Research article

Parent–school-community relationship: a comparative study of highly effective schools and schools with low effectiveness in Andalusia

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Abstract

When studying an educational system, the relationship between school and parents is one of its most important components. The literature shows that highly effective schools demonstrate good parent–teacher relationships, while schools with low effectiveness are generally characterised by a lack of good parent–school linkage. The purpose of the research carried out in this article was to identify the differences between parent–school relationships in highly effective and less effective primary schools in the autonomous community of Andalusia. Twenty-five interviews with members of management teams from both types of schools were analysed in order to understand the existing school reality. The results obtained show that parental involvement, parent–school communication, the

perceived needs of the parents, the parent–teacher association, the relationships with entities of the educational community and parental complaints about the school are all factors that contribute to differentiate parent–school relationships between highly effective schools and schools with low effectiveness. The conclusions reached reveal that highly effective school management teams perceive greater involvement of parents and better parent–teacher association functioning. However, the people in the schools with low effectiveness highlight the complaints they receive from parents and the needs they present.

Keywords school-community relationship; parent–school relationship; educational efficiency; educational

Introduction

The relationship between school and parents is a key factor in understanding the day-to-day life of an educational centre. Schools and parents are two parties that have an obligation to continuously interact with each other, given that they are united by students (Ramírez-García et al., 2018). It is not possible to understand a school without parents; in the absence of this relationship, the connection between home, students and school would break, leading to a deterioration in the quality of the teaching–learning process (Simweleba and Serpell, 2020). In his ecological model of human development, Bronfenbrenner (1987) highlighted the importance of the parent–school collaboration, because these two parties share the common goal of contributing to the integral formation of children in all areas of development. Currently, national and international research (Cárcamo Vásquez and Garreta Bochaca, 2020; Cueli Naranjo and López Larrosa, 2022) highlights the importance of a healthy parent–school relationship. This relationship is reflected in the quality of education that students receive, as well as in their academic progress, social and behavioural competencies, and mental health.

Parental involvement in the school is one of the factors that most influences the success of the school for students, favouring their adaptation to the school, and their behaviour towards teachers and peers, and increasing their motivation to learn (Smith et al., 2020). These attitudes by the parents also lead them to become more actively engaged in monitoring homework and, as a result, have a positive influence on their children's academic development (Fernández-Freire Álvarez et al., 2020). Good parental involvement at school improves social cohesion among all members of the educational community and increases the expectations of parents, teachers and students regarding education (Aierbe-Barandiaran et al., 2023; Intxausti et al., 2014).

This relationship has been studied at primary school level in large-scale research (Barg, 2019; Council of Europe and Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013), and parental involvement has been found to be greater the younger the age of the child (Egido Gálvez, 2020). As students develop, the time spent by parents on direct participation activities at school decreases (Gerdes et al., 2022).

It is important for parents to receive training that makes them realise the importance of their participation in schools, and the benefits for their children's educational achievement (Alamolhoda, 2020). In this aspect, schools' parent–teacher associations (PTAs) play a crucial role, as they are in the intermediate space between parents and the school environment, and are a key element in the dynamism of the school (Epstein et al., 2019; Fernández-Freire Álvarez et al., 2020). PTAs connect parents with each other, a collaboration that, if well established, also has positive effects on the educational performance of students (Park et al., 2017). The involvement of parents in these partnerships and activities is a pedagogical added value that contributes to the development of a school for all (Burriel, 2022).

Despite the importance of these associations, in some schools, parents' participation is low or even non-existent. This lack of interest distances parents from the internal reality of the centre and deprives them of much of the information provided by the centre. Communication between parents and school serves as a starting point for participation and acts as a guideline for this relationship, thus enriching the whole educational community (Aierbe-Barandiaran et al., 2023).

Schools are effective when, considering the students' socio-economic and cultural factors and their previous academic results, students' educational performance is higher than expected (positive residual)

and is maintained over time (Murillo, 2005; Scheerens, 2017). Different research (Azpillaga Larrea et al., 2014; Murillo and Krichesky, 2015) has shown that highly effective schools (HEFS) are characterised by a high level of parental involvement in school socio-educational processes.

Therefore, effective education is understood as a teaching and learning process that achieves comprehensive and sustainable development in all students at a level higher than expected, considering their previous performance and the parents' social, economic and cultural situation. An effective school has at its core a goal for the improvement of students' all-round development, equity (teaching will be effective if it promotes the development of every student) and the sustainability of the effects over the course of the school year (Murillo, 2005).

In schools with low effectiveness (LEFS), in contrast, the level of parental involvement is usually very low, being limited to attendance at meetings required by the school to address their children's poor behaviour or performance (Barg, 2019; Ersan and Rodrguez, 2020). In LEFS, there is generally a series of factors that lead to poor parental involvement, such as low level of parental education and low parental socio-economic and cultural factors, leading to a lack of resources to support the education of the children.

However, not everything depends on the parents; the education system and schools must also support their participation in their children's education. The legislative framework encourages the participation of parents from the beginning of schooling. The current education law in Spain – Ley Orgánica 3/2020, de 29 de diciembre, por la que se modifica la Ley Orgánica 2/2006, de 3 de mayo, de Educación (Agencia Estatal Boletín Oficial del Estado, 2020) – in its second principle, states that the whole educational community must collaborate with each other to obtain a quality education. Without parents' participation, both in the work of their children and in the daily life of the educational centres, it is impossible for students to succeed at school. Within this legislative framework, educational centres are obliged to develop programmes that promote the collaboration of parents, as, in addition to improving the coexistence of the educational community (Azpillaga Larrea et al., 2014), this will help to improve student performance. These participation programmes should follow a training model that responds to the interests of the centre and parents, avoiding standardised activities that do not consider the demands of the participants. Joint training for parents and teachers should be encouraged, where projects and actions are designed jointly, abandoning the traditional, unidirectional parenting school based on listening (Hernández Prados et al., 2019). To achieve this, teachers and management teams need the right training, attitudes and tools to make parental involvement a success (Fernández-Freire Álvarez et al., 2020).

Due to the importance of parental involvement in schools, and to ensure that this involvement is of the highest quality, universities where future teachers are trained and teacher training centres should include programmes that promote the benefits of parental involvement and develop specific content, techniques and tools for teachers to be able to involve parents in schools (Alamolhoda, 2020; Burriel, 2022). Studies affirm that university curricula do not adequately address the importance of a good parent–school relationship (Muñoz and Hernández, 2017), which results in a lack of training for teachers on this important issue in their work. Teachers are one of the most influential actors in parental participation, and it is in their power to encourage or eliminate it (Perälä-Littunen and Böök, 2019). Conversely, some research reveals a series of prejudices that hinder an optimal parent–school relationship. A considerable proportion of teachers are still reticent about effective parental involvement in the school, even considering it an intrusion in their professional work (Lyubitskaya and Shakarova, 2018). As a consequence, the relationship with parents is often limited to reporting negative aspects of the educational process of school children (Gerdes et al., 2022; Smith et al., 2020).

Despite progress, a good understanding between parents and school remains an educational challenge for teachers and management teams concerned with the holistic education of primary school pupils and their academic results. Current and future research should therefore provide the keys to making this relationship optimal.

As has been pointed out, there are different variables that affect pupils' performance, and that influence the relationship between parents and school. This article focuses on the relationship between parents and school. Through interviews with the management teams of these schools, the article aims to find out the differences in parent–school relations between HEFS and LEFS in Andalusia. This represents an original contribution to the existing body of knowledge, because no research has ever been carried out in the Andalusian education system that establishes such a comparison. This study could contribute to the development of similar research at national and international level.

Materials and methods

Study design

This study was based on a qualitative methodology using a descriptive approach (Elo and Kyngäs, 2008). For this purpose, a content analysis was carried out (Bardin, 1986). This approach was used to study the different perspectives of schools and provide a comprehensive understanding of parental factors that affect educational performance in Andalusian primary schools.

This study is based on previous research of similar characteristics carried out in the autonomous community of the Basque Country. Therefore, it can be called a replication and extension study because it replicates and extends the results of previous studies by reformulating the assertions of those studies into hypotheses and propositions to be tested in another context, in this case the Andalusian education system (Bonett, 2012). The Andalusian context differs from the Basque context in many respects. For example, there is no official language other than Spanish, as is the case in the Basque Country, and there is only one educational modality in the Andalusian education system, whereas in the Basque education system there are three different modalities. Furthermore, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests (OECD, 2023) show important differences between the two education systems, and although these tests are carried out with secondary school students, the considerable differences suggest that these also occur at the lower levels of education.

The consolidated criterion for reporting qualitative studies (COREQ) checklist for qualitative research was followed (Tong et al., 2007). All participants in the investigation were adults, and they were informed of the nature and purpose of the study and the conditions of their intervention. This research adhered to the rules of the Ethics Committee for Social Science Experimentation of the University of Seville. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained.

