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## A Case Study of ParentSchool Relationships: How Spanish-Speaking Latino Parents of Elementary Multilingual Learners Perceive Parental Involvement in Schools

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# LATINO PARENTS' PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOLS

A Case Study of ParentSchool Relationships: How Spanish-Speaking Latino Parents of  
Elementary Multilingual Learners Perceive Parental Involvement in Schools

Ingrid Corpuz

Molloy University

# LATINO PARENTS' PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOLS

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# LATINO PARENTS' PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOLS



## SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES

The dissertation of **Ingrid Corpuz** entitled: *A Case Study of Parent-School Relationships: Spanish-Speaking Parents of Elementary Multilingual Learners' Perception of Parental Involvement* in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in the School of Education and Human Services has been read and approved by the Committee:

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Molloy University

Date: November 9, 2022

**DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my family who are my lifelong source of inspiration, love, and support.

**ABSTRACT**

A Case Study of Parent-School Relationships: How Spanish-Speaking Latino Parents of Elementary Multilingual Learners Perceive Parental Involvement in Schools

Ingrid Corpuz

This study examined how Spanish-speaking Latino parents of multilingual learners (MLs) perceived their participation in the school community and their role in the educational process of their children. It explored several factors that can influence the involvement of Spanish-speaking parents in their children's education. Social capital, cultural capital, and social learning theories guided this study to provide a deeper understanding of the parental involvement of Spanish-speaking Latino parents in schools. Ten participating parents shared their experiences and described their view of parental involvement in their children's school. This study concluded that Spanish-speaking Latino parents displayed characteristics of highly involved parents, defying previous conceptions of Latino parents' lack of caring and involvement. Implications for policy and practices at the district and school building levels include providing teachers and educational leaders with professional development focused on cultural awareness and culturally responsive practices, developing language resources to assist families navigate the U.S. educational system, implementing parent workshops to serve as opportunities to promote parent awareness of the school's expectations for involvement and engagement with the curriculum, as well as designating district and school budgets for the purchase of translation devices and services to attend to the language needs of the population they serve. Recommendations are offered for

future research to expand the understanding of Spanish-speaking Latino parents' involvement in their children's education.

**Keywords:** parental involvement, Spanish-speaking Latino parents, roles, social capital, cultural capital, social learning

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**TABLE OF CONTENT**

Dedication .....	I
Acknowledgements.....	IV
List of Tables .....	II
List of Figures.....	III
CHAPTER ONE: Introduction .....	1
CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review .....	19
CHAPTER THREE: Methodology.....	45
CHAPTER FOUR: Findings .....	59
CHAPTER FIVE: Implications, Recommendations, and Conclusions .....	121
REFERENCES .....	147
APPENDIX A: Institutional Review Board Approval Letter.....	166
APPENDIX B: Parent Interview Protocol Outline - English .....	168
APPENDIX C: Parent Interview Protocol Outline - Spanish.....	171
APPENDIX D: Resultados, Recomendaciones y Conclusiones.....	174
APPENDIX E: Resultados, Recomendações e Conclusão .....	193

**LIST OF TABLES**

TABLE 4.1 Parents Profile ..... 62

**LIST OF FIGURES**

FIGURE 4.1 Themes and Sub-Themes .....69

FIGURE 5.1 Social Learning, Social Capital, and Cultural Theories as a Lens for Parental  
Involvement Data Analysis .....117

## CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

*“At the end of the day, the most overwhelming key to a child’s success is the positive involvement of parents.”*

*- Jane D. Hull*

Parents are considered the primary role models in a child’s life. Research shows that parents have a lasting impact on children’s learning because “assuring their children's academic achievement and success in school is one of the essential aspirations of every parent in many cultures” (Tekin, 2011, p.1). Parents can be a powerful influence on children's overall emotional and academic growth: "The idea that parents can change their children's educational trajectories by engaging with their children's schooling has inspired a generation of school reform policies" (Domina, 2005, p.245). Parental involvement is often deemed a positive key component of learning “through which schools enhance the achievement of underperforming students” (El Nolali, Bachman, & Votruba-Drzal, 2010, p.989).

School administrators, teachers, parents, researchers, and policymakers encourage parental involvement from kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade (Shelton & Epstein, 2005). According to Marzano (2003), parental involvement is one of the five vital school-level components influencing student achievement. Many studies on increasing student achievement reported similar findings (Haro, R, 2004; Scheerens & Bosker, 1997; Teddlie & Reynolds, 2000; Wang et al., 1993). However, for many families, increasing parental involvement appears to be a challenging task. Eccles and Harold (1996) found that, in general, “parents and teachers are not as involved with each other as they would like to be” (p. 3), but for Latino<sup>1</sup> parents, school

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<sup>1</sup> Recognizing and understanding that many people choose to use the gender-neutral term *Latinx*, I use the term *Latino* to honor how members of the community selected for this study identify themselves. Few Latino adults, including people who are part of my study, use the term *Latinx* (Noe-Bustamante et al., 2020).

involvement is more complex than many studies indicate (Planty et al., 2009; U.S. Department of Education, 2013; Turney & Kay, 2009). The apparent lack of involvement of Spanish-speaking Latino parents in their children's education is due to a number of different factors. For instance, I offer the following stories of a Spanish-speaking Latino parent of a multilingual learner<sup>2</sup> (ML) and a 5<sup>th</sup>-grade teacher to illustrate this point. To ensure the confidentiality of these individuals their names were replaced by pseudonyms.

“Mrs. P” expressed how grateful she was to have someone at her son's school that spoke Spanish during our introductory meeting. Her son was in second grade at the time and they had just relocated to our district, so this was their first year in our school. I called to welcome her family to our school, introduce myself, and to go over her son's classification as a ML, services provided at school, the language proficiency assessment, state exit criteria, and her rights as a parent. Mrs. P received the information in Spanish as a hard-copy and as an electronic version through Talking Points, a text messaging system used to communicate with families, which translates messages in a family's preferred language. Mrs. P immediately shared that she knew her son needed help learning English as soon as she enrolled him in kindergarten, but his previous school did not share any information about the services and tests he needed to take; or if they did, it was all in English. Mrs. P explained in a frustrated tone that receiving information about her son's academic progress and any other school information in English was not helpful. She also shared that she wanted to help her son with school but that she did not know how since she could not communicate with his teacher. During parent-teacher conferences, if she did not

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<sup>2</sup> Recognizing and understanding the efforts in properly identifying and serving the ever-growing MLs' population in schools over the years, I use the most current term to refer to students receiving English language services which have also been previously identified as English Learners (ELs), English Language Learners (ELLs), English as a New Language student (ENL), English as a Foreign Language student (EFL), Limited English Speaker (LES), and Language Minority Student (LMS; TESOL International Association, 2021).

have someone to translate for her, the school simply provided her with his report card and a short note in English of what his strengths and weaknesses were. Mrs. P highlighted that she felt helpless and unsure what else she could do to help her son do better at school but was hopeful that the new school would provide the support she needed. Her experiences embody some of the challenges that Spanish-speaking Latino parents face to become involved in their children's education, where becoming involved may seem like an impossible task.

That following year, I worked with "Mrs. W," a fifth-grade teacher who had over 12 years of experience teaching at the high school level. This placement was her first-year teaching at an elementary school, and in her class, she had several MLs whose language proficiency levels ranged from novice to advanced. Anticipating that she would have questions about how to meet the needs of the MLs in her class as she began this new chapter in her teaching career, I invited her to a meeting. Mrs. W arrived promptly to my classroom. She spoke rapidly, clearly excited about our partnership and immediately shared that her biggest worry was how to communicate with the Spanish-speaking parents. She explained her concerns with the amount of home-school communication expected at the elementary level and how it was much more intense compared with what she had experienced at the high school. Mrs. W shared that her new grade-level team had a communication plan already in place that consisted of a weekly newsletter, a daily class folder, and a school agenda. She was also very concerned about how to share learning strategies with Spanish-speaking parents to help students at home and communicate with families during parent-teacher conferences.

It was no surprise that Mrs. W sounded overwhelmed with what seemed like an impossible task since she did not speak Spanish. Her questions were familiar: How do I get all the information translated into a language parents can understand? Do I have to translate

everything? What do I do if there is an emergency? Who do I call? Do you translate all the conferences? Do you know all the parents? Clearly, Mrs. W was unaware of the many available resources to support teachers in maintaining an active home-school partnership while overcoming the language barrier. She was not sure where to begin and expressed how concerned she was that her Spanish-speaking parents would feel excluded from participating in their children's education.

These encounters with parents and teachers exemplify why there continue to be barriers in home-school partnerships such as the lack of knowledge of available resources to overcome language and cultural barriers, cultural awareness, and culturally responsive teaching practices. Therefore, I wanted to investigate further the pronounced issues and what may be the hindering factors legitimizing this inability to overcome these barriers. Is it a cultural gap, a form of bias, or a lack of understanding of American schools? As a Multilingual Learner Program Specialist (MLPS) and the district's Multilingual Learner Program (MLP) consultant, I have witnessed firsthand the challenges, for both parents and teachers, to build long-lasting home-school partnerships. As the work continues, my goal is to ensure that educational leaders and administrators attend to and collaborate with the very stakeholders who are at the heart of this work: parents and teachers.

Most teachers often see parents whose primary language is not English as a burden (Delgado-Gaitan, 2001, 2004). Studies have shown that the lack of parental participation in the work of schools can be seen in part as the parents neglecting their responsibilities, the parents feeling unwelcome, and believing that what they have to offer is unimportant and unappreciated. According to a year-long case study by Pena (2000), "some teachers have welcomed parent participation and used it effectively to motivate students, other teachers have not felt secure

enough to have parents in their classroom” (p. 42). In turn, Spanish-speaking Latino ML parents have to overcome a number of barriers to actively participate in their children's education (Ballantyne et al., 2008, Pena, 2000). As the ML population continues to grow, the school-related challenges such as academic performance trajectories among these students are likely to increase (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2008).

### **Background of the Study**

While parental involvement is generally defined as being involved in a child's education, school administrators and teachers have long understood the positive correlation between student performance and parental involvement (Suarez-Orozco et al., 2008). According to Marzano (2003), parental involvement is one of the five vital school-level components influencing student achievement. Many studies on increasing student achievement reported similar findings (Haro, R, 2004; Scheerens & Bosker, 1997; Teddlie & Reynolds, 2000; Wang et al., 1993). However, for many families, increasing parental involvement appears to be a challenging task. The increasing number of Spanish-speaking Latino MLs raises several concerns and discussions about their rights in American schools, and challenges educators to identify ways to connect with these students and their families, and highlights the need for parental involvement.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2018), the number of foreign-born U.S. residents increased from 39.9 million in 2010 to 44.7 million in 2018. In School Year 2015–16, a report from the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition of Washington stated that 37 states and the District of Columbia consisted of 65% or more of ELs speaking Spanish. In South Carolina, where the study took place, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that 5.8% of the population in 2018 was Hispanic.



In many communities in South Carolina, this change in demographics has not been viewed by non-Hispanic white community members as a positive one: Nearly 5 percent of South Carolina residents are immigrants, while almost 4 percent are native-born U.S. citizens with at least one immigrant parent based on the American Immigration Council statistics of 2017 (Acevedo, 2019). The United States is a nation of growing diversity. MLs travel daily between two different worlds: the world of the parents and that of the school and the teachers. Research shows that many school districts face obstacles when trying to increase the level of parental cooperation and assistance in children's education (Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994; Marzano, 2003; Pena, 2000; Shelton & Epstein, 2005). As a result, the level of parent participation varies among schools with some schools encountering many challenges to engage parents in critical conversations about the academic needs of their children while other schools have parents actively involved at school and at home with activities such as homework and school projects (Shelton & Epstein, 2005).

According to Zarate (2007), the most influential factor in a child's academic achievement is the involvement and participation of parents at home and at school. Usually, helping with homework support, purchasing educational toys, reading bedtime stories, and implementing shared reading techniques are the main tasks of parents in fostering their children's literacy (Zarate, 2007). Providing homework assistance is the most common form of parental involvement. However, the most important effort parents can make to improve their children's language development and acquisition is to engage in shared reading activities (Lonigan, 2003). Lonigan (2003) stated that children learn language through their interactions with their parents, and when reading stories. The involvement of parents in their children's language development is more important than the level of parents' education (Buchanan & Floiri, 2004).

At a time when accountability plays a significant role in determining the success of schools, steps must be taken to ensure that Latino MLs gain English proficiency and meaningful connection and access to the academic curriculum. To meet these goals, the active participation of the parents of MLs in the educational process of their children is essential. Therefore, a “key component of serving the needs of MLs is establishing strong relationships with families” (Gray & Fleischman, 2004, p. 84). The most challenging aspect of building a strong parent-teacher relationship is to find the most effective way to connect and sustain parental involvement with Latino ML parents. Arias and Morillo-Campbell (2008) suggested implementing “linguistic and cultural accommodations” (p. 11) for parental involvement programs. Another key recommendation in their research is implementing programs that teach non-English-speaking parents about the values and expectations of the school.

The link between parents and schools can influence the level of parental involvement (Eccles & Harold, 1996). When parents perceive that school administrators and teachers are welcoming, positive, and without judgments or blame towards them, they are more likely to engage in school events and activities and support the school (Spaulding et al., 2004). According to Eccles and Harold (1996), understanding why parents are not as involved at school and in their children’s education can be explained by a number of reasons such as “time, energy and/or economic resources; familiarity with the curriculum and confidence in one’s ability to help; attitudes regarding the appropriate role of parents to play at various ages; and prior experiences with the schools that have left some parents disaffected” (p.4). Therefore, gaining the understanding of parents’ school-related challenges can help schools provide the necessary support to encourage parental involvement so that policies implemented may not restrict parents from becoming more involved. (Jefferson, 2014). If families have “limited access to the school

and they must overcome barriers to engage in their children's education" (Jefferson, 2014, p.79), they are less likely to become engaged with the school.

Haro (2004) suggested that teachers often interpret low levels of parental involvement as a lack of caring. However, according to Shah and Marshall (2005), Latino parents are interested in their children's education; they just tend to perceive their role and the role of teachers in a child's education differently than the guidelines and expectations in American schools (Shah & Marshall, 2005). Rodriguez-Brown (2010) also stated that there seems to be a lack of understanding between home and school in regards to expectations and their levels of involvement. Providing care, love, moral values, and beliefs for children is often the way Latino parents view their role in their children's lives, while the schools should provide academic education. These different views or perceptions of home and school responsibilities may explain why Latino parents feel uncertain when they are asked to take on responsibilities that they expect to be the school's job.

### **Theoretical Frameworks**

For the purpose of this study, social capital, cultural capital, and social learning theories were examined to provide a deeper understanding of Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs' perceptions of parental involvement in schools. Social capital was introduced by Bourdieu (1980), who explained the term as a set of communal resources, making it possible and easy for people to accomplish goals together. In 1988, Coleman (1990) applied the concept of social capital to education recognizing that a social bond facilitates the achievement of goals as an individual or group. Bourdieu (1980) referred to the education system as a representation of middle- and upper-class values, making it more challenging for low-socioeconomic students and families to succeed. Bourdieu explained that low socioeconomic students do not struggle due to

the lack of resources. Rather, their struggles are associated with the school not recognizing or valuing the varied forms of social and cultural capital of low-socioeconomic students and their families to engage in school at the same expected level as middle- and upper-class students (Bourdieu, 1977).

Cultural capital refers to cultural elements that influence interactions between individuals and groups. It consists of all kinds of values, which may be distinct to an individual, community, or presented by an institution such as a school. Lareau (2011) stated that cultural elements of parents' lives can facilitate how parents respond to teachers' and school's requests for involvement. Bourdieu (1977b) argued that schools vary on how cultural elements such as school's structure and curriculum expectations may be understood differently by parents, teachers, and other community members, which consequently impacts family-school relationships.

Since the acquisition of social capital and cultural capital comes from values acquired from childhood - often unconsciously - and work with other forms of capital such as economics within a site of social interactions such as a school, learned social behavior appears to have a significant impact on how a person interacts with others and an institution. According to Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, a person's behavior influences or is influenced by a continuous two-way interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental influences and self. As a result, a person's identity is built through observations and interactions with others and the environment. Just as much the behavior of a person plays a significant role in influencing the environment; similarly, the environment can influence the behavior of a person. Parent involvement can rely heavily on observing how school embraces them and their children as well as the attitude of teachers and administrators toward them.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Existing literature indicates that parental involvement leads to higher levels of academic success. Spanish-speaking Latino families of elementary MLs have unique needs when it comes to being involved in supporting their children through school. In South Carolina, where this study took place, the participation of all parents in the school community seems to fall short at the school level as schools are challenged by the instruction of an increasingly diverse number of students. As such, the purpose of this case study was to explore how Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs perceive their involvement in their children's education.

The U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (OCR) enforces Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance. The memorandum of May 25, 1970, clarifies the responsibility of school districts to provide equal educational opportunity to language-minority students, including providing notices and other information from school to parents who are not proficient in English notices and other information from school in a language they can understand. In addition, schools that receive Title I funds are required to develop a written parent and family engagement policy that must be developed jointly with and agreed upon by parents of Title I children (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). However, schools are not equipped with or lack access to resources such as interpreters, and translated documents and activities that meet the language needs of Latino Spanish-speaking parents in communities in South Carolina. Even though the law supports non-English speaking parents' involvement and active participation, reality seems to differ.

This qualitative study of parents' views of their participation in the education of their children followed a case study approach of Spanish-speaking Latino families of elementary MLs

in a South Carolina public school. I studied the concept of parental involvement within the school context, but participants were free to define *parental involvement* on their own terms and by their own actions. To examine parents' perceptions of parental involvement, I conducted semi-structured interviews to address the research question and subquestions. All participants were from an elementary school located in a Southeastern school district in South Carolina. Last, this study was limited to one school site that is in the process of actively involving parents. It provides the opportunity to explore unique parents' perspectives of their role in the educational process and the factors influencing their involvement.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs perceive their role in their children's education. The literature indicates that low parental involvement is an ever-increasing and complex problem in schools. Although research shows that the challenge of involving parents in schools is greater in middle school, elementary schools encounter challenges unique to involving Latino parents who are often unfamiliar with parental involvement expectations in U.S. schools (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005; Brough & Irvin, 2001; Halsey, 2005; Novey, 2001). This study aimed to contribute to the research literature by extending what is already known about Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs in the area of home-school partnerships. The findings of this research contribute to educational equity by encouraging critical analysis and understanding of Spanish-speaking Latino parents' perceptions of their role in their children's education.

### **Research Questions**

The overall guiding question of this research was How do Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs define and perceive their involvement in their children's education?

In addition, the following subquestions guided this study:

- a. In a school that is expected to actively involve parents, how do Spanish-speaking Latino parents view their role in the educational process of their children?
- b. How do parents' stories of parental involvement relate (or not) to social and cultural capital exchanges with the school?

### **Overview of the Methodology, Research Design, and Data Collection**

To gain a deeper understanding of how the perceptions of Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs influenced the way in which they were involved in their children's education, I used the lens of social capital, cultural capital, and social learning theories lens to apply my own understanding of parental involvement to the data analysis in this study. I used qualitative and constructivist/transformational methodologies to inform my research design, to analyze and interpret the emerging themes within the data, and answer the research questions guiding this study. A case-study approach provided a comprehensive and in-depth explanation of parents' perceptions of parental involvement and shed insights into the *how* and *why* questions about the case at hand. Stake (1995) stated that a case study relies heavily on direct observation and interviews of the involved participants which allow the researcher to attest to the themes and patterns that may emerge from the data collected while drawing from their own experiences.

### **Context and Setting of the Study and Participants**

The data collection for this case study derived from a Latino congregation and local market in a Southeastern school district in South Carolina, using a purposeful selection of

Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs who were enrolled in an elementary school within a 5-mile radius from each location. All the data analysis reflects the elementary classes in which the participants' children were enrolled.

When selecting these sites for my study, I considered multiple factors. The main factor was that the selected area has an increasing population of MLs. All participants' children were enrolled in the same school; the school's Spanish-speaking ML enrollment consisted of 19% of the district-wide population of 195 elementary ML Spanish-speaking students in 2020-2021 and 24% of the district-wide population of 228 elementary ML Spanish-speaking students in 2021-2022. Another key factor in selecting these sites was the strong support in engaging Spanish-speaking families in their children's education, differentiating it from the other community resources within the district that is not providing the same level of support. In addition, I worked at an elementary school in the Southeastern region of the U.S. and have served as the MLPS teacher for all the MLs for schools in the area for several years now. For these reasons, to provide context and align the findings for this case study, I have triangulated the data using all information on school-wide parental involvement efforts already implemented by the school such as documents, procedures, and communication tools.

Using purposeful selection, as previously stated, the participants consisted of Spanish-speaking Latino parents of MLs registered at the elementary level. The Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs were selected based on the level of involvement and interest in sharing their stories and experiences for the study as they met the selection criteria (Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs who were enrolled in an elementary school within a 5-mile radius from the Latino congregation and market in a Southeastern school district in South Carolina). The goal of the interviews was to document Spanish-speaking Latino parents' stories



and perceptions of their role in the educational process of their children and in developing home-school partnerships. Parents participating in this study gained from the opportunity to reflect on their level of involvement, school expectations for home-school partnerships, and their perceptions of parental involvement.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

Through the use of a variety of data collection tools within this study, I captured parents' perceptions of their role in their children's education. Using qualitative methods, I examined all participants' responses to the interviews and my notes. Any notes taken during the interviews were relevant to participants' responses and provided additional information about their feelings and attitudes towards the shared experiences. After transcribing the interviews, I identified emerging themes and selected supporting quotes from participants' responses using Dedoose, a coding tool. This tool allowed me to code participants' responses into themes and document similar responses into groups. Coding the data in multiple levels separate from the analysis allowed me to apply a critical-analysis procedure between the identified themes, properties, and groups to make applicable and purposeful connections. The coding process allowed for the identification of core themes within participants' experiences. Next, I examined the groups for patterns and the connections between them by triangulating the data collected from participants' interviews and the information gathered from the school's policies and services designed to support parental involvement efforts. In addition, I applied several steps such as purposive sampling, triangulation of data, member checking, adequate engagement with data collection, comparative data analysis, data saturation, audit trail, and reflection; these are qualitative study procedures, to ensure the study's trustworthiness. First, a crucial data source to answer the overarching research questions and sub-questions for this study was recruiting participants from

a specific area in a Southeastern school district, an area in which community resources actively involved parents in their children's education. To allow participants to question my interpretation of their responses or correct any errors in their responses, I used direct data collection and member checking. Second, an interview protocol ensured that all participants received the same opportunity to share their experiences. The interview questions included more in-depth questions after asking general questions to build rapport with participants. Third, the comparative data analysis method allowed me to identify and analyze emerging themes and patterns. Finally, I spent sufficient time collecting and analyzing data, and I used an audit trail to provide a detailed account of the study design, methods, data collection, and data analysis guiding the study to ensure the study's trustworthiness on internal validity issues, reliability, and generalizability (Merriam, 2002). I also examined the school's policies and services to support parental involvement efforts.

Data analysis was an ongoing process throughout the data collection to permit for potential early identification of emerging themes. The study findings were triangulated through the use of all information on school-wide parental involvement efforts already implemented by the school, as well as through the analysis of previously utilized resources and efforts, including the school's website, and grade-level planning. I began the data collection in April 2022 and ended in May 2022.

As an essential component of analyzing data my positionality directly influenced my interpretation, understanding, and whose voices are represented in this study. Therefore, reflecting on how my positionality and worldview influence aspects of the study was a valuable aspect of this qualitative research. Another crucial aspect of qualitative research was my understanding of the potential biases that shaped my interpretation of the collected data. As a

bilingual Latino parent of a bilingual child in a community in the Southeast region and as an MLPS and MLP district consultant, I had an insider view of the parental involvement expectations and means of communication and engagement adopted to involve parents in the selected district for this study. As a result, my positionality offered me opportunities to establish rapport and trust with study participants that led to more in-depth information that were not easily discernible, such as thoughts, emotions, and previous behaviors, than someone approaching this study from a different position (Patton, 2002). Therefore, I recognized that these experiences could have introduced bias into my understanding of the case and participants in this study (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002). The study required that I be self-reflective and intentional about setting any assumption aside as necessary to focus on the purpose of the study and data (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). To do so, I took part in a continuous act of reflection of my identities and experiences while collecting and analyzing data to identify and address ways my assumptions may surface (Patton, 2002).

### **Limitations and Assumptions of the Study**

By conducting this case study in the selected area of South Carolina, I aimed to provide a snapshot of Latino Spanish-speaking parents of elementary MLs' experiences within a Southeastern school district. I generalized the findings to the framework of social capital, cultural capital, and social learning theories to illustrate the behaviors, interactions, and views of parental involvement within the home-school connections between Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs. However, there were key factors to consider that limited how the study can be applicable to a wider population. First, since I was a key instrument to the study, replicating the study can be challenging. The data analysis depended on the interpretation of the acquired information. Another factor was the participants' truthfulness in response to the

interview questions. Although the researcher might assume that participants have answered each question truthfully, participants' assumptions about the researcher's expectations and how sensitive the topic might be to each individual may have influenced how they responded. Last, the study is one snapshot in time, not a longitudinal data over time.

### **Significance of the Study**

While most of the existing scholarly research on parental involvement focuses on its impact on academic achievement, there is limited available research on how the perceptions of parental involvement among Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs have formed within the school and how this has influenced their involvement in their children's education. By examining parents' perceptions of their role in a child's educational experiences at the elementary level, my goal was to understand how parents view parental involvement, the unique barriers impacting the Spanish-speaking Latino parents' population, and the available opportunities and resources to become involved in schools. In addition, the Spanish-speaking Latino community is not "new" in the Southeastern school district in South Carolina. On the contrary, there is a sizable community of second, third, and fourth-generation Latino families who have lived in the same district, with many families residing in the area since the 1970s (SCRFAO, 2021). Therefore, the continuous framing of the Latino population as a "new" group, often used to partially justify why they are underserved in schools, adds to the importance of focusing on Spanish-speaking Latino parents and their involvement in schools in the south. Therefore, I aimed to utilize the understanding gained from this study and its findings to inform future considerations to address communication gaps and school efforts, if any, in promoting and sustaining a strong and active home-school partnership with Spanish-speaking Latino parents of MLs. I hope to bring more awareness to educational leaders, teachers, and parents about the

factors influencing the involvement of Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs in their children's education, and to inform parental involvement policy and practice that will assist in overcoming language and cultural barriers to home-school partnerships.

### **Conclusion**

The remaining five chapters of this dissertation are each dedicated to a distinct purpose and content. Chapter Two provides a literature review of scholarly writing relevant to parental involvement and describes the challenges and opportunities provided to Spanish-speaking Latino parents to be involved in their children's education. Chapter Three describes the research design and structure of the proposed study. Within this chapter, I discuss my rationale for the chosen methodology, the selection of the study site and participants, and data collection, and analysis methods. In addition, I reflect on my role as the researcher in relation to the study. Chapters Four and Five consist of the findings, analysis, summary, and conclusions of the study. I also included implications for future research in Chapter Five. Finally, Chapter Six consists of a summary, the findings, analysis, and conclusions of the study in Spanish to offer the Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs in this study with recommendations for an active involvement in their children's education.

## CHAPTER TWO - LITERATURE REVIEW

*“... whatever good or bad fortune may come our way, we can always give it meaning and transform it into something of value.”*

*- Herman Hesse*

The purpose of this chapter is to review literature relevant to parental involvement and to describe the challenges and opportunities provided to Spanish-speaking Latino parents to be involved in their children's education. This literature review analyzes four areas of literature to provide a better understanding of Spanish-speaking Latino parents' involvement in schools. The aim of the first section is to explore the definition and types of parental involvement, review the history of parental involvement, and explore parents' and teachers' different views regarding parental involvement. The next section focuses on Latino parents' involvement, which includes the benefits and drawbacks of parental involvement associated with student academic achievement, the barriers of parental involvement, and parental involvement for multilingual learners (MLs). The third area focuses on the theoretical framework of parental involvement. It explicitly describes the implications of social capital, cultural capital, and social learning theories to parents' involvement in their children's education and schools. The last area for review examines effective parental involvement practices.

### **Defining Parental Involvement**

Although no law exists that mandates parent communication with schools, schools connect with parents in hopes of building a home-school partnership not only to provide an environment in which parents are welcome to get involved in their children's education but also to promote that student achievement is a standard expectation (National Education Association, 2020). Parental involvement is a well-studied topic. However, the lack of a standard definition of

*parental involvement* may be the cause of the many challenges schools encounter to successfully engage parents. Parents' and teachers' perceptions of their roles and what is appropriate and expected of parental involvement in American schools do not align (Thompson, 2012). Mapp (2003) found that the most widely accepted definition of *parental involvement* consisted of attending school events, participating in parent-teacher conferences and PTA meetings, dedicating extra time at school through volunteering activities, and providing additional resources for the classroom. These examples of parental involvement are typically observed in White, middle-class parents and not often observed in Latino parents or parents from low socioeconomic families since they typically spend longer hours at work compared to middle- and upper-class families (Mapp, 2003; Marcon 1999).

While many teachers view parental involvement as parents helping students with homework and attending parent-teacher conferences, many parents believe that bringing students to school on time and focusing on students' behavior is an adequate level of involvement on their part (Bussey, 2008). In other words, the teacher's role encompasses all components of teaching and learning while the parent's role is specific to parenting and caring for the well-being of the child (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995; Shelton & Epstein, 2005; Wilder, 2004).

Regardless of the lack of a standard definition for parental involvement or an understanding of how schools should apply it, parental involvement outreach efforts and programs tend to encourage home support (Epstein, 2010). These efforts and programs focus on enhancing students' academic achievement and usually result in meeting high academic expectations while improving overall attendance (Epstein, 2010; Wilder, 2004). Although these findings indicate that students can benefit from parental involvement, it is essential to consider aspects of the involvement process such as parents' and teachers' views of parental involvement,

available opportunities for involvement, and the level of access to these opportunities, as well as other factors that may hinder parental involvement practices. Are all parents provided equal access to become involved? Are low-income and culturally diverse parents not proficient in English included in the decision-making pertaining to their children's education? Furthermore, to what extent are language and cultural differences addressed to include all parents? Research from multiple authors suggests that levels of parental involvement vary widely, affecting parents within the same school as well as all levels of class, race, culture, and family structure (Baquedano-L'opez, et al., 2013; Delgado-Gaitan, 2004; Durand & Secakusuma, 2019; Lareau, 2011; Love, 2019; Schneider & Coleman, 1993).

### **Types of Parent Involvement**

Parent involvement can happen in many ways, in and out of schools (Niehaus & Adelson, 2014). The types of parent involvement associated with students' academic achievement vary depending on students' age. At the elementary level, accompanying field trips and attending Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings are common activities that require parents' presence. Middle and high school students require a different level of support from their parents, which may influence students' overall psychological, behavioral, and emotional state. Although parent involvement does not have a standard definition, there are a few aspects associated with parent involvement that hold powerful meaning. According to Berger (2000), parents' involvement in school encompasses different levels of engagement in which a parent can be an active partner - a key figure in academic decision-making, an advocate for the school, a volunteer, a liaison, a supporter of the school's mission, and a receiver of support.

Epstein et al.'s (1997) six different types of parental involvement provide a useful framework. The types of involvement include:



- Parenting, which is described as providing children support by securing a safe home environment;
- Communicating, which indicates active and effective communication focused on students' success;
- Volunteering, which is associated with parents' help and support in the school;
- Learning at home, which refers to the support provided by parents at home focused on students' academic achievement;
- Decision making, which focuses on the parents voicing their opinions and becoming a part of the decision-making process impacting the school;
- Collaborating with the community, which addresses the numerous programs in place to support families.

With these types of parent involvement in mind, it is clear that communication and relationship are significant (Epstein, 2001; Tekin, 2011). Therefore, a look into the history of parental involvement with particular attention to the efforts and impact of schools and policymakers to involve parents in their children's education can provide a better understanding of Latino parents' involvement in schools.

### **History of Parental Involvement**

Knowing the history of parental involvement is valuable to understanding the strategies of parental involvement efforts in American public schools today and how these impact Latino parental involvement at school. In 1897, Alice McLellan Birney and Phoebe Apperson Hearst founded the National Congress of Parents to improve children's educational life (National PTA, 2020). In 1926, Selena Sloan Butler established the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers to advocate for children with a focus on African American children (National PTA,

2020). These organizations advocated for children through many crucial moments in history such as the Jim Crow era, Civil Rights movement and later on the desegregation of schools (Woyshner, 2009). In 1970, the two organizations merged, unifying all 50 states and becoming one association known as the National Parent Teacher Association (PTA). The year 2020 marks the 50th anniversary of this association and its continued efforts to advocate for children's rights (National PTA, 2020). Today the organization has over four million parents and teachers committed to advocating for children's education, health, and safety (National PTA, 2020). The core focus of the PTA has always been parental involvement and building home-school partnerships (Woyshner, 2009).

According to Tekin (2011), parental involvement became more evident at the beginning of the 20th century, with stay-at-home mothers providing assistance in the classrooms supporting teachers and helping with the classroom upkeep. McLaughlin (1990) suggested that although educators and policymakers did not begin to consider the connection between parental involvement and low-income, and struggling students' academic achievement until the 1960s, parental involvement efforts existed as early as the 1940s. Initiative programs, such as Head Start, which encouraged parental involvement, were noted and implemented in the early 1960s (Tekin, 2011). Head Start programs focused on low-income families with culturally diverse backgrounds, offering parent assistance and workshops (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2020).

The federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was one of the first national education laws in 1965, addressing the commitment to equal educational opportunities for all students. It highlighted parental involvement by providing schools with a set of instructions on how to engage with families (Washington Office of Superintendent of Public

Education, 2020). In 1975, the Education of All Handicapped Children Act required parents of children with special needs to monitor the alignment of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) to the state standards (Gestwicki, 2007). In 1994, Project Appleseed, the national campaign for public school improvement, “advised the White House on the creation of the first parental involvement provisions of the ESEA” (Project Appleseed, 2020).

Goals 2000 Educate America Act supported parent and community involvement through high expectations and standards that held teachers and parents accountable for learning (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). As the focus on parental involvement and accountability increased, so did academic standards and standardized testing. Parents’ roles gained new dimensions that went beyond the traditional responsibilities. They became supervisors of their children’s learning, monitoring what school is covering academically. By the 1990s, parents became involved in school budget decisions as part of a federally funded program intended to support public schools’ innovative programs, which for the first time included parents in the decision-making for purchasing resources available in classrooms (McLaughlin, 1990).

In 2001, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) required schools to address parental involvement by encouraging parents to become more involved in their children’s education using strategies to meet the needs of the population they served. This included implementing parental involvement policies granting parents certain rights under these provisions and access to data (Fege, 2006). The parental involvement provisions addressing the home-school partnership included in the NCLB was possible because of the collaboration between the National PTA and Congress (National PTA, 2020).

In 2006, the Appleseed Foundation report “It Takes a Parent” conducted a study that examined parental involvement elements included in NCLB. The study found that parental

involvement was not at the forefront of schools and school districts and that there are still misconceptions, lack of support, and mandated actions from parental involvement that require implementation (Coleman et al., 2006). However, the report also found that there are a number of parental involvement efforts that seem promising to meet the needs of families and students (Coleman et al., 2006). Current studies show that administrators and educators continue to increase efforts to make parental involvement possible for all parents (Baquedano-L'opez et al., 2013; Durand & Secakusuma, 2019; Shelton & Epstein, 2005; Wilder, 2004).

### **Teachers' and Parents' Perspectives**

Trumbull et al. (2001) described that the meaning and view of involvement vary for parents and schools. As a result, having different goals, interpretations, and expectations in regards to parental involvement is not at all surprising. There is evidence that Latino parents view their role and the role of the schools quite differently (Chavkin & Gonzalez, 1995). Research shows that Latino parents view their role as providers who care for their children's well-being and instill moral values, while the role of the school is to teach academic content and expand overall knowledge (Chavkin & Gonzalez, 1995; Espinosa, 1995; Trumbull et al., 2001). This difference in perspective and the role that home culture and school culture play in children's education is often overlooked by schools (Lawson, 2003). However, embracing both cultures of the home and school can facilitate the understanding of factors influencing parents' involvement (Garcia, 2002). Trumbull et al. explained that some common, expected behavior from parents - such as inquiring about their children's grades and homework - is considered by Latino parents to be a disrespectful act. On the other hand, teachers typically consider this inquiry a positive initiative that demonstrates the high-value parents place on their children's education.

Delgado-Gaitan (2004) emphasized that Latino parents typically demonstrate a high level of commitment to community and family, which is also evident in their desire for their children to succeed at school. However, Lawson (2003) shared that for Latino parents, partnering up with their children's schools is not a common practice in the Latino culture and that parents view their involvement as an interference rather than a positive behavior. Therefore, parents are more likely to become motivated to do so when parental involvement is clearly defined by the school and teachers, accompanied by welcoming invitations (Hoover-Dempsey & Sadler, 1997).

Delgado-Gaitan and Trueba (1991) found that literature shows that Latino parents' challenges to become involved in their children's education is a result of teachers' lack of awareness of students' cultural background, culturally responsive instructional training, and schools' structure. The lack of students' culture awareness and culturally responsive instructional training still are issues among teachers today (Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991; Karabenick & Clemens, 2004; Lawson, 2003; Staehr Fenner & Snyder, 2017; Thompson, 2012). Latino parents' challenges to become involved can be explained by the deficit theory, which refers to the connection between students' cultural background and socioeconomic status with poor performance at school and parents' lack of involvement (deMarrais & LeCompte, 1995). Epstein et al. (1997), Hartford (1996), and Karabenick and Clemens (2004) suggested that teachers' belief and attitude towards MLs and non-English speaking parents significantly impacted teachers' efforts to engage these students and their family in school. In addition, Leistyna (2002) described that public school teachers held parental involvement to a standard that was mostly only met by White, middle-class practices. This perception of acceptable level of parental involvement was heavily influenced by the assumption that all parents have the same view,

access, and time to support the school and engage in their children's education (Leistyna, 2002; McCollum, 1996).

### **Benefits and Drawbacks of Parental Involvement**

Research illustrates the benefits of parental involvement (Epstein et al., 2002; Marzano, 2003). Schneider and Coleman's (1993) extensive work in the field of education has provided a vision on the impactful factors in parental involvement that may significantly influence academic achievement. Their work addresses parents' expectations for their involvement in schools, the effect of family structure on student outcomes, parent involvement and academic achievement, parental intervention in the school, and parent choice. Epstein (1991) found that parents engaged in children's education positively affect reading achievement test scores which has shown to improve at a much faster pace compared to reading achievement test scores of children whose parents were not involved. Lareau (1989) also noted that teachers' evaluations of students reflected a much more positive tone for students whose parents were actively involved resulting in parents' motivation to sustain their involvement. Hoover-Dempsey et al. (1987) reported that students' grades and teachers' positive rating of students' abilities and skills were associated with parental involvement. As a result, there was a lower grade retention. Parental involvement is a resource that can support schools and students, promoting positive changes in education and students' academic achievement across diverse cultures (Lopez, 2011).

However, other studies have demonstrated the drawbacks of parental involvement. Marzano (2005) identified research describing that not all parental involvement results in high student academic achievement. Negative parental involvement and constant criticism of the school can adversely impact student academic achievement (Marzano, 2005). Several studies examining families from diverse backgrounds demonstrated that parents' involvement in

students' homework is associated with poor performance at school (e.g., Chen & Stevenson, 1989; Cooper et al., 2000; Georgiou, 1999; Pomerantz et al., 2007). Research by Pomerantz and Eaton (2001) indicated that parental involvement may have a negative effect on student achievement as parents provide help in the completion of school homework. The study showed that parents' homework intervention, which focused on the support and intervention provided by mothers, had a positive impact on student's performance after parents were informed of students' poor performance at school. Even though students' performance improved over time, research has not yet found long-lasting positive effects when parents' support is solely motivated by students' previous poor academic performance (Levin et al., 1997; Pomerantz & Eaton, 2001). Gaunt (2020) presented an interesting aspect of the negative impact parental involvement may impose on students in which parents may take involvement too far. She explained that students may struggle to solve issues independently because parents are involved too frequently.

### **Barriers to Parental involvement**

Research has found several barriers to parental involvement. From socioeconomic to cultural barriers, the challenges for schools and parents can be overwhelming. Hong and Ho (2005) found that socioeconomic barriers affect parents' ability to become involved in their children's education at home and school. Children from low socioeconomic status are at risk for lower academic achievement as they lack basic resources essential for their overall health and academic success (Turney & Kao, 2009). Negative impact on students' academic achievement can often be a result of outside-the-home influences such as low socioeconomic neighborhoods that are usually characterized by crime and substance abuse (Drummond & Stipek, 2004). These influences can disrupt students' focus.

Parents of low socioeconomic families, often, are not actively involved in their children's education (Drummond & Stipek, 2004). For the most part, these parents devote most of their time working to provide for their family, leaving little to no time to focus on their children's academic needs (Drummond & Stipek, 2004). A lack of information about school's activities and expectations and the lack of resources to maintain their homes are often factors associated with parents of low socioeconomic status, which becomes a challenge for building strong home-school partnerships with their children's teachers (Turney & Kao, 2009). In their study, Turney and Kao (2009) found that it is common for low socioeconomic status and culturally diverse families to have a large number of family members in the same home. This type of family structure, often noted in Latino families, may include extended family members living in the same home, which can play a significant role in the children's upbringing and education (Turney & Kao, 2009). In many cases, children from low socioeconomic and culturally diverse families are raised by extended family members, which significantly impacts home-school communication (Jasis & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2012). Some extended family members are not as actively involved in the children's school, finding it difficult to devote extra time and effort to attend to their children's educational needs. Therefore, it is important for teachers to recognize the diversity of students' families and their families' structure and the influence it may have on students' daily routines and possible academic performance (Jasis & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2012). By understanding students' family, teachers can best understand their students.

Barriers, at times, are created from attitudes toward parents. When school administrators and teachers are not welcoming to families and students, these factors can impact how parents engage with the school. Teachers often view parents from low socioeconomic and culturally diverse families as uninvolved and less caring about education (Brock & Edmunds, 2010). When



school administrators and teachers are not welcoming, they can create a school image that lacks warmth, which can damage opportunities to build open communication between the parent and school. Technology has bridged many gaps in communication between home and school through email exchanges between teachers and parents, digital newsletters available with weekly information about what is happening in the classroom, and the school's website with available information and resources to support learning. However, technology has also added to the barriers many low-income and culturally diverse families have to overcome, and access to and knowledge of the tools used by the school may be limited (Thomas-Lester, 2017). As a result, low-income and culturally diverse families may lack the necessary skills to navigate school websites, email, and other platforms and databases to view their children's grades.

Limited English language proficiency plays a significant role in creating barriers between homes and schools. Latino and immigrant families may lack the ability to become involved at school simply because they do not know the steps, they should take to connect with the school in a way they understand (Turney & Kao, 2009). As diversity and the non-English speaking population in schools continues to increase in the United States, the need for understanding and acknowledging this shift and implementing programs to attend to the communication needs of these families increase. School activities such as parent-teacher conferences, PTA meetings, and parent workshops are steps schools should take to involve parents in the school and their children's education. These activities are opportunities to connect home and school in hopes to share with parents what is happening at school and ways in which the school can support learning at home (Niehaus & Adelson, 2014). However, without translating resources and guiding tools, many families may lack the language skills to attend these activities and become actively involved in their children's education and schools (Turney & Kao, 2009).

### **Parental Involvement for Latino Parents**

When engaging Latino parents, it is crucial for teachers and administrators to acknowledge and address the unique barriers impacting this population of parents. Schools can establish a welcoming environment and engage Latino parents by providing opportunities for them to communicate in their native language (Zarate, 2007). Not only do schools that communicate with parents in Spanish help Latino parents overcome the language barrier but they also signal to parents that school personnel respect culture (Quintanar & Warren, 2008).

It is no surprise that language can be a barrier when working with Latino parents, but there are many ways to address this challenge (Murillo et al., 2009). Many schools utilize text-messaging platforms that provide translation in multiple languages to facilitate daily home-school communication independent of parents' native language and English language proficiency. Another example in addressing the language challenge in home-school communication is the use of newsletter websites that provide translating options to help keep families informed. These resources and many others are available to support schools' connection with parents to engage parents in their children's school, but a question remains on how much involvement schools expect from parents. With the lack of a standard definition for *parental involvement*, the goal and level of involvement expected from a parent by schools may vary (Lawson, 2003).

Language is a powerful tool for communication. Latino families value their language. In breaching the language barrier, as Spanish-speaking Latino children learn English a shift of power in communication becomes something a child withholds when communicating with the school resulting in a parent feeling devalued or inferior (Trueba, 2004). De Gaetano (2007) emphasized that a critical aspect to consider for Spanish-speaking Latino parents' involvement is

respect for not only the language but also the overall families' culture. Other researchers list a number of other factors that impact parents' decisions to get involved and barriers to their involvement in their children's school, such as race, immigrant status, socioeconomic status, English language proficiency, lack of time, conflicts with work schedule, lack of understanding of school's parental involvement expectations, and parents not feeling welcome at school (Brock & Edmunds, 2010; De Gaetano, 2007; Delgado-Gaitan, 1992, 2004; Murillo et al., 2009; Turney & Kao, 2009; Zarate, 2007).

Espinosa (1995) and Lopez (2001) found that Latino parents are highly involved in their children's education. For Spanish-speaking families, the focus of their involvement is on providing help with homework and addressing children's behavior (Lopez, 2001). It is important to understand that culture can impact home-school partnership, which illustrates the need for schools to be aware of Spanish-speaking parents' view of their role in their children's education (Inger, 1992).

Immigrant Spanish-speaking families have a high rate of two-parent families among this group which generally provides them with more opportunities for parental involvement than is possible for single-parent families (Shields & Behrman, 2004). However, the limited level of education and the English language proficiency of family members result in challenges to provide adequate academic support for the children in the home (Shields & Behrman, 2004). Latino students' low academic achievement is associated with low socioeconomic status, language barriers, racism, low teacher expectations, and the challenging home-school partnership (Inger, 1992; Scribner et al., 1999). Addressing the language barrier to focus on strengthening the home-school communication with Spanish-speaking Latino families can empower parents to become more involved at school. As stated earlier, there are many translation tools available

today to reduce language barriers and connect families from a variety of language backgrounds (Cohan et al., 2019). For example, an educator from South Carolina uses a text-messaging system called Talking Points, which allows teachers to communicate with parents from a range of language backgrounds. Another educator from Idaho provides multilingual and multimodal resources presented in school monthly meetings that support a newcomer's program with resources and interpretation services. In addition, an educator in Minnesota provides bilingual parents with opportunities to meet and discuss topics of interest guided by bilingual educators at school during a dinner event designed to support their bilingual families.

Although teachers view parental involvement as an essential aspect of learning, teachers' perceptions of Spanish-speaking Latino parents are usually associated with parents' lack of involvement, which results in the misconception that they do not care about their children's education (Delgado-Gaitan, 2001, 2004). Consequently, teachers adopt low expectations for Latino students due to their parents' perceived lack of involvement (Turney & Kao, 2009). Although many Latino parents have high expectations for their children, Hyslop (2000) stated that language differences pose the most significant barrier.

When engaging Spanish-speaking Latino families, it is important to consider the cultural difference between home and school. Culture is much more than one's language. Although it is vital for schools to communicate with families, it cannot be the only means to show respect for Latino families' culture and language (Borba, 2009; Murillo et al., 2009). Quintanar and Warren (2008) found that Latino parents demonstrated a greater level of appreciation for the school when teachers and administrators strived to find ways to communicate with families in Spanish, resulting in parents attempting to communicate in English.

Inevitably, culture plays a crucial role as a barrier to parent involvement for Latino parents. Bussey (2008) stated that cultural differences often highlight the challenges in parent-school communication and engagement. For non-English-speaking parents, adapting to a new culture can be an overwhelming barrier to overcome (Becker, 2001; Carlisle et al., 2005). As Spanish-speaking Latino parents become involved in their children's school, they may grow comfortable interacting with teachers and other school staff that they can connect and identify themselves or their culture to the attitude and even appearance of the teachers and other school staff (Carlisle et al., 2005). However, failure to collaborate is often due to both teachers and parents differing in how they set and communicate goals, and their willingness to do so (Espinosa, 1995; Lopez, 2001). Educational research recognizes the importance of family and how parent involvement can significantly impact the way students learn and view their school (Bussey, 2008; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Niehaus & Adelson, 2014).

### **Theoretical Framework**

For the purpose of this study social capital, cultural capital, and social learning theories were examined to provide a deeper understanding of Spanish-speaking Latino parents' involvement in schools. This section of the literature review explicitly describes the implications of social capital, cultural capital, and social learning theories to Latino parents' involvement in their children's education and schools.

### **Social Capital and Parental Involvement**

Introduced by Bourdieu (1980), the term social capital refers to a set of communal resources, making it possible and easy for people to accomplish goals together. Coleman (1990) applied social capital to education referring to a social bond that facilitates the achievement of goals as an individual or group. Further elaborating on the concept, Putnam et al. (1993)

provided a useful definition of *social capital* as referring to “features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks that can improve the efficiency of society...” (p.167). According to these researchers, social capital is a positive network of association, which connects individuals with shared knowledge, values, and behaviors consisting of trust and cooperation for action. Social capital also refers to the connection with institutions, and their norms and relationships, shaping the depth and frequency of interactions among individuals and institutions (Putnam et al., 1993). For parents, this can mean the connections with their children’s schools, how they identify themselves with the schools’ educational mission and traditions, and how involved they choose to be in the schools and their children’s education. Shared values, shared traditions, norms, and connections by associations or informal networks are the essence of social capital (Coleman, 1990). Social capital may have a positive or negative effect on habits and attitudes. Coleman (1988) explained that social capital takes different forms and it may or may not enable actions by an individual or a group. In contrast, Putnam et al. (1993) claimed that cooperation among individuals could benefit a larger group. Cooperation leads to interaction, and people tend to trust one another when the level and frequency of these interactions increase.

Schools are platforms for interaction and connection that aim to support students’ academic achievement. Through education, connections develop among students, teachers, parents, the community, and the institution. It is a common assumption that acquiring an education guarantees a more financially secured future (Robeyns, 2006). Bourdieu (1980) referred to the education system as a representation of middle- and upper-class values making it more challenging for low-socioeconomic students and families to succeed. In earlier research on parent involvement in the 1960s, the academic challenges for low socioeconomic students were associated with poor academic performance due to the lack of resources (Hoover-Dempsey et al.,

1987; Moles, 1992; Thomas-Lester, 2017; Turney & Kao, 2009). However, Bourdieu explained that low socioeconomic students did not struggle due to the lack of resources. Their struggles are associated with the lack of cultural and social capital to engage in school at the same expected level as middle- and upper-class students (Bourdieu, 1977). Lareau (1989) also demonstrated how cultural capital shapes parental involvement. Her ethnographic study meticulously underscored the parenting styles of people from different socioeconomic classes.

### **Cultural Capital**

According to Lareau (1987), *cultural capital* refers to cultural elements that influence interactions between individuals and groups. It consists of all kinds of values, which may be distinct to an individual, community, or presented by an institution such as a school. Lareau stated that cultural elements of parents' life can facilitate how parents respond to teachers' and schools' requests for involvement. Bourdieu (1977b) argued that schools vary on how they bring out cultural resources of parents, teachers, and members of the community, which consequently impacts family-school relationships. For example, schools' structure and curriculum expectations may be familiar to families from upper class but not families from low socioeconomic status and culturally diverse families. In addition, Bourdieu explained that home cultural experiences impact how students interact with school and influence academic achievement. Therefore, cultural elements become key to accessing cultural capital.

The structures of schools and how families perceive and understand the different levels of involvement are essential to understanding Spanish-speaking Latino parents' involvement in schools. Schools' efforts to involve parents often rely on the expectation of known social and cultural experiences of families from middle and upper classes (Lareau, 1987; Turney & Kao, 2009). Those who access the cultural resources that are needed to build a positive family-school

relationship are parents with higher education and parents who often have time to meet the level of involvement traditionally expected by schools such as attend to parent-teacher conferences, volunteer at school, and support their children with homework (Jasis & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2012). Therefore, cultural elements and socioeconomic factors shape how parents access the cultural resources to meet their children's school involvement expectations (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995; Lareau, 1987). In her study, Lareau (1987) found that low-socioeconomic families and upper-class families had different social, cultural and economic resources, which impacted how they responded to requests of involvement made by their children's teacher. For example, the parents from low socioeconomic families were reluctant to comply with teachers' requests to read to their children at home because they felt educationally inadequate to help with such tasks, whereas parents from upper-class families found the request typical, as reading to their children was already part of their routine. Overall, due to the cultural differences between families, Lareau concluded that parents' perceptions of the appropriate family-school relationship varied drastically. Parents from low socioeconomic, less educated families depended on the knowledge of teachers to provide their children with the educational skills needed to succeed academically while parents from upper-class, educated families built on the family-school partnership taking a share of responsibility in their children's academic success (Lareau, 1987).

### **Social Learning**

As social factors contribute to social interactions, Bandura's social learning theory also provides theoretical grounds for this study (Bandura, 1977). The theory encompasses four major aspects of social cognitive learning: (a) observational learning, (b) self-regulation, (c) self-efficacy, and (d) reciprocal determinism. According to Bandura's theory, a person's behavior influences or is influenced by a continuous two-way interaction between cognitive, behavioral,



and environmental influences. As a result, a person's identity is built through observations and interactions with others and the environment. Just as much the behavior of a person plays a significant role in influencing the environment; similarly, the environment can influence the behavior of a person. To expand on the concept of students', teachers', and parents' relationship, involvement, and language acquisition, the study's focus is on the four aspects of social cognitive learning, which is applicable not only to students but also to parents. Parent involvement can rely heavily on observing how the school embraces them and their children as well as the attitude of teachers and administrators towards them.

### **Observational Learning**

Observational learning refers to the process of modeling (Bandura, 1977). People learn from observing behaviors, attitudes, and the results of those behaviors. While observational learning often takes place during childhood as children learn from parents, teachers, and peers it can take place at any time in a person's life. Bandura (1977) highlighted that observational learning contributes significantly to the socialization process as children learn how to act and react to others by observing how their parents interact with each other and with others. Therefore, observational learning is a continuous process that can influence individuals' interactions. According to Bandura (1977, 1986), observational learning consists of four components: attention, retention, reaction, and motivation. Grusec (1992) stated that there are a number of variables influencing one's attention, "including the power of attractiveness of the model as well as the conditions under which behavior is viewed" (p.781). Retention is determined by the memory representation of the observed behavior, which then is "converted into appropriate actions similar to the originally modeled behavior" (Grusec, 1992, p.782). The final component addresses motivation, a person's level of desire to mimic a modeled action

(Grusec, 1992). Observational learning can be a powerful learning method not only for children but for parents as well. When parents interact with other parents and teachers as they engage in school activities, observational learning can play an important role in parent involvement in learning schools' expectations of their involvement in school.

### **Self-Efficacy**

The theory of self-efficacy describes that one's self-belief can affect effort; determination; and the selection, attempt, and completion of a task (Bandura, 1995). Although it appears to refer to students' self-efficacy, it is imperative to reflect on the impact and development of self-efficacy, particularly in teachers and parents. Self-efficacy bonds self-belief and goal setting. For teachers and parents, this means seeking opportunities to learn and their willingness to become more engaged at work and school, as well as working toward meeting goals (Corkett & Benevides, 2011). Motivation, like in observational learning, plays a crucial role in participation and relationships (Bandura, 1995). Students, teachers, and parents are more likely to feel more confident when they are motivated that they can complete a task (Corkett & Benevides, 2011). As a result, they may increase their level of participation. Parents who have a higher level of self-efficacy may not only increase their involvement at school but also become more actively engaged in their children's education (Harrison et al., 1997). When tasks appear challenging to parents and they have low self-efficacy, they may avoid getting involved (Harrison et al., 1997). When working and addressing students and their parents, teachers should be aware of how students and parents perceive themselves, their abilities, failures, and successes. Parents of MLs may have many challenges to overcome that go beyond the school building such as immigration and financial issues that can keep them from actively participating in their children's education

(Ballantyne et al., 2008; Pena, 2000). These challenges may not only have an impact on the parents' motivation to become involved at school but also MLs' motivation to learn.

### **Reciprocal Determinism**

Bandura (1977) also believed in reciprocal determinism, where a person's behavior and the environment cause each other. Bandura's social learning theory describes human behavior in terms of a continuous two-way interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental influences. People learn from observing behaviors, attitudes, and reactions of and to those behaviors. Bandura (1977) explained the importance of human interaction and its impact by highlighting learning:

"Learning would be exceedingly laborious, not to mention hazardous if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions to inform them what to do. Fortunately, most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling. From observing others, one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions, this coded information serves as a guide for action." (p. 22)

Based on Bandura's theory, cognition is impacted by the way people perceive themselves, their set of goals, their physical environment, and their own behavior. The environment through modeling, instruction, and social influences also impacts a person and his or her reaction, depending on the personality and even physical characteristics. Finally, behavior can vary and be determined based on the environment (Bandura 1977, 1986). In the concept of *reciprocal determinism*, Bandura (1977) argued that people influence their own lives through selections as they create and direct the course of their lives. Experience reflects self-efficacy beliefs, competence, and self-regulatory abilities of a person.

In sum, Bandura's social learning theory offers critical concepts to address interactions between students, teachers, and parents, as well as their experiences. By focusing on home-school partnerships and highlighting parent involvement as a crucial aspect in children's academic achievement, this study hopes to explore the degree to which parents understand their role in the involvement of parents in a child's education.

### **Effective Parental-Involvement Practices**

Although there is no standard definition of *parental involvement*, mothers and fathers engage with schools in many different ways, depending on the school's structure and the population it serves. However, the provision to NCLB Act 2001 to address parental involvement revealed five compelling themes: (1) building a partnership between parents and schools, (2) promoting 'random acts' of family engagement not connected to student academic achievement, (3) focusing on compliance for family involvement, (4) featuring the individual growth of each family or parent rather than as a collective group, and (5) minimizing commitment to monitoring and evaluation (Mapp, 2012). These themes set the foundation for what schools use to address parental involvement and implement programs and practices that focus on involving families at school and their children's education.

Studies show that parental-involvement programs and practices are more likely to succeed when schools and teachers clearly identify parental involvement expectations and adopt inclusive practices to engage all parents (Domina, 2005; Lawson, 2003; Niehaus & Adelson, 2014). Zarate (2007) suggested that the key to involving Latino parents at school is collaboration. Latino parents value collaboration and community; therefore, such value is associated with parents' positive responses to getting involved in their children's education (Curry & Holter, 2015; Delgado-Gaitan, 2004; Delgado-Gaitan & Trueba, 1991; Epstein, 1996).

There are many effective ways in which schools can promote parents' involvement. Garibay (2019) shared that providing a safe and welcoming environment can go a long way. She explained that teachers can begin building connections with families by decorating their classrooms with posters that represent the language spoken by students and families. Another important and thoughtful way to provide a welcoming environment is incorporating culturally relevant texts in the classroom and instruction. In addition, engaging in age-appropriate discussions about immigration with the goal to promote and emphasize diversity is also helpful. Garibay highlighted the importance of creating a culture at school that not only welcomes parents but also looks out for their well-being by implementing home visits and investing time to learn more about the families to establish trust. Intentionally involving families at school and valuing their contributions are crucial to connecting with parents (Cohan et al., 2019; Garibay, 2019; Mapp et al., 2017).

Lander (2019) suggested a few other successful strategies involving parents at school which emphasized the importance of collaboration. The first step in welcoming families is placing a positive value on their native language and sharing the advantages their children may have for being multilingual (Barrera et al., 2019; Fine et al., 2019; Hamman-Ortiz, 2019; Lander, 2019). However, Lander did not stop there, her main focus was to inspire schools to recognize and showcase the many strengths each family possesses in order to strengthen or build a powerful home-school partnership. Lander highlighted the importance of investing in professional development that focuses on family engagement and the need to assign time to connect with families because the success of their children can significantly benefit from this relationship.

The six types of parental involvement are a set of guidelines to promote a balanced and all-embracing program and practices for connecting with families and building strong partnerships (Epstein, 1995, 1996, 2001). In most recent studies, educators can find a 'roadmap' for how they can build strong, meaningful partnerships with parents from the beginning to an empowering but never-ending process (Cohan et al., 2019; Garibay, 2019; Mapp et al., 2017). Mapp et al. stated that educators must begin by examining their own core beliefs and the meaning of parental involvement for all parents. The next key steps are harnessing the power of partnerships, and welcoming, honoring, and connecting with families. Once these steps have been established, educators must empower parents for parent-teacher conferences and IEP meetings by sharing responsibilities and holding each other accountable. The work of building strong, meaningful partnerships is never-ending, so maintaining strong ties throughout the year; and supporting students' work with family-friendly resources are key to the success of this invaluable bond (Cohan et al., 2019; Garibay, 2019; Mapp et al., 2017).

### **Summary**

Studies have shown the potential of parental involvement in children's academic achievement and throughout life (Cohan et al., 2019; Delgado-Gaitan, 2001, 2004; Epstein, 1995, 1996, 2001; Garibay, 2019; Lawson, 2013; Mapp et al., 2017). Despite the benefits, drawbacks, and barriers associated with parental involvement, there is still a need to understand and further investigate the key participants in this partnership: parents and schools. This need is crucially important for schools struggling to connect with Spanish-speaking Latino families to build home-school partnerships, those who may be from low socioeconomic backgrounds and those not proficient in English. By taking into account parents' core beliefs, and their assumptions and expectations as key participants in a child's education, while embracing all their

challenges and strengths, research can help understand how to attend to the challenges of developing strong parent-teacher relationships.

Although teachers' perceptions of parental involvement have received much attention in past research (Epstein & Becker, 1982; Karabenick & Clemens Noda, 2004; Shunow & Harris, 2000; Thompson, 2012), the meaning and expectations of the parent by parents leave the field of education without an in-depth understanding of such. Once defining parental involvement and what it represents for parents, schools can tap into its potential which may further contribute to children's academic achievement and the support provided to meet the needs of both parents and teachers. Meaning in context is essential to examining and understanding a school and the population it serves. Therefore, giving voice to parents is fundamental to include their perceptions to encouraging the critical analysis of Spanish-speaking Latino parents' perceptions of their role in their children's education.

### CHAPTER THREE. METHODOLOGY

*"It's not what you look at that matters. It's what you see."*

*- Henry David Thoreau*

Although most of the literature on parental involvement focuses on its impact on academic achievement, one of the most challenging issues schools aim to overcome today is the ever-growing cultural and linguistic diversity of the student population (Delgado-Gaitan, 2004; Zarate, 2007). Consequently, this issue raises concerns about how educators can support the home-school partnership with Latino families. In addition, parental involvement in education has many different definitions; therefore, understanding how Latino parents of MLs perceive parental involvement is valuable to building strong home-school partnerships. In addition, there is insufficient research that has been conducted on the perceptions of Latino parents and school involvement.

Delgado-Gaitan (2004) stated that home-school partnerships are fragile and complex, and these partnerships are critical for students' overall success. Assuming that all parents and teachers aim to educate and adequately guide children, collaboration with school partners is imperative. Furthermore, educators often anticipate that all parents hold their children's health and academic needs at the top of their priority (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005). Darder et al. (1997) stated that education is highly regarded as the social and economic equalizer, and as a prerequisite to improving the social and economic status of Latinos (p. 68). Therefore, one might conclude that Latino parents of MLs highly value education.

As noted in Chapter One, the purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how Latino parents of MLs perceived their role in their children's education. Although research demonstrates that the challenge of involving parents in schools is more significant in middle and



high schools, elementary schools encounter unique challenges to include parents in home-based and school-based involvement. Involving Latino parents, who may not be fluent English speakers and are often unfamiliar with parental involvement expectations in American schools, poses a significant challenge for schools today (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005; Brough & Irvin, 2001; Halsey, 2005; Novey, 2001). Allington and Cunningham (2007) stated that reaching out and listening to families are necessary steps to building a home-school connection. They also highlighted the importance of schools clarifying what aspects of family engagement would be beneficial and what that may look like before setting expectations for parent involvement in a child's education. Therefore, understanding key elements of how parents perceive parental involvement is crucial to involving Latino parents in their children's education. The completion of this study fills a gap in the literature regarding Latino parents of elementary MLs in a suburban school district in the Southeast region of the US. It will potentially build parents, teachers, and other stakeholders' awareness, knowledge, and understanding of Latino parents to develop strategies to involve Latino parents in schools.

### **Research Design**

Qualitative research is a type of inquiry that allows the researcher to use words to develop detailed descriptions of cases, as well as the meaning actors, ascribe to their social situation, and to capture the essence of an understanding or interpretation (Beaudry & Miller, 2016, p. 39). For this study, a case study research method (Creswell & Creswell, 2005, 2018) was the primary inquiry and tool to address the research questions. According to Stake (1995), the purpose of a case study is to investigate a phenomenon (the "case") within its context and establish a practical research method that focuses on studying a single case using data. The data analysis ensured that the case - Latino parents of elementary MLs' perception of parental

involvement - reveals the potential dimensions of the phenomenon through different lenses. This design also allowed the researcher to answer research questions that require a comprehensive and in-depth explanation of the phenomenon and provide the researcher the answers to the *how* and *why* questions about the social phenomenon (Yin, 2017). Yin described that case study questions “deal with the tracing of operational processes over time” (p. 10). Case study relies heavily on direct observation and interviews of the involved participants in the social phenomenon. A case study allows the researcher to attest to the themes and patterns that may emerge from the data collected while drawing from their own experiences (Stake, 1995). For this reason, the use of this research approach provided the researcher with the opportunity to examine how the perceptions of parental involvement of Latino parents of elementary MLs' had formed within the school and how their perceptions influenced their involvement in their children's education. The overall guiding question of this research was as follows: How do Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs define and perceive their involvement in their children's education? In addition, the following subquestions guided this study:

- a. In a school that is expected to actively involve parents, how do Spanish-speaking Latino parents view their role in the educational process of their children?
- b. How do parents' stories of parental involvement relate (or not) to social and cultural capital exchanges with the school?

To inform this research design and data analysis, I implemented qualitative research and constructivist/transformational methods, which I review below. Another vitally important approach to inform this research was personal narration and communication, as well as interactions between individuals. The participants' interaction and context were relevant for this study as they might lead to social-order production and influence collaboration (Tirado & Gálvez, 2007).

