

# Parental Participation in Latin American Basic Education: A Systematic Review

Participación parental en educación básica latinoamericana:  
revisión sistemática


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## Summary

There is consensus among researchers about the benefits of parental involvement in primary school education. The empirical development available refers to research mainly developed in the countries of the northern hemisphere where educational inequalities are less visible than in Latin American countries. When it is integrated, it is not addressed in a differentiated way, which limits knowledge about the specificities and commonalities between its countries. The objective of this research is to analyze the Latin American scientific production that addresses the study of parental involvement in the field of primary school education, published between 2020 to 2024, following the methodological guidelines of Systematic Reviews. The review highlights the scarce and unequal production between countries where studies on parental involvement from a pedagogical and formative approach prevail. Following what has been described for the Spanish case and the Anglophone countries, the review shows the use of different concepts to refer to parental involvement. The few definitions found show distinctions between the notions of involvement, implication, connection between families and schools and parental participation, which shows a novel conceptual development compared to what is found in northern countries.

**Keywords:** Parental participation, Elementary education, Systematic review, Latin America.

## Resumen

Existe consenso entre los investigadores acerca de los beneficios de la participación parental en la educación escolar primaria. El desarrollo empírico disponible remite a investigaciones centralmente desarrolladas en los países del hemisferio norte donde las desigualdades educativas son menos visibles que en los países latinoamericanos. Cuando se la integra, esta no es abordada de forma diferenciada, lo cual limita el conocimiento sobre las especificidades y comunalidades entre sus países. El objetivo de esta investigación es analizar la producción científica latinoamericana que aborda el estudio de la participación parental en el campo de la educación escolar primaria, publicada entre los años 2019 y año 2024, siguiendo los lineamientos metodológicos de las revisiones sistemáticas. La revisión destaca la escasa y desigual producción entre los países donde priman los estudios sobre involucramiento parental desde un enfoque pedagógico y formativo. Siguiendo lo que se ha descrito para el caso español y los países anglófonos la revisión muestra el uso de conceptos diferentes para referirse a la participación parental. Las escasas definiciones encontradas muestran distinciones entre las nociones de involucramiento, implicación, conexión entre familias-escuela y participación parental, lo que muestra un desarrollo conceptual novedoso respecto a lo que se encuentra en los países del norte.

**Palabras claves:** Participación de los padres; Educación básica; Revisión sistemática; Latinoamérica.

## INTRODUCTION

Parental participation is a subject of ongoing interest to researchers and educational and school policymakers (Epstein & Sheldon, 2024). In general terms, research shows beneficial relationships of parental participation in development optimization, child-youth learning, and school effectiveness. In the particular area of basic school education, there are already several meta-analyses that confirm the significant scientific production available in different countries around the world on the relationship between both constructs (parental participation and school education of boys and girls) (Barger et al., 2019; Jeong et al., 2021; Jeynes, 2024; Kim, 2022).

However, a more detailed analysis of the associated practices reveals that parental participation has been studied from different theoretical and methodological approaches and describes diverse forms in the same educational institution (Borgonovi & Montt, 2012). It is a construct conceived differently depending on the approach in question. A bibliometric analysis of 564 research studies on the relationship between family and school published in Spanish between 2008 and 2018 suggests that among the most used concepts are family involvement and parental participation (Castrillón-Correa et al., 2021). According to the authors, these notions are not always accompanied by definitions to be differentiated from each other. Some systematic reviews of research published in English journals also suggest the homologation of the concept of parental participation, parent participation with that of parental involvement or family involvement (Goodall & Montgomery, 2014), agreeing that the conceptual delimitation of these constructs remains unclear. The question arises whether something similar occurs in Latin American research. Conceptual precision is relevant in research as it contributes to a better understanding of the phenomenon (or subject) or phenomena that are put in relation, even more so when inserted in different population and institutional contexts and a field in permanent movement as is what characterizes social and school life (De Montigny & Lacharité, 2005). The research presented in this article opts for a broad notion of parental participation that considers at least three dimensions: activities and behaviors of involvement in the activities organized by schools, feelings of connection with the meaning and purposes of those initiatives and of commitment, consequently, with the activities that are demanded from there.

Something similar is observed in the international literature concerning the notion of school education. In general terms, it usually refers to the idea of formal education centrally provided by the school institution. However, it is often operationalized using concepts as varied as academic performance or school achievement. In Latin American educational policies, school education usually refers to the scores obtained by boys and girls in standardized tests for comparative measurement of the quality of education, whether national or international (Treviño et al., 2014). However, this emphasis is also discussed as it has been shown that school education is not reduced to student academic performance or achievement level in this type of measurement. School education also depends on structural, socioeconomic, and territorial conditions, educational aspirations and expectations, transgenerational socialization patterns, and the relationship between families and schools (Bourdieu & Passeron, 2001). The notion of school education used in this research focuses on basic education and refers to the process and experience of development and learning manifested through formal education offered by the school system in a structured and sequential manner at different levels and modes.

