



Educational Resilience among Refugee Children and Youth and their Cultural Preparedness: Implications for Career and Livelihood Planning Counsellors

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Abstract

This paper explores the educational resilience of refugee children and youth in one country, Greece, and its implications for career and livelihood planning. First, we attempt to understand their educational resilience by examining responses to a child and youth resilience measure. Twenty-five participants provided the data, among whom fifteen were unaccompanied and separated children and ten accompanied children. Two tests of correlation – Welch’s two-sample t-test and Fisher’s exact test – were used to compare differences in the response data between the two groups. Next, we applied the construct of cultural preparedness to more closely examine the reported experiences of the unaccompanied and separated group to better understand their orientations to career and livelihood planning. We propose that there are potential linkages between the educational resilience of refugee children and youth and their cultural preparedness for career and livelihood planning, and suggest that these links have implications for guidance and counselling. Specifically, our analyses suggest the need for sensitivity training for service providers in destination countries to address implicit discrimination and cultural bias, and steps that could create supportive learning environments for not only better educational outcomes for refugee children and youth, but also their future career development.

Keywords: Unaccompanied and separated children, Educational resilience, Cultural preparedness, Refugee education, Education-to-career pipeline

Introduction

Greece has been a major entry point for refugees arriving in Europe over the past decade. A notable portion of Greece’s refugee population are children and youth under the age of 18, with over 74,000 refugees under the age of 18 in Greece in 2023 (United Nations High Commissioner

for Refugees, 2024). Ensuring access to formal schooling, in what has come to be defined as an emergency context, is a major challenge for refugee children and youth. Even with the offer of non-formal educational opportunities by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), third sector organisations, and the voluntary

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sector, the quality of education received may still be subpar (Aleghfeli & Nag, 2024; Vakali, 2020). In response, advocates have called for increased funding for a range of interventions such as, for example, Greek and English language acquisition programmes, hiring teachers specialised in refugee education, increased sensitivity training that reduce potential discrimination and cultural bias, tailored instruction for children who have missed years of school, and youth mental health services to support trauma recovery (Aleghfeli & Nag, 2024; Arvanitis, 2020; Gkaintartzi et al., 2020; Papapostolou, 2020; Vakali, 2020). Challenges of navigating opportunities in a new country context makes it difficult for refugee children and youth to have an ordinary education-to-employment pipeline. We intend to conceptualise the connection between educational trajectories and the new approach to career and livelihood planning needed by refugee children and youth upon entry into the destination country. First, we attempt to understand the educational resilience trajectories of refugee children and youth in Greece. We do this by examining the responses of a small sample of refugee children and youth to a questionnaire measure of child and youth resilience. Second, we discuss the implications of the construct of educational resilience on the career and livelihood planning of refugee children and youth in Greece, drawing upon the theoretical construct of cultural preparedness for career and livelihood planning (Arulmani, 2014b, 2014a, 2019). Our study posits that there may be potential linkages between the educational resilience of refugee children and youth and their cultural preparedness for the next level of their career and livelihood planning. We argue for similarly targeted future investigations so as to build an evidence base for the delivery of career guidance and systematic support for livelihood planning which are sensitive to individual histories, current constraints and future aspirations.

Literature Review

Understanding Educational Resilience

Educational resilience is an evolving concept that may be explained within the context of four waves of resilience research (Aleghfeli, 2021; Masten, 2007). The first wave of resilience research represented initial efforts to descriptively explain the resilience phenomenon and identify characteristics of the child, family, relationships, or environment that function as resilience correlates. In addition to their primary focus on health and epidemiology, several initial studies on resilience also examined educational and school-related factors as both outcomes and potential indicators of risk and resilience (Garmezy et al., 1984; Masten et al., 1990; Rutter, 1979, 1987; Werner & Smith, 1977, 1992). Risk correlates, or factors, were often subclassified as proximal, directly experienced by the child, or distal, arising from the child's environment or context (Luthar et al., 2006; Wright et al., 2013). Resilience correlates, or factors, were often sub-classified as protective or promotive when they improved outcomes (e.g., health, educational, behavioral) in the context of a high probability of poor outcomes (Luthar et al., 2006; Sameroff, 2000).

