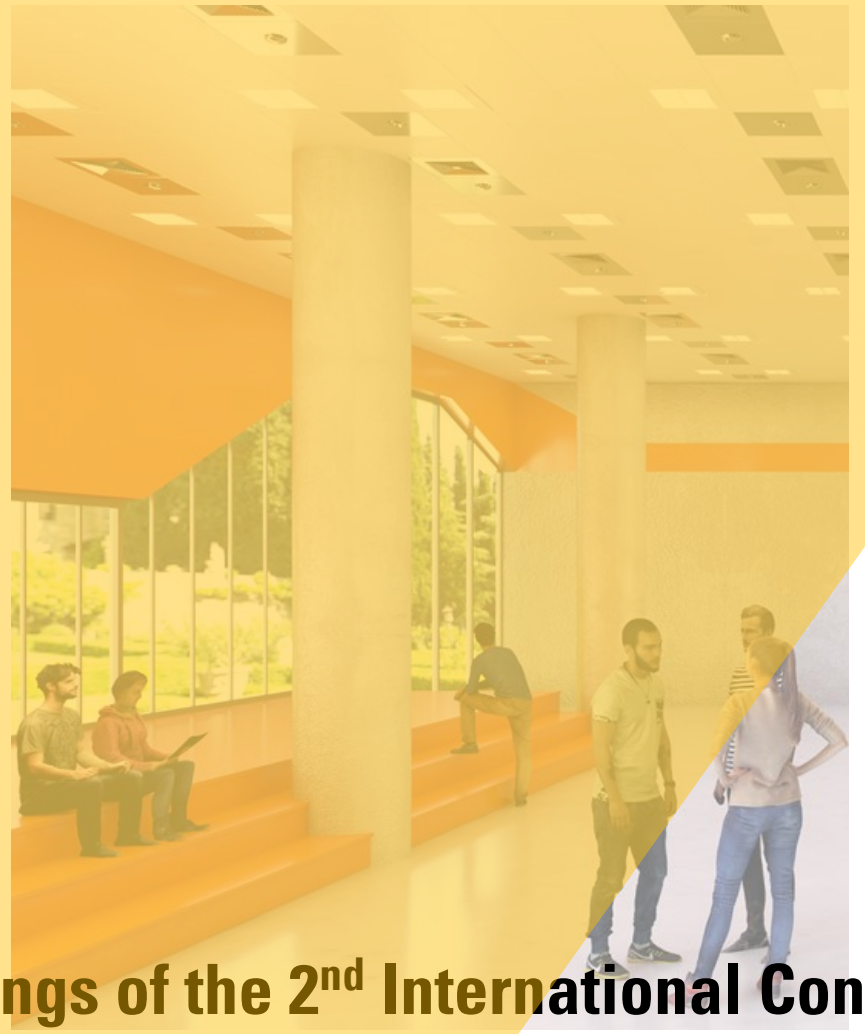

# Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference of the Journal Scuola Democratica

## REINVENTING EDUCATION

## VOLUME II

# Learning with New Technologies, Equality and Inclusion

ASSOCIAZIONE "PER SCUOLA DEMOCRATICA"

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# Learning with New Technologies, Equality and Inclusion

**ASSOCIAZIONE "PER SCUOLA DEMOCRATICA"**
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*Title* **Proceedings of the Second International Conference of the Journal "Scuola Democratica" – Reinventing Education VOLUME II Learning with New Technologies, Equality and Inclusion**

This volume contains papers presented in the First International Conference of the Journal "Scuola Democratica" which took place at the University of Cagliari on 5-8 June 2019. The aim of the Conference was to bring together researchers, decision makers and educators from all around the world to investigate the concepts of "education" in a "post-democracy" era, the latter being a set of conditions under which scholars are called to face and counteract new forms of authoritarian democracy.

Populisms, racisms, discriminations and nationalisms have burst and spread on the international scene, translated and mobilized by sovereigntist political movements. Nourished by neo-liberalism and inflated by technocratic systems of governance these regressive forms of post-democracy are shaping historical challenges to the realms of education and culture: it is on this ground, and not only on the political and economic spheres, that decisive issues are at stake. These challenges are both tangible and intangible, and call into question the modern ideas of justice, equality and democracy, throughout four key dimensions of the educational function, all of which intersected by antinomies and uncertainties: ethical-political socialization, differences, inclusion, innovation.

The Conference has been an opportunity to present and discuss empirical and theoretical works from a variety of disciplines and fields covering education and thus promoting a trans- and inter-disciplinary discussion on urgent topics; to foster debates among experts and professionals; to diffuse research findings all over international scientific networks and practitioners' mainstreams; to launch further strategies and networking alliances on local, national and international scale; to provide a new space for debate and evidences to educational policies. In this framework, more than 600 participants, including academics, educators, university students, had the opportunity to engage in a productive and fruitful dialogue based on researches, analyses and critics, most of which have been published in this volume in their full version.

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## Premise

In recent years, an important debate has developed on the role that digital technologies are playing and can play in the transformation of education and its institutions. Digital platforms, distance learning, blended learning, online training technologies are part of a significant restructuring and reculturing of the educational worlds. Digital technologies have restructured learning practices, educational content and the forms of educational governance which are immersed in public spaces and global markets. On the one hand, the digital governance of education contributes to changing and reconfiguring educational practices and the management of education on a local, national, international and transnational scale. On the other hand, technologies make possible the interconnection of multiple modes and shapes of formal, informal and non-formal education and training, producing forms of re-spatialization of education, locating the classroom within a digital learning ecosystem and favouring the emergence of different models of blended or hybrid learning.