Social interactions rely heavily on communication, in which an exchange of meaning happens through language and symbols. It is the way people make sense of their social worlds. Therefore, communication and interactions between Spanish-speaking Latino parents and teachers are essential elements in building strong home-school partnerships. Schools that establish communication with Latino parents in Spanish not only help them overcome the language barrier, but they also signal to parents that school personnel respect their culture (Quintanar & Warren, 2008).

### **Philosophical Worldview**

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), a researcher's set of beliefs or philosophical worldview influences how they will approach the research, the research questions, and the way they will choose to answer them. Creswell and Creswell highlighted four worldviews: postpositivist, constructivist, transformative, and pragmatic. I embraced the constructivist and transformative perspectives to guide my research.

Honebein (1996) explains that the constructivist philosophy refers to the idea that people understand the world through their experiences. A constructivist approach is a philosophical approach that helps the researcher understand a phenomenon's complexities because it allows the research to be an instrument in their investigation. As a qualitative researcher, I sought to understand Latino parents' and teachers' perceptions of parental involvement by observing the participants, gathering information, and interpreting my findings. As stated by Adom et al (2016), constructing meaning is learning; there is no other kind (p. 2). Therefore, I aimed to impact and add knowledge about how Latino parents perceive parental involvement through a continuous accumulation of knowledge and understanding of their perceptions of parental involvement and their involvement in their children's education.

Creswell and Creswell (2018) explained that exploring multiple perspectives will allow the researcher to construct meaning and understand a phenomenon. The constant search for explanation and understanding of the world, the finding of meaning in experiences that apply to groups and individuals, and the aim to create new opportunities for further research resonated with how I desired to explore Latino parents' perceptions of parental involvement. This added research approach refers to the transformative qualitative methodology. The National Science Board (2007) offered the following definition of *transformative research*:

Transformative research involves ideas, discoveries, or tools that radically change our understanding of an important existing scientific or engineering concept or educational practice or leads to the creation of a new paradigm or field of science, engineering, or education.” Such research challenges current understanding or provides pathways to new frontiers (p. 10).

In other words, a qualitative researcher's work has the potential to be impactful and provide great leaps in our understanding of a social phenomenon.

### **Study Site and Participants**

This study's setting was important since the Southeast region is one of the fastest-growing regions for MLs (Carnock, 2017). Study participants consisted of 10 Spanish-speaking Latino parents of MLs who were enrolled in an elementary school in the 2021-2022 school year in the Southeastern school district. All participants were members of the Latino congregation or shopped at the local Latino market in a Southeastern school district in South Carolina, where the flyers to recruit participants were displayed. All participants' children were enrolled in the same school. The school's Spanish-speaking ML enrollment consisted of 19% of the district-wide population of 195 elementary ML Spanish-speaking students in 2020-2021 and 24% of the

district-wide population of 228 elementary ML Spanish-speaking students in 2021-2022 (NCES, 2021). The elementary school was 1 of 12 schools in the school district. The entire school's student population included 698 culturally and linguistically diverse students in kindergarten through grade 5. The student demographics consisted of 41.1% African American, 39.9% White, 13.1% Hispanic, and 5.5% other races (NCES, 2021). In addition, all participants are part of a two-parent heterosexual household. Although only women were interviewed, the lack of male participants in the study was a result of family member availability and not an intentional choice based on the nature of the study.

To successfully explain how Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs perceived their role in their children's education, the population selected for this study was crucially valuable. It provided insight into how Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs' perceptions influenced the way in which they were involved in their children's education, and why they perceived parental involvement the way they do. The selected Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs were more likely to express how they perceived parental involvement since elementary parental involvement expectations in the American school system were often considered to be more demanding as compared with parental involvement expectations in secondary education.

### **Role of the Researcher**

Reflecting on how positionality and worldview influence aspects of the study is a valuable aspect of qualitative research. As the primary tool in qualitative research, understanding potential biases and the shaping interpretation of the collected data is crucial. Besides being the primary instrument for collecting and analyzing data, I am an experienced MLPS, and have taught in New York, North Carolina, and South Carolina school districts. In addition, I was the

coordinator and family engagement consultant for the Learning Beyond Borders after-school initiative for a Title I school in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, NC, advocating for and teaching ML parents. In this capacity, I provided workshops in English, Spanish, and Portuguese, in which parents received language instruction and support to assist their children with schoolwork at home. I also hosted professional development training on various topics for classroom teachers working with MLs throughout the Southeast region. Currently, I serve as an MLP District Consultant in South Carolina. One of the many common challenges I noticed within schools in the Southeast region involves the engagement of Spanish-speaking Latino parents in schools and their children's education. Serving as the translator for routine school communication and parent-teacher conferences on numerous occasions in which these parents had taken part allowed me the opportunity to work closely with Latino families. However, when viewing the elementary school's data where participants' children attended, the gap in Spanish-speaking parents' involvement as compared with other families was far from meeting schools' expectations for parental participation set by the districts.

The school's data on parent involvement was gathered from a report generated by Talking Points, a text-messaging platform adopted school-wide in 2018 as part of their parental engagement efforts. This platform consists of enhanced, contextualized text messages for educational use, which uses human translators and Artificial Intelligence (AI) through a two-way communication in more than 100 languages (Talking Points, 2021). In addition, I reviewed signed logs of parents' attendance at school events such as parent-teacher conferences and PTA meetings.

By having provided MLP services in the area, not only did I work directly with MLs and their families and served as their home-school contact but I also consulted on the school's efforts

to communicate and engage with multilingual families at various districts in the Southeastern region of the US. I also maintained personal and professional relationships with many people within the school community. As a result, my positionality offered me opportunities to establish rapport and trust with study participants that may have led to more in-depth information that was not easily discernible, such as thoughts, emotions, and previous behaviors, than someone approaching this study from a different position (Patton, 2002). Also, as a public-school Latino parent of a bilingual child in a community in the Southeast region, I had an insider view of the parental-involvement expectations and means of communication and engagement adopted to involve parents in the selected district for this study. Therefore, I recognized that these experiences could have introduced bias into my understanding of the case and participants in this study (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002). The study required the researcher to be self-reflective and intentional about setting any assumption aside as necessary to focus on the purpose of the study and data (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). In order to do so, I took part in a continuous act of reflection of my identities and experiences while collecting and analyzing data to identify and address ways my assumptions might surface (Patton, 2002).

### **Data Collection**

To understand how Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs' perceptions of parental involvement have formed within the school and how their perceptions influenced their involvement in their children's education, I conducted open-ended, in-depth, virtual, semi-structured interviews and audio-recorded them with each of the participating parents. The participants were Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs from a school in the Southeast region. I also reviewed documents such as district documentation on parental involvement policy and other home-school communication action plans to triangulate the data

and establish my findings. Morgan (2016) suggested that by using in-depth interviews, the participant's experience, behavior, feelings, and/or attitudes may be probed deeply to identify underlying concepts that the researcher analyses to generate a theory surrounding the research topic. Since I am fluent in Spanish, I translated the interview questions and interviewed participants in Spanish. I audio-recorded each interview using the computer software Audacity and transcribed participants' responses using Sonix.ai, a Spanish transcribing service. In addition, I contracted a certified Spanish interpreter to verify all translations for accuracy, to capture the interview data effectively.

After receiving IRB approval (see Appendix A), I enlisted participants and conducted semi-structured, open-ended, in-depth, audio-recorded interviews. I requested the local Latino church congregation's member and local Latino market's manager for permission to display a flyer to recruit participants. The flyer included the purpose of the study, details about the researcher, the criteria to participate, and instructions for participants to contact the researcher for more information about the study by texting a specific code to the given number as part of the Talking Points text messaging system selected for communication. I used Talking Points to communicate with parents to schedule their individual virtual meeting to introduce the research, research goals, interview process, and ask if they had any questions about the study. After receiving the parents' signed IRB consent forms allowing the recording of the interview in both English and Spanish, the 1- to 1 ½-hour individual interviews took place virtually at an agreed-upon time. The interview was set virtually to attend to the COVID protocols that were in place so that the interview setting did not impact participants' responses or make them feel uncomfortable or reserved in any way. I used an interview protocol to guide the individual in-depth semi-structured interviews, which allowed participants to freely share their perceptions and



experiences of parental involvement freely. I explained that participation in this study was voluntary, and they could stop the interview at any time. Also, each participant received a copy of the study's description and pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality. Using Audacity as a recording tool for each interview allowed the researcher to easily store participants' responses and submit them to Sonix.ai, the selected speech-to-text service for this study. Because I had ties to the community after serving as an MLP consultant in the area, I was able to establish rapport with each participant. I also anticipated having a cultural background in common with the participants of this study and the ability to speak Spanish would facilitate and ease participants' engagement in meaningful dialogue and provide authentic perceptions of Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs' parental involvement. Overall, the goal of each interview was to gather data to better understand how Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs' perceptions influenced how they were involved in their children's education. I began the data collection in April 2022 and ended in May 2022.

### **Data Analysis**

To maintain alignment with qualitative methods, I thoroughly reviewed all participants' responses and my notes. The researcher's notes provided additional information to participants' responses by recording expressions, verbal and non-verbal expressions that may be relevant and correspond to their experience, behavior, feelings, and attitudes. After completing the transcribing process, I categorized the emerging themes from parents' interviews and selected quotes to support the themes and findings as I compared and analyzed their parental involvement perceptions. As Newton Surter (2012) suggested, I coded the data using multiple levels of open codes separate from the analysis. This critical procedure allowed for the "back-and-forth within categories and their properties, between categories (to make tentative connections) and between

other components of conceptualizations" to conduct high-quality research (Newton Surter, 2012, p. 355). The process of coding participants' experiences into thematic labels allowed for identifying core themes of their experience. In addition, the use of Dedoose as a coding tool enabled the researcher to code participants' responses into themes and patterns and label similar responses, reasoning, and examples into categories. Creswell and Creswell (2018) identified this labeling and coding process as an appropriate method for a case study design. Next, I reviewed each category for emerging patterns and the relationship between them by triangulating parents' interview data with the information noted from the school's documentation on parental involvement, and the district set expectations for parental involvement. This form of analysis allowed me to see how the participants' perceptions aligned with their school's parental involvement expectations and how these perceptions impacted Spanish-speaking Latino parents' decisions about how they would be involved with their children's school.

### **Trustworthiness**

For this study, I applied several qualitative study techniques to provide credible results, such as triangulation of data, member checking, adequate engagement with data collection, comparative data analysis, reflection, and audit trail. Based on the nature of the problem identified for this study, selecting participants from the Southeast region – which is one of the fastest-growing regions for MLs (Carnock, 2017) – provided the crucial source of data to answer the overarching research question and sub-questions.

The first technique I used to enhance trustworthiness was to gather evidence from multiple sources to confirm emerging findings or triangulation. Triangulation of data is a characteristic of case study methods (Yin, 2014), which is an essential component of this study's design of this study. A second was using *member checking* through the interview process, which

allowed participants to provide feedback on my interpretation of the data and correct any errors in their responses or question my interpretations (Sagor, 2000). Not only did I make interview transcripts available to participants for review but I also provided participants with drafts of the findings for feedback. A third technique was that I allowed ample time to collect and analyze data. Allowing for *adequate engagement with data collection* is another method also built into case study design, which reflects the in-depth nature of a case study (Yin, 2014). The fourth method I used to identify common emerging themes and patterns from the data consisted of a *constant comparative data* analysis. Once the analysis reached a point of saturation, I cross-checked multiple data sources and procedures to evaluate the connection between the collected evidence (Newton Suter, 2012). Reflection of my positionality in respect to the data was a fifth technique, which was discussed earlier. Finally, to ensure the study's trustworthiness on internal validity issues, reliability, and generalizability, I used an audit trail to provide a detailed account of the study design, methods, data collection, and data analysis guiding the study (Merriam, 2002).

### **Ethical Considerations**

During and after the research, I abided by research standards and regulations regarding participants' protection from harm, right to privacy, and other regulations included in the IRB. To ensure the participants' confidentiality and freedom from harm, I submitted this research project for IRB approval from Molloy University. All interview recordings, transcripts, and field notes were kept confidential and stored securely in a password-protected flash drive and only handled only by me. The participants' informed consent process is an essential ethical step to minimize any ethical concerns and confirm each participant's anonymity, providing them and the school's site with pseudonyms and ensuring the confidentiality of their responses. Furthermore, I

explained that participation in this study was voluntary and that participants could withdraw from the study if they had any concerns or objections. All the data I collected and analyzed produced findings that were added to the research on this topic. Lastly, the local Latino congregation member and local Latino market manager who permitted the posting of flyers to recruit participants for this study received a copy of the approved research proposal to establish and maintain a clear understanding of the purpose and procedures of this study.

### **Limitations of Case Study Research**

According to Merriam (2016), a researcher's sensitivity and integrity can limit a case study. My assumptions and biases could have limited the study and potentially impacted the coding process. Therefore, I referred back to the interview questions and my interpretation of participants' responses to accurately capture parents' responses. For this study, the work focused on one specific school site with a specific population. It proposed the issue that the narratives and potential themes may only be applicable to the school that all participants' children attended. However, Yin (2017) argued that case study research relies on making projections about the transferability of results through careful evaluation to apply them to a larger scale. The present study was limited to parents' perspectives of parental involvement; other stakeholders' perspectives were not included. Last, the study results may offer limited support for parents, teachers, and other school sites as its focus was to inquire and analyze a social phenomenon. The study is one snapshot in time and not a longitudinal data over time. Since the researcher was a key instrument to the study, replicating the study can be challenging. However, I can explain the theory framing the study, each step I took in the study, and the way I aimed to examine data to contextualize my findings. The researcher's own positionality and blind spots to the context due to the insider status, were both a limitation and a way for self-reflection on my own practice.

While the study cannot be generalized to other parent groups necessarily, it can be generalized to the theory. These steps increased the study's reliability, which enables one to replicate this case study in another setting easily.

### **Summary**

In this chapter, I described the approach, design, and methodology for this study. As explained in detail, this study was a qualitative case study designed to examine how Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs perceive parental involvement. I have embraced the constructivist and transformative perspectives to frame this study's methodology. Therefore, I sought to understand how the perceptions of Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs influenced the way in which they were involved in their children's education.

To understand Spanish-speaking Latino parents perceive their involvement in their children's school and education, I conducted in-depth interviews with 10 Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs. I also observed home-school communication to triangulate the data and contextualize my findings. Therefore, a case study design was critical to collect and analyze data about parent involvement from the Latino parents' points of view. The findings in the next chapter shed light on this critical issue in education.

## CHAPTER FOUR. FINDINGS

*“.. whatever good or bad fortune may come our way, we can always give it meaning and transform it into something of value.”*

*- Herman Hesse*

This qualitative case study examined parental involvement which refers to the participation of parents in regular, two-way communication with the school to improve children's educational experiences and academic performance (Schneider & Coleman, 1993; Shelton & Epstein, 2005). In particular, it focused on how Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary multilingual learners (MLs) perceive their role in their children's education. Several factors can influence the involvement of Spanish-speaking parents of elementary MLs in their children's education; namely, the participating parents' perceptions of their roles, strengths, barriers, and responsibilities (Eccles & Harold, 1996; Jefferson, 2014; Marzano, 2003; Pena, 2000; Shah & Marshall, 2005). These identity-defining perceptions guide parents' understanding of their position in the home-school partnership (Turney & Kao, 2009; Zarate, 2007) and may influence their level of involvement in their children's education.

Current parental involvement literature suggests that strong home-school partnerships and linguistic and cultural accommodations for parental involvement programs may advance the engagement of Spanish-speaking parents in schools (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Gray & Fleischman, 2004); furthermore, children often reap the benefits of their parents' active participation in their education (Haro, R, 2004; Marzano, 2003; Scheerens & Bosker, 1997; Teddlie & Reynolds, 2000; Wang et al., 1993). However, at times, schools struggle to identify ways to connect with MLs and their families (Eccles & Harold, 1996; Jefferson, 2014). What have not been further explored are Spanish-speaking Latino parents' perceptions of their

experiences participating in their children's learning, their beliefs regarding their roles as parents, and the factors influencing their involvement in their children's academic life.

The significance of this study was to capture how the perceptions of Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs influenced the way they were involved in their children's education. Multiple themes emerged from the data analysis, member checking, and data triangulation. In this chapter, I present the themes in order to broaden the understanding of parental involvement among Spanish-speaking Latino parents. I used tenets of social and cultural capital and social learning theories to anchor and report the results of this study. This approach enabled me to consider the data in relation to the research questions.

### **Research Questions**

The overall guiding question of this research was as follows: How do Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs define and perceive their involvement in their children's education? In addition, the following subquestions guided this study:

- a. In a school that is expected to actively involve parents, how do Spanish-speaking Latino parents view their role in the educational process of their children?
- b. How do parents' stories of parental involvement relate (or not) to social and cultural capital exchanges with the school?

In this chapter, I first reflected on my role as the primary tool in this qualitative case study; I identified how participating parents responded to or interacted with me during the study. I then divided this chapter into two parts. Part One provides a brief background and descriptions of the participating parents, as well as how the themes of this study emerged. Although the 10 participating parents had many common cultural challenges, experiences, and opinions, they each had a distinct approach to their involvement in their children's education. Therefore, it is

imperative to share parents' backgrounds before highlighting the common themes and findings of the study. Subdivided into three sections, Part Two addresses the topics contained in each of the research questions: (1) Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs' perceptions of their roles in their children's education, (2) View of parent role in their children's education, and (3) Parents' stories of parental involvement relation (or not) to social and cultural capital exchanges with the school. The chapter ends with a summary based on the findings.

### **Role of the Researcher**

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) acknowledged that the researcher in qualitative research, the researcher is a *human instrument* of data collection and that there is a “relationship between the researcher and the researched” (Ormston et al., 2014, p.8). Consequently, research is constructed by both the researcher and participants (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). As a MLPS, parent of a ML, former coordinator and family engagement consultant for an after-school initiative program in North Carolina, and a district consultant for South Carolina, my positionality is reflective of my experiences in these roles that make up my identity and connection to this study. Therefore, I recognized that my experiences shaped my perceptions of parents' role in their children's education and the many factors influencing multilingual parents' level of involvement. For this reason, I must recognize and actively reflect on my values, beliefs, and experiences as the primary instrument in collecting and analyzing data knowing that my positionality may have influenced my interpretations of the data collected within this study. In addition, my role in providing direct guidance to MLs and their families in being able to communicate with Spanish-speaking parents in their home language may have influenced how participating parents responded and interacted with me during the virtual interviews, as well as their perceptions of me as a researcher. Therefore, throughout the study, I aimed to maintain objectivity and challenge



my values, beliefs, and experiences to prevent my biases from influencing the findings of this study and to preserve the participants' shared stories and experiences.

### **Part One: Participating Parents**

The study participants consisted of 10 Spanish-speaking Latino parents of MLs who attended an elementary school in a Southeastern school district in South Carolina. Parent participants were recruited from a Latino religious congregation and a shop at a local Latino market. All interviews were in the participating parents' native language, Spanish; therefore, all quotes presented in this study include a translation under participating parents' responses. A summary of key characteristics of each participating parent is included in Table 4.1, which consists of the country of origin, years in the United States, level of education, employment status, and child's grade level.

**Table 4.1 – Parents Profile**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Country of Origin</b>	<b>Length of Time in US</b>	<b>Level of Education</b>	<b>Level of comfort with English</b>	<b>Child's Grade Level</b>
Mrs. A	Honduras	3 years	5th	Not comfortable	K
Mrs. B	El Salvador	4 years	6th	Somewhat comfortable	5th
Mrs. C	Honduras	9 years	HS	Not comfortable	5th
Mrs. D	Honduras	3 years	3rd	Not comfortable	4th
Mrs. E	Honduras	6 months	6th	Not comfortable	1st
Mrs. M	Mexico	13 years	8th	Somewhat comfortable	5th
Mrs. N	Mexico	20 years	HS	Somewhat comfortable	3rd
Mrs. O	El Salvador	4 years	HS	Somewhat comfortable	2nd
Mrs. P	Mexico	12 years	10th	Not comfortable	3rd
Mrs. Q	Honduras	4 years	HS	Somewhat comfortable	5th

**Mrs. A**

Mrs. A's family of four emigrated from Honduras three years ago, searching for better opportunities in the United States. Their oldest child is in kindergarten. Mrs. A. stays home to care for her youngest child, and her husband works outside the home. All members of the family rely heavily on the assistance of others daily to communicate in English. The family prefers to receive information from the school in Spanish, and they do not attend parent-teacher conferences without an interpreter. They respond to messages sent via the school-wide text-messaging system but rarely initiate conversation.

**Mrs. B**

Mrs. B's family emigrated from El Salvador four years ago in an effort to escape financial challenges and the increase of crime near their home. The couple has two children. The oldest is a fifth grader who receives MLP services; the youngest child did not qualify for services. All members of the family are fluent in Spanish. The children are also fluent in English. Both parents can understand English but prefer to communicate in Spanish to ensure they fully understand what others are saying. Mrs. B contacts the school at least once a month via the school-wide text-messaging system or by scheduling virtual or in-person conferences.

**Mrs. C**

Some of Mrs. C's family emigrated from Honduras more than 15 years ago, but Mrs. C emigrated nine years ago. She came to the United States so that her children could have educational opportunities that were unavailable in Honduras. Both Mrs. C and her husband work to support their family. Together they have three children. One is in high school, one in middle school, and the youngest is in elementary school in the fifth grade. Their fifth-grader relocated to the US less than a year ago, and he was enrolled in school in the middle of the academic year. He

is fluent in Spanish and immediately began receiving MLP services. Mrs. C does not understand or speak English well, and she expressed that she is primarily comfortable communicating in Spanish. Her contact with the school is limited to scheduled parent-teacher conferences and messages sent by the teacher using the school-wide text-messaging system.

**Mrs. D**

Mrs. D's family emigrated from Honduras about three years ago, hoping to find new opportunities to provide for her family. She works with her husband to help with the house expenses. They have one child attending fourth grade who receives MLP services. Every member of the family is fluent in Spanish. They understand English, but they feel most comfortable speaking in Spanish. During parent-teacher conferences, an interpreter must be present to facilitate the conversation. Mrs. D limits her communication with the teacher and school due to language barriers, but she is always present when called.

**Mrs. E**

Mrs. E's family emigrated from Honduras six months ago to have a better life. She and her husband have one child attending first grade and receiving MLP services. The language barrier concerns all family members as they have not been in the United States long. Mrs. E is currently a stay-at-home mom. She and her husband rely heavily on others to help them communicate their needs and concerns in English. Information sent home by the school without the school-wide text-messaging system often is overlooked or ignored due to their lack of understanding of English. Parent-teacher conferences require the presence of an interpreter.

The five families described above have been in the United States under five years, with the exception of Mrs. C who lived in the US a bit longer. One common characteristic these

parents share is their low level of confidence in communicating in English. Contrary to the portrayal of Latino parents' lack of interest in their children's education, their stories reveal not only that these Spanish-speaking Latino parents are not only interested and concerned about their children's academic success, but they are also highly involved in their children's education and that they do desire to learn ways to further support their children's learning.

**Mrs. M**

Mrs. M's family emigrated from Mexico 13 years ago, seeking job opportunities and the goal of a better life for their growing family. There are five children in this family. One of the older children is in fifth grade and receives MLP services. Mrs. M understands English but feels most comfortable communicating in Spanish. She relies on the assistance of the oldest child to attend to the younger children's needs while she works to support the family. She attends parent-teacher conferences and other school-wide events and often communicates with the classroom teacher to attend to her child's emotional and academic needs. Her level of involvement in her child's education may be considered average to high.

**Mrs. N**

Mrs. N's family emigrated from Mexico 20 years ago to provide additional academic and life opportunities for her family. She has three children; the youngest attends third grade and receives MLP services. Mrs. N is a stay-at-home mom. All family members understand English, but she prefers to communicate in Spanish when interpreters are available. She is attentive to her children's academic progress and meeting school expectations. She often contacts her child's teacher to clarify homework directions as well as information sent home about academic progress and school events, and to stay informed about her child's behavior. Mrs. N attends all scheduled parent-teacher conferences and school-wide events.

**Mrs. O**

Mrs. O's family emigrated from El Salvador four years ago, seeking a better life and academic opportunity for their children. Together, Mrs. O. and her husband have two children. Mrs. O is a stay-at-home mom. The youngest child attends second grade and receives MLP services. All members of the family understand English, but Mrs. O prefers to communicate in Spanish to ensure that she does not misunderstand any information shared with her. She is highly involved in her children's education and often communicates with the school to learn ways to support her children's academic progress. Mrs. O attends all scheduled parent-teacher conferences and school-wide events.

**Mrs. P**

Mrs. P's family emigrated to the United States from Mexico about 12 years ago. Together, Mrs. P and her husband have three children. The oldest child attends third grade and is a monitored ML, which means that she received a passing score when taking the language proficiency assessment when entering kindergarten but needs to be monitored for four consecutive years by the MLP teacher. Spanish is spoken at home, but the father and oldest child are fluent in English. Both parents work to provide for their family. Mrs. P is highly involved in all aspects of her children's education. Although Mrs. P does not speak English, she communicates openly with her child's teacher by asking clarifying questions using the school's text-messaging system and attending all scheduled parent-teacher conferences and school-wide activities. In addition, Mrs. P requests an interpreter for all virtual and in-person meetings.

**Mrs. Q**

Mrs. Q's family emigrated from Honduras, and they have been living in South Carolina for about four years. They came to the United States to improve the quality of life for their

family. Mrs. Q is a stay-at-home mom. She and her husband have two children. Their oldest child is in fifth grade and is a monitored bilingual learner. This student received direct MLP services for a few years but exited the program by meeting the assessment exit criteria a couple of years ago. Mrs. Q understands some English but feels most comfortable communicating in Spanish. Her interactions with her child's teacher are focused on behavior and academics, using the school's text-messaging system, and attending parent-teacher conferences and school-wide activities. She requests an interpreter for all parent-teacher conferences - virtual and in-person - to ensure that she understands all information shared with her about her child.

This second group of families has lived in the United States for more than ten years, or they have other family members who immigrated before them and have been living in the United States for over 10 years. One common characteristic among these parents is that they often seek assistance and ask clarifying questions throughout the academic year to stay informed of their children's behavior and academic progress, independent of their low confidence level in understanding the English language.

### **Emerging Themes**

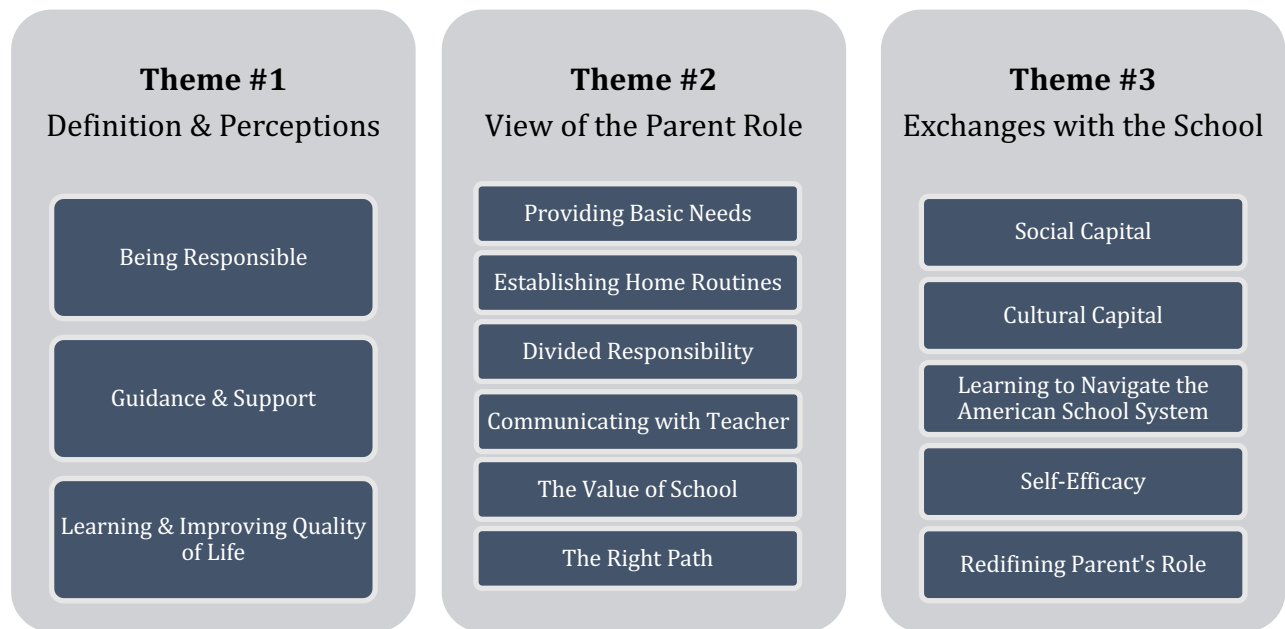
This section provides a graphic representation of the themes that emerged from parents' virtual interviews. As described in Chapter Three, I used qualitative and constructivist/transformational methodologies to analyze and interpret the emerging themes within the data. Data analysis took place after the open-ended, in-depth, virtual, semi-structured interviews were completed, and the files were transferred and transcribed from Audacity to Dedoose. I also reviewed district documentation on parental-involvement policy, and other home-school communication action plans to triangulate the data and establish my findings. Three

major themes emerged from the data analysis, where I examined each participating parent's interview individually. In the next step of the analysis, codes that were common amongst participants emerged, which were analyzed in conjunction with the analysis of individual participating parents and as a whole. As a result, three major themes informed the findings of this study.

The first theme that emerged focused on how Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs defined and perceived their parental involvement. When parents were asked to explain what parental involvement means to them, their responses centered on four different sub-themes: (1) Being a responsible parent as they care for their child, (2) Providing guidance and support to their children, and (3) Making sacrifices to improve their children's quality of life. The second theme presented how Spanish-speaking Latino parents viewed their roles and the different ways in which they were involved in the educational process of their children in a school that was expected to actively involve parents. Six sub-themes emerged from parents' reflections and consideration of their role in their children's education: (1) Ensuring that their children have the basic necessities to live a healthy life, (2) Establishing home routines for their family, (3) Dividing the responsibility of educating their children, (4) Communicating with their children's teacher, (5) Instilling the value of school in their children, and (6) Guiding their children onto the "right path". The third theme highlighted how parents' stories of their parental involvement relate (or not) to social and cultural capital exchanges with the school. The framework of social capital, cultural capital, and social learning theories guided the data analysis, illuminated the findings, and enabled me to interpret the relationship between Spanish-speaking parents' level of involvement and home-school partnerships stemming from their perceptions of their roles in their children's education (Harrison et al., 1997; Henderson, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey

& Sandler, 1995, 1997). Through this analysis, five sub-themes emerged: (1) Accessing social capital, (2) Accessing cultural capital, (3) Observing other parents to learn how to navigate the American school system, (4) Advocating and supporting their children as it related to academic content, and (5) Redefining the parent's role. In Figure 4.1, presents a visual representation of the themes and sub-themes.

**Figure 4.1 - Themes and Sub-Themes**



## Part Two: Addressing the Research Questions

### Theme One: Definition and Perception of Parental Involvement

When parents explained what parental involvement meant to them, their responses highlighted three different emerging subthemes: (1) Being a responsible parent as they care for their child, (2) Providing guidance and support, and (3) Making sacrifices to improve their children's quality of life.



### **Being Responsible**

Parents consistently defined their parental involvement as being responsible for their children's school attendance, managing their behavior at school, and making sure their homework was completed. According to the participating parents, parental involvement meant assuring that their children attended class regularly, respected their teachers, and that their children had a comfortable space at home to complete school assignments. One way that parents shared details of their involvement was by ensuring their children went to school rested and ready to learn. Some parents described how challenging but valuable it was to promote a healthy sleeping schedule when they had to provide for their family and working hours that were irregular and demanding.

*Mrs. N: Una de mis responsabilidades como padre es asegurarme de que mis hijos estén listos para la escuela todos los días. Hago que se acuesten temprano y que no se queden con sus tabletas o computadoras para que descansen y no se cansen yendo a la escuela porque si están cansados, no aprenden todo lo que les tiene que enseñar el profesor. Esto es importante o los niños estarán demasiado cansados para aprender.*

One of my responsibilities as a parent is to make sure my children are ready for school every day. I make them go to bed early and they can't stay up with their iPads or computers, this is so that they can rest and don't go to school tired because if they're tired, they don't learn everything the teacher has to teach them. This is important or the kids will be too tired to learn<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> All quotes consist of the original participants' Spanish quote as well as an English translation.

Parents also reported that teaching their children to behave positively and respecting the classroom teacher was their responsibility and a reflection of their family at school. Parents spoke of raising their children to be respectful individuals and that the teacher was the one in charge when they were at school.

*Mrs. D: Siempre le digo a mi hijo que se asegure de ser respetuoso con su maestro. Es importante que le demuestre al maestro que es de buena familia y que le enseñamos a ser respetuoso y educado. Su comportamiento debe ser siempre bueno.*

I always tell my son to make sure that he is respectful to his teacher. It is important that he shows the teacher that he is from a good family and that we taught him to be respectful and well-mannered. He must always behave.