The second wave of resilience research sought to explain the long-term processes in which these risk and resilience factors moderate or mediate positive outcomes, thereby enabling resilience. Mediators and moderators describe the nature of the effects of risk and resilience factors on educational and other child-level outcomes (Baron & Kenny, 1986). On the one hand, mediation is when a risk or a resilience factor can have an effect and explain the relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable, also called a main effect. On the other hand, moderation is when a risk or a resilience factor can have an effect and explain the strength or direction of the relationship between an independent variable and a dependent variable, also called an interaction effect. This wave of research

propelled the study of resilience from a cross-sectional analysis, that simply describes risk and resilience factors, to a longitudinal examination that investigates the connections between various factors over time in order to identify mediators and moderators (Feinstein et al., 2008; Motti-Stefanidi, 2018).

The third wave of resilience research represents the intellectual interest in testing resilience ideas through educational and school-based intervention designs and translating resilience research findings into educational and social policy and practice. This wave was heavily characterized by educators and education researchers contributing to the resilience literature. By utilizing experimental designs like randomized control trials of interventions implemented in schools, third-wave resilience studies provided fresh evidence regarding the mediating and moderating influence of resilience correlates in facilitating resilience processes (Cicchetti et al., 2000; Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000). It was in this wave that the often-cited definition of educational resilience was coined: "Educational resilience is the heightened likelihood of success in school and other life accomplishments despite environmental adversities brought about by early traits, conditions, and experiences" (Wang et al., 1994). However, such conceptualizations of resilience by interventionists painted resilience as an inherent trait, characteristic, or quality of the individual.

The fourth wave of resilience research represents a more critical approach where resilience processes are understood through multiple levels of analysis and a wider understanding of contextual and cultural factors is attempted. This body of work sought to re-affirm the academic consensus on resilience, going back to Rutter (1987), that resilience cannot be seen as an inherent trait, characteristic, or quality of the child (Luthar et al., 2000; Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000; Masten, 2014; Panter-Brick & Leckman, 2013; Rutter, 2012). Inspired by previous socio-ecological systems research (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1986), fourth-wave resilience studies sought to engage with a

multilevel understanding of resilience processes, where the child and individual is placed within microsystemic (complex relationships and physical settings experienced by the child, e.g., family, school, friends), mesosystemic (interrelations between the microsystems, e.g., between family and school), exosystemic (social structures that do not contain but may directly influence the child), macrosystemic (cultural norms, values, and ideologies that shape and influence the system around the child), and chronosystemic (change in place, space, and time) contexts (Aleghfeli, 2021; Feinstein et al., 2021; Ungar, 2004, 2008).

Educational Resilience for Refugee Children and Youth

The study of children and youth's resilience in education in emergency contexts has been dominated by western and neo-liberal conceptualisations that unfairly responsabilised the individual (Chandler & Reid, 2016; Hajir et al., 2022; Shah et al., 2020). Taking from the lessons of the fourth wave of resilience research (Aleghfeli, 2021; Feinstein et al., 2021; Luthar et al., 2000; Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000; Masten, 2014; Rutter, 1987, 2012), a re-conceptualisation of the construct of educational resilience that considers the interaction of the child with the wider system was necessary, rather than simply framing educational resilience as an internal trait or characteristic of the child. Ungar (2008) exemplifies this later perspective when he defines resilience as: both the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that sustain their well-being, and their capacity individually and collectively to negotiate for these resources to be provided in culturally meaningful ways (p. 225).

Ungar (2004) further noted that resilience research is also silent about children's own perspectives on their culturally embedded pathways to resilience. As such, it was important to incorporate qualitative and socio-interactive approaches (Vygotsky, 1967, 1978) to explore what Ungar (2008)

conceptualises as navigation (the personal agency of the child in seeking educational or social care support) and negotiation (seeking the provision of educational and social care resources in ways meaningful to the child). Accordingly, this study defines educational resilience as the presence of positive educational experiences despite exposure to significant risk or severe adversity (Masten, 2014; Rutter, 2012).

