

YOUNG RIDER'S SATISFACTION AND LOYALTY TO A CLUB: FACTORS AND INFLUENCES

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Context and problem

- Recent **decrease** in the number of the French Equestrian Federation (FFE) memberships (after 70 years of continuous progression)
- High **volatility** of customers
- The services offered by riding schools still remain **too standard** and seem to have difficulties in adapting to **changing demand**
- **Improving riders' loyalty** to the riding school is an issue recognized by professionals in an increasingly competitive environment

Particularly for **children <13** = main target clientele of riding schools

Research focus: Expectations, satisfaction and loyalty of young riders, complementary influences of parent and child in decision making processes



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Literature on young children loyalty to a sporting club and family influence:

- There is variation in loyalty processes according to individuals, particularly according to age^{1, 2, 3}
- Children can answer a semi-structured survey from the age of 7⁴
- Investigating parents is necessary for survey approval but also to understand the strong parental influence at this age⁵

Methods

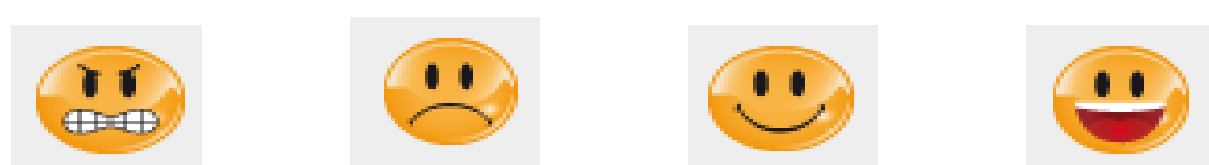
Adapted Survey

Child

10 mn each

Parent

- Answers **without his parent**
- Investigator asks questions and writes down answers
- Simple **short questions** using **adapted language**
- Mainly **closed-ended questions:** items or Likert scales (4 points)



- **Self-filled** for one part (closed-ended questions) while investigator interrogates his child
- Open-ended questions asked by investigator afterward

Riding school choice (29)

- 2 French counties: Hérault (South) and Eure (North)
- In suburban, urban or rural areas
- Various sizes and disciplines
- Random selection of respondents:
-> **87 child – parent pairs**

Data processing

- Coding open-ended questions
- Descriptive statistics and cross tables
- With significance tests

Results

87 children

82% ♀ 18% ♂

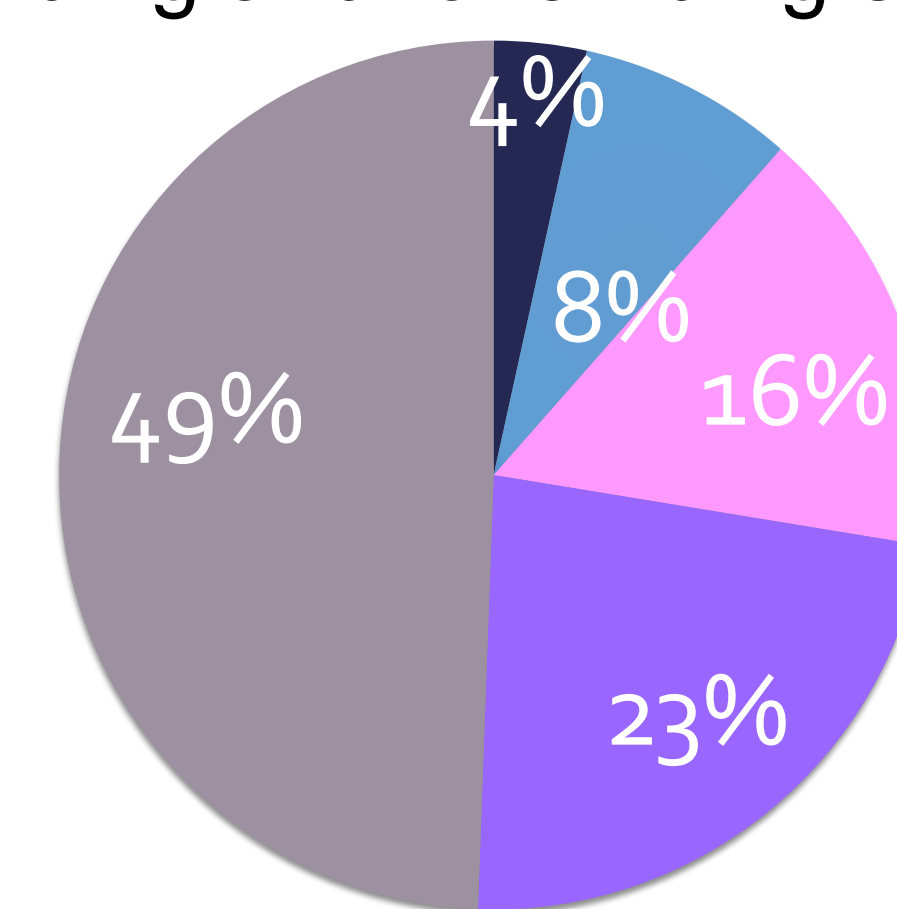
Frequency of **riding practice:** 1/week

Riding **experience:** From 1 to 9 years (3.5 years on average)

1/2 practices **another activity** 1/week (music or sport)

Influence of family members, especially the **mother**, in the initial choice for horse riding and for a riding school

Percentage of **riders** depending on their **parent's gender**



- Father rider
- Father former rider
- Mother rider
- Mother former rider
- Father/Mother not rider

Once the practice is engaged, **child satisfaction** and desire to stay or not in the riding school seems to take precedence over parent's opinion

Very high satisfaction for the child: average 3.83/ 4 (sd: 0,38)

BUT: 29% would like improvements in infrastructures or materials, then **security**

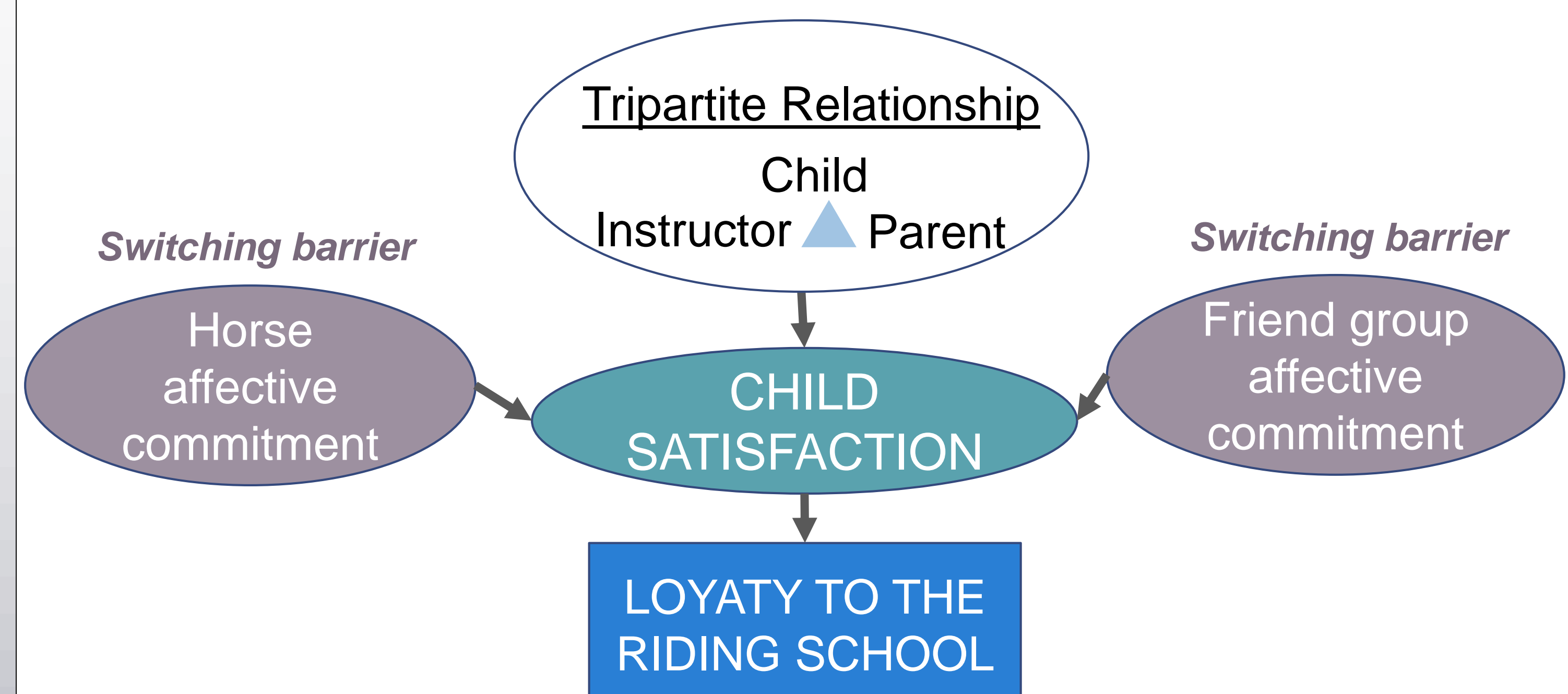
39% seem unsatisfied with their **teaching**

Other factors related to horseback riding instructor:

- Affective commitment for the child
- Trust for parent & child
- Improvement wish for parent & child

Reason for leaving the horse riding school for parent and child

Child loyalty process to riding school



Conclusion

These results invite **riding schools to question building and promoting their offer in order to adapt it to the specificities of this market**, while taking into account the distinct and complementary roles of young children and their parents in the loyalty process. They also highlight the significant role of the horse riding instructor in child and parent satisfactions.

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