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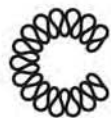
Differential effects of chilean schools accountability on parent participation

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Effects of Chilean schools' accountability on parent participation

Efecto de la rendición de cuentas de las escuelas chilenas sobre la participación de padres

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Abstract

The educational reforms implemented in Latin America have encouraged parent participation in order to regulate school effectiveness. The assumption is that the model will work as long as schools provide families with public, pertinent, and timely information. When the right to choose freely cannot be exercised, school effectiveness can be regulated through parent participation in school activities. The main objective of this study was to estimate the effects of household socioeconomic status and type of information provided by the school on parent participation in school activities. A cross-sectional, quantitative, non-experimental study of the association of information and parent participation with household socioeconomic status was conducted using least squares regression analysis (OLS) and binary logistic regression models. The study is based on data from a subsample of 258 people who reported having at least one child enrolled in high school. We used data from the Metropolitan Family and Education Survey developed by the Centro de Estudio e Investigación sobre Familia (CEIF). The results show that parents are more willing to participate in activities related to everyday aspects of their children's school experience. OLS models reveal some elements that positively influence parent participation: accountability (.24), personal student information (.42), and high socioeconomic status (2.49). Our conclusion is

that the provision of personal student information, along with the accountability of institutional management, can increase the relative probability of a more active participation of families in functional classroom activities.

Keywords: School Effectiveness, accountability, parent participation

Resumen

Las reformas educacionales latinoamericanas han convocado la participación de los como reguladores de la efectividad escolar. El supuesto es que el modelo funciona en la medida que las escuelas provean de información pública, pertinente y oportuna a las familias. Cuando el derecho de libre elección no puede ejercerse, la regulación de la eficacia escolar puede hacerse a través de la participación de los padres en las actividades de la escuela. El presente estudio tuvo como principal propósito estimar los efectos que tienen el nivel socioeconómico del hogar y el tipo de información proporcionada por la escuela sobre la participación de los padres en la escuela. Se realizó un estudio transversal, cuantitativo y no experimental de la relación entre información y participación de padres con el nivel socioeconómico del hogar, a partir de un análisis de regresión de mínimos cuadrados (OLS) y modelos de regresión logística binaria. El estudio se basa en los datos de una submuestra de 258 personas que declararon tener al menos un hijo cursando enseñanza escolar. Se utilizaron los datos provenientes de la Encuesta Metropolitana de Familia y Educación desarrollada por el Centro de Estudios e Investigación sobre Familia (CEIF). Los resultados muestran que los padres presentan mayor disposición a participar en actividades relacionadas con la cotidianeidad de la experiencia escolar de los hijos e hijas. A partir de los modelos OLS se constatan efectos positivos en la participación de los padres, a saber: la rendición de cuentas (.24), la información personal del estudiante (.42) y alto nivel socioeconómico (2,49). Se concluye, que la provisión de información personal del estudiante, en conjunto con la rendición de cuentas de la gestión institucional de las escuelas, aumentan la probabilidad relativa de una participación más activa de las familias en actividades funcionales al trabajo docente en el aula.

Palabras clave: Eficacia escolar, rendición de cuentas, , participación de padres

Introduction

The analysis of the results obtained by Latin American students on the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) test confirms

their poor performance compared with the average score of the participating countries (OCDE, 2013). A more detailed analysis shows how the unequal distribution of students among schools increases depending on their families' socioeconomic background (Treviño, Salazar & Donoso, 2011). Even though contextual variables such as student SES are better predictors of academic performance, research inspired by the school effectiveness movement shows that, in the specific case of students from economically and culturally disadvantaged backgrounds, schools can make a difference (Carriego, 2010; Murillo, 2011; OCDE, 2011; Scheerens, Witziers & Steen, 2013). Nevertheless, a number of empirical studies reviewed suggest that parent participation in schools is a relevant mediating factor during the first years of education in childhood (Martinez & Niemelä, 2010; Sanchez, Valdés, Reyes & Martinez, 2010).