Parents stated that providing their children with opportunities to attend to reading and completing their homework each day was a crucial way of supporting their learning. As Mrs. N described:

*Lo más importante que puedo hacer para ayudar a mi hija a tener éxito en la escuela es apoyar las ideas de ella, y que ella tenga un ambiente adecuado para que ella pueda concentrarse para estudiar acá en casa, apoyándola. Tratamos de que ella tenga un lugar para que ella haga sus tareas, y que ella esté cómoda leyendo ya que a ella le encanta leer. Y ella nos dice más. «Necesito este. Ah, esto». Una lámpara aquí cerca, una mesa o algo. O sea, tratamos de tenerle un lugar acogedor para que ella se sienta a gusto.*

The most important thing I can do to help my daughter succeed in school is to encourage her ideas, and for her to have a suitable environment so that she can focus on studying

here at home, where we support her. We try to give her space to do her homework, where she can do her homework, and where she is comfortable reading since she loves to read. And she tells us more. "I need this. Oh, this." A lamp near here, a table or something. So, we try to let her have a cozy place for her to feel comfortable.

Overall, parents described that they were responsible for supporting their children's learning by making sure their children had a comfortable space to work and time to attend to school assignments at home. In addition, they set high expectations for their children's behavior at school. Parents saw themselves honoring their commitment to raising their children as one of the most important ways of being involved in and accountable for their children's education. Ultimately, they expressed that the parental duties they described demonstrated the characteristics of being good parents who were engaged in and committed to their children's schooling.

### **Guidance and Support**

Participating parents firmly believe that parents must provide guidance and support. They explained that parents are their children's life teachers, and they must guide them throughout their entire lives, providing them with information, opportunities, and boundaries to stay on "the right path" so that they may continue to choose this path when they are on their own.

*Mrs. E: Le digo que aproveche la oportunidad que él tiene, ya que yo no la tuve o sepa aprovechar la oportunidad porque aquí es más fácil todo, le dan más facilidades a uno y en vez en el país de uno no las tiene seguro.*

I tell him to take advantage of the opportunity he has, since I didn't have it or know how to take advantage of the opportunity because everything is easier here, they provide more support which we definitely do not have in our country.

Mrs. O: *Vean, todo requiere esfuerzo, motivación, pero ellas tienen la oportunidad, tienen la capacidad de poder hacerlo, ¿verdad? Y saben ellas que tienen mucho el respaldo mío, como el de mi esposo para poder estudiar y seguir adelante.*

See, everything requires effort, motivation, but they have the opportunity, they have the ability to do it, right? And they know that they have a lot of support from me and my husband to be able to study and move forward.

In addition to guiding their children in their life choices, parents spoke of the importance of supporting their children's overall interests, whether they focused on educational or career aspirations. Making sacrifices was one of the most mentioned factors in supporting their children's aspirations by providing their children with opportunities that they did not have themselves.

Mrs. O: *Pues, impulsarla, motivándolos a que ella puede hacerlo, ella puede lograrlo, hacer las metas que ella tiene entre lo que ella quiere desarrollarse, lo que a ella le gusta.*

To encourage her, motivate that she can do it, she can accomplish anything, achieve the goals that she has between what she wants to develop, what she enjoys.

Mrs. Q: *La educación aquí en Estados Unidos es excelente. La verdad que a veces cuando uno viene a este país no viene pensando en uno, sino para darle un mejor futuro a nuestros hijos realmente. Además, es una decisión que ha sido la mejor, la verdad, porque uno mira reflejado el esfuerzo que uno hizo en los hijos porque están aprendiendo.*

Education here in the United States is excellent. The truth is that sometimes when you come to this country, you don't come thinking of yourself, but rather to give your children a better future, really. It has also been the best decision, honestly, because one sees the effort that one made reflected in the children because they are learning.

Another key characteristic of being a good parent, according to the participating parents, was preparing their children for life by providing guidance and support. Children need structure, limits, boundaries, and encouragement to develop interests and personal characteristics that will help shape their identity and assist them when making life decisions. Providing children with a consistent schedules and routines was viewed as characteristics of good parenting. Parents in this study described wanting their children to succeed. Not only did participating parents motivate their children, but they also supported their interests.

### **Learning and Improving Quality of Life**

Learning and improving quality of life was at the forefront of parents' definition of parental involvement. Parents stated that involvement meant they needed to "push" their children to be more and do better to secure a happy and prosperous future. Some parents described their sacrifices such as moving to the United States, working long hours at low-paying jobs, being separated from family and friends, and struggling to speak English to make themselves understood to provide their children with opportunities they did not have. Improving their children's quality of life also revolved around the access that their children had to educational resources not available in their home country.

*Mrs. E: La participación de los padres es importante para el éxito de los estudiantes en la escuela porque si el niño no se siente apoyado, no saca provecho de su tiempo.*

*Porque, si uno es descuidado, también se va descuidando de sus de sus actividades. Le*

*digo a él que se ponga gana, porque prepararse en la vida es lo mejor que hay, ser preparado.*

Parents' participation is important for the success of students in school because if the child does not feel encouraged, he does not take advantage of his time. Because if one is neglected, he also neglects his activities. I tell him to try hard, because preparing in life is the best thing there is, being prepared.

*Mrs. M: Mi experiencia educativa influyó mucho en mis decisiones sobre la educación de mis hijos porque no tuve las mismas oportunidades. Tienen que estudiar, tienen que seguir adelante para poder tener un futuro mejor. No quiero que pasen por los mismos desafíos que yo tuve que pasar.*

My educational experience greatly influenced my decisions on my children's education because I didn't have the same opportunities. They have to study; they have to keep going so they can have a better future. I don't want them to go through the same challenges I had to go through.

As parents spoke about their own learning experiences, it became clear that they saw themselves as having a powerful influence over their children's education. The sacrifices they made were a part of their efforts to empower their children and to have a positive effect on their overall quality of life.

*Mrs. C: Este año pasado hubo muchos problemas con mi trabajo. Ellos no iban a la escuela porque no había bus. Entonces a veces yo dejaba de trabajar para dejarlo él. Entonces yo pienso que estos son sacrificios que uno hace. Bueno, no es tanto, ¿eh? Se*

*sacrifica uno porque uno necesita la plata y necesita el trabajo, pero yo siento que es una obligación porque ellos tienen que estudiar, pero también es un sacrificio.*

This past year there were many problems with my job. They didn't go to school because there was no bus. So, sometimes I left work to take him. So, I think that these are sacrifices that one makes. Well, it's not that much, right? One sacrifices oneself because one needs money and one needs work, but I feel that it is an obligation because they have to study, but it is also a sacrifice.

Mrs. N: *Ah, pues, yo ya no pude seguir estudiando, ¿verdad? Y yo quiero que ellos no se queden en el nivel de estudio donde yo me quedé. Yo quiero que ellos sigan adelante.*

*Porque, de hecho, yo como he estado, ahora estoy 100 % dedicada a ser ama de casa y he tenido la oportunidad de chequear, estar revisando tareas, todo eso que acá en Estados Unidos en comparado con México tiene un nivel de estudio bastante avanzado. Entonces necesito estar atenta ahora que son jóvenes. Mi esposo trabaja muy duro para que yo pueda estar pendiente de ellos. Que ahora sí, que como ya estudié, me entiende. Pero sí, porque hay unas cosas, por ejemplo, que me hija le están enseñando, que tal vez yo no estudié a nivel middle school y ella apenas va en tercero.*

Oh well, I couldn't continue studying, right? And what I want is for them not to stop at the level of study where I stopped. I want them to keep moving forward. Because in fact, as I've been, I am now 100% dedicated to being a housewife and I have had the opportunity to control, to check homework, everything that, here in the United States, compared to Mexico, has a fairly advanced level of study. So, I need to be watchful now that they are young. My husband works very hard so that I can watch them. That now, since I already studied that, she understands me. But, because there are some things, for

example, that my daughter is being taught, that perhaps I did not study at a middle school level and she is only in third grade.

In addition, parents also referred to their learning and improving their quality of life as they defined parental involvement. Through their learning, parents seemed to make great efforts to influence their children's learning experiences positively. Although all parents reported not fully comprehending how to navigate the American academic system, they understood that they were responsible for providing impactful learning experiences beyond academic learning. Parents reported a desire to learn English, the educational content taught to their children, and the school's policies and expectations to directly support their children at school. They hoped to positively impact their children's academic progress by taking control of their learning experiences and learning in general. Olivos' (2006) findings support not only parents' influence on their children's life but also the impact on their children's approach to learning as well as their overall academic success.

Based on the participating parents' responses, their perception of involvement consisted of areas that were outside of what is traditionally recognized as involvement in schools beyond parents' participation in school-based activities. Even though all parents mentioned school-based activities in this study, they were not the foundation for what parental involvement meant to them. Parents' definition of parental involvement in this study confirmed Lopez et al.'s (2001) findings that the challenges with involving parents in schools and their children's education stem from how parental involvement has been traditionally defined. However, the definitions shared here challenge the traditional definition of parental involvement and urge for this concept of parental involvement to be broadened, as indicated by Lopez and Stoelting (2010). Parents in this study pointed out that parental involvement consisted of being responsible parents that cared for



their children to attend school regularly and complete homework assignments, providing guidance and support to their children to put them on the right path in life, and making sacrifices so their children had better educational opportunities.

### **Theme Two: View of the Parent's Role in a School that is Expected to Actively Involve Parents**

Participating parents described their role in their child's education in several ways. The focus of their responses was not directly connected to their children's school activities; instead, it addressed other aspects of their children's lives such as what happens in the home, their children's well-being, cultural and religious beliefs, ideas about schooling, and life choices. Six subthemes emerged from parents' reflection and consideration of their role in their children's school: (1) Ensuring that their children have the basic necessities to live a healthy life, (2) Establishing home routines, (3) Dividing the responsibility of educating their children, (4) Communicating with their children's teacher, (5) Instilling the value of school in their children, and 6) Guiding their children into the "right path".

#### **Providing Basic Needs**

When asked about their role in their child's education, some parents addressed providing their children with a home, food, and clothing to support learning. They shared that ensuring their children were equipped with the basic necessities to live a healthy life was something beyond what they had experienced when they were children. Therefore, being able to provide for their children was a high priority.

*Mrs. M: Nuestro trabajo como padres es ver que todo esté en orden y saber si falta algo, que es nuestra responsabilidad proveer para nuestros hijos. Darles un hogar, comida para comer y ropa es mi prioridad. A veces hay que firmar papeles para el colegio, pero*

*tenemos tantas cosas que hacer como padres de muchos hijos o mucho trabajo, que se nos olvida o no vemos. Así que creo que tenemos que centrarnos un poco más en ese punto.*

Our job as parents is to see that everything is okay and know if something is missing, it is our responsibility to provide for our children. Given them a home, food to eat, and clothes is my priority. Sometimes papers have to be signed for school, but we have so many things to do as parents of many children or have a lot of work, that we forget or we don't see it. So, I think we have to focus a little more on that point.

Parents also mentioned that knowing that their child's school provided breakfast and lunch helped significantly in assisting their family in meeting their child's needs. They demonstrated gratitude when they shared that their children ate two daily meals at school.

*Mrs. Q: Una de las cosas que me gusta de la escuela de mi hija es que dan desayuno y almuerzo. Esta es una gran ayuda y nos quita una preocupación a los padres. Le gusta comer con sus amigos en la escuela.*

One of the things I like about my daughter's school is that they give her breakfast and lunch. This is a huge help and leaves one less concern from us parents. She likes eating with her friends at school.

As a way to serve their children's best interests, parents described that they were responsible for meeting their children's basic needs for food, clothing, housing, and education. As parents raise their children according to their own values and beliefs, parents make decisions about a number of factors that they view as important for their children's overall success. Being

responsible to provide supervision and control at both home and school exemplified participating parents' positive involvement effort to support their children's academic success.

### **Establishing Home Routines**

As parents expanded on their views of their role in their child's education, they mentioned that establishing a routine after school that permitted their children to focus on activities such as homework and reading was a key component of supporting their education. Although these routines varied from home to home, from enrolling their children in after-school programs to setting time aside at home to study, they shared a common goal: making sure that their children were ready and prepared for school as they learned to take responsibility for their learning.

*Mrs. D: Mi apoyo más grande es de poner como horario para que él pueda tener el tiempo de lectura, para que no se esté distraído con cosas que tenga que hacer, tenga el tiempo. Él es independiente, yo solo me encargo de que él estudie la lectura, que vea a su media hora y siempre le digo que haga la tarea.*

My greatest support is to set a schedule so that he can have time to read, so that he is not distracted from the things he has to do, so he has the time. He is independent, I only make sure that he studies his reading, that he reads his half-hour and I always tell him to do his homework.

*Mrs. Q: Para apoyar a mi hija lo que le pongo es que ella lea sus 30 minutos en la casa. Ahorita, gracias a Dios, hay un programa en la escuela que mi hija entra cuando sale a las 2:00 de la escuela, se va al programa y de ahí la ponen a hacer tareas. Cuando ella llega, yo le reviso si tiene tareas, ella me dice: «No, porque las he hecho en el*

*programa». Pero siempre, todos los días, le digo yo. Leer más que sea media hora porque a través de la lectura ella se va desenvolviendo más y aprende.*

To help my daughter, what I tell her is to read her 30 minutes at home. Right now, thank God, there is a program at school that my daughter goes to when she leaves school at 2:00 p.m., she goes to the program and they make her do her homework. When she comes home, I check if she has homework, she tells me 'No, because I have done it in the program'. But always, every day, I tell her to read more than half an hour because, through reading, she progresses and learns more.

Parents also reported that they would like to assist with school-related activities beyond establishing home routines but did not feel equipped to do so. Whether it was the lack of content knowledge or language proficiency impacting the level of support they could provide, they saw the value in setting up time at home for their children to meet school's expectations.

*Mrs. N: Si mi hija me dice que hay algo que no entiende, yo estoy siempre tratando de investigar o preguntar a alguien que nos pueda ayudar con el idioma que yo no entiendo. Pero mi gustaría poder hacer más acerca de ayudar en los estudios de ella.*

When my daughter tells me that there is something she does not understand, I always try to research or ask someone who can help us with the language which I do not understand. But I would like to be able to do more about helping her with her studies.

*Mrs. Q: Las tareas estaban en inglés y no sabía cómo ayudarla. Entonces ella sí me lo puso muy difícil al principio, los primeros dos años fueron difíciles porque a veces ni siquiera entendía sus tareas, entonces, ¿cómo la ayudo en ese sentido? Puso un traductor, pero no era lo mismo. Ambas estábamos perdidas.*

The homework was in English and I didn't know how to help her. So, she did make it very difficult for me at first. The first two years were difficult because sometimes she didn't even understand her homework, so how could I help her in that sense? She used a translator, but it was not the same. We were both lost.

Based on parents' responses, their support has a fundamental role in children's academic progress. They pointed out that they viewed themselves in a supportive role, and they felt responsible for providing their children with the opportunity for an education. The responsibility parents felt to support their children's academic success illustrated participating parents' perceptions of their roles as they displayed characteristics consistent with being good parents. In contrast, the perceptions of the participating Latino parents were inconsistent with the historical portrayals of Latino parents' lack of involvement in their children's education (Brock & Edmunds, 2010).

### **Divided Responsibility**

From the analysis of the data, another subtheme that emerged concerned the Latino parents' belief in a sense of shared responsibility between the school and themselves in educating their children. According to parents, the school was responsible for the child's academic education while the parents were responsible for everything else. They expanded on the idea that the school taught core academic subjects, and by fostering the completion of homework and reading assignments, the parents further supported their children's schooling.

*Mrs. O: El papel de un padre el darnos cuenta cómo nuestros hijos están, cómo es su avance, cómo ellos se sienten, eso es estar informados y también que en lo que se pueda ayudar, aunque sea desde casa. Yo pienso que ayuda ir a la escuela todos los días... El*

*papel como maestra es enseñar, motivar, impulsar que siga adelante, vea que ella puede lograr mucho más con las tareas, matemáticas, y lectura.*

A parent's role is to notice how our children are doing, how they are making progress, how they feel, that is, to be informed and to be able to help, even if it is from home. I think it helps that they go to school every day... Teachers' roles are to educate, motivate, encourage her to keep going, help her see that she can achieve much more with homework, math, and reading.

A parent's role was to provide their children with the time at home to attend to school assignments, know how they act and perform in school, as well as take part in parent-teacher conferences to get reports of the child's academic progress and behavior.

*Mrs. C: Mi hijo también tiene que aprender mucho en la casa y uno, como padre, tiene que poner más de su parte para que ellos tengan tiempo en la casa para dedicar a los estudios, completar sus tareas, y leer... También tenemos que estar pendiente de cómo se portan en la escuela y, con el caso que algo pase, hablar con su maestra.*

My son also has to learn a lot at home and, as a parent, one has to do more than their share so that they have time at home to dedicate to studies, complete their homework, and read... We also have to know how they behave at school and, if something happens, talk to their teacher.

When asked about the school's parental involvement policy, parents demonstrated a high-level of uncertainty, and they had many questions about the policy. Some parents asked me to explain what I was referring to when I mentioned the policy and where they could find more information about it.

Mrs. A: *No sé si existe una política de participación de los padres en la escuela de mi hijo. ¿Te refieres a un documento? ¿Para qué sirve? ¿Otras escuelas tienen esto? Si es así, es posible que lo tengan porque esta es una buena escuela, pero no la he visto.*

I do not know if a parental involvement policy exists in my child's school. Do you mean a document? What is it for? Do other schools have this? If so, they may have it because this is a good school, but I have not seen it.

Parents emphasized the importance of transparency and the need for the school to share information in stages. They wanted the school to provide resources to assist Spanish-speaking parents to navigate the school's policy and meet the school's expectations. Other parents stated that the school was responsible for parents and should make every effort to clarify shared information.

Mrs. Q: *Cuando vas a inscribir a tus hijos, te lo dan, no te dan uno, te dan varios, varios papeles que tienes que firmar. Algunos documentos vienen en español, pero hay tantos documentos enviados a casa a principios de año que es posible que uno no los vea o no los entienda y no hablamos de eso después de eso, así que, si tenemos preguntas, no sabemos cómo obtener respuestas. La escuela necesita ayudarnos a entender estas cosas porque muchas cosas son nuevas para los padres nuevo en el país. Es demasiada información a la vez.*

When you go to enroll your children, they give it to you, they don't give you one, they give you several, several papers that you have to sign. Some documents come in Spanish but so many documents are sent home at the beginning of the year that one may not see it or understand it, and we don't talk about it after that so, if we have questions, we don't

know how to get answers. The school needs to help us understand these things because so much is new to parents who are new to the country. It is too much information at the same time.

***Working with parents.*** Parents also described how valuable the communication piece between the home and the school was for Spanish-speaking parents but that being unfamiliar with the subject matter and not fully understanding the school's expectations hindered parents to support their children's learning in American schools.

*Mrs. A: No entiendo cómo puedo ayudar a mi hijo. No estudié mucho. No sé cómo decir las letras o las palabras. La maestra explica en qué necesita ayuda mi hijo, pero no sé cómo ayudarlo en la casa.*

I don't understand how I can help my son. I didn't study much. I don't know how to say the letters or the words. The teacher explains what my son needs help with, but I don't know how to help him at home.

Parents reported that in their home countries schools were drastically different from their children's experiences in their American school and the opportunities that were available. Some parents shared they did not complete elementary school, whereas others reached middle school or high school. Working closely with their children's teachers was crucial to establishing their children's needs and how they could assist them in their learning. According to the participating parents, being a team with their children's teachers was of the utmost importance. Being able to ask questions and share their limitations in supporting their children's academic and emotional needs were key components of the home-school partnership for Spanish-speaking parents.



Mrs. C: *No se puede dejarles toda la carga a los maestros. Yo pienso que no es correcto, porque yo tengo uno, digamos, y yo solo tengo ese. Pero un maestro tiene varios niños. Entonces creo que, en muchas partes, yo tengo que poner de mi parte también. Trabajando juntos.*

We cannot leave all the burden to the teachers. I think that isn't right, because I have one, and I only have that one. But one teacher, they have several children. So, I think that in many aspects, I have to do my part as well. Work together.

Mrs. D: *Es importante trabajar en equipo. Es mejor, pues, para ayudar a nuestros hijos. Así ayudamos ambos.*

It is important to work as a team. It is better, to help our children. So we both help out.

***Listening to parents.*** Parents voiced their concerns about not having opportunities to be heard or the ability to impact school policy. Although all parents felt that the school was doing a great job educating their children, some thought they lacked a platform to share their concerns. Some parents communicated the desire to make suggestions about ways the school could better support Spanish-speaking parents to be involved in their children's education.

Mrs. O: *A mí me gustaría que la escuela siempre esté abierta o dispuesta a querer involucrar en general a todos los padres en lo que son las actividades, que el idioma de uno no sea una interferencia para poder involucrarnos. Vea, porque a veces, por ejemplo, si la maestra que habla nuestro idioma no está en la escuela, nosotros no podemos y no tenemos oportunidades de comunicar nuestras opiniones sobre cosas en la escuela o sobre nuestros hijos.*

I would like the school to always be open or willing to involve all parents in general activities, so that one's language is not an obstacle in being able to get involved. See, because sometimes, for example, if the teacher who speaks our language is not at the school, we cannot and we do not have opportunities to communicate our opinions about things at school or about our children.

Parents wanting to participate in their children's school decision-making by having their views and concerns heard echoes the findings of Jasis and Ordoñez-Jasis's (2012), who highlighted parents' efforts to become involved in their children's school and the struggles and obstacles they face. It is not surprising that many Spanish-speaking Latino parents feel that school personnel often dismiss their suggestions and contributions (Jasis & Ordoñez-Jasis, 2012; Rodriguez-Brown, 2010). However, through their shared stories, parents in this study expressed the desire to make meaningful contributions to and become active partners with their children's school.

### **Communicating with Teachers**

Parents identified that communicating with teachers about their children's homework, academic progress, and school-based events was crucial to attending to their children's educational needs. Although it was a challenge for many parents, communication was the most frequently mentioned factor in understanding what to expect and how to help their children.

*Mrs. D: Sería muy bueno de que un maestro siempre que fuera el traductor para nosotros. Ese es el factor más importante para nosotros los latinos porque no comprendemos todo. Pero, simplemente agradezco mucho por el valioso trabajo de la maestra, por el empeño, por la colaboración siempre. Y gracias por tenerme tan al pendiente de todo lo que pasa con mi hijo.*

It would be great if a teacher could always be a translator for us. That is the most important factor for us Latinos because we don't understand everything. But I am incredibly thankful for the valuable work of the teacher, for their effort, their constant collaboration. And I am grateful they keep me so updated on everything that happens with my son.

*Mrs. Q: Me comunico con la maestra de mi hija algunas veces a la semana sobre la tarea y cuando no la hace en la computadora. Entonces, cada vez que no lo hacía, la maestra me lo decía y luego resolvíamos el problema. Estoy agradecido de que la maestra me lo dijera para poder hablar con mi hija. Si el maestro no dijera nada, no tendría idea de lo que estaba pasando.*

I communicate with my daughter's teacher a few times a week about homework and when she doesn't do homework on the computer. So, whenever she didn't do it, the teacher told me and then we solved the problem. I'm grateful that the teacher told me so that I could talk to my daughter. If the teacher didn't say anything, I would have no idea what was happening.

Some parents expressed that although attending parent-teacher conferences did not necessarily mean they could fully understand and assist with some of the academic requests made by teachers, they still made it a priority to be present virtually or by phone. Other parents shared their experience communicating with their child's teachers in these conferences.

*Mrs. D: Siempre asisto a las conferencias de padres y maestros, pero no siempre entiendo todo lo que dice el maestro, incluso con un traductor que me ayuda. Me siento perdida con tanta información y números sobre cómo le va a mi hijo en la escuela que no*

*hago muchas preguntas. A veces me pide que lo ayude en casa con su trabajo en la computadora, pero no sé cómo. Mi enfoque principal es si él tiene buenas calificaciones y si tiene problemas con su comportamiento.*

I always attend the parent-teacher conferences but I don't always understand everything the teacher is saying, even with a translator there to help me. I feel lost with so much information and numbers about how my son is doing at school that I don't ask many questions. Sometimes he asks me to help at home with his work on the computer, but I don't know how. My main focus is if he has good grades and if he has problems with his behavior.

*Mrs. N: Pues he tenido buenas experiencias con mi poco inglés y he hablado con los maestros personalmente. Ellos me entienden, me dan mi tiempo para poder acomodar yo mis palabras y, pues, más que nada la ayuda de ellos todos. Yo pienso que la participación de los padres en la escuela es cuando todos los maestros nos llaman la reunión, porque ellos dan bastante consejo a nuestros hijos sobre qué les hace falta para salir adelante o si están atrasados en alguna materia. Nos dan folleto, nos explican más o menos cómo podemos ayudarlos en casa y esta información ahora que nos haga falta. Ahora, al menos en lo personal, sí me han ayudado y en esa parte.*

Well, I have had good experiences with the little English I know, and I have spoken with the teachers personally. They understand me, they give me my time to be able to arrange my words orally and, more than anything, the help they all provide. I think that parent participation in the school is when all the teachers call us to a meeting, because they give our children a lot of advice about what they need to get ahead or if they are behind in a

subject. They give us a brochure; they explain more or less how we can help them at home and all this information if we need it. Now, at least personally, they have helped me and in that sense.

Communicating with teachers revolved around the means of communication that parents could understand. Comments pointed to a messaging system utilized school-wide to communicate with all parents taking into account their native or preferred language. It highlighted the opportunity parents had to communicate with their children's teachers directly, independent of parents' native language; it was a positive and welcoming tool that built and maintained home-school partnerships. In sharing about the text messaging system, parents portrayed their communication with teachers in a way that indicated a sense of acceptance and open communication between themselves and the school.

*Mrs. E: La cosa que más me gusta de la escuela de mi hijo es que me están mandando mensajes. Cosa que en nuestro país no existe. Los maestros nos comunican me mandan recados de mi hijo, que eso no lo no estaba acostumbrada. Los mensajes están en español para que pueda entender lo que el maestro necesita decirme. ¡Eso es muy útil!*

The thing I like most about my son's school is that they send me messages. That's something that doesn't exist in our country. The teachers send us messages about my son, something I was not used to. The messages are in Spanish so that I can understand what the teacher needs to tell me. That is very helpful!

*Mrs. Q: El sistema que utiliza la escuela para comunicarse es muy importante, la verdad. Es muy importante porque uno de padre que no sabe inglés y, cuando llega a la escuela, uno no sabe cómo poder expresarse, que alguien entienda. Entonces uno se siente mal en*

*esa parte, pero con el mensaje que te traduce, es bueno. Es una manera que la escuela tiene de comunicarse con los papás que hablan español y para nosotros comunicarnos con la escuela.*

The system the school uses to communicate is, honestly, very important. It's very important because you have parents who do not speak English and, when you are new to the school, you do not know how to express yourself, how to make someone understand you. So, you feel bad in that sense, but with the message that translates for you, it's good. It is a way for the school to communicate with parents who speak Spanish and for us to communicate with the school.

Parents reported that the text-messaging system and having a Spanish-speaking person available at the school to translate for them were indispensable help in getting school information. However, they also shared that there were many instances when they faced not knowing about the details they deemed necessary and relevant to their children's education or that they did not trust the person translating the information. In addition, parents stated that numerous documents were often sent home in their children's folder with extensive information that was not translated, making these challenging to understand. Other concerns were missing important deadlines to submit documents, and being able to sign up their child for school activities and join school-wide events.

*Mrs. E: Siempre que viene de su escuela, reviso sus carpetas y si mandan a decir algo. Pero me tardo un poco porque tiene muchos papeles que viene en inglés y el traductor en veces me miente, porque no, no es igual y me decía una cosa, pero es otra. Entonces tengo que buscar a un niño que sepa inglés y que me diga de que se trata. Entonces le digo que ser responsable a veces se dificulta.*

Whenever he comes from his school, I check his folders and if they sent any messages. But it takes me a while because he has many papers that come in English and the translator sometimes lies, because no, it's not the same, and it told me one thing but it actually meant another. So, I have to look for a child who knows English and who tells me what it is about. So, I'm telling you, being responsible is difficult sometimes.

Although parents described the option to text as helpful, it did not replace being able to engage in deeper conversations, discuss more complex topics with their children's teachers, or get assistance from other school staff. Some parents expressed a positive level of connection by being able to communicate with their child's teacher directly. They felt welcomed at school when teachers made parents feel at ease when they asked for help and were able to respond in the parents' home language.

Mrs. N: *Yo pienso que sí, que la escuela de mi hija ve a los padres latinos que hablan español como personas esenciales. Hasta los maestros aprenden de nosotros por el idioma, porque hay muchos maestros que se preguntan cómo se dice tal cosa en español y todo eso. Hablando directamente con los maestros es muy importante. Y eso es bonito porque uno se siente como en familia y cuando ellos quieren también saber y preguntan cosas en nuestro idioma, es perfecto.*

I think so; I think my daughter's school sees Latino parents who speak Spanish as essential people. Even teachers learn from us about the language because there are many teachers who ask how to say this or that in Spanish, and all that. Talking directly with teachers is very important. And that's nice because this - well, one feels like family and when they also want to know how to say something and ask things in our language, it's perfect.

However, parents shared that even though the text messaging system used by the school bridged the gap between home-school communication, they still felt apprehensive about their relationship with their children's school. In addition, parents explained that the language barrier was a challenge to becoming more involved and supporting their children's academic success. For this reason, parents indicated that having someone at the school that spoke Spanish was helpful, and it spoke to the school's efforts and commitment to make information accessible to Spanish-speaking families (Auerbach, 2007; De Gaetano, 2007). Parents also elaborated on the school's welcoming environment and their positive experiences communicating with their children's teachers, principal, and other school staff.

*Mrs. E: Dado a que yo no sé el idioma, mi participación en la escuela es muy poco y por eso a veces no, no me involucro mucho. Vea porque, o sea, yo voy, o sea, no puedo tener una, entablar una conversación con su maestra porque, o sea, no, yo no sé mucho el idioma este. Debido a esto es que no, no nos involucramos.*

Since I don't know the language, my participation in the school is scarce and that's why sometimes I don't, I don't get very involved. See, I mean, I go, I mean, I can't have a, start a conversation with his teacher because I mean, no, I don't speak much of this language. This is why, no, we don't get involved.

*Mrs. P: Siempre ha habido una reunión, no recuerdo qué día, pero a las 15:00 de la tarde. Entonces yo pregunté si esa reunión estaba en español y me dijeron que no, entonces por ese motivo yo nunca me conectaba a esa reunión. ¿Me entiendes? ... Entonces, a veces creo que sí sería necesario aceptar a alguien que pudiese apoyar el otro idioma porque, por ese motivo, uno no se involucra al 100 % en todo. Por ejemplo,*



*si yo me conectara de reuniones de mal estaría, porque no entendería absolutamente nada.*

There has always been a meeting, I don't remember what day, but at 3:00 p.m. So, I asked if that meeting was in Spanish and they said no, so that's why I never connected to that meeting. You understand? ... So, sometimes I think it would be necessary to accept someone who could speak the other language because, for those reasons, one does not get 100 % involved in everything. For example, if I connected to meetings, I would not be well off, because I would not understand anything at all.

The sentiment of the group towards feeling welcomed by their children's school was unanimous.

*Mrs. E: No hay discriminación en la escuela de mi hijo. Siempre los lo tratan bien a uno. Yo siento muy bienvenida a participar en la escuela.*

There is no discrimination at my son's school. They always treat you well. I feel very welcome to participate in the school.

*Mrs. Q: La escuela a de mi hija ve a los padres latinos como personas esenciales en la escuela. Uno siente eso cuando uno llega a la escuela. No sé, pero siento que, como que a uno lo miran como especial, en el sentido de que, porque somos de otro país, como que nos prestan más atención. Es una cosa positiva.*

My daughter's school sees Latino parents as essential people in the school. You feel it when you arrive at school. I don't know, but I feel that there is a certain way they look at us as special, in the sense that because we are from another country, they pay more attention to us. It is a positive thing.

Parents in this study viewed parents and teachers as a vital support system to help their children thrive, and they believed that working together could significantly impact their academic success. Therefore, communication with their children's teachers was viewed, not only, as a way to connect with the school but also a form to personalize learning based on the needs of the child and the family while respecting and valuing parents' involvement efforts, language, and cultural background. As parents attempted to communicate with their children's teachers - whether they needed the assistance of a translator or through the text-messaging system - their efforts could be identified as the characteristics of parents interested in their children's learning; therefore, characteristics of good, involved parents.

### **The Value of School**

The fourth subtheme that emerged from the data concerned the importance of getting an education. For these parents, education was not an option in their home country due to the lack of opportunities and financial challenges. Moving to the United States involved numerous sacrifices to provide their children the opportunity for an education. Subsequently, parents shared how they taught their children that education was the key to a successful life.

*Mrs. C: La educación es muy importante. Ojalá hubiera estudiado más, pero tenía que trabajar para ayudar a mi familia. Quiero que mis hijos tengan la oportunidad de concentrarse en la escuela para que puedan tener más oportunidades que mi esposo y yo tuvimos cuando éramos jóvenes, para que puedan tener un mejor trabajo.*

Education is so very important. I wish I had studied more but I had to work to help my family. I want my children to have the opportunity to focus on school so they can have more opportunities than my husband and I had when we were young, so they can have a better job.