Educational resilience is also the result of a dynamic engagement between the child, their aspirations, and their immediate environment (Arulmani, 2019; Luthar et al., 2000; Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000) and is specific to the socio-ecological and socio-interactive context of the child (Ungar, 2008). As such, incorporating a socio-ecological approach and a socio-interactive approach provides a comprehensive framework to explore the multiple systems influencing educational resilience and promotes a holistic understanding of the educational experiences of refugee children and youth. In addition, taken within a socio-ecological systems approach (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1986), multiple resilience factors existing in the environment of refugee children and youth might play an enabling role and provide positive educational experiences. In a systematic review of nine high-income destination countries, Aleghfeli and Hunt (2022) identified socio-ecological factors existing at the student-level, teacher-level, and school-level associated with positive educational trajectories for unaccompanied and separated children (UASCs). They found that microsystemic and mesosystemic factors such as supportive home, class, and school settings could enable some UASCs to overcome adversity, adapt to new environments, and persist in their educational pursuits. Also important to the current topic is a socio-interactive approach (Vygotsky, 1967, 1978) to considering how the interactions between risk and resilience factors contribute to educational resilience-building processes for UASCs. One study on the educational outcomes of Palestinian UASCs in Jordan had identified interactive relationships that had promotive or protective effects on their

educational resilience (Aleghfeli, 2023). Fostering positive teacher-student relations, building a positive class disciplinary climate, and enhancing children's economic, cultural, and social status were found to have promotive effects, while quality use of structuring and scaffolding strategies in teaching and effective use of ability grouping were found to have protective effects. By adopting this approach, the study can also communicate findings in a manner that can a) inform future researchers, practitioners, and policymakers on how to extend existing educational programming, and b) create supportive class and school environments to foster educational resilience.

Career and Livelihood Planning

A key question linked to the study of educational resilience is how this may be linked to the career and livelihood planning of refugee children and youth. Arulmani (2014b, 2014a) argued that the manner in which individuals and groups are prepared by their cultures explains their engagement with work and career, necessitating the need for a holistic, culturally-grounded approach to understanding career development. As such, Arulmani (2014b) developed a theoretical framework that emphasises the crucial role of cultural factors in preparing individuals to engage with work and career development. The framework is built on five propositions: 1) at the macro-level, global conditions, trends, and transformations form the backdrop against which human engagement with work and career occurs; 2) at the micro-level, preparedness for career development is influenced by three key factors: patterns of social organization along the individualism-collectivism continuum, patterns of value attribution, and the processes of role allocation; 3) human ability for cultural learning through the processes of enculturation and acculturation mediate the interaction between the macro-level and micro-level factors; 4) the socializing forces of enculturation interact continuously and dynamically with the macro-level and micro-level factors to create a cultural

preparation equilibrium (a state of internal stability); and, 5) the socializing forces of acculturation interact continuously and dynamically with the macro-level and micro-level factors to alter the existing equilibrium and create a new equilibrium that the group or individual may experience as being consonant or dissonant with their earlier cultural preparation equilibrium.

By emphasising the role of cultural learning and cultural factors, the model provides a framework to contextualise career and livelihood planning, moving beyond Western-centric notions of individualistic career choice. Accordingly, Arulmani continued to extend the cultural preparedness approach to make it relevant for non-Western contexts. First, Arulmani (2014a) expanded on cultural preparedness in career planning by introducing to it the idea of 'livelihood planning' as an essential dimension of career development, particularly in global south contexts. Arulmani argued that Western and capitalist notions of career as personal growth and development, may not be entirely relevant for individuals in non-Western contexts engaged in more traditional occupations that are intrinsically linked to a community's broader way of life. Accordingly, a cultural preparedness approach to career and livelihood planning advocates for careers practitioners and guidance counsellors to acquire skills to understand individuals' culturally specific engagement with work and optimise this engagement for contemporary work environments. Second, Arulmani (2019) stressed that disturbances in the cultural preparation equilibrium lie at the heart of immigrant's integration into destination countries. Drawing on interviews with 84 immigrants from 35 developing countries living in 9 destination countries, Arulmani (2019) attempted to understand the disturbance of cultural preparation equilibrium experienced by immigrants as they navigate the cultural realities of the destination country. In the context of a stable social context, individuals develop a state of internal stability and balance through the process of enculturation, which is theorised as being shaped by culture-

specific patterns of social organisation, value attribution, and role allocation.

However, migration can disrupt this cultural preparation equilibrium, requiring immigrants to adapt and find a new equilibrium. It is possible that the acculturative forces, experienced by the immigrant in their destination country, could be out of synchrony with the enculturation that formed the immigrant's cultural preparation for career and livelihood planning, causing disequilibrium. For example, it is possible that an individual's enculturation occurred in a cultural environment where social organisation was characterized by collectivism. Such enculturation may create a value attribution tendency, whereby the individual immigrant learns to unquestioningly venerate the opinions and direction of their employer in their destination country. Such value attribution tendency could result in incidences of migrant worker exploitation in destination countries (Buller et al., 2015). Accordingly, a cultural preparedness approach to career and livelihood planning for immigrants requires considering the interface between immigrants' deeply held, culturally mediated career development aspirations and their engagement with destination country services (Arulmani, 2014b, 2014a). While the cultural preparedness approach brings focus on the immigrant's responses to this disturbance, which can range from integration into the system of the destination country to rejecting it and retaining their original cultural orientation, it also recognizes the need for the system to support the immigrant in attaining that cultural preparation equilibrium, reflected in the call to recognize the importance of 'livelihood planning' alongside career planning (Arulmani, 2019).

Research Objectives

Our main objective is to conceptualise the connection between the educational resilience of refugee children and youth and their cultural preparedness for career and livelihood planning. By juxtaposing quantitative data collected during fieldwork in Greece (Aleghfeli & Nag, 2024) with the

theoretical construct of cultural preparedness for career and livelihood planning (Arulmani, 2014b, 2014a, 2019), this piece aims to answer the following questions:

- What are the educational resilience trajectories of refugee children and youth?
- What are the implications of knowing about educational resilience on the career and livelihood planning of refugee children and youth?

Methods

Study Sample

The main participants in the study were refugee youth who arrived in Greece seeking asylum as minors (N = 25), composed of UASCs (N = 15) and non-UASCs (N = 10), who arrived in Greece seeking asylum as minors. The inclusion criteria for participants to this study were: 1) the participant must be a current or former refugee youth, both UASC and non-UASC, aged 16–23 years old; 2) the participant must have attained at least one year of educational provisioning, including both formal and non-formal, in Greece; 3) the participant must have provided consent to participate in the study; and 4) the availability of a competent interpreter and transcriptionist.

Research Instrument

The Child and Youth Resilience Measure (henceforth, CYRM-R) is a self-reported measure of socio-ecological resilience made up of 17 items (Jefferies et al., 2019). A composite score of all items provides an overall resilience score (henceforth, referred to as the overall resilience score) and two sub-scale provide specific scores: the CYRM-R personal resilience score and CYRM-R relational resilience score. The CYRM-R personal resilience score (henceforth, referred to as the personal resilience score) is made up of 10 items and relates to intrapersonal and interpersonal manifestations of resilience,

while the CYRM-R relational resilience score (henceforth, referred to as the relational resilience score) is made up of 7 items and relates to characteristics associated with important relationships shared with caregivers. The questionnaire used in our study is the simplified language version, which uses the 3-point scoring system to avoid the possibility that some respondents may struggle with reading comprehension or struggle to differentiate between response options. Although given the option to skip an item if they preferred, none of the youth skipped any item, resulting in no missing data. Participants took an average 10–15 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted from November 2021 to January 2022, involving online focus group discussions with refugee education stakeholders (N = 6) in Greece. The aim was to contextualise the CYRM questionnaire for use on the field and ensure that it reflects the educational context of refugee children and young people in Greece, following the recommendations of the Resilience Research Centre (2018). To achieve this, we organised three online focus group discussions with six education stakeholders who were experts on refugee children and youth in Greece. Two were directors of separate NGOs, two were teachers, one was a social worker, and one was a gender rights activist. We asked the focus group participants to offer their knowledge on the educational resilience of refugee children and youth in Greece, as they've experienced it as care professionals, to help with contextualizing the CYRM-R and ensuring the measure was culturally sensitive to local educational realities for refugee children and youth.

Fieldwork

Once the feedback from the pilot study was incorporated into the study design, fieldwork was completed from February to May 2022. Participants were recruited through snowball sampling with the help of

three Athens-based NGO partners. First, the partners contacted prospective participants to get initial consent to participate. Second, an informational e-mail was sent to each participant who gave their initial consent, inviting them to participate in the study. For participants aged 16-17, both their informed assent and the informed consent of their legal guardians were sought. When asked who their caregiver was, all UASC participants responded their caregiver was their social worker at their housing facility, while all non-UASC youth participants responded their caregiver was their parent. Third, sessions with the first author (YKA) were scheduled for participants who accepted the invitation and held either at the partner NGOs' offices or online, based on each participant's preference. During each session, the questionnaire was read out to the participant in English, oftentimes with the support of a local interpreter in cases where English was the participant's first language. Renewal of consent was also undertaken at every stage of the study, including at all initial and informed consent and assent stages as well as at the start and end of the session. It was stressed to all participants that they can refuse participation at any stage of the research without needing to give a reason and with no consequences to their educational opportunities, the services they receive from the NGOs, or their status in Greece. Alongside collecting responses to the questionnaire, the fieldwork also involved qualitative data collection by means of observation, documentation analysis, interviewing, and developing a reflective record in field notes of what has been learned during the process. This paper focuses mainly on findings from the questionnaire, while the results of the qualitative data collection is published in Aleghfeli and Nag (2024). The study protocol was approved by the University of Oxford ethics committee.

Data Analysis

Correlational analyses were used to determine whether differences in the CYRM-R between UASCs and non-UASCs

were statistically significant or not. Welch's two-sample t-test (1938) was the correlational test used to compare differences in the CYRM-R scores between UASCs and non-UASCs, while Fisher's exact test (1935) was the correlational test used to compare differences in the CYRM-R items between UASCs and non-UASCs. Both tests are valuable statistical tests for working with small sample sizes. Fisher's exact test (1935) is a statistical test used to determine the significance of the association between two categorical variables in a 2x2 contingency table. It is particularly useful in situations where the sample size is small and the assumptions required for other tests, such as the chi-square test, are not met. It also provides an exact calculation of p-values without relying on asymptotic approximations, making it suitable for analyzing categorical data with sparse cell frequencies. In cases where the categorical variables are in contingency tables that are larger than 2x2, Freeman and Halton's extension (1951) of the Fisher's exact test is applied by using Monte Carlo simulation methods to estimate the p-value. Welch's two-sample t-test (1938) is a statistical test commonly used to compare means between two groups or conditions for continuous variables. It is advantageous for small sample sizes when the assumption of equal variances is violated (Satterthwaite, 1941). It also offers a robust alternative to the traditional t-test by accommodating unequal variances, allowing for more accurate inference even with limited data. The Welch's two-sample t-test is calculated on R using the `T.test` command while the Fisher's exact test is estimated using the `fisher.test` command, both part of the `stats` package (Wickham et al., 2023). An a priori power analysis was conducted using G*Power (Faul et al., 2007) to estimate the sample size needed for both tests based on the estimated number of UASCs in Greece from UNICEF (2020). With a significance criterion of $\alpha=.05$ and power $=.95$, the minimum sample size needed was $N=18$ for Fisher's test and $N=24$ for Welch's t-test. We obtained a sample of 25.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 gives a summary of the demographic details of the youth

participants in the study for both UASC and non-UASC youth. In terms of age, UASCs were on average older ($M = 18.47$, $SD = 1.96$) than non-UASCs ($M = 17.5$, $SD = 2.72$) at the time of interview.

Table 1.
Summary of demographic details of youth participants

	UASC (N = 15)		Non-UASC (N = 10)		Total (N = 25)	
Age						
Age at interview (Mean/SD)	18.47	1.96	17.7	2.54	18.08	2.29
Age at arrival (Mean/SD)	15.73	0.7	12.4	3.2	14.4	2.63
Gender						
Girls (n, %)	4	26.67	5	50	9	36
Boys (n, %)	11	73.33	5	50	16	64
Country						
Afghanistan (n, %)	10	66.67	4	40	14	56
Cameroon (n, %)	1	6.67	0	0	1	4
DR Congo (n, %)	3	20	0	0	3	12
Guinea (n, %)	1	6.67	0	0	1	4
Iran (n, %)	0	0	2	20	2	8
Lebanon (n, %)	0	0	1	10	1	4
Pakistan (n, %)	0	0	3	30	3	12
Formal education status at interview						
Enrolled (n, %)	8	53.33	9	90	17	68
Not enrolled (n, %)	7	46.67	1	10	8	32
Highest educational attainment at interview						
Lower secondary (n, %)	6	40	6	60	12	48
Upper secondary (n, %)	6	40	4	40	10	40
Tertiary (n, %)	3	20	0	0	3	12
'Home' at interview						
Family (n, %)	0	0	10	100	10	40
Residential (n, %)	6	40	0	0	6	24
Semi-Independent (n, %)	6	40	0	0	6	24
Independent (n, %)	3	20	0	0	3	12
Employment status at interview						
Employed (n, %)	4	26.67	0	0	4	16
Unemployed (n, %)	11	73.33	10	100	21	84
Immigration status at interview						
Asylum status (n, %)	9	60	9	90	18	72
Refugee status (n, %)	6	40	1	10	7	28

