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Speaking up and decision avoidance in a Honduran Public Secondary School

Expresarse y decidir en secundaria. Expresión de opiniones y evitación decisional en un Instituto Público Hondureño

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ABSTRACT

Objective. To examine the relationship between reported ease in expressing opinions and decision avoidance, with additional analyses of disagreement, consideration of alternatives, and delegation at Instituto Gubernamental Desarrollo Sostenible in Distrito Central, Honduras. Method. A quantitative, cross-sectional secondary analysis examined ordinal relationships among 155 participants. Ten items and four relationships were described using contingency tables, Kendall's tau-b, eleven group omissions, and 10,000 whole-group resamples. Wolfram Mathematica 15.0.1 performed the primary calculations, independently verified in Python. Results. The primary association was inverse, with tau-b of −.178, an exploratory range of [−.255, −.094], and group-omission estimates from −.201 to −.155. Ease in expressing opinions accompanied different frequencies of avoidance. Associations involving delegation and consideration of alternatives were close to zero. Nervousness during disagreement showed a positive relationship with greater sensitivity to resampling. Conclusions. Reading responses together distinguishes behaviors that warrant specific educational questions. The study contributes Honduran evidence and criteria for examining opportunities for expression, deliberation, and choice. Adaptation to other schools requires contextual review and comparison with their own evidence.

Keywords: assertiveness; decision avoidance; secondary education; ordinal association; Honduras

RESUMEN

Objetivo. Examinar la relación entre facilidad declarada para expresar opiniones y evitación de decisiones, complementándola con desacuerdo, consideración de alternativas y delegación en el Instituto Gubernamental Desarrollo Sostenible, Distrito Central, Honduras. Metodología. Se realizó un análisis secundario cuantitativo, transversal y relacional ordinal de 155 participantes. Se describieron diez reactivos y cuatro relaciones mediante tablas conjuntas, tau-b de Kendall, once exclusiones de grupo y 10.000 remuestreos de grupos completos. Wolfram Mathematica 15.0.1 realizó el cálculo y Python lo comprobó independientemente. Resultados. La relación principal fue inversa, con tau-b de −,178, rango exploratorio [−,255 ; −,094] y

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estimaciones por exclusión entre −,201 y −,155. Expresar opiniones con facilidad coexistió con distintas frecuencias de evitación. Las asociaciones con delegación y consideración de alternativas fueron próximas a cero. El nerviosismo ante el desacuerdo mostró una relación positiva de mayor sensibilidad al remuestreo. Conclusiones. La lectura conjunta distingue conductas que requieren preguntas educativas específicas. El estudio aporta evidencia hondureña y criterios para examinar oportunidades de expresión, deliberación y decisión, cuya adaptación en otros centros exige contraste con su contexto y sus propios datos.

Palabras clave: asertividad; evitación decisional; educación secundaria; asociación ordinal; Honduras

INTRODUCTION

Expressing an opinion and taking responsibility for a decision are closely related experiences in secondary school, where students learn to uphold positions, listen to other perspectives, and act on shared responsibilities. Their relationship deserves attention because contributing to a conversation and making a choice involve different demands. Studying them together makes it possible to recognize when ease in expressing opinions accompanies a willingness to decide and which combinations require a more situated understanding. From this perspective, individual responses to a school survey offer an opportunity to turn a general interest in social and emotional skills into a clearly defined educational question.

The framework of the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL, 2020) links relationship skills and responsible decision-making to learning environments. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2024), in turn, places assertiveness within engagement with others. Both frameworks situate expression and choice within holistic education while preserving the specific meaning of each behavior. Ames et al. (2017) provide an important conceptual clarification by examining assertiveness in relation to the interpersonal demands of a situation.

Previous empirical studies help clarify that distinction. Luna Bernal and Laca Arocena (2014) studied decision-making patterns and self-confidence among Mexican adolescents and proposed broadening their explanation through variables such as assertiveness. Di Giusto Valle et al. (2014) addressed personal and social competencies among Spanish and Chilean adolescents using a multidimensional battery. These studies support the interest in examining relationships between behaviors, while the selection of specific indicators makes it possible to examine which aspects of that discussion can be observed in a school survey.

Recent research also shows the importance of listening to students' reasons. Al-Adeimi and Lee (2025) identified reasons related to the topic, personal expression, and interpersonal dynamics when analyzing responses about participation in school discussions. In Honduras, Moncada Godoy and Rivera Reyes (2021) examined secondary school experiences through accounts that help explain the role of relationships and institutional conditions. This dialogue situates the problem within concrete opportunities for participation, while distinguishing self-reported behavior, the reasons for engaging in it, and the accompanying educational conditions.

The study was guided by the following question: How does reported ease in expressing opinions relate to the frequency of avoiding decisions among participating students at Instituto

Gubernamental Desarrollo Sostenible, in the municipality of Distrito Central, Honduras? The objective was to examine that relationship through joint distributions, ordinal associations, and stability across groups, complemented by nervousness during disagreement, consideration of alternatives, and delegation. The secondary analysis of 155 participants examined paired responses and their variation across school groups. This perspective identifies both the overall trend and individual combinations of expression and decision-making that may inform educational support.

METHOD

Design and data source

The researchers conducted a quantitative, observational, cross-sectional secondary analysis of an educational survey administered in 2026 at Instituto Gubernamental Desarrollo Sostenible, a public school located in the El Hatillo neighborhood, kilometer 9, Tegucigalpa, municipality of Distrito Central, Honduras. The scope was descriptive and focused on ordinal relationships. Each participant was the unit of observation, and grade-and-section groups were retained as units of composition. The protocol specified one primary and three secondary relationships before calculating associations. The general and nonexperimental Journal Article Reporting Standards for Quantitative Research (JARS –Quant) were used as supplementary reporting checks, particularly to identify the secondary use of data, measures, and analytical priority (American Psychological Association [APA], 2024a, 2024b).

Participants and original data collection

The survey targeted the afternoon session, whose documentation reported an enrollment of 178 students from seventh through twelfth grade and an invitation intended to cover the entire population. Administration included students present on those dates. A total of 158 responses were received, three of which recorded a refusal in the participation agreement field. The 155 eligible cases represented 87.1% of the reported enrollment and constituted the analyzed dataset. The sample size reflected participation achieved in the existing survey. System timestamps placed administration on March 26 and 27 and April 6 and 7, 2026.

Participants included 75 students who recorded female sex and 80 who recorded male sex. Age was collected in intervals: 87 participants were aged 12–14, 56 were 15–17, 11 were 18–20, and one was 21 or older. By grade, there were 36 seventh graders, 33 eighth graders, 31 ninth graders, 19 tenth graders, 21 eleventh graders, and 15 twelfth graders. The eleven grade-and-section combinations contained between 2 and 20 eligible responses. This characterization describes the observed composition and contextualizes the stability procedure.

Instrument and operationalization

The researchers used the self-administered digital questionnaire developed for the original survey from its operationalization matrix. It included participant characteristics and 45 items: 40 on social, emotional, and ethical skills and five on school support. After reviewing the relevance of its fields, the five items from the assertiveness section and the five from decision-making were selected for their correspondence with expression, disagreement, and decision-making behavior. Table 1 presents their

wording in full. Codes ASR01–ASR05 and DEC01–DEC05 identify that correspondence throughout the analysis.

The original categories were never, almost never, occasionally, and almost always or always, coded from 1 to 4. Each score represented the frequency of the stated behavior; thus, a higher value on ASR05 indicated greater reported ease in expressing opinions, and on DEC05, greater avoidance. Individual items were analyzed in their literal direction, retaining wording about difficulty or nervousness. Psychometric properties remained limited to the sets for which they were calculated. Overall alpha ($\alpha = .8903$) corresponded to the 45 items for the 155 participants.

Data preparation verified eligibility, correspondence between columns and the questionnaire, valid categories, and response completeness. All 155 cases had complete information on the 45 items and were retained in the analysis. Possible duplicates were examined using complete records, maintaining the criterion that matching responses require additional evidence to identify a repeated record. The analytical copy used artificial identifiers, group codes, and the ten selected items, with a dictionary documenting their source and coding.

Ordinal analysis and stability

The 40 frequencies resulting from crossing ten items with four categories were calculated, with percentages based on 155 participants per item. Four four-by-four contingency tables were constructed. ASR05 with DEC05 was the primary relationship. The secondary relationships were ASR02 with DEC05, ASR05 with DEC03, and DEC02 with DEC05. Row percentages were added for the primary relationship, using participants sharing a category of ease in expressing opinions as the denominator. This examined the diversity of avoidance within each frequency of expression.

The ordinal trend was summarized using Kendall's tau-b, which compares concordant and discordant pairs and incorporates ties in both variables. Its sign was interpreted according to the wording of the two items, and its magnitude was examined alongside the contingency table. The Wolfram Language formulation for individual observations was used (Wolfram Research, n.d.). All four relationships were reported regardless of their direction and magnitude, retaining their priority and descriptive nature.

Sensitivity to composition was examined by successively omitting each of the eleven groups and recalculating the coefficients with the remaining participants. In addition, 10,000 resamples of eleven whole groups were drawn with replacement, preserving their members. The size of each replicate could vary according to the groups drawn. Indices were generated beforehand with Python's random.Random, based on Mersenne Twister, using seed 20261026. The same indices were retained for both calculations. This choice addressed the clustered structure of the data and the importance of the resampling mechanism discussed by Field and Welsh (2007).

The 2.5th and 97.5th percentiles were calculated using type 7 linear interpolation, explicitly defined in the protocol following the classification of Hyndman and Fan (1996). They were presented as exploratory ranges of stability under changes in the composition of the observed groups. With eleven groups and the participation achieved at one school, their interpretation was limited to that

procedure. If a replicate had an undefined coefficient, the protocol specified identifying the relationship as lacking an estimable range.

Wolfram Mathematica 15.0.1 for Windows performed the calculations and generated the figures (Wolfram Research, 2026). Python independently verified extraction, counts, contingency tables, and coefficients through pairs of participants and group multiplicity weights. Both calculations used the same indices and percentile definition. Full-precision results were retained before uniform rounding so that the text, tables, and figures shared a single verified numerical basis.

Ethical considerations

According to the information provided for this article, the original survey had authorization from the school and ethical review by its guidance team. The agreement recorded in the questionnaire was used as an inclusion criterion. Data preparation minimized personal information and kept individual records in restricted local storage. The school review is described under its own designation, and the presentation uses aggregated data to preserve confidentiality. Custody conditions and any subsequent access will be governed by the scope of the relevant authorizations and consent or assent.

RESULTS

Distributions of the ten items

The distributions differed according to the behavior considered. In almost always or always, there were 64 responses on ease in expressing opinions and 69 on consideration of all alternatives. Difficulty expressing disagreement had 62 responses in occasionally, whereas nervousness when contradicting someone had its highest frequency in never, with 48. Table 1 retains the wording and all four complete categories, with 155 responses per item.

Table 1

Distributions of the ten items on expression and decision-making

Item	Never n (%)	Almost never n (%)	Occasionally n (%)	Almost always or always n (%)
ASR01. I find it difficult to say that I disagree with something.	25 (16.1)	37 (23.9)	62 (40.0)	31 (20.0)
ASR02. I get very nervous if I have to contradict someone.	48 (31.0)	36 (23.2)	35 (22.6)	36 (23.2)
ASR03. I say what I think, even if others disagree.	15 (9.7)	25 (16.1)	55 (35.5)	60 (38.7)
ASR04. I find it easy to tell others what I think of them.	29 (18.7)	30 (19.4)	58 (37.4)	38 (24.5)
ASR05. I express my opinions easily.	12 (7.7)	21 (13.5)	58 (37.4)	64 (41.3)
DEC01. When I have to make a decision, I wait a long time before starting to think about it.	14 (9.0)	23 (14.8)	77 (49.7)	41 (26.5)

Item	Never n (%)	Almost never n (%)	Occasionally n (%)	Almost always or always n (%)
DEC02. I like to consider all alternatives before making a decision.	11 (7.1)	10 (6.5)	65 (41.9)	69 (44.5)
DEC03. I prefer to leave decisions to others.	35 (22.6)	36 (23.2)	62 (40.0)	22 (14.2)
DEC04. I cannot think properly if I have to make decisions in a hurry.	19 (12.3)	29 (18.7)	61 (39.4)	46 (29.7)
DEC05. I avoid making decisions.	44 (28.4)	26 (16.8)	55 (35.5)	30 (19.4)

Note. N = 155 per item. Cells present frequencies and percentages of all participants, rounded to one decimal place. ASR identifies assertiveness items and DEC identifies decision-making items. A higher score indicates a higher frequency of the stated behavior.

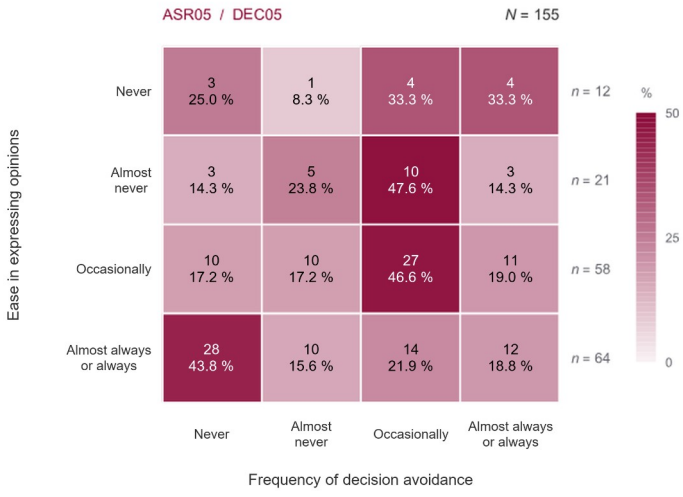
In the decision-making section, 77 participants indicated occasionally that they waited a long time before starting to think about a decision. That category included 62 responses on leaving decisions to others and 61 on difficulty thinking when deciding in a hurry. Avoidance was distributed across never, with 44 responses; almost never, with 26; occasionally, with 55; and almost always or always, with 30.

Primary relationship and response combinations

Ease in expressing opinions and avoidance showed a tau-b of −.178. Among the 64 participants who expressed opinions easily almost always or always, 28 reported never avoiding decisions, or 43.8% of that row, and 12 indicated avoidance almost always or always, or 18.8%. Among those who never expressed opinions easily, three of twelve answered never for avoidance and four indicated almost always or always. Figure 1 presents all combinations, their counts, and row percentages.

Figure 1

Expression of opinions and avoidance within the same participants



Note. N = 155. Each cell shows the frequency and percentage within its row. The denominator appears next to each category of opinion expression. Burgundy intensity represents the row percentage. Categories retain the questionnaire order.

The most frequent combination brought together expression almost always or always and avoidance never, with 28 participants. The next combined occasionally for both behaviors, with 27. The inverse direction of the coefficient coexisted with responses in all sixteen combinations, so the joint distribution clarified the diversity underlying that trend.

Secondary relationships and group composition

Nervousness when contradicting someone and avoidance showed a tau-b of .129. Ease in expressing opinions and preference for leaving decisions to others reached −.018, and consideration of alternatives and avoidance, .009. Among the 69 participants who considered alternatives almost always or always, 22 never avoided decisions and 17 avoided them almost always or always. Table 2 presents the four associations, resampling ranges, and minimum and maximum estimates from successive omissions.

Table 2

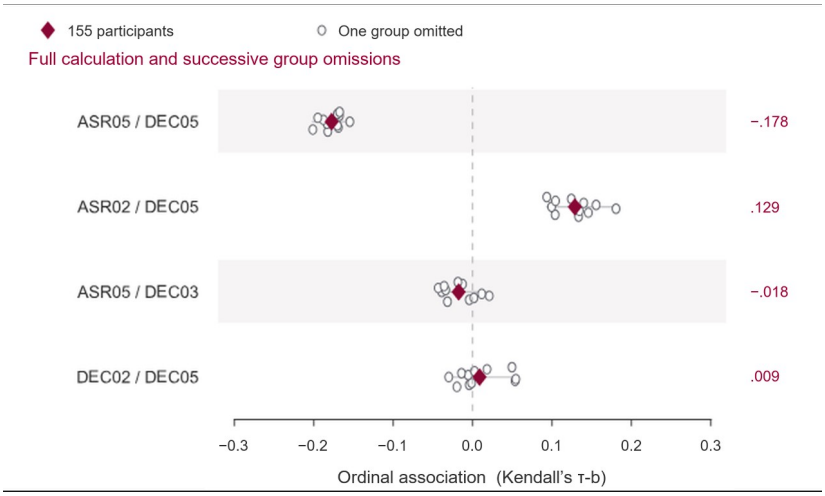
Prespecified associations and sensitivity to group composition

Relationship	Tau-b	Exploratory range	Minimum and maximum after omitting one group
R1. Ease in expressing opinions and avoidance	−.178	[−.255 ; −.094]	[−.201 ; −.155]
R2. Nervousness when contradicting someone and avoidance	.129	[−.036 ; .269]	[.093 ; .181]
R3. Ease in expressing opinions and delegation	−.018	[−.124 ; .118]	[−.043 ; .021]
R4. Consideration of alternatives and avoidance	.009	[−.154 ; .181]	[−.030 ; .054]

Note. N = 155 in the full calculation. R1 is the primary relationship and R2–R4 are secondary. Exploratory ranges correspond to the 2.5th and 97.5th percentiles of 10,000 resamples of eleven whole groups, using type 7 linear interpolation. The last column summarizes the eleven successive omissions. There were 10,000 defined replicates for each relationship.

Figure 2

Full-sample associations and estimates after omitting each group



Note. Diamonds correspond to the full calculation with 155 participants. Circles represent the eleven estimates obtained by successively omitting one grade-and-section group. R1–R4 correspond to the relationships in Table 2. The vertical line marks zero on tau-b.

For the primary relationship, the eleven omissions produced coefficients between −.201 and −.155, retaining the inverse direction. The exploratory range was [−.255; −.094]. Nervousness and avoidance retained a positive direction in the omissions, with a resampling range of [−.036; .269]. The relationships with delegation and alternatives showed sign changes across some omissions and ranges that included values on both sides of zero. All 10,000 replicates for each relationship were estimable. Figure 2 shows each omission alongside the full calculation.

DISCUSSION

What the relationship between expression and decision-making adds

The primary relationship answered the question posed in the Introduction by showing that, among the 155 participants, greater reported frequency of expressing opinions easily accompanied a lower frequency of avoiding decisions, with tau-b = −.178 (Table 2, R1). The inverse direction persisted in all eleven group omissions, with estimates between −.201 and −.155, and the exploratory resampling range was [−.255; −.094]. The data provide evidence of a link between ease of expression and lower decision avoidance that persisted after removing any of the observed groups. This finding places both behaviors in an identifiable relationship within the school, whose magnitude and diversity of experiences are clarified through paired responses.

Figure 1 clarifies the educational meaning of that trend. Among the 64 students who reported expressing opinions easily "almost always or always," 28 never avoided decisions, equivalent to 43.8% of that row, whereas 12 avoided them "almost always or always," or 18.8%. The common denominator shows that the same frequency of ease of expression accompanied different decision-making experiences. This heterogeneity provides a concrete reason to observe how each student connects expressing a position with choosing an alternative. For educational support, relevant

information includes both the opportunity to speak and the circumstances in which responsibility for a decision is assumed.

Ames et al. (2017) examine assertiveness in relation to interpersonal demands and judgments about its appropriateness in each situation. That approach helps interpret the diversity in the row of 64 students in Figure 1, because general ease in expressing opinions leaves open the people, issues, and responsibilities involved. The coexistence of different avoidance frequencies within that row shows that perceived expression accompanied heterogeneous decision-making experiences. This result situates the relationship between the two behaviors in situations that can be explored with peers, teachers, or family members, considering what opinions concern and what decisions need to be made.

The value of investigating those circumstances has a precedent in Al-Adeimi and Lee (2025), who analyzed 693 survey responses from sixth- through eighth-grade students and identified participation reasons related to the topic, personal expression, and interpersonal dynamics. In that study, reasons were coded as idea units, distinguished from the responses received. Those findings situate participation within concrete issues and interactions and support incorporating student voice. Asking about reasons and situations would make it possible to investigate why, in our Figure 1, ease in expressing opinions coexisted with different frequencies of avoidance.

Disagreement, delegation, and deliberation as distinct questions

The relationship between nervousness when contradicting someone and avoidance added a clarification regarding disagreement. Its tau-b was .129 (Table 2, R2), and the eleven omissions produced positive values between .093 and .181 (Figure 2). Whole-group resampling yielded a wider range, [−.036; .269], which included zero. The two procedures inform different aspects of stability, since one removes each group once and the other changes their representation through resampling. Reading them together situates the positive trend within the observed composition and supports examining the situations in which nervousness accompanies avoidance. Relevant educational observation would record interlocutors, anticipated consequences, and ways of requesting help.

González Fragoso et al. (2018) studied assertiveness and anxiety among 535 Mexican secondary school students and reported positive associations between assertive behavior scores and total anxiety. Their assertive behavior scale assigns lower scores to greater assertiveness and higher scores to greater aggressiveness. That scoring direction is essential to understanding their result and to defining its relationship with the nervousness addressed by our ASR02 item. The prior study provides a basis for examining the emotional experience of disagreement using appropriate instruments, while our result identifies a specific behavior whose relationship with avoidance warrants situated observation. Distinguishing between the measures preserves the precise meaning of each association.

Ease in expressing opinions and preference for leaving decisions to others showed tau-b = −.018, with an exploratory range of [−.124; .118] (Table 2, R3). The overall ordinal trend was close to zero, and all four delegation categories were present among those who expressed themselves more frequently. Luna Bernal and Laca Arocena (2014), in their research with 992 Mexican upper secondary students,

discussed the transfer of decisions in relation to the perceived legitimacy of intervening in particular matters. In our school, ease of expression coexisted with different preferences for delegation, placing responsibility for choice as a specific issue when interpreting participation. Seeking advice and distributing responsibilities are possible interpretations that require contextual examination.

Moore's (2022) longitudinal study of a student committee at an independent secondary school in Scotland helps interpret that coexistence. The analysis distinguished perceptions of being consulted from opportunities to influence decisions and highlighted the institutional response. The diversity of delegation observed in R3 acquires educational meaning within that distinction, because expressing oneself and taking responsibility for a choice may involve different responsibilities and opportunities. Recording which decisions belong to the student, who makes proposals, and how support is requested would allow that interpretation to be examined. The result provides a concrete basis for studying participation alongside the actual scope for decision-making offered by the activity.

The relationship between considering alternatives and avoiding decisions completed this differentiation. Its tau-b was .009, with an exploratory range of [−.154; .181] (Table 2, R4). Among the 69 participants who reported considering alternatives "almost always or always," 22 never avoided decisions and 17 avoided them "almost always or always," according to the joint distribution described in Results. This coexistence provides information about the connection between deliberating and arriving at a choice. The analysis supports observing how options are compared, a criterion is established, and responsibility for a decision is assumed, keeping these steps identifiable within the same task. Luna Bernal and Laca Arocena's (2014) proposal to broaden decision-making research through variables such as assertiveness is developed here in a focused analysis based on paired behaviors.

Honduran contribution and criteria for educational support

At this school, ease of expression was inversely related to avoidance, while nervousness when contradicting someone showed a positive relationship sensitive to group composition. In turn, ease in expressing opinions and delegation, as well as consideration of alternatives and avoidance, showed overall ordinal trends close to zero (Table 2). This configuration reveals that the behaviors examined were connected in different ways within the same students. Table 3 links those findings to observation criteria for teachers and guidance teams, providing a basis for evaluating which support is appropriate in each situation.

Table 3

Observed relationships and criteria for investigating educational support

Evidence	Educational interpretation	Proposed guidance
R1. Tau-b = −.178, with an inverse direction in all eleven omissions.	Ease in expressing opinions and avoidance show an overall trend and diverse combinations.	Observe expression and choice within the same task, recording reasons and support requested.

Evidence	Educational interpretation	Proposed guidance
R2. Tau-b = .129, with an exploratory range that includes zero.	Nervousness when contradicting someone warrants interpretation in relation to interlocutors and conditions.	Record when disagreement is expressed and which participation opportunities the activity offers.
R3. Ease in expressing opinions and delegation, tau-b = −.018.	Leaving decisions to others requires examining responsibilities, help, and the context of choice.	Distinguish shared decisions, support requested, and responsibilities assumed in concrete tasks.
R4. Consideration of alternatives and avoidance, tau-b = .009.	Considering options and arriving at a choice raise distinct educational questions.	Examine how alternatives are compared, a choice is justified, and the agreement is carried out.

Note. The guidance comprises proposals for educational observation and evaluation derived from the relationships analyzed. R1–R4 retain the codes used in Table 2.

The criteria can be put into practice in a school task that invites students to express a position, compare alternatives, and justify a choice. The record would distinguish what each participant proposed, the support requested, and the responsibility assumed. The perspective on personal and social competencies offered by Di Giusto Valle et al. (2014) provides a framework of holistic education for contextualizing that proposal. The combinations observed in R1 and R4 reveal different experiences of avoidance among students who reported the same frequency of ease of expression or consideration of alternatives. That finding supports observing how such behaviors connect during an activity, with attention to their circumstances and the support required.

CASEL (2020) links relationship skills to communication and collaboration, and responsible decision-making to reasoned examination of options and consequences. Within that framework, the combinations in Figure 1 and relationship R4 justify proposing activities that make both expression and the process of choice observable. Oral contributions, written responses, and time for deliberation could be used, recording how each mode enables students to present reasons and request support. These actions constitute proposals for educational evaluation, whose relevance would be examined through the opportunities offered and the performance observed. Their basis lies in the explicit link between the empirical pattern and the pedagogical question it raises.

In Honduras, Moncada Godoy and Rivera Reyes (2021) documented support mechanisms and interpersonal relationships in secondary school trajectories through participant accounts. That precedent highlights the importance of understanding experiences within their school organization. The survey of 155 participants at Instituto Gubernamental Desarrollo Sostenible, in Tegucigalpa, adds evidence of an inverse relationship between ease of expression and avoidance that coexisted with diverse response combinations. The complementary relationships clarified differences in disagreement, delegation, and consideration of alternatives. Together, these findings provide a Honduran empirical basis for interpreting expression and decision-making distinctly and examining that interpretation through observed tasks or participants' perspectives.

Latin American relevance and development of the findings

Other Latin American schools can use the procedure to examine these relationships within their own communities. The OECD (2024) skills classification and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO, 2024) guidance on integrating social and emotional learning provide reference points for contextualizing the work. Adaptation would require documenting language, ages, interlocutors, and recognized responsibilities, as well as checking how the items are understood. With that information, contingency tables and group analysis would allow comparison of both the trend and the combinations accompanying it. The transferable value lies in this procedure of interpretation and contextual examination.

Target 4.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) links education, citizenship, a culture of peace, and cultural diversity (United Nations, 2015). The article's contribution is conceptually related to that aim by distinguishing expression, disagreement, and decision-making responsibilities as educational questions. Table 3 offers criteria for investigating participation opportunities and justification of decisions affecting others. This connection enables the development of contextualized observation indicators and an educational agenda on coexistence and responsibility, while keeping the target's conceptual role explicit.

The scope of the findings is situated within cross-sectional self-reports from one school and ten individual items. Omissions and resampling of eleven groups inform exploratory stability under changes in composition, while response situations and reasons constitute the next object of study. Observed tasks, interviews, and follow-up would therefore allow the interpretations of R1–R4 to be examined and their development studied. Expansion to multiple schools would provide evidence about the institutional and cultural conditions in which those relationships acquire educational meaning.

CONCLUSIONS

Among the 155 participants at Instituto Gubernamental Desarrollo Sostenible, in Tegucigalpa, reported ease in expressing opinions was inversely related to the frequency of avoiding decisions, answering the question posed in the Introduction. The association was tau-b = −.178 (Table 2, R1) and retained that direction in all eleven group omissions (Figure 2). Among the 64 students who expressed themselves easily "almost always or always," 28 never avoided decisions and 12 avoided them "almost always or always" (Figure 1). The inverse trend thus coexisted with diverse decision-making experiences among those who reported the same frequency of ease of expression, clarifying the educational meaning of the relationship examined.

The three complementary relationships defined what each behavior adds to that answer. Nervousness when contradicting someone was positively associated with avoidance, with tau-b = .129, and its exploratory range [−.036; .269] showed sensitivity to group composition (Table 2, R2). Ease in expressing opinions and delegation showed tau-b = −.018 (R3), while considering alternatives and avoiding decisions reached .009 (R4). In the latter relationship, among the 69 students who considered alternatives "almost always or always," 22 never avoided decisions and 17 avoided them

"almost always or always." The results support examining responsibilities and the transition from deliberating to choosing separately.

The findings contribute Honduran evidence of a specific connection between expression and decision-making. Greater ease in expressing opinions accompanied lower avoidance overall, while delegation and consideration of alternatives retained diverse combinations with their respective comparison variables. This configuration reveals the heterogeneity of experiences and places disagreement, responsibility for choice, and deliberation as aspects warranting distinct educational interpretation. Paired responses document that diversity within the same individuals, and Table 2 and Figure 2 clarify the observed stability. Other researchers thus have clearly delimited findings and a reproducible procedure for examining them within their school communities.

The article offers four criteria for educational support grounded in those findings and organized in Table 3. Relationship R1 supports observing expression and choice within the same task; R2, attending to the conditions of disagreement; R3, recognizing who assumes responsibility for the decision; and R4, examining how options are compared and a choice justified. The CASEL (2020) framework situates these proposals within relationship skills and responsible decision-making. Their evaluation can incorporate oral or written expression, time for deliberation, and records of support requested. These criteria provide concrete reference points for studying participation and the process of choice through evidence from school activities.

The findings offer other Latin American schools a point of comparison regarding the relationship between expression and decision-making, whose use requires attention to language, ages, and recognized responsibilities within each community. Observed tasks, interviews, and follow-up would help explain the reasons for the combinations identified and examine their development, while administration across several schools would provide information on school organization and cultural relevance. The research documents an inverse trend with individual heterogeneity and offers criteria for examining its educational meaning. This evidence can be expanded through comparisons that document the circumstances in which students express themselves, consult, deliberate, and decide.

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ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The study was conducted through a literature review based exclusively on previously published documentary sources. It did not involve direct participation by humans or animals, interventions, biological samples, or access to identifiable personal data. Consequently, it did not require ethics committee approval or informed consent. Throughout the research process, the principles of scientific integrity, appropriate attribution of authorship, rigorous citation, and responsible use of consulted sources were observed.

DECLARATION ON THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

The authors state that the artificial intelligence tool was used exclusively to support the organization of the article and translation of the text. Its use did not determine the scientific content, study design, source selection, data analysis, interpretation of results, or conclusions. Full responsibility for the content remains with the authors.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest related to this study and that all procedures followed comply with the ethical standards established by the journal. They also confirm that this work is original and has not been published, in whole or in part, in any other publication.

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