might represent important limitations which should be addressed in future researches with a more representative population of teachers. Nevertheless, we stress the importance of counting with an instrument which can be useful to detect teachers' attitudes to cultural diversity at school, and further, to improve our knowledge about intergroup relations impact on immigrant students schooling processes, by identifying variables which can be key to psychosocial and educational intervention. Future research might also consider teachers' acculturation attitudes toward immigrant students, and other important specific aspects such as their culturally responsive teaching skills (Gutentag et al., 2017). A deeper knowledge about these issues could contribute to the design of teachers training programs, which could improve their capabilities to cope with the challenges of cultural diversity, promoting positive intergroup relations at school.

We expect that this unifactorial version of the instrument could encourage scholars on this field to consider teachers' perspectives on multicultural schools settings, especially in contexts where diversity management is a new and challenging task, such as in the Chilean case.

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## **Apendix**

### Items of Attitude to Multiculturality at School Scale. Spanish version

- 1.- Una escuela multicultural sería buena
  - 2.- Todos los alumnos inmigrantes tienen derecho a una educación
  - 3.- La variedad étnica en las escuelas supone una experiencia positiva y enriquecedora
  - 4.- La presencia de alumnos inmigrantes en la escuela influye negativamente en el rendimiento del grupo.
  - 5.- La presencia de alumnos inmigrantes en un centro escolar afecta negativamente el prestigio del centro.
  - 6.- Los alumnos inmigrantes están peor preparados que los autóctonos.
  - 7.- La presencia de alumnos inmigrantes en la escuela dificulta el desarrollo de actividades en el aula.
  - 8.- Tener alumnos inmigrantes es un serio problema para los centros educativos.
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