Moreover, UASCs were also on average older ($M = 15.73$, $SD = 0.7$) than non-UASCs ($M = 12.4$, $SD = 3.2$) at the time of arrival in Greece. In terms of gender, 11 of the UASC youth were boys (73.33%) and 4 were girls (26.67%), while 5 of the non-UASC youth were boys (50%) and 5 were girls (50%). In terms of country of origin, 14 youth were from Afghanistan (10 UASCs, 4 non-UASCs), 3 from DR Congo (all UASC), 3 from Pakistan (all non-UASCs), 2 from Iran (both non-UASC), and 1 youth each was from Cameroon (UASC), Guinea (UASC), and Lebanon (non-UASC).

In terms of formal education status at the time of interview, 8 of the UASC youth were enrolled in formal education at the time of interview (53.33%), 7 were not (46.67%). Conversely, 9 of the non-UASC youth were enrolled in formal education at the time of interview (90%), while only 1 was not (10%). In terms of highest educational attainment at the time of interview, 12 youth had attained or were currently in lower secondary education (6 UASCs, 6 non-UASCs), 10 youth had attained or were currently in upper secondary education (6 UASCs, 4 non-UASCs), and 3 youth had attained or were currently in tertiary education (all UASC). In terms of accommodation at the time of the interview, of the UASCs, 6 youth were in residential accommodation, 6 youth were in semi-independent accommodation, and 3 youth were in independent accommodation. As for non-UASCs, all were living with their families at the time of the interview. In

terms of employment status at the time of interview, 4 of the UASC youth were employed (26.67%) and 11 were not (73.33%), while none of the non-UASC youth were employed (100%). Lastly, in terms of immigration status at the time of interview, for UASCs, 6 of the youth had received refugee status (40%), while 9 were still asylum seekers waiting on the decision on their asylum applications (60%). As for non-UASCs, only 1 of the youth had received refugee status (10%), while 9 were still waiting for a decision on their asylum application (90%).

Correlation Analysis

Table 2 presents the results of Welch's *t*-tests of the CYRM-R scores. On the overall resilience score, there was a statistically significant difference between UASCs and non-UASCs ($t(22.88) = 2.32, p < 0.05$), meaning that UASCs had a significantly lower score on average ($M = 38.8$, $SD = 5.91$) than non-UASCs ($M = 43.2$, $SD = 3.58$). On the relational resilience score, there was a statistically significant difference between UASCs and non-UASCs ($t(22.96) = 4.18, p < 0.001$), meaning that UASCs had a significantly lower score on average ($M = 13.4$, $SD = 3.6$) than non-UASCs ($M = 18.3$, $SD = 2.26$). On the personal resilience score, no statistically significant difference was found between UASCs and non-UASCs.

Table 2
Results of Welch's T-tests of CYRM-R scores

	UASC (N = 15)		Non-UASC (N = 10)		t	df
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Overall resilience score	38.8	5.91	43.2	3.58	2.32*	22.88
Personal resilience score	25.4	3.16	24.9	1.97	-0.49	22.95
Relational resilience score	13.4	3.6	18.3	2.26	4.18***	22.96