The pandemic scenario has accelerated these processes, making more visible the tensions between multiple worlds of education and the processes of digitalization, while triggering a complex restructuring of educational institutions whose directions are not yet easily predictable. Perhaps, we are entering a new era that will mark the end of education as we have known it so far. In such a scenario, it becomes more urgent to carry on and debate an informed educational research, that explores the realities of the relations between education and digital technologies. This is especially needed because technologies are far from neutral. They are a heterogeneous technical and social world in which possibilities to change education for the better and make education fairer can be encountered as well as risks can be run of reproducing social and educational inequalities. Therefore, key questions are: how and in what direction the processes of digitalization are changing education, its practices and its governance? What are forms of coordination between educational technology markets and the institutional and educational actors in the emerging transnational governance arenas? How do the professional and social actors (teachers, managers, students, families) that are involved in the digitalization of education react to and translate these transformations? How do digital technologies change the aims and the curriculum of contemporary educational institutions? How can the digital competencies learned by students beyond the educational spaces (school and university) become a resource for learning processes and educational socialization in educational contexts? And above all, what are the possibilities that digital technologies offer us to reinvent education and its governance that are worth to be explored?

Papers collected in the Volume try to give preliminary answers to those issues. Furthermore, contributions from a range of experts, specialists and scholars cannot avoid facing educational inequalities which haven't by any means disappeared. They have rather changed and (re)combined into new forms that challenge the resilience of educational systems in terms of both effectiveness and equity. Several contributions published in the Volume aims to address these issues from a theoretical and empirical point of view, as well as their implications for educational policies. In this sense, proposals linked to educational inequalities in relation to social stratification as a factor affecting cognitive results, educational choices, the attainment of educational qualifications and working careers are of interest for the reader. Comparative research on different scale (comparisons between national, regional or local cases) is

particularly relevant and much importance is attached to the analysis of institutional factors (tracking, comprehensive vs selective systems, accountability policies, private education, ability grouping) which can produce educational segregation dynamics affecting educational inequalities, intersecting extra-curricular factors, such as urban segregation, for example.

The intertwining and interconnecting of differences (gender, socio-economic, cultural, ethnic, cognitive, and motivational factors) often generate inequalities both for their effects in themselves and in relation to the policies implemented to address them in their multidimensionality and intersectionality. Therefore, specific tracks on how education systems and educational institutions try to manage differences and end up producing inequalities are welcome.

The links between education and the labour market are another central aspect of research: the debate on the inflation of educational qualifications and over-education, the differential returns to education according to the type of diploma, degree program or type of tertiary program attended and, more generally, the relationship between education and social mobility represent a pivotal set of phenomena to understand production and reproduction of educational inequalities.

The applications of randomized controlled trials to the assessment of policies aimed at reducing inequalities and improving cognitive and career results as well as empirically driven reflections on how educational policies intersect the complex relationship between equity (equality and inclusion), quality and excellence are one of the main focuses researchers have dealt with in the collected papers.

Gender inequalities are a key topic to understand educational differences. Educational contexts are marked by a significant gender gap in staffing and in the formative experiences of children, teenagers and young students. These differences reflect and often reproduce gender stereotypes and asymmetries in societies at large. How are gender issues addressed in classrooms? Where are they encountered in training settings? What models do teachers convey, and what are the emotional responses from students of diverse gender? How do educational institutions practice and reproduce gender stereotypes and asymmetries? Can school and university provide contexts in which to acquire gender awareness and tackle gender issues? What are the responsibilities of educational contexts in the representation of gender in society? What experiences and good practices have been activated to promote greater gender equity? What cultural resistances? Several questions are addressed in the Volume and many are the answers discussed.

Many forms of educational segregation persist, yet today a growing presence of women – which are in some cases becoming a majority – is found even in fields that have historically been a male domain; this is the case, for example, of medicine and biology in higher education. International and national data show that many things have changed in recent decades, and gender equity is rising in all spheres of education and training. At the same time, several initiatives have been launched to promote greater awareness of gender stereotypes and prevent phenomena such as discrimination and gender-based violence. However, much remains to be done – not least to prevent backslashes and the emergence of new inequalities alongside

established ones. This is the case, for example, of the asymmetries in accessing fields of knowledge that may become relevant for the future of work (e.g., digital skills), or the development of new practices of discrimination related to the use of new technologies (e.g., hate speech or revenge porn).

Younger generations have been challenging those constraints surviving from the past, but new challenges arise in a constantly evolving global environment, where the urgency of the climate crisis in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic call for societal radical shifts while populism, unemployment, artificial intelligence, remote education and communication are affecting the ordinary daily life as we knew it.

Some analysts fear the pandemic will spur a new kind of backlash against the very basis of global society, from migration to cooperation and interdependence, while others worry about younger generations' abilities to overcome mass unemployment and economic vulnerability. Economic, political and environmental crisis are now fully part of the youth horizon: how are formal, informal and non-formal education going to support young people in moving forward positively and purposefully in their lives while simultaneously ensuring space for their autonomy, decision-making and voice?

Such general question contains intersected and multiple issues and applies across contexts as diverse as the role and relevance of democracy as educational content, the changing landscape of non-formal learning/education, the forging of future visions on politics, digital technologies and the media, youth educational transitions, youth experiences at work, the relation between consumerism and environmentalism, the widening of opportunities and constraints stemming out from cooperative learning and digital exchange tools.

Social research and youth studies have been producing a wide range of analyses on these relevant issues, with the (re) emergence of broader theories and empirical inquires directed towards the recognition and validation of non-formal education, the promotion of youth participation, and the deeper rethinking of youth policies.

Under the large umbrella of an education to be re-invented, papers in the Volume are dedicated to new generations, transitions and the future of education, with a broad, multidisciplinary, and internationally set of contributions focusing on a variegated platform of topics on youth studies theories, critical analysis of relevant societal debates surrounding youth in and out education; in and out the labour market; on youth transitions throughout and across cultures, statuses, roles, responsibilities and institutions; on the impact of the various initiatives to promote and enhance youth participation; on the role of youth organisations as well as on the strengths and weaknesses of youth policies at both a national and supranational level.

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# Rethinking School-Family Communication after Pandemic: New Protocols, Competences, and Alliances?

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**ABSTRACT:** *School-family communication is an extremely delicate issue, especially in times like the one we are currently experiencing due to the pandemic, which is strongly marked by the need to necessarily rely on technology to allow teachers and parents to exchange information or simply to communicate. Although in Italian schools there are formal communication protocols that provide for the use of official digital channels, there is an 'underground' of communication situations that rely on unofficial channels and involve both parents and teachers. In many cases, school regulations do not norm the above-mentioned cases and this causes some parents and teachers to be very wary of forms of communication that use unofficial channels. It is therefore more necessary than ever to reflect on this phenomenon, which is difficult to investigate precisely because it takes place in borderline areas that often escape regulations and scientific debate. The research hereby presented, which has been in development for 18 months in a school institute in the metropolitan city of Bologna, aims to investigate how teachers consider the issue of school-family communication, trying to answer the following questions: Are teachers' digital competences enough to guarantee a good level of technology-mediated school-family communication? What is the teachers' perception, in terms of usefulness, of ICTs as a tool for communication between school and family and between colleagues? Are the communication protocols used by the schools effective? How can school-family communication processes be improved?*

**KEYWORDS**: school-family; alliance; technology; communication; professional-development

## 1. The school-family communication

The spread of technologies and digital media is now a fact with which the school system must confront itself on a daily basis: teachers, pupils and families experience the pervasiveness of the media in all aspects of their lives, not always with serenity. Alongside a wide range of potential, in fact, this diffusion also offers a long series of elements to which to pay more attention. The influences and possible effects of technologies on the socio-relational level represent an aspect still little explored by the scientific literature. If for some time the studies related to the Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) field have opened the way to an investigation, even in educational contexts, of the communication dynamics through digital tools, it must however be emphasized that most of these studies are based on «traditional» digital media such as emails, mailing lists, forums or wikis (Bouhnik, Deshen, 2014; Cifuentes, Lents, 2011; Doering et al., 2008; Smit, Goede, 2012; Sweeny, 2010). The reason for this partiality is mainly given by the period in which the CMC started, before the advent of smartphones and social networks, and also due to the methodological difficulties that these new digital contexts entail. Furthermore, a majority of researches that are interested in the new

forms of communication offered by social networks are developed in contexts far from those of the school (Jenkins et al. 2016; Turkle, 2012, 2016).

Within the framework of the school's system, it is possible to recognize elements that already presented a profound complexity and that, with the introduction of technologies, have been enriched in terms of horizons of opportunities and educational challenges. Reference is made, in particular, to the relational dynamics affecting pupils, teachers and parents and how these have become further complicated due to an increasingly constant access by users to the possibility of communicating through new channels (messages, telephone calls, e-mail, audio messages, images, videos and other methods made possible by today's social networks). The spectrum of possible communication tools is wider than ever, and ranges from digital tools that can be defined as «official», conceived and made available in an institutional manner by the school for purely educational purposes, and «unofficial», spontaneously used by families and sometimes teachers too (Soriani, 2018). This dense network of relationships mediated by digital contexts – referring in particular to the relational dynamics between students / students, students / teachers and even teachers / teachers – occurs seamlessly inside and outside the times and spaces of the school, and influences the social climate of the classroom in a very decisive way. While these dynamics have previously been explored, albeit partially (Pacetti, 2019), there are others that still remain unexplored and that could contribute to improving the professionalism of the teacher in the care of relationships in the school environment with families and pupils. In particular, the issue related to «unofficial» channels represents an important junction in the communication space between the stakeholders while often risks leading to conflicting dynamics managed in a difficult way or simply perceived as an unnecessary burden and an additional load for teachers and parents.

A reflection in this sense is very important for a series of elements:

- The lack of research (especially in the Italian context) dealing with the relational aspect of technologies in the school environment;
- The indefiniteness of this type of situation, often difficult to manage and a source of concern for teachers and parents;
- The potential in relational and logistic terms linked to communication mediated by technologies;
- The difficulty in investigating similar phenomena caused by their indefiniteness.

The problem transversally affects all school contexts, and in times of pandemics, during which computers have forcibly mediated all communication, this reflection has become even more urgent.

## 2. The research

### *2.1 Research's questions*

The research hereby presents the second part of a larger research, which has been in development since January 2019 in a school institute in the Metropolitan City of Bologna (Italy) composed by one kindergarten, two primary school and one lower secondary school (pupils from 3 to 14 years old): the research aims to investigate how teachers and parents consider the issue of school-family communication (SFC).