In the particular area of study of parental participation in basic school education, authors such as Gubbins et al. (2023) have identified:

(...) at least five approaches to its study: 1) Family involvement focused on pedagogical and/or formative aspects 2) Family engagement focused on the inclusion of diversity 3) Family participation as external regulators of the quality of the educational offer 4) Family participation as internal regulators of institutional administrative-financial efficiency 5) Family participation as an expression of social justice and democratic school governance. (p. 4)

The first notion approaches the phenomenon from an ecosystemic perspective of overlapping socializing influences between families and schools (Epstein, 2001). The second notion is oriented to the promotion of inclusive education (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2023). The third notion refers to the school choice model (Orellana et al., 2018), and the fourth concept is oriented to school effectiveness (Murillo, 2011). Finally, the family participation is an indicator of social justice and a relevant dimension of democratic school governance (Belavi & Murillo, 2020).

Likewise, and despite the available empirical development, studies on parental participation in basic school education refer to scientific research mainly developed in the countries of the northern hemisphere where educational inequalities are less visible than those described in Latin American countries (United Nations [UN], 2020). When Latin American research is integrated into these meta-analyses and systematic reviews, it is observed that the studies conducted in Latin America are not approached in a differentiated manner, limiting the possibilities of building a thorough knowledge of the specificities and communalities described in terms of the relationship between parental participation and school education in Latin America, compared to what is found in other continents. Something similar is observed in a review conducted by Latin American authors of 41 studies published between 2011 and 2019. Although the authors conclude communalities regarding the importance of parental participation in this case, academic achievement, and the use of different concepts to refer to parent behavior and attitudes toward school education of their boys and girls, the authors do not make a differentiated intercontinental analysis (Mayorquín & Zaldívar, 2019). However, this background is shared by reviews of research conducted in other continents (Boonk et al., 2018; Kamal et al., 2022).

The search also showed another publication addressing “parental participation in education” (Caligiore & Ison, 2018, p.138). It aims to relate it to two dimensions that, although linked to school education, are analyzed in terms of the development of childhood self-efficacy and executive control. The work is presented as a theoretical review relying on theoretical and empirical background published before 2018, but it seems to be closer to an essay than to a systematic review because it does not specify the methodology used. In sum, there is no clear overview of recent scientific production on the relationship between parental participation in basic school education in the particular context of Latin American countries, particularly those produced between 2020 and 2024. This range of years is particularly interesting to study because it is mediated by an unprecedented situation of a global nature, such as the COVID-19 pandemic that, as a result of the

confinement required by the states, demanded new modalities of parental participation in the school education of their boys and girls.

In this scenario, it seems debatable that educational improvement policies, plans, and programs decisions made in Latin American countries can be based simply on evidence produced centrally in countries with a different social and economic structure. This study seeks to reduce this gap from a systematic, updated, and exhaustive review of empirical research in parental participation in basic school education of boys and girls in Latin American schools. In particular, it seeks to answer the following research questions: What is understood by parental participation in school education in Latin American scientific production? What is known about parental participation in school education of basic education students in schools in Latin American countries?

This study aims to analyze the Latin American scientific production studying parental participation in school education published between 2020 and 2024. This review seeks to provide information on the current status of Latin American scientific research on parental participation in school education. Specifically, this review asks about the conceptualizations used, dimensions of study, characteristics, and type of relationships with school education to provide information for the development of future research to deepen the knowledge of this area of study in Latin America.

These research questions are of special interest to be addressed in the case of Latin America since a growing citizen demand for participation in institutional decision-making, including formal education, has been described in different Latin American countries (Parra, 2021). This movement emerges in a continent with persistent socioeconomic and educational gaps that demand to be revisited with educational and school plans, programs, and policies supported by local scientific evidence.

## METHOD

### Design

A systematic review following the guidelines of the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses model known as PRISMA (Page et al., 2021) was conducted to fulfill the objective of this research. This type of study differs from a meta-analysis because it does not use statistical techniques for analysis (Codina, 2018). In contrast, systematic reviews focus on the organization and analysis of existing evidence and provide a structured overview of the current status of research in an area (Moreno et al., 2018).

The search for articles that made up the corpus of information to be analyzed was carried out through three sources of information: the SCOPUS, SciELO, and WOS electronic databases. This decision was based on the recognized reputation of the journals indexed in these databases in terms of the quality and impact of their social science publications (González et al., 2011). Articles published between 2020 and the first semester of 2024 were considered. This was based on the need to update the knowledge systematized by previous systematic reviews related to this topic in Latin America, whose last reference appears published in 2019 (Mayorquín & Zaldívar, 2019).

It was also based on the impact of the implementation of distance education on parental participation as a result of the confinement due to the COVID-19 health crisis during 2020 and 2021. The assumption is that this health crisis, unprecedented for the countries of the world, and in particular the experience of maintaining school education from home impacted the traditional modes of parental participation in the school education of boys and girls (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2021). Another inclusion criterion was to consider research published in Spanish because it is the predominant language in Latin America, English because it is a hegemonic language in the highest impact scientific publications, and Portuguese to include Brazilian scientific production in the analysis. In terms of exclusion criteria, it was decided not to include research on the relationship between parental participation and school dropout, maladaptive student behavior (aggression, bullying, crime, among others), or learning and/or developmental disorders (e.g., autism, dyslexia) because these situations require a comprehensive approach and more specialized intervention on the part of schools and families, articles that do not specify the age of the students (in case it is not clear whether the institution is a basic education school), studies that address preschool, basic, and/or middle education at the same time, and articles that publish research conducted in countries of the northern hemisphere. The selection of the publications was based on the following eligibility and exclusion criteria (see Table 1).

**Table 1.**  
*Text eligibility and exclusion criteria.*

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
a) Articles that address the topic of parental participation in the title and abstract.	a) Research that addresses the relationship between parental participation and school dropout, maladaptive student behavior (aggression, bullying, crime, among others), or learning and/or developmental disorders (e.g., autism, dyslexia).
b) Articles that address parental participation in school education.	b) Articles that do not specify the age of the students (in case it is not clear whether the institution is a basic education school establishment).
c) Research conducted with different actors in basic and/or primary education.	c) Studies that address preschool, basic, and/or middle education at the same time.
d) Studies conducted in a Latin American country (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Puerto Rico, Uruguay, and Venezuela).	d) Articles that publish research conducted in countries of the northern hemisphere.

**Procedure**

The search was carried out between June and July 2024 using the keywords mentioned in Table 2 and different Boolean search equations. Each equation combined one of the descriptors or keywords (see Table 2) with the type of document, discipline, and Latin American country. The total number of equations was 31. Below is an example used for each database considered:

**1. For WOS database**

TS= (Parental participation) and Preprint Citation Index (Excluy – Database) and 2024 or 2023 or

2022 or 2021 or 2020 (Years of publication) and Article or review article (Types of documents) and Psychology or Social Sciences Other Topics or Studies of Family or Sociology or Education Education Research (Research areas) and BRAZIL or CHILE or MEXICO or BRAZIL or COLOMBIA or PERU or CUBA or ECUADOR (Countries/Regions) and Spanish or Portuguese or English (Languages).

2. Example of the equation used in Scopus database

Parental AND involvement AND PUBYEAR > 2019 AND PUBYEAR < 2024 AND ( LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "SOCI" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( SUBJAREA , "PSYC" ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( DOCTYPE , "ar" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( DOCTYPE , "re" ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Parental Involvement" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Socioeconomic Status" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( EXACTKEYWORD , "Primary School" ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( AFFILCOUNTRY , "Chile" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( AFFILCOUNTRY , "Mexico" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( AFFILCOUNTRY , "Colombia" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( AFFILCOUNTRY , "Brazil" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( AFFILCOUNTRY , "Peru" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( AFFILCOUNTRY , "Ecuador" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( AFFILCOUNTRY , "Uruguay" ) ) AND ( LIMIT-TO ( LANGUAGE , "English" ) OR LIMIT-TO ( LANGUAGE , "Spanish" ) )

