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Patterns of parental involvement in schools of religious communities. A systematic review

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ABSTRACT

Research on family involvement has revealed its positive impact on children's academic and nonacademic achievement over the past two decades. However, little is known about parental involvement in religious schools. During our review, we examined studies focusing on parental involvement with special attention to religious schools. 22 papers met the research criteria out of 123 abstracts screened from 85 databases. Management and decision-making participation in religious schools seem to be less important than in Epstein's model. Religious schools have developed a special PI model where parents accept decisions based on staff competence, and teachers work to build a parent community and earn the trust of parents by being accountable for the children's diverse development. Some studies point to inadequate implementation of the ideal model and are critical. The novelty of the analysis is that our analysis was open to schools of all religions. A limitation of the review is that we cannot be sure that all relevant studies were included in the examined databases. As such, further research is needed to better understand this phenomenon.

KEYWORDS

Parental involvement; faith-based schools; religious community; religious education

1. Introduction

Families influence students' school performance in many ways, and the biggest challenge for the education system is to compensate for the resulting disadvantages. Early research on faith-based schools examined the ways in which opportunities were created, revealing special patterns of interaction with parents (Greeley 1982; Coleman, Hoffer, and Kilgore 1982; Coleman and Hoffer 1987; Morgan and Sorensen 1999). Studies showed that the involvement of low-status pupils' parents in school activities created such communities around schools that enabled the large-scale collaboration of teachers and parents to promote student achievement and mitigate risks to progress (truancy, indiscipline, etc.). However, the details and methods of engaging with parents in schools of religious communities and organisations were not widely mapped on the basis of Epstein's model, nor was it examined how this interaction was perceived by the parties involved. There has been an incredible wealth of research on parental involvement up to the present day, and most studies focus on the impact of individual attributes on parental involvement. Relatively little attention has been devoted to research on parental involvement phenomenon in schools run by churches or religious communities. Our study is a systematic review (Chang 2018), in which a search

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of the Ebsco Discovery Service Search Engine (85 databases, see Appendix A) (after various screening and selection procedures) produced 18 articles among the studies under review. The studies are diverse, which shows that researching this topic is far from being standardised, but the validity of the studies is particularly high due to their field-based approach, which is why their analysis can make a significant contribution both to research on the efficiency of schools run by religious communities and to the development of specific methodologies for parental involvement. In our analysis, we sought to answer the question of how religious schools can be characterised in terms of parental involvement policies and activities based on the involved studies.

1.1. Schools of religious communities and organisations

It is not a simple task to give a uniform definition of religious community schools, as the categorisation of these institutions in the educational systems of different countries and regions depends on religious and historical traditions as well as political circumstances. It is very difficult to find what is a concept that stands up to cross-cultural comparison, because these institutions are diverse in terms of their character. In examining schools of religious communities and organisations, we can distinguish between several different types, such as faith-based and schools run by religious organisations. In the case of faith-based institutions, it is emphasised that, in addition to belonging to a system of a religious community and organisation, there is an institutional culture imbued with a particular religious spirituality. On the other hand, in the case of church-run schools, religious observance does not necessarily imply religious spirituality.

Moreover, the category of schools run by religious communities or organisations within a single educational system is not uniform either, since such schools may be associated with several religions or denominations within a country. Furthermore, local aspects may also be important. Religious organisations and local communities with separate identities often develop very different characteristics and school cultures.

Thus, in our paper, we apply the term schools of religious communities to those institutions that are backed by a religious-cultural community or its organisations, which determine the culture of the schools.

The identity of the school provider, the supervising institution, or the funder does not make crafting a definition much easier since these are not always religious organisations. Among the American Catholic schools included in the studies that we review in this paper, there are private schools controlled and supervised by a local or regional church organisation, but there are also state-funded Catholic schools within publicly funded private school voucher programmes (Ospino and Weitzel-O'Neill 2016; Joseph, Vélez, and Antrop-González 2017), as well as 'community-oriented schools' (as referred to by the government) because of the ethno-religious composition of the school community (Lavenda 2011). Faith-based public schools may also fall into this category based on Lai and Zhang's (2014) reviewed article.

1.2. Models of parental involvement

While investigating schools of religious communities, Coleman (Coleman and Hoffer 1987; Coleman 1988) revealed the importance of parental network around the schools. His interpretation does not used the PI concept and does not split up this phenomenon into different types, forasmuch as from his point of view each appearance of the parents in schools are valuable resources. Although there are several models on parental involvement (Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler 1997; Rief and Heimburge 2006), Epstein's typology of involvement is one of the most frequently used models in the implementation of the family-school-community relationship (Epstein 1992, 1995). The framework lists six types of parental involvement that can have a positive impact on children's school careers and behaviour, and also distinguishes six fields for schools that can support parental involvement. The first type is parenting, which can be enriched by training sessions and family visits

to promote the development of parenting skills and help to create the ideal learning conditions at home. The second type is communicating, which provides a means of two-way communication between the parents and the school. It helps to provide information about school documents and programmes, as well as helps parents to take an active interest in their children's academic process. The third type is the volunteering, within which the families' voluntary assistance contributes to the completion of tasks in school and in class level. The fourth type is parental assistance, which is extremely important in the organisation of home learning and in the planning of various schoolwork. The fifth type is the involvement of families in decisions concerning their children and the implementation of school goals. And, lastly, the sixth type is a collaboration with the community, which occurs when the school cooperates the community and promotes the identification and integration of services, which strengthen school programmes and shared responsibility (Epstein 1992, 2001, 2016). This model ensures and supports the organisation of specific activities and ensures how parental involvement can be implemented in practice (Winters 2002).

2. Methods

As our subject does not belong to the well-researched topic's publication, our review is a systematic review (Chang 2018). This systematic review follows the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines (Figure 1). We used a methodology of systematic literature review, but we reviewed only the peer-reviewed journal articles, and we will explore the characteristics of this literature.