The research questions that sustained the whole work are:

- Are teachers' digital competences enough to guarantee a good level of technology-mediated school-family communication?
- What is the teachers' perception, in terms of usefulness, of ICTs as a tool for communication between school and family and between colleagues?
- Are the communication protocols used by the schools effective?
- How can school-family communication processes be improved?

*2.2 Methodological notes*

This research was conducted by following a specific approach called Professional Development Research (from now on, PDR)[28]. PDR is an empirical research methodology formalized by the Centre for Educational Research on Teachers as Professionals[29] (CERTP) which consists in conducting empirical research in formal education systems by using a variety of methodologies with the aim of promoting the professional development of teachers by building common research pathways within the framework of inter-institutional collaboration. In this specific PDR, we also involved parents as fundamental active actors.

The research has started in 2019: during the first year, we established the group for the PDR, we designed the research tools (questionnaires and focus group) and validate them, and we collected first data: due to COVID-19 situation, we decide, during the second year, to redesign research tools adding questions and to rescheduling activities, collecting more data and starting planning concrete actions to improve school-families communication.

In this contribution we will present the results of the second year of the study, which focused more on the SCF dynamics during lockdown.

*2.3. Data collection tool*

Two surveys have been distributed online in the school where the research took place: one for teachers and one for parents. Both surveys had a compile time of 10-15 minutes and were divided in several areas.

Teachers/educators survey was organized in:

- general information;

[28] In Italian, «ricerca-formazione».

[29] In Italian, «CRESPI (Centro di Ricerca Educativa sulla Professionalità dell'Insegnante)». For more information, see https://centri.unibo.it/crespi/en/centre

- digital competences level and level of confidence in the use of ICTs for school-family communications (SFC);
- SFC dynamics during lockdown;
- perceptions about school's rules about SFC.

Parents survey was organized in:

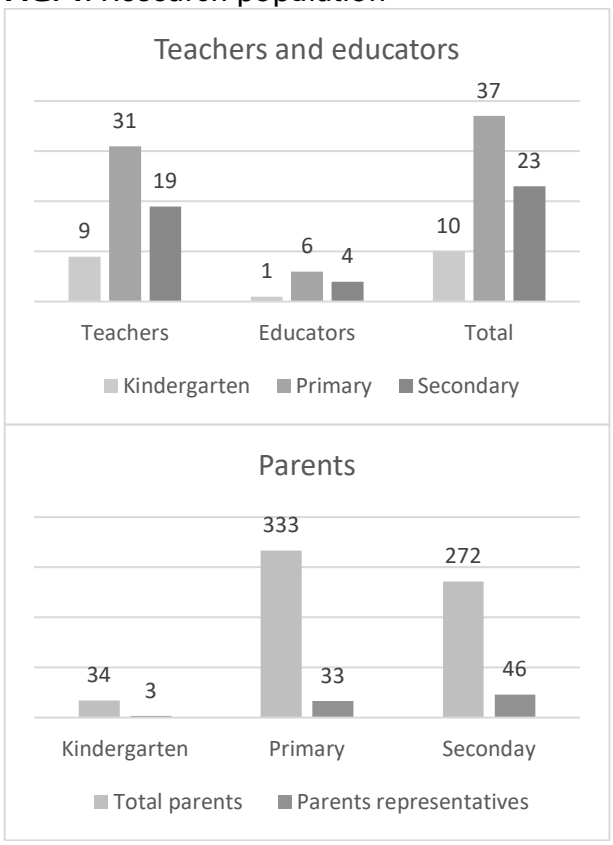
- general information;
- digital competences level and level of confidence in the use of ICTs for school-family communications (SFC);
- SFC dynamics during lockdown;
- digital platforms used and practices related.

The closed questions have been analysed with the support of Microsoft Excel and the open-ended ones have been categorized in macro areas following an inductive approach (Thomas, 2006).

*2.4 Research population*

To the surveys answered: 58 teachers, 11 educators and 566 parents of 639 pupils.

**FIG. 1**. Research population



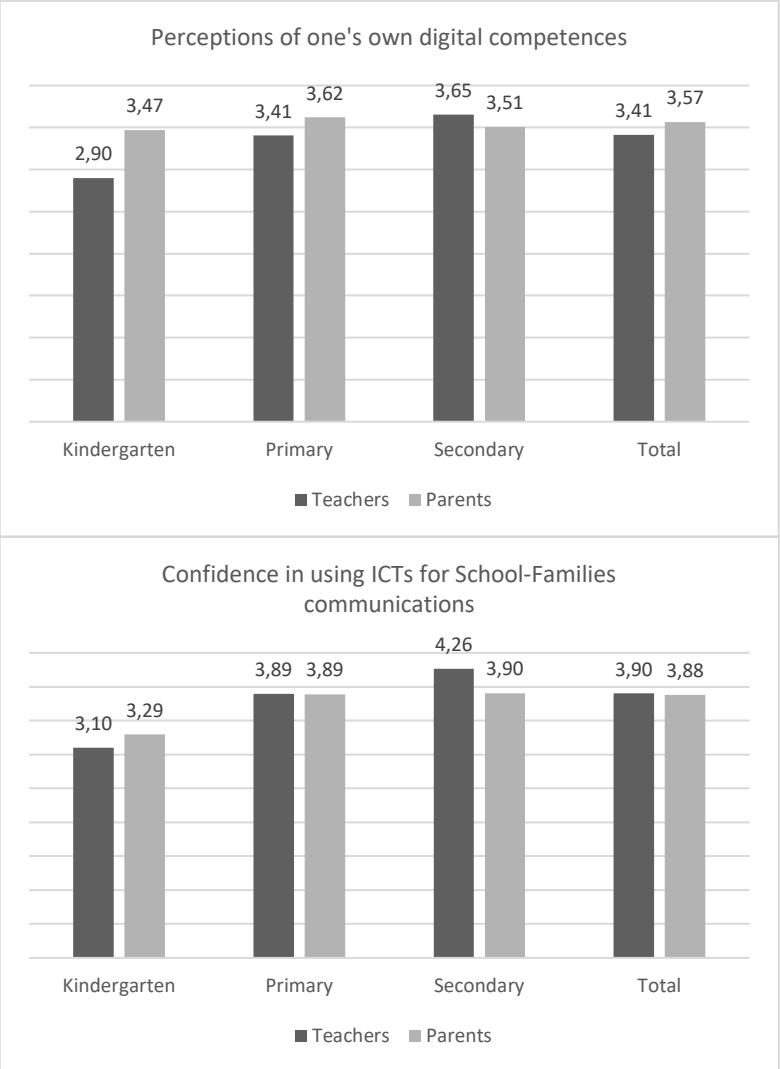

## 3. Data analysis

*3.1. Levels of digital competences and of confidence in the use of ICTs for school-family*

The teachers and the parents, which have participated to the research, have, in general, a good self-consideration in terms of personal level of digital competence. By observing the graphic below, it is possible to notice that kindergarten's teachers and parents are those who have answered with lower values, and that primary and secondary schools' ones have the same trend.

The same comment can be applied to the level of confidence in using ICTs for school-family communications; the only concrete difference is that the values are higher than those of the perceptions of one's own level of digital competence.

**FIG. 2.** *Teachers and parents' levels of digital competences and of confidence in the use of ICTs for school-family – Likert scale: 1(min.)-5(max.)*




### *3.2. Teachers and educators' data*

*Communication dynamics during lockdown*

The firsts two questions concerned the practical aspects of technology-mediated-communication with the parents that teachers appreciated the most and that find more critical.

Among the aspects that they appreciate the most one can find the possibility to communicate quickly (40,5%), the possibility of even more structured and optimised electronic meetings (13%) and the participation of the parents (11,6%); among the more critical aspects one can find the absence of direct human contact (24,6%), the low level of digital skills among the parents (20,3%), the lack of technological equipment in some families (11,6%) and the struggle in respecting timings with the increase of e-meetings (8,7%).

The second block of questions was about the practical aspects of technology-mediated-communication with the other colleagues that teachers appreciated the most and that find more critical.

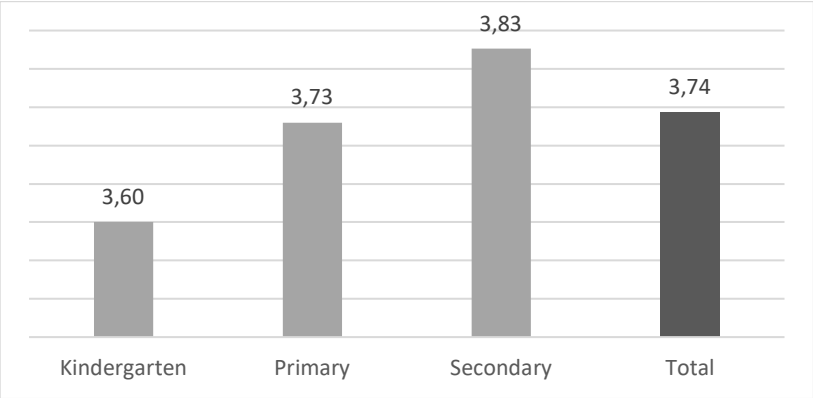
Among the aspects that teachers appreciated the most we can list: the clarity and the immediacy of the communication exchanges (31,8%); an increased continuance of the relationships with colleagues (18,8%); the efficacy of the official digital channels (15,9%); the easier participation in school's dynamics (14,5%).

The critical aspects the most pointed out by teachers are the absence of direct human contact (21,7%), the difficulty in communicating by the mean of a digital tool (20,2%) – which makes some institutional operation more complicated – and timing issues like the too much time spent online and the sense of being available seamlessly (8,7%).

*Perceptions about school's rules concerning school-family communication*

The teachers survey contained a section devoted to understanding the respondents' perceptions of the school rules concerning school-family communications. By looking at the graphic in FIG. 2 it is possible to observe that, in general, all the teachers find these rules quite adequate (average Likert value: 3,75).

**FIG. 2.** *Teachers' perceptions about the school's rules concerning SCF – Likert scale: 1(min. level of adequateness)-5(max. level of adequateness)*




To the open-ended question «Which proposal would you have to supplement the regulation?» answered only 26 subjects out of 69.

The most relevant categories of proposals emerged are: making communications clearer (8,7%); communicate at a more appropriate time (7,2%); only use official channels (5,8%); communicate in more languages (5,8%); more accurate management of online meetings (5,8%); allow educators to participate to e-registry (4,4%); more training for teachers and parents (4,4%).