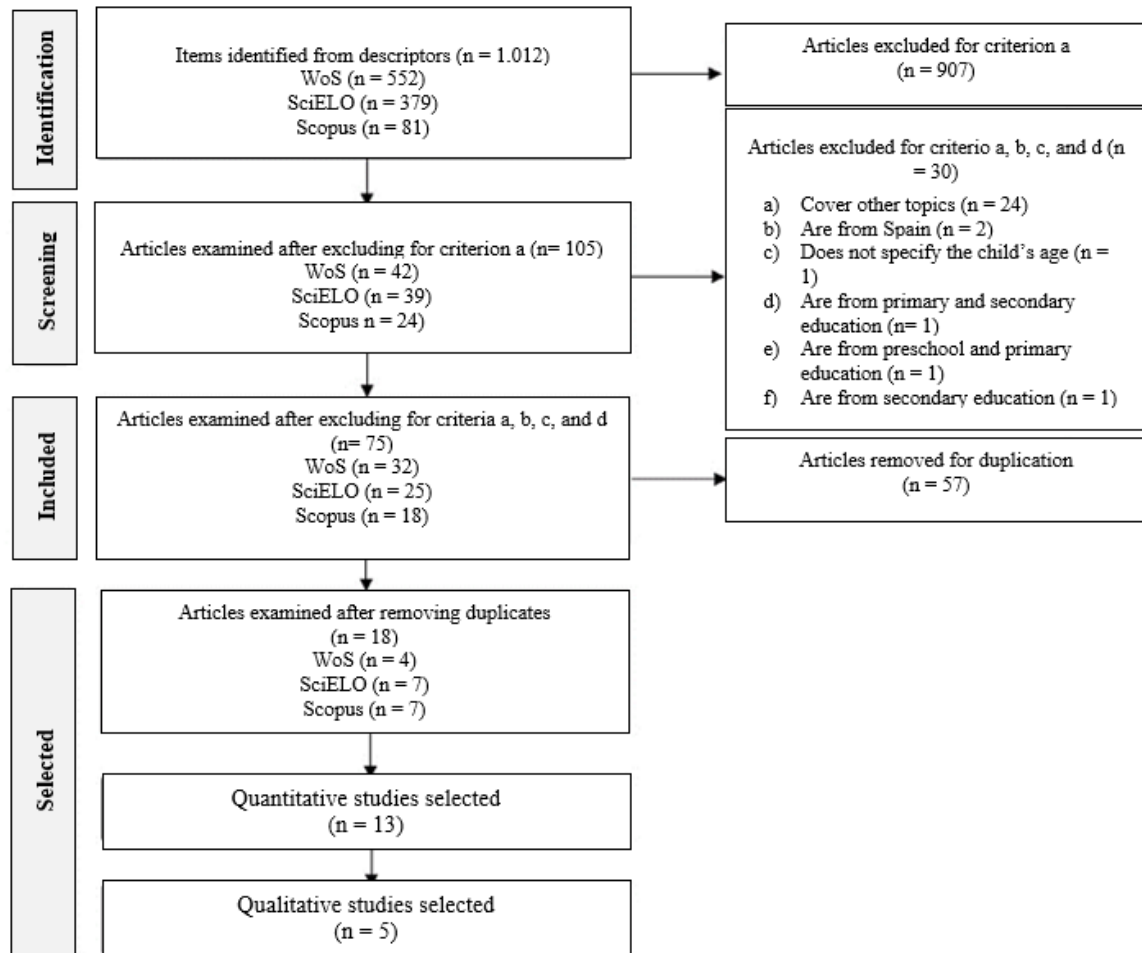
3. Example of the equation used in SciELO database

Expression: Parental Participation. Filters used: (Collection: Brazil) (Collection: Mexico) (Collection: Colombia) (Collection: Chile) (Collection: Argentina) (Collection: Costa Rica) (Collection: Cuba) (Collection: Peru) (Collection: Ecuador) (Collection: Uruguay) (Collection: Uruguay) (Collection: Venezuela) (Collection: Paraguay) (Language: \*) (Year of publication: 2021) (Year of publication: 2022) (Year of publication: 2023) (Year of publication: 2020) (SciELO Thematic Areas: Applied Social Sciences) (SciELO Thematic Areas: Humanities).

Figure 1 shows the article selection process that began with the review of titles and abstracts of each bibliographic document that appeared in the search. Table 3 shows the documents selected and reviewed.

Table 2.  
Database used, keywords and language of the publications.

Database	Keywords	Language
WOS	1. Participación parental	Spanish
	2. Involucramiento parental	
	3. Participación de padres	
	4. Participación familias	
	5. Compromiso de padres	
	6. Colaboración de padres	
SciELO	7. Parental involvement	English
Scopus	8. Parental engagement	
	9. Envolvimento parental	Portuguese
	10. Participação dos país	
	11. Participação familiar	
	12. Compromisso dos País	
	13. Colaboração dos país	

**Figure 1.***Reviewed articles search and selection process.*

## Data analysis

Eighteen articles were found to meet the inclusion criteria and were analyzed using a matrix constructed from the following categories: year, country, author, objective, methodology, participants, and whether or not they were conducted during the pandemic.