Parents expressed that the challenges they encountered were constant reminders of the value there is in education. They repeatedly referred to their role as always helping their children understand that education could take them further in life and eliminate many of the struggles they have had to face.

*Mrs. C: Yo hablo con mis hijos que me gustaría que mis hijos fueran profesionales que trabajan en una oficina. Ay, ¡tantos sueños que me gustaría para él! Como mamá, no me gustaría ver a mis hijos trabajando, así como uno trabaja en construcción, trabajos pesados. A mí me gustaría que ellos trabajaran en un lugar donde tienen que usar la mente. Pero todo tiene un sacrificio, todo trabajo cuesta. Entonces que se centren en lo que ellos han estudiado, que ellos sean algo en la vida y que tengan con qué defender.*

I talk with my children, tell them that I would like them to be professionals that work in an office. Oh, there are so many dreams that I would like for him! As a mother, I would not like to see my children working in places like construction sites, physical labor. I would like them to work in a place where they have to use their minds. But everything requires sacrifice, all work requires effort. So, they should focus on what they studied, they should be someone in life, and they should have the tools for that.

*Mrs. O: Para mí es muy importante que los padres participen, participen y se involucren en lo que son las actividades escolares con los hijos. Los hijos ven el interés de los padres, de que ellos puedan superar y poder decir: «Mi papá está acá, es porque yo le importo, está bien aquí en mi escuela, porque eso es importante para él que yo pueda lograr, que yo pueda a crecer, vea que yo logro mis metas, lograr lo que se requiere de un estudio que ellos puedan avanzar y ser mejor en mi vida».*

I think it is very important that parents participate; participate and get involved in school activities with their children. The children see their parents' interest, so that they can overcome and be able to say: "My dad is here because he cares about me, he's fine here at my school, because it's important to him that I achieve, that I can grow, that he see me achieve my goals, accomplish what is required of studying so that I can progress and be better in my life."

Other parents shared their emphasis on their children putting forth their best effort as a way to stress the importance of school and a way to make sure that their children did their best in school every day.

*Mrs. B: Lo único que les pedimos a nuestros hijos es que les vaya bien en la escuela y que trabajen duro. Necesitan prestar atención en clase y leer y practicar. Nuestra responsabilidad es llevarlos a la escuela a tiempo y su responsabilidad es aprender.*

The only thing we ask of our children is for them to do well in school, and to work hard. They need to pay attention in class and read and practice. Our responsibility is to get them to school on time and their responsibility is to learn.

*Mrs. O: Trato de hacerle ver la oportunidad que ellos tienen acá en esta nación de superarse. Desde que tienen la oportunidad de estudiar, no pueden ellos decir que no puedo seguir porque no tengo apoyo de nadie, ¿verdad? Porque si lo tienen lo único que se necesita es esfuerzo.*

I try to make them see the opportunity that they have here in this country to improve themselves. Since they have the opportunity to study, they can't say they cannot continue

because they don't have support from anyone, right? Because they have it, all it takes is effort.

The value and respect for schools' expectations present in parents' shared stories is evidenced by Valdes' (1996) statements that Latino parents strive to meet schools' expectations for their children. As illustrated by the parents in this study, Spanish-speaking Latino parents, independent of their knowledge of academic content and language proficiency, strongly emphasized the importance of education (Turney & Kao, 2009). In contrast to portrayals of Latino parents showing a lack of interest in their children's education, Latino families value education and see themselves as a key component in their children's education.

Participating parents demonstrated how invested they are in meeting daily attendance and homework expectations while showing gratitude for opportunities provided by the school, such as daily meals and parent-teacher conferences. By attending to these aspects of school expectations, parents were promoting the school as a valuable part of their children's lives as they continue to learn to stay involved and informed in their children's education.

### **The "Right Path"**

Another central emerging subtheme was the parents' desire to steer their children onto the "right path." Parents mentioned that they were responsible for their children's understanding of moral values and valuable experiences learned through life. Their goal was to continuously teach their children to make life choices that would positively impact them and their future. Core values such as respecting others, distinguishing right from wrong, and learning from others' mistakes were at the top of their efforts in being involved in their children's lives, and subsequently their education.

Embedding core values in their children's way of thinking and setting examples of positive and empowering values as their children's first teachers in life were identified as crucial aspects of their role in their children's education. Teaching their children to be respectful individuals was part of this notion of an essential foundation for life success. Parents expressed their belief that a strong moral foundation could keep children on the "right path" independent of the challenges they would face in life.

*Mrs. C: Siempre queremos que los niños sean buenos niños, creo que todos los padres quieren que sus hijos vayan por el buen camino. Tomar buenas decisiones a veces no es fácil, pero debemos creer que los valores que enseñamos a nuestros hijos en casa los ayudarán en la escuela y en la vida.*

We always want children to be good children, I think all parents want their children to be on the right track. Making good choices is not easy sometimes, but we have to believe that the values we teach our children at home will help them at school and in life.

*Mrs. O: Mis hijas han estado en algo muy diferente que en lo que es en nuestro país. Ellas dicen que no ven la diferencia. Pero yo les digo a ellos que sí, hay una gran diferencia, inclusive en lo que se requiere. Los valores morales. En nuestro país, un alumno no podía faltarle al respeto a una maestra. Mi hija me dice que antes los explotaba, antes los abusaban. Y yo le digo no, no había abuso, era respeto. Eran valores en los cuales yo puedo observar que hoy en día se ha perdido mucho eso.*

My daughters have been in something very different from what is in our country. They say they don't see this difference. But I tell them that there is a big difference, even in what is required. Moral values. In our country, a student could not disrespect a teacher.

My daughter tells me that before we were exploited, that before, they abused students.

And I tell them no, there was no abuse, it was respect. There were values, which today I see that much of that has been lost.

Parents in this study also emphasized the importance of orienting their children, as early as at the elementary level, to surround themselves with other children who shared their family core values and were supportive of their academic progress. As described by most of the participating parents, assisting their children in identifying, building, and nurturing positive relationships was also a parent's responsibility. Aside from hoping their children would not get easily influenced or distracted by others from their learning experiences at school, parents hoped that this early life lesson would guide them in staying away from bad influences in the future.

*Mrs. C: Le explico a él que tiene que seleccionar sus amigos, seleccionar las cosas que va a ver en el teléfono, seleccionar todo lo bueno para él de muchas cosas malas. Y uno decide que lo que quiere, como le digo a él, yo le pongo las opciones. Le digo a él que hay cosas buenas y hay cosas malas. Él decide qué camino quiere. Pero durante los estudios y cuando pasa un día conmigo en casa, todo tiene que ver cosas buenas, cosas positivas.*

I explain to him that he has to choose his friends, choose what he is going to see on his phone, choose everything that is good for him out of many bad things. And one decides what one wants, as I tell him, I give him options. I tell him that there are good things and there are bad things. He decides which path he wants to take. But while he studies and during the days that he is at home with me, he has to do good things, positive things.

Mrs. E: *La participación de los padres significa mucho en la vida de un niño porque a veces los niños están en una edad donde son muy rebeldes y si un padre no los educa para estar con buenos niños, tienen que hacerlo bien, porque aquí no hay que perder el tiempo, hay que aprovechar todas las oportunidades para hacerlo bien y para estudiar duro.*

Parent participation means a lot in the life of a child because sometimes children are at an age where they are very rebellious and if a parent does not educate them to be with good children, they have to do it well, because here there is no time to waste, you have to take every opportunity to do well and to study hard.

Parents consistently reported the importance of their role in their children's education as they taught them core values and key life lessons. Participating parents shared these values and lessons as the foundation their children needed to be successful at school. Parents explained that only after embedding these core values and lessons would the school be able to attend to their children's academic needs and promote academic success. The conclusions drawn from Olivos (2006) and Romo and Falbo's (1996) work reflect the findings of this study as parents shared that their involvement and commitment to their children's education revolve around the use of advice from their own experiences in life. Participating parents pointed out the importance of their role in building their children's values and guiding them through the decision-making process, impacting their success in life. Lopez (2001) highlighted the role of Latino parents in teaching their children values and life lessons, where Latino parents view teaching core values as essential to education. Ensuring their children success through nurturing independence, fostering personal responsibility and good judgment, and encouraging self-reliance were additional characteristics of involved parents demonstrated by the parents in this study.



### **Theme Three: Social and Cultural Capital Exchanges with the School**

The parents in this study maintained a low socioeconomic status. However, their struggles to be involved in school were not due to the lack of resources, as shown in earlier research on parent involvement in the 1960s (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1987; Moles, 1992, Thomas-Lester, 2017; Turney & Kao, 2009). Instead, their struggles were associated with them not sharing in the cultural and social capital to engage that the school expects them to have and that middle- and upper-class families have (Bourdieu, 1977). The findings of this study parallel Coleman's (1990) application of social capital to education and the findings of Lareau's (1989) study on cultural capital, demonstrating how it shapes parental involvement. The five emerged sub-themes discussed in this section consist of: (1) Social Capital, (2) Cultural capital, (3) Parents' efforts in observing other parents to learn how to navigate the American school system, (4) Level of confidence to advocate and support children in academic content, and (5) Redefining the parent's role.

#### **Social Capital**

As stated in Chapter 2, *social capital* refers to a social bond that facilitates the achievement of goals as an individual or group (Coleman, 1990), and it "refers to features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks that can improve the efficiency of society..." (Putnam, 1993, p.167). For parents, this can mean connections with individuals with shared knowledge, values, and behavior consisting of trust and cooperation for action. The parents in this study displayed a strong bond and trust in one another as they learned to navigate the American school system relying on each other's experiences with the school system to enroll their children in school. Although many of the participating parents shared that they had built a level of trust with their children's teacher and other school personnel through the use of the

school-wide text-messaging system, they reported the challenges of engaging in more in-depth conversations due to language barriers and other obstacles. Parents suggested improving communication between home and school. They also expressed great gratitude for all the efforts from their children's schools to include Spanish-speaking Latino parents.

*Mrs. O: Desde que yo llegué a la escuela, pues una maestra me brindó todo el apoyo, inclusive hasta para llenar los papeles que tenía que hacer. Ella fue una gran ayuda y ha sido una gran ayuda hasta hoy. Para nosotros como familia, es muy importante. Y pues inclusive le digo a mi esposo me gustaría que hubiera más maestras como ella. Entonces para mí ha sido muy excelente eso de que haya alguien que pueda hablar español para que pueda ser ayuda para una persona que no, que no sabe el idioma. Aunque no en todas las escuelas se ve eso. Hay unas escuelas que solamente es inglés y a veces, te digo, los padres hispanos van, pero si no saben el idioma, no saben nada de lo que están diciendo ahí.*

Since I arrived at the school, one teacher was very helpful, even when filling out the paperwork that I had to send in. She was a great help and has been very helpful to this day. For us, as a family, this is very important. And well, I even tell my husband that I wish there were more teachers like her. So, for me it has been great to have someone who can speak Spanish to help those who do not, who do not know the language. Although this doesn't happen in every school. There are some schools that only speak English and sometimes, let me tell you, Hispanic parents go there, but if they don't know the language, they don't know understand anything that is being said.

Participating parents not only identified with their school's educational mission but also the values instilled in their children in regards to responsibility and behavior by their children's

teachers. However, there was a disconnect between parents and school traditions and expectations for parents' involvement in their children's education. Some of this disconnect resulted from parents having language barriers, varying level of self-efficacy, lack of knowledge of schools' policies and expectations, and feeling unequipped to support their children's learning based on their level of education. These challenges shaped the depth and frequency of interactions among the participating parents and their children's school. A few parents were able to overcome some of the obstacles limiting their communication and involvement, which resulted in having a positive effect on their attitudes toward the school. Mrs. M, Mrs. N, and Mrs. P stated that after living in the United States for over 10 years, they learned to be involved in their children's learning and connect with their teachers. Mrs. O and Mrs. Q shared that because they had other family members in the country who helped them settle once they moved, they felt at ease reaching out to their children's teacher and school for support in building an active home-school partnership. Connecting with their children's school allowed for a level of collaboration to bolster their children's academic success that they were not accustomed to doing in their home country. As these interactions increased, so did the parents' level of trust in the teacher and vice-versa.

Other parents reported that their limitations and heavy reliance on the assistance of other family and community members to connect with the school took a toll on their involvement. Participating parents shared that they were open to learning and welcome any additional guidance to better support their children's academic progress, including becoming learners themselves. Their desire to help their children was noted within each shared experience, as Mrs. N explained:

*Para apoyar el éxito académico de mis hijos yo tengo que aprender más inglés. Aprender más inglés, y lo que yo tengo que hacer, como documentos de la escuela. Porque este día hay palabras que a veces ellos no entienden y hoy tengo que buscar la manera de que ellos me entiendan y entiendan las tareas. Ellos necesitan mi ayuda y quiero poder ayudar.*

To encourage the academic success of my children, I have to learn more English. Learn more English, and whatever else I have to do, like school paperwork. Because now, sometimes there are words that they don't understand so I have to find a way for them to understand me and the tasks. They need my help and I want to be able to help.

Research shows that social capital in education is the basis of home-school partnerships and the foundation of active connections between parents and teachers. From trust and mutual understanding, to shared values and behavior binding the members of a community, collaboration and cooperation are formed which can significantly impact children's academic success. Essentially, networks lead to social capital which affects educational achievement; therefore, parents in this study aimed to further develop their home-school partnerships, overcoming their own limitations as a way to support their children's learning. Parents in this study acknowledged the benefits of key elements of social capital such as social networks, information, trust, and norms of reciprocity which can determine a child's opportunities, choices, and educational success (Putnam, 2001). Therefore, parents' involvement efforts and their willingness to provide their children with guidance and a nurturing home environment were not only a characteristic of their interest in their children's educational success but also characteristics of being good and caring parents.

### **Cultural Capital**

According to Lareau (1987), *cultural capital* refers to cultural elements that influence interactions between individuals and groups. Lareau also stated that cultural aspects of parents' lives could facilitate how they respond to requests from teachers and schools for involvement. Bourdieu (1977b) argued that schools vary in how they bring out the cultural resources of parents, teachers, and community members. Consequently, these resources impact family-school relationships. Cultural elements become crucial for parents to play an active part in home-school partnerships since understanding the culture of their society or children's school gives parents the advantage of being able to understand and interact with people who are different from them.

Parents in this study explained that the language barrier was the main factor that limited their involvement in their children's education. Language is a cultural element essential to connecting with Spanish-speaking Latino parents and supporting their involvement. Parents also reported that their children's school adoption of a school-wide auto-translating text messaging system as the means of communication with all parents has positively facilitated and influenced their involvement at school. This form of eliminating the language barrier connected home and school, thus giving parents direct access to their children's education. This effort received positive feedback from all participating parents, who demonstrated a high level of gratitude for being able to communicate with their child's teacher and for feeling that their language and culture were welcome and respected at the school level. As a result, parents described feeling supported by the school and more inclined to attend the conferences and ask questions.

Parents also commented on the way information was shared with families. The information shared throughout the school year can be overwhelming for Spanish-speaking parents. Since translators and translated materials are not always readily available, not all

information transmitted is translated. This barrier hindered Spanish-speaking parents' efforts to attend to all the forms, deadlines, events, and their children's homework. As Mrs. N described:

*Lo que a mí me gustaría como madre es aprender inglés para ayudarlo más a él. O sea, ellos saben mi español y yo siento que no es impedimento para eso, pero para poder ser mejor en este país es aprendiendo inglés fluido, donde uno pueda defenderse bien y expresarse.*

What I would like as a mother is to learn English to help him more. So, they know how to speak my Spanish, so I feel that it is not an impediment to that, but in order to be better in this country, you have to learn fluent English, where one can defend oneself well and express oneself.

Another factor parents expressed to enhance the challenging task of understanding all information shared by the school is the number of platforms and applications they need to master to complete forms and make school-related payments. As their children's school increases the use of technology, an additional barrier between home and school has taken place. All parents described that although they are grateful for the 21st-century tools available in schools for their children, they did not grow up using the platforms and applications used by schools today. Parents reported that not knowing how to navigate these platforms and applications combined with their English language proficiency have hindered their involvement in their children's education. Mrs. B explained:

*Siento que puedo hablar con la maestra de mi hijo sobre mi hijo, pero noto que algunos padres como yo que hablan español, no lo hablan. Hablo con miembros de nuestra comunidad y hay muchas cosas que nos gustaría poder compartir y ayudar, pero no*

*sabemos cómo. Le comento algunas ideas a la maestra porque necesitamos ayuda con la computadora y los papeles. Para entender todo, ¿sabes?*

I feel like I can speak to my son's teacher about my son, but I notice that some parents that speak Spanish like me, don't. I talk to members of our community and there are many things we would like to be able to share and help with, but we don't know how. I tell the teacher a few ideas because we need help with the computer and paperwork. To understand everything, you know?

In addition, participating parents described being unfamiliar with the school's curriculum expectations and unable to support their children's learning. Some parents recalled instances where their children were completing tasks in third and fourth grades that they did not learn themselves until high school back in their home countries. Another common struggle mentioned was parents' reluctance to comply with teachers' requests to read to their children at home because they felt educationally inadequate to help with such tasks. Parents' understanding of curriculum expectations and their academic experiences impacted how they responded to requests of involvement made by their children's teachers.

Although schools had implemented a few initiatives to involve Spanish-speaking Latino parents, parents also highlighted that educators and educational leaders did not see or value parents' varied forms of cultural capital such as knowledge, attitudes, values, beliefs, customs, and traditions that make up their cultural identity. Parents' cultural capital must be considered as a key element to interacting and connecting when schools are formulating decisions such as parental-involvement efforts and expectations. It was evident that even amongst the parents in this study, their perception of the appropriate family-school relationship varied drastically. These differences in the expectations of Spanish-speaking Latino parents presented challenges for the

school to involve all parents and to meet the school's parental involvement policy and expectations.

### **Learning to Navigate the American School System**

As parents reflected on how they currently involve themselves in their children's education, it became evident how they often feel helpless when supporting and advocating for their children at school. All parents illustrated these feelings as part of their first experiences in the United States as their children began attending school. To address some of the challenges they faced, parents relied on other Spanish-speaking Latino parents to help them navigate the nuances of their new life, especially raising their children in a new country. Participating parents depended not just on the basic levels of communication where translation was required but also on understanding the next steps in the registration process, policy, and expectations as they enroll their children in school. Having a *helping hand* in a language they know made the challenges seem a bit smaller and made parents feel welcomed and supported.

*Mrs. E: Las costumbres nos unen porque hay bastantes hispanos, pero no de los mismos países. Vivimos como niños adaptándonos, así somos los adultos, convivimos y compartimos ideas porque estamos pasando por las mismas cosas.*

Traditions bring us together because there are quite a few Hispanics, but not from the same countries. We live like children, adapting, that's how adults are, living together and sharing ideas because we are going through the same things.

Parents reported how they aimed to be attentive, recall information, understand what they could do based on their abilities, and push themselves to learn to attend to the challenges their children would face. Reflected in Bandura's (1977, 1986) learning theory, in which attention, retention, reaction, and motivation are the four components of observational learning,



participating parents' desire to learn rested on their ability to observe others. Their overall involvement in children's school began with mimicking the Spanish-speaking Latino parents who provided them with guidance and support as they settled into their new life in America.

*Mrs. C: Yo pienso que lo único que a mí me gustaría como madre es aprender inglés para ayudarlo más a él. Ellos saben mi Español y yo siento que no es impedimento para eso, pero para poder ser mejor en este país es aprendiendo el Inglés fluido, donde uno pueda defenderse bien y expresarse.*

I think that the only thing I would like as a mother is to learn English to help him more. They know my Spanish and I feel that it is no obstacle for that, but in order to be better in this country, you must learn fluent English to the point where one can defend oneself well and express oneself.

Observational learning was a powerful learning method for participating parents. People learn from observing behaviors, attitudes, and reactions to those behaviors. According to Bandura (1977, 1986), human interaction significantly impacts learning, and behavior can vary and be determined based on the environment. Therefore, as parents interacted with other parents and teachers, they engaged in school activities, and their interactions played an important role in their level of involvement and their learning about schools' expectations of their engagement in school. In the concept of *reciprocal determinism*, Bandura (1977) argued that people influence their own lives through selections as they create and direct the course of their lives. Experience, furthermore, reflects a person's self-efficacy beliefs, competence, and self-regulatory abilities.

### **Levels of Self-Efficacy**

Another finding referred to the confidence level parents demonstrated when advocating for and supporting their children's learning. Parents' levels of self-efficacy appeared to be closely related to the number of years they have been living in the US, their English proficiency, and their perception of how their involvement efforts were valued by their children's teachers. Parents who are confident demonstrated efforts to advocate and support their children at school. In this study, five parents (50% of the sample) exhibited characteristics of a high level of self-efficacy such as awareness of most homework and school expectations and confidence in communicating with their children's teacher about their children's needs were evident in parents who are confident. These parents were not only familiar with most of the school expectations for homework and the behavior policy but also communicated often with the teacher to ask questions about their children's academic performance and ways they could improve. Parents were clear about their lack of content knowledge and English language proficiency. Still, they consistently reached out to the school to support and advocate for their children's academic needs. Another key characteristic of parents who are confident was how they had been in the United States the longest (between 5 to 15 years), compared to parents who are gaining confidence. Parents who are confident varied their involvement and interactions in the school. These parents believed that they were highly involved in their children's education and they described their responsibilities to their children at home and their level of participation at school attending parent-teacher conferences and school-wide events such as breakfast and lunch with parents and volunteering to assist at field days. These findings echo Harrison et al.'s (1997) findings, where they described that parents with a higher level of self-efficacy might not only increase their involvement at school but also become more actively engaged in their children's

education. Parents who are confident had high self-efficacy. This type of parental involvement aligns closely with the traditional or widely accepted definition of parental involvement efforts and expectations.

Parents who are gaining confidence displayed low self-efficacy to support and advocate for their children's academic needs. Five parents (50% of the sample) who were less confident exhibited characteristics of low to moderate self-efficacy. These parents differed from the other five parents in their level of confidence in their involvement and advocacy and support for their children's learning. Parents who are gaining confidence communicated a lack of awareness of homework and school expectations and explained that these factors were either due to their level of education or English language proficiency. As a result, they felt unequipped to support their children's learning; however, they attended parent-teacher conferences and expressed having high expectations for their children. Parents who are gaining confidence were considered newcomers. They had been in the United States for fewer than three years. These parents also expressed concern about their child's behavior, which they explained to be the focus of their inquiries when contacting the child's teacher. Academically, parents who are gaining confidence relied on the teacher to attend to their child's learning needs. They described being present during homework time but unable to assist. These parents were very concerned with their child's academic progress and demonstrated great efforts to motivate them to do well at school. They believed that parental involvement was not being bound to the school. Therefore, parents who are gaining confidence had low self-efficacy and made great efforts to motivate their children for school but felt unequipped to support and advocate for their children's academic needs due to their own limitations. The findings presented in this section align with Harrison et al.'s (1997) findings that parents might avoid getting involved when tasks appear challenging to parents and

they have low self-efficacy, they might avoid getting involved. This type of parental involvement does not align with the traditional or most widely accepted definition of parental involvement efforts and expectations. Whether or not a participating parent displays characteristics of confidence, all parents in this study were highly involved in their children's education but are not always in the way that educators perceived or valued involvement in school.

### **Redefining the Parent's Role**

Despite the level of self-efficacy of the participating parents, all parents displayed characteristics of good parenting and demonstrated the desire to improve their level of support for their children's learning and partnership with the school. Parents' role in their children's education relied heavily on their prior knowledge of their responsibilities towards their children's education and the understanding of parental involvement opportunities offered by the school. Parents demonstrated their aspirations for educational growth in American schools, such as knowing policy and available resources in their child's school to support their learning. Parents consistently mentioned efforts to become involved and gain knowledge to understand and assist their children with meeting school expectations beyond attendance and behavior. Learning English was another common topic in becoming better equipped to support their children in school. Whether participating parents are confident or gaining confidence, all parents shared that they felt that their own learning was essential to their role in supporting their children's education. Parents consciously and subconsciously become learners when they become involved in their children's education. Although learning can be a challenging task for many, parents embrace this role to support their children's success (Henderson, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, 1997).

Mrs. B: *Sé que si aprendo inglés puedo hacer más por mi familia, pero siento que necesito entender más para ayudar a mi hijo. Hay muchas cosas, trabajo de la escuela, que pide ayuda que no sé. Me gustaría ayudar, pero también necesito ayuda. Sé que la escuela y los maestros tienen mucho que hacer, pero me vendría bien una ayuda para ayudar a mi hijo. ¿Tal vez necesito volver a la escuela y aprender lo que él está aprendiendo? Solo quiero ayudarlo ahora, pero no puedo... Tal vez la escuela también pueda enseñarnos.*

I know that if I learn English, I can do more for my family, but I feel like I need to understand more to help my son. There are many things, like tasks from school, that he asks for help with that I don't know how to help. I would like to help but I need help too. I know the school and teachers have much to do, but I could use some help to help my son. Maybe I need to go back to school and learn everything he is learning? I just want to help him, but I can't... Maybe the school can teach us too.

Mrs. N: *En lo personal, enseño todo de manera hasta donde mi nivel académico me da, o tal vez por enseñanzas de la vida que uno va aprendiendo a lo largo de una serie, de lo que uno va mirando y lo que ha vivido. Pero, acá en los Estados Unidos, yo siento que necesito aprender mucho más para atender a mis hijos y a mi familia. No solamente el idioma, pero cosas en general. Yo tengo mucho que aprender.*

Personally, I teach everything as far as my academic level allows me to, or perhaps through life lessons that one learns through experiences, from what one watches and what one has lived. But, here in the United States, I feel that I need to learn much more to help

my children and my family. Not only the language but things in general. I have a lot to learn.

In one way or another, it was evident that participating parents wanted to further develop their ability to support their children's learning. Although the focus on areas to improve can vary from parent to parent, they want to help their children's schooling in areas such as learning English, academic content, and school expectations. The schools' non-traditional parental involvement efforts such as the text-messaging platform, received positive feedback from most parents. Even though the school attempted to involve parents in decision-making regarding their children's learning, it was challenging to make such decisions. Some parents reported that they felt unfit to do so, relying heavily on the opinions and guidance of their child's teacher and other school specialists to best support their children's academic growth. Most parents also depended on the affection of their children's teachers and other school staff to trust that the school has their children's well-being on academic progress at the forefront of their efforts and decision-making process.

Parents consistently mentioned language as the most challenging barrier to participating in their children's education, impacting their level of self-efficacy so they constantly questioned their ability to support their children, feeling unequipped and even unable to participate in school activities.

*Mrs. P: Si no hay existencia en español, cuesta comunicarse con alguien. Uno puede decir que no lo entienden, pero uno realmente no quiere decir. Usted llega a una conclusión tan simple: si habla uno es por cosas muy básicas, pero ya para para entrar en detalles sobre nuestros hijos, siempre toca decir en español... Yo creo que la escuela no hace limitaciones, pero las limitaciones que pone uno porque a veces por el miedo,*

*por el idioma o algo así no acepta asistir, como cuando piden voluntarios para alguna actividad o algo así.*

If there is no Spanish, it is difficult to communicate with someone. Or one can say but they don't understand, but one really does not want to say. You reach such a simple conclusion: if one speaks it is for very basic things, but to go into details about our children, we must always say it in Spanish... I believe that the school does not impose limitations, but there are limitations that one imposes on oneself because sometimes, out of fear, because of the language or something like that, one does not agree to attend, like when they ask for volunteers for some activity or something like that.

However, language was not the only barrier challenging parents' involvement in their children's education. Parents explained daily challenges preventing their participation which included long working hours, not having a vehicle to get to their children's school, and the use of unfamiliar online platforms. The disconnect between parents and school was evident in parents shared experiences with school event scheduled during the day and the implementation of online platforms without guidance and training.

*Mrs. M: Es posible que muchos papás latinos no participen porque muchos trabajan y algunos no saben manejar. Y este es el punto. Conozco a mucha gente que no sabe conducir. Entonces, necesitan transporte o esas cosas para participar en la escuela de sus hijos. Otra cosa es la tecnología o aplicación, aplicaciones o cosas que la escuela usa para los documentos. No todos los padres saben cómo usar estas cosas, por lo que esta puede ser la razón por la que no participan o no responden a las cosas en la escuela.*

Many Latino parents may not participate because many work and some don't know how to drive. And that is a big point. I know a lot of people who don't know how to drive. So, they need like transportation or something like that to participate at their children's school. Another thing is the technology or apps, apps or things that the school uses for documents. Not every parent knows how to use these things so this may be the reason they don't participate or respond to things at school.

*Mrs. Q: Pues, en la escuela no me veo mucho, la verdad, porque hay muchas limitaciones, hay padres que no tienen limitaciones. Yo, por ejemplo, aunque quiera participar en la escuela de mi hija, no puedo por muchas razones. Pues una de ellas es porque tendría que manejar, cosa que yo no sé. Y eso, pues me impide muchas cosas. Mira, para asistir a la conferencia de mi hija, tengo que caminar. Salgo de mi casa una hora antes para poder llegar a tiempo. Hago el sacrificio porque quiero estar pendiente de mi hija en la escuela.*

Well, at school I really don't see myself there much because there are many limitations, there are parents who don't have limitations. For example, even though I want to participate in my daughter's school, I can't for many reasons. Well, one of them is because I would have to drive, and I don't know how to. And that, well, prevents me from many things. Look, to attend my daughter's meetings, I have to walk. I leave my home an hour early so that I can make it there on time. I make the sacrifice because I want to know how my daughter is doing at school.

Based on the data collected and analyzed, parents were involved and assumed a parental role in their children's education that met some of the traditional parental involvement efforts



expected by schools in the United States while displaying other levels of involvement not usually recognized as types of parental involvement. The need for additional support for parents to become more actively involved based on the school's parental-involvement policy was also evident in supporting Spanish-speaking Latino parents of MLs regarding involvement in their children's academic growth.

### Summary

The findings in this study suggest ways that call into question the traditionally recognized and accepted definition of parental involvement and the crude representation of Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs' level of involvement in their children's education. Parents in this study defied previous conceptions of Latino parents' lack of care and involvement. Historically, Latino parents have been portrayed as uncaring or uninterested in their children's schooling (Delgado-Gaitan, 2001, 2004; Haro, 2004). The parents in this study provide an opportunity to reshape and broaden the concepts of parental involvement.

Spanish-speaking Latino parents in this study consistently described types of parental involvement they used to support their children's education, displaying characteristics of highly involved good parents. Through the lens of the participating parents, parental involvement goes beyond the school. In fact, most involvement in their children's education did not include many school activities or participation in the school decision-making process. Instead, parents provided detailed information on how they viewed involvement through concepts outside the school. While the traditional definition of involvement for their children's school was not common knowledge to the parents in this study and revolved around information, participation, and advocacy, parents in this study defined *involvement* as caring for their child, providing guidance and support, and making sacrifices to improve their children's quality of life.

Participating parents' length of time living in the US, their level of comfort with English, and having older children who had already completed school not only had a significant impact on their experiences with their children's school and their involvement in their children's education but also shaped parents' perceptions of what their involvement in school should be. The more parents were exposed to English, the more comfortable they became with the language, and the more confident they were in getting involved in school. The same was true for parents with older children who had gone through school. Parents' experiences navigating the US educational school system not only shaped how they perceived their involvement but also influenced their level of involvement in their younger children's education.

The findings on parents' perceptions of their roles in their children's education provide the foundation for the level of involvement they commit to. Parents viewed educating their children as a shared responsibility with the school while there were distinct roles that each of them played. However, these responsibilities worked parallel to each other in supporting their children's learning. Therefore, these findings present pivotal insight into the involvement of Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs in their children's education. *Social capital* is a positive network of association, which connects individuals with shared knowledge, values, and behavior consisting of trust and cooperation for action (Bourdieu, 1980; Coleman, 1990; Putnam et al., 1993). Meanwhile, *cultural capital* refers to cultural elements that influence interactions between individuals and groups (Bourdieu, 1977b; Lareau, 1987). Both significantly impact family-school relationships. Participating parents' shared experiences illustrated language barriers, parents' level of self-efficacy, challenges navigating the U.S. school system, lack of knowledge of schools' parental involvement policy and expectations, and feeling unequipped to

support their children's learning based on their level of education. As a result, their perception of the appropriate family-school relationship varied drastically.

Next in Chapter Five, I present the conclusions drawn from the findings discussed in this chapter and a discussion of the implications for action and recommendations for future research related to Spanish-speaking Latino parents' perceptions of their roles in their children's education.

**CHAPTER FIVE. IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS**

*“None of us, including me, ever do great things. But we can all do small things, with great love, and together we can do something wonderful.”*

*- Mother Teresa*

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to understand the perceptions of Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary multilingual learners (MLs) as to their role in the educational process and the factors influencing their involvement in their children's education. In this chapter, I present an overview of this study, including the problem and purpose statements, the research method and design, the research questions that guided the study, and the conclusions drawn from the data collected.

In this study, I reviewed the challenges of Latino parental involvement and deepened the interpretations of the existing literature. Based on the findings, I offer possible implications for the implementation of policy and practices concerning parental involvement for Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs at the district and school levels. I also identify the limitations of this study. To further the understanding of Spanish-speaking Latino parents' perceptions of their experiences participating in their school participation, their role as parents, and the factors influencing their involvement in their children's learning, I suggest potential topics for future research. Last, concluding remarks summarize and close the chapter.