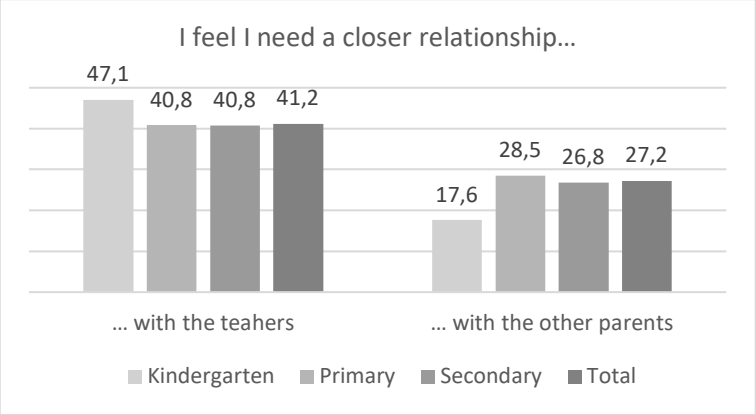
*3.3. Parents' data*

*Communication dynamics during lockdown*

In this paragraph we will present the parents' answers to the survey's items aimed to collect their perceptions about SFC dynamics during lockdown.

The graphic in Fig. 3. shows a comparison of the answers to the question «Do you feel you need a closer relationship with the teachers and the other parents?»; by observing it, it is clear that parents wish to had a closer relationship (intended as more frequent communication and more occasions to get to know the other subjects) with their children's teachers (41,2%) rather than the other parents of the class (27,2%). It must be remarked that almost half of the parents with sons or daughters attending the kindergarten (47,1%) manifested a stronger need for more contacts with the teachers and, at the same time, these parents are showing the lower interest in having more contact with other parents (only the 17,6%).

**FIG. 3.** *Parents' answers to the question «Do you feel you need a closer relationship with the teachers and the other parents?» (Results in percentage)*




By examining the open-ended questions that explored the reasons behind these answers it emerges a quite interesting scenario.

About the relationship with the teachers, the 163 parents who do not feel the need for a closer relationship with them, motivated their answers by providing the following main reasons: the teachers are already quite available (9,2%); there are enough tools to communicate with the

teachers (5,3%); there are already enough information (5,1%); I completely trust them: they are acting at their best (4,9%).

On the other hand, the 51 parents who answered that they would have had a closer relationship with the teachers offered these arguments: to have more discussion about my son/daughter's situation (10,4%); I wish I could have face-to-face relationship (8,5%); I wish longer talks with them (7,4%); I would like to meet them and better getting to know them (5,5%).

Regarding the relationship with the other parents, 217 parents reported that they do not felt the need for a closer relationship with them by offering these motivations: the chat-group is enough and works fine (10,6%); there was already a good relationship before (8,8%); I do not need confrontation (6,9%); seen the pandemic situation, it is ok as it is (2,7%).

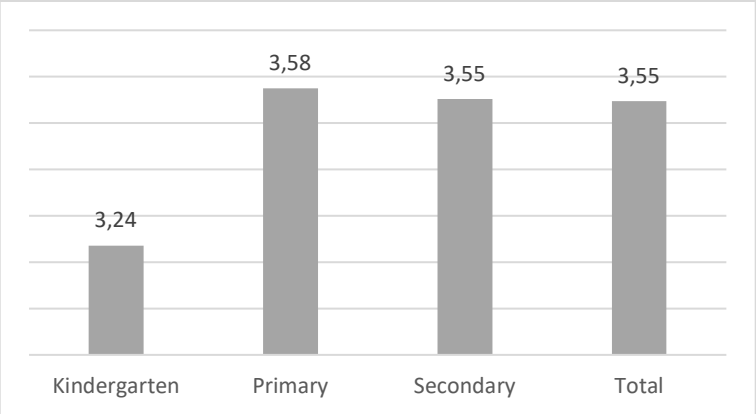
To complete the picture, a group of 29 parents stated that they would have preferred a closer relationship with their peers by providing the following motivations: I need confrontation with other parents (9,2%); I miss human informal relationship with other parents (4,4%); I would like to meet them and better getting to know them (3%).

*Digital platforms used and practices*

This paragraph will describe the parents' practices and the use of digital platforms for school-related communication purposes.

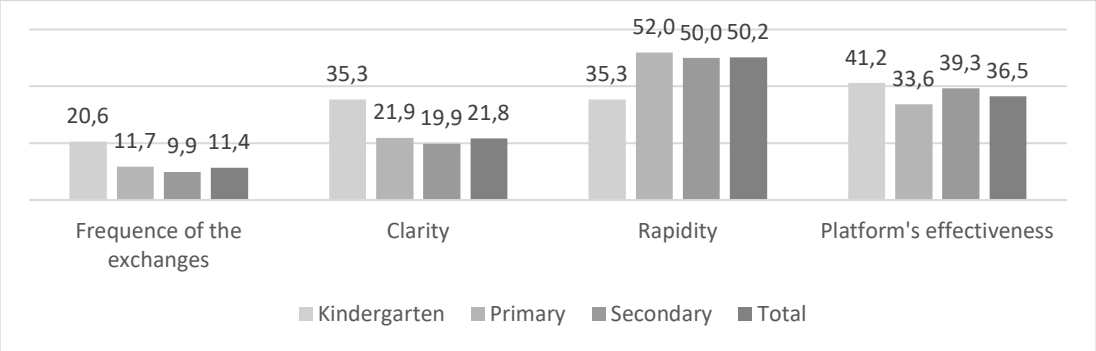
The first topic addressed is how much parents can follow and read all the communications from the school. As one can observe from FIG. 4, the general level of access to the communication is fairly high (average Likert level 3,55 on a scale of 1 to 4), and although every value is included in the range between 3 and 4, the kindergarten parents are those who present the lower level of access (3,24).

**FIG. 4.** *Parents' answers to the question «Can you read all the communications that the school sends?» – Likert scale: 1(I lose all of them)-4(I manage to read all of them)*



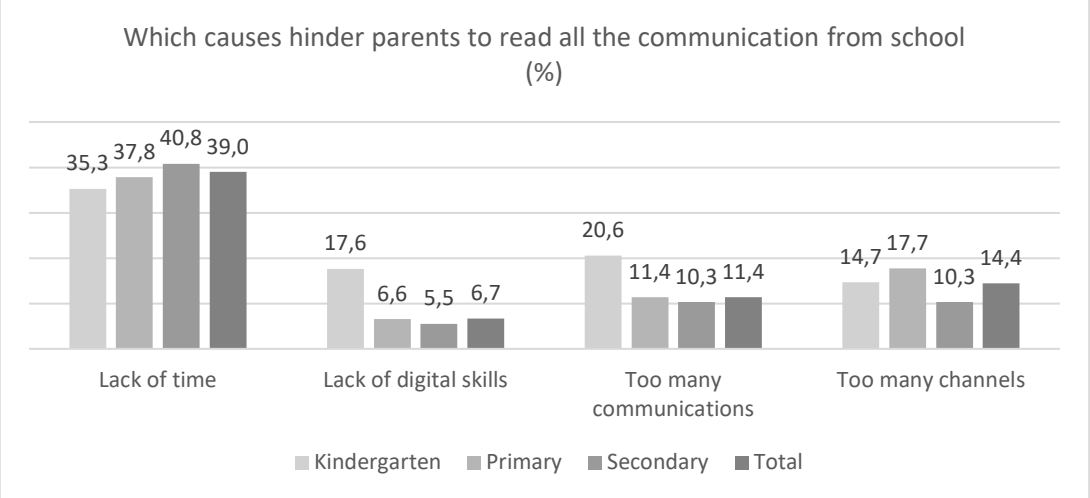

Among the aspects more appreciated by parents in school's communication modalities we can list the rapidity (50,2%), the e-platform's effectiveness (36,5%), the clarity of the communications (21,8%) and the frequency of the exchanges (11,4%).

**FIG. 5.** *Aspects more appreciated by parents in school's communication modes (Results in percentage)*




One further element explored by the survey was the causes that may hinder parents to regularly read the communications that the schools deliver. It appears (FIG. 6) that the main cause is the lack of time (39%), followed by the presence of too many channels to follow (14,4%), the presence of too many communications (11,4%) and, ultimately, the lack of digital skills (6,7%).

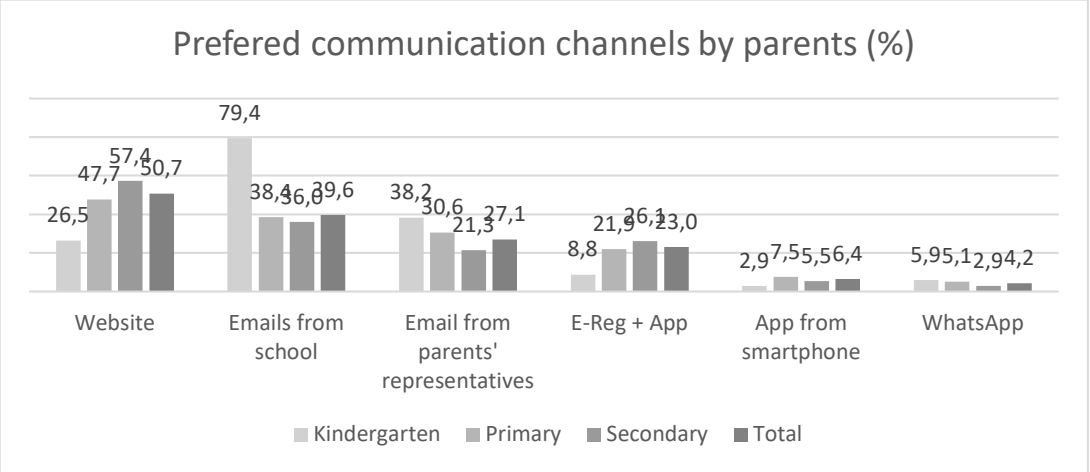
**FIG. 6.** *Causes that hinder parents to regularly read all the communication from school (Results in percentage)*




Ultimately, we would like to present the parents' preferred communication channels, that can be observed in the following graphic (Fig. 7). The website and the official emails from teachers and school-principal are the two preferred channels (respectively 50,7% and 39,6%),

followed by emails from parents' representatives (27,1%) and e-register (23%). The use of smartphone to access to these communications does not seem to represent a habit for the parents who participated in the research.

**FIG. 7.** *Preferred communication channels by parents (Results in percentage)*




## 4. Discussion

The literature in the fields of parental engagement agrees that supporting the learning of young people requires communication between school staff and children's families (Goodall, 2016; Goodall, Vorhaus, 2011; McDermott, Rothenberg, 2004). Similarly to other education systems around the world (Selwyn, 2015), in our country, digital data management has become an integral part of school educational practices and school-family communication for some years now. The ability to share information and communicate in real time is certainly a resource that, particularly during the lockdown, allowed a certain degree of continuity in the school-family relationship (Blau, Hameiri, 2017).

The study explored how teachers and parents view the issue of school-family communication, answering the following questions: are teachers' and parents' digital competences enough to guarantee a good level of technology-mediated school-family communication? What is teachers' perception, in terms of usefulness, of ICT as a tool for communication between school and family and between colleagues? Are the communication protocols used by schools effective? How can school-family communication processes be improved?