## RESULTS

In analyzing the distribution of articles by country, it was identified that eight research were conducted in Chile, seven in Mexico, two in Brazil, and one in Ecuador. In terms of language, nine publications were in Spanish, eight in English, and one in Portuguese. Within this criterion, it is observed that Chile tends to publish more in Spanish (n=6) than in English (n=2), Mexico has a similar number of articles published in English (n=4) and Spanish (n=3), and Brazil has one publication in its language and one in English, and Ecuador has one in English.

In analyzing the articles by publication date, it is observed that there is a higher concentration in 2020 (n=8) and 2021 (n=4) than in the following years: 2022 (n=3), 2023 (n=3), and 2024 (n=0). Chile and Mexico published the most in 2020 and 2021. Regarding the pandemic, three of the 18 studies analyzed parental participation in school education in the context of the COVID-19 health crisis. Seventy-two percent of the studies used a quantitative methodology, and 28% used a qualitative methodology.

**Table 3.**  
*Description of selected articles*

No.	Country	Year	Author	Objective	Type of study / Methodology	Participants	During the pandemic
1	Mexico	2020	Grijalva-Quiñonez, C. S., Valdés-Cuervo, A. A., Parra-Pérez, L. G., y Vázquez, F. I. G.	To analyze the relationship between the types of parental involvement in homework, psychological resources, and academic performance in Mexican children.	Quantitative. Structural model analysis.	823 students	No
2	Mexico	2020	Bazán-Ramírez, A., Castellanos, D., y Fajardo, V.	To test an explanatory model of structural relationships between variables of parents' support to their children in studying and learning at home, students' intellectual aptitudes, parents' educational level, and academic achievement in reading comprehension at the end of primary education.	Quantitative. Exploratory, confirmatory, and structural regression factor analysis.	362 students and parents	No
3	Mexico	2020	Echeverría-Castro, S. B., Sandoval-Domínguez, R., Sotelo-Castillo, M. A., Barrera-Hernández, L. F., y Ramos-Estrada, D. Y.	To test a measurement and invariance model for a scale of beliefs about parental participation in school education for children residing in rural and urban areas.	Quantitative. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis.	2 576 parents	No
4	Mexico	2021	Vazquez, S. R., y Greenfield, P. M.	To analyze the relationship between family social class and the effectiveness of their homework help.	Qualitative. Comparative case study	Two low- and middle-income families	No
5	Mexico	2022	Bazán-Ramírez, A., Hernández-Padilla, E., y Castellanos-Simons, D.	To determine the effect of parents' educational level and family support on the academic achievement of 6th-grade students in two Mathematics curricular competencies.	Mixed. Structural regression analysis	142 students and parents	No
6	Mexico	2022	Velázquez, C. E., y Palos, P.	To analyze the relationship between school parental involvement at home and school parental self-efficacy during the confinement due to COVID-19.	Quantitative. Confirmatory factor analysis	349 mothers	Yes
7	Mexico	2023	Santana, J. C., Lagunes, A. del R., Molchanova, V. S., y Lagunes, O. N.	To determine the role of parents in the virtual teaching process of primary school students during the COVID-19 health contingency in online classes.	Quantitative, descriptive. Correlational and exploratory factor analysis.	249 fathers and mothers	Yes