**Summary of the Study**

This qualitative case study, I explored how Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs perceived their role in their children's education. This study was grounded in the literature and focused on the barriers to parental involvement of Spanish-speaking Latino parents. I described how I designed and conducted a qualitative case study, which consisted of

10 Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs who were enrolled in an elementary school in the 2021-2022 school year in a Southeastern school district of South Carolina. The methodology and design of the study incorporated the conceptual theoretical frameworks of social capital (Bourdieu, 1980; Coleman, 1990), cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977b; Lareau, 2011), and social learning (Bandura, 1977). This study considered what is already known about Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs in the area of home-school partnership, how parents' perceptions influenced the way in which they were involved in their children's education. In the next sections, I review the problem, purpose, methodology, and findings of this qualitative case study.

### **Problem**

The level of parent participation varies among schools with some schools encountering many challenges to engage parents in critical conversations about the academic needs of their children while other schools have parents actively involved at school and at home with activities such as homework and school projects (Shelton & Epstein, 2005). The most challenging aspect of building a strong parent-school relationship is to find the most effective way to connect and sustain parental involvement with Spanish-speaking Latino parents.

According to Eccles and Harold (1996), understanding why parents are not as involved at school and in their children's education can be explained by a number of reasons. Therefore, gaining the understanding of parents' school related challenges can help schools provide the necessary support to encourage parental involvement, so that policies implemented may not restrict parents from becoming more involved. (Jefferson, 2014). Therefore, the purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs perceive their involvement in their children's education.

### **Methodology and Research Questions**

A case study research method (Creswell & Creswell, 2005, 2018) was the primary inquiry and tool that embraced constructive and transformative perspectives to guide my research and address the research questions. To implement this design, I conducted open-ended, in-depth, virtual, semi-structured interviews and audio-recorded them with each of the participants. The sites selected for this study were a local Latino church and market within the school district. I selected these sites since they are essential pillars of connection and support for the Latino community. I also reviewed documents such as district documentation on parental involvement policy and other home-school communication action plans to triangulate the data and establish my findings.

The data collection for this study took place in April 2022 and ended in May 2022. The process included a thorough examination of all participants' responses to the interviews and notes taken during each interview, which provided additional information to participants' responses. I examined all available information on school-wide parental-involvement efforts such as shared documents; procedures; and communication tools, including state parental-involvement policy. Transcribing, coding interviews, and collecting observational data took place from May 2022 through July 2022. Participants provided feedback on transcriptions during member-checking throughout the data-collection process. To ensure consistency between the data and identified themes, I reviewed the transcripts multiple times throughout the data coding and analysis phases. The emerging themes were then analyzed to determine the major findings in response to the research's overall guiding question and sub-questions:

1. How do Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary multilingual learners define and perceive their involvement in their children's education?

- c. In a school that is expected to actively involve parents, how do Spanish-speaking Latino parents view their role in the educational process of their children?
- d. How do parents' stories of parental involvement relate (or not) to social and cultural capital exchanges with the school?

In the next section, I discuss the findings in relation to these research questions, which include the following main themes:

- a) Definitions and perceptions: How Spanish-speaking Latino parents' perception of their role in their children's education mold the way they define and perceive parental involvement,
- b) View of parent roles: How Spanish-speaking Latino parents view their role and the different ways in which they are involved in the educational process of their children in a school that is expected to actively involve parents, and
- c) Exchanges with the school: How parents' stories of parental involvement relate (or not) to social and cultural capital exchanges with the school.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The findings in this study suggest ways that call into question the traditionally recognized definition of *parental involvement* and the crude representation of Spanish-speaking Latino parents' level of involvement in their children's education. Latino parents have historically been portrayed as uncaring or uninterested in their children's schooling (Delgado-Gaitan, 2001, 2004; Haro, 2004). However, the parents in this study defied previous conceptions of Latino parents' lack of care and involvement, and the data provide evidence to reshape and broaden the concepts of parental involvement. Three major themes emerged from the data analysis: (1) definition and perceptions on how Spanish-speaking Latino parents perceive their role in their children's education mold the way they define parental involvement; (2) how Spanish-speaking Latino

parents view the different ways in which they are involved in the educational process of their children in school, and (3) how parents' stories of parental involvement relate (or not) to social and cultural capital exchanges with the school.

### **Definitions and Perceptions**

Contrary to the historical portrayal of Latino parents as uninvolved and not caring (Brock & Edmunds, 2010), the perceptions of Spanish-speaking Latino parents having low levels of involvement are the results of how parental roles are defined in mainstream society. Latino parents' perceptions of their roles differ drastically compared with the expectations held in American schools. I found that the involvement of the Latino parents consisted of areas that are outside of what is traditionally recognized as involvement in schools, which goes beyond parents' participation in school-based activities. Even though all parents mentioned school-based activities in this study, it was not the foundation for Latino parental involvement.

In regard to the research question guiding this study, parents shared experiences of their involvement and perception of their role in their children's education, which illustrated the disconnect between the traditional definition of parental involvement and the parental-involvement efforts shared by Spanish-speaking Latino parents in their children's education. In all interviews, parents described their involvement with high levels of interest, and they indicated a great deal of sacrifice on their part. As suggested in the literature, teachers often interpret low levels of traditional parental involvement as a lack of caring (Haro, 2004), and therefore, Latino parents are often perceived not to care about their children's education. However, Latino parents' understanding of parental involvement differs from traditional expectations. Their involvement consists of (1) being responsible parents as they care for their children, (2) providing guidance and support, and (3) making sacrifices to improve their children's quality of life. The definitions



of *parental involvement* shared by participating parents in this study challenge the traditional definition and provide evidence for the concept to be broadened, as indicated by Lopez and Stoelting (2010).

### **View of Parent Roles**

The first sub-question guiding this research explored how Spanish-speaking Latino parents view their role in the educational process of their children's education in a school that is expected to actively involve parents. Participating parents described their role in their child's education in several ways. The focus of their responses, as noted earlier, was not directly connected to their children's school; instead, it addressed other aspects of their children's lives such as the home, their well-being, beliefs, school, and life choices.

In general, the parents who were interviewed reflected on what they believed to be their responsibilities toward their children's learning and the school. They focused on the expectations, they set for themselves which, for the most part, drastically differed from the expectations set by the school. The findings of this study aligned with the findings of Shah and Marshall (2005) and Rodriguez-Brown (2010) in that there seemed to be a lack of understanding between the home and the school expectations and involvement. Parents' reflection and consideration of their roles in their children's education were specific to (1) ensuring that their children have the basic necessities to live a healthy life, (2) establishing home routines, (3) dividing the responsibility of educating their children, (4) communicating with their children's teacher, (5) instilling the value of schooling in their children, and (6) guiding their children towards the "right path." Providing care, love, moral values, and beliefs for children is often how Latino parents view their roles in their children's lives, while schools should provide academic education. These different views or perceptions of home and school obligations explain why

Latino parents feel uncertain when they are asked to take on certain duties that they believe are the responsibilities of the school.

### **Exchanges with the School**

In consideration of the last research sub-question, how parents' stories of parental involvement relate (or not) to social and cultural capital exchanges with the school, the challenges to meet parental-involvement expectations highlighted the need for change. In spite of the low socioeconomic status of parents in this study, their struggles to be involved in school were not due to the lack of resources, (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1987; Moles, 1992; Thomas-Lester, 2017; Turney & Kao, 2009). Instead, their challenges were associated with the inability of educators and educational leaders to recognize or value Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs' varied forms of social and cultural capital to engage in school at the same expected level as middle- and upper-class students (Bourdieu, 1977). The findings of this study parallel Coleman's (1990) application of social capital to education and Lareau's (1989) study on cultural capital, demonstrating how it shapes parental involvement.

There was a disconnect between parents and school traditions and expectations for parents' involvement in their children's education. Some of this disconnect resulted from language barriers, parents' level of self-efficacy, lack of knowledge of schools' parental involvement policy and expectations, and feeling unequipped to support their children's learning based on their level of education. In general, this parental misapprehension shaped the depth and frequency of their interactions with their children's school. Parents' beliefs about their limitations as well as their reliance on the assistance of other family and community members to connect with the school and support their children's learning took a toll on their involvement.

The language barrier was the main factor limiting parents' involvement in their children's school. However, the school-wide adoption of an auto-translating text messaging system for parent communication positively facilitated and influenced their involvement at school, and parents described feeling supported by the school and more inclined to ask questions. Parents who were somewhat comfortable with English but preferred to receive information and communicate with their children's school in Spanish were more confident and involved in their children's education. Less confident parents were not comfortable with English which drastically limited their involvement in their children's education and communication with the school.

Another factor that increased the challenging task of parents becoming more involved in their children's education was understanding all the information shared by the school. There were a number of platforms and applications they need to master to complete forms and make school-related payments. Parents reported that not knowing how to navigate these platforms and applications combined with their level of English language proficiency had hindered their involvement. Similar struggles were present in parents' reluctance to comply with teachers' requests to read to their children at home because they felt educationally inadequate to help with such tasks. Parents' understanding of curriculum expectations and their academic experiences impacted how they responded to requests made by their children's teachers. Participating parents' desire to understand rested on their ability to learn through observation where their behavior, communication efforts, and overall involvement. This process began by mimicking the Spanish-speaking Latino parents who provided guidance and support as they settled into the new life in America.

Based on parents' responses, two levels of self-efficacy emerged regarding advocacy and support for their children's learning: parents who are confident and parents who are gaining

confidence. Whether a participating parent displayed characteristics of a parent who is confident or a parent who is gaining confidence, all parents in this study were highly involved in their children's education, but educators did not always recognize or value their type of involvement in school.

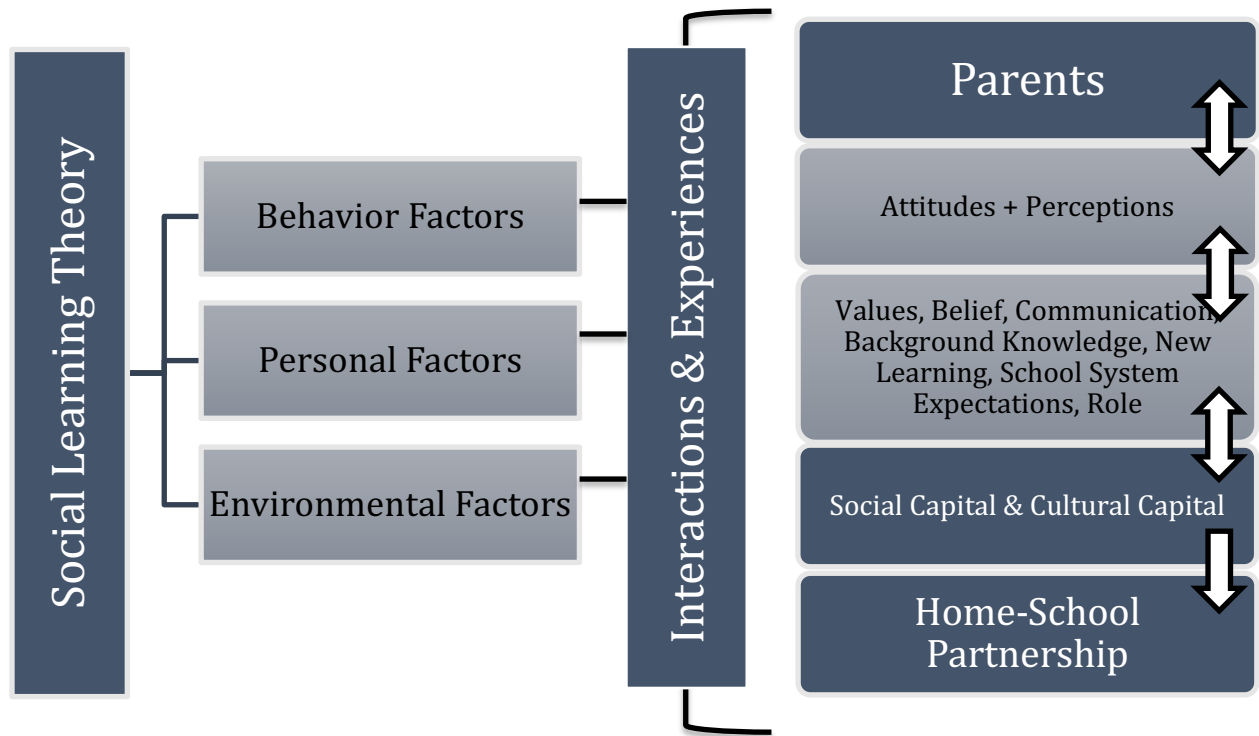
### **Contributions to Theories**

The tenets of social capital, cultural capital, and social learning theories were well supported by the findings of this study. This theoretical lens closely represented the participating parents' shared stories and experiences during the virtual interviews and the emerging themes throughout parents' view of their role and the different ways they were involved in their children's education. Figure 5.1 illustrates how home-school partnerships were derived from a continuous two-way between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental influences and self (social learning theory), the acquisition of social capital and cultural capital from values acquired from childhood, often unconsciously, and other forms of capital such as economics within a site of social interactions such as a school. In addition, how learned social behavior appears to have a significant impact on how a person interacts with others and an institution.

### **Social Capital**

The principles of social capital, which provide insight to examine how Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs perceive their role in their children's education, were supported by the findings of this study. As Putnam (1993) observed, *social capital* "refers to features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks that can improve the efficiency of society..." (p. 167). The dynamic nature of social capital (Coleman, 1990) was emphasized by the experiences of the Latino parents in this study, which provided insight into their interactions and connections.

**Figure 5.1 - Social Capital, Cultural Capital, and Social Learning Theories as a Lens for Parental Involvement Data Analysis**



Parents' shared experiences revealed that their understanding and commitment to their children's academic success came from pre-learned notions of their past experiences with schools in their home countries. These preconceived ideas shaped the depth and frequency of their interactions with their children's school. Many obstacles posed challenges in their communication with the school, but as their interactions increased, so did the parents' level of trust in the teacher and vice-versa. Connecting with their children's school allowed for a level of collaboration to support their children's academic needs that they were not accustomed to in their home country. Aligned with Trainor's (2010) findings, parents perceived social capital as necessary for their participation. Hence, Spanish-speaking Latino parents relied on other family

members or members of the Latino community to reach out to their children's teachers and schools. These family and community members were parents' social networks and provided them with information and opportunities to get involved. This behavior was evident in all parents' shared experiences whether they had been living in the U.S. for a short or long period of time. These relationships with family and community members were converted to social capital as they were used to accomplish a home-school connection (Murray et. al., 2020), which for participating parents meant the ability to register their children, complete forms to allow or deny their participation, and attend a parent-teacher conference, to name a few. Although participating parents have a *bonding social capital*, which is characterized by relationships with their own peers, the goal of home-school partnerships is to form *bridging social capital* as parents form relationships with members outside their social network such as the school (Putnam, 2001).

### **Cultural Capital**

Bourdieu (1977) argued that parents possess cultural capital; they transmit cultural capital to their children, and their children assimilate this cultural capital and convert it into academic success. Guided by this concept, cultural capital is crucial for parents to play an active part in home-school partnerships since understanding the culture of their society or children's school, gives them the ability to understand and interact with people who are different from them. Parents' understanding and perceptions of their roles in their children's education impact family-school relationships. When schools do not recognize or value Latino parents' varied forms of cultural capital, the connection, and partnership between home and school become one-sided. As a result, parents take more of a receiving role rather than an active contributing role in their children's school. This limited role was evident in all participating parents' shared experiences as they explained their communication with the school was a way to stay up-to-date with their

children's progress, but it included no meaningful exchange of knowledge between home and school.

The school took initiative to implement tools to bridge the language barrier with Spanish-speaking families creating a more welcoming and supporting environment for Latino parents. This implementation, resulted in parents becoming more inclined to attend conferences and ask questions. However, Latino parents still did not feel that other aspects of their cultural identity were taken into account. The school's ability to activate cultural capital and the way in which it is activated influence its value in how they interact with parents (Bourdieu, 1977; Lareau et. al, 2004). Despite the school's perceived culturally inclusive effort, not all aspects of cultural capital and cultural elements of Spanish-speaking Latino parents were illustrated in participating parents' interactions with their children's school. This again demonstrated how the quality and nature of the implementation of culturally inclusive efforts are critical in determining not only its effectiveness but also influencing home-school partnerships (Lareau & Erin, 1999).

### **Social Learning Theory**

As social factors contribute to social interactions, Bandura's social learning theory (1977) provided insight to examine how Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs perceived their role and the factors influencing their involvement in their children's education. According to Bandura, a person's behavior influences or is influenced by a continuous two-way interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental influences. As a result, a person's identity is built through observations and interactions with others and the environment. Just as much of a person's behavior plays a significant role in influencing the environment; similarly, the environment can influence the behavior of a person. First, people learn from observing behaviors, attitudes, and the results of those behaviors; therefore, observational learning

contributes significantly to how parents interact with their children's schools. Participating parents relied heavily on other family and Latino community members to communicate with the school. In essence, they modeled ways to interact with the school, which was consequently internalized by participating parents. Whether or not parents continue to interact the way they first observed others, these initial encounters shaped the way they interact with their children's school. When parents work in partnership with other parents and teachers as they engage in school activities, observational learning can play an important role in parent involvement in learning and understanding schools' expectations of parental involvement in school.

Another important aspect in building and cultivating parental involvement is understanding that one's belief in self could affect effort; determination; and the selection, attempt, and completion of a task (Bandura, 1995). When parents described feeling unequipped to communicate with their children's teacher due to their level of English language proficiency and the lack of knowledge of the school curriculum, they spoke about their self-efficacy. It is imperative to reflect on the impact and development of self-efficacy, particularly in teachers and parents. Self-efficacy bonds self-belief and goal setting. If parents' level of confidence is low and tasks appear challenging or beyond their comfort zone, they may avoid getting involved in the way that is expected of them (Harrison et al., 1997). On the other hand, when parents feel more confident, they can complete a task and may increase their level of participation (Corkett & Benevides, 2011). An increased level of interactions from parents who are confident resulted in high levels of self-efficacy.

Finally, behavior can vary and be determined based on the environment (Bandura, 1977, 1986). The environment through modeling, instruction, and social influences also impacts a person and his or her reaction, depending on the individual's personality and even physical



characteristics. As participating parents described their children's school as a welcoming environment for Spanish-speaking Latino parents based on how they were treated with respect and that the school made efforts to accommodate their language needs, it was evident that parents' perception of the school influenced their level of interaction with their children's teacher and overall school staff. Petrick's (2005) findings are evidence that social learning plays a significant role in framing the nature and purpose of Latino parents' involvement in their children's school. Establishing collaboration through initiatives that are culturally inclusive is critical for the effectiveness of parental involvement (Petrick, 2005).

### **Surprising Findings**

Participating parents took extraordinary measures to make sure their children got to school, and they attended parent-teacher conferences and other school-wide events despite being perceived as uninvolved or lacking care for their children's education. Several parents had to make elaborate drop-off and pick-up arrangements with other family and Latino community member to get their children to and from school until they were approved to ride the bus which usually took up to two weeks. Parents described dropping their children off in the middle of the night at friends' homes in the community before their work shift so that the children could catch the bus. Mrs. Q also shared that she walked an hour each way, to and from school, to attend parent-teacher conferences and school-wide events such as breakfast and lunch day with parents. These parents were committed to their children and willing to do whatever it took to support their education.

### **Consideration of Findings in View of the Existing Research**

In this section, I identify the contributions of this study to existing literature on the parental involvement of Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs. Chapter Two of

this dissertation provided a review of the literature used to pinpoint the problem studied and the gaps that emphasized a need for additional research. In particular, there was limited information on how Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs perceive their role in their children's education.

### **Building Self-Efficacy Through Cultural Awareness**

The findings of this study highlighted the different levels of parents' self-efficacy regarding their ability to communicate with the school and the importance of building schools' cultural awareness in cultivating home-school partnerships. These factors were key influencers of participating parents' interactions with their children's school. Parents with moderate to high level of self-efficacy or those who are confident initiated communication with the school more often, independent of their lack of content knowledge and English language proficiency. These findings are consistent with literature suggesting that the higher the level of a person's self-efficacy, the more active a person will be (Reed, 2020). In contrast, parents with low to moderate level of self-efficacy or parents who are gaining confidence displayed characteristics of being involved but did not initiate interactions with the school. In fact, the efforts and interactions with the school of parents who are gaining confidence seem to not directly align with the school's expectation for involvement. These findings were consistent with the literature indicating that a person with lower self-efficacy might not complete a task that challenges them out of their comfort zone (Pajares, 2006). All participating parents were highly involved and displayed characteristics of being "good parents" in ways that went beyond the traditional definition of involvement or perceived as involvement in American schools. Their involvement was focused on ensuring their children were present at school and were well-behaved, guiding and supporting their children to do their best at school, and making good choices such as building positive

friendships at school. With these in mind, school educators and leaders might recognize the actions of Latino parents as a form of parent involvement. Lopez et al. (2001) stated that traditional perceptions of parental involvement consist of attending PTA meetings, volunteering in the classroom- or at school-wide events, and participating in school fundraising activities. Consequently, parents who do not attend such events are often seen as not involved. Spanish-speaking Latino parents, whether due to long working hours, lack of transportation, or their English proficiency level, often do not participate in their children's education in the same way American schools expect. As a result, some parents are perceived as not involved when in reality they are.

Building cultural awareness and understanding of the school community and families the school serves is critical to home-school interactions and partnerships, and without intention in doing so, a school will not thrive (Freire, 2005). We must examine possible conflicts in the current knowledge of school parental involvement and how Spanish-speaking Latino parents view themselves and their role in their children's education to include other forms of parent involvement in its definition. Only then, can all educators and educational leader learn to accept and understand the different ways in which parents are involved in their children's education that goes beyond the involvement set by the boundaries of traditional parental-involvement expectations. When schools capitalize on involvement that is already taking place either at home or school, home-school partnerships can be cultivated and parents can be active participants (Lopez, 2001). The Spanish-speaking Latino parents in this study were involved in their children's lives in various and meaningful ways and their shared experiences stressed that to view parents as partners, schools and policymakers must go beyond school-based involvement.

They must understand and value the language, culture, and knowledge of all families in the school community.

### **Parent Workshops**

My findings on how Spanish-speaking Latino parents view their role in the educational process of their children, in a school that is expected to actively involve all parents, stressed the importance of establishing a practice of orienting and keeping parents informed. Independent of parents' English language proficiency, parents in this study described their children's school as welcoming and respectful of their language and culture. Many parents expanded on this description of the school as a good school because of the reputation it has within the Latino community. However, continuing to provide a welcoming environment for all parents by the way the school greets and answers parents' questions can have a positive influence on parents' involvement at school (Smith et. al, 2011; Thomas-Duckwitz et al., 2013). Schools should provide parents with support throughout the academic year in the ways they expect parents to assist their children and create opportunities for more active roles in the school (LeFevre & Shaw, 2012). Participating parents stated not knowing how to attend to teachers requests to assist their children with homework and support learning at home beyond providing their children with a comfortable space and time to attend to their learning. They also reported attending school-wide events such as field day and lunches with their children as well as being willing to take a more active role in the preparation of such events but not knowing how. All parents, independent of their level of self-efficacy, viewed their children's school as a place of learning and wished that the school had opportunities for parents to learn and be more informed. They expressed their desire and willingness to engage in learning themselves to meet the academic needs of their children.

By providing parents with support that meet their needs, schools not only cultivate home-school partnerships but also build on parents' capacity to assist in areas they did not feel equipped to do so previously. This builds parents' level of self-efficacy and expands on their perception of involvement. Although the school is expected to share information with parents, they must also recognize parents as learners with abundant "*funds of knowledge*" (Moll, 2019) and facilitate this exchange between home and school, so that parents can holistically embrace the role of contributors and receivers of information and knowledge. Whether the school provides workshops for parents or refers them to workshops available in the community, parents can gain understanding and learn how to further support their children's learning at home. As schools take an approach of tapping into the "*funds of knowledge*" of families, they can tailor parent workshops and orientations to meet their needs while learning the bases of their knowledge as well as the resources and strengths they possess (Moll, 2019). Schools can better know how to support the children's families by understanding that some parents may require additional support in areas such as online platforms used for communication and completion of forms, the use of language tools, and a good understanding of the curriculum. In the same way, recognizing that all parents have much to offer their children's school through enriching the curriculum and promoting the use of cultural capital will create the foundation for actively involving parents. Using the cultural capital assets of families in the school and classroom can help students, teachers, and parents develop a better understanding of themselves and others, as well as promote cooperation between home and school (Lee & Bowen, 2006). Schools can not only use "*funds of knowledge*" of families to generate new ideas, but ultimately, they can cultivate an environment that is academically oriented and build on such resources for learning (Molly, 2019), resulting in a collaborative, resourceful, respectful, and inclusive school.

### **Meeting Language Needs**

Latino parents participating in this study expressed gratitude toward the school's use of an auto-translating text-messaging platform facilitating parents' direct communication with their children's teachers. Having a language barrier was noted as one of the key factors impeding parental involvement. Parents also made several references to feeling that the language barrier prevented them from engaging in deeper and more meaningful conversations with school personnel about their children. In addition, their lack of understanding of English-only information such as the forms sent home in their children's folders also posed a challenge in meeting the school's expectation of open two-way communication and involvement. To keep parents informed may require the school to invest, time, and perhaps money as additional resources to meet the language needs of the families they serve. Home-school communication does not need to be limited to newsletters and forms on paper (Kim, 2009). With the vast availability of language resources designed to assist in school communication, it is critical that schools take in account how families make sense of the information sent home. From translating applications and online tools for video messaging, schools today can choose resources and aids that will best meet the language needs of their families and help to close the gap in communication.

Some parents shared tools they use to understand forms sent home, but they are not always accurate, and so they made suggestions for ways the school could assist them to overcome the language barrier. Some of the ideas they shared consisted of having a translator record a video message to send to families through the text messaging system already implemented school-wide, help parents share tools with other families through video or face-to-face meetings, teach parents how to use additional resources that schools may already have, and

use platforms that support translating options to limit the need to translate every document and form sent home. Parents were hopeful about their thoughtful suggestions, but they expressed that even though their children's school seems to welcome them, they did not feel that they had a place to share their opinion and make suggestions. One parent recalled that at the beginning of the school year, the school shared the parental-involvement policy with parents which was not always translated, and that during the first parent-teacher conference, they received a form in which they had the opportunity to share ideas. However, that document was not always translated, and parents were not familiar with the process once they made their suggestions. This disconnect can also influence parents' involvement. To cultivate home-school partnerships and build on the concept that both the school and families should be learning from one another (Gonzalez & Moll, 2002), communication must be built on a strong foundation of mutual respect, honoring different perspectives, and nurturing collaboration.

### **Implications for Policy and Practice**

The findings of this study illustrate implications for policy and practice not only for the participants in the study but also for other MLs' families. The three recommendations are rather straightforward initiatives that can be implemented by districts and schools. Each of these implications is discussed in this section.

Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs who participated in this study viewed their roles as being critical to their children's academic success. Despite their strong perceived connection to their children's education, 5 out of the 10 participating parents were further challenged to communicate with school personnel due to their English proficiency level. A change in practice to provide equitable access to MLs' families would be to ensure that educators receive professional development focused on cultural awareness and culturally

responsive teaching strategies. In addition, schools need to implement language resources to assist families to better navigate the American education system and connect to their children's school. The first five parents reported that they depend on the expertise of other Latino community members to participate at school and to understand the information sent home in their children's folders. Although the other parents described being able to connect with the school, they also expressed the challenge to support their children's academic success, since they are unfamiliar with the curriculum and feel unequipped to assist learning at home.

To effectively build home-school partnerships, parental-involvement efforts must take into account the population it serves, including their cultural and financial needs. Implementing parent orientations for Spanish-speaking Latino parents of MLs in a language they can understand - similar to what is available to all parents in English - may serve as an opportunity to educate and promote parent awareness of the school's expectations for involvement and to engage with the curriculum. By raising parents' awareness of the school's expectations, the available language support to assist with learning at home, and an overview of the curriculum through parent workshops, Spanish-speaking Latino parents may be more accepting of and prepared for their added responsibilities in their children's academic success. In turn, educators and administrators messaging and support of school-wide parental involvement efforts for all parents, independent of their culture and language, may shift the storylines and involvement of Spanish-speaking Latino parents of MLs in their children's education.

Finally, district and school budgets designed to attend to the needs of MLs and non-English speaking families must account for the purchase of devices and translation services to attend to the language needs of the population it serves. Schools often have to raise money and submit local grants to complement their parental involvement efforts and supply teachers with



classroom resources. Therefore, a policy change to establish district-wide language resources by including translating services and devices alongside orientations is critical. This would provide guidance for the proper use of these services and resources to meet the language needs of its multilingual population cultivating equitable home-school partnerships and supporting parental involvement efforts for Spanish-speaking Latino parents.

### **Limitations**

Yin (2017) argued that case study research relies on making projections about the transferability of results through careful evaluation to apply them to a larger scale. Since this study was limited to parents' perspectives of parental involvement and other stakeholders' perspectives were not included, the findings of this study are not intended to be generalized to the broader population. The findings can, however, be generalized to the theory to gain a deeper understanding of Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary MLs' perspectives regarding their role in their children's education. Last, the results may offer limited support for parents, teachers, and other school sites, as the study's focus was to inquire about and analyze a social phenomenon. The study is one snapshot in time and not a longitudinal data over time. Readers may use their best judgment in deciding what aspects of the findings apply to their district or school.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The findings of this study suggest the need for continued research in the area of parents' perceptions of their roles in their children's education. Taking into consideration the limitations described in the previous section, one idea for future research would be conducting a study that includes the perspectives of other stakeholders such as teachers and administrators on their perceptions of their role and the role of Spanish-speaking Latino parents in their children's

education. Undoubtedly, obtaining information about these perceptions and how these roles and involvement policies are constructed would further the understanding and involvement of Spanish-speaking Latino parents of MLs. These identity-defining perceptions guide parents' understanding of their position in the home-school partnership (Turney & Kao, 2009; Zarate, 2007) since parental involvement refers to the participation of parents in regular, two-way communication with the school to improve children's educational experiences and academic performance (Schneider & Coleman, 1993; Shelton & Epstein, 2005).

Since it was evident that the role of parents and teachers differ from one another, expanding the study through the lens of positionality on how differences in social position and power shape identities and access for Latino parents would further the understanding of parents' decisions to be involved in their children's education. In other words, parents' involvement may be determined by how they are positioned (Van Langenhove & Harré, 1999).

With regard to factors influencing Spanish-speaking Latino parents' involvement, another consideration for future research would be to further explore parents' self-efficacy, resources, and the parental learning available to support their involvement in their children's academics at home. Last, since the participants in this study were married females from heterosexual households, future studies might consider including the voices of Latino parents who are single, male, or from the LGBTQ community. By bringing light to these factors, schools can further understand and assist Spanish-speaking Latino parents' involvement in their children's education.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The increasing number of Spanish-speaking Latino MLs in U.S. schools challenges educators to identify ways to connect with these students and their families as well as enhance

parental involvement. Several factors can influence the involvement of Spanish-speaking Latino parents - namely, parents' perceptions of their role, strengths, barriers, and responsibilities (Eccles & Harold, 1996; Jefferson, 2014; Marzano, 2003; Pena, 2000; Shah & Marshall, 2005). Historically, Latino parents have been portrayed as uncaring or uninterested in their children's schooling (Delgado-Gaitan, 2001, 2004; Haro, 2004). The findings in this study suggest ways that call into question the traditionally recognized and accepted definition of parental involvement and the misrepresentation of Spanish-speaking Latino parents' level of participation in their children's education. Parents in this study defied previous conceptions of Latino parents' lack of care and involvement.

This study suggests that the perception of Spanish-speaking parents not caring to be involved in their children's education could perhaps stem from the traditional and widely accepted definition of *parental involvement* and what is perceived as an appropriate level of engagement by all parents at the school level. In addition, even with a strong school parental-involvement policy supported by school leaders to implement parent engagement initiatives that are culturally inclusive, how Latino parents' involvement unfolds is bound to the dynamic interactions and communications between them and their children's teachers, administrators, and other school staff throughout the academic year and in a given context.

As with any school-level initiative, the implementation of parental involvement efforts is subject to stakeholders seeing the need and value in doing so. Consideration of the cultural make-up of the population it serves, as well as reflecting on past practices in sharing information regarding school-involvement expectations, is critical to examine possible conflicts in the current knowledge of school parental involvement in school and how Spanish-speaking Latino parents view themselves and their role in their children's education.

Home-school partnerships are greatly impacted by communication; therefore, for parental-involvement efforts to be effective and successful, understanding and accepting the concerns of all stakeholders is critical. Whether a Spanish-speaking Latino parent has been living in the US for a few days or a few years, efforts to inform and involve that parent is vital for their children's academic success. In addition, selecting and providing professional development opportunities that target the school's community and language resources to facilitate home-school communication may eliminate existing and potential obstacles to the successful implementation of home-school partnerships of Spanish-speaking Latino parents.