The results, despite the various positive aspects emphasized by teachers and parents, like creating a new digital space for building 'community connections' between school and family, further enhancing the relationship (Rivoltella, 2017), highlight at least three significant elements on which to reflect in order to improve the communication aspects – in the sense of both simple giving/receiving of information and active dialogue between the two parties – between school and family:

cognitive overload of parents, organization among parents, problems in organizing communication.

*4.1 Parents' cognitive overload*

Lockdown, smart working, the lack of separation between work and private life forced us to practice more and more multitasking, causing, however, in many of us a considerable cognitive overload.

Numerous parents reported to lose track of notifications, especially if made only once and with too much of anticipation regarding the meeting date. More timely and repeated notifications (a few days before and on the day of the meeting) and including the meeting link again would be necessary.

Another problem experienced by some parents concerning online communication relates to the school's sending of attachments with inaccessible formats: some parents who open notifications from their smartphones might forget about them if they cannot open the attachments immediately. A solution could be to send attachments in a different or accessible format (e.g. PDF) that can be easily opened from any device.

In addition, parents who stated that the presence of too many channels might be the cause of their struggle in accessing SFC referred to a multiplication of the messages driven by multiple means: e-registry, school's website, email from teachers, email from parents' representatives, informal chatgroup, etc. It is interesting to remark that the parents who struggle the most in this scenario are the kindergarten ones, who also denounce the lower value in digital skills. One of the elements that can be identified as the cause of this trend is that, in the school where the research took place, the only section where technology was not used for SFC before the pandemic was kindergarten: during lockdown, all the face-to-face meetings with the teachers were suspended.

However, low parental digital skills seem to be a generalized problem at all school levels: while the majority of parents perceive themselves as competent in both the use of ICT and the level of digital competence, teachers identify the low level of digital competence along with the lack of appropriate communication tools in some families among the critical aspects of families' communication during the lockdown months:

> there are still too many families who are not provided with suitable technology or who are not used to and unwilling to use technology to communicate with the school (teacher A, secondary school first degree)

> one critical issue I have found is that unfortunately not all parents have appropriate technological literacy (teacher B, kindergarten)

This last statement seems to reflect the current Italian situation regarding the digital divide: despite the fact that 95.1% (ISTAT, 2019, 7; EUROSTAT, 2019) of Italian households with at least one minor have a broadband

connection and that ICTs such as smartphones, PCs, laptops, tablets are widespread and growing in Italian households (IPSOS, 2017), only 29.1% of Internet users aged 25-59 (assumed age range of parents who responded to the questionnaire) have high digital skills.

Furthermore, the absence of the «school ritual» in attendance in which to meet with teachers and parents in school settings or «moment set aside for it» with teachers during one-on-one interactions has certainly contributed to parents' difficulty in focusing on just that one thing.

In fact, if from one side teachers find online communication with families more functional in terms of immediacy, optimization of time, structuring of meetings, greater participation of parents in interviews and class meetings facilitated by smart working, on the other hand they identify some problematic factors, among which is the lack of human contact, which becomes a problematic factor, especially in the presence of immigrant families:

> the lack of face-to-face relationships does not allow us to grasp non-verbal messages, and this is particularly critical in communication with foreign families, where the risk of mutual misunderstanding is high (teacher C, secondary school first degree)

*4.2 Organization among parents*

With regard to the organization of online communication between parents, the role of class representatives is fundamental to support school-family interaction but, at the same time, risks to be too much left to chance and sensitivity. In the majority of cases, despite the lockdown, class representatives have remained in continuous communication with teachers, and were available in case of need, often acting as reminders of online meetings with teachers or deadlines for other parents, inventing very efficient and original systems. In this sense, it could help to provide communication protocols to disseminate information among parents, training on the use of shared calendars, training on the use of communication tools officially recognized by the school (e-registry, school's website, email from teachers, etc.).

*4.3 Communication organization problems*

Finally, the third emerging element that needs to be better managed by the school is communication organization problems.

The importance of «curating» (Potter, McDougall, 2017) the school-family communication processes can also be seen in the words of the parents: it emerges the need to receive clear and unambiguous information from the school, for example by updating the class register in a timely and systematic way. This would greatly simplify the valuable work of class representatives. In addition, among the causes that may hinder parents to regularly read the communications that the schools deliver appears the presence of too many channels to follow together with the presence of too many communications. Consequently, it is important that school adopt a holistic, overarching view and practice

(Goodall, Vorhaus, 2011) in order to optimizing qualitative and quantitative of communications; moreover, the use of institutional communication channels for school-family communications only is required.

At the same time, it emerges as necessary to curate of and reflect on all aspects of school-family communication, even in secondary schools but no less important aspects, proposing a multichannel information strategy.

For example, provide notifications and alerts that serve as reminders of upcoming events, and provide «press release» type packages that parents can disseminate without danger of misunderstanding.

In addition, it seems appropriate to integrate Spaggiari's ClasseViva electronic register (currently in use in these schools) to allow the creation of appointments in Google Meet automatically, not only for meetings but also for individual conversations.

In conclusion, the main aim of implementing communications through technology is not simply to inform parents, but rather to involve them in decision-making processes and support their effective engagement in their children's learning. For this reason, training and workshop in the use of ICT, especially in digital communication competences, for teachers and parents must be considered an integral part of this process, with a view to highlighting its potential and managing its introduction and use.

Further actions that the research intends to implement are related to the co-design of protocols to support a fair and sustainable school-family communication (with differences depending on school level) and the creation of tutorials to support a better communication.

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