Participants

The participating schools belong to the list of high- and low-performing primary schools developed by García-Jiménez et al. (2022) based on extreme residual performance scores and the growth (or decline) of these residuals (García-Jiménez et al., 2022; López-González et al., 2021). This list is composed of the 50 HEFS and the 50 LEFS in the autonomous community of Andalusia.

To compile this list, the results of the ESCALA tests (Writing, Calculation and Reading in Andalusia) conducted by the Andalusian Agency for Educational Evaluation during the 2011/12, 2012/13, 2013/14, 2014/15 and 2016/17 academic years were used. These diagnostic assessments are carried out on a census basis on the entire population of the second year of primary education to evaluate mathematical reasoning and linguistic communication skills. In addition, these tests are accompanied by a contextual questionnaire for parents that provides information on variables such as socio-economic and cultural factors.

Accidental sampling was used to include in the study the first 25 centres that agreed to participate: 12 HEFS and 13 LEFS (García-Jiménez et al., 2022). This figure was considered sufficient to understand how the parent–school relationship develops unequally in HEFS and LEFS, and how this influences pupils' educational performance, as information saturation was reached with these 25 interviews. Moreover, as all interviews were well over an hour long, the volume of information collected was quite substantial, with an average of 22 pages of transcript per interview.

Regarding the procedure followed, members of the management teams of 36 schools were contacted by telephone and informed in detail of the objectives of the research project and the activities that would be carried out if they agreed to participate in the research. They were also informed of the researchers' profiles, as well as the personal goals and the reasons for conducting the research, which were based on finding out the opinion of the members of the management teams on the parent–school relationship and its influence on students' educational achievement. The 11 centres that declined this invitation justified their decision by citing work overload resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic.

The 25 representatives of the management teams of the participating schools were asked to provide contact details, and agreed on a date and time for the interviews. They were also asked to sign an informed consent form, which was used to obtain authorisation to audio record the interview, and to guarantee the anonymity and confidentiality of the information shared.

The sociodemographic data of the participants shows that there is parity in terms of gender (52 per cent male and 48 per cent female) and of the representation of high effectiveness (48 per cent) and low effectiveness (52 per cent) centres. Regarding the ownership of the centres in which they work, 21 work in public centres (84 per cent) and 4 in subsidised centres (16 per cent). In terms of years of experience in a management role, 12 had between 0 and 4 years (48 per cent), 4 had between 5 and 8 years (16 per cent), and 9 had 9 or more years (36 per cent).

Data collection

In a scientific study of a socio-educational nature, such as the one presented here, the interview is one of the most effective qualitative research techniques (Taylor and Bogdan, 2002). A semi-structured interview was used, adapted from the one already used in a similar project developed in the autonomous community of the Basque Country (Joaristi et al., 2014; Lizasoain-Hernández and Angulo-Vargas, 2014), which encompassed eight dimensions with their respective categories.

The purpose of these interviews was, in general terms, to gain an insight into the day-to-day life of a school from the perspective of a member of the management team. To this end, the interviewees were asked about training projects carried out at their school, methodologies applied in teaching, ways of dealing with diversity at the school, how they dealt with student assessment, the organisation and management of the school, who was in charge of leadership and how it was developed at the school, coexistence at the school and, last, the relationship between parents and the school. In this article, only the results corresponding to the parent–school-community relationship dimension are presented.

The 25 interviews were conducted over a period of 13 months, from December 2019 to February 2021, by the three authors of this article, all of whom have a PhD and extensive research experience and belong to the research team. The interviews ranged in length from 60 to 90 minutes. Although some of them were held in person at the educational centres, the vast majority were held by telephone due to Covid-19 restrictions and the impossibility of attending face-to-face meetings. At the time of the interviews, only one interviewer and one interviewee were present. Only the audio recordings of the interviews were used to record the data.

Data analysis

After the audio recordings had been transcribed, a content analysis was performed of the responses given by participants to the questions asked in the interviews. This was the most appropriate methodological option to break down, classify and give meaning to the statements made by the interviewees (Kvale, 2011). Since oral communication does not always allow for clear sentence boundaries (LaDonna et al., 2018), the paragraph was selected as the unit of analysis. The transcripts were not returned to the participants for review, as consent was given for the audio recordings.

This arduous process generated a system of categories (Corbetta, 2003; McMillan and Schumacher, 2005), which was both inductive (starting initially from a series of categories present in the literature and in the interviews) and deductive (new categories emerged, and the initial ones were modified after analysis of the first interviews), on which a descriptive analysis, using the Atlas.ti program, was carried out to establish the weight of each category. When all the information provided in the total set of interviews was considered to be perfectly captured in the existing system of categories and subcategories – that is, when information saturation was obtained – the final system of categories was elaborated, of which the part corresponding to the parent–school-community relationship is presented in this research.

Finally, using the SPSS program, the Krippendorff's alpha was calculated to estimate the agreement between researchers in the coding carried out by the three researchers who developed the category system index (see Figure 1). In order to obtain a high reliability in the index, a three-week prior training was carried out to understand and adapt the categories established in the system.

The value obtained for Krippendorff's alpha (0.82) denotes good reliability, taking into consideration that Krippendorff (2004) sets a value of 0.8 as the absolute minimum to be accepted for any serious purpose.

Figure 1. Krippendorff's alpha results (screenshot from SPSS program)

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Krippendorff's Alpha Reliability Estimate


              Alpha      Units    Obsrvrs      Pairs
Nominal      ,8203 72159,0000    3,0000 216477,000

Judges used in these computations:
 rater1_C rater2_P rater3_J
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Results

After analysing the statements of the 25 subjects, the resulting system of categories for the dimension under study is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Frequencies and total percentages of categories

Category	Code	Subcategory	Total	HEFS (%)	LEFS (%)
Activities with parents	FAM-AF (172 = 39.6%)	(1) Training activities	48 (27.9%)	26 (54.2%)	22 (45.8%)
		(2) Participation activities	54 (31.4%)	30 (55.6%)	24 (44.4%)
		(3) Broad participation	30 (17.4%)	19 (63.3%)	11 (36.7%)
		(4) Low participation	40 (23.3%)	17 (42.5%)	23 (57.5%)
Relationship and communication with parents	FAM-RC (65 = 15%)	(1) Good relationship and communication	35 (53.8%)	18 (51.4)	17 (48.6%)
		(2) Poor relationship and communication	6 (9.2%)	1 (16.7%)	5 (83.3%)
		(3) Initiation of parental involvement (gender)	8 (13.3%)	3 (37.5%)	5 (62.5%)
		(4) Greater participation of mothers than of fathers	16 (24.6%)	11 (68.8%)	5 (31.2%)
Attention to the needs of parents	FAM-NF (53 = 12.2%)	(1) Language	2 (3.8%)	1 (50%)	1 (50%)
		(2) Economic	16 (30.2%)	2 (12.5)	14 (87.5%)
		(3) Bureaucratic	6 (11.32%)	0 (0%)	6 (100%)
		(4) Educational	10 (18.9%)	1 (10%)	9 (90%)
		(5) No need	3 (5.6%)	3 (100%)	0 (0%)
		(6) Psychological and Social	16 (30.2%)	6 (37.5%)	10 (62.5%)

Table 1. *Cont.*

Category	Code	Subcategory	Total	HEFS (%)	LEFS (%)
PTA	FAM-AP (49 = 11.3%)	(1) Good participation in the PTA	26 (53%)	25 (96.2%)	1 (3.8%)
		(2) Minimal participation/PTA not functioning well	16 (32.7%)	4 (25%)	12 (75%)
		(3) Absence of a PTA	7 (14.3%)	3 (42.9%)	4 (57.1%)
Other entities	FAM-EN (50 = 11.5%)	(1) Presence of a connection	50 (100%)	18 (36%)	32 (64%)
Complaints from parents about the centre	FAM-QP (45 = 10.4%)	(1) Minimal	15 (33.3%)	11 (73.3%)	4 (26.7%)
		(2) Many complaints	8 (17.8%)	2 (25%)	6 (75%)
		(3) Coexistence	9 (20%)	4 (44.4%)	5 (55.6%)
		(4) Academic	13 (28.9%)	11 (84.6%)	2 (15.4%)

Activities with parents

This category includes the activities that the management team proposes to parents, so that they are trained and participate in the school, and how they are involved in carrying them out (see Table 2). Almost 40 per cent of all the statements made by the members of the management teams interviewed focused on this category.

Table 2. Main results of the category: activities with families

Subcategory	Differences between HEFS and LEFS
Participation activities (FAM-AF-2)	HEFS outperformed LEFS by 11.2%
Training activities (FAM-AF-1)	HEFS exceeded LEFS in terms of response rate (54.2%)
Low participation (FAM-AF-4)	LEFS are the centres with the highest frequency of response (57.5%)
Broad participation subcategory (FAM-AF-3)	HEFS outperformed LEFS by 26.6%

Relationship and communication with parents

This category covers the perceptions of management team members of differences in parental involvement, and the relationship between teachers and parents. The subcategories can be divided into two blocks: relationship and communication between parents and school, and parental involvement.

Relationship and communication between parents and school

This section shows the results of the subcategories that refer to the quality of communication between parents and teachers (see Table 3).

Table 3. Main results of the category: relationship and communication between parents and school

Subcategory	Characteristics	Differences between HEFS and LEFS
Good relationship and communication (FAM-RC-1)	Good relationship and communication receives 85.4% of the responses, compared to 14.6% of poor communication and relationship	The difference was minimal (2.8 points higher in the HEFS)
Poor communication and relationship (FAM-RC-2)		There is a considerable difference, with LEFS outperforming HEFS by 66.6%

Parental involvement

This section shows the results of the subcategories that refer to the difference in involvement between mothers and fathers in the school (see Table 4).

Table 4. Main results of the category: parental involvement

Subcategory	Characteristics	Differences between HEFS and LEFS
Greater participation of mothers than fathers (FAM-RC-4)	Greater participation of mothers than fathers obtained a frequency of 66.7% compared to 33.3% for the initiation of parental involvement	HEFS have a higher frequency than LEFS (68.8%)
Initiation of parental involvement (FAM-RC-3)		The LEFS obtained a higher percentage, 62.5%

Attention to the needs of parents

This category covers all types of needs that parents bring to the school, and how the management team tries to address them (see Table 5).

Table 5. Main results of the category: attention to the needs of parents

Subcategory	Characteristics	Differences between HEFS and LEFS
Language (FAM-NF-1)	They are the subcategories least reported	They obtain the same response rate
No needs (FAM-NF-5)		Only in the HEFS did they mention this subcategory
Bureaucratic needs (FAM-NF-3)		This subcategory obtained a frequency of 11.32%, with the total number of responses from the LEFS

Table 5. *Cont.*

Subcategory	Characteristics	Differences between HEFS and LEFS
Educational needs of parents (FAM-NF-4)		LEFS once again stand out in this subcategory, with a frequency of 90%
Economic needs (FAM-NF-2)	The subcategories with the highest response frequency, both with a response rate of 30.2%	The LEFS reach 87.5%
Psychological and social needs (FAM-NF-6)		The LEFS score is 62.5%

Parent–teacher association

This category gathers all the answers of the members of management teams who talked about the relationship between the PTA and the school (see Table 6).

Table 6. Main results of the category: PTA

Subcategory	Characteristics	Differences between HEFS and LEFS
Absence of a PTA in the school (FAM-AP-3)	A minority of schools (14.3%) mention the absence of a PTA	
Good participation in the PTA (FAM-AP-1)		The HEFS had a higher frequency of 92.4 points than the LEFS
Minimal participation/not functioning well by the PTA (FAM-AP-2)		It is reported in LEFS 75% of the time

Other entities

This category includes content related to the relationship that centres establish with external entities that belong to the educational community (see Table 7).

Table 7. Main results of the category: other entities

Subcategory	Characteristics	Differences between HEFS and LEFS
Other entities (FAM-EN-1)	100% of the centres analysed answered affirmatively to the questions about the subcategory	The LEFS had a higher frequency than the HEFS, at 64%

Complaints from parents about centres

This category includes the types and number of complaints received by the management teams from parents (10.4 per cent of the manifestations) (see Table 8).

Table 8. Main results of the category: complaints from parents about centres

Subcategory	Differences between HEFS and LEFS
Minimum amount of parental complaints (FAM-QP-1)	HEFS indicate, with a much higher frequency (73.3%)
Many parental complaints (FAM-QP-2)	The LEFS stand out (75%)
Academic complaints (FAM-QP-4)	HEFS indicated with a higher frequency rate (84.6%)
Coexistence in the centre (FAM-QP-3)	The LEFS highlighted slightly more (55.6%)

Discussion

The interviews carried out with the members of the management teams were used to understand their perceptions of the participation, relationships, needs and complaints of parents in their centres. According to research by Murillo and Krichesky (2015) and Park et al. (2017), parents are more involved in training and participation activities in HEFS than in LEFS. These results are consistent with those obtained in studies in other contexts (for example, Aierbe-Barandiaran et al., 2023), which highlights the quality of parent–school relationships in HEFs.

Furthermore, HEFS parents attend to the proposals made by the centre more frequently, although not much more frequently, than LEFS parents. Therefore, the HEFS PTAs also participate and collaborate with the schools more effectively. According to the results of the present research and Park et al. (2017), the participation of the PTAs is considered good and effective when PTAs are involved in school activities, participate and seek solutions to problems, offer innovative and quality extra-curricular activities, and organise periodic assemblies to discuss relevant issues.

In LEFS, PTAs have neither the influence in the school nor the support from parents that teachers would like to see. However, parental involvement in the PTA remains low in both types of schools, as noted in other studies by Brown et al. (2021).

As stated by López-González et al. (2021), due to the good participation of parents in HEFS, parental complaints in these centres are minimal, and if they do occur, they are mostly related to academic issues. Parental complaints are more frequent in LEFS interviews, and are related to problems of school coexistence, as concluded by Loscalzo and Giannini (2019). These authors argue that this could be because in HEFS schools, in general, there is a lower rate of problems related to school coexistence, while in LEFS schools, the relationship between students may be more conflictive, and, therefore, parents complain more frequently. School coexistence is understood as the relationships that take place between all the people who form part of the educational community. It will be positive if these relationships are based on respect, acceptance of differences and the opinions of all on an equal footing, and if conflicts are resolved in a peaceful manner to continually promote mutual understanding and peace (García-Raga et al., 2022).

The relationship and communication between parents and schools are perceived positively in both types of schools, although parents are still not very present in their children's schools (Egido Gálvez, 2020). Some studies, such as that by Fernández-Freire Álvarez et al. (2020), note that this reduced participation is largely limited to collaboration, especially of mothers, in the activities proposed by the school.

Finally, with regard to the needs that parents present to the centres, the HEFS indicate that their parents have needs that they cannot meet, although at a very low rate. However, LEFS report more frequently that their parents ask for help with financial, psychological, social and educational problems (Barg, 2019; Ersan and Rodrguez, 2020).

It follows that the relationships of the centres with other entities are more relevant in LEFS than in HEFS. As parents have more needs, schools need the support of other institutions in the educational community to help them solve their problems, such as social affairs, police and the charity Caritas.

Conclusions

This study offers a critical reflection on the complexity of parent–school relationships. As can be seen, the results presented in this study are in line with previous studies, but the original contribution of this article to the field is, as its objective indicates, to show the reality of parental involvement in the Andalusian education system by comparing HEFS and LEFS.

Relevant data have been obtained that differentiate parent–school relationships between the two types of schools, such as parental involvement (in participation and training activities) or the functioning of the PTAs, where HEFS obtain higher results than LEFS. However, LEFS have more parental needs detected by managers (especially economic and psychological needs), and in the number of complaints made by parents to the centre. Although the participation of mothers is much higher than that of fathers in the centres, more LEFS report observing the beginning of fathers' participation.

With regard to the system of categories used, it is considered a useful instrument to analyse the teaching perspective due to the high inter-researcher agreement index obtained (Krippendorff's alpha > 0.8). It is a valid instrument not only for educational researchers, but also for members of the management teams themselves, since analysing their own vision and conception of parental participation through this system of categories allows them to observe the different shortcomings and strengths of their centre in this area.

It can be concluded that generating new and more intense forms of parental participation in schools contributes to increasing the quality of the educational system. This progress depends on each school establishing the channels and resources through which to improve the participation of parents in school life, according to its context and the particular characterisation and needs of the surrounding educational community (Leo et al., 2019).

Limitations and further perspectives of research

The number of interviews that were analysed (25) was considered sufficient for a study such as the one presented here, although if a larger number of interviews had been conducted, a more complete sample of the centres targeted by the research would have been obtained.

Finally, this research serves as a basis for the design of educational actions to improve the two-way parent–school relationship. In other words, they contribute to parents improving their vision of the centres where their children are educated and, in turn, those members of the management teams improve their perception of the parents in their centres. The information obtained from the in-depth study of the interviews can help management teams plan actions, taking into account the interests and needs of parents, and improving their relationship and, thus, the quality of education.

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Declarations and conflicts of interest

Research ethics statement

The authors conducted the research reported in this article in accordance with the Ethics Committee for Experimentation in the Social Sciences of the University of Seville standards.

Consent for publication statement

The authors declare that research participants' informed consent to publication of findings – including photos, videos and any personal or identifiable information – was secured prior to publication.

Conflicts of interest statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest with this work. All efforts to sufficiently anonymise the authors during peer review of this article have been made. The authors declare no further conflicts with this article.

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