The parents in this study described their role in their children's education with characteristics of a highly involved parent. Although they expressed feeling unequipped to attend to their children's homework and curriculum-related questions, parents reported being responsible for supporting their children beyond academics and school. Parents were supportive of their children's learning interests, provided a comfortable space to complete homework and reading assignments at home, and made sure that they attended school, and were well-behaved in and out of school. Some parents took a more active approach assisting with the completion of homework and attendance at school-wide events beyond parent-teacher conferences, which were characteristics of parents who have lived in the U.S. for over five years. As a result, those who have gained confidence and familiarity with the school's expectations manifested a newly acquired sense of their role in their children's education as a newcomer Spanish-speaking Latino parent. For this reason, it is imperative to reassess and modify the traditionally recognized definition and concepts of parental involvement to include the definitions, perceptions, and roles shared by the participating Spanish-speaking Latino parents in this study. Parental involvement must embody a broader meaning of parental engagement in their children's education that is

inclusive of the voices shared in this study so that Spanish-speaking Latino parents' involvement can be better understood and the poor historical portrayal of not caring for their children's education can be eliminated from schools.

Spanish-speaking Latino parents' perceptions of their role in their children's education both reflect and contribute to their involvement and inform how they make sense of their roles and responsibilities in supporting their children's learning in American schools. This study highlights the significance of how Spanish-speaking Latino parents perceive their role as it relates to equitable opportunities for involvement in their children's education.

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## APPENDIX A

## Institutional Review Board Approval Letter



1000 Hempstead Ave., PO Box 5002, Rockville Center, NY 11571-5002  
[www.molloy.edu](http://www.molloy.edu)

**Kathleen Maurer Smith, Ph.D.**  
**Dean, Graduate Academic Affairs**  
**T:** 516.323.3801  
**F:** 516.323.3398  
**E:** [ksmith@molloy.edu](mailto:ksmith@molloy.edu)

**DATE:** April 9, 2022

**TO:** Ingrid Corpuz  
**FROM:** Molloy College IRB

**PROJECT TITLE:** [1836162-1] A Case Study of Parent-Teacher Relationships: Spanish-Speaking Latino Parents of Elementary Multilingual Learners' Perceptions of Parental Involvement

**REFERENCE #:**  
**SUBMISSION TYPE:** New Project

**ACTION:** APPROVED  
**APPROVAL DATE:** April 9, 2022  
**EXPIRATION DATE:** April 7, 2023  
**REVIEW TYPE:** Expedited Review

**REVIEW CATEGORY:** Expedited review category # 7

Thank you for your submission of New Project materials for this project. The Molloy College IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

YOU MAY PROCEED WITH YOUR PROJECT.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on applicable federal regulations.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others (UPIRSOs) and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. Please use the appropriate reporting forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to this office.

This project has been determined to be a MINIMAL RISK project. Based on the risks, this project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate forms for this

procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of April 7, 2023.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the completion of the project.

If you have any questions, please contact Patricia Eckardt at 516-323-3711 or [peckardt@molloy.edu](mailto:peckardt@molloy.edu). Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

Sincerely,

Patricia Eckardt, Ph.D., RN, FAAN  
Chair, Molloy College Institutional Review Board

This letter has been issued in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within Molloy College IRB's records.

## APPENDIX B

### Parent Interview Protocol Outline - English

I want to thank you for taking the time to meet with me today.

My name is Mrs. Corpuz, and I would like to talk to you about parental involvement for Latino parents of multilingual learners. Specifically, I would like to learn about your parental involvement perceptions and your participation in your child's education.

The interview should take about an hour. I will interview in Spanish to ensure we thoroughly understand one another. Although I will be taking notes during the session, with your permission, I will also be taping the session to ensure that I do not miss any of your comments.

All responses will be kept confidential. This means that I will ensure that any information I include in the report does not identify you as the respondent. Remember, you do not have to speak about anything you feel uncomfortable with or do not want to, and you may end the interview at any time. Do you have any questions about what I explained? (Pause for 5 seconds) Are you willing to participate in this interview?

Let's begin:

#### I. Introduction

1. How long has your elementary school child attended this school?
  - a. Describe your child's language proficiency when he/she was enrolled in kindergarten.
  - b. How would you describe your child's language proficiency now?
    - i. Spanish? English? Other languages?
2. Do you have other children enrolled at this school? If yes, what grade level are they in?
  - a. How would you describe their language skills? Are they currently receiving ESOL services?
3. How would you describe your child's elementary school to someone who isn't familiar with the schools in this district?

#### II. Parent's Educational/Occupational Background

4. Tell me about your own educational experiences growing up.
  - a. Where did you go to school? If outside of the US - How long have you been in the US?
  - b. What is your level of education?
5. How would you describe your educational experience?
  - a. In what ways did you like or dislike school?
6. How did your educational experience (or your spouse's experience) influence your decisions for your own child's education?

#### III. Decisions about school and neighborhood

7. How long have you lived in the Southeast region? Why did you move to this area? What influenced your decision about which neighborhood to live in?

**RQ1: How do Spanish-speaking Latino parents of elementary multilingual learners define and perceive their involvement in their children's education?**

- a. **How do parents' stories of parental involvement relate (or not) to social and cultural capital exchanges with the school?**
- b. **In a school that is actively involving parents, how do Spanish-speaking Latino parents view their role in the educational process of their children?**

**IV. Parent Involvement in School**

8. In your opinion, what is the most important thing you can do to help your child succeed in school?
9. Tell me how you see yourself participating in your child's school as a parent.
10. Can you describe the types of contact you have had with your child's school? How about with your child's teacher?
11. Please explain how or if you have felt welcomed when participating in your child's school and school activities.
12. Please, share details about your level of involvement in your child's school.
13. Can you describe a few occasions where you have advocated for your child at their school? Were there any obstacles?
14. Do you believe that parent involvement is important for student success in this school? Why or why not?
15. In what ways does your child's school impact your involvement?
  - a. How does this school engage Spanish-speaking Latino parents of multilingual learners?
  - b. How does your child's school meet your expectations in terms of involving Spanish-speaking Latino parents?
16. Do you believe that your child's school view Spanish-speaking Latino parents as essential partners? Why or why not?
17. Please describe the things you like the most about your child's school? How about the least?
18. Please explain what parental involvement means to you?
  - a. How do you meet each of the characteristics you discussed?
  - b. What do you need to support your child's academic success?
  - c. How does parent involvement influence student success in this school?
19. Please describe your perceptions of parental involvement:
  - a. at home
  - b. at school
  - c. Are these perceptions the same or different?
20. In your opinion, what is your role in your child's education? How about the role of your child's teacher? How are these roles the same or different?

**V. Parent Involvement Policy**

21. Do you know whether or not there is a parent involvement policy in your child's school? If so, please describe.

22. If you had the chance, what things would you change about the involvement of Spanish-speaking Latino parents in your child's school in terms of home-based involvement, school-based involvement, and academic socialization?

#### VII. COVID & School

23. How did your child's school keep you informed of the changes impacting your child's education throughout the challenges due to the pandemic?
24. What learning option did you select for your child once schools began offering in-person learning? Did your child remain virtual or did you select in-person instruction?
  - a. If your child returned to in-person learning, what influenced your decision the most?
25. Please describe how the pandemic affected your involvement in your child's education?
26. How would you assess your ability to support your child throughout the pandemic?
27. How would you assess your child's school level of support throughout the pandemic?
28. How often did you communicate with your child's teacher? What were some of the reasons for communicating with your child's teacher?

Key Question: What would you say is the most important factor influencing Latino parent's involvement in school? Do you think that is different for other parents? Why or why not?

#### VIII. Demographic questions

29. What type of housing do you live in? Own or rent?
30. What is your marital status?
31. Highest education level and degree (including spouse)? [Less than middle school, less than high school, High school diploma, technical training/2-year college, 4-year college, or Master's+]
32. Current occupation (including spouse)
33. What was your 2021 yearly Family Income? [Less than \$25,000, 25K-\$50,000, 50K-\$150,000, Over \$150,000]
34. Are you receiving public assistance? If so, what type of assistance and how long have you received it? [housing, food stamp, welfare, etc.?]
35. What social class group would you consider yourself to be? [lower class/low-income, working-class, middle class, upper-middle-class, upper class/high-income]
36. What languages do you speak/your child speaks? Do you speak that language only at home, only with your spouse, only with friends or family, at school with other parents?

#### IX. Closing

37. Are there any questions that I should have asked that I didn't ask?
  - a. Is there anything you would like to add?

I'll be analyzing the information you and others gave me and completing my dissertation shortly.

Thank you for your time.

## APPENDIX C

### Parent Interview Protocol Outline - Spanish

Quiero agradecerle por tomarse el tiempo para reunirse conmigo hoy.

Soy la Sra. Corpuz y me gustaría hablar con usted sobre la participación de los padres latinos de estudiantes multilingües. En concreto, me gustaría conocer sus percepciones sobre su involucración como padres y su participación en la educación de su hijo/a.

La entrevista durará aproximadamente una hora. Los entrevistaré en español para asegurarnos de que nos entendamos completamente. Aunque tomaré notas durante la sesión, con su permiso, también grabaré la sesión para asegurarme de no perder ninguno de sus comentarios.

Todas las respuestas serán confidenciales. Esto significa que me aseguraré de que toda información que incluya en el informe no lo identifique a usted como el encuestado. Le quiero recordar que no tiene la obligación de hablar sobre ningún tema que le resulte incómodo o sobre el cual no desee hablar, y puede finalizar la entrevista en cualquier momento. ¿Tiene alguna pregunta sobre lo que expliqué? (Pausa de 5 segundos) ¿Está dispuesto a participar en esta entrevista?

Comencemos:

#### I. Introducción

1. ¿Cuánto tiempo ha asistido su hijo/a a esta escuela primaria?
  - a. Describa la competencia lingüística de su hijo/a cuando estaba inscrito en el jardín de infantes.
  - a. ¿Cómo describiría competencia lingüística de su hijo/a ahora?
    - i. ¿Español? ¿Inglés? ¿Otros idiomas?
2. ¿Tiene otros hijos matriculados en esta escuela? En caso afirmativo, ¿en qué grado están?
  - a. ¿Cómo describiría sus habilidades lingüísticas? ¿Actualmente están recibiendo servicios de ESOL?
3. ¿Cómo describiría la escuela primaria de su hijo/a a alguien que no está familiarizado con las escuelas de este distrito?

#### II. Antecedentes educativos/ocupacionales de los padres

4. Cuénteme de sus propias experiencias educativas al crecer.
  - a. ¿Dónde fue a la escuela? Si fue fuera de los EE. UU., ¿Cuánto tiempo ha estado en los EE. UU.?
  - b. ¿Cuál es su nivel de educación?
5. ¿Cómo describiría su experiencia educativa?
  - a. ¿De qué manera disfrutó o le disgustó la escuela?
6. ¿Cómo influyó su experiencia educativa (o la experiencia de su cónyuge) en sus decisiones sobre la educación de su propio hijo/a?

#### III. Decisiones sobre la escuela y la vecindad

7. ¿Cuánto tiempo lleva viviendo en la región del sureste? ¿Por qué se mudó a esta zona?  
¿Qué influyó en su decisión sobre en qué vecindad residir?

**RQ1: ¿Cómo definen y perciben los padres latinos hispanohablantes de ML en edad primaria su participación en la educación de sus hijos?**

- a. ¿Cómo se relacionan (o no) los relatos de los padres sobre su participación con los intercambios de capital social y cultural con la escuela?
- b. En una escuela que activamente involucra a los padres, ¿cómo ven los padres latinos hispanohablantes su papel en el proceso educativo de sus hijos?

**IV. Participación de los padres en la escuela**

8. En su opinión, ¿qué es lo más importante que puede hacer para ayudar que su hijo tenga éxito en la escuela?
9. Cuénteme, como padre, ¿cómo piensa que puede participar en la escuela de su hijo?
10. ¿Puede describir los tipos de contacto que ha tenido con la escuela de su hijo/a? ¿Y con el maestro de su hijo/a?
11. Explique si se ha sentido bienvenido al participar en la escuela y las actividades escolares de su hijo/a y, en caso positivo, de qué forma.
12. Comparta detalles sobre su nivel de participación en la escuela de su hijo.
13. ¿Puede describir algunas ocasiones en las que haya defendido a su hijo/a en su escuela?  
¿Hubo algún obstáculo?
14. ¿Cree que la participación de los padres es importante para el éxito de los estudiantes en esta escuela? Justifique su respuesta.
15. ¿De qué manera la escuela de su hijo/a influye en su participación?
  - a. ¿Cómo involucra esta escuela a los padres latinos hispanohablantes de estudiantes multilingües?
  - b. ¿Cómo cumple la escuela de su hijo/a con sus expectativas en cuanto a involucrar a los padres latinos hispanohablantes?
16. ¿Cree que la escuela de su hijo/a ve a los padres latinos hispanohablantes como colaboradores esenciales? Justifique su respuesta.
17. Describa lo que más le gusta de la escuela de su hijo/a. ¿Qué es lo que menos le gusta?
18. Explique lo que significa para usted la participación de los padres.
  - a. ¿Cómo cumple con cada una de las características que comentó?
  - b. ¿Qué necesita para apoyar el éxito académico de su hijo/a?
  - c. ¿Cómo influye la participación de los padres en el éxito de los estudiantes en esta escuela?
19. Describa sus percepciones sobre la participación de los padres:
  - a. en la casa
  - b. en la escuela
  - c. ¿Estas percepciones son iguales o diferentes?
20. En su opinión, ¿cuál es su papel en la educación de su hijo/a? ¿Cuál el papel del maestro de su hijo? ¿En qué se asemejan o difieren estos papeles?

**V. Política de participación de los padres**

21. ¿Sabe si existe una política de participación de los padres en la escuela de su hijo/a? En caso de que haya, descríbala.

22. Si tuviera la oportunidad, ¿qué cambiaría sobre la participación de los padres latinos hispanohablantes en la escuela de su hijo/a en términos de participación en la casa, participación en la escuela y socialización académica?

#### VII. COVID y la escuela

23. ¿Cómo lo mantuvo la escuela de su hijo informado de los cambios que afectaban a la educación de su hijo/a a lo largo de los desafíos producto de la pandemia?
24. ¿Qué opción de aprendizaje seleccionó para su hijo/a cuando las escuelas comenzaron a ofrecer clases presenciales? ¿Su hijo/a siguió el método virtual u optó por la enseñanza en persona?
- a. Si su hijo/a volvió a las clases presenciales, ¿qué fue lo que más influyó en su decisión?
25. Describa cómo afectó la pandemia a su participación en la educación de su hijo/a.
26. ¿Cómo evaluaría su capacidad para apoyar a su hijo/a durante la pandemia?
27. ¿Cómo evaluaría el nivel de apoyo de la escuela de su hijo/a durante la pandemia?
28. ¿Con qué frecuencia se comunicó con el maestro de su hijo/a? ¿Cuáles fueron algunas de las razones para comunicarse con el maestro de su hijo/a?

Pregunta Clave: ¿Cuál diría que es el factor influyente en la participación de los padres latinos en la escuela? ¿Cree que es diferente para otros padres? Justifique su respuesta.

#### VIII. Preguntas demográficas

29. ¿En qué tipo de vivienda vive? ¿Es un inmueble propio o alquilado?
30. ¿Cuál es su estado civil?
31. ¿Cuál es su nivel de estudios más alto y titulación (incluido el de su cónyuge)? [Menos de la escuela media, menos de escuela secundaria, título de escuela secundaria, formación técnica/universidad de dos años, universidad de cuatro años o máster]
32. Ocupación actual (incluido el de su cónyuge)
33. ¿Cuál fue su ingreso familiar anual de 2021? [Menos de \$25,000, 25K-\$50,000, 50K-\$150,000, Más de \$150,000]
34. ¿Está recibiendo asistencia pública? En caso afirmativo, ¿qué tipo de asistencia y hace cuánto la recibe? [¿vivienda, cupones para alimentos, asistencia social, etc.?]
35. ¿A qué clase social considera que pertenece? [clase baja/bajos ingresos, clase trabajadora, clase media, clase media alta, clase alta/altos ingresos]
36. ¿Qué idiomas habla usted o habla su hijo/a? ¿Habla ese idioma solo en casa, solo con su cónyuge, solo con amigos o familiares, en la escuela con otros padres?

#### IX. Clausura

37. ¿Hay alguna pregunta que debería haber hecho y no haya hecho?
- a. ¿Hay algo que quiera agregar?

Analizaré la información que usted y otros me proporcionaron y terminaré mi disertación en breve.

Gracias por su tiempo.



## APPENDIX D

### Resultados, Recomendaciones Y Conclusiones

*“La acción es la clave fundamental para todo éxito.”*

*- Pablo Picasso*

En este apéndice, se proporciona un resumen, los resultados, el análisis, las recomendaciones y las conclusiones de la investigación traducidos al español para rendir homenaje a los padres latinos involucrados en este proyecto y a su participación en la educación de sus hijos.

En diversos estudios, se demuestra que los padres tienen un impacto duradero en el aprendizaje de los niños porque “asegurar el rendimiento académico y el éxito escolar de sus hijos es una de las aspiraciones esenciales de todos los padres en muchas culturas” (Tekin, 2011, p.1), los padres pueden ser una poderosa influencia en el crecimiento emocional y académico general de los niños. “La idea de que los padres pueden cambiar las trayectorias educativas de sus hijos al comprometerse con la educación de sus hijos ha inspirado una generación de políticas de reforma escolar” (Domina, 2005, p. 245). En consecuencia, los administradores escolares, los maestros, los padres, los investigadores y los responsables políticos incentivan la participación de los padres desde el jardín de infantes hasta el último año de la secundaria (Shelton & Epstein, 2005). Sin embargo, para muchas familias, acrecentar la participación de los padres parece ser una tarea difícil. Eccles y Harold (1996) encontraron que, en general, “los padres y los maestros no están tan vinculados entre sí como les gustaría” (p. 3), pero para los padres latinos, la participación en la escuela es más complicada de lo que indican muchas investigaciones (Planty et al., 2009; U.S. Department of Education, 2013; Turney & Kay, 2009). El aspecto más desafiante de construir una relación sólida entre padres y maestros es encontrar la

manera más efectiva de conectar y mantener la participación de padres latinos. Por ende, el propósito de este estudio de caso cualitativo fue comprender las percepciones de los padres latinos hispanohablantes de estudiantes multilingües (ML por sus siglas en inglés, *multilingual learners*) de nivel primario en cuanto a su papel en el proceso educativo, y los factores que influyen en su participación en la educación de sus hijos.

Este estudio tuvo como objetivo contribuir a la literatura al ampliar lo que ya se abordó sobre los padres latinos hispanohablantes de ML en cuanto a la asociación entre la casa y la escuela. Los resultados de esta investigación contribuyen a la equidad educativa al incentivar un análisis crítico y comprender las percepciones de los padres latinos hispanohablantes en cuanto a su papel en la educación de sus hijos. La pregunta general de la investigación fue: «¿Cómo definen y perciben los padres latinos hispanohablantes de estudiantes multilingües de nivel primario su participación en la educación de sus hijos?» Las siguientes preguntas guiarán esta investigación:

- a. ¿Cómo se relacionan (o no) las historias de los padres sobre su participación con los intercambios de capital social y cultural con la escuela?
- b. En una escuela que intenta activamente involucrar a los padres, ¿cómo ven los padres latinos hispanohablantes su papel en el proceso educativo de sus hijos?

En En este estudio de caso cualitativo, se explorará cómo los padres latinos hispanohablantes de ML de nivel primario percibían sus responsabilidades en la educación de sus hijos. Este estudio se basó en la literatura y se enfocó en las barreras a la participación de los padres latinos hispanohablantes. Se describió cómo se planificó realizó un estudio de caso cualitativo, que consistió en 10 padres latinos hispanohablantes de ML de nivel primario que estaban matriculados en una escuela primaria en el año escolar 2021/2022 en un distrito escolar

de la región sureste de Carolina del Sur. La metodología y el plano del estudio incorporaron el marco conceptual de las teorías del capital social (Bourdieu, 1980; Coleman, 1990), el capital cultural (Bourdieu, 1977b; Lareau, 2011) y el aprendizaje social (Bandura, 1977). Este estudio consideró lo que ya se conoce sobre los padres latinos hispanohablantes de ML de nivel primario en el área de asociación entre el hogar y la escuela, cómo se formaron las percepciones de la participación de los padres dentro de la escuela y cómo estas percepciones han influido en la participación de los padres en la educación de sus hijos. En las siguientes secciones, se hace una revisión del resultado y las recomendaciones de este estudio de caso cualitativo.

### **Resultados**

Los resultados que produjo este estudio sugieren maneras que cuestionan la definición tradicionalmente reconocida de la participación de los padres y la mediocre representación del nivel de participación de los padres latinos hispanohablantes en la educación de sus hijos. Históricamente, los padres latinos han sido retratados como indiferentes o desinteresados en la escolarización de sus hijos (Delgado-Gaitán, 2001, 2004; Haro, 2004). No obstante, los padres en este estudio desafían las nociones previas sobre la falta de atención y participación de los padres latinos, y los datos aportan pruebas para remodelar y ampliar los conceptos de la participación de los padres. Tres temas principales surgieron del análisis de datos: 1) Definición y percepciones sobre cómo la percepción de los padres latinos hispanohablantes sobre sus responsabilidades en la educación de sus hijos moldea la forma en que definen y perciben su participación; 2) cómo los padres latinos hispanohablantes ven su papel y las diferentes formas en que se involucran en el proceso educativo de sus hijos en una escuela, y 3) cómo los relatos de los padres sobre la participación de los padres se relacionan (o no) con los factores de capital sociales y culturales en los intercambios con la escuela.

*Definición y percepción de la participación de los padres* – En contraposición a la representación histórica de los padres latinos como poco involucrados y menos afectuosos (Brock & Edmunds, 2010), las percepciones de los padres latinos hispanohablantes que tienen bajos niveles de participación resultan de cómo se definen los papeles de los padres. Las percepciones de los padres latinos sobre sus responsabilidades difieren drásticamente en comparación con las expectativas que se tienen en las escuelas estadounidenses. Se encontró que la participación de los padres latinos consistía en áreas que no se incluyen en lo que tradicionalmente se reconoce como participación en las escuelas, aspectos que van más allá de la participación de los padres en las actividades escolares. Aunque todos los padres mencionaron actividades escolares en este estudio, no fue la base para la participación de los padres latinos.

Con respecto a la pregunta de investigación que guió este estudio, los padres compartieron experiencias sobre su participación y la percepción de su papel en la educación de sus hijos. Esto ilustró la incongruencia entre la definición tradicional de participación de los padres y los intentos de participación de los padres que comparten los padres latinos hispanohablantes en la educación de sus hijos. En todas las entrevistas, los padres describieron un alto nivel de interés en su participación e indicaron un gran sacrificio de su parte. Como se sugiere en la literatura, los maestros suelen interpretar los bajos niveles de participación tradicional de los padres como una falta de interés (Haro, 2004) y, por lo tanto, a menudo se percibe que los padres latinos no se preocupan por la educación de sus hijos. Sin embargo, la forma en el que los padres latinos entienden la participación de los padres difiere de las expectativas tradicionales. Su participación consiste en 1) ser padres responsables en el cuidado de su hijo, 2) orientar y apoyar, y 3) hacer sacrificios para mejorar la calidad de vida de sus hijos. Los padres que formaron parte en este estudio compartieron definiciones de participación de los

padres que desafían la definición tradicional de participación de los padres y proporcionan evidencia para ampliar el concepto, como indican López y Stoelting (2010).

*Concepto del papel de los padres* - La primera sub pregunta que guió esta investigación exploró cómo los padres latinos hispanohablantes ven su papel en el proceso educativo de la educación de sus hijos en una escuela que espera que los padres se involucren activamente. Los padres participantes describieron su papel en la educación de sus hijos de varias maneras. Como se señaló anteriormente, el enfoque de sus respuestas no tenía un vínculo directo con la escuela de sus hijos; en su lugar, abordaban otros aspectos de la vida de sus hijos, como el hogar, su bienestar, creencias, escuela y opciones de vida.

En general, los padres entrevistados reflexionaron sobre cuáles creían que eran sus responsabilidades frente al aprendizaje de sus hijos y la escuela. Se centraron en las expectativas que se fijaron, las cuales, en su mayoría, diferían drásticamente de las expectativas establecidas por la escuela. Los resultados de este estudio se alinearon con los resultados de Shah y Marshall (2005) y Rodríguez-Brown (2010) en el sentido de que parecía haber una falta de concordancia entre las expectativas y la participación en la casa y en la escuela. La reflexión y consideración de los padres sobre sus responsabilidades en la educación de sus hijos se centraba en 1) asegurar que sus hijos tengan las necesidades básicas para vivir una vida saludable, 2) establecer rutinas en el hogar, 3) dividir la responsabilidad de educar a sus hijos, 4) comunicarse con el maestro de sus hijos, 5) inculcar el valor de la escolarización en sus hijos, y 6) guiar a sus hijos hacia el "camino correcto". Los padres latinos consideran que su papel en la vida de sus hijos se centra en el cuidado, el amor y en proporcionar valores morales y creencias; mientras que las escuelas deben brindar educación académica. Estos puntos de vista o percepciones distintas sobre las

obligaciones de la casa y la escuela explican por qué los padres latinos expresan poca seguridad cuando se les pide que asuman ciertas tareas que creen que son responsabilidades de la escuela.

*Intercambios con la escuela* – Al considerar la segunda sub pregunta de investigación, cómo los relatos de los padres sobre la participación de los padres se relacionan (o no) con los intercambios de capital social y cultural con la escuela, los desafíos para cumplir con las expectativas de participación de los padres destacaron la importancia del intercambio. A pesar del bajo nivel socioeconómico de los padres en este estudio, sus obstáculos por involucrarse en la escuela no se debieron a la falta de recursos (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1987; Moles, 1992, Thomas-Lester, 2017; Turney y Kao, 2009). En cambio, sus desafíos estaban asociados con la incapacidad de los educadores y líderes educativos para reconocer o valorar las variadas formas de capital social y cultural de los padres latinos hispanohablantes de ML de nivel primario para participar en la escuela al mismo nivel que se espera de los estudiantes de clase media y alta (Bourdieu, 1977). Los resultados de este estudio son paralelos a la utilización del capital social a la educación de Coleman (1990) y al estudio de Lareau (1989) sobre el capital cultural, los cuales demuestran cómo da forma a la participación de los padres.

Había una discordancia entre los padres y las tradiciones escolares, y las expectativas de participación de los padres en la educación de sus hijos. Parte de esta discordancia se debió a las barreras lingüísticas, el nivel de autoeficacia de los padres, el desconocimiento de la política y las expectativas de participación de los padres de las escuelas, junto con la creencia de no estar capacitados para apoyar el aprendizaje de sus hijos en función de su nivel educativo. En general, este desentendimiento de los padres determinó a la profundidad y frecuencia de sus interacciones con la escuela de sus hijos. La participación de los padres fue afectada por las creencias de los

padres sobre sus limitaciones, así como su dependencia en la ayuda de otros miembros de la familia y de la comunidad para vincularse con la escuela y apoyar el aprendizaje de sus hijos.

La barrera lingüística fue el factor principal que limitó la participación de los padres participantes en la escuela de sus hijos. No obstante, la adopción en toda la escuela de un sistema de mensajes de texto con traducción automática como medio de comunicación facilitó e influyó positivamente en su participación en la escuela. Los padres describieron sentirse apoyados por la escuela y más dispuestos a hacer preguntas.

Otro factor que incrementó el reto de los padres de involucrarse más en la educación de sus hijos fue comprender toda la información que compartía la escuela. Se les indicó una serie de plataformas y aplicaciones que debían dominar para completar formularios y realizar pagos relacionados con la escuela. Los padres informaron que desconocer cómo navegar por estas plataformas y aplicaciones, junto con su bajo dominio del inglés, había dificultado su participación. Se describieron dificultades similares ante el pedido de los maestros que los padres les leyeran a sus hijos en casa porque se sentían incapaces de ayudar con estas tareas debido a su nivel de educación. La comprensión de los padres de las expectativas del plan de estudios y sus experiencias académicas impactaron la forma en que reaccionaron a las solicitudes realizadas por los maestros de sus hijos. El deseo de comprender de los padres participantes dependía en su capacidad de aprender a través de la observación. Su comportamiento, esfuerzo por comunicarse y participación general comenzaron al emular a los padres latinos hispanohablantes que les brindaban orientación y apoyo a medida que se adaptaban a la nueva vida en los Estados Unidos.

Sobre la base de las respuestas de los padres, surgieron dos niveles de autoeficacia: padres que tienen confianza y padres que están adquiriendo confianza. Estos niveles se refieren a

la cantidad de confianza que los padres demostraron al defender y apoyar el aprendizaje de sus hijos. Ya sea que un padre participante mostrara características de un padre que tiene confianza o de un padre que está adquiriendo confianza, todos los padres en este estudio estaban muy involucrados en la educación de sus hijos. Sin embargo, los educadores no siempre reconocían o valoraban su tipo de participación en la escuela.

### **Recomendaciones**

En esta sección, se identifican las contribuciones de este estudio a la literatura existente sobre la participación de los padres latinos hispanohablantes de ML de nivel primario.

### **Desarrollar la Autoeficacia a Través de la Conciencia Cultural**

Los resultados de este estudio destacaron los diferentes niveles de autoeficacia de los padres en lo que respecta su capacidad para comunicarse con la escuela, además de la importancia de desarrollar la conciencia cultural de las escuelas para cultivar asociaciones entre la casa y la escuela. Estos factores influyeron de forma decisiva en las interacciones de los padres participantes con la escuela de sus hijos. Los padres de nivel moderado a alto de autoeficacia o los padres que tienen confianza iniciaron la comunicación con la escuela con más frecuencia, independientemente de su falta de conocimiento del contenido y dominio del inglés. Estos resultados son consistentes con la literatura que sugiere que cuanto más alto sea el nivel de autoeficacia de una persona, más activa será (Reed, 2020). Por el contrario, los padres con un nivel bajo a moderado de autoeficacia o los padres que están adquiriendo confianza mostraron características de ser padres involucrados, pero no iniciaron interacciones con la escuela. De hecho, los esfuerzos y las interacciones de los padres que están adquiriendo confianza con la escuela parecen no coincidir directamente con las expectativas de participación de la escuela. Estos resultados fueron consistentes con la literatura que indica que una persona con



menor autoeficacia podría no lograr completar una tarea que los desafíe a salir de su zona de comodidad (Pajares, 2006). Todos los padres participantes se mostraron muy involucrados y lucieron características de ser buenos padres en aspectos que superan la definición tradicional de participación, o lo que se percibe como participación, en las escuelas estadounidenses. Su participación se centraba en garantizar que sus hijos estuvieran presentes en la escuela y tuvieran buena conducta. Los padres mencionaban guiar y apoyar a sus hijos para que logran el mejor desempeño posible en la escuela, y para que tomen buenas decisiones con el fin de construir amistades positivas en la escuela. Al considerar esto, los líderes y educadores escolares podrían reconocer las acciones de los padres latinos como una forma de participación de padres. López et al. (2001) afirman que las percepciones de las formas tradicionales de participación de los padres consisten en asistir a las reuniones de la Asociación de Padres de Alumnos (PTA), ser voluntario en el aula o en eventos escolares y participar en actividades escolares para recaudar fondos. En consecuencia, los padres que no asisten a estos eventos suelen considerarse como padres que no se involucran con sus hijos. Los padres latinos hispanohablantes, ya sea debido por una gran carga de trabajo, por falta de transporte o por su poco dominio del inglés, no suelen participar en la educación de sus hijos de la forma que esperan las escuelas en Estados Unidos. Como resultado, se considera que algunos padres no están muy involucrados con sus hijos, cuando en realidad lo están.

Crear conciencia cultural y entender la comunidad escolar y las familias que son parte de esa escuela es fundamental para las interacciones y asociaciones entre la casa y la escuela, y si no hay un esfuerzo para lograr esto, la escuela no prosperará (Freire, 2005). Debemos examinar posibles conflictos en el conocimiento actual de la participación de los padres en la escuela y cómo los padres latinos hispanohablantes se ven a sí mismos y su papel en la educación de sus

hijos con el fin de incluir otras formas de participación de los padres en la definición. Esta es la única forma de que todos los educadores y líderes educativos puedan aprender a aceptar y comprender las distintas formas en que los padres se involucran en la educación de sus hijos, lo cual va más allá de lo establecido por los límites de las expectativas tradicionales sobre la participación de los padres. Cuando las escuelas aprovechan la participación que ya ocurre en la casa o en la escuela, se pueden cultivar asociaciones entre la casa y la escuela y, de esta forma, los padres pueden ser participantes activos (López, 2001). Los padres latinos hispanohablantes en este estudio se involucraron en la vida de sus hijos de diversas y significativas maneras. Sus experiencias compartidas destacan que, para considerar los padres como colaboradores, las escuelas y los responsables políticos no deben limitarse a ver la participación en la escuela. Deben comprender y valorar el idioma, la cultura y el conocimiento de todas las familias de la comunidad escolar.

