

Family involvement in early childhood education

La participación de las familias en educación infantil

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Abstract

The benefits of the family implication in the educational process of children and its repercussion in the quality of the education are facts widely demonstrated. The aim of this research knew the range of possible groups whose children study in the stage of childhood education, formed from a set of variables of family participation and sociodemographics. Thus, this research counted on the help of 1953 Spanish families by means of a questionnaire ad hoc of 66 items, with high reliability. After further Cluster Analysis, the results show four family profile: 1) participative profile non normative, 2) non participative profile of not Spanish nationality, 3) participative profile normative 4) non normative profile of Spanish nationality. The more diffuse profile is number two, with no significant differences with the rest of the profiles. In addition, the magnitude of the differences between some profiles is not totally defined.

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Resumen

Los beneficios que aporta la implicación familiar en el proceso educativo de los hijos y su repercusión en la calidad de la educación son hechos ampliamente demostrados. El objetivo de este estudio fue conocer posibles agrupamientos de familias, cuyos hijos cursan la etapa de Educación Infantil, configurados a partir de una serie de variables de participación familiar y sociodemográficas. Para ello, se contó con 1.953 familias españolas, a las que se les aplicó un cuestionario ad hoc de 66 ítems, con alta fiabilidad. Tras realizar un análisis clúster, los resultados ofrecieron cuatro perfiles familiares: 1) perfil participativo no normativo, 2) perfil no participativo de nacionalidad no española, 3) perfil participativo normativo y 4) perfil no normativo de nacionalidad española. El perfil más difuso es el 2, no hallándose diferencias significativas del resto con este perfil. Asimismo, la magnitud de las diferencias entre algunos perfiles no queda totalmente definida.

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There are many precedents in which family participation in school settings is recognised as one of the indicators of educational quality. Therefore, on occasions it is understood that an efficient school is “one that achieves an integral development of all students, beyond what would be expected taking into account their previous performances and the socio

economic and cultural situation of the families (Murillo, 2005, 30). As it can be appreciated, the concept of efficient schooling makes reference to the educational role of the family.

There are evidences that suggest high positive implication of families from pupils in schools, is related to a higher efficiency in

school settings, hence the effort in promoting such participation so it can be a trait identifying the setting, as it is considered good practice. But we still need to know the character of this implication, how it is established and if there are factors that would interfere casually (Azpillaga, Intxausti & Joaristi, 2014).

Unfortunately, family participation is not constant during the whole school life. As mentioned by Peñalver (2009), such participation is more prominent in Early Years, where family implication is usually more intense than in Primary and Secondary (Garreta, 2008; Gomariz, Parra, García, Hernández & Pérez, 2008), with a more intense tracking and a more friendly relationship with teaching staff (Panigua, 2009).

Without a doubt, there are many factors that favor this initial implication from parents, and equally, there are also factors that hinder the development of such implication in later stages. It can be highlighted, firstly, that the benefits associated with family participation in regards to educational questions act as a catalyst of such participation. In this sense, family participation facilitates the learning process, improving academic achievement and contributing to reducing school failure figures (Sheldon & Epstein, 2002).

Secondly, it must be recognized that in our society there is an ethic-moral disposition to care for children's vulnerability, something that has not always been the case; however since the Universal Declaration on the Rights of the Child (1959) there is greater sensibility in this regard. Hence, culturally there is a tendency from parents to care and protect their children providing ideal conditions for their development and their potential as human beings, considering it as an educational responsibility which is unavoidable.

As children get older and they advance in schooling, there is a decrease of accompaniment and family implication, with

the aspiration and educational aim of promoting the development of independence. Both concepts are understood in our culture as opposing, but in reality they can complement each other. We all need support of accompaniment. It is a natural feeling and an inherit need to the condition of human beings. The individual does not live on its own, but in a community. The community is the grouping of individuals that interact voluntarily (Gaviria, 2014:14). Therefore, education cannot be understood independently from the contexts and agents implied but as a coeducation in which these agents merge voluntarily. From this view point, communication nets and cooperation between family and school should be promoted; it should be established based on trust and freedom, and motivated by the common objective of integrating new generations into society.

The satisfaction of this greater participation in the Early Years stage, cannot evade the need to continue improving this dimension. The shared responsibility of education requires creating communities of shared objectives and practices (Paniagua, 2009), widening communication channels and actively collaborating in the school setting, staff and families, increasing the sense of belonging, promoting direct and indirect implication of families in the learning environment. Therefore, it requires training and awareness to teach participation, to teachers as well as families, and to be able to transmit such value. New generations must have participation examples from their close contexts, if we want future citizenship to be participatory and committed.

With the intention of finding out types, forms or profiles of family participation in Early Years and the variables that characterize such families, the present study has evolved. Therefore, the variables considered refer to a *none normative* participation, such as communication and participation in the educational setting and at home, incorporating

valuating elements of frequency and satisfaction which inform us of quality; variables focused in positive attitudes, sense of belonging and commitment from families with the community (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 2003); and finally, variables related to indirect implications of families through associations or advisory bodies in the settings, which can be called normative participation.

On the other hand, in regards to concrete situational variables or socio demographic ones, that allow us to sketch a family profile, we have questioned ourselves, as well as other authors, about aspects referred to socio economic and cultural level of families, and also the educational level of parents (Bolívar, 2006; Pérez-Díaz, Rodríguez & Sánchez, 2001) in which the role and importance of human capital, has been reflected upon, recalling the report by Coleman in the eighties. Other variables considered, are: age of parents, type of educational setting the children attend (Pérez-Díaz et al., 2001) or national origin of families (Rodríguez, 2010a; Rodríguez, 2010b; Santos & Lorenzo, 2009), with the wish of “breaking” with social dynamics that feedback and that make inclusion flow difficult (Escudero, 2006; Teacher training Institute, Educational Research and Innovation, 2011).

Taking into account everything mentioned, the present study refers to a wider research coordinated by the State School Board (2014), in which around 15000 families took part, whose children are in schools in the

educational stages of Early Years, Primary and Secondary. The concrete aim of the study shown in this article was to recognize participation profiles in school education, which characterizes family groups from pupils in Early Years. According to the more distinctive traits and using appropriate statistical analysis, the hypothesis of this study wanted to prove the existence of family groupings that revolve around variables such as type of educational setting or national origin of its members, without dismissing the human and social capital which we have referred to in previous paragraphs.

Methodology

Participants

The wider research we have referred to, took place considering the whole of the Spanish State through a random sample ranked from the following variables: educational cycle (stage), and type of educational setting. Focusing in the Early Years stage, in the present study 2452 families from 93 educational settings took part; of which 508 were dismissed due to invalid data. Therefore, the real sample was of 1944 families.

In Table 1, it is indicated, in percentages, the sample distribution of participant fathers and mothers, in regards to socio demographic variables considered in the study, which data we will discuss in the *Findings* section of this article, once the meaning of the variables is specified.