Theoretically, it has been proposed that the course of psychological and academic development in childhood depends on a person's chances to receive stimulation that targets his/her potential, his/her perception of his/her environment, and the way in which other people involved in his/her developmental process interact with him/her. Activities, roles, and meanings, deployed at different systemic levels of development –or ecological environments, as suggested by Urie Bronfenbrenner (2005)– are what models children's psychosocial and academic trajectories. Direct interaction environments (micro-system level), which exist at the level of intra-family, intra-school, and classroom relationships, and those which occur in other social spaces where students do not participate, the meso- and exosystem levels of development (e.g. parent participation at school, parents' workplace, among others). This theory suggests that these systems are not disconnected from each other. All social practices involve decision-making, actions, and interpretations which inevitably affect the disposition, activities, relationships, and meanings that students construct regarding their schooling process (Epstein, 2013; Gonzalez & Jackson, 2013; Linse, 2011). The ecological perspective highlights underlying psychosocial processes. In the specific field of parent participation, the research derived from this theory has fostered the development of analysis models which include the taxonomy proposed by Joyce Epstein (2013) (e.g. parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with community). Despite its importance, parent participation in school activities has received scarce attention. European authors state that research has focused on parents'

involvement at home rather than on their participation at school (Avvisati, Besbas & Guyon, 2010; Martinez & Niemelä, 2010).

Latin American educational reforms have organized educational systems around school autonomy (López, 2006). Based on the school choice model, educational institutions request parents' participation in their capacity as clients and regulators of school activity. The assumption is that family preferences pressure schools into competing with others to attract more students, which forces schools to innovate in order to obtain better results and to be publicly accountable for the processes employed and the achievements obtained. According to OECD data (2011), access to timely and relevant information makes it more likely for students to obtain better academic results. This model also suggests that when the right to choose freely cannot be exercised –for example, due to financial constraints– school effectiveness can be regulated from within the school through parental involvement in school activities (Canosa, 2010; Corvalán & McMeekin, 2006). Studies conducted in Chile show that internal regulation mechanisms are still unclear (Thieme & Treviño, 2011).

International evidence suggests the existence of different parent participation patterns depending on the economic and cultural backgrounds of the families. For instance, some studies show that the lower a family's income and cultural capital, the lower the presence of parents in school-organized activities. Explanatory factors include practical reasons, such as a working day which is incompatible with the scheduling of school activities, difficulties taking care of children at home, and insufficient knowledge about the educational tasks conducted by the school, among others (Hill & Tyson, 2009; Gubbins, 2013; Poncelet & Francis, 2010). The higher the parents' income and educational level, the greater their interest in collaborating with teachers and in exerting more leadership in the parent-teacher association (Sanchez et al., 2010; Sy, Rowley & Schulenberg, 2007). Recent studies conducted in Chile reveal a similar trend (Hernandez & Raczynski, 2010; Gubbins, 2014). However, these are qualitative studies which fail to tackle the relationship between the type of information provided to families by schools and the level of parent participation in school activities, a situation that makes it impossible to establish generalizations applicable to larger populations.

In this context, the present article attempts to answer the following questions: What is the effect of the information provided by schools to parents over parent participation in school activities? What is the degree

of influence of the socioeconomic status of families over parental involvement in school activities? The article explores the following hypotheses: a) providing personal information has a positive effect – greater than that of providing institutional information to families– on parents' participation in school activities, b) the higher a family's SES, the more parents tend to participate in school activities.

Method

The study sought to estimate the effects of parent participation in school activities, the information provided by schools, and household SES. The design of the study is quantitative, non-experimental, and cross-sectional. The data used were taken from the Metropolitan Family and Education Survey, developed by Universidad Finis Terrae's Centro de Estudio e Investigación sobre Familia (CEIF) [Family Study and Research Center].

Sample

The survey was administered to 860 individuals aged 18 or up, living in Santiago de Chile. Each person selected to be in the sample took a structured standard questionnaire used to collect opinions and attitudes about the participation of parents in the activities organized by their children's school, as well as about the information provided by the school. Based on probability sampling, the sample was selected in four stages. In the first stage, it was stratified by district, using proportional affixation; in the second stage, clusters of blocks were chosen at random, in the third one, six houses were randomly selected in each block, and in the final one, a person at least 18 years old who resided in the home, excluding domestic workers, was randomly surveyed. This process yielded information from 34 districts of the Metropolitan Region of Santiago de Chile, representing 97% of the province of Santiago. The fieldwork lasted 10 weeks, from June 29th to August 29th, 2013. The sample included 258 people who stated that they had at least one child attending school, which equals 32% of the total number of cases. 68.2% of the persons surveyed are women, and the average age of the sample is 41 years ($\pm 6.1\%$ margin of error, 95% CI). As table I shows, the dependent variable used is parent participation,

conceived differently depending on the type of statistical analysis applied. On the one hand, for the OLS regression models, a Parent Participation Scale was constructed upon the basis of a set of items. On the other hand, for the logistic regression models, dummy variables were used. The independent variables used are socioeconomic status (SES) –as a proxy of objective status–, two scales about the information received by parents from the school (institutional and personal), and multiple sociodemographic controls such as sex, age, number of children, and marital status of the parents.

TABLE I. Study variables

Type	Variable	Attribute
Dependent		
Parent Participation	Parent Participation Scale	0 (lowest score) - 16 (highest score)
	8 dummy variables about parent participation in school activities	0 = Does not participate - 1 = Does participate or sometimes does
Independent		
Status proxy	Socioeconomic Status	High
		Middle
		Low (reference)
Institutional information	Institutional information scale	0 (lowest score) - 8 (highest score)
Personal information	Personal information scale	0 (lowest score) - 12 (highest score)
Sociodemographic controls	Sex	Female = 1 - Male = 0 (reference)
	Age	Years
	Children	Number of children
	Marital status	Single
		Married or cohabiting
	Separated or divorced (reference)	

Instruments

The Parent Participation Scale was constructed upon the basis of a set of 8 items about parents' participation in the activities organized by their children's schools. These are: parent-teacher conferences, meetings with teachers, parent and guardian association meetings, ceremonies, school trips and social gatherings, parent-child events, reception of academic performance reports, and talks for supporting parents' educational role hosted by their children's school. Possible responses lie within a 3-point range (from 0 to 2), where 0 = "Does not participate"; 1 = "Sometimes participates"; 2 = "Does participate". The Scale considers the total sum of the values for the 8 items considered. Therefore, the theoretical score ranges from a minimum of 0 to a maximum of 16. According to the characteristics of the scale, a higher score fosters an attitude oriented towards active participation, whereas a lower score results in an attitude oriented towards non-participation. In order to assess the internal consistency of the scale, Cronbach's alpha was used. The value obtained for the set of items was 0.8.

The construct "information provided by the school" was analyzed based on the results obtained on the two scales. Construct validity was assessed via Principal Components Analysis (PCA). To facilitate the interpretation of the factor solution, the Varimax rotation method was selected. The second criterion evaluated was internal consistency, measured with Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Two principal components were identified: institutional information and personal student information. The first component includes items related to the school's institutional situation, teacher evaluation data, and selection criteria for staff and students. The second one refers to the reception of information about the student's and the school's academic performance, the school's learning standards, the school's SIMCE scores, the student's behavior, and the student's developmental stage. The values for each response are: 0 = "Does not receive it"; 1 = "Sometimes receives it"; 2 = "Does receive it". Afterwards, the values for each of the items that comprised the dimensions were added, which formed the basis of the two information scales. The first one was labeled "Institutional Information Scale", while the second was labeled "Personal Information Scale". The potential values for the Institutional Information Scale range from 0 to 8 points, with scores closer to 0 indicating lower levels of institutional information and scores closer to 8 reflecting higher levels (Cronbach's alpha: 0.79). With

respect to the Personal Information Scale, the highest possible value is 12 (Cronbach's alpha: 0.69).

Procedure

In each randomly selected home, the researchers asked if there was a person aged at least 18 years who would accept to participate voluntarily and confidentially in the study. Each questionnaire included all the relevant information, which was read aloud to each interviewee. Once they gave their informed consent, they were handed university contact information in case they had any questions. The survey was conducted through face-to-face personal interviews which lasted 35 minutes on average. Once the information had been collected, the reliability of the scales constructed was analyzed. The study of the relationship between information, participation, and household SES was conducted through a bivariate analysis of contingency tables. In order to analyze the predictive effect of the independent variables over the variation of the results obtained on the parent participation scale, the decision was made to generate four multiple linear regression models which included, successively, the SES, institutional information, and personal information covariables. To control for the effects of the variables of interest, other sociodemographic variables were included, such as the sex and age of the respondent and the number of children declared. To study in more detail the effects of information provided by the school over each instance of Parent Participation, eight binary logistic regression models were generated, one per item in the Parent Participation Scale. Each of the variables associated with parent participation in their children's school operates as a distinctive dependent variable in one of the models. In order to do this, the original categories of the items have been coded so that the "Yes" and "Sometimes" attributes have been merged into a single category, precisely the category of interest. On the other hand, the "No" attribute preserved its original arrangement. Thus, in all models, the dependent variable includes two categories, with value "1" reflecting participation and value "0" indicating non-participation (dummy variables). Lastly, and consistently with the research questions posed, Parental Participation was modeled using least squares regression (OLS) and binary logistic regression. The analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics 22 and Stata 13.

Results

The analysis of the effect of the school information received by the families and the household SES on parent participation in school activities yields the following results:

Families receive more information about each individual student than about the institutional operation of the school.

The analysis of the variables associated with “school information received by the parents” reveals a greater proportion of responses concerning personal student information than institutional information. As Table II shows, the largest proportion is concentrated on children’s academic performance (85.77%) and behavior (83.55%). The next variables concern the academic performance of the class (67.7%) and the school’s SIMCE score (61.62%). Information regarding students’ developmental stage was present in 56.78% of the responses. Negative responses involve student selection criteria (37.78%) and the school’s financial situation (27.68%). Teacher evaluation data and selection criteria reach lower percentages (22.43% and 14.81% respectively).

This evidence portrays a situation where the school seems to privilege the transmission of individual information, either about the individual academic performance or the behavior of each student, above the publication of results associated with several institutional administration matters. All things considered, and despite having better access to personal student information, families still believe that the information provided by schools is insufficient (4.54 out of 12 points on the personal information scale and 2.71 points out of 8 on the institutional information scale).

The greater the families’ economic contribution to the schools, the better their access to the schools’ institutional information.

A more detailed analysis of the type of information provided by schools, considering household SES, reveals that, even though they receive insufficient institutional information, low-SES families seem to be

better informed about the schools' financial management and teacher activities in the school. As Table II shows, this is the part of the sample with the largest proportion of affirmative responses in all the items related to the Institutional Information dimension. High-SES homes, despite funding the whole of their children's education, receive the least amount of institutional information from the schools, especially regarding their financial situation (17.20%), teacher evaluation (15.96%), and teacher selection criteria (8.60%). The greater the parents' economic contribution, the less institutional information schools provide about their students.

Families know little about the developmental processes of their children as individuals.

The results also show that the information received by families from all the socioeconomic levels studied tends to focus on results obtained through cross-sectional and standardized measurements (e.g. individual academic performance and behavior of students). More qualitative information, of the kind explored in the items "description of minimum achievement levels" and "stage of development of your child", receive the lowest affirmative response percentages in this sample. On the other hand, nearly all middle-SES families state that they receive more information about their children's academic performance (93.94%) and achievement levels (63.64%) compared to the other two social levels (85.26% and 44.68% for high-SES families; 81.42% and 54.87% for low-SES families). Low-SES families appear to receive more information about the developmental stage that their children are in than high- and middle-SES families (63.39% versus 54.26% and 49.25% respectively).

TABLE II. Percentage of information provided by schools, by SES

		High	Middle	Low	Total
Academic performance of your child	No	1.05	0.00	3.54	1.82
	Sometimes	13.68	6.06	15.04	12.41
	Yes	85.26	93.94	81.42	85.77
					(7.00)
Learning standards or description of minimum achievement levels	No	20.21	15.15	16.81	17.58
	Sometimes	35.11	21.21	28.32	28.94
	Yes	44.68	63.64	54.87	53.48
					(5.92)
Academic performance of your child's class	No	12.63	10.61	14.29	12.82
	Sometimes	29.47	18.18	11.61	19.41
	Yes	57.89	71.21	74.11	67.77
					(11.11)**
SIMCE score of the school	No	19.35	24.24	33.04	26.20
	Sometimes	12.90	16.67	8.93	12.18
	Yes	67.74	59.09	58.04	61.62
					(6.73)
Behavior of your child	No	0.00	4.48	4.42	2.92
	Sometimes	13.83	13.43	13.27	13.50
	Yes	86.17	82.09	82.30	83.58
					(4.31)
Developmental stage of your child	No	22.34	26.87	21.43	23.08
	Sometimes	23.40	23.88	15.18	20.15
	Yes	54.26	49.25	63.39	56.78
					(4.54)
Financial situation of the school	No	72.04	54.55	54.46	60.52
	Sometimes	10.75	16.67	9.82	11.81
	Yes	17.20	28.79	35.71	27.68
					(11.22)**
Teacher evaluation information	No	70.21	65.15	58.93	64.34
	Sometimes	13.83	13.64	12.50	13.24
	Yes	15.96	21.21	28.57	22.43
					(4.78)
Staff selection criteria	No	83.87	73.85	62.50	72.59
	Sometimes	7.53	13.85	16.07	12.59
	Yes	8.60	12.31	21.43	14.81
					(12.27)**
Student selection criteria	No	47.37	48.48	38.39	43.96
	Sometimes	17.89	18.18	18.75	18.32
	Yes	34.74	33.33	42.86	37.73
					(2.71)

Note: Pearson's chi-squared test results in brackets, n = between 255 and 257 cases, depending on the item. **p < .05.

Source: created by the author

Parents are more willing to participate in activities associated with the everyday school experiences of their children.

The Parent Participation Scale reached a mean of 10.1 points. The direction of the scale suggests that families, regardless of their SES, are interested in participating in the activities organized by schools. In descriptive terms, the data presented in Table III indicate that more traditional events result in the highest participation rates. These include parent-teacher conferences (77.21%) and meetings with teachers (70.80%). These are followed by the reception of academic performance reports (58.91%), ceremonies (53.82%), school trips and social gatherings (50.73%), and parent-child events (43.80%). Lower percentages are observed for participation in talks for supporting the educational role of parents (39.42%) and in the instances that link parents' voice with the school's management, such as parent and guardian associations (28.83%). Families are more willing to participate in activities which are directly related with children's everyday school experiences, rather than in others that require more involvement and influence in institutional matters.

Middle-SES families display the most interest in participating in the parent and guardian associations of their children's schools.

Table III shows that high-SES families participate more and in a wider variety of events than the other two social groups. In contrast, the lower a family's income, the lower the parents' participation in activities organized by the schools. In fact, most low-SES families appear to have a preference for parent-teacher conferences (75.89%), meetings with teachers (65.79%), and the reception of academic performance reports (55.65%). On the other hand, middle-SES families appear to be more prone to participating in parent and guardian associations (34.33%).

TABLE III. Percentage of parent participation by SES

		Socioeconomic Status			Total
		High	Middle	Low	
Parent-teacher conferences	No	3.19	15.15	10.71	9.19
	Sometimes	12.77	15.15	13.39	13.60
	Yes	84.04	69.70	75.89	77.21
					(7.76)
Meetings with teachers	No	7.45	16.67	15.79	13.14
	Sometimes	17.02	10.61	18.42	16.06
	Yes	75.53	72.73	65.79	70.80
					(5.96)
Parent and guardian association	No	46.24	56.72	58.77	54.01
	Sometimes	25.81	8.96	14.91	17.15
	Yes	27.96	34.33	26.32	28.83
					(9.61)**
Ceremonies	No	9.57	21.21	23.48	18.18
	Sometimes	24.47	27.27	31.30	28.00
	Yes	65.96	51.52	45.22	53.82
					(11.01)**
School trips and social gatherings	No	13.83	28.36	34.51	25.91
	Sometimes	25.53	25.37	20.35	23.36
	Yes	60.64	46.27	45.13	50.73
					(12.20)**
Parent-child events	No	19.15	27.27	39.47	29.56
	Sometimes	29.79	24.24	25.44	26.64
	Yes	51.06	48.48	35.09	43.80
					(11.35)**
Reception of academic performance reports	No	20.21	33.33	26.09	25.82
	Sometimes	17.02	7.58	18.26	15.27
	Yes	62.77	59.09	55.65	58.91
					(6.46)
Talks for supporting parents' educational role	No	31.91	43.94	44.74	40.15
	Sometimes	21.28	24.24	17.54	20.44
	Yes	46.81	31.82	37.72	39.42
					(5.74)

Note: Pearson's chi-squared test results in brackets, n = between 257 and 258 cases, depending on the item. **p < .05.

Source: created by the author

Giving parents more institutional information may increase families' involvement in activities organized by the school.

Model 1, shown in table IV, reveals that SES is a significant predictor of parent participation, controlling for sex, age, marital status, and number of children. As a whole, the model explains 16% of the variance of the parent participation scale. In fact, high-SES parents attain higher participation scores than low-SES ones ($\beta = 2.33$). The difference is significant with 99% confidence ($p < 0.01$). On the other hand, middle-SES parents also have a higher average participation score than low-SES ones ($\beta = 1.11$). However, in this case the difference is not statistically significant. Model 2 shows that the institutional information scale is a significant predictor of parent participation ($p < 0.01$), explaining 15% of the variance, controlling for the rest of the variables considered. This indicates that, as more institutional information is perceived to be provided by the school, parent participation may also increase ($\beta = 0.35$).

Third, by including the personal information scale in Model 3, it can be stated that the effect of the variable is significant with 99% confidence ($\beta = 0.53$, $p < 0.01$), when controlling for the rest of the variables. That is, it can be inferred that, in the case of this sample of Chilean parents with school-age children, the personal information provided by the school positively affects parent participation. In this case, the model explains 21% of the variance of the dependent variable, which is regarded as a major advantage over the first two models. Model 4 includes all the variables characterized in the previous models, which makes it possible to explain 28% of the variance of the parent participation scale. Regarding this point, it is important to stress that the values of the variance inflation factor (VIF), calculated in order to detect multicollinearity in the model, do not surpass the critical recommended value ($VIF < 10$). Thus, and as the model indicates, it can be observed that high-SES families preserve their significant association with 99% confidence, slightly increasing their difference with respect to low-SES families ($\beta = 2.49$, $p < 0.01$). On the other hand, middle-SES parents still display a difference that is not statistically significant with respect to low-SES ones. Regarding the institutional and personal information scales, both predictors preserve a significant association with the dependent variable, even though their magnitude decreases.

TABLE IV. OLS regression models of parent participation by SES, institutional information scale, and personal information scale

		Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
SES (ref: low)	High	2.33***			2.49***
		(4.19)			(4.74)
	Middle	0.93			0.92
		(1.50)			(1.59)
Institutional information			0.35***		0.24**
			(3.88)		(2.52)
Personal information				0.53***	0.42***
				(6.00)	(4.54)
Sex (female = 1)		2.40***	2.15***	2.10***	2.32***
		(4.93)	(4.47)	(4.55)	(5.14)
Age		0.01	0.01	0.01	0.00
		(0.23)	(0.32)	(0.16)	(0.00)
Number of children		0.36	0.27	0.19	0.32
		(1.78)	(1.14)	(0.82)	(1.44)
Marital status (ref: separated or divorced)	Single	1.95**	1.36	1.80**	1.73**
		(2.33)	(1.62)	(2.24)	(2.21)
	Married or cohabiting	1.70**	1.95***	1.97***	1.74***
		(2.58)	(2.99)	(3.13)	(2.85)
Constant		5.10***	5.38***	1.76	0.95
		(5.53)	(3.86)	(1.16)	(4.38)
R2		0.16	0.15	0.21	0.28

Note: non-standardized coefficients, t scores in brackets. n = 255. **p < .05; ***p < .01.

Source: created by the author

The information provided by the schools predicts the meaning that parent participation in school activities can have.

As Table V shows, model 1 seeks to evaluate if the variables considered affect the relative probability of participation in parent-teacher conferences. The β value of the Institutional Information scale shows that, the higher the level of institutional information, the less likely parents are to participate in parent-teacher conferences (Exp (β) = 0.89, $p < 0.05$), controlling for the rest of the variables. The Personal Information Scale was not found to be a significant predictor of participation in parent-teacher conferences. Model 2 seeks to evaluate if the variables considered affect the probability of participating in meetings with teachers. With respect to this issue, the Personal Information Scale is a positive and highly significant predictor: each additional point of personal student information received by the parents increases the relative probability of parent participation in meetings with teachers by 37% (Exp (β) = 1.37, $p < 0.01$), controlling for the rest of the variables. In contrast, in the other two models (4 and 5) personal information has a positive effect over parent participation in ceremonies, school trips, and social gatherings. Specifically, a greater amount of personal information provided by the school is associated with greater odds of participating in ceremonies (Exp (β) = 1.16, $p < 0.05$) and school trips and social gatherings (Exp (β) = 1.12, $p < 0.1$), controlling for the rest of the variables. As model 3 shows, institutional information is a good predictor of parent participation in parent and guardian associations. In fact, higher scores on the Institutional Information Scale are associated with higher odds ratios (18%) of participating in parent and guardian associations (Exp (β) = 1.18, $p < 0.01$), after controlling for the rest of the variables. In the last three models (6, 7, and 8), both institutional and personal information are revealed to be significant predictors. The β values of the Institutional and Personal Information scales are positive, which indicates that higher levels of institutional and personal information are associated with higher odds ratios of participating in parent-child events (12%), reception of academic performance reports (15%), and talks for supporting parents' educational role (24%).

Regarding the classification variables which, at the same time, make it possible to control for the effects of the information provided by the school over parent participation, some relevant results must be noted. First, high SES is a positive predictor in all models. In fact, high-SES parents are more likely to participate in all activities than low-SES parents, after controlling

for the rest of the variables. Specifically, high SES is the most significant predictor for explaining participation in ceremonies, school trips and social gatherings, and parent-child events (Exp (β) = 3.53, 3.78, 2.56 respectively, $p < 0.01$). Second, sex is also a very relevant explanatory variable. Given that parents' sex is coded so that the value "0" is associated with men and "1" with women, a positive β value indicates that women are more likely to report participation than men. In any case, this premise is observed in all participation opportunities. In fact, being female is significantly associated with more parent participation in all the models described, after controlling for the rest of the variables. Nevertheless, the coefficients related to participation in parent-guardian associations and ceremonies display values which are not statistically significant. Third, the age variable is a significant predictor of participation in parent and guardian associations. Specifically, the β value for age is positive, which means that being older is associated with greater odds of participating in parent and guardian associations (Exp (β) = 1.03, $p < 0.1$), after controlling for the rest of the variables. In fact, every additional year of parental age increases the odds of participating in these school activities by 3%. Fourth, the number of children that parents have behaves as a statistically significant predictor only for the reception of academic performance reports and talks for supporting parents' educational role, after controlling for the rest of the variables. More specifically, the β value for the number of children is positive, which means that having more children increases the odds of going to the school to receive academic performance reports and attend talks for supporting the educational role of parents (Exp (β) = 1.62 and 1.45 respectively, $p < 0.01$ and 0.05). In fact, every additional child increases the odds of parental reception of academic performance reports by 62% on average. Likewise, this variable increases the likelihood of participating in talks for supporting parents' educational role by 45%. Fifth, the marital status of the parents is a variable which makes it possible to study some aspects of participation in more detail. On the one hand, being a single parent is a positive predictor of participation in parent-teacher conferences, meetings with teachers, parent-guardian associations, parent-child events, and academic performance reports. In fact, single parents are more likely to participate in such activities than separated or divorced parents (reference), after controlling for the rest of the variables. On the other hand, like single parents, married parents display greater odds of participating in parent-teacher conferences, meetings with teachers, ceremonies, and parent-children events than separated or divorced parents.

TABLE V. Logistic regression models predicting the odds of Parent Participation in various school activities

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Institutional information		0.89**	0.95	1.18***	1.06	0.99	1.12*	1.16**	1.16**
		(1.49)	(0.27)	(8.45)	(0.64)	(0.04)	(3.35)	(4.63)	(5.58)
Personal information		1.25	1.37***	1.04	1.16**	1.12*	1.12**	1.15**	1.24***
		(5.17)	(15.27)	(0.42)	(5.10)	(3.15)	(3.95)	(5.68)	(12.59)
SES (ref: low)	High	6.33**	3.73**	2.19**	2.99**	3.53***	3.78***	2.09**	2.56***
		(5.96)	(5.53)	(6.25)	(6.26)	(10.96)	(13.79)	(3.83)	(7.66)
	Middle	0.75	1.35	1.17	1.21	1.57	2.11**	0.82	1.39
		(0.27)	(0.36)	(0.21)	(0.23)	(1.50)	(4.11)	(0.26)	(0.84)
Sex (female = 1)		18.63***	6.32***	1.22	1.38	2.18***	1.73*	1.67*	2.22***
		(16.61)	(14.86)	(0.57)	(0.88)	(6.59)	(3.52)	(2.74)	(7.78)
Age		0.99	0.97	1.03*	0.98	1.01	1.00	1.00	0.98
		(0.07)	(1.54)	(3.59)	(1.11)	(0.16)	(0.02)	(0.09)	(1.93)
Number of children		0.95	1.31	1.15	1.10	0.9	1.10	1.62***	1.45**
		(0.04)	(1.62)	(1.11)	(0.17)	(1.08)	(0.38)	(8.22)	(6.43)
Marital status (ref: separated or divorced)	Single	9.15***	5.36**	3.05**	1.28	1.27	2.51*	4.75***	1.54
		(6.80)	(5.24)	(5.49)	(0.24)	(0.23)	(3.38)	(7.57)	(0.77)
	Married or cohabiting	5.28***	3.35**	1.79	2.62**	1.76	1.92*	1.79	1.64
		(7.77)	(6.16)	(2.41)	(5.35)	(2.15)	(3.04)	(2.26)	(1.71)
Constant		0.23	0.10*	0.03*	0.66	0.31	0.11**	0.08*	0.05***
		(1.09)	(3.55)	(14.50)	(0.16)	(1.51)	(5.72)	(6.63)	(9.92)
Nagelkerke's R2		0.37	0.33	0.13	0.14	0.13	0.16	0.21	0.25
Parent Participation Items that function as dependent variables									
1 Parent-teacher conferences					5 School trips and social gatherings				
2 Meetings with teachers					6 Parent-child events				
3 Parent and guardian association					7 Academic performance reports				
4 Ceremonies					8 Talks for supporting parents' educational role				

Note: Exp (β), Wald test, n = 255. * p < .1; **p < .05; ***p < .01.

Source: created by the author

Conclusions

The results obtained indicate that the SES of the families and the information provided by the schools have significant effects over the scope and type of participation of parents in school activities. These results support the evidence obtained in other international studies (Martínez & Niemelä, 2010; Sanchez et al., 2010).

The perception of the families surveyed is that the school is more interested in providing personal information (academic performance and behavior) rather than information about the rules and functioning of the institution in general and about teacher work in particular. It is surprising to see that high-SES families are the ones that receive the lowest amount of information about these topics. According to Corvalán & McMeekin (2006), accountability in schools is intended to provide information about the responsibilities of the parties involved in the processes and results of education. This finding suggests that paying more for a school does not guarantee more school accountability. The information circulating between the school and the families is still insufficient. This result suggests the hypothesis that schools have a limited view of the situation and ascribe to families most of the responsibility for the results obtained by students. The role of teacher activity in this field is made invisible.

A second consideration is that high-SES families report that they receive less information about the developmental processes and the academic results of their students than the other two socioeconomic groups. The international evidence reviewed suggests that private schools serving more economically advantaged student populations do not necessarily help to increase the academic results of the educational system as a whole (OCDE, 2011). The school choice model presumes that being able to pay more increases families' power to pressurize schools into improving. The results obtained in this study suggest that these families not only lack information about the developmental processes of their children but also have no influence over the financial management of the resources that they provide. Such a relational logic may be helping to preserve the current inertia of these schools. This is a hypothesis which should be tackled in future research in order to further clarify it.

Middle-SES families report the highest level of participation in parent and guardian associations. This finding is consistent with the evidence found in some European countries (Le Pape & Van Zanten, 2009; Vincent,

Rollock & Gillborn, 2012). Organized and institutional participation has been considered to be a central strategy for increasing students' academic success and constructing a deliberative and democratic coexistence in schools (Martinez & Niemelä, 2010). This is even more relevant for societies taking part in economically and culturally globalized development processes. As Vila (2006) aptly points out, the age of globalization demands "(...) a search for the universality of human rights and democratic values as the basic norms of coexistence" (p.905). The novel aspect of the present study is that it shows that institutional information significantly increases the likelihood of increasing the group-based and institutionalized participation of families. Likewise, if the combination of school autonomy and accountability is associated with improved academic results, national educational policies should be able to put more pressure on schools to make them increase the transparency of the processes that they conduct and the results that they obtain in the administrative, financial, and pedagogical fields. In this regard, the market does not seem to be pushing towards greater school effectiveness (Murillo, 2011; OECD, 2011).

The present study reveals the gap between what educational policy promotes and how schools are managed. On the one hand, legislation promotes the regulation of school effectiveness based on accountability via information for families. On the other hand, parents only receive personal information related to the academic aspects of their children's school life at the individual level. These two divergent perspectives may be contributing to the reproduction of the current state of slow improvements in education quality and school segregation that characterizes the Chilean educational system. As suggested by Gonzalez & Jackson (2013), by privileging personal student information above institutional information, the school itself limits its chances of increasing parent participation in activities that can result in higher levels of classroom work optimization.

From a methodological point of view, it must be noted that a probability sample was used, taken from a population that is difficult to access: parents of school-age children. Schools are not always willing to administer surveys to their students' families. They are worried about how parents may assess the school's administrative and teaching decisions. This study also introduces highly reliable scales for measuring the information provided by the school and parent participation in school

activities. Lastly, we must mention the need to study the research questions with larger samples, which should make it possible to increase the precision and scope of the estimations made. In addition, it is necessary to construct instruments that include other independent variables such as occupation, length of parents' work day, and students' family structure in order to continue adding depth to the explanatory analysis of the phenomenon of parent participation in connection with the improvement of educational quality and the reduction of school segregation.

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