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**The association between mother's education level and the
verbal–emotional ability, as well as with their child's aged
4-6 years emotional abilities, as expressed verbally, in
drawings, and in understanding illustrated facial
emotion expressions**

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Abstract

Introduction: A long series of studies attests to the link between socio-economic status and the mother's education, and the quality of mother-child interaction as expressed in maternal sensitivity, warmth, encouragement and enriched conversations that affect the child's verbal ability and social-emotional skill. These abilities find their expression in a broad vocabulary as well as identification, understanding and expressing emotions by the child.

Objective: The objectives of the current study were to examine the association between a mother's level of education among mothers with education of more than 12 years of study, and their verbal-emotional ability in interaction with their children 4–6 years of age. In addition, the study also sought to examine the association between the mother's educational level and the child's ability to identify and understand illustrated facial expressions and verbal descriptions of emotional states.

Hypotheses: Among mothers having a matriculation certificate or higher education, the ability for verbal-emotional communication would be found to be higher with an increase in education. Among children of mothers with a matriculation certificate or higher education, better abilities would be found for identification of illustrated facial emotion expressions, understanding and expressing emotions verbally and by drawing emotional facial expressions, with an increase in the mother's education.

Method: Fifty-two mother-child couples with the mother's level of education above 12 years of study participated in the framework of the research. As part of the study,

each mother–child couple was filmed during interaction of free play. The quality of the mother's verbal–emotional communication was assessed by means of a tool for analyzing interaction (OMI – Observing Mediation Interaction). The children's ability to identify, understand and express simple and dual–meaning facial expressions was assessed by means of tasks that included free identification and forced identification of illustrated facial expressions, statement of emotion, pointing at the illustrated face and drawing of a face that awakens due to a short story.

Findings: The findings of the current study point to a direct association between the mother's level of education and the quality of verbal emotional communication during mother–child interaction, in dimensions of emotional significance, adult effect, general effect during interaction and several longer chains of communication. Yet, no association was found between the educational level of mothers and skills of comprehension and expression of emotions in the children.

Discussion: In accordance with the findings of previous studies, we hypothesize that the dimensions of emotional verbal communication by the mother, which were found to be linked to the mother's level of education in the current study, are linked to the mother's high linguistic skills.

Previous studies have shown that the mother's level of education also leads to a better quality of mediation through the employment of a rich vocabulary, high cognitive discussion, expansions and relations.

The hypothesis of the study that referred to the link between the mother's education and the ability to understand and express emotions by the child was not affirmed.

We estimate that there is a direct influence for the mother's high level of education on the child's linguistic level, which enabled children to study the basic vocabulary needed for the emotional skills tested. This possibly resulted in the finding that children's abilities that were measured in the study were not sensitive to the mother's educational level. We recommend continuing the study of the variance that exists between the mother's level of education and the manner in which it is expressed in the child's behavior.