Table 1. *Sample distribution of families in Early Years*

Variables	Categories	Family percentages
Type of setting	State (1)	63,2%
	Fee subsidised school (2)	34,6%
	Private/independent (3)	2,2%
Family nationality	Spain (1)	81,1%
	Other country (2)	17,5%
Father's age	Below 20 years old (1)	0%
	20 to 30 years old (2)	5,3%
	31 to 40 years old (3)	58,7%
	41 to 50 years old (4)	30,3%
	Older than 51 years old (5)	1,4%
Mother's age	Below 20 years old (1)	0,1%
	20 to 30 years old (2)	11,8%
	31 to 40 years old (3)	70,1%
	41 to 50 years old (4)	15,9%
	Older than 51 years old (5)	0%
Father's qualifications	Primary unfinished (1)	3,3%
	Primary (2)	12,7%
	Secondary compulsory (3)	16,2%
	Bachillerato or vocational training medium level (4)	20,7%
	Vocational training higher level (5)	13,9%
	Diploma (6)	7,5%
	Bachelor's degree or similar (7)	15,7%
	Doctorate (8)	1,4%
Mother's qualifications	Primary unfinished (1)	2,3%
	Primary (2)	8,6%
	Secondary compulsory (3)	12,7%
	Bachillerato or vocational training medium level (4)	20,8%
	Vocational training higher level (5)	13,9%
	Diploma (6)	16,5%
	Bachelor's degree or similar (7)	19%
	Doctorate (8)	1,3%
Number of books at home	Between 0 and 10 books (1)	7,9%
	Between 11 and 25 books (2)	15,9%
	Between 26 and 100 books (3)	39,9%
	Between 101 and 200 books (4)	17,2%
	Between 201 and 500 books (5)	11,6%
	More than 500 books (6)	4,3%
Learning resources	Less than 3 resources (1)	4,2%
	From 3 to 6 resources (2)	27,2%
	From 7 to 10 resources (3)	47,4%
	More than 10 resources (4)	21,2%
Other material resources	Less than 10 points (1)	26,7%
	From 10 to 20 points (2)	68,8%
	From 21 to 30 points (3)	1,5%
	More than 30 points (4)	0,1%

Instrument

A questionnaire was given on paper to the educational settings and sent to the State School Board by postal mail, as the administrative and launcher manager of the study. The complete questionnaire had 141 items of different types, although for this research 66 items were used, 45 related to family participation in the educational process of children and 21 referred to socio demographic data.

The validity of the questionnaire content was protected by the participation of a group of experts from four Spanish universities, who participated in the validation through an expert judgement of the instrument, dealing mainly with its clarity and relevance.

The reliability of the complete instrument for a sample of 14876 families, in which were included levels of Primary and Secondary Education, as well as Early years, generated a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.867, which indicates a high internal consistency of the questionnaire (De Vellis, 2003). For the sample of families whose children attended Early Years, the reliability was practically the same (Cronbach alpha coefficient = 0,864).

Variables

In order to delimit the participation profiles, some variables were considered, first of all, variables that refer directly to such participation that families maintain with the educational setting: quality of communication, participation in activities in the setting, feeling of belonging, direct implication from home, implication in AMPA and implication in the School council. The number of items and content of each of these variables is as follow:

- ‘Quality of communication’: 9 items were considered (1: Never – 4: Always), which form aspects related to the frequency in which families communicate with the setting, as well as level of satisfaction of such communication (i.e. “I attend tutorials when my child’s tutor asks for an

appointment” or “I consider satisfactory the meetings I have with the setting”)

- ‘Participation of families in concrete activities organised by the setting’: 4 items were considered (1: I am unaware if the setting organizes activities – 4: I collaborate and participate); some related to family participation in training activities for fathers and mothers, work commissions created in the setting or activities of support to the setting (i.e. “I participate in training activities for fathers and mothers such as parent school, talks or educational conferences, etc.)
- ‘Feeling of belonging’: this variable remained configured by 4 items, in which families were asked if they felt part of the setting, if they considered it as their own (1: totally disagree – 4: highly agree) (i.e. “if a team from the setting participates in a sport, context..., that one is my team”).
- ‘Implication from the home’: 12 questions were considered (1: Never – 4: Always) which refer to the collaboration and educational accompaniment that families carry out with their children from their homes (i.e. “I share common educational objectives in the setting in order to develop them at home” or “in my family, we go to the cinema, theatre, museums, travelling, concerts and exhibitions, etc”).
- ‘Implication through AMPA (Parent teacher association)’: it was made out of 8 items (0: No – 1: yes), regarding the knowledge families have of such association, their participation in the different activities developed or the commitment acquired with the association (i.e. “I am or have been a member of AMPA in the setting in which my child is enrolled”).
- ‘Implication in the School Council’, variable integrated by 8 items (0: no – 1: yes) through questions related to the knowledge by families about School Council, their purpose or who their members are, their participation in elections, etc. (i.e. “I know the representatives of the families in the School Council of the setting).

From these 6 variables, the first four were obtained through the average of the items used for its configuration, while the last two variables, resulted from the addition of affirmative responses obtained in the items that form them.

Secondly, we have considered other variables which collect information regarding socio demographic situations of families (see Table 1), such as: type of setting (state, fee subsidized, private), nationality of families (Spanish and none Spanish), age of father (in intervals with a scale from 1 to 5) age of mother (scale 1 to 5), number of books in the home (scale 1 to 6), father's qualifications (scale from 1 to 8), mother's qualifications (scale from 1 to 8), learning resources (scale from 1 to 4) and material resources (scale from 1 to 5).

In the section of *Participants* the number of options or categories has been indicated, which families could choose from to answer this type of variables. Each of which corresponds with an item from the questionnaire, except the ones referred to learning resources and material resources.

The variable "learning resources" (without counting the number of books) was configured by adding the 12 items in which families were asked about availability at home of elements such as : own room, a quiet place to study, a computer to carry out school tasks, educational software, internet connection, classical literature books, art books, etc. Although we are aware that not all of these resources have the same value (not educational neither economic), we do not discriminate any of them, as we consider that this could be too subjective. For the measurement of this variable 4 intervals were considered (see Table 1).

The variable "material resources" (others, a part from the mentioned ones) was made up of 4 items: number of mobile phones, televisions, computers and cars. This variable was also obtained by the adding of the 4 items that integrated it, but in this occasion, a weighted value was given to each resource.

In this sense, being aware that the weighing depends on brands, sizes and other characteristics of each resource, we considered equally mobile phones, televisions and computers, but each car was counted as 4 of the remaining resources, as the most important thing was to know the economic level of the family. The results were counted in points, establishing this way for the measurement of this variable, 4 intervals (see Table 1)

Procedure

Although it was the State School Board who requested to the research team the development of a general study in regards to family and educational settings, it was the team itself who set the objectives, as well as the design of the questionnaire to collect information. Once the instrument was validated, a company for the distribution and collection of questionnaires to and from the educational settings was contracted. Information of questionnaires was collected and data files were generated using SPSS with the consequent analysis.

Data Analysis

A cluster analysis was carried out in two phases or two-stage sample. The choice of this technique within the analysis of conglomerates was due to the algorithm employed, coinciding with the characteristics of our data, which allows to deal with categorical and quantitative variables simultaneously, to determine automatically the optimal number of conglomerates and to analyse big size data files (Pérez López, 2009). The inferential calculations have been carried out with an statistical mean level of $\alpha=0,05$.

In order to obtain the index *d* of Cohen (1988) a calculator EasyCalculation.com (s.f.) has been used.

Results

Regarding the aim of the research, four conglomerates were obtained of family participation from pupils in Early Years (1, 2, 3 and 4), in which some family percentages are assigned (Table 2).

Table 2. *Conglomerates Distribution. Conglomerates of family participation in Early Years*

		N	% of combines	% of total
Conglomerate	1	643	33,1%	26,2%
	2	304	15,6%	12,4%
	3	531	27,3%	21,7%
	4	466	24,0%	19,0%
	Combined	1.944	100,0%	79,3%
Excluded cases		508		20,7%
Total		2452		100,00%

Immediately, in tables 3, 4 and 5 it is presented averages and typical deviations or percentages of the variables considered, in relation to the four conglomerates obtained. It

was through these variables that the forms of participation by families and essential characteristics were defined.

Table 3. *Descriptive of numerical variables by conglomerate in Early years. Averages and typical deviations*

Variable	Statistic	Conglomerate				
		1	2	3	4	Combines
Quality of communication	Average	2,80	2,65	2,90	2,58	2,75
	Typical dev	,401	,447	,402	,322	,411
Participation in activities	Average	2,29	2,03	2,46	1,86	2,19
	Typical dev	,785	,759	,767	,647	,780
Feeling of belonging	Average	3,21	3,14	3,36	2,86	3,16
	Typical dev	,611	,660	,530	,647	,633
Home collaboration	Average	3,51	3,36	3,59	3,29	3,45
	Typical dev	,312	,407	,257	,332	,3407
AMPA implication	Average	2,19	1,93	3,73	1,62	2,43
	Typical dev	1,995	2,006	2,314	1,447	2,141
CE implication	Average	2,03	1,97	3,77	1,79	2,44
	Typical dev	1,933	2,060	2,344	1,632	2,170
Father's age	Average	3,33	3,34	3,37	3,15	3,30
	Typical dev	,551	,690	,521	,578	,580
Mother's age	Average	3,14	2,98	3,17	12,88	3,06
	Typical dev	,493	,551	,440	,540	,514
Father's qualifications	Average	4,79	4,15	4,80	3,45	4,37
	Typical dev	1,761	1,746	1,768	1,525	1,797
Mother's qualifications	Average	5,27	4,57	5,33	3,91	4,85
	Typical dev	1,606	1,726	1,537	1,594	1,708
Number of books	Average	3,50	2,90	3,69	2,74	3,28
	Typical dev	1,169	1,282	1,123	,996	1,202
Learning resources	Average	3,06	2,84	3,23	2,55	2,95
	Typical dev	,706	,773	,645	,635	,731
Material resources	Average	1,77	1,66	1,87	1,70	1,76
	Typical dev	,445	,544	,379	,516	,469

In Table 3, in the column named "combines" (which represents the total of families in Early Years) it can be appreciated, that families, globally, perceive quite high the

quality of communication with the educational setting (\bar{X} = 2,75, over 4), they don't participate much in activities organised by such setting (\bar{X} = 2,19, over 4), they have a

high feeling of belonging towards the setting (\bar{X} = 3,15, over 4), they collaborate between quite a lot and a lot from the home (\bar{X} = 3,45, over 4) and they implicate themselves moderately in the AMPA (\bar{X} = 2,43, over 8) as well as the School Council of the setting (\bar{X} = 2,44, over 8).

In the same column of “combines” of Table 3, supported by Table 1 (“participants” section) it is proved that it regards families where parents have an average age of approximately 43 years old (\bar{X} = 3,30) and mothers around 40 years old (\bar{X} = 3,06), with average qualifications of father situated

between the level of Bachillerato or vocational training (FP) of medium level and vocational training of higher level (\bar{X} = 4,37) and of the mother in the latter level (\bar{X} = 4,85). They are families with scarce economic means (\bar{X} = 1,76: from 10 to 15 points approximately), but with quite a lot of learning resources (\bar{X} = 2,95: from 6 to 9 resources) and a number of books that varies between 40 and 120 (\bar{X} = 3,28).

Tables 4 and 5 show frequencies and percentages of each category of the qualitative variables considered for the make-up of cluster.

Table 4. *Descriptive of variable type of school by conglomerate in Early Years. Frequencies and percentages*

Category	Statistic	Conglomerate				
		1	2	3	4	Combines
State	Frequency	0	220	531	466	1.217
	Percentage	,0%	18,1%	43,6%	38,3%	100,0%
Fee subsidised	Frequency	615	81	0	0	696
	Percentage	88,4%	11,6%	0%	0%	100,0%
Private/independent	Frequency	28	3	0	0	31
	Percentage	90,3%	9,7%	0%	0%	100,0%

Table 5. *Descriptives of variable of father’s nationality and/or mother by conglomerates in Early years. Frequencies and percentages.*

Category	Statistic	Conglomerate				
		1	2	3	4	Combines
Spain	Frequency	643	0	531	466	1.640
	Percentage	39,2%	0%	32,4%	28,4%	100,0%
Other country	Frequency	0	304	0	0	304
	Percentage	0%	100,0%	0%	0%	100,0%

Characteristics of family type 1 in Early Years

This family profile represents 33.1% of the families that make up the research sample (Table 2). There are parents (fathers/mothers) of Spanish nationality (Table 5) of pupils in private settings and fee subsidised schools (Table 4).

As shown in Figure 1, the variables “Nationality of father or mother” and “Type of setting” are statistically significant to conform this first family profile (critical values of Chi-square: Type of setting= 7.38; Nationality= 5.02).

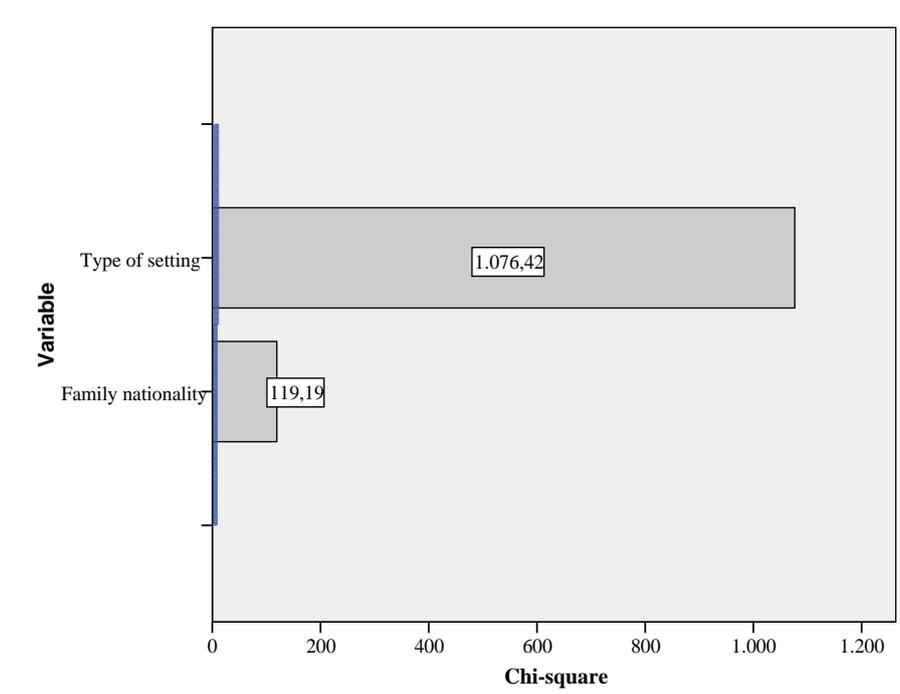


Figure 1. *Importance of categorical variables in conglomerate*

Table 3 indicates that this typology of families, perceive quite high, the quality of communication with the educational setting in which their children study ($\bar{X} = 2,75$, around 4); they participate moderately in activities organised by the setting ($\bar{X} = 2,29$, around 4); they have quite a feeling of belonging ($\bar{X} = 3,20$, around 4) and they implicate themselves from quite a lot to a lot in the education of their children from the home ($\bar{X} = 3,51$, around 4). Opposite to these values, the families that conform this first profile, they implicate themselves scarcely in the AMPA of the setting ($\bar{X} = 2,15$, around 8), and in the School Council ($\bar{X} = 2,01$ around 8). In general, of the four obtained conglomerates, this profile holds the second position in regards to participation of fathers and mothers in the educational process of their children ($\bar{X} = 2,67$).