2.1. Eligibility criteria

For this systematic review, we selected studies which met the following inclusion criteria: (1) reported original research published in a peer-reviewed journal, (2) examined the relationship between parental involvement and religious schools, (3) were published in English, and (4) covered any of the following disciplines: education, psychology, social work, sociology, social sciences, and humanities. Since 1989, we have been conducting research. The date was chosen because, according to some political thinkers, this year brought the end of history (Fukuyama 1989), and to others, these decades transformed the world order (Huntington 1996). The symbolic date of the fall of the Berlin Wall (1989) is the starting point of a new era of openness and globalisation. The collapse of the bipolar world had a profound impact on religious freedom and religious rebirth, the revival of religious belief, and at the same time, research conducted in other parts of the world showed that modernisation does not go hand in hand with secularisation (Berger 1999). The increasing social demand also had an impact on the strengthening of the educational activities of religious actors (Wareham 2023).This study did not involve kindergartens, because in most countries, kindergarten attendance is not mandatory, and participation is often determined by parental preferences. Kindergartens differ from traditional educational institutions because they do not have compulsory education status. We examined only journal articles; books or book chapters, dissertations, and newspaper articles were excluded.

2.2. Search strategy

We consulted a research librarian from the University of Debrecen about our search strategy. We performed our search in October and November 2021 in the database of Debrecen University Library with the help of EBSCO Discovery Service Search Engine, which contains over 85 databases (see Appendix A). In October of 2023, we will conduct a new search. We narrowed down our search to result only in published journal articles written in English. We searched for the following key words in the abstracts: parental involvement in schools AND Catholic schools, parental involvement in schools AND Jewish school, parental involvement in schools AND Christian schools, parental involvement in

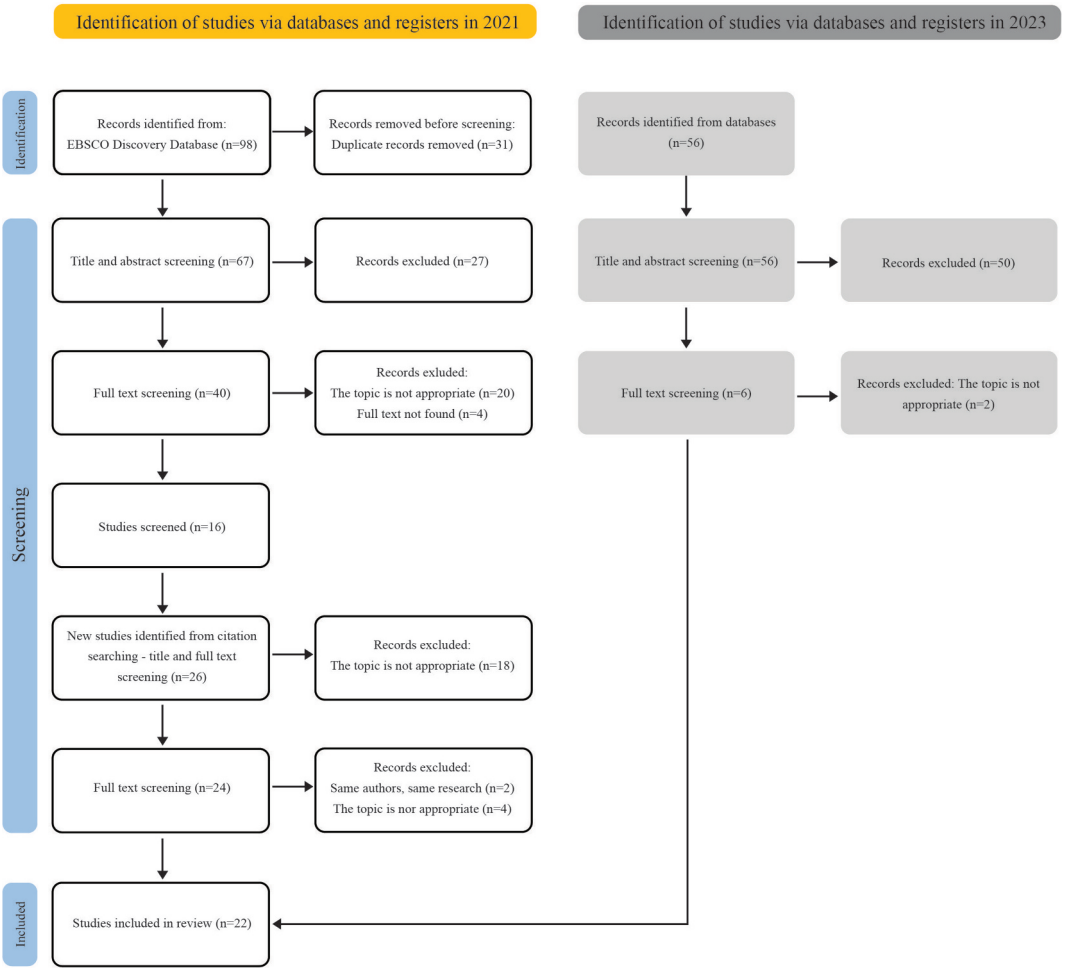

Figure 1. Preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses (PRISMA) diagram.

schools AND parochial schools, parental involvement in schools AND Muslim schools, parental involvement in schools AND faith schools, parental involvement in schools AND faith-based schools, parental involvement in schools AND church schools.

2.3. Study selection

As part of our study selection process, we used the Rayyan tool integrated with Zotero software. As a result of searching the abstracts for keywords, 67 studies were identified in first round and 56 in second round, which were collected on a filter page for further examination. The abstracts of the journal articles were further analysed according to whether they discussed parental involvement and whether they examined church or faith-based schools. After this screening, 40 journal articles remained, the full texts of which were analysed as the analysis of the abstracts alone proved insufficient (PG, DKZs, CsE, ME). After the analysis of the journal articles, 16 of them were found to be relevant in first round and 4 in second round. As this number seemed to be too low, the reference lists of the studies already included were also reviewed, which resulted in another 26 relevant titles (PG, DKZs, CsE, ME, SzE, BA). The content of these journal articles was also subjected to the analysis previously carried out, whereby 8 further journal articles were added to the 16 already available;

thus, we started working with 24 journal articles. During the detailed analysis, two more studies were excluded due to the presence of journal articles by the same authors, covering the same research, and four more studies were excluded due to their irrelevant subject matter (PG, DKZs, CsE, ME, SzE, BA). Since there is no study with the same statistical procedure, this study does not undertake a comparison of statistical methods.

3. Parental involvement in schools of religious communities (results)

Overall, our systematic search yielded 22 records. The papers were published between 1996 and 2023, the majority after 2000 (20), and most of which occurred in the 2010s (16). Only two papers were found focusing on international differences, while the rest of them presented the findings of national or regional studies. Most research was conducted in the United States (10) and Israel (4), see Table 1.

3.1. Religious communities and organisations

In our analysis, we examined the character of religious/denominational school communities treated by the studies based on two criteria. First, we looked at whether the institutions in each study were run by a religious/denominational organisation or were associated with religious communities. On this basis, institutions can be grouped into three different categories: we distinguish studies that examine schools affiliated with a particular religious denomination (Daly 2009; Dallavis 2014; Ospino and Weitzel-O'Neill 2016; Joseph, Vélez, and Antrop-González 2017; Vera et al. 2017; Donovan 1999; Frabutt et al. 2010; Gorleku and Campbell 2018; Swaner et al. 2023; Wright, Park, and Saadé 2022, Tobin 2017; Hamlin and Flessa 2018) and studies that have gathered data from a social context that is a 'human mosaic of religion' with their own separate 'community-oriented schools' (Lavenda 2011, 929), which are not literally run by a church/religious organisation but are organised on an ethnor-eligious basis (Arar et al. 2016, Lai & Zhang, 2014; Lavenda 2011; Schaedel et al. 2015; Freund et al. 2018). As a third group, we distinguish studies that conduct comparative studies across different sectors (Hamlin and Cheng 2020; Bauch and Goldring 1996; Mulligan 2003; Kim and Placier 2004; Kuru Cetin and Taskin 2016), comparing charter, Christian, Catholic, public, and private schools.

Secondly, we examined which religion or denomination is in the focus of the studies. Most of the studies under analysis focus on the Catholic school community (Daly 2009, Dallavis, 2014; Ospino and Weitzel-O'Neill 2016; Joseph, Vélez, and Antrop-González 2017; Vera et al. 2017; Donovan 1999; Frabutt et al. 2010; Gorleku and Campbell 2018; Kim and Placier 2004; Wright, Park, and Saadé 2022, Tobin 2017; Hamlin and Flessa 2018), one about Christian schools generally (Swaner et al. 2023), but there are also a number of studies that deal with Arabic and/or Jewish communities, which are distinguished by their culture-specific characteristics (Arar et al. 2016; Schaedel et al. 2015; Lavenda 2011; Freund et al. 2018). Our literature analysis identified two studies that examine multiple religious denominations through intra-sectoral comparative analysis (Hamlin and Cheng 2020; Lai and Zhang 2014); and three studies that make cross-sectoral comparisons (Bauch and Goldring 1996; Mulligan 2003; Kuru Cetin and Taskin 2016). Based on the studies of cross-sectoral comparison, we found it helpful that the articles were drawn from a wide range of cultures, because it is a way to look beyond the Euro-Atlantic culture. At the same time, the diversity of the research base population presented in the articles also posed a difficulty, since, for example, the working definition of 'religious community school' was almost impossible to adapt to such geo-cultural diversity.

3.2. The interpretation of PI in the studies

Out of the 22 studies, 17 provide explanations (ranging from detailed to limited) and analyses of the nature and quality of parental involvement. In these, the authors define the concept of parental involvement and the ways in which it is realised. The definitions/explanations are summarised in Table 2.

Table 1. The core data of the studies involved to the review.

Author(s)/year	Keywords	Country	Scientific Journal	SJR
Hamlin and Cheng (2020)	school governance, parental satisfaction, parental empowerment, school choice, parental involvement	USA	*Educational Administration Quarterly*	Q1
Joseph, Vélez, and Antrop-González (2017)	school choice; parental involvement; Latino; vouchers	USA	*Journal of Latinos and Education*	Q1
Freund et al. (2018)	parental motivation, parental involvement, parental role construction, self- efficacy, Jewish and Arab parents	Israel	Children and Youth Services Review	Q1
Kim and Placier (2004)	-	USA	*Education Policy Analysis Archives*	Q1
Lai and Zhang (2014)	inclusive practices early childhood education Special education needs faith-based kindergartens	Hong Kong	*Journal of Religion & Health*	Q1
Lavenda (2011)	parental involvement, culture, role construction, SEM, SES	Israel	Children & Youth Services Review	Q1
Swaner et al. (2023)	Christian education, School sustainability, Innovation, Appreciative inquiry, Principal components analysis	USA	*International Journal of Educational Development*	Q1
Hamlin and Flessa (2018)	parent grants, parental involvement, educational policy, parental involvement model, Ontario, Canada	Canada	*Educational Policy*	Q1
Daly (2009)	academies, DEIS, educational disadvantage, England, Ireland, school autonomy	Ireland	*Eire-Ireland*	Q2
Wright, Park, and Saadé (2022)	COVID 19, digital learning, distance learning, school closure, parental involvement	United Kindom	*Open Learning: The Journal of Open, Distance and e-Learning*	Q2
Arar et al. (2016)	leadership styles, parental involvement, Arabs in Israel	Israel	International Journal of Pedagogies & Learning	Q3
Kuru Cetin and Taskin (2016)	family-school relationships, academic achievement, low-income, socio-economic rank	Turkey	*Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*	Q3
Dallavis (2014)	-	USA	*Journal of Catholic Education*	-
Ospino and Weitzel-O'Neill (2016)	Catholic schools, Hispanic families, Latinos, Hispanic ministry, pastoral leadership	USA	*Journal of Catholic Education*	-
Schaedel et al. (2015)	parental involvement, Jewish and Arab teachers, school climate, teachers' obstacles, teacher-parent communication	Israel	*International Journal About Parents in Education*	-
Vera et al. (2017)	parent involvement, Latinos, educational involvement, English Learners	USA	*Journal of Catholic Education*	-
Donovan (1999)	-	USA	*Journal of Catholic Education*	-
Frabutt et al. (2010)	-	USA	*Journal of Catholic Education*	-
Gorleku and Campbell (2018)	-	Ghana	*Journal for Leadership and Instruction*	-
Mulligan (2003)	-	USA	*Journal of Catholic Education*	-
Bauch and Goldring (1996)	parental involvement, school climate, community involvement, social trust, school principal	USA	*Urban Education*	-
	Parental involvement, school activities, policy development	Ireland	*International Journal for Transformative Research*	-

However, various terms are used in the studies to refer to parental involvement: parental involvement, family involvement, school-parent communication, school-parent collaboration, school-parent partnership, family-school-community partnership, as well as role construction, educational involvement, family-school relationship, parental empowerment, parental influence. The vast majority of these terms can be divided into the Epstein's typology.

As we have seen, the studies interpret the concept of parental involvement in the broadest sense possible. A strong emphasis is laid on the requirement that the essence of PI should go beyond formal, superficial forms of parent-school communication in schools of religious communities. Almost without exception, reference is made to Epstein's six-dimensional concept (Epstein et al. 2002). Moreover, many studies reflect a distinctive interpretation of Epstein's typology of PI, according to which different types of PI represent different stages on the developmental scale of the parent-school relationship (Bauch and Goldring 1996).

Table 2. Definition of parental involvement according to Epstein's Model.

	Form of parental involvement					
Study	Parenting	Communicating	Volunteering	Learning at Home	Decision Making	Collaborating with the Community
Arar et al. (2016)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bauch and Goldring (1996)		✓	✓			
Dallavis (2014)	✓					
Daly (2009)	✓				✓	
Hamlin and Cheng (2020)	✓			✓	✓	✓
Freund et al. (2018)				✓		✓
Joseph, Vélez, and Antrop-González (2017)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Vera et al. (2017)		✓		✓		
Donovan (1999)		✓	✓			
Frabutt et al. (2010)				✓		✓
Gorleku and Campbell (2018)				✓	✓	✓
Kim and Placier (2004)						✓
Kuru Cetin and Taskin (2016)		✓		✓		
Lai and Zhang (2014)			✓		✓	
Mulligan (2003)	✓					
Lavenda (2011)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ospino and Weitzel-O'Neill (2016)	✓				✓	✓
Schaedel et al. (2015)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wright, Park, and Saadé (2022)	✓	✓		✓		
Swaner et al. (2023)					✓	✓
Tobin (2017)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hamlin and Flessa (2018)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

3.3. Methodology of the papers

As there are no standardised measures of parental involvement, the methodology of the articles is also important and interesting to consider. In the following section, the 18 studies are analysed according to research methodology.

The target groups of the studies are mostly parents (10 articles) and teachers (9 articles), students (3 articles), school leaders and administrators (6 articles), as well as parish priests or congregation pastors (1 article) See Table 3. Nine studies analyse the responses from parents (Bauch and Goldring 1996; Donovan 1999; Lavenda 2011; Dallavis 2014; Kuru Cetin and Taskin 2016; Joseph, Vélez, and Antrop-González 2017; Vera et al. 2017; Freund et al. 2018; Hamlin and Cheng 2020), and one study analysed parental rights documents. Nine studies interview teachers (Bauch and Goldring 1996; Donovan 1999; Dallavis 2014; Lai and Zhang 2014; Schaedel et al. 2015; Kuru Cetin and Taskin 2016; Arar et al. 2016; Wright, Park, and Saadé 2022; Swaner et al. 2023). Other target groups are school principals and administrators, whose responses are analysed in six studies (Donovan 1999; Mulligan 2003; Lai and Zhang 2014; Kuru Cetin and Taskin 2016; Ospino and Weitzel-O'Neill 2016; Swaner et al. 2023); three further studies are based on student data (Kim and Placier 2004; Dallavis 2014; Gorleku and Campbell 2018), while Frabutt et al. (2010) discuss responses from parish priests. Furthermore, in one study, observations were made both in the classroom and outside of it (Dallavis 2014) and in another study, parents' data were linked with school-level administrative data (Hamlin and Cheng 2020). The best-covered age group is primary and lower secondary (from the age of 5 to the age of 18, fewer articles deal with the upper secondary and pre-primary level.

3.3.1. Sampling

For Daly's (2009) document analysis and interview studies by Dallavis (2014), Joseph, Vélez, and Antrop-González (2017), Kuru Cetin and Taskin (2016), Lai and Zhang (2014), sampling was done

Table 3. Target groups, data sources and school levels in reviewed articles.

	Target group					Data sources			ISCED level[1]			
Article	teachers	parents	students	administrators	other	interviews	questionnaires	other	0	1	2	3
Dallavis (2014)	✓	✓	✓		stakeholders	50		observation			✓	
Ospino and Weitzel-O'Neill (2016)				✓			656		✓	✓	✓	
Arar et al. (2016)	✓						200				✓	
Hamlin and Cheng (2020)		✓					1699	school-level administrative data		✓	✓	✓
Joseph, Vélez, and Antrop-González (2017)		✓				6				✓	✓	
Schaedel et al. (2015)	✓						799			✓		
Vera et al. (2017)		✓					329		✓	✓	✓	✓
Donovan (1999)	✓	✓		✓		25		documents		✓	✓	
Frabutt et al. (2010)					pastors		1047	text segments		✓	✓	✓
Freund et al. (2018)		✓					437			✓		
Gorleku and Campbell (2018)			✓				907					
Kim and Placier (2004)			✓				1789					✓
Kuru Cetin and Taskin (2016)	✓	✓		✓		24				✓	✓	✓
Lai and Zhang (2014)	✓			✓		6		observation	✓			
Mulligan (2003)				✓			72260		✓			
Bauch and Goldring (1996)	✓	✓					991					✓
Daly (2009)		✓						documents		✓		
Lavenda (2011)		✓					5999				✓	✓
Wright, Park, and Saadé (2022)	✓					15						
Swaner et al. (2023)	✓			✓	Staff and board members	55	553				✓	✓
Tobin (2017)	✓	✓	✓		stakeholders			action research			✓	
Hamlin and Flessa (2018)								initiatives		✓	✓	
	10	11	4	6	4	7	13	8	4	11	13	8

using expert sampling, snowball sampling, and convenience sampling. Subjects in the quantitative studies were sampled using multistage stratified random sampling (Mulligan 2003; Kim and Placier 2004; Lavenda 2011; Ospino and Weitzel-O'Neill 2016), whereas in the small-sample studies, expert sampling was used in the first stage and full sampling in the second stage (Swaner et al. 2023; Arar et al. 2016).

Most of the studies (14) used quantitative research methods. The qualitative method (interviews), and the secondary data analysis also have characteristics. Documentary analysis used only one paper. See Table 4.

Based on the nature of data collection, the studies fall into three broad categories: online, paper-based self-completion, and face-to-face. Electronic communication (at least in part) was used by Ospino and Weitzel-O'Neill (2016), Swaner et al. (2023) and Hamlin and Cheng (2020). Empirical investigation was conducted through paper-based questionnaire completion in the majority of studies; Bauch and Goldring (1996), Mulligan (2003), Kim and Placier (2004), Schaedel et al. (2015), Gorleku and Campbell (2018), Lavenda (2011), Vera et al. (2017), Arar et al. (2016), Freund et al. (2018), Swaner et al. (2023) and Donovan (1999). Face-to-face interview research was conducted by Dallavis (2014), Joseph, Vélez, and Antrop-González (2017), Kuru Cetin and Taskin (2016), Lai and Zhang (2014). Wright, Park, and Saadé (2022).

In relation to the measurement tools used to operationalise parental involvement, it should be noted that previously used questions and entire instruments were adapted by the authors (though the latter less frequently). Lavenda (2011) and Freund et al. (2018) used Walker et al.'s 2005 Parent Questionnaire. Arar et al. (2016) used six subscales of the Parents' Involvement Questionnaire (PIQ) to explore teachers' views on parents' involvement. Vera et al. (2017) also added new variables to the Family Involvement Questionnaire (FIQ) for parents. Donovan (1999) made additions to two questionnaires that had been in use previously (Family Involvement in School and the Self-Assessment for Effective Partnerships Between Home and School).

Table 4. The methodology of the papers.

	Quantitative research					
Studies	Large-sample studies	Small-sample studies	Qualitative research	Mixed methods	Secondary analyses	Documentary analyses
Arar et al. (2016)		✓				
Bauch and Goldring (1996)	✓					
Dallavis (2014)			✓			
Daly (2009)						✓
Hamlin and Cheng (2020)	✓					
Freund et al. (2018)		✓				
Joseph, Vélez, and Antrop-González (2017)			✓			
Vera et al. (2017)		✓				
Donovan (1999)				✓		
Frabutt et al. (2010)				✓	✓	
Gorleku and Campbell (2018)	✓					
Kim and Placier (2004)	✓				✓	
Kuru Cetin and Taskin (2016)			✓			
Lai and Zhang (2014)			✓			
Mulligan (2003)	✓				✓	
Lavenda (2011)	✓					
Ospino and Weitzel-O'Neill (2016)				✓		
Schaedel et al. (2015)	✓					
Wright, Park, and Saadé (2022)			✓			
Swaner et al. (2023)				✓		
Tobin (2017)			✓			
Hamlin and Flessa (2018)	✓					

Table 5. Summary of mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT).

	Meets the methodological quality criteria			
Study	Yes	No	Can't tell	Comments
Arar et al. (2016)	x			non probability sampling
Bauch and Goldring (1996)			x	Low response rate (ca. 50%). Self-selection raises the possibility of bias.
Dallavis (2014)	x			
Daly (2009)	x			Using document analysis (nonempirical)
Donovan (1999)	x			There are divergences and inconsistencies between quantitative and qualitative results.
Frabutt et al. (2010)	x			
Freund et al. (2018)	x			
Gorleku and Campbell (2018)	x			Low response rate
Hamlin and Cheng (2020)			x	Low response rate (less than 20%). Self-selection raises the possibility of bias.
Hamlin and Flessa (2018)	x			Generalisations are limited to the applicant parent communities.
Joseph, Vélez, and Antrop-González (2017)	x			
Kim and Placier (2004)	x			
Kuru Cetin and Taskin (2016)	x			
Lai and Zhang (2014)	x			
Lavenda (2011)	x			Only parents' meeting participants were examined.
Mulligan (2003)	x			
Ospino and Weitzel-O'Neill (2016)	x			Does not justify the choice of mixed methods directly.
Schaedel et al. (2015)	x			There was only a 35% return rate on the questionnaires sent out.
Swaner et al. (2023)	x			
Tobin (2017)		x		Research questions are not clearly defined.
Vera et al. (2017)	x			Only parents who have close links with the school were among the respondent
Wright, Park, and Saadé (2022)	x			

3.4. Quality assessment

For critical appraisal and to limit bias, each included study underwent critical review. Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) were used to explore the risk of bias in the interventional studies (Hong et al. 2018), because our studies used several method, and this tool it is possible to assess the methodological quality of five types of studies: qualitative research, randomised controlled trials, non-randomised studies, quantitative descriptive studies, and mixed methods studies. These are not points systems, but rather a judgement of quality, categorised as: meets the methodological quality criteria or not (or we can't tell it). The results of the quality assessment can be found in Tables 5. As a result of these tools, we can say that most of the studies are good quality studies. Only a few of them have some risk, but they also have only a moderate risk of bias.

4. Parental involvement in schools of religious communities and organisations

Based upon a limited number of studies contained cross-sectoral comparison, we investigated whether there is a difference in parental involvement between religious and non-religious schools and between schools of different denominations. For this purpose, we found it useful to mark the implementation of Bauch and Goldring's framework (1996), which draws on Epstein's typology. Bauch and Goldring (1996) distinguish four types of the co-occurrence of teacher and parent involvement, with high teacher and high parent involvement and empowerment at one end of the scale, and low teacher and parent involvement and empowerment at the other. On the middle of the continuum are variations in between with either teachers or parents having high empowerment and involvement at the expense of the other actors. Next, we seek to answer the question of how schools of religious communities and organisations can be situated in this model, based on the research presented in these studies.

4.1. Temporal dimension

Three studies draw attention to the fact that the understanding and forms of parental involvement had undergone a significant transformation by the end of the last century (Bauch and Goldring 1996; Arar et al. 2016; Freund et al. 2018). Bauch and Goldring (1996), drawing on Epstein's typology, interpret forms of cooperation as stages of development. They observe that the main direction of the evolution of the parent-school relationship is that parental involvement is moving from the traditional passive to a new and more collaborative, proactive approach (Bauch and Goldring 1996). It is noteworthy that this paradigm shift in the educational systems of many countries has also affected the schools of religious communities and organisations. In Israel, neither parents nor schools had initiated a systematic school-based parental involvement plan prior to the 1970s, when the period of separation ended, and the relationship between parent and teacher was intensified. In the 1980s, the two sides could be described as service providers (schools) and clients (parents) (Freund et al. 2018). In the 21st century, schools began to value a collaborative relationship with parents in order to establish a working-learning environment (Arar et al. 2016, 133). In another study, the three basic models of parental involvement are also presented as stages of development, starting from a lower level of involvement with parents as teachers' helpers, through a somewhat more serious level with parents as teachers' partners, and arriving at the highest level of cooperation with parents being fully empowered in schools' decision-making (Donovan 1999).

Although the generally accepted assumption of most studies is that parental involvement in a religious community school is of a high standard, studies show that it is not always the case, and that parents have not always been part of the school community. The study by Frabutt et al. (2010), who studied the 19th century, reaches the furthest back in time. The authors trace the basic tenets of the Catholic Church's view of the parental role, citing Church documents from the end of the 19th century, pointing out that the Catholic Church regarded parents as the primary agents in the education of their children (primacy of parental role) and that Catholic documents urged parent-school collaboration. Furthermore, in 1977 the Congregation for Catholic Education even urged parental involvement (Frabutt et al. 2010). A study by Daly (2009) shows that parents were only viewed as 'providers of children' in Irish Catholic schools in the mid-twentieth century (Daly 2009, 195). A historical review of two studies reveals that parents were external side actors in school life throughout the mid-twentieth century (Daly 2009; Freund et al. 2018). Daly's study (2009) traces the process by which parents' movements and organisations began to make their voices heard in Ireland in the 1950s, primarily in order to have a say on fundamental issues such as corporal punishment in schools. Daly (2009) investigated Catholic schools in Ireland, whose teachers (while not disputing the sacred, God-given right and duty of parents to their children) acted on the principle of in *loco parentis*, interpreting it as teachers being entitled to substitute for parents at school in instances of parents' incompetence. Both the Church and the state supported the institutions and the teachers in their unlimited empowerment at school (Daly 2009). In other words, in some contexts the recognition of the primacy of parental responsibility and support for parental involvement in schools do not go hand-in-hand, and therefore this issue needs to be defined and examined in detail in the context of schools within religious communities.

4.2. Too little or too much

Our analysis sought to answer what is considered to be optimal parental involvement. Several studies point out the delicate and problematic nature of this relationship. While all the studies emphasise that PI is extremely beneficial, research reveals that, even today, there is a school stance that maintains the superiority of teacher authority and the limits of parents' expertise as educators (Freund et al. 2018). Thus, despite international and national support from educational policymakers, there are institutions that still prefer to keep parents at a distance (Arar et al. 2016; Schaedel et al. 2015). In three articles, the paradigm shifts in parental involvement, which has increased the role of

parents, putting them in a consumer position, is associated with liberal or neoliberal education policies aimed at improving school quality and decentralisation (Arar et al. 2016; Bauch and Goldring 1996; Freund et al. 2018). Even the choice of school by parents is seen as a manifestation of parental involvement, since they have the right to choose another institution if their needs are not taken into account or they are not given a say in the decisions of the school where they wish to be involved (Bauch and Goldring 1996; Swaner et al. 2023). However, according to Freund et al. (2018), the consequence of the decentralisation of education policy in the 1990s was that teachers began to see parents as clients rather than real partners. Three studies have shown that schools in religious communities have the potential to treat parents as partners rather than consumers (Bauch and Goldring 1996; Dallavis 2014; Tobin 2017).

Donovan (1999) points out the shortcomings and weaknesses of PI in Catholic schools. Looking at the dimensions of parental involvement, he finds that parents in Catholic schools are at the very bottom of the school hierarchy. In his view, the PI policy not only falls short of the empowering, self-governing model, but cannot even be considered a partnership, because parents are not treated as equal partners, but merely as teachers' helpers, and are only involved in school events and fundraising. Although this study also emphasises that Catholic schools are grounded on trust in teachers' expertise and goodwill, the author argues that this relationship level is low compared to trends in educational policy (Donovan 1999).

There are specific cases in which language and cultural barriers make it difficult to involve parents. If parents do not speak the language of the school and the language of instruction, communication with parents and the development of parents' language skills are also major challenges. One school in a study of Hong Kong's religious community schools offered language courses for parents (Lai and Zhang 2014). Three studies on Catholic schools, conducted in the United States, focus on communication with parents of minority pupils, who are predominantly Spanish-speaking and Catholic. Hispanics make up 25.9% of the U.S. student population and 76% of those who are not fully proficient in English (Vera et al. 2017). In these school settings, the lack of parental involvement is also pointed out by Ospino and Weitzel-O'Neill (2016), who, examining the intersection of parent culture and Catholic school culture, argue that in order to increase parental involvement in schools, it would be necessary to increase the openness of school leadership to parents and the proportion of staff with intercultural skills. Joseph, Vélez, and Antrop-González (2017) investigate the involvement of bilingual Hispanic parents in Catholic schools in an institution that has a parent involvement programme in place, but with inadequate results (Joseph, Vélez, and Antrop-González 2017). The study concludes that parents' home-based involvement is favourable considering their possibilities, but researchers have identified a number of barriers to PI in addition to language difficulties, in particular the lack of invitation from school staff, the fact that teachers are available for discussion only during parents' working hours, and that teachers only contact them when they have negative messages about the children. The studies also note the lack of parental organisations and community opportunities offered by the school. Based on these studies, it appears that schools of religious communities and organisations are expected to be more culturally sensitive and to maintain special partnership with parents (Ospino and Weitzel-O'Neill 2016; Joseph, Vélez, and Antrop-González 2017).

Frabutt et al. (2010) study explored the viewpoints of the church alongside those of the school and parents, providing a unique perspective to the systematic literature review. A nationwide US study exploring the views of Catholic pastors, analysing data from 2008, found that parental involvement in Catholic schools is considered very important and valuable by pastors, but not in all Epsteinian dimensions. Instead, they would assign a practical role to parents. The relationship between parents and schools is seen as relevant through the collaboration between parish and school. Religious upbringing in the home as well as collective religious practice and charitable work are highlighted as primary areas of parental involvement. Parents belonging to Catholic schools are perceived by pastors as mostly not practising their religion, spiritually underdeveloped, and behaving as if they were consumers of private schools. The majority of pastors regard the involvement of

parents in collective decision-making at school as hazardous because they do not trust parents to go beyond the interests of their own children for the sake of the common good, and also because they believe it is important that school leaders remain in full charge of the school (Frabutt et al. 2010). At the same time, the study points out that the church and schools have a responsibility to offer special preparation programmes for parents to make them aware of their responsibilities in raising children, and parishes are encouraged to promote proactive parental involvement, which would involve parents in a living, active community that would better support the efficiency of the school (Frabutt et al. 2010).

Although studies agree that parental involvement is important and desirable, the idea arises in the examined studies that excessive parental involvement in the work of the school may not always be effective. This is more likely to happen in schools of religious communities, where parents often play an active, leading role in the life of the local religious community and therefore feel empowered to have a say in teachers' professional affairs. The professional authority of teachers and the maximisation of parental involvement in decision-making may even result in conflict. Nevertheless, none of the studies dispute the versatile usefulness of PI. Indeed, modern education policy not only urges parental empowerment, but also emphasises that teachers' personalities, professionalism, and decision-making power are crucial to the quality of education (McKinney-Thompson 2015). Teachers, while clearly having a modern conception of the teaching role, still want to protect their professionalism from parental interference (Arar et al. 2016).

The studies place special emphasis on the religious and cultural composition of students as well as the diversity of school culture in schools of religious communities. The issue is inescapable, as ethnoreligious affiliation influences parental and teacher role perceptions (Lavenda 2011; Schaedel et al. 2015). Israeli parents, for example, similarly to Americans, show a high degree of involvement, which also continues in the post-elementary school stage, while the data show differences between Jewish and Arabic parents in all the factors of PI that were examined.

Particularly noteworthy are the studies which contain comparisons of PI-related attitudes of parents from different religions and cultures (Lavenda 2011; Schaedel et al. 2015). For instance, the article by Freund et al. (2018) compares the parental involvement of Jewish and Arabic parents. As the ethnoreligious communities in Israel have strictly separate school networks, cultural differences are not parents' individual attributes but distinctive features of school cultures, which may result in totally different school climates. Due to Jewish parents' individualised views and consumerist attitudes towards schools, PI in Jewish schools has undermined mutual feelings of trust (Freund et al. 2018). Arabic culture, which retains a traditional, community-centred approach, has also undergone some changes with the increase in parental schooling and with growing ambitions for upward mobility. Arabic parents are very active in home-based PI but are not so involved by their children's schools (Freund et al. 2018).

4.3. Optimal ways of parental involvement

Overall, our review reveals an exciting and sometimes tense force field of the parent-teacher relationship, in which the active presence of parents in schools and their involvement in decision-making are sources of concern for teachers (Donovan 1999; Freund et al. 2018). In recent decades, governments have been almost universally supportive of parental involvement. Several studies, however, attempt to determine the optimal type and degree of parental involvement. It can be concluded that maximum parental involvement and the setting of competency boundaries cannot be easily achieved in such a way that ensures the professional autonomy of teachers as well as the professional authority, self-esteem, and competence of schools and teachers. Finding the balance requires particular attention from education policymakers and school staff, especially school leadership, as four studies emphasise that the school principal is not only in charge of PI policy, but also personally determines the attitude of the teaching staff towards PI (Mulligan 2003; Arar et al. 2016; Joseph, Vélez, and Antrop-González 2017; Vera et al. 2017). Although the study from Wright, Park,

and Saadé (2022) emphasises the importance of parental involvement during school closures, it does not mention the importance of Catholic schools.

Three studies suggest that schools of religious communities and organisations would be able to find a special solution to strike this delicate balance (Bauch and Goldring 1996; Dallavis 2014; Vera et al. 2017). As the church and school community overlap in Catholic schools, they are open to parents, develop a collaborative relationship with them, and invite them to many community-building school events, thus creating a sense of belonging and care (Swaner et al. 2023, Tobin 2017). At the same time, Bauch and Goldring (1996) point out that in these schools, parents are less involved in decision-making, which tips the balance slightly towards teacher empowerment. However, parents perceive teachers as approachable, caring, and trustworthy, and therefore have a positive perception of their own situation because, in spite of not having formal guarantees of their interests, they trust the school and the teachers (Bauch and Goldring 1996).

Mulligan also defines PI in Catholic schools as a special model (Mulligan 2003). Contrary to the consumerist view prevalent at the turn of the millennium, Catholic schools seek to develop a sense of community in the school, with parents closely involved. This is what Coleman called intergenerational closure (Coleman 1988 and it appears in the sixth dimension of Epstein's model (Epstein 2016). At its core, parents and school staff share a commitment 'to creating community and an academically-enriching environment for all students' (Mulligan 2003, 249). Accordingly, the PI model in Catholic schools is characterised by the fact that parents are not involved in school-level decision-making, but, instead, create a cohesive community of parents through community events. According to Mulligan (2003), this model has been so successful that other schools, such as magnet and charter schools, are trying to follow suit. Dallavis (2014) argues that the advantage of a religiously based teacher role model in engaging with parents is that religiosity validates teachers' messages about their attention and care for students, and therefore parents are convinced that teachers love their profession and do not work just for their salaries (i.e. they associate an altruistic role model with teachers, in whom they place more) (Dallavis 2014). Vera et al. (2017) find that the strongest predictor of PI in schools is the perception of teachers' positive attitudes (the feeling that teachers invest in children and encourage school participation), and of the fact that culturally competent leadership is coupled with culturally responsive education.

5. Conclusion

This systematic review is a descriptive analysis of the nature of parental involvement in religious schools, in which research results of included articles were compared to Epstein's typology. While the literature on parental involvement pays much attention to the individual attributes of parents and families, research on parental involvement in schools of religious communities and organisations gives special focus to educational policy, school leadership, school culture, and teacher attitudes and behaviour. This may also explain why the study of parental involvement in schools of religious communities and organisations is of interest to a wide range of researchers. In addition to educational researchers, the authors of these articles include historians (Daly 2009), leadership and policy researchers (Bauch and Goldring 1996; Gorleku and Campbell 2018), social work researchers (Freund et al. 2018), school leaders and teachers (Donovan 1999; Frabutt et al. 2010), as well as government experts (Mulligan 2003), church experts (Frabutt et al. 2010), theologians, and religious education researchers (Ospino and Weitzel-O'Neill 2016). This undoubtedly benefits research in the field, as it places the issue in a broad context. The varied research methodology does not allow for a meta-analysis-level review, but while conducting this systematic review, researchers have encountered such new questions and perspectives on PI that can also be utilised by other researchers of the subject. Most of the studies included in the sample were aimed at influencing the decisions of school providers, government, or school leaders, or at changing teachers' behaviour. Four studies focus on one or a few schools (Donovan 1999; Lai and Zhang 2014; Gorleku and Campbell 2018), with the advantage of drawing on a deeper and more thorough knowledge of the institutions, but there are

also works based on large-sample databases, such as Kim and Placier (2004) or the works of Mulligan (2003) and Lavenda (2011). Evaluations of intervention programmes aiming at parental involvement can also serve as subjects of study. Donovan's (1999) research evaluates a local programme that encourages parent involvement, whereas Joseph, Vélez, and Antrop-González (2017) evaluate the local implementation of a national programme that provides parent training and volunteering opportunities (Joseph, Vélez, and Antrop-González 2017). In other cases, the studies reveal the absence of programmes that encourage parent involvement (Ospino and Weitzel-O'Neill 2016).

With respect to the question of who bears the most responsibility for the implementation of PI, the reviews of the evolution of PI do not point to the shortcomings of parents, but claim that the behaviour of school staff is influenced by their role perceptions and educational approach, so that optimal PI is not a matter of routines and practices, but depend on the views of school providers, leaders, and staff. A study interpreting the openness of Catholic school teachers to extra tasks related to PI (Mulligan 2003) points out that it depends on the rational calculations of the school and teachers to be convinced that the investment of extra time and effort in developing PI, along with the loss of their own leisure time, will pay off. Another new idea is the importance of providing teachers with training that equips them to engage effectively with hard-to-reach parents. By increasing their sense of support and reducing their frustration, this can help teachers not to feel so burdened by the efforts they put in PI tasks (Mulligan 2003). As three studies show that parents themselves often feel unprepared, especially in academic-related matters, researchers often conclude that parent competence development is needed, possibly in the form of training (Mulligan 2003; Frabutt et al. 2010; Vera et al. 2017).

Studies on schools of religious communities and organisations attribute a crucial role to institutional attitudes, which means that poor implementation of PI is not attributed to parents' lack of interest or ignorance of educational issues, but to the lack of invitation on the part of schools. Moreover, the school attitude of limiting parental involvement to home-based parenting is interpreted as an outdated, traditional solution, and passive parental involvement is interpreted as a reflection of unwelcoming school attitudes. In contrast, major significance is attached to the collective dimension of Epstein's typology, which proposes the involvement of parents in institutional management and decision-making, in curriculum and textbook choice, and in teachers' nominations. However, the studies reviewed also reveal that the essence of the PI model in some Catholic schools is not to involve parents in decision-making, but to maintain a close relationship with the religious community and to develop the parental community. The studies also refer to a number of good practices, the listing of which is beyond the scope of this paper, but perhaps a key activity is the organisation of community events by parents and school staff, which are not occasions of blaming or shaming parents, but casual community-building meetings based on partnership. Even with parents who prefer to stay away, there are suggestions such as using report cards to encourage them to join later. Another noteworthy initiative is the two-way immersion (TWI) programme in Catholic schools for minority pupils, with bilingual and bicultural teachers as well as recreational and religious events in the parents' mother tongue (Vera et al. 2017).

5.1. Limitations

The limitation of our analysis is that, due to the monolingual nature of the search, there were cultural constraints. As we searched only in English, we found mostly studies from the English-speaking world. Due to the choice of the keywords and the database, it is possible that relevant studies on this topic were overlooked.

Note

1. ISCED is the reference international classification of education programmes and levels. ISCED 02- pre-primary, ISCED1-primary, ISCED2-lower secondary, ISCED3-upper secondary.

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Appendix A. Databases involved in data collection by EBSCO Discovery Service

Accucoms - COVID-19 resources,
ACM Digital Library
Arts & Humanities (ProQuest)
Bibliotheca Corviniana Digitalis
Biological Abstracts 2000-2004
Biomedical & Life Sciences Collection
BMJ Journals
Business Source Premier
CAB Abstracts
Cambridge Journals
ChemSpider
CNKI
Cochrane
COMPASS
Congress.gov
De Gruyter Journals
Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)
Ebook (Springer)
Ebook Collection (Ebsco)
EbookCentral (ProQuest)
EBSCOHost
Elsevier
Elsevier - SciVal
ELTE Reader
Emerald
EMIS University – Central and South - East Europe
EndNote
ERIC
European Parliament Legislative Observatory
EUR-Lex
Europeana Collections
EUROSTAT
FSTA (Food Science and Technology Abstracts)
GALE Literary Sources (GLS)
Gale Reference Complete
Global Health and Human Rights Database
Grove Music Online
HUMANUS
HUNGARICANA
IJOTEN,
Impact Factor (Journal Citation Reports)
InCites
International Human Rights Network
Internet Archive
JSTOR
MATARKA
MathSciNet
MathSciNet (EBSCOhost)
MEDLINE (EBSCOhost)
MEDLINE (PubMed)
Medscape
Nature Journals
NEJM Group - COVID-19 resources
Nutrition and Food Sciences
Oxford Handbooks Online (OHO) – Criminology and Criminal Justice
Oxford Handbooks Online (OHO) – Law
Oxford Scholarship Online (Law Collection)
Oxford University Press (OUP) Journals
Project Gutenberg

ProQuest - One Academic
PubMed
PubMob
RefWorks
SAGE Journals
Science Direct
Science Magazine
SciFinder
SciFinder-n
SCImago Journal and Country Rank (SJR)
SciTech (ProQuest)
SCOPUS
SHERPA/RoMEO
SpringerLink
STADAT
Statista
SzocioWeb
Taylor and Francis Online Library
The Historical Map Portal
United Nations Treaty Collection
UpToDate Advanced
Web of Science
Wiley Online Library
World Biographical Information System
zbMATH
International Directory of Music Resources