**Table 3.**  
*Description of selected articles (continued)*

No.	Country	Year	Author	Objective	Type of study / Methodology	Participants	During the pandemic
8	Chile	2020	Carvajal, C. M., y Armijo, P. C.	To analyze the level of Family Support and Participation in student educational processes according to the characteristics of the family, head of household, indigenous origin, and school vulnerability index.	Quantitative. Variable multivariate analysis and verificatory factor analysis.	520 guardians	No
9	Chile	2020a	Gubbins, V., y Otero, G.	To examine the effect of parental participation in the Language and Mathematics performance of third-grade students attending low socioeconomic schools in Santiago de Chile.	Quantitative. Linear regression analysis	672 parents and guardians	No
10	Chile	2020b	Gubbins, V., y Otero, G.	To examine the impact of educational expectations, perceived self-efficacy, and information provided by the school on parental participation at home and school.	Quantitative. Linear regression analysis	745 parents	No
11	Chile	2020	Gubbins, V., Ugarte, E., y Cárcamo, H.	To analyze the relationship between teachers' communicative style and parental participation in school from the point of view of mothers of students in public educational institutions.	Qualitative. Semantic structural analysis	19 mothers	No
12	Chile	2021	Treviño, E., Miranda, C., Hernández, M., y Villalobos, C.	To explore the educational practices of the Chilean middle-professional class during the health crisis.	Quantitative. Descriptive analysis	1 597 guardians	Yes
13	Chile	2021	Cárcamo, H., y Jarpa-Arriagada, C.	To disclose the representations of the future primary education teachers regarding the family engagement in the schooling process of boys and girls.	Qualitative. Semantic structural analysis	40 Pedagogy students	No
14	Chile	2022	Santander, E., Avendaño, M., y Soto, P.	To examine the influence of NSE on the willingness to participate decisively or in an engaged way in school as opposed to more passive or merely consultative parental participation.	Quantitative. Logistic regression analysis	678 guardians	No
15	Chile	2023	Gubbins, V., Urrutia, M. & Cárcamo, H.	To disclose the conceptions of the future basic education teachers about the participation of fathers and mothers at school.	Qualitative. Semantic structural analysis	40 Pedagogy students	No
16	Brazil	2020	Da Silva, I., y da Costa, A. S.	To analyze elements that promote or hinder family participation at school.	Qualitative	A teacher, a grandfather, and a mother	No
17	Brazil	2023	Dias, D., y Barroso, R.	To compare the perspectives of parents or guardians and students on parental participation at school.	Quantitative. Descriptive and correlational analysis	526 parents and students	No
18	Ecuador	2021	Bustos, M.	To understand the factors that affect parental participation in their children's education.	Quantitative. Analysis correlational.	163 parents	No

## What is understood by parental participation in the Latin American literature consulted?

Ten different terms were found in the concepts used. The use of the notion of parental involvement in English (n=5) prevails (only three articles define the concept). This is followed by the use and the corresponding definition of the concept of family involvement in Spanish (n=1) and school parental involvement (n=1) published in Spanish. Two articles use the term parent involvement in English without explaining the concept to differentiate it from parental involvement. Family engagement (n=1) and parental commitment (n=1) are also used and defined. They are followed by the concept of parental participation (n=2), which is defined in one article only. Other concepts such as family support (n=3), *participação da família* (family participation) (n=1), and parent participation (n=1) are also used, but none of these three publications defines the concept used. In sum, about half (n=8) of the eighteen articles analyzed define the concepts used in their research.

The notions of parental involvement and *involucramiento parental* (parental involvement) coincide in the reference to the activities and varied practices that parents carry out in favor of children's education in different spheres of action (home, school, neighborhood, others) (Grijalva-Quíñonez et al., 2020; Gubbins et al., 2020; Gubbins & Otero, 2020a, 2020b). Despite coinciding in the reference to the activities carried out, other authors such as Treviño et al. (2021) do not make distinctions between family involvement and parental participation, as they do “among formal educational practices, those directly aimed at supporting school teaching, and informal educational practices, those experiences in which students are indirectly or spontaneously exposed to the acquisition of certain learning (...)” (p.119). When it comes to parental involvement in the school environment, Velázquez and Palos (2022) propose to analyze the interactions between parents and school. However, they do not explicitly mention the activities associated with or derived from these relationships. When addressing the concept of parental participation, other authors invite to broaden the view to consider the activities and behaviors of parental involvement at school and home, and the relationships between families and schools as parts or dimensions of the concept (Gubbins et al., 2020).

The concepts of family commitment and engagement (or parental engagement in English) seem to emphasize “the form that families adopt to get involved in the schooling process” (Cárcamo & Jarpa-Arriagada, 2021, p.59). In other words, as Santander et al. (2022) point out:

(...) implies a greater mobilization of “parental agency” and is associated with a much more active insertion in the child's school processes and the school's institutional strategies to promote academic success, meaningful learning, and social integration (...). (p.2).

Regarding the study dimensions of parental participation, most of the research analyzed approaches various learning support practices (Bazán-Ramírez et al., 2020; Bazán-Ramírez et al., 2022; Carvajal & Armijo, 2020; Gubbins & Otero, 2020a, 2020b; Grijalva-Quíñones et al., 2020; Vazquez & Greenfield, 2021). Other studies analyze consultative engagement and participation (Santander et al., 2022) and family educational strategies during the pandemic (Treviño et al., 2021). Another group of researchers is interested in knowledge and communication with school from the

parents' perspective (Carvajal & Armijo, 2020) and the analysis of factors that facilitate and hinder participation at school (Da Silva & da Costa, 2020).

Seven of the eighteen articles relate parental participation (in its different concepts) to a dimension of school education, such as academic self-efficacy, student learning, academic achievement in different subjects (mathematics and language) (Bazán-Ramírez et al., 2020; Bazán-Ramírez et al., 2022; Carvajal & Armijo, 2020; Díaz & Barroso, 2023; Grijalva-Quíñonez et al., 2020; Gubbins & Otero, 2020a).