In regards to the rest of the numerical variables, Table 3 highlights that this conglomerate is made up of fathers and mothers of an average age of approximately 43

and 41 years old respectively ($\bar{X} = 3,33$ y $\bar{X} = 3,14$, around 4); parents have average qualifications slightly lower to FP (vocational training of higher level) ($\bar{X} = 4,79$, around 8) and mothers have reached a bit more of such educational level ($\bar{X} = 5,27$, around 8). They are families with little material resources, as they have only reached from 10 to 15 points ($\bar{X} = 1,77$, around 4), they have quite a lot of learning resources ($\bar{X} = 3,07$, around 4: from 7 to 10 resources), as well as between 50 and 150 books ($\bar{X} = 3,51$, around 6 intervals).

In Figure 2, it can be observed the significant relevance from 10 of the 13 numerical variables contemplated, all of them with values higher to the average, with the exception of the ones referred to “Implication in the School Council” and “Implication in the AMPA” (critical values of t of Student of - 2,90 y 2,90).

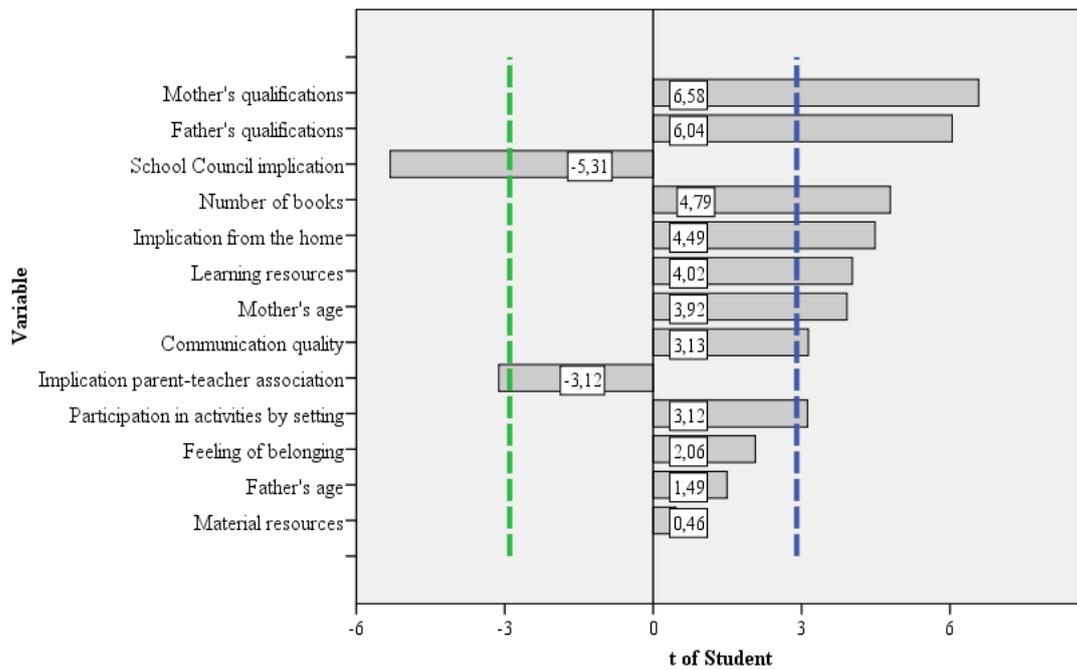


Figure 2. Importance of the numerical variables of conglomerate 1.

Characteristics of family type 2 in Early Years

This second profile represents 15.6% of the families from pupils in Early Years (Table 2). It is made up of fathers and mothers with nationality other than Spanish (Table 5), whose children study mainly in State settings (Table 4).

In Figure 3 it can be appreciated that the two categorical variables chosen in the study have been significantly relevant for the make-up of this second conglomerate in the stage of Early Years (critical values of Chi-square: Nationality= 7.38; Type of setting= 5.02).

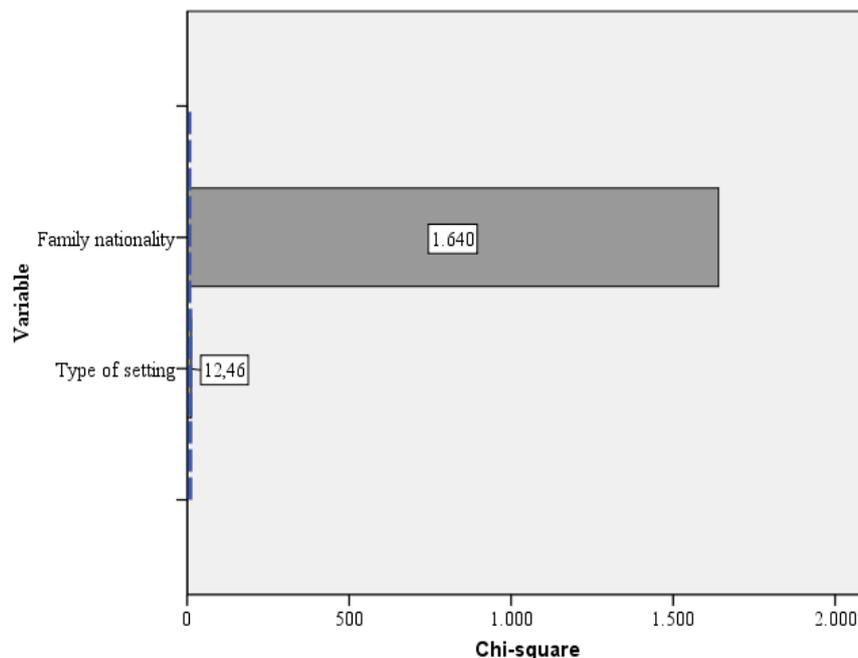


Figure 3. Importance of categorical variables of conglomerate 2.

Table 3 shows that profile 2 is made up of families that qualify as moderate, the quality of communication with the setting (\bar{X} = 2,65, around 4); with little participation in activities organised by the setting (\bar{X} = 2,03, around 4); quite a feeling of belonging (\bar{X} = 3,14, around 4), as well as collaboration in the educational process of their children from the home (\bar{X} = 3,36, around 4). These families implicate themselves little in the AMPA (\bar{X} = 1,93, around 8), and the School Council of the setting (\bar{X} = 1,97, around 8). Globally, it is the typology that is on the third place regarding level of participation in the educational process of their children (\bar{X} = 2,51), in regards to the rest of the conglomerates obtained.

In Table 3, it can also be appreciated that this second profile groups fathers and mothers who are of an average age of 43 and 40 years old respectively (\bar{X} = 3,34 y \bar{X} = 2,98, around 5

intervals); with average qualifications of the father, situated between Bachillerato and FP (vocational training medium level) (\bar{X} = 4,15, around 8), and the mother between the latter level and FP (vocational training of higher level) (\bar{X} = 4,57, around 8); they are families with scarce material resources (\bar{X} = 1,66, around 4 intervals; from 9 to 14 points), they have 5 to 8 learning resources (\bar{X} = 2,84, around 4 intervals) and from 26 to 100 books (\bar{X} = 2,90, around 6 intervals).

As can be observed in Figure 4, to make-up this family profiles, there has been statistical significance in 7 out of the 13 numerical variables contemplated in the research (critical values of t of Student of -2,91 y 2,91), all of them with scores inferior to the average.

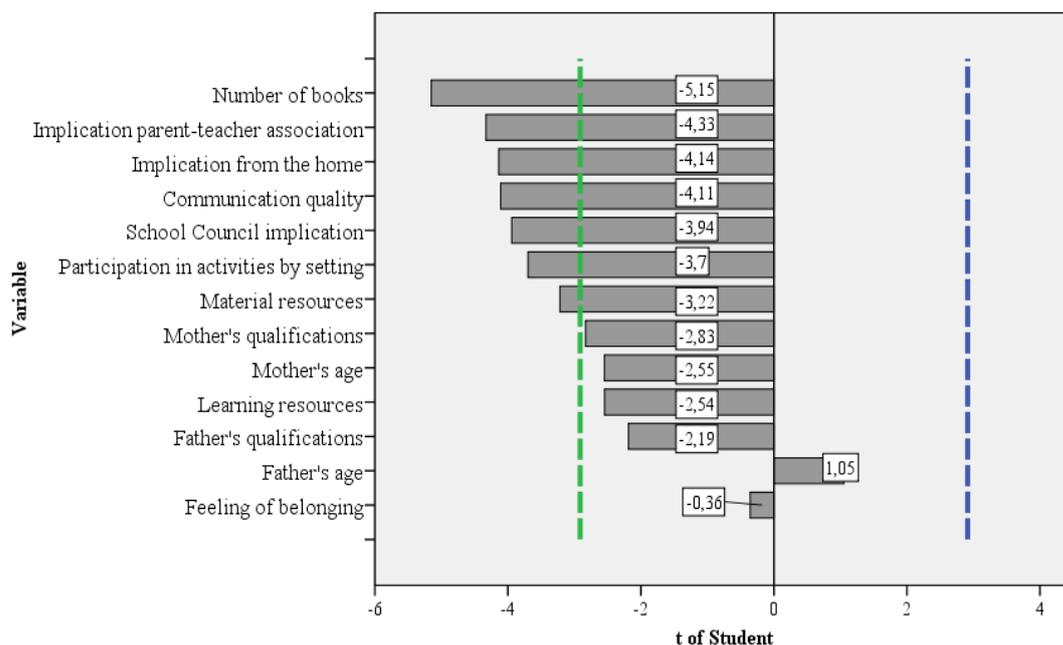


Figure 4. Importance of numerical variables in conglomerate 2.

Characteristics type of family 3 in Early Years

This conglomerate represents 27.3% of the participant families (Table 2). It is made up of Spanish fathers and mothers (Table 5), whose children attend state schools (Table 4).

Figure 5 indicates that the variable “Type of setting” as well as the variable “Nationality of families”, the same way that happened with family types 1 and 2, are significantly relevant for the make-up of the conglomerate (critical values of Chi-square: Type of setting=7.38; Nationality=5.02).

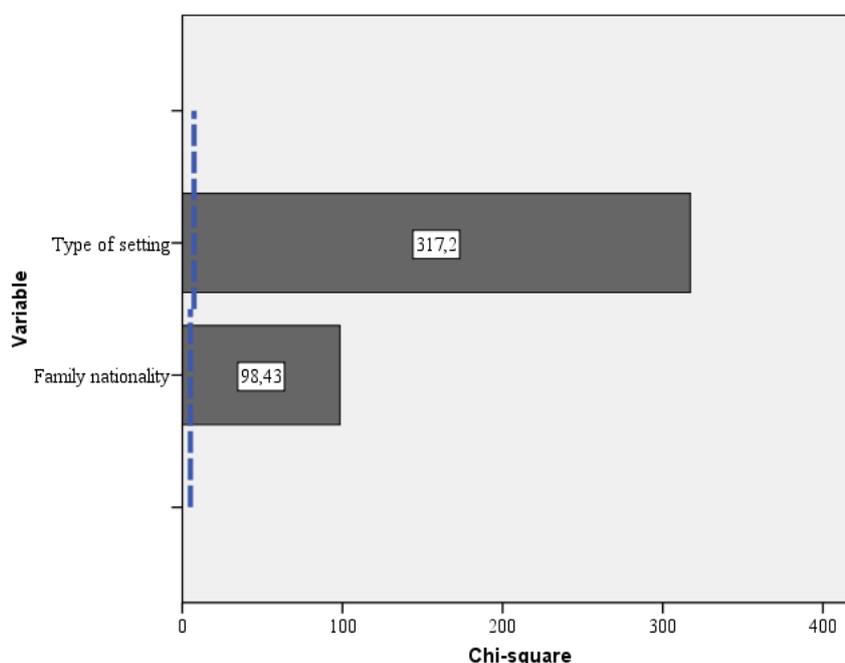


Figure 5. Importance of categorical variables of conglomerate 3.

This cluster is made up of families with the highest participation level in the school education of their children ($\bar{X}= 3,30$). Therefore, as it can be appreciated in Table 3, the fathers and mothers consider of high quality the communication with the educational setting ($\bar{X}= 2,90$, around 4); with moderate participation in activities organized by the setting ($\bar{X}= 2,46$, around 4); they have a high feeling of belonging ($\bar{X}= 3,36$, around 4) and they collaborate between quite a lot and a lot with the education of their children from the home ($\bar{X}= 3,59$, around 4). These families implicate themselves in the AMPA, much more than the ones from the two previous profiles ($\bar{X}= 3,73$, around 8), and in the School Council of the setting ($\bar{X}= 3,77$, around 8).

In Table 3, it can also be appreciated that this third family profile is made up of older

parents, with an approximate average age of 44 years old in fathers, ($\bar{X}= 3,37$) and in mothers an age of 42 years old ($\bar{X}= 3,17$); fathers have nearly reached an average qualification of FP (vocational training of high level) ($\bar{X}= 4,80$, around 8), while mothers surpass this educational level ($\bar{X}= 5,33$, around 8). Although the material resources from these families in this conglomerate are scarce, it increases the quantity of resources ($\bar{X}= 1,87$, around 4 intervals; from 10 to 18 points); furthermore, these parents have between 8 to 11 learning resources ($\bar{X}= 3,39$, around 4 intervals) and between 101 and 200 books ($\bar{X}= 3,69$, around 6 intervals).

In addition, Figure 6 shows that the 13 numerical variables selected are statistically significant for the make-up of the third type, all of them superior to the average (critical values of t of student of -2,9 y 2,9).

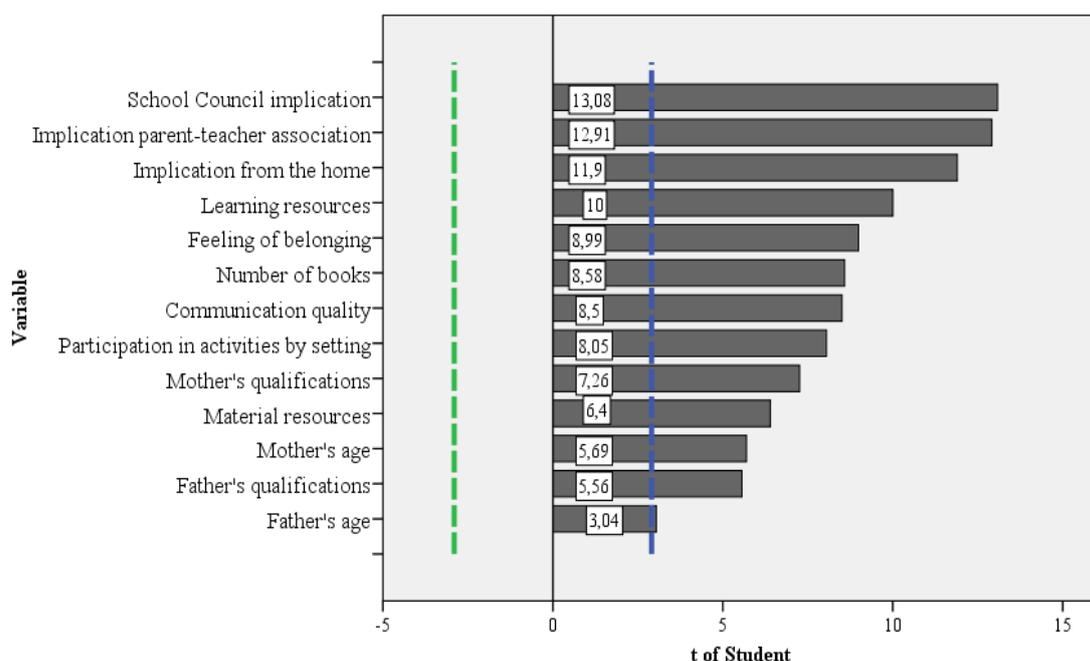


Figure 6. Importance of numerical variables in conglomerate 3.

Characteristics of family type 4 in Early Years

This fourth and last profile encompasses 24% of the families of pupils from Early Years (Table 2). It is made up of fathers and mothers of Spanish nationality (Table 5) that have enrolled their children in State settings (Table 4).

In Figure 7 it can be appreciated the importance of the variables “Type of setting” and “Nationality of family” for the make-up of the conglomerate, and as in the other profiles, both have resulted statistically significant (critical values of Chi-square: Type of setting = 7.38; Nationality=5.02).

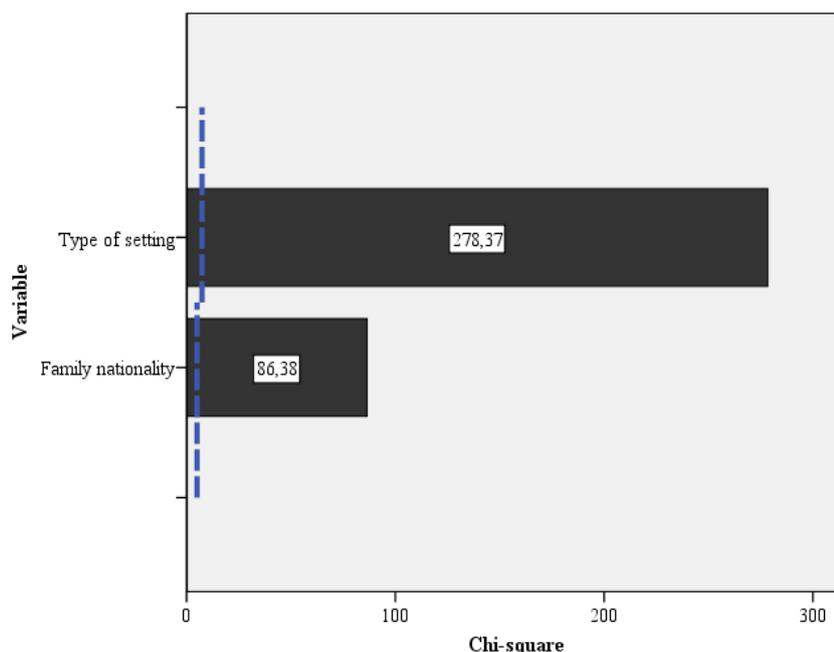


Figure7. Importance of categorical variables in conglomerate 4

In the opposite end of profile 3, this typology integrates families with the lowest global participation of the four conglomerates (\bar{X} = 2,33). In Table 3, it can be observed how families perceive as moderate the quality of communication with the educational setting (\bar{X} = 2,58, around 4); a small degree of participation in activities organized by the setting (\bar{X} = 1,86, around 4); quite a feeling of belonging (\bar{X} = 2,86, around 4), as well as quite a lot of collaboration in the educational process of their children from the home (\bar{X} = 3,29, around 4). These families implicate themselves very little in the AMPA (\bar{X} = 1,62, around 8) and in the School Council of the setting (\bar{X} = 1,79, around 8).

Table 3 also shows that this last profile encompasses fathers and mothers with an average age of 41 and 39 years old respectively (\bar{X} = 3,15 y \bar{X} = 2,88, around 5

intervals), the youngest parents from the participant sample; the average qualification from the father is situated between Secondary Compulsory Education and Bachillerato or FP (vocational training of medium level) (\bar{X} = 3,45, around 8), and the mother in the latter level (\bar{X} = 3,91, around 8). This conglomerate, groups families with little material resources (\bar{X} = 1,70, around 4 intervals; from 15 to 25 points), from 4 to 8 learning resources (\bar{X} = 2,55, of 4 intervals) and between 20 and 50 books (\bar{X} = 2,74, around 6 intervals).

In Figure 8, it can be observed that 12 of the numerical variables selected have been statistically significant in the configuration of the last type of families, all of them inferior to the average (critical values of t of Student of -2,91 y 2,91).

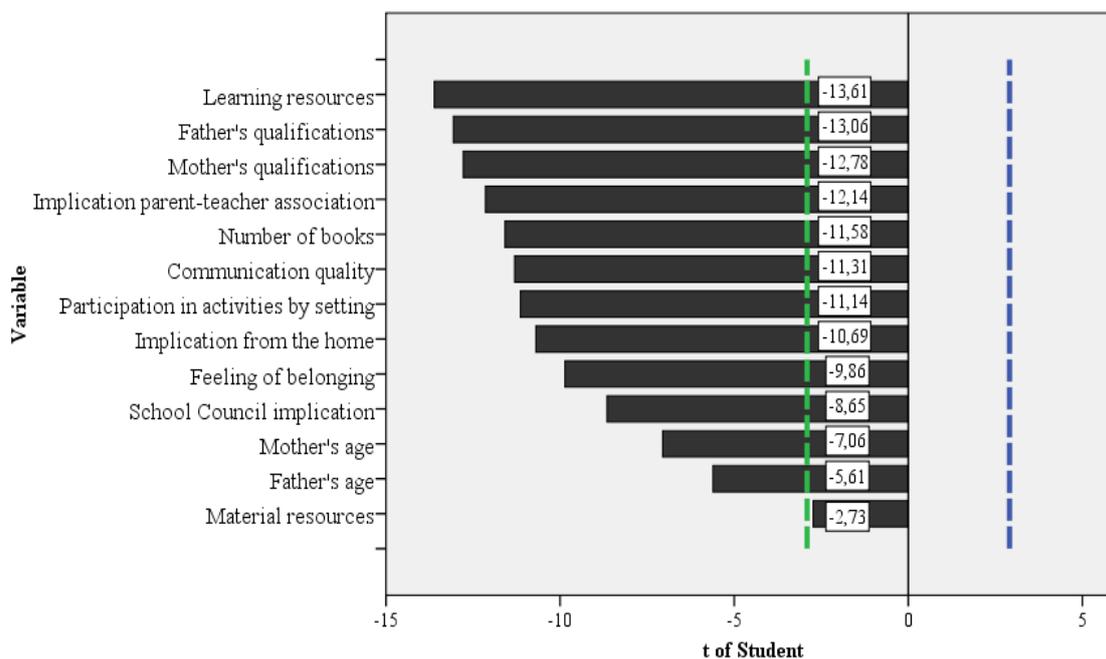


Figure 8. Importance of numerical variables in conglomerate 4.

Statistical significance and magnitude of the effect between profiles of family participation

Firstly, in relation to the two categorical variables considered in the research, “Type of setting” as well as “Nationality of families”, once the Chi-square tests were carried out and the calculation of the respective contingency

coefficients was done, by taking in twos, the four family profiles, it has been demonstrated the existence of significant differences in all possible combinations, as well as a significant correlation between each variable and the type of conglomerate ($p < .05$). However, it must be highlighted, in regards to “Type of setting”, that it is not relevant to carry out calculations

between profiles 3 and 4, as such variable is a constant; in other words, in both groupings all families have enrolled their children in State settings. In regards to the variable “Nationality of families”, the same thing happens between profiles 1 and 3, 1 and 4 and 3 and 4 (all of them integrated by Spanish fathers and/or mothers).

In regards to the numerical variables, looking first at the ones considered of family participation, the test ANOVA has shown the presence of significant differences globally between the profiles of this study ($p < .05$ for all variables). However, the tests *post hoc* indicate exceptions between some pairings of conglomerates (Table 6).

Table 6. *Absence of statistical significance of variables of family participation between pairings of family profiles*

Profiles	Variable	Statistical meaning
1-2	Feeling of belonging	,441
	Family implication in the AMPA	,258
	Family implication in the School Council	,973
1-4	Implication in School Council	,175
2-4	Family implication in the AMPA	,132
	School Council implication	,582

In regards to the rest of numerical variables contemplated for the make-up of family profiles, the test ANOVA has highlighted the

existence of significant differences between them globally ($p < .05$ for all variables). Tests *post hoc* show the exceptions in Table 7.

Table 7. *Absence of statistical significance of socio demographic numerical variables between pairs of family profiles*

Profile	Variable	Statistical meaning
1-2	Father's age	,996
	Father's age	,702
1-3	Mother's age	,682
	Father's qualifications	1
	Mother's qualifications	,891
2-3	Father's age	,914
2-4	Number of books	,247
	Material resources	,733

Given the size of the participant sample, as well as the statistical significance, it has also been calculated the magnitude of the effect of the variables contemplated in the research. For this, it has been used the contingency

coefficient value in the case of categorical variables and the index d of Cohen in the case of numerical variables. The interpretation of the size of the effect in each measurement is presented in Table 8 (Cohen, 1988).

Table 8. *Interpretation of the size of the effect*

Interpretation	Index <i>d</i>	Index <i>r</i>
Void effect	0	0
Low effect	±0,20	±0,10
Medium effect	±0,50	±0,30
High effect	±0,80	±0,50

In regards to categorical variables, the contingency coefficient has surpassed the value 0.3 demanded in all possible combinations between pairs of family profiles. Therefore, it can be argued, that the size of the effect of the two categorical variables studied, is sufficiently strong to accept a clear difference between family profiles. However, it must be remembered that calculations referred to the correlation between conglomerates 3 and 4, in regards to “Type of setting”, as well as between cluster 1 and 3, 1

and 4 and 3 and 4, related to “Nationality of families” have not been carried out as each variable is a constant in the indicated groupings.

In regards to numerical variables, taking into consideration first the ones related to family participation, Table 9 shows the value of the index *d* of Cohen (size of the effect), considering the different combinations between pairs of conglomerates which turned up to be statistically significant.

Table 9. *Size of the effect of family participation variables between pairs of family profiles with statistical significance*

Variable	Index <i>d</i> of Cohen					
	Profiles 1-2	Profiles 1-3	Profiles 1-4	Profiles 2-3	Profiles 2-4	Profiles 3-4
Quality of communication	,365	,246	,600	,597	,162	,870
Participation in activities	,334	,332	,598	,562	,245	,848
Feeling of belonging		,275	,549	,368	,431	,849
Collaboration from home	,419	,271	,682	,674	,182	1,001
Implication in AMPA		,713	,327	,831		1,093
Implication in CE		,900		,816		,980

As it can be appreciated in (Table 9) there is a clear difference between the family typologies 3 and 4 in regards to all the variables considered in family participation. This difference can also be observed between profiles 2 and 3, with the exception of the variable “Feeling of belonging”; as well as between profiles 1 and 4, with the exception of variables “Implication in the AMPA” and

“Implication in the School Council”. In regards to these two latter variables, they are the only ones which differences between profiles 1 and 3 can be considered relevant. Finally, between conglomerates 1 and 2, and 2 and 4 there are not clear differences, as index *d* has not reached the average effect in any of the variables.

In regards to the numerical socio demographic variables, Table 10 indicates a magnitude of the effect equal or superior to the typical between profiles 1 and 4, as well as between 3 and 4, with the exception of the variables “Age of father” and “Material resources”. Furthermore, the differences are sufficiently ample between profiles 2 and 3 in relation to variables in which statistical

significance has been obtained, with the exception of “Mother’s age” and “Father’s qualifications”. Between profiles 1 and 2, there was only one clear difference in relation to the variable “Number of books” (decreasing the index *d* to 1 decimal). Magnitude of effect required between profiles 1 and 3, and 2 and 4 was not appreciated in any variable.

Table 10. *Size of the effect of socio demographic numerical variables between pairs of family profiles with statistical significance*

Variable	Index <i>d</i> of Cohen					
	Profiles 1-2	Profiles 1-3	Profiles 1-4	Profiles 2-3	Profiles 2-4	Profiles 3-4
Father’s age			,319		,299	,400
Mother’s age	,306		,503	,381	,183	,589
Father’s qualifications	,365		,813	,370	,256	,818
Mother’s qualifications	,401		,900	,465	,397	,907
Number of books	,489	,166	,700	,698		,895
Learning resources	,297	,251	,760	,548	,410	1,062
Material resources	,199	,242	,145	,448		,376

Discussion

Family participation in school settings is quite varied, with different intensities, depending on the essential socio demographic characteristics of the families. Despite legislation in regards to rights of participation, authors such as Navaridas & Raya (2012) have cited that “reality does not reflect an active and meaningful participation of parents in the life of the setting” (p.239). In this sense, generally, families of conglomerate 2 and 4, denote low levels of participation in the life of the school setting, confirming in this way, that on occasions, the relationships between families and educational settings is characterised by “the report of a disagreement” (Fernández Enguita, 1993), by the disregard (Bolívar, 2006) as a result of differences of objectives (Maestre, 2009), as well as because of an ambiguous and inefficient communication which contributes to such relationship as an

educational challenge we should all question (García Bacete, 2003). According to Collet & Tort (2008) the distance that exists sometimes between family and school has its origin in the structural difference of both institutions: modernity versus postmodernity.

However, in the diversity of family typologies, results obtained in the study suggest they could go in a different direction, as more than half of the participants, whose children are in Early Years, in conglomerate 1 and 3, show a medium to high implication in the educational setting. All of this suggests that joined participation of both institutions, from shared objectives is not uniform, it is not always offered the same way, and it could be argued that families evolved in the manner of interaction with the setting and teaching staff. According to García Bacete (2003) parents, as clients, can generally adopt, two extreme positions; they either leave everything on the

hands of the teacher (delegating unconsciously, or because the teacher is the professional and he is paid to do something) or, they can consider legitimate to participate in the education of their children and they feel they can lose control over them. However, in participation it has been observed a positive evolution of families in regards to communication in school life, more diversified regarding paths of communication, despite the predominant tendency to deal with negative aspects, of behaviour, attitude and academic attainment, and where meetings are initiated generally by teaching staff, although already there is a demand of tutorials with parents by the families (Gomariz et al., 2008).

Therefore, the relevance is not in the difference of close moments in schooling, restricting to interact in initial stages and pulling away later on, but it is the way of interaction in a continuous manner by families with the educational setting throughout their children school life (Martínez-González & Alvarez-Blanco, 2005). In the case of families, this path does not represent a sole bipolar split to do with the existence or none existence of participation and ways of implication. According to the obtained results, four profiles can be identified where certain socio demographic variables such as nationality, type of setting, parents qualifications, age, learning resources, etc. are shown associated with different levels of participation in the setting, quality of participation, feeling of belonging or indirect participation through the AMPA and School Council.

The first type of families has been named *participative none normative*. It is made up of Spanish families whose children attend private/independent schools or fee waved private settings, with a medium to high education level and scarce economic resources, although a great majority of them invest in the learning of the student. The name given to this profile is due to the fact that it is integrated by fathers and mothers that participate actively in the education of their children, but at the time of collaborating

through bodies of formal participation, they show a small implication both in the AMPA and School Council of the setting. Santos & Lorenzo (2009) consider that the insertion of families in the AMPA is valued by the families as satisfactory, with a very low rate of parents maintaining an active relationship with it.

The second type of families, which could be named *none participative of none Spanish nationality*, is characterised by the integration of families of different nationality to the Spanish one of at least one parent. These parents enroll their children mainly in State schools and they have low to modest economic resources. The level of direct implication of these families in activities from the setting is scarce, with a degree of indirect implication through participation in AMPA and School Council, even lower than the previous one. It is a vague profile, as it is defined by a little less than half of the variables considered in the study.

According to Santos & Lorenzo (2009), families in which one of the parents is not of Spanish nationality maintain distant behaviors with the setting. Some of the aspects that suggest this are reflected in the fact that more than half of them mentioned not knowing or knowing little, the tutors and teaching staff of their children. Other studies also have highlighted that immigrant families participate in school meetings and activities by the setting scarcely, with a lesser frequency than national families (Hernández, Gomariz, Parr & García-Sanz, 2016).

Also, Martínez-González, Rodríguez & Gimeno (2010) indicate a medium to high participation of these families in the AMPA, in relation to inscription (76% of this families pay the fees for AMPA), but a scarce implication in its organization (78% does not collaborate) and participation in activities (less than half of them). Furthermore, González Falcón (2007) highlights that one of the main demands by teachers in regards to immigrant families, focuses in asking for implication in the Early Years stage, as many of these families come from countries in which

schooling at an early age is not generalized (Sub-Saharan Africa, Magreb, Latin America, etc) with the main communication happening through the mum (Bueno & Belda, 2005; Santos, Esteve, Ruiz & Lorenzo, 2004).

Although it occupies the third place regarding the four typologies of families found in this research, in this second profile, the feeling of belonging to the setting is shown as good by families, which shows that immigrant families are motivated to participate in the life of the setting but they don't know how to. In this sense we agree with Reparaz & Naval (2014), who state that in order to part take it is not sufficient with having the will and initiative to do so, but also they must know how to participate and be able to do so.

The third type of families has been named *participative normative*. It is made up of Spanish parents who have enrolled their children in State settings; they are the oldest and have a high level of education. Although they have more human resources than the rest of family profiles, the resources are still scarce, although they allocate the majority of them to the education of their children. This profile participates the most in activities in the setting, and they implicate themselves more in the AMPA and School Council, although such implication is moderate. They consider the setting as something theirs, in other words their feeling of belonging is high, the highest of all the profiles.

The fourth and last type of families responds to the profile *none participative of Spanish nationality*, whose children attend exclusively State schools. They are the youngest parents; they present the lowest educational level of all typologies, as well as the lowest number of resources for school learning. Their feeling of belonging, level of direct participation in the setting and implication in the AMPA and School Council is the lowest of all the family profiles. Although we agree with Garreta (2008) in saying that family implication varies in relation to nationality, national origin or not of the parents, the results in the present study

differ from the cited study as we have found in this fourth profile of families, that although they are local, they have the lowest grade of participation in the school.

Among the essential factors that could help us to explain the reasons of implication of families, we understood nationality, level of education, type of setting, learning resources and number of books to be in general, the most defining one and with a higher predictive capacity to estimate family participation in settings. Without being an exclusive and discriminatory trait, families with higher level of qualifications, find their children's education as something they must involve themselves with, in regards to accompaniment, tracking and implication. Families with lower level of qualifications are the ones with the lowest levels of participation and implication in the school life. In this sense, we agree with Martínez-González et al. (2000) in mentioning the need for settings to stimulate more direct communication with parents with lower qualifications, in order to facilitate their implication in the educational support and tracking of learning from an early age.

Also, learning resources, including number of books are related to levels of family participation. In regards to the role of economic resources, in the present study, this variable has not been significant to configure profiles 1 and 4. In other research studies results are vague. On one hand, there are many studies that highlight how there is a relationship between economic possibilities of families as one of the stronger inputs in school results (Santín, 2001). Furthermore, Bolívar (2006) recognizes that family participation is usually scarce, mainly in those poor socio economic contexts, where oddly, a greater implication is required. In these conditions, there are many difficulties presented to families in order to implicate themselves: absence of one parent from the family core because of extensive work hours, a lack of an educational family model, lack of confidence in education as a path to a better future, alternatives not very positive that their context

offers, among others. Opposite to this, Domínguez & Fernández (2007) conclude that the socio economic level of families does not influence the aspects related to participation. Feito (2007) defends despite not existing significant differences in participation in regards to economic resources according to the location of the setting, that families from settings in disadvantaged areas implicate themselves less in the education of their children than those families in settings in medium to high class areas. This fact evidences, the need to establish joint action commitments between the family and school in vulnerable contexts.

In regards to the difference between the four types of family participation, it has been proved that the absence of statistical significance between profiles affects mainly the second typology, coinciding with the conglomerate which is less defined of the four. In terms of magnitude of differences which are significant, there is a clear distance between profiles 1-4, 2-3 and 3-4. Between the rest of profiles, differences are more diffuse.

Therefore, regarding the research hypothesis, it can be confirmed, that, although the existence of family groupings has been proved, which revolve around a series of variables related to family participation and socio demographic character, the difference or distance between some profiles is not entirely defined.

Early Years, is the stage that traditionally maintains a closer relationship between family and school; however, it does not guarantee, on its own, a family participation and implication of quality in the education of children. It is necessary to design intervention programs directed to the training of parents that should prioritise inclusion of family groups with little participation dynamics, in order to be actively involved in the collaboration nets of educational settings (Dabas, 2005; Parra, Ceballos, Fontana & Bartau, 2012). In conclusion, proposals and inclusive programs are needed to promote effective democratization that would foster family

commitment with school education (Buarque, 2012); Teaching Training Institute, Research and Education Innovation, 2011).

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Notes

1. The present study derives from a research promoted and financed by the State School Board. We have followed recommendations by the Spanish Royal Academy (2005) in this article, and have used the masculine form to refer equally to both genders.
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