Note. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Table 3 presents the results of Fisher's exact tests of the CYRM-R items. First, there was a statistically significant association between being UASC and the question 'I get along with people around me' ($p < 0.001$). Given that most UASC youth responded 'Yes' (10 out of 15) to the question, while most non-UASC youth responded 'Sometimes' (10 out of 15) to the question, UASCs agree more than non-UASCs that they get along with people around them. Second, there was a statistically significant association between being UASC and the question 'My caregiver/guardian(s) really looks out for me' ($p < 0.01$). Given that most UASC youth responded 'Sometimes' (6 out of 15) to the question, while most non-UASC

youth responded 'Yes' (9 out of 15), UASCs agree less than non-UASCs that their caregiver or guardian really looks out for them. Third, there was a statistically significant association between being UASC and the question 'My caregiver/guardian(s) know a lot about me' ($p < 0.05$). Given that most UASC youth responded 'No' (8 out of 15) to the question, while most non-UASC youth responded 'Yes' (6 out of 15), UASCs agree less than non-UASCs that their caregiver or guardian knows a lot about them. Fourth, there was a statistically significant association between being UASC and the question 'I feel safe when I am with my caregiver/guardian(s)' ($p < 0.01$).

Table 3
Results of Fisher's Exact Tests of CYRM-R items

CYRM-R items	P-value
Q01: I get along with people around me	0.0005 ***
Q02: Getting an education is important to me	0.3883
Q03: I know how to behave/act in different situations (such as school, home, and work)	1
Q04: My caregiver/guardian(s) really looks out for me	0.008* *
Q05: My caregiver/guardian(s) know a lot about me (for example, who my friends are, what I like to do)	0.0115 *
Q06: If I am hungry, there is enough to eat	0.4858
Q07: People like to spend time with me	1
Q08: I talk to my caregiver/guardian(s) about how I feel (for example when I am hurt or sad)	1
Q09: I feel supported by my friends	0.7141
Q10: I feel that I belong/belonged at my school	1
Q11: My caregiver/guardian(s) care about me when times are hard (for example if I am sick or have done something wrong)	0.1449
Q12: My friends care about me when times are hard (for example if I am sick or have done something wrong)	0.6107
Q13: I am treated fairly in my community	1
Q14: I have chances to show others that I am growing up and that I can do things by myself	0.1204
Q15: I feel safe when I am with my caregiver/guardian(s)	0.0095 **
Q16: I have chances to learn things that will be useful when I am older (like cooking, working, and helping others)	0.4488
Q17: I like the way my caregiver/guardian(s) celebrates things (like holidays or learning about my culture)	0.032*

Given that most UASC youth responded 'No' (6 out of 15) to the question, while most non-UASC youth responded 'Yes' (9 out of

15), UASCs agree less than non-UASCs that they feel safe when they are with their caregiver or guardian. Lastly, there was a statistically significant association between

being UASC and the question 'I like the way my caregiver/guardian(s) celebrates things' ($p < 0.05$). Given that most UASC youth responded 'No' (7 out of 15) to the question, while most non-UASC youth responded 'Yes' (8 out of 15), UASCs agree less than non-UASCs that they like the way their caregiver or guardian celebrates day-to-day matters like holidays or learning about their culture.

Discussion and Conclusion

Our survey found a possible connection between refugee children and youth's sense of resilience and their personal sense of being looked after, being known, feeling safe, and feeling celebrated by their designated caregivers. First, when examining the statistically significant differences in CYRM-R scores among the refugee youth participants by their accompanied status (UASC) and non-accompanied status (non-UASC), we found that UASCs were significantly lower on average than non-UASCs on the overall resilience score and on the relational resilience score. No statistically significant difference between UASCs and non-UASCs was found in their personal resilience score, despite UASCs having scored slightly higher than non-UASCs in their personal resilience score. Second, when examining the statistically significant differences in CYRM-R items among the refugee youth participants by their status, we found that UASCs agreed significantly more than non-UASCs that they get along with people around them, whereas they agreed significantly less than non-UASCs that their caregiver or guardian really looks out for them, that their caregiver or guardian knows a lot about them, that they feel safe when they are with their caregiver or guardian, and that they like the way their caregiver or guardian celebrates what may be personally meaningful events within their life, such as holidays or practices that would require some learning about their culture. Both findings illustrate what might be the underpinnings of smooth or choppy enculturation and acculturation processes; these are seen as essential processes to address in order to foster a sense of safety

and belonging. The proposition then is that if caregivers and guardians of unaccompanied refugee children and youth in the destination country can work to be perceived as people who look out for them, know them well, make them feel safe and can celebrate what is personally meaningful to them, then such sensitivity to each child and youth's cultural preparedness may help them better in their career and livelihood planning. Such a focus on cultural factors that prepare individuals to engage with work and career development and the role of socialising forces, echoes a growing call to foster cultural safety, belonging, and experience of success for refugee children and youth (Aleghfeli, 2024; Hunt et al., 2023; McIntyre & Abrams, 2021; McIntyre & Neuhaus, 2021; Miri, 2024; Prentice, 2022, 2023).

No claims to causality are made due to both the sample size and the research design. First, the generalizability of the findings is limited by the small sample size. Additionally, the use of snowball sampling may lead to the possibility of sample bias and limited diversity (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981). Since the sampling method relies on referrals, it may not have captured the educational experiences of UASCs and non-UASCs who are not connected to the initial network, thereby reducing the diversity of the sample and compromising the generalizability of the study findings. Future educational and social care studies should consider recruiting a more representative number of participants using more random sampling techniques. Second, it is important to note the limitations of using self-reported data collected via a brief questionnaire. Self-reported questionnaire data is often susceptible to measurement error arising from potential issues of social desirability bias, meaning that responses that are elicited may simply be socially acceptable (Krumpal, 2013), and recall bias, meaning a potential skew when remembering past events or experiences (Bell et al., 2019). Nevertheless, this study still demonstrates several methodological strengths. The study's use of Fisher's exact tests (1935) and Welch's two-sample t-tests (1938) with

the appropriate statistical specifications (Freeman & Halton, 1951; Satterthwaite, 1941; Wickham et al., 2023) allows for preliminary insights into the trajectories of refugee children and youth in Greece.

The findings have practical implications for supporting the career and livelihood planning trajectories and thus the educational resilience of this vulnerable population of refugee children and youth. Arulmani (2014a) proposes the concept of a 'livelihood counsellor', combining the expertise of a career counsellor with the ability to understand and work with the culturally-mediated integration needs of refugee children and youth. Accordingly, livelihood counsellors can take a culturally-informed approach to help refugee children acknowledge the importance of and learn how to access and mediate system-provided opportunities in their new environments such as those for skills development and acquisition of the language(s) of the destination country, and thereby improve their preparedness for a career. Livelihood counsellors can also plan initiatives that address the emergent, new equilibrium triggered by the acculturative forces of the destination country. These initiatives could foster attitudes of integration and inclusion into the destination country and help refugee children and youth recognise tendencies toward self-alienation and separation. Such approaches could inculcate feelings of cultural safety and belonging, which in turn could pave the way toward positive career and livelihood trajectories in the future. This could be achieved by strengthening support networks for refugee children and youth, providing mentorship, and building connections with positive role models in the destination country. Taken together, our findings bring sharp focus on the quality of relationship between the refugee child or youth and their caregiver, guardian, teacher, and social worker. Without high quality psychosocial support,

identifying what might be causing cultural disequilibrium for the refugee child or youth may go unaddressed.

To conclude, in this paper, we have attempted to understand the constructs of educational resilience and cultural preparedness for career and livelihood planning by engaging with survey responses of a small group of refugee children and youth in Greece. This is the first study to suggest that the association between the educational resilience of refugee children and youth and their cultural preparedness for post-immigration career and livelihood planning are enculturation and acculturation processes that foster cultural safety, belonging, and success. The findings underscore the importance of a holistic, culturally-informed approach to career and livelihood planning for refugees in Greece (and elsewhere), one that considers both the socio-ecological and socio-interactive aspects of their educational resilience trajectories, ensuring they are culturally prepared to enter the Greek and European (and another host country's) workforce. Such a multilevel approach allows for a dynamic exploration of the various factors that support the cultural preparedness of refugee learners. Future studies should investigate the extent to which psychosocial support from key service providers contribute to a) strengthening educational resilience—conceptualised here as an engagement between the refugee child and youth and their immediate environments that leads to positive educational trajectories, and b) career development—defined as the way refugee children and youth's cultural preparedness influences their career development and choices. Such research has the potential to systematically inform how best to not only support the educational outcomes of refugee children and youth, but also their future career development.

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