### **What is known about parental participation in basic school education in Latin America?**

The selected research was organized into two broad categories: 15 research conducted before the pandemic and three conducted during the pandemic. The former were re-grouped according to nine subcategories: general characteristics of parental participation and involvement (articles 3, 4, 8, 10, 13, 14, 17, 18), parental satisfaction (article 3), parental valuation (article 3), parental interest in learning about their children's school (article 18); relationship between parental participation and teacher communicative styles perceived by parents (article 11), influence of parental involvement on academic performance (articles 1 and 2), teachers' and parents' conceptions of the type of involvement at school (article 16); conceptions of future basic school teachers (article 15) and parents' conceptions of the type of parental involvement (article 17).

Regarding the studies conducted during the pandemic, the few publications available were organized according to the characteristics of parental involvement in that period (articles 6, 7 and 12) and the relationship between parental involvement at home and parental self-efficacy (article 6).

A first general reading makes it possible to recognize that the analysis of the relationship between types of practices and socio-demographic factors (socioeconomic level, ethnic group, type of school, percentage of social vulnerability of schools, age, educational cycle, and number of children, among others) is more important. It is concluded that before the pandemic: 1) parents who resided in urban areas participate more in the academic activities of their boys and girls (article 3), 2) middle-class parents participate more in the decision-making processes of schools if compared to upper-class parents (article 14), 3) it is observed that parents from low socioeconomic groups are more willing to support teachers in the classroom as compared to upper-class parents (article 14), 4) families belonging to an indigenous ethnic group have a high rate of family support and participation in educational processes and it is significantly higher than that of families not belonging to any ethnic group (article 8), 5) the older the parents are, the more they participate in school activities (article 17), 6) activities are defined by teachers and schools (article 11).

It is worth noting that several of these findings tended to persist during the pandemic. Namely: 1) parents in private schools are more involved in their children's education relative to those in public schools (article 6), 2) fathers and mothers who are not professionals seek more help from professional relatives and friends to support their children's schoolwork, tend to replicate the form of teaching they experienced in their school as children, and have less access to digital connectivity, books, and artistic works decreasing the range of student extracurricular motivation (article 12), 3)

mothers with children aged 9 to 12 years old are less involved at home compared to the 6-to-8-year-old group (article 6).

Regarding parental subjectivity before the pandemic, it was found that: 1) a high percentage of parents in rural areas felt comfortable with the time they spent in the care and education of their children compared to parents in urban areas (article 3), 2) parents living in urban areas showed slightly more interest in learning about their children's school compared to those in rural areas (article 18). No publications addressing parental satisfaction and interest during the pandemic were found.

The study of parents' and teachers' conceptions of the desirable modes of parental participation in school education highlights differences between both actors: teachers conceive parental involvement as the presence of parents in parent-teacher meetings and school activities, but for parents, recreational and commemorative activities at school are the most attractive modes of participation for them (articles 16 and 17). Furthermore, the type of involvement most valued by future teachers is informative and collaborative to the needs of teachers at school, in particular, the implementation of actions (for example, reinforcement of curricular content) aimed at helping students achieve the expected academic objectives (article 13). While parents consider that their role at school is more related to their contribution at home, promoting and stimulating children's learning, than to their contribution to the activities that may be carried out at school (article 17). No research exploring this dimension during the pandemic was found.

From the point of view of the relationships analyzed, some studies conducted before the pandemic suggest that the communicative teaching style (discouraging or encouraging) perceived by parents of vulnerable groups impacts the different participation practices that parents use at school (article 11), parental support for children's autonomy describes a direct and positive relationship with their academic self-efficacy and self-regulated learning (article 1) and there is a reciprocal relationship between parental involvement in schoolwork and the child's academic performance. These issues are not analyzed in distance education as a result of the confinement due to COVID-19. What we have during the pandemic is: 1) a study that shows a positive, although moderate, relationship between parental involvement at home and parental self-efficacy at school in public and private schools (article 6), 2) mothers with a higher education level (bachelor's degree/postgraduate) are more involved at home and show feelings of parental self-efficacy to undertake pedagogical support functions from home (article 6).