### **Orientaciones Para Padres**

Los hallazgos sobre cómo los padres latinos hispanohablantes ven su papel en el proceso educativo de sus hijos dentro de una escuela que se espera que todos los padres se involucren activamente destacó la importancia de establecer una práctica para orientar y mantener informados a los padres. Independientemente del dominio del inglés, los padres en este estudio describieron la escuela de sus hijos como un lugar acogedor que respeta su idioma y cultura. Muchos padres ampliaron esta descripción de la escuela como una buena institución debido a la reputación que tiene dentro de la comunidad latina. Sin embargo, aunque la escuela puede tener una influencia positiva en la participación de los padres al brindar un entorno acogedor para ellos al saludar amablemente y responder sus preguntas (Smith et. al, 2011; Thomas-Duckwitz et. al, 2013), la escuela debe brindarles apoyo a lo largo del año académico con respecto a las formas

en que esperan que los padres ayuden a sus hijos y al crear oportunidades para papeles más activos en la escuela (LeFevre & Shaw, 2012). Los padres participantes manifestaron no saber cómo cumplir con los pedidos de los maestros de ayudar a sus hijos con las tareas y apoyar el aprendizaje en la casa, más allá de brindarles tiempo y un espacio cómodo para llevar a cabo su aprendizaje. Asimismo, informaron que asistían a eventos de la escuela, como días de campo y almuerzos con sus hijos, y que estaban dispuestos a desempeñar un papel más activo en la preparación de dichos eventos, pero no sabían cómo hacerlo. Todos los padres, independientemente de su nivel de autoeficacia, veían la escuela de sus hijos como un lugar de aprendizaje y expresaron que querían que la escuela tuviera oportunidades para que los padres aprendieran y estuvieran más informados. Manifestaron su deseo y voluntad de participar en el aprendizaje por sí mismos para poder satisfacer las necesidades académicas de sus hijos.

Al proporcionarles a los padres el apoyo que satisfaga sus necesidades, la escuela no solo cultivará la asociación entre la casa y la escuela, sino que también desarrollará la capacidad de los padres para ayudar en áreas en las que no se sentían capacitados para involucrarse anteriormente. De esta forma, se construye el nivel de autoeficacia de los padres y se amplía su percepción de participación. Si bien se espera que la escuela comparta información con los padres, haciendo hincapié en los padres, también debe reconocer a los padres como estudiantes con abundantes *fondos de conocimiento* (Moll, 2019) y facilitar este intercambio entre la casa y la escuela, para que los padres puedan asumir de manera integral el papel de contribuyentes y receptores de información y conocimiento. Ya sea que la escuela ofrezca talleres para padres o les recomiende talleres disponibles en la comunidad, los padres pueden comprender y aprender cómo seguir apoyando el aprendizaje de sus hijos desde la casa. A medida que las escuelas adoptan un enfoque para aprovechar los *fondos de conocimiento* de las familias, pueden adaptar

talleres y orientaciones para padres a fin de satisfacer sus necesidades mientras aprenden las bases de su conocimiento, además de los recursos y fortalezas que poseen (Moll, 2019).

Comprender que algunos padres tendrán necesidades y quizás requieran apoyo adicional en áreas como las plataformas en línea utilizadas para comunicarse y completar formularios, el uso de herramientas de lenguaje y la comprensión del plan de estudios, beneficiará a la escuela con el conocimiento de cómo apoyar a las familias. De la misma manera, reconocer que todos los padres tienen mucho que ofrecer a la escuela de sus hijos mediante el enriquecimiento del plan de estudios y la promoción del uso del capital cultural creará las bases para la participación activa de los padres. Aprovechar los activos de capital cultural de las familias en la escuela y en el aula puede ayudar a que los estudiantes, los maestros y los padres a desarrollar una mejor comprensión de sí mismos y de los demás, además de aprender cómo promover la cooperación entre la casa y la escuela (Lee & Bowen, 2006). Las escuelas no solo pueden utilizar los *fondos de conocimiento* de las familias para generar nuevas ideas, sino que eventualmente pueden cultivar un entorno que se oriente a lo académico y aprovechar esos recursos para el aprendizaje (Molly, 2019). Esto resulta en una escuela con un entorno colaborativo, ingenioso, respetuoso e inclusivo.

### **Satisfacer Las Necesidades Lingüísticas**

Los padres latinos que participaron en este estudio expresaron su agradecimiento de que la escuela utilice un mensaje de texto con traducción automática, lo cual facilita la comunicación directa de los padres con el maestro de sus hijos. Tener una barrera lingüística se señaló como uno de los factores clave que impiden la participación de los padres. En varias ocasiones, los padres también mencionaron que sentían que la barrera lingüística les impedía entablar conversaciones más profundas y significativas sobre sus hijos con el personal de la escuela.

Asimismo, no comprender la información que solo se ofrece en inglés, como los formularios enviados a casa en las carpetas de sus hijos, también planteó un desafío para cumplir con las expectativas de la escuela en cuanto a la comunicación y participación bidireccional abierta. Mantener a los padres informados puede requerir que la escuela invierta tiempo e incluso fondos en recursos adicionales para satisfacer las necesidades lingüísticas de las familias a las que sirven. La comunicación entre la casa y la escuela no tiene por qué limitarse a boletines y formularios impresos (Kim, 2009). Con la gran disponibilidad de recursos lingüísticos diseñados para ayudar en la comunicación escolar, es fundamental que las escuelas tengan en cuenta cómo las familias entienden la información que se envía a casa. Desde aplicaciones de traducción y herramientas en línea para mensajes mediante videos, las escuelas de hoy pueden elegir recursos y formas de ayudar que mejor satisfagan las necesidades lingüísticas de las familias y ayuden a cerrar la brecha en la comunicación.

Algunos padres compartieron las herramientas que utilizan para comprender los formularios enviados a casa, pero establecieron que no siempre son precisas. Por esta razón, propusieron sugerencias sobre las formas en que la escuela podría ayudarlos a superar la barrera lingüística. Algunas de las ideas que compartieron consistieron en hacer que un traductor grabará un mensaje de video para enviar a las familias a través del sistema de mensajes de texto ya implementado en toda la escuela, ayudar a los padres a compartir herramientas con otras familias a través de reuniones de video o de forma presencial, enseñarles a los padres cómo utilizar recursos adicionales que las escuelas ya tiene disponibles, y usar plataformas que permitan opciones de traducción que evitaría la necesidad de traducir cada documento y formulario que se envía a casa. Los padres se mostraron esperanzados con sus atentas sugerencias pero expresaron que, aunque la escuela de sus hijos parecía acogerlos, no sentían que tuvieran un lugar para

compartir su opinión y hacer estas sugerencias. Un padre recordó que, al comienzo del año escolar, la escuela compartía con los padres la política de participación de los padres la cual no siempre contaba con una traducción. Además, recordó que, durante la primera conferencia de padres y maestros, recibían un formulario donde se les daba el espacio para compartir ideas. Sin embargo, ese documento no siempre tenía traducción y los padres no estaban familiarizados con el proceso una vez que hicieron sus sugerencias. Esta desconexión también puede influir en la participación de los padres. Para cultivar asociaciones entre la casa y la escuela, y construir sobre el concepto de que tanto la escuela como las familias deben aprender unas de otras (González & Moll, 2002), la comunicación debe construirse sobre una base sólida de respeto mutuo donde se respetan las diferentes perspectivas y se fomenta la colaboración.

### **Implicaciones Para La Política y La Práctica**

Los resultados de este estudio ilustran las implicaciones para la política y la práctica, no solo para los participantes en el estudio, sino también para las familias de otros estudiantes multilingües. Las tres recomendaciones son iniciativas bastante sencillas que los distritos y las escuelas pueden implementar. Cada una de estas implicaciones se desarrollan en esta sección.

Los padres latinos hispanohablantes de ML de nivel primario que participaron en este estudio consideraron que sus funciones eran fundamentales para el éxito académico de sus hijos. A pesar de su fuerte conexión percibida con la educación de sus hijos, 5 de los 10 padres participantes tuvieron más desafíos para comunicarse con el personal de la escuela debido a su bajo dominio del inglés. Un cambio en la práctica para brindar acceso equitativo a las familias de los estudiantes multilingües sería garantizar que los educadores reciban desarrollo profesional centrado en la conciencia cultural y estrategias de enseñanza culturalmente adaptadas. Asimismo, las escuelas deben disponer de recursos lingüísticos para ayudar a las familias a

navegar por el sistema educativo estadounidense y conectarse con la escuela de sus hijos. Los primeros cinco padres informaron que dependen de la experiencia de otros miembros de la comunidad latina para participar en la escuela y entender la información que les envían a casa mediante las carpetas de sus hijos. Aunque los otros padres manifestaron que lograban conectarse con la escuela, también expresaron el desafío de apoyar el éxito académico de sus hijos ya que no están familiarizados con el plan de estudios y no se sienten capacitados para ayudar con el aprendizaje en casa.

Para construir asociaciones entre la casa y la escuela de manera efectiva, los esfuerzos de participación de los padres deben tener en cuenta la población a la que sirve, incluidas sus necesidades culturales y financieras. Implementar orientaciones para padres latinos hispanohablantes de estudiantes ML de nivel primero, tales como los que están disponibles para todos los padres en inglés, puede ser una oportunidad para educar y promover la conciencia de los padres sobre las expectativas de la escuela en cuanto a la participación y compromiso con el currículo. Al concientizar a los padres sobre las expectativas de la escuela, el apoyo lingüístico disponible para fomentar el aprendizaje en casa y una descripción general del plan de estudios a través de orientaciones para padres, los padres latinos hispanohablantes pueden estar más dispuestos a aceptar, y estar más preparados para llevar a cabo, sus responsabilidades adicionales en el desarrollo académico y éxito de sus hijos. A su vez, que los educadores y administradores envíen mensajes y apoyen los esfuerzos de participación de los padres en toda la escuela, independientemente de su cultura e idioma, puede modificar la situación y mejorar la participación de los padres latinos en la educación de sus hijos.

Por último, el presupuesto designado del distrito y la escuela para atender las necesidades de los ML y las familias que no hablan inglés debe considerar la compra de dispositivos y

servicios de traducción para atender las necesidades lingüísticas de la población a la que sirve. Las escuelas suelen tener que recaudar dinero y presentar subvenciones locales para respaldar sus proyectos para la participación de los padres y para proporcionarles a los maestros recursos para el aula. Por lo tanto, cambiar la política para disponer de recursos lingüísticos en todo el distrito mediante la inclusión de servicios y dispositivos de traducción, junto con orientaciones para saber cómo utilizar estos servicios y recursos con el fin de satisfacer las necesidades lingüísticas de su población multilingüe, cultivaría asociaciones equitativas entre la casa y la escuela. Además, apoyaría los esfuerzos de participación de los padres para los padres latinos hispanohablantes.

### **Conclusiones**

El creciente número de estudiantes multilingües latinos hispanohablantes en las escuelas estadounidenses supone un reto para los educadores, quienes deben identificar formas de vincularse con estos estudiantes y sus familias, además de mejorar la participación de los padres. Existen varios factores que pueden influir en la participación de los padres latinos hispanohablantes, a saber, las percepciones de los padres sobre su papel, sus fortalezas, barreras y responsabilidades (Eccles & Harold, 1996; Jefferson, 2014; Marzano, 2003; Pena, 2000; Shah & Marshall, 2005). Históricamente, los padres latinos fueron retratados como indiferentes o desinteresados en la educación de sus hijos (Delgado-Gaitán, 2001, 2004; Haro, 2004). Los resultados de este estudio sugieren formas que cuestionan la definición tradicionalmente reconocida y aceptada de la participación de los padres y la tergiversación del nivel de participación de los padres latinos hispanohablantes en la educación de sus hijos. Los padres de este estudio desafían las concepciones previas sobre la falta de cuidado y participación de padres latinos.



A través de este estudio, se llega a comprender que la percepción de que a los padres hispanohablantes no les importa involucrarse en la educación de sus hijos podría provenir de la definición tradicional y ampliamente aceptada de participación de los padres y lo que se percibe como un nivel adecuado de compromiso de todos los padres a nivel escolar. Asimismo, incluso con una sólida política de participación de los padres en la escuela apoyada por los líderes escolares para implementar iniciativas de participación de los padres que sean culturalmente inclusivas, la forma en que se desarrolla la participación de los padres latinos se relaciona a las interacciones y comunicaciones dinámicas entre ellos y los maestros, los administradores y otro personal de la escuela de sus hijos a lo largo del año académico y en un contexto determinado.

Al igual que con cualquier iniciativa a nivel escolar, la implementación de los esfuerzos de participación de los padres está sujeta a que las partes interesadas vean la necesidad y el valor de realizarlo. Considerar la composición cultural de la población a la que sirve, así como reflexionar sobre las prácticas anteriores en cuanto al intercambio de información sobre las expectativas de participación escolar, es fundamental para examinar posibles conflictos en el conocimiento actual de la participación de los padres de la escuela y cómo los padres latinos hispanohablantes se auto perciben y perciben su papel en la educación de sus hijos.

Las asociaciones entre la casa y la escuela se ven muy afectadas por la comunicación. Por lo tanto, para que los esfuerzos de participación de los padres sean efectivos y exitosos, es fundamental comprender y aceptar las inquietudes de todos los interesados. Ya sea que un padre latino hispanohablante haya estado viviendo en los EE. UU. durante unos días o varios años, el esfuerzo para informar e involucrar a ese padre es crucial para el éxito académico de sus hijos. De igual modo, seleccionar y brindar oportunidades de desarrollo profesional dirigidas a la comunidad escolar, así como disponer de recursos lingüísticos para facilitar la comunicación

entre la casa y la escuela, puede eliminar los obstáculos existentes y potenciales para exitosamente lograr que prospere la asociación entre la casa y la escuela de padres latinos hispanohablantes.

Los padres en este estudio describieron su papel en la educación de sus hijos con características de padres muy involucrados. Aunque expresaron sentirse incapacitados para involucrarse en las preguntas relacionadas con el currículo de tareas de sus hijos, los padres informaron que se responsabilizaban por apoyar a sus hijos más allá de lo académico y el ámbito escolar. Los padres apoyaron los intereses de aprendizaje de sus hijos, proporcionaron un espacio cómodo para que completen sus deberes y las tareas de lectura en casa, se aseguraron de que asistiera a la escuela y de que se comportaran dentro y fuera de la escuela. Algunos padres adoptan un enfoque más activo al ayudar a completar la tarea y al asistir a eventos escolares más allá de las conferencias de padres y maestros. Estas eran características de aquellos padres que habían estado viviendo en los EE. UU. durante más de cinco años. Como resultado, aquellos que adquirieron confianza y se familiarizaron con las expectativas de la escuela manifestaron un sentido recién adquirido de su papel en la educación de sus hijos como padres latinos que recién habían llegado al país. Por esta razón, es imperativo reevaluar y modificar la definición y los conceptos tradicionales reconocidos de participación de los padres para incluir las definiciones, percepciones y papeles demostrados por los padres latinos que participaron en este estudio. La participación de los padres debe incorporar un significado más amplio de intervención de los padres en la educación de sus hijos para incluir las voces compartidas en este estudio. Esto es con el fin de lograr una mejor comprensión de la participación de los padres latinos hispanohablantes, y para erradicar de las escuelas la errónea tradicional representación de padres que no se preocupan por la educación de sus hijos.

Las percepciones de los padres latinos sobre su papel en la educación de sus hijos reflejan y contribuyen a su participación, e indican cómo entienden sus funciones y responsabilidades con el fin de apoyar el aprendizaje de sus hijos en las escuelas estadounidenses. Este estudio destaca la importancia de la percepción de los padres acerca de sus funciones en relación con las oportunidades equitativas de participación en la educación de sus hijos.

## APPENDIX E

### Resultados, Recomendações e Conclusão

*“Há muros que só a paciência derruba. E há pontes que só o caminho constrói.”*

*- Cora Coralina*

Neste apêndice, forneço um resumo dos resultados, recomendações e conclusões do estudo em Português para homenagear minha cultura e idioma e conscientizar educadores em meu país de origem sobre a importância de envolvimento dos pais na educação dos filhos.

Pesquisas mostram que os pais têm um impacto duradouro na aprendizagem das crianças porque “garantir o desempenho acadêmico e o sucesso escolar de seus filhos é uma das aspirações essenciais de todos os pais em muitas culturas” (Tekin, 2011, p.1), os pais podem ser uma poderosa influência no crescimento emocional e acadêmico geral das crianças. “A ideia de que os pais podem mudar as trajetórias educacionais de seus filhos, engajando-se na escolarização de seus filhos, inspirou uma geração de políticas de reforma escolar” (Domina, 2005, p.245). Como resultado, administradores escolares, professores, pais, pesquisadores e formuladores de políticas encorajam o envolvimento dos pais desde o jardim de infância até a décima segunda série (Shelton & Epstein, 2005). No entanto, para muitas famílias, aumentar o envolvimento dos pais parece ser uma tarefa desafiadora. Eccles e Harold (1996) descobriram que, em geral, “pais e professores não estão tão envolvidos uns com os outros como gostariam” (p. 3), mas para pais Latinos, o envolvimento escolar é mais complexo do que muitos estudos indicam (Planty et al., 2009; Departamento de Educação dos EUA, 2013; Turney & Kay, 2009). O aspecto mais desafiador de construir um forte relacionamento entre pais e professores é encontrar a maneira mais eficaz de conectar e manter o envolvimento dos pais com os pais Latinos. Portanto, o objetivo deste estudo de caso qualitativo foi compreender as percepções de

pais Latinos que falam Espanhol de alunos multilíngues elementares (MLs) quanto ao seu papel no processo educacional e os fatores que influenciam seu envolvimento na educação de seus filhos.

Este estudo teve como objetivo contribuir para a literatura de pesquisa, ampliando o que já se sabe sobre pais Latinos que falam Espanhol de MLs na área de parceria casa-escola. Os resultados desta pesquisa contribuem para a equidade educacional, incentivando uma análise crítica e compreensão das percepções dos pais Latinos sobre seu papel na educação de seus filhos. A questão norteadora geral e as subquestões da pesquisa foram:

1. Como pais Latinos que falam Espanhol de alunos multilíngues do ensino fundamental definem e percebem seu envolvimento na educação de seus filhos?
  - a. Como as histórias de envolvimento parental dos pais se relacionam (ou não) com as trocas de capital social e cultural com a escola?
  - b. Em uma escola que deve envolver ativamente os pais, como os pais Latinos veem seu papel no processo educacional de seus filhos?

Neste estudo de caso qualitativo, explorei como pais Latinos que falam Espanhol de MLs elementares percebiam seu papel na educação de seus filhos. Este estudo foi fundamentado na literatura e focado nas barreiras ao envolvimento parental de pais Latinos. Descrevi como projetei e conduzi um estudo de caso qualitativo, que consistiu em 10 pais Latinos de MLs do ensino fundamental que estavam matriculados em uma escola primária no ano letivo de 2021/2022 em um distrito escolar da região sudeste da Carolina do Sul. A metodologia e o desenho do estudo incorporou a estrutura conceitual das teorias de capital social (Bourdieu, 1980; Coleman, 1990), capital cultural (Bourdieu, 1977b; Lareau, 2011) e aprendizagem social (Bandura, 1977). Este estudo considerou o que já se sabe sobre pais Latinos que falam Espanhol

de MLs elementares na área de parceria casa-escola, como as percepções de envolvimento dos pais se formaram dentro da escola e como essas percepções influenciam o envolvimento dos pais na educação de seus filhos. Nas próximas seções, reviso as descobertas e recomendações deste estudo de caso qualitativo.

### **Resultados**

Os achados deste estudo sugerem caminhos que questionam a definição tradicionalmente reconhecida de envolvimento dos pais e a representação grosseira do nível de envolvimento dos pais Latinos na educação de seus filhos. Os pais Latinos têm sido historicamente retratados como indiferentes ou desinteressados na educação de seus filhos (Delgado-Gaitan, 2001, 2004; Haro, 2004). No entanto, os pais deste estudo desafiam concepções anteriores de falta de cuidado e envolvimento dos pais Latinos, e os dados fornecem evidências para reformular e ampliar os conceitos de envolvimento parental. Três temas principais emergiram da análise dos dados: 1) Definição e percepções sobre como a percepção dos pais Latinos sobre seu papel na educação de seus filhos molda a forma como eles definem e percebem o envolvimento parental; 2) como os pais Latinos que falam Espanhol veem seu papel e as diferentes formas como estão envolvidos no processo educacional de seus filhos na escola, e 3) como as histórias de envolvimento dos pais se relacionam (ou não) com os aspectos sociais e trocas culturais de capital com a escola.

*Definição e Percepção de Envolvimento Parental-* Ao contrário do retrato histórico de pais Latinos como não envolvidos e menos atenciosos (Brock & Edmunds, 2010), as percepções de pais Latinos com baixos níveis de envolvimento são o resultado de como os papéis parentais são definidos. As percepções dos pais Latinos sobre seus papéis diferem drasticamente em comparação com as expectativas mantidas nas escolas americanas. Descobri que o envolvimento dos pais Latinos consistia em áreas que estão fora do que é tradicionalmente reconhecido como

envolvimento nas escolas, que vai além da participação dos pais nas atividades escolares.

Embora todos os pais tenham mencionado atividades escolares neste estudo, não foi a base para o envolvimento dos pais Latinos.

Em relação à primeira questão de pesquisa que norteou este estudo, os pais compartilharam experiências de seu envolvimento e percepção de seu papel na educação de seus filhos, o que ilustrou a desconexão entre a definição tradicional de envolvimento dos pais e os esforços de envolvimento dos pais compartilhados por pais Latinos na educação de seus filhos. Em todas as entrevistas, os pais descreveram seu envolvimento com altos níveis de interesse e indicaram um grande sacrifício de sua parte. Conforme sugerido na literatura, os professores muitas vezes interpretam os baixos níveis de envolvimento parental tradicional como falta de cuidado (Haro, 2004) e, portanto, os pais Latinos são frequentemente percebidos como não se importando com a educação de seus filhos. No entanto, a compreensão dos pais Latinos sobre o envolvimento dos pais difere das expectativas tradicionais. Seu envolvimento consiste em 1) serem pais responsáveis no cuidado com o filho, 2) fornecer orientação e apoio e 3) fazer sacrifícios para melhorar a qualidade de vida de seus filhos. As definições de envolvimento parental compartilhadas pelos pais participantes deste estudo desafiam a definição tradicional de envolvimento parental e fornecem evidências para que o conceito seja ampliado, conforme indicado por Lopez & Stoelting (2010).

***Visão do papel dos pais-*** A primeira subquestão que norteia esta pesquisa explorou como os pais Latinos veem seu papel no processo educacional da educação de seus filhos em uma escola que deve envolver ativamente os pais. Os pais participantes descreveram seu papel na educação de seus filhos de várias maneiras. O foco de suas respostas, como observado anteriormente, não estava diretamente ligado à escola de seus filhos; em vez disso, abordou

outros aspectos da vida de seus filhos, como o lar, seu bem-estar, crenças, escola e escolhas de vida.

Em geral, os pais entrevistados refletiram sobre o que acreditavam ser suas responsabilidades com a aprendizagem de seus filhos e com a escola. Eles se concentraram nas expectativas, que estabeleceram para si mesmos que, em sua maioria, diferiam drasticamente das expectativas estabelecidas pela escola. Os achados deste estudo foram alinhados com os achados de Shah e Marshall (2005) e Rodriguez-Brown (2010) em que parecia haver uma falta de entendimento entre as expectativas e envolvimento da casa e da escola. A reflexão dos pais e a consideração de seus papéis na educação de seus filhos foram específicas para 1) garantir que seus filhos tenham as necessidades básicas para viver uma vida saudável, 2) estabelecer rotinas domésticas, 3) dividir a responsabilidade de educar seus filhos, 4) comunicar com o professor de seus filhos, 5) inculcando o valor da escolarização em seus filhos, e 6) orientando seus filhos para o "caminho certo". Fornecer cuidado, amor, valores morais e crenças para as crianças é, muitas vezes, a maneira como os pais Latinos veem seus papéis na vida de seus filhos, enquanto as escolas devem fornecer educação acadêmica. Essas diferentes visões ou percepções das obrigações domésticas e escolares explicam por que os pais Latinos se sentem inseguros quando são solicitados a assumir certos deveres que acreditam serem responsabilidades da escola.

***Intercâmbios com a Escola-*** Considerando a segunda subquestão de pesquisa, como as histórias de envolvimento dos pais se relacionam (ou não) com as trocas de capital social e cultural com a escola e com os desafios para atender às expectativas de envolvimento dos pais destacaram a necessidade de mudança. Apesar do baixo nível socioeconômico dos pais neste estudo, suas lutas para se envolverem na escola não se deviam à falta de recursos (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1987; Moles, 1992, Thomas-Lester, 2017; Turney & Kao, 2009). Em vez disso,



seus desafios foram associados à incapacidade de educadores e líderes educacionais de reconhecer ou valorizar as variadas formas de capital social e cultural dos pais Latinos das MLs elementares para se engajar na escola no mesmo nível esperado de estudantes das classes média e alta (Bourdieu, 1977). Os resultados deste estudo são paralelos à aplicação do capital social à educação por Coleman (1990) e ao estudo de Lareau (1989) sobre o capital cultural, demonstrando como ele molda o envolvimento dos pais.

Havia uma desconexão entre os pais e as tradições escolares e as expectativas quanto ao envolvimento dos pais na educação de seus filhos. Parte dessa desconexão resultou de barreiras linguísticas, nível de autoeficácia dos pais, falta de conhecimento da política e expectativas de envolvimento dos pais das escolas e sentimento de despreparo para apoiar a aprendizagem de seus filhos com base em seu nível de educação. Em geral, esse equívoco dos pais moldou a profundidade e a frequência de suas interações com a escola de seus filhos. As crenças dos pais sobre suas limitações, bem como sua dependência da ajuda de outros membros da família e da comunidade para se conectar com a escola e apoiar o aprendizado de seus filhos, afetaram seu envolvimento.

A barreira linguística foi o principal fator limitante do envolvimento dos pais participantes na escola de seus filhos. No entanto, a adoção em toda a escola de um sistema de mensagens de texto com tradução automática como meio de comunicação facilitou positivamente e influenciou seu envolvimento na escola e os pais descreveram sentir-se apoiados pela escola e mais inclinados a fazer perguntas.

Outro fator que aumentou a tarefa desafiadora de os pais se envolverem mais na educação de seus filhos foi a compreensão de todas as informações compartilhadas pela escola. Havia uma série de plataformas e aplicativos que eles precisavam dominar para preencher formulários e

fazer pagamentos relacionados à escola. Os pais relataram que não saber navegar nessas plataformas e aplicativos combinados com seu nível de proficiência na língua inglesa dificultaram seu envolvimento. Lutas semelhantes estavam presentes na relutância dos pais em atender aos pedidos dos professores para ler para seus filhos em casa porque se sentiam educacionalmente inadequados para ajudar nessas tarefas. A compreensão dos pais sobre as expectativas curriculares e suas experiências acadêmicas impactaram a forma como eles responderam às solicitações feitas pelos professores de seus filhos. O desejo de compreensão dos pais participantes baseava-se em sua capacidade de aprender por meio da observação, onde seu comportamento, esforços de comunicação e envolvimento geral começavam imitando os pais Latinos, fornecendo orientação e apoio à medida que se adaptavam à nova vida na América.

Com base nas respostas dos pais, emergiram dois níveis de autoeficácia, pais que estão confiantes e pais que estão ganhando confiança, que se referem à quantidade de confiança que os pais demonstraram ao defender e apoiar a aprendizagem de seus filhos. Se um pai participante apresentou características de pai que é confiante ou pai que está ganhando confiança, todos os pais, neste estudo, estavam altamente envolvidos na educação de seus filhos, mas os educadores nem sempre reconheceram ou valorizaram seu tipo de envolvimento na escola.

### **Recomendações**

Nesta seção, eu identifico as contribuições deste estudo para a literatura existente sobre o envolvimento parental elementares MLs.

#### **Construindo a Autoeficácia Através da Consciência Cultural**

Os resultados deste estudo destacaram os diferentes níveis de autoeficácia dos pais em relação à sua capacidade de se comunicar com a escola e a importância de construir a consciência cultural das escolas no cultivo de parcerias casa-escola. Esses fatores foram os

principais influenciadores das interações dos pais participantes com a escola de seus filhos. Pais de nível moderado a alto de autoeficácia ou pais que estão confiantes iniciaram a comunicação com a escola com mais frequência, independentemente da falta de conhecimento do conteúdo e da proficiência na língua inglesa. Esses achados são consistentes com a literatura que sugere que quanto maior o nível de autoeficácia de uma pessoa, mais ativa ela será (Reed, 2020). Em contraste, pais com nível baixo a moderado de autoeficácia ou pais que estão ganhando confiança apresentaram características de bons pais envolvidos, mas não iniciaram interações com a escola. De fato, os esforços e interações dos pais que estão ganhando confiança com a escola parecem não se alinhar diretamente com a expectativa de envolvimento da escola. Esses achados foram consistentes com a literatura que indica que uma pessoa com menor autoeficácia pode não concluir uma tarefa que a desafie fora de sua zona de conforto (Pajares, 2006). Todos os pais participantes estavam altamente envolvidos e exibiam características de serem bons pais de maneiras que iam além da definição tradicional de envolvimento ou percebidas como envolvimento nas escolas americanas. Seu envolvimento foi focado em garantir que seus filhos estivessem presentes na escola e se comportassem bem, orientando e apoiando seus filhos a fazer o melhor na escola e fazendo boas escolhas construindo amizades positivas na escola. Com isso em mente, os educadores e líderes escolares podem reconhecer as ações dos pais Latinos como uma forma de envolvimento dos pais. Lopez et al. (2001) afirmam que as percepções das formas tradicionais de envolvimento dos pais consistem em participar de reuniões de PTA, ser voluntário em eventos da sala de aula ou da escola e participar de atividades de arrecadação de fundos da escola. Conseqüentemente, os pais que não participam de tais eventos são frequentemente vistos como não envolvidos. Pais Latinos que falam Espanhol, seja por trabalharem muito tempo, falta de transporte ou seu nível de proficiência em inglês, muitas vezes

não participam da educação de seus filhos da mesma forma que as escolas americanas esperam. Como resultado, alguns pais são percebidos como não envolvidos quando na realidade estão.

Construir a consciência cultural e a compreensão da comunidade escolar e das famílias que a escola atende é fundamental para as interações e parcerias casa-escola e, sem a intenção de fazê-lo, a escola não prosperará (Freire, 2005). Devemos examinar possíveis conflitos no conhecimento atual do envolvimento dos pais na escola e como os pais Latinos veem a si mesmos e seu papel na educação de seus filhos para incluir outras formas de envolvimento dos pais em sua definição. Só assim, todos os educadores e líderes educacionais poderão aprender a aceitar e compreender as diferentes formas como os pais se envolvem na educação de seus filhos, que vão além do envolvimento estabelecido pelos limites das expectativas tradicionais de envolvimento dos pais. Quando as escolas capitalizam o envolvimento que já está ocorrendo em casa ou na escola, as parcerias casa-escola podem ser cultivadas e os pais podem ser participantes ativos (Lopez, 2001). Os pais Latinos que falam Espanhol neste estudo estiveram envolvidos na vida de seus filhos de várias maneiras significativas e suas experiências compartilhadas enfatizaram que, para ver os pais como parceiros, as escolas e os formuladores de políticas devem ir além do envolvimento escolar. Devem compreender e valorizar a língua, a cultura e o conhecimento de todas as famílias da comunidade escolar.

### **Oficinas Para Pais**

Minhas descobertas sobre como os pais Latinos veem seu papel no processo educacional de seus filhos, em uma escola que deve envolver ativamente todos os pais, enfatizaram a importância de estabelecer uma prática de orientação e manutenção dos pais informados. Independentemente da proficiência da língua inglesa dos pais, os pais, neste estudo, descreveram a escola de seus filhos como acolhedora e respeitosa de sua língua e cultura. Muitos pais

expandiram essa descrição da escola como uma boa escola por causa da reputação que ela tem na comunidade latina. No entanto, continuar a proporcionar um ambiente acolhedor para todos os pais pela forma como a escola cumprimenta e responde às perguntas dos pais pode ter uma influência positiva no envolvimento dos pais na escola (Smith et al, 2011; Thomas-Duckwitz et al, 2013 ), a escola tem que dar apoio aos pais ao longo do ano letivo na forma como eles esperam que os pais ajudem seus filhos e criem oportunidades para papéis mais ativos na escola (LeFevre & Shaw, 2012). Os pais participantes afirmaram não saber como atender às solicitações dos professores para auxiliar seus filhos nas tarefas de casa e apoiar o aprendizado em casa, além de proporcionar aos filhos um espaço e tempo confortáveis para atender sua aprendizagem. Eles também relataram participar de eventos em toda a escola, como dia de campo e almoço com seus filhos, além de estarem dispostos a ter um papel mais ativo na preparação de tais eventos, mas sem saber como. Todos os pais, independentemente do seu nível de autoeficácia, viam a escola dos seus filhos como um local de aprendizagem e desejavam que a escola tivesse oportunidades para os pais aprenderem e estarem mais informados. Eles expressaram seu desejo e vontade de se engajar no aprendizado para atender às necessidades acadêmicas de seus filhos.

Ao fornecer aos pais apoio que atenda às suas necessidades, a escola não apenas cultivará a parceria casa-escola, mas também desenvolverá a capacidade dos pais de ajudar em áreas que não se sentiam equipadas para fazê-lo anteriormente. Assim, construindo o nível de autoeficácia dos pais e ampliando sua percepção de envolvimento. Embora se espere que a escola compartilhe informações com os pais, enfatizando os pais, eles também devem reconhecer os pais como aprendizes com abundantes *fundos de conhecimento* (Moll, 2019) e facilitar essa troca entre casa e escola, para que os pais possam abraçar de forma holística o papel de contribuintes e receptores de informação e conhecimento. Quer a escola ofereