

Teachers And Migrant Families: Pressing Communication

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Abstract

Contributing to reflection at communication between school and family diversity without exclusions involving attending to other views and perspectives from and towards equity and social justice. In this sense, the objective of this study is to analyze the communication status between migrant families and teachers in early childhood and elementary education centers in the Region of Murcia. Two homologous questionnaires were chosen to develop a quantitative non-experimental research of descriptive nature. From the main results it is revealed that extracurricular activities are not part of the unusual conversations between families and teachers. However, acceptable but improvable aspects were detected, such as deepening the discipline issues and the student's learning, etc. On the other hand, it is evidenced that parents still do not visit teachers on their own initiative to address the relevant elements of teaching-learning process of their children.

Keywords: migrant family; inclusion; school; equity; justice.

1. Introduction

The basic principle of educational inclusion is based on the recognition of what is different as something proper and essential, and as a universal right that must ensure the coexistence of diversity in educational centers (Lata and Castro, 2016; Molina, Benet and Doménech, 2019). In this sense, Matsura (2008) states that:

When it comes to education, which is our absolute priority, we want to promote quality education for all. The fundamental challenge is to build more inclusive, fair

and egalitarian societies, through the development of quality educational systems, more inclusive and more sensitive to the enormous diversity of learning needs that arise throughout life (p. 48).

This implies the participation of teachers, families and students to generate, from a perspective of equity and justice, the feeling of belonging, regardless of having or not having different aptitudes and/or abilities, or being part of a culture. or a different one. From this perspective, it is necessary to consider that the participation of parents in the life of the school is one of the irreplaceable pillars that constitute an exercise of democracy and pedagogical quality, which contributes to the proper functioning of educational centers (Sarramona and Rock, 2007).

Starting from this premise, the increase in family participation in a framework of quality and social justice is confirmed as a foundation and right of democratic schools. This will mean being a participant and making decisions in the teaching and learning process, which will affect and favor the educational inclusion of your sons and daughters. In short, as Silveira (2016) refers, we would speak of a right under construction. But, for this right to be made effective, access to information and, more specifically, knowledge of the channels of participation is required as an undeniable condition, to overcome the encounters and disagreements that until now occur between families and society. school.

It is unavoidable evidence to recognize that at the present time the cultural, linguistic, religious and ideological diversity of families has been considerably accentuated in educational centers, due to the increase in foreign students in classrooms (Sánchez and Robles, 2013). . Therefore, the inclusive school is based on a fundamental postulate that we basically share, which focuses on a school

system that must give the opportunity to these “new” students and their families to integrate and adapt to the school system and vice versa.

It is evident that the participation of migrant parents in the educational process of their sons and daughters, in terms of equality with teachers, will contribute to considerably improving their involvement and collaboration with teachers. However, communication between both parties is not free of difficulties that interfere with the advancement of the inclusion of migrant families in school, due to their characteristics and particular conditions, in addition to the training deficiencies of teachers to face this new challenge at school (Leiva, 2013).

2. Literature review

In educational centers, the conviction has spread that the excess of tasks that teachers have to face, such as time and administrative overload, limit their relationship with parents (Gubbins, 2012). Along these lines, Madrid et al. (2019) indicate that the absence of a repertoire of innovative strategies in the school to bring positions closer to families produces a lack and inconsistent collaboration and absence of interest from them. These authors affirm that the communication spaces of parents are limited only to the recreational activities organized by schools.

Along with this, Ceballos and Saiz (2019) show that despite the recognition of the crucial role of the teacher, as a mediator between the family and the school, the absence of good practices that promote a more viable relationship with parents is still evident. . The authors add that formal communication channels with families do not go beyond specific actions and a one-way exchange of information. The truth is that, despite this increase in functions and the absence of viable strategies, the school continues to focus its efforts on attracting families, taking into account

their particularities. Proof of this is the gradual increase in parents' interest in formal structures and in their contribution to the educational process of their sons and daughters (Gomariz et al., 2019).

In this context, families of migrant origin are perceived as an additional obstacle in the relationship with teachers, which requires inclusive and fair educational practices to minimize the tense and fragile interaction between the two (Gigli et al., 2019). In this sense, it is evident that the concerns of migrant parents due to the absence of feelings of welcome and integration at school make their voices invisible, preventing a collaborative attitude with teachers (Centorrino and Pellegrino, 2020; Terrén and Carrasco, 2007). . All of this calls for combining synergies of educational intentions and practices that provide new impulses for balance and stability in communication between the two parties.

Along the same lines, authors such as Santos-Rego et al. (2019) maintain that the lack of a social support network among migrant parents, together with their low training, conditions the application of the guidelines provided by teachers. For this reason, Chamseddine and Hernández (2020) emphasize that the presence of these fathers and mothers in the school context presents new challenges and implications that require inclusive actions, adapted to cultural diversity and its peculiarities. Palpable facts in the school, which should be treated as a wealth and not as an added difficulty for the educational community. Therefore, it is necessary to offer these families clear and simple pedagogical alternatives that allow them to manage the content that is addressed with teachers, focusing interest on their limitations and abilities (Chamseddine, 2020).

If we delve into the aspects that are addressed between teachers and migrant parents, a good number of authors (Cárdenas-Rodríguez et al., 2019; Carrasco and

Coronel, 2017; Cebolla and González, 2008; Chamseddine and Arnaiz, 2019; Charette and Kalubi, 2016; Egido, 2015; Garreta, 2015; González, 2007; Macía, 2019; Rivas, 2007; Molina, 2017) point out the timid progress in relation to trust between both parties to address or propose topics to be discussed. Likewise, these authors confirm the limited progress in delving into aspects linked to the discipline, extracurricular activities, and positive or negative aspects regarding learning difficulties.

In the type of relationships that both parties maintain, it is again evident in various previous studies that the interaction between teachers and migrant families has experienced little evolution in recent years (Charette and Kalubi, 2016; Fagan, 2013; Hampden and Galindo, 2016; Garreta and Cargat, 2007; Loudová, 2013; Martínez and Pérez, 2006; Megías, 2006; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001; Roth and Volante, 2018; Vallespir et al., 2016). These authors advocate for less restricted and more interactive relationships, in a context of advice and guidance that acts as a network, to facilitate information, communication and cooperation between these two educational agents.

According to the review of the literature, it is possible to continue researching in this field, which is why the following research objective is proposed: to analyze the state of communication between migrant families and teachers in Early Childhood and Primary Education Centers in the Region of Murcia. Therefore, we present two specific objectives in this research:

- Know the topics that teachers and migrant families address in their conversations.
- Identify the degree of fluidity in the interaction between teachers and migrant parents.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research design

The study design corresponds to a quantitative, non-experimental, descriptive nature. The objectivity of quantitative research allows us to analyze and explain specific, coherent and viable issues that reveal the similarities and differences of opinions (Ugalde and Balbastre, 2013). In the case at hand, the two questionnaires used have given us the opportunity to delve deeper into the evaluations of teachers and families regarding the topics they address in their meetings, as well as to know first-hand the degree of fluency in the relationship between both parties.

3.2 Participants

The research includes parents and teachers from 10 Early Childhood and Primary Education centers in the Region of Murcia, in which there were 2,651 families of students enrolled in school, but in the end we had a sample of 832 migrant fathers and mothers, and 150 teachers. by referral from the surveyed families themselves. Regarding the level of education of the mothers, the following should be noted: primary studies (34.5%), ESO (31%), no studies (17.4%), high school studies or vocational training (14.9%), and higher education (2.2%). Examining the educational level of the parents, it should be noted that primary education (38.4%), ESO (30.1%), high school studies or vocational training (15.1%), no studies (13.2%), and higher education (3.2%). Regarding teaching experience, it ranges from less than 5 years (18.7%), between 5 and 9 years (26.7%), between 10 and 14 years (28.7%), between 15 and 20 years (15.3%), between 21 and 25 (4 %) and over 25 years old (6.7%).

3.3 Instruments

In order to address the previously stated objectives, two homologous questionnaires were used, whose authors are Gomáriz et al. (2008). The first instrument is aimed at parents and consists of 49 items; The second is intended for teachers and consists of 53 items. Both questionnaires have five Likert scale response alternatives: never (1), rarely (2), sometimes (3), frequently (4) and always or almost always (5). In this contribution, 4 dimensions were analyzed with a total of 36 items. The parents' questionnaire consists of 2 dimensions: the topics that teachers and migrant families address in their conversations (11 items), and the degree of fluidity in the interaction that exists between both parties (7 items). Similarly, the teachers' questionnaire is made up of 2 other dimensions: the aspects that teachers usually discuss with parents (11 items), and the level of density in the relationship established between the two groups (7 items).

Given that the study was carried out in a different context and with a different sample, some modifications were made to guarantee the validity of the instruments, in terms of their structure and content. The changes have included the suggestions and contributions of five teachers from Early Childhood and Primary Educational Centers and three University professors from the Faculty of Education of the University of Murcia. In relation to the reliability requirement, the internal consistency method based on Cronbach's Alpha was used. The families' questionnaire achieved an excellent value globally (.911), and the teachers' questionnaire achieved a medium-high value globally (.825). Regarding the parents' questionnaire, a value of .799 is obtained in the first dimension and a value of .721 in the second. Regarding the teacher questionnaire, a value of .592 was found in the first dimension and a value of .717 in the second dimension.

3.4 Procedure

In a group session with migrant families from each participating school, the questionnaire was administered, explaining and delving into the content of the items addressed in the different dimensions and their purpose. Subsequently, after having contacted the management teams to explain the objective of the research, the questionnaire was sent to the teachers through emails, provided by the directors of the educational centers. Along with the instruments, an information note was sent to the teachers clarifying anonymity, confidentiality and the return schedule.

3.5 Information analysis

In the analysis of quantitative data, descriptive statistics (percentages) were used, through the statistical package Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) v.24. Specifically, a descriptive analysis of the items of both instruments was carried out, using the Likert scale, as noted above. The same questions of the two established dimensions were raised to analyze the points of meeting and disagreement of the responses and, therefore, the exhaustive understanding of the information provided by the two participating groups.

4. Results

The results will then be provided according to the specific objectives established.

Objective 1. Know the topics that teachers and migrant families address in their conversations.

Figures 1 and 2 show the response percentages of families and teachers, respectively, which are explained later. Following the previous guidelines, the data are presented as follows: never/rarely; sometimes; frequently/always or almost always.

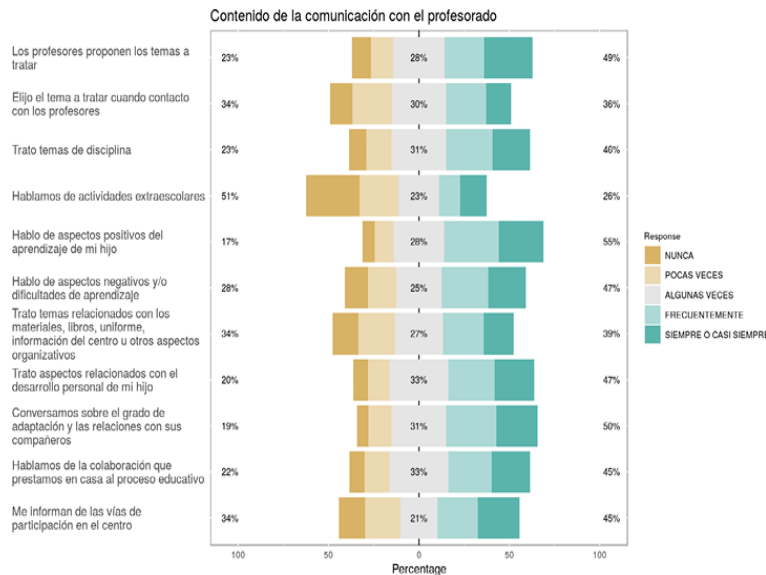


Figure 1. Topics that migrant parents address with teachers in their conversations.

Source: self made.

Regarding whether the teacher proposes the topics to be discussed with the families, 23% of parents state that the tutor never or rarely proposes the topic to be discussed, compared to a small 2% of the participating teachers. 18% of parents indicate that sometimes, and this rises to 25% in the case of teachers. Finally, 49% of the families' responses appear and a significant 73% indicate that frequently, always or almost always the topics to be discussed with the teachers are proposed by them.

Regarding the question, when families contact teachers, 34% of families indicate that the topic has never or rarely been proposed by them, compared to a small 4% of teachers. Regarding who chooses the topic to be discussed, 30% of parents indicate that it has sometimes been chosen by them, and 23% by the teachers. Finally, 36% of parents state that they have frequently, always or almost always spoken with teachers about issues raised by them, with a relevant 73% of teachers surveyed.

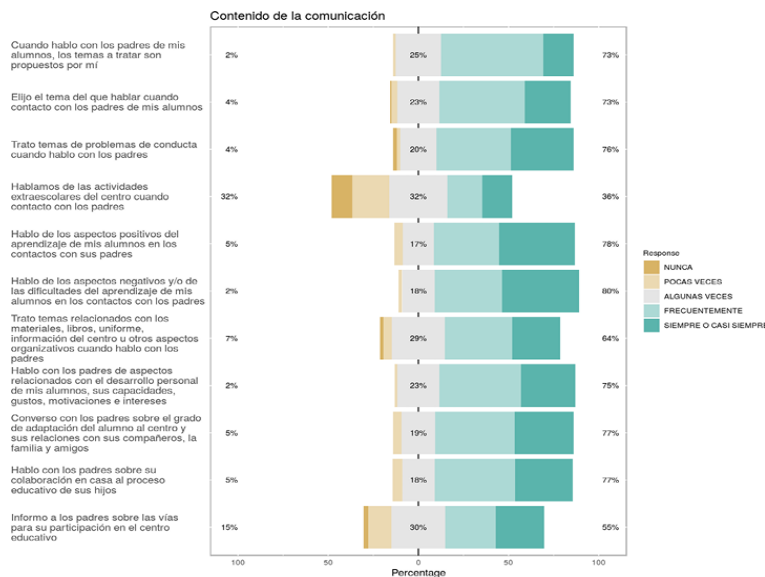


Figure 2. Topics that teachers address with migrant families in their conversations

Source: self made

When it comes to discussing discipline issues, when families talk to teachers, 23% of the families and a small 4% of participating teachers have never or rarely discussed these issues. 30% of fathers and mothers and 20% of teachers state that they have sometimes talked about this topic. Finally, 46% of families compared to a significant 76% of teachers confirm that these topics are frequently, always or almost always talked about.

Regarding whether families have conversations with teachers about extracurricular activities, a considerable 51% of parents appear compared to a small 32% of teachers, who respond that these conversations never or rarely occur. 22% of parents and 32% of teachers indicate that on some occasions. Finally, 26% of parents and 36% of teachers report that they frequently, always or almost always talk about extracurricular activities with their families.

Regarding addressing positive aspects of children's learning in contacts with teachers, it is found that 17% of families never or rarely discuss this issue with

teachers, and 5% when it comes to teachers. 28% of parents surveyed maintain that, on some occasions, while a small 17% of teachers confirm that they deal with this issue. Finally, a significant 55% of parents highlight that frequently, always or almost always the content of the communication between them is about the positive aspects of their child's learning, and a relevant 78% in the teachers' responses.

Regarding dealing with negative aspects and/or learning difficulties of their children, 28% of parents surveyed indicate that they never or rarely talk about this topic with teachers, compared to a reduced 2% in the case of teachers. . 25% of families respond that on some occasions these issues are addressed and 18% by teachers. Finally, it is contemplated that 47% of families indicate that this topic is frequently, always or almost always discussed in the communication between both parties, while a high 80% of the teachers surveyed express this.

In relation to delving into topics related to materials, books, uniforms, center information or other organizational aspects, 34% of families state that they never or rarely talk about these aspects with the teacher, compared to a reduced 7% of families. responses from the participating teachers. 27% of parents and 29% of teachers indicate that these topics are sometimes discussed. Finally, 39% of families compared to 64% of teachers report that frequently, always or almost always the information transmitted is related to these issues.

Regarding talking about aspects related to the personal development of students, their abilities, tastes, motivations and interests, 20% of families confirm that these topics have never or rarely been addressed, while a small 2% maintain that of the teachers. 33% of parents and 23% of teachers indicate that sometimes these elements are discussed between both parties. Finally, 47% of families as well as a

relevant 75% of teachers surveyed show that frequently, always or almost always this topic is the one discussed in these spaces.

In regards to addressing issues of children's adaptation at the center, their relationships with their peers, family and friends, 19% of parents indicate that they never or rarely adapt their children. his son has been the topic addressed. This figure is reduced to 5% when it comes to teachers. 30% of families report that these issues are sometimes discussed, compared to 19% of teachers surveyed. Finally, 50% of participating parents indicate that frequently, always or almost always, while a high 77% in the case of teachers confirm that these issues are part of their conversations.

Regarding the collaboration of parents at home, 22% of parents state that they never or rarely, compared to a small 5% of the teachers surveyed who maintain that this collaboration exists. 33% of families indicate that this contribution is sometimes made and 18% regarding teachers. Finally, 45% of parents report that frequently, always or almost always, and 77% of teachers indicate the existence of such collaboration.

Regarding whether teachers inform parents about the ways of participation, 34% of parents indicate that they have never or rarely been informed and a small 15% by tutors. 20% of families sometimes acknowledge having been informed, compared to 30% of teachers. Finally, 45% of parents and 55% of teachers surveyed responded that they have frequently, always or almost always been informed of the different ways of participation in the educational center.

Objective 2. Identify the degree of fluidity in the interaction between teachers and migrant parents.

Figures 3 and 4 show the response percentages of families and teachers, respectively. As previously stated, the information obtained is grouped as follows: never/rarely; sometimes; frequently/always or almost always.

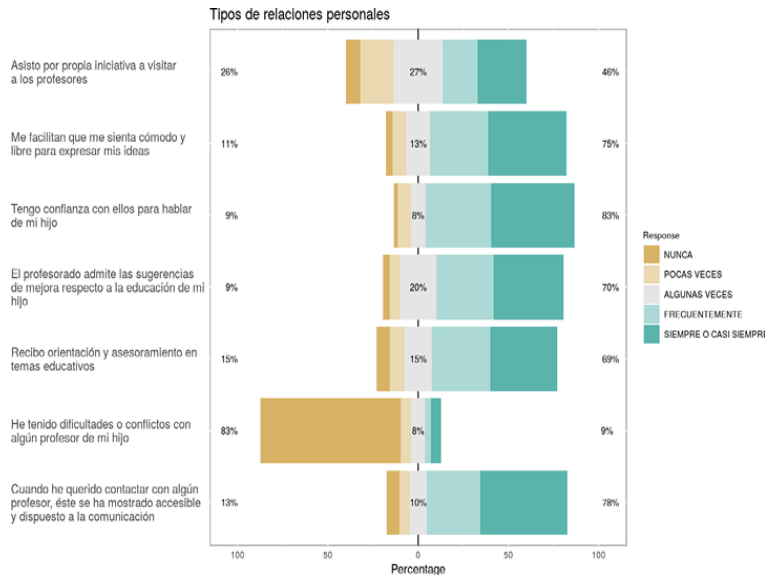


Figure 3. Degree of fluidity in the interaction between migrant parents and teachers

Source: self made

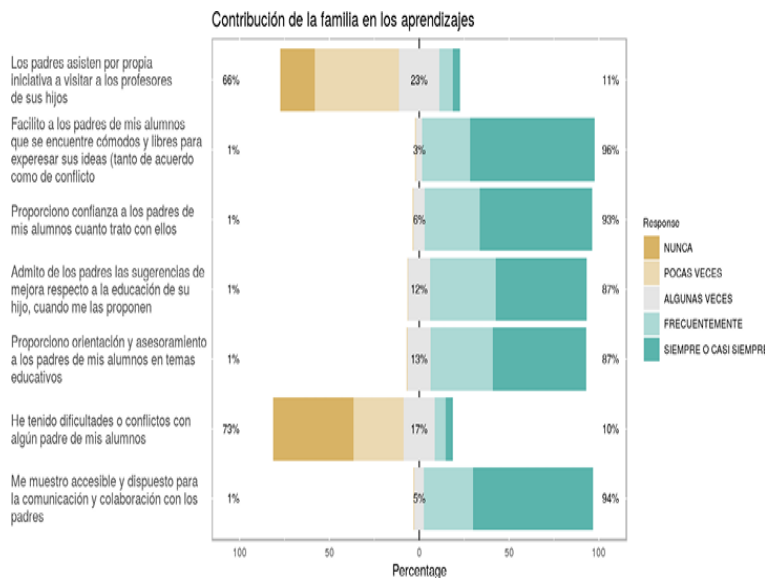


Figure 4. Degree of fluidity in the interaction between teachers and migrant parents

Source: self made.

Regarding whether families attend on their own initiative to visit teachers, 26% of families indicate that they have never or rarely attended, compared to 66% of responses from the teachers surveyed. 27% of parents and 23% of teachers say that sometimes. Finally, 46% of parents say that they take the initiative frequently, always or almost always, while a small 11% say that teachers take the initiative.

Regarding whether teachers make it easier for parents to feel comfortable and free to express their ideas, 11% of families indicate that they never or rarely, compared to a significant 2% of participating teachers. 13% of parents say that teachers sometimes facilitate the presentation of their ideas, while a small 3% highlight that teachers do so. Finally, 75% of families affirm that they frequently, always or almost always perceive this feeling of feeling free and comfortable when expressing their ideas and concerns, and 95% of the teachers surveyed.

Regarding whether families have had enough trust with teachers to talk about their children, 9% of parents indicate never or rarely, reducing to 1% in the case of teachers. 8% of parents and 6% of teachers point out that sometimes they receive that trust from both of them. Finally, 83% of parents and 93% of teachers emphasize that they frequently, always or almost always have this trust.

In the case of whether families accept suggestions for improvement regarding their children's education, 9% of families say never or rarely, compared to 1% of teachers. 20% of parents indicate that suggestions are sometimes accepted, and a small 12% on the part of teachers. Finally, 70% of parents confirm that the suggestions from these professionals are frequently, always or almost always well received, and 87% in terms of the teachers' responses.

Regarding receiving guidance and advice from their children's teachers on educational issues, 15% of families indicate that they never or rarely obtain such information, reducing to 1% in the case of teachers. 15% of parents and 13% of teachers surveyed say that they have sometimes received this guidance. Finally, 69% of parents emphasize that frequently, always or almost always, while 86% represent the participating teachers.

Regarding whether parents have had difficulties or conflicts with a teacher, it is notable that 83% indicate that they have never or rarely experienced it, compared to 73% of teachers. 8% parents and 17% teachers point out that sometimes there have been differences between both parties. Finally, 9% of families and 10% of teachers say that conflicts have frequently, always or almost always arisen between both parties.

Regarding whether the teachers have shown themselves accessible and willing to communicate when the families have wanted to contact them, 13% claim that the teachers have never or rarely shown themselves accessible, compared to 1% in the case of teachers. 10% of parents maintain that sometimes, compared to 5% highlighted by teachers. Finally, a high 78% of parents maintain that teachers have frequently, always or almost always shown interest and availability for communication related to dealing with children's educational issues, rising to 94% when referring to teachers' responses. surveyed.

5. Discussion and conclusions

In relation to the topics that parents discuss with teachers, the results show that a considerable group of fathers and mothers express little initiative in proposing the topic to be addressed with teachers, with a large group of teachers stating that the topic to deal with families is proposed by the teaching team. In this sense, some

research (Egido, 2015; Molina, 2017) points out that the feeling of belonging of families to school life leads to generating initiatives on different topics of these “new” parents in the coeducation of their sons and daughters. .

In terms of dealing with discipline issues, a considerable group is identified that has barely addressed these issues with teachers; however, the latter make up a large group that confirms that they usually address them to prevent possible conflicts and improve school coexistence. Data related to the study by Cárdenas et al. (2019) point out that providing parents with conflict resolution tools allows them to create a climate of healthy coexistence both in school dynamics and within the family.

Regarding dealing with extracurricular activities, worse evaluations appear from families, where a very considerable number of parents express the absence of conversations related to these topics. On the contrary, teachers do confirm the presence of these themes in the conversations that occur between both parties. However, in terms of delving into positive aspects of sons' and daughters' learning, only a very small group of families recognizes that they do not address these aspects with teachers, compared to a large group of these who assure that the positive aspects are issues that they usually analyze with fathers and mothers.

Next, the group of parents rises, who point out that they barely delve into negative aspects and possible learning difficulties of their children, compared to a large group of teachers, who confirm addressing these issues with families to agree on strategies and guidelines to follow. Identical results appear in recent research (Garreta, 2015; Macía, 2019), which indicates that the positive aspects are not regularly addressed, however, the interest of teachers in dealing with negative aspects or incidents increases, something that causes some discomfort. between families.

In terms of reflecting on issues related to materials, books, uniforms, center information or other organizational aspects, there is a significant group of parents who admit their tendency not to talk about these aspects. While a higher group of teachers state that teachers have a duty to exchange information related to these matters. In this sense, in the research developed by Carrasco and Coronel (2017), it is noted that teachers usually dedicate a lot of space to these topics in communication with families, and that they should address other more relevant aspects with the same effort and dedication.

In the aspects associated with the personal development of children, their abilities, tastes, motivations and interests, only a small group of fathers and mothers are identified who recognize that these issues are not part of their conversations. However, a very large group of teachers point out that these topics are the ones discussed in these spaces. These data corroborate those found in the study carried out by (Cebolla and González, 2008), which indicate that topics linked to personal development are systematically present in conversations between teachers and families.

The same happens in relation to the collaboration provided by parents at home, where a small but significant group of families is revealed, who respond that they barely collaborate in this aspect. On the contrary, a large group of teachers consider that families collaborate a lot with their sons and daughters at home. In this sense, Charette and Kalubi (2016) state in the results of their research that the language difficulties of many non-Spanish-speaking migrant fathers and mothers hinder such collaboration.

And regarding whether families are informed about the ways to participate in schools, there is a considerable group of parents who admit their lack of concern

about being informed about these resources. A higher group of teachers confirms having reported the different ways of participation in the educational center. In relation to the above, González (2007) warns that not all migrant families manage the means of participation nor do they exhaustively understand the process to follow to access them.

In summary, it is clear that promoting the feeling of belonging and trust with all families, without exclusions, is a key element that leads to real and comprehensive participation. Likewise, it also allows us to address content associated with relevant aspects, as well as those less relevant to generate a common participatory culture in and from the school. Therefore, building the inclusion of these cultural or ethnic minorities from equity should become an ethical and moral imperative for a more just and democratic school, to avoid by action or omission the reproduction of social injustices (Murillo and Hernández, 2014).

On the other hand, the results confirm that a considerable number of families recognize that they hardly attend on their own initiative to visit teachers, compared to a high number of teachers surveyed who think the same on the matter. Other research points in the same direction, confirming that self-initiated visits occur only to address possible conflicts or to deal with issues related to the grades of the sons and daughters (Martínez and Pérez, 2006; Megías, 2006).

Next, it is revealed that a small group of families alludes to the fact that their child's teachers do not make it easy for them to feel comfortable and free to express their ideas. The same thing happens in the analysis of trust, where a non-significant group appears that expresses little trust with teachers when talking about their children, reducing it even further in the case of teachers. Similar data appear in other studies (Andrés and Giró, 2016; Loudová, 2013; Hampden and

Galindo, 2016), which indicate significant advances in the interaction between migrant parents and teachers. However, the research developed by Cargat and Bernad (2015) confirms that trust continues to be a pending issue between both groups.

Regarding whether teachers accept suggestions for improvement regarding their children's education, the responses confirm that a very small group of fathers and mothers indicate that on rare occasions suggestions for improvement regarding education are not accepted. children's education. The teachers, for their part, state that all contributions are well received in this sense. The same is true when it comes to receiving guidance and advice. These data do not corroborate the results obtained in other research (Charette and Kalubi, 2016; Fagan, 2013; Vallespir et al., 2016), which denounce the persistence of the asymmetric and reticent relationship of teachers, although this perception cannot be generalized to all education professionals.

Regarding the existence of difficulties or conflicts between parents and teachers, we found a very high group of families and teachers, who assure that they have hardly experienced these difficulties. Likewise, a small group of respondents appears who express the limited accessibility and predisposition of teachers for communication. Teachers, for their part, say they are accessible and willing at all times to initiate and establish conversations with parents. Data contrary to those found in other research (Rodríguez and Fernández, 2018; Rey, 2006), which warn about the existence of prejudices and distant positions of teachers, when addressing any topic with parents.

In summary, it is considered important to begin by identifying and recognizing the presence of prejudices and stereotypes, which feed the rejection and distant

treatment that occurs between families and teachers. Therefore, it is about dismantling these variables involved, with the aim of building mutual trust between both parties. Thus, the relational value that such trust provides would improve the frequency of parents' visits to educational centers, and the degree of flexibility and accessibility to teachers. Furthermore, it would give both parties the opportunity to listen and be heard, to express their doubts and concerns, with the aim of jointly contributing to ensuring the students' academic success.

In relation to the limitations or gaps presented in the article, it should be noted the need to carry out a qualitative study through semi-structured interviews with parents and teachers. In this way, greater enrichment is guaranteed to the information obtained from the quantitative study. On the other hand, it would be interesting to delve deeper into other variables that may point to greater differences in the results. We are talking, therefore, about collecting information linked to the origin of the families, their work activity, and their level of education. And with respect to teachers, variables such as their teaching experience, specific training, and their level of mobility should be analyzed.

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