## DISCUSSION

This article provides an overview of Latin American research on parental participation in school education published in high-impact journals between 2020 and 2024. The first finding is the low number of publications referring to research conducted during the pandemic (three of eighteen articles). Despite having become a topic of great interest and debate (public and academic), the scarcity of publications on parental participation in distance education in times of confinement as a result of an unprecedented global health crisis is surprising. Part of the explanations could be attributed to the time it takes for peer review and effective publication of articles in Latin American

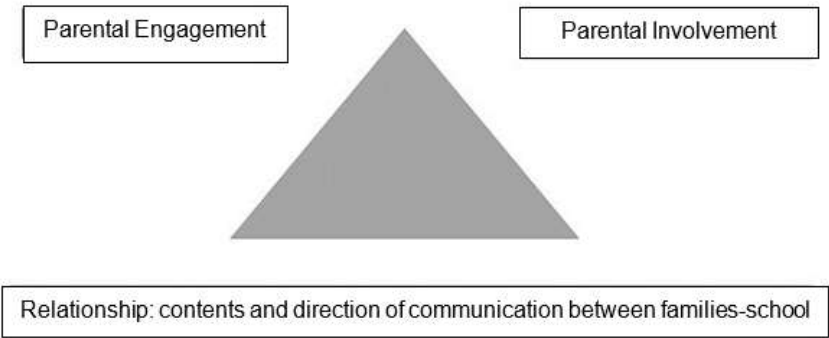
journals compared to what is available in English journals (Aguado-López & Becerril-García, 2021; González-Sanabria et al., 2020). This fact makes it difficult to know in all its scope and nuances the deployment of the modes of parental participation in distance school education and consequently evaluate opportunities and innovations that could enrich the processes of educational improvement that have been carried out after the pandemic (OECD, 2021).

The second finding is the unequal production of scientific research on parental participation in school education among Latin American countries. This finding supports what has been found in other reviews on educational research, where Chile, Mexico, and Brazil continue to stand out compared to other countries in the region (Torrecilla & Garrido, 2019). This evidence raises the importance of investigating the reasons that may be maintaining these differences and analyzing incentive policies for scientific research in these nations.

Following what has been described for the Spanish case (Castrillón-Correa et al., 2021) and English-speaking countries (Goodall & Montgomery, 2014), the review conducted here has shown the use of different concepts to refer to parental participation. As proposed by Leiva-Guerrero et al. (2022) and other authors of meta-analyses in the area (Jeynes, 2024), it is essential to advance toward greater conceptual precision of the constructs used, supported by clear definitions that explicitly show specificities to differentiate them from other concepts and that suddenly, due to the absence of definitions, may be misconstrued as synonyms. This need becomes more relevant when a recent study of some Latin American policies of family participation in school education also shows conceptual inaccuracies (Gubbins et al., 2023). As these authors point out, this opacity is relevant to be enriched with contingent and local evidence to reduce eventual problems of “understanding the meaning and expected results of family participation on the part of educational institutions” (p. 2).

Notwithstanding the above, a more detailed analysis of the few definitions found supports the notion of parental participation initially proposed in this article. That is, as we try to schematize it in Figure 2, to conceive parental participation as something that goes beyond mere practices (parental involvement) to understand it by integrating other subjective and relational dimensions such as parental engagement and the connections that are built in the daily interactions between families and school professionals based on the content and direction of the communication between schools and families. This is only a conceptual hypothesis that needs to be tested in future research.

**Figure 2.**  
*Dimension of parental participation*



From the point of view of the knowledge produced, the analysis of the selected Latin American research makes it possible to conclude the primacy of a focus on parental involvement centered on pedagogical and/or formative aspects (Epstein, 2001) over family participation as external regulators of the quality of the educational offer, internal regulators of institutional administrative-financial efficiency, or as an expression of social justice and democratic school governance, as could be the study of organized and institutional parental participation via Parent and Guardian Centers or School Boards (Gubbins, et al., 2023). This importance attributed by educational research to parental participation in childhood pedagogy and education with little conceptual precision brings practical and theoretical implications, that is, to contribute with evidence-based guidelines for school decision-making about, for example, what is the dimension of parental participation that improves school education processes and effectiveness?

From the point of view of limitations, it is important to remember that systematic reviews analyze sources that, although they share the same study phenomenon, are conducted in different territorial, cultural, and economic contexts, with samples and methodologies that are not necessarily comparable each other. In this scenario, we recommend taking the results of the research analyzed as first references for eventual assumptions to be explored or hypotheses to be examined in future research. In this regard, we encourage replicating these studies in other countries, territorial, cultural, and economic contexts, among others, and ideally, from a comparative perspective. As the study of parental participation in basic school education in Latin America expands and enriches, we will have relevant local information to use as a reference and/or argument for the development and improvement of education policies aimed at reducing inequality and educational lag, thus advancing toward greater educational justice and educational quality based on situated evidence.

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