

# A CLOSER LOOK AT PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN THEIR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION: Is gender, sector (urban and rural) and parent's level of education an issue?

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## Abstract

A study was conducted in order to understand the factors that affect parents' involvement in their children's education. The involvement of parents in their children's education is defined in terms of its key components (communication with the school, communication with the children, knowledge of the school). An intentional sample was taken from primary schools in the urban and rural sectors of Ambato, Ecuador, and a sample of 163 parents of students who voluntarily agreed to respond to the instrument was selected. It was found that the factors that most affect the level of involvement of parents in their children's education are the sector of origin of the parents (urban or rural) and the educational level of the parents. This research concentrated its efforts on a relatively small sample of a single city in Ecuador. More studies are needed across the country, and additional factors that may be affecting parents' involvement in their children's education need to be considered.

**Keywords:** parent involvement, Ecuador, primary education, communication with school, communication with children, school knowledge.

## Resumo

Foi realizado um estudo para compreender os fatores que afetam o envolvimento dos pais na educação de seus filhos. O envolvimento dos pais na educação de seus filhos é definido em termos de seus componentes-chave (comunicação com a escola, comunicação com as crianças, conhecimento da escola). Uma amostra intencional foi retirada das escolas primárias dos setores urbano e rural de Ambato, Equador, e uma amostra de 163 pais de alunos que aceitaram voluntariamente responder ao instrumento foi selecionada. Constatou-se que os fatores que mais afetam o nível de envolvimento dos pais na educação de seus filhos são o setor de origem dos pais (urbano ou rural) e o nível educacional dos pais. Esta pesquisa concentrou seus esforços em uma amostra relativamente pequena de uma única cidade do Equador. Mais estudos são necessários em todo o país, e fatores adicionais que podem estar afetando o envolvimento dos pais na educação de seus filhos precisam ser considerados.

**Palavras-chave:** Participação Pais, Equador, Educação Primária, Comunicação com Escola, Comunicação com Crianças, Conhecimento Escolar

## 1 Introduction

In recent decades, parent involvement in the education of their children has been a topic of discussion on the part of their protagonists, since together parents and schools are the two most important environments of socialization for a child (Lacaa, 2000). These two scenarios that seem to be so distant for many tend to converge due to three reasons: the first is the relationship identified by several researchers in which it is mentioned that the articulation of the family and the school improves learning, the second, which indicates that it is necessary to recognize that parents are the first educators of children; and the third, the family will always help more people achieve their educational goals and achievements (Reveco, 2004). Clear evidence has been found that the most successful schools are those that stimulate a natural environment of parental involvement in their children's education (Hornby et al. 2011), however, many parents do not naturally participate in these activities, and the reasons for this lack of involvement and the ways in which these reasons interact with each other are often unknown, despite the fact that several attempts have been made to describe the factors affecting family involvement (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011).

The family is considered by many to be a pillar of coexistence. It is the first institution that trains the child by transmitting values, customs and beliefs through the daily relationship, this because of the fact that at an early age the child begins to experience the instructive influence of the family environment (Guevara, 1996).

Several researchers suggest that the family continues to be the first space where children develop (Bronfenbrenner, 1987). This has always been the case in children's education, since at that stage it has been considered that the family should be taken into account as the main collaborator and promoter of children's education through its direct articulation with the school (Reveco, 2004).

Solé (1996) believes that the family-school relationship can be considered a classic theme in the study of education, since the family was the institution in charge of the socialization of children (Laaca, 2000) and the school was responsible for the teaching of knowledge (Vila, 1998). The truth is that, for Solé, neither the family nor the school should face alone the challenge of education today.

Family and school have a strong bond (Domínguez Martínez, 2010), as they share complementary and common objectives; The need for adequate collaboration between them is hardly questioned (Solé, 1996). Thus, the family is considered as the first responsible for the positive transformation of their children.

At present, participation includes a broader vision in which family-school relations are proposed as an essential instrument for the improvement of educational processes and results (Solé 1996). From this perspective, the role of parents is considered important in the academic achievements of children (Icaza & Mayorga, 1994), a truth that highlights the need to achieve effective collaboration between parents and school (Blanco G., 1999).

It has been reported that children whose parents are better informed about their children's behavior at school and who have greater contact with teachers perform better academically (Laaca 2000). Parental involvement is associated with better behavior at school (Kimberly &

Naguib, 2007), better study habits and higher levels of self-esteem and motivation towards learning (Icaza & Mayorga, 1994). It is clear that parental involvement has a positive impact on students' academic performance in global terms, as well as in specific subjects such as reading and mathematics. Other studies have focused on factors such as the structure and size of the family, its ethnic origin, its socio-economic status or its cultural level, trying to investigate its influence on intellectual abilities and on the academic success or failure of students (Solé, 1996).

The existing relationship between parents and school has a direct impact on academic performance (Álvarez, Aguirre, & Vaca, 2010) (Balarin & Cueto, 2008), which means that the greater the degree of family participation, the better academic results (Balarin & Cueto, 2008); Garreta, 2015; Velásquez, 2010).

How important culture is for a family has a great influence on the formation of children (Yurén et al., 2014). A study conducted in Venezuela found a direct relationship between the years of study of parents and the academic performance of young people with respect to their probabilities of completing their education (Marchesi, 2015).

In short, the strategies from which we can approach the educational and family environment are multiple and have changed over the years, as have the school and the patterns that organize family life (Marchesi, 2015). In any case, there are a number of questions that can be asked because these relationships turn out to be multivariate and this is something that has not been exhaustively explored due, perhaps, to the fact that school learning is still usually considered a task that is carried out only in the classroom (Lacaa, 2000).

This research work is aimed at empirically exploring the relationship that exists between the participation of parents and the academic activities of their children at the school level in governmental and private institutions in the city of Ambato - Ecuador.

To accomplish this, the following research questions have been laid out.

What is the level of involvement of parents in their children's education?

Does gender, educational level or sector influence parents' communication with the school, communication with children and knowledge of the school?

## **2 Parent involvement**

The commitment that parents must demonstrate during the educational process of their children (Tuesca, Girón & Navarro 2012) is an important element. Schools must design processes that involve parents more directly, planning is considered very important because this can maintain more appropriate communications (Garreta, 2015) to promote school-family relations.

It is considered that channels of effective communication can be given through course meetings, tutorials, school agendas, grades, and so on. According to Garreta (2008b) these can be presented as effective means, since they undoubtedly denote the school commitments that parents must assume (García, Gomariz, Hernández & Parra 2010) which allow parents to know better the school where their children study.

Bazán, Sánchez, & Castañeda (2007) mention the important role that parents play in their children's learning, including both academic and work expectations. It is evident that there must be considerable involvement of parents in the school, which must include methodological strategies to generate reciprocal relationships between parents, students and their teachers.

The cultural and social part has a great influence as mentioned by Garreta (2008a) who states that these structures demonstrate different types of relationships between parents and teachers, the culture, the level of education and the resources that parents have provide the educational opportunities available for children; Espitia and Montes (2009) mention that parents in many cases consider that the school has very low levels of training and on the other hand the school considers that the level of involvement of parents is almost zero, because they tend to leave all the responsibility of educating in the hands of teachers.

On the other hand, Valdés, Martín, & Sánchez (2009) found that few fathers say they are involved in school activities without finding differences between the role that both fathers and mothers play. With respect to communication and knowledge of the school, more involvement of mothers was noted. Hernández & López (2006) believe that in order to facilitate harmony and coexistence between the school and the parents, it is necessary to admit that the two parts collaborate equally. At a Latin American level, it is usually thought that mothers should be in charge of this task, while fathers are in charge of supporting the home.

Therefore, the influence that families have on their children is really predominant. For Vallejo & Mazadiego (2006), parents progressively influence the academic performance of their children and parental support is a useful instrument to deepen the bonds that exist within the family, thus improving the students' performance for students within the school process (Ruiz de Miguel, 2001) (Páez Martínez, 2016).

Sarmiento & Zapata (2014) conclude in their research that the sociodemographic characteristics of parents influence the quality of participation, making this a reason for disadvantage for their children. Cultural, linguistic and economic factors are of relevance and constitute issues that have to be taken into account.

Another topic that should be discussed is the one mentioned by Cava, Musitu, & Murgui (2006) who conclude that there must be certain family variants for there to be indices of school violence. According to Garcia (2008) some violent reactions reproduced by children at school are usually practiced at home or in the neighborhood. Moreno, Estévez, Murgui, & Musitu (2009) insist that the family environment is of vital importance for the social development of the child, as it influences their social skills, attitudes and behavior.

### **3 Communication with the school**

De León (2011) concludes that the family and the school share something in common, that is, enabling the development of children. Adequate family participation positively

influences students, as this results in high academic performance (Mella, 1997) and adequate child development. (Andrés Cabello & Giró Miranda, 2016).

At present, parents are interested in using strategies that allow them to have good communication with their children (Rivera and Neva, 2006) and thus strengthen their affective relationships. Therefore, it is essential not to leave aside the continuous advance of the digital era (Pagán & Máiquez, 2011), because it is through technology that the level of communication increases. This results in the construction of an effective dialogue within the family; this reality is reflected in the children's educational response (Parada Navas, 2010).

It is important to analyze from the social point of view that these two groups, family and school are in constant discrepancy when agreeing on the amount of responsibility that each has. (Feito, 2010). The truth is that according to social, cultural and economic conditions (Cabrera Muñoz, 2009) families choose with the best intention the school where their children will go, so it is only fair that the participation of families in the school is not considered as an act of charity. (Garreta, 2008b). The multiple functions of families could cause teachers to feel an overload of responsibilities, which is why for Martínez (2015) it is very important that there be a family-school alliance with the same interests in common.

As for the evaluation and expectations of the school, Álvarez et al. (2010) argue that there is interest and concern on the part of parents and teachers to achieve greater levels of collaboration that would result in an improvement in the quality of education in general, but this requires willingness, time and motivation (Antúnez, 1999).

Reperaz & Naval (2014) in their book describe that the result of participation is to have something in common, hence the term community. This participation can be understood as civic, social or even political.

On the other hand, Weiss, Bouffard, Bridglall, & Gordon (2010) define family involvement as a responsibility that must be shared, which not only includes practices or attitudes of the school community but also includes expectations and dissemination of activities that allow the construction of alliances based on mutual respect.

Sarmiento & Zapata (2014) propose a conceptual model in which participation in school should be understood as a joint work between the student, the family, the school and the community in four dimensions: family support, communication between the family and the school, participation in management, and integration of the community as support for educational experiences.

Theoretically, parent involvement has been treated by several authors who from their own point of view have divided it into dimensions to deepen their study. In the first instance we will talk about the work presented by Joyce L Epstein & Salinas (2004). These authors view family, school and community as three overlapping spheres that influence children's learning.

There are a number of social and demographic factors that affect parents' participation in their children's school activities. Traditionally, mothers are associated with a greater degree of supervision of their children's tasks, although this perception of society has changed over the years. This greater degree of participation of mothers compared to fathers can be explained in different ways, but regardless of their causes, schools have implemented

programs that allow them to increase this level of participation. It has been recommended that these programs be targeted at the most vulnerable social sectors and those with the lowest economic level, since in these sectors the level of parental involvement is even lower. (Hill & Taylor, 2004).

Ideas about parental involvement in school come from the fact that both are important socialization environments for children and that at some point they become distant lines. There is discussion of the help parents give teachers on various aspects of their children's education, of the importance parents place on knowing whether their child is doing well in school or sharing with peers or completing assignments, as this has a direct impact on students' success in their academic lives (Price-Mitchell, 2009). It also highlights the fact that many parents have little knowledge of the pedagogical model that teachers use with their children or that the school itself offers, either because of the lack of knowledge in these subjects or because they care little about them, when instead it would be expected that a participatory pedagogy exists between parents and teachers that contributes to the student's academic development (Rocha-Schmid, 2010). Therefore, it is important for parents to maintain broad communication with their schools and teachers in order not to place the weight of education solely on the teachers.

#### 4 Research methods

The present study is a transectional, correlational, non-experimental research.

For the present investigation the questionnaire (Annex 1) designed by Valdés, Martín, and Sánchez (2009) was used. They performed a factor analysis using the varimax rotation method, through which three levels of participation were extracted: communication with the school, communication with the child, and knowledge about the school.

In order to determine the levels of participation, ranges with the following criteria were established within the research:

**Table 1.** Ranges for different levels of participation in three criteria

	<b>Low</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>High</b>
Communication with the school	14 to 29	30 to 55	56 to 70
Communication with children	4 to 10	11 to 15	16 to 20
Knowledge of the school	5 to 8	9 to 12	13 to 15

The present study on parental involvement in their children's academic activities was divided into urban and rural sectors. Within these groups the study was subdivided into fathers and mothers taking into account their respective level of education.

The main objective of the research was to establish the level of participation of parents in the academic activities of their children in the educational institutions of the primary level of the urban and rural sector of the city of Ambato. Intentional sampling was carried out to

select institutions from both the urban and rural sectors. Data were collected from a sample of 163 parents of students who voluntarily agreed to respond to the instrument.

This tool was developed to assess parental involvement in children's school-related activities. It consisted of a demographic section with general data and 23 items on a Likert scale; the scale used was: 1 = Never, 2 = Almost never, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Almost always and 5 = Always.

## **5 Analysis**

The instrument was subjected to a pilot test prior to its final application. The questionnaire was applied by a small number of parents from a particular school that was not part of the study. This made it possible to improve the structure of the initial test information and the socio-demographic data of the parents. For the formal collection of information, the questionnaire was sent directly to the children so that in their parents' homes they could answer voluntarily. The selection was made at random, i.e. by drawing lots, so that each of the selected people has the same opportunity to participate.

The questionnaire was divided into two parts, the first of which sought to find out the socio-demographic data of parents such as: level of study, gender. The second part of the questionnaire contains the questions that lead us to determine the variables of the study, the communication of the parents with the school, the communication of the parents with their children and how much the parents know about their children's school.

With regard to the statistical analyses carried out, descriptive statistics were calculated for the instrument used. Next, graphs were made to find out if there were differences between the variables under study with respect to the levels of communication with the school, communication with the children and knowledge of the school. Subsequently, a t test was carried out in order to establish whether there were significant differences in the variables under study.

Data analysis was carried out using SPSS statistical software.

### **5.1 Parent's sociodemographic data**

Data on parental participation in educational institutions were obtained from the questionnaire applied. Statistical analyses are presented below in order to test the hypotheses put forward.

First, the data on the socio-demographic situation of the parents were obtained. In these results (see table 2) it is observed that, among the participants in the present research, there's a higher number of mothers (with 64%) in the secondary level, followed by the primary level with 20%.

**Table 2.** Level of study of mothers and fathers.

Level of study	Mothers		Fathers	
	n	%	n	%
Primary	25	20	11	31
Secondary	82	64	21	60
University	21	16	3	9

With regard to occupation (understood as the activity that parents carry out to support their household), this study has been divided into: (a) worker, people who work for enterprises executing labor works; (b) technicians with some academic background in supervisory positions in enterprises; (c) traders who are the persons who are engaged in the purchase and sale of products to a greater extent as retailers; (d) professionals who, under a professional title, work in public or private companies in managerial positions or occasional jobs.

Among the data that stand out (see table 3) it can be observed that the group of mothers are located in the following three activities: trader (29%); workers (28%) and without occupation (28%), that is to say, they take care of the household tasks and the care of their family. With lower percentages we find family mothers and those who mention to be technicians of a company.

Within the group of parents there is no one who does not work in a paid way or report that is unemployed, the vast majority of parents are workers (people that are dedicated to work in leather companies, textiles or manufacturing shoes) or are engaged in commerce. To a lesser extent they report to be technicians in companies or professionals.

**Table 3.** Occupation of mothers and fathers.

Occupation	Mothers		Fathers	
	n	%	n	%
does not work	36	28	-	-
Worker	36	28	13	37
Technician	3	2	7	20
Trader	37	29	12	34
Professional	16	13	3	9

## 5.2 Parent involvement in their children's education

With respect to the level of participation of parents in their children's school activities, table 4 shows the frequencies and percentages of fathers and mothers, and within the research, scales were established with the following criteria: a) for the communication factor with the

school from 70 to 56 points: high; 55 to 30 points: medium; and 14 to 29 points: low; b) for the communication factor with children from 16 to 20: high; from 11 to 15: medium and from 4 to 10: low; and c) for the school knowledge factor from 13 to 15: high; from 9 to 12: medium; and 5 to 8: low. These criteria were established based on the minimum and maximum score that can be obtained for each of the factors of study, thus, for communication with the school the highest value corresponds to 70 on the scale. To this end, each parent was placed at a level of participation through the instrument they answered (see table 4). The scales were made under the responsibility of the researcher, to improve the understanding of the data obtained.

**Table 4.** Parent involvement percentage

Factor	Percentage of subjects by level of participation		
	High	Medium	Low
Communication with the school	53%	44%	4%
Communication with children	47%	33%	20%
Knowledge of the school	37%	50%	12%

As can be seen in the table for the variable 'Communication with the school', most of the parents surveyed were at a high and medium level of participation (53% and 44% respectively).

Within the variable 'Communication with children', most of the participants in this research are at a high level of participation, followed by a medium level and a low level of participation.

Unlike the two previous variables, where the highest percentage corresponded to the high level of participation, in the variable 'Knowledge of the school', the highest percentage is presented in the medium level, followed in second place by the presence of a high level and in third place by the low level of participation.

### *5.3 Communication with the school*

At this point, we analyzed whether the factors in the study level of education, sex and sector affect the level of communication with the school.

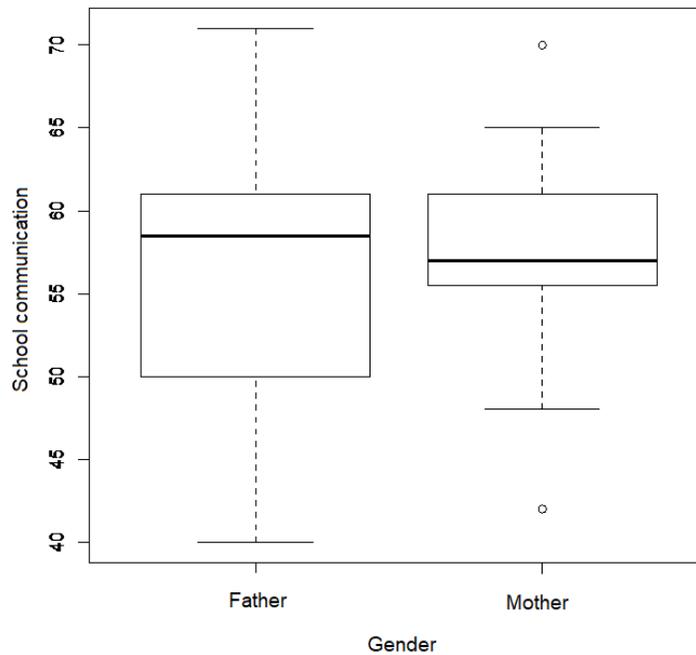
The results are as follows:

#### **5.3.1 Communication with the school by sex**

Average scores indicate that fathers communicate more than mothers with the school (see Table 5 and Figure 1). However, when carrying out the respective statistical analysis, no significant differences were found ( $p = .528$ ) in the communication with the school carried out by parents (see table 5).

Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted, which says that there are no significant differences in communication with the school between parents.

**Figure 1.** Average communication with the school by sex



**Table 5.** Differences in communication with the school by sex

	<b>fathers</b>	<b>Mothers</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>P</b>
Communication with the school	4.065	3.973	-.634	.528

**Note:** t statistical test was used

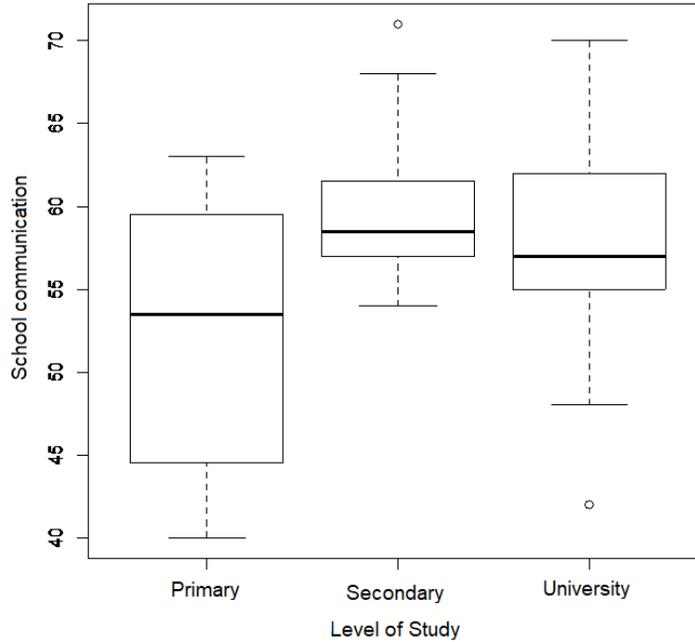
### 5.3.2 Communication with the school by level of study

In the variable of communication with the school by level of studies, the average scores indicate that parents with secondary education are those who communicate most with the school, followed by parents at university level (see table 6 and figure 2).

After the statistical analysis, no statistically significant differences ( $p = .059$ ) were found in the communication with the school between the three levels of study that the parents have (see table 6).

Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted, which says that there are no significant differences in communication with the school between the levels of study of the parents.

**Figure 2.** Average Communication with School by Levels of Study



**Table 6.** Differences in communication with the school by level of study

	Primary	Secondary	University	F	P
Communication with the school	3.761	4.112	4.125	2.915	.059

Note: t statistical test was used

#### 5.4 Communication with children

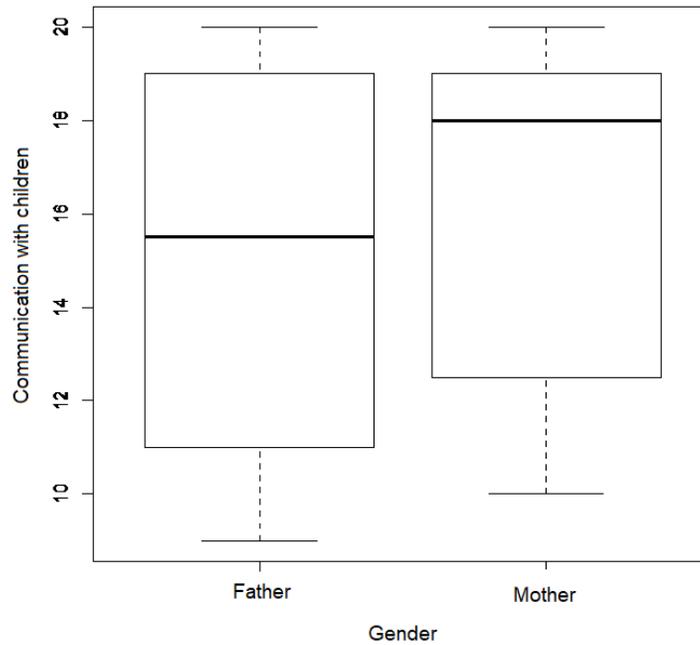
The following results were obtained for the communication with the children:

##### 5.4.1 Communication with children and sex

With respect to communication with children, there is a higher average score of participation on the part of mothers compared to fathers (see figure 3 and table 7). A subsequent statistical analysis shows that these differences are not statistically significant ( $p = .132$ ) (see table 7).

Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted: there are no significant differences in communication with the children between fathers and mothers.

**Figure 3.** Average communication with children by sex.



**Table 7.** Statistical differences in communication with children by sex

	<b>fathers</b>	<b>mothers</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>
Communication with children	4.227	3.889	-1.518	.132

**Note:** t statistical test was used

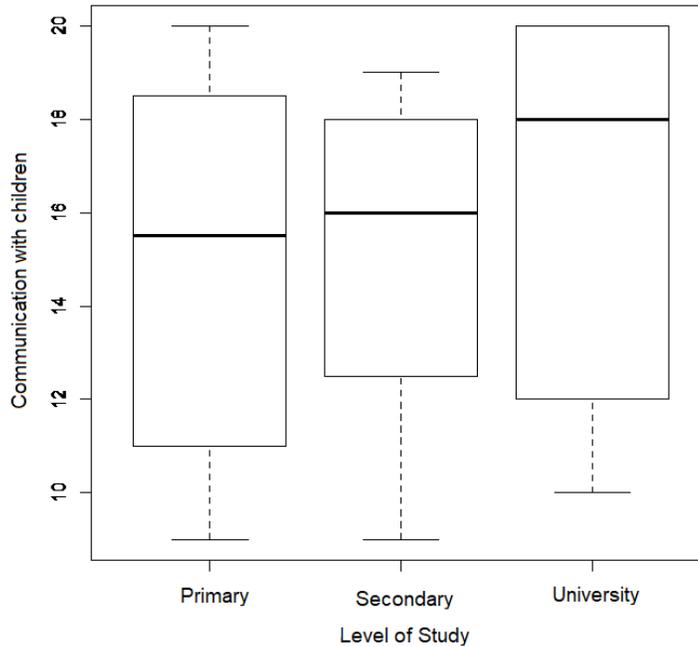
#### 5.4.2 Communication with children and level of study

Descriptive analyses indicate that parents with a university degree have a higher level of communication with their children, while parents with a primary level are those who communicate less with their children (see Figure 4 and Table 8).

From a subsequent statistical analysis, it is found that there are no significant differences ( $p = .706$ ) of parents between the three levels of studies contemplated for the present research (see Table 8).

Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted, which says that there are no significant differences in communication with children between the levels of study of the parents.

**Figure 4.** Average communication with children by level of study.



**Table 8.** Statistical differences in communication with children by level of study

	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>University</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>p</b>
Communication with children	3.931	4.000	4.229	.349	.706

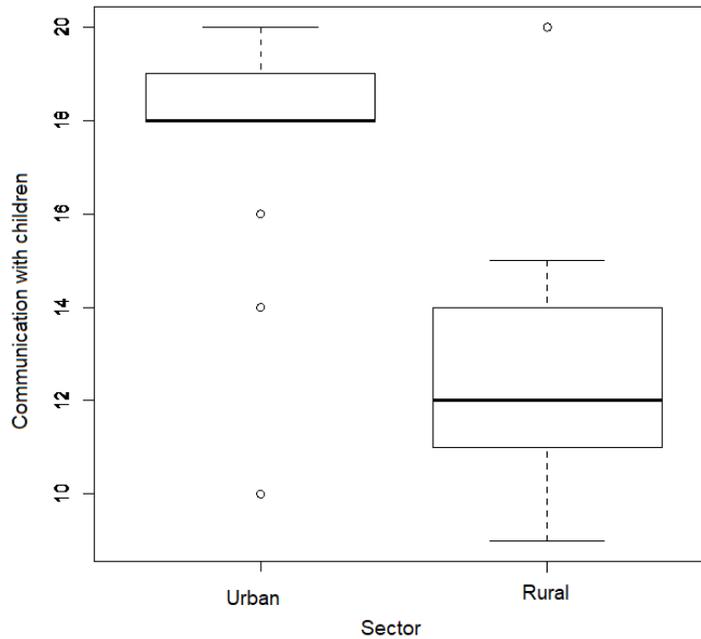
**Note:** t statistical test was used

### 5.4.3 Communication with children and level of study

The results indicate that the urban sector has the highest average score for communication with children, unlike the rural sector (see figure 5 and table 9). The subsequent statistical analysis shows that these differences in favor of urban parents are statistically significant ( $p = .001$ ) (see table 9).

The alternative hypothesis that there are significant differences in communication with children between the urban and rural sectors is therefore accepted.

**Figure 5.** Average communication with children by sector.



**Table 9.** Statistical differences in communication with children by sector

	Rural sector	Urban sector	t	p
Communication with children	3.174	4.459	-7.089	.001

Note: t statistical test was used

### 5.5 Knowledge of the school

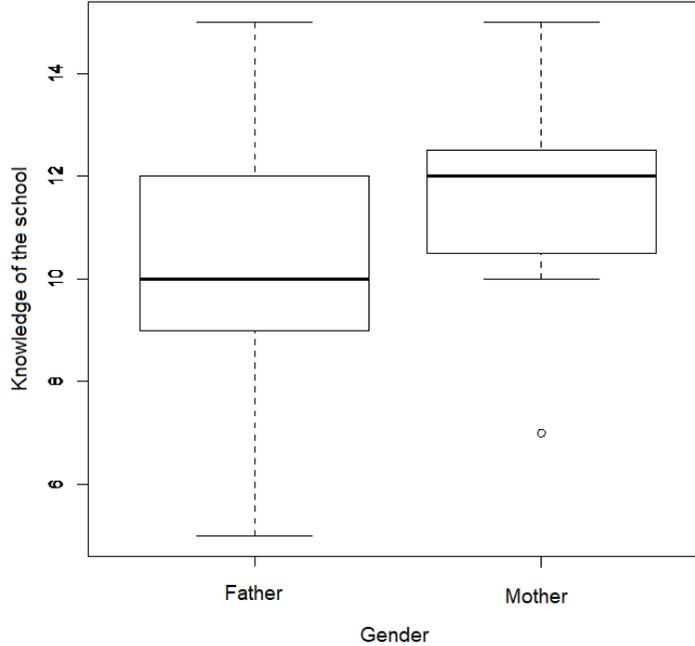
The following results are obtained for the knowledge of the school:

#### 5.5.1 Knowledge of the school and sex

With respect to knowledge of the school, the results show that mothers have the highest average scores in this area, unlike fathers (see Figure 6 and Table 10). These scores did not show a statistically significant difference ( $p = .976$ ) after the corresponding statistical analysis (see Table 10).

Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted: there are no significant differences in communication with the children between fathers and mothers.

**Figure 6.** Average knowledge of the school by sex



**Table 10.** Statistical differences in school knowledge by sex

	<b>fathers</b>	<b>mothers</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>p</b>
Communication with school	2.303	2.307	-.030	.976

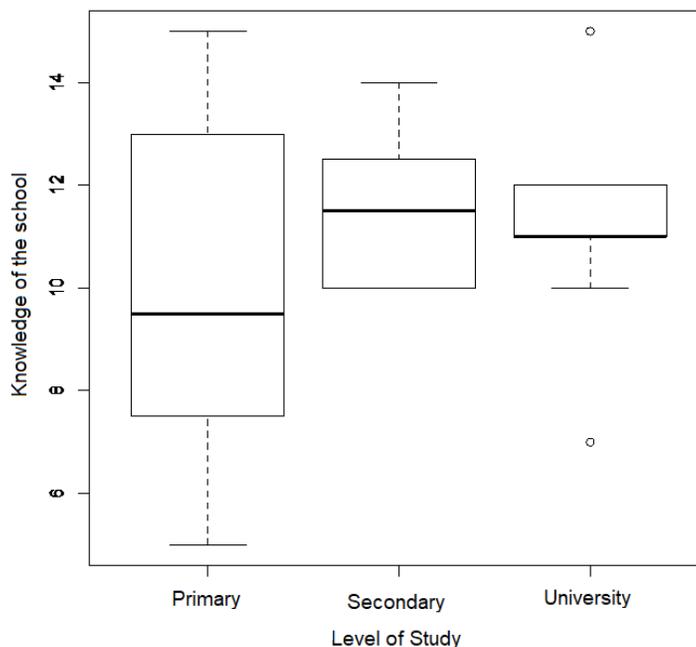
**Note:** t statistical test was used

### 5.5.2 Knowledge of the school and level of study

With respect to knowledge of the school by level of studies, the average scores indicate that those parents who have completed secondary education present more knowledge of the school than those of the university level of studies and those of the primary level (see Figure 7 and Table 11). Through the subsequent statistical analysis, it was possible to determine that the differences are not statistically significant ( $p = .503$ ) between the three groups according to their level of study (see Table 11).

Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted, which says that there are no significant differences in knowledge of the school between the levels of study of the parents.

**Figure 7.** Average knowledge of the school by levels of study



**Table 11.** Statistical differences in school knowledge by level of study

	Primary p	Secondary	University	F	p
Communication with school	2.207	2.336	2.400	-.691	.503

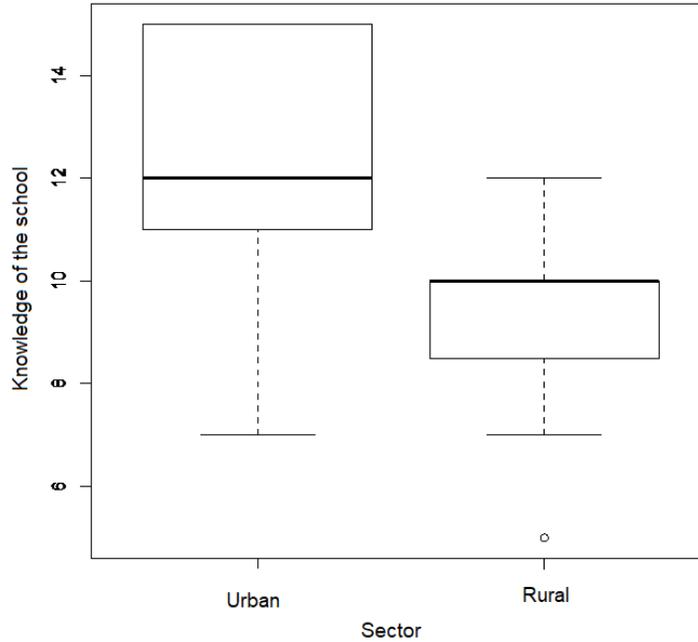
Note: t statistical test was used

### 5.5.3 Knowledge of the school by sector

Average scores in the school communication variable by sector indicate that urban parents score higher than rural parents (see figure 8 and table 12). The subsequent statistical analysis makes it possible to determine the existence of significant differences ( $p = .001$ ) between the scores presented by parents in the urban and rural sectors (see table 12).

The alternative hypothesis that there are significant differences in knowledge of the school between the urban and rural sectors is therefore accepted.

**Figure 8.** Average knowledge of the school by sector.



**Table 12.** Statistical differences in school knowledge by sector

	<b>Rural sector</b>	<b>Urban sector</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>P</b>
Communication with school	1.944	2.495	-5.157	.001

**Note:** t statistical test was used

## 6 Closing discussion

For the analysis and discussion of the results obtained in the present research on the participation of parents, the participation has been divided into gender - father-mother, level of study - primary, secondary and university and sector - urban and rural.

The results obtained in terms of gender show that there are no significant differences, i.e., both fathers and mothers maintain high levels of participation. These data coincide with Valdés, Martín, & Sánchez (2009) who found that there are no differences in participation between the role that both fathers and mothers play, with respect to communication and knowledge of the school.

With regard to the level of education, it was found that both fathers and mothers went through secondary school, there is a higher percentage of fathers who only attended primary school, and it should be noted that a high percentage of mothers attended university,

according to data from the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses (INEC), Ecuador, for 2010 it was detected that the illiteracy rate was reduced from 9% to 6.8% and that the gap between men and women to access education is barely 0.9%, which is reflected in the rate of women in the country accessing or attending institutions at the higher level which is 61%, 4 points more than men with 57%, which is consistent with the data obtained in this research.

However, no statistical differences in participation were found due to this variable, that is, both those with high levels of education and those with no equal are interested in the academic activities of their children. Waanders, Mendez, & Downer (2007) agree that parents' level of education is closely related to their involvement in their children's academic activities. This is not a factor that is isolated and independent of others, but rather one that determines the levels of parental involvement. Marchesi (2015) states that there is a direct relationship between the years of study of parents and the academic performance of students with respect to their probabilities of completing their education. This may be because, according to Yurén et al. (2014), the cultural capital that the family has is of great influence for the children in their academic formation.

For the urban or rural sector variable, significant differences in participation were found with respect to communication with their children and knowledge of the school, meaning that urban parents participate more in their children's academic activities. These data coincide with Sarmiento & Zapata (2014) who conclude that the sociodemographic characteristics of parents influence the quality of participation, since factors such as language, economics, and culture are reasons for disadvantage to be taken into account. Hill & Taylor (2004) state that in the vulnerable or rural sectors the level of participation is lower and, according to Garreta (2008a), the cultural and social part always have a great influence when measuring levels of parental participation.

With regard to communication with the school, the participation of parents is high, which shows that in the context there is interest in the academic activities of their children, both on the part of parents and mothers within the urban or rural sector or without taking into account the level of education. These data coincide with Laaca (2000) who reports that children whose parents care about their children and stay in contact with the school generate better academic performance. This relationship has a direct impact that, according to Álvarez, Aguirre, & Vaca (2010), Balarin & Cueto (2008) generate positive and apparently common results from the levels studied. This is different from the results obtained by Garreta (2015), Velásquez (2010) who detected low levels of communication with the school on the part of parents. According to Oyserman, Brickman, & Rhodes (2007) children perceive this lack of affection as a decrease in their parents' interest in them, which has a negative effect on their school life.

With regard to parental involvement in communication with children, no significant differences were found with regard to the sex of parents or levels of study, but there are differences in the sector variable, i.e. urban parents communicate more with their children than rural parents. Moreno, Estévez, Murgui, & Musitu (2009) insist that the cultural capital of the family determines children's levels of social development. Valdés Cuervo, Pavón, & Sánchez Escobedo (2009) believe that parents' communication with their children is the basis

for building better performances. Rivera and Neva (2006) consider that parents are interested in seeking strategies that allow them to have good communication with their children in order to strengthen their affective relationships, these attempts and technology have created wider spheres of communication as well as types of parents and styles of communication described by García, Lendínez and Pelegrina (2002).

Regarding the knowledge of the school, no significant differences were found in what has to do with the sex of the parents or their academic level attained, but differences were found in the variable sector, detecting that parents in the urban sector are a little more interested in knowing their children's school. However, in a general manner, it can be seen that the level of participation of parents is average (Table 8), which indicates that either there is not much interest in the quality of the educational offer of the institution, or there is no interest in knowing the characteristics of the school where they leave their children. It seems that the second option is the most common, possibly due to fear or ignorance of education systems, a situation that should be assessed and analyzed by parents in order to know where they leave their children to carry out their academic activities. According to Garcia, Gomariz, Hernandez & Parra (2010) parents should assume these school commitments that would allow them to know better the school where their children study. Garreta (2008b) assures that effective communication channels can be given through course meetings, tutorials, the school agenda, grades, these can be presented as effective means for parents to get to know the school and this depends very much on the direct participation of teachers involved in making the school the best channel of communication and knowledge.

It is important to note that the perceptions that parents have of teachers and vice versa are opposing concepts that need to be dealt with in depth in order for this to become commitments of participation on both sides to improve educational processes. It should be remembered that if teachers do not promote spaces for participation, parents will feel relegated and if parents do not do enough to maintain a good relationship with the institution, on the other hand, teachers will feel rejected.

The work carried out leaves many lines of research to be developed in a more profound way, since the dynamics of parental participation are issues that require the due attention of the educational, political and social sectors. It is extremely important to attend to the construction of new methodological models that comprehensively address the participation of parents in the school.

It is therefore important to continue conducting research on family-school relations in all their dimensions, because the more information you can have this will be useful for both teachers and socio-political entities that help to create laws or mechanisms that break myths and create channels of good communication always improving our children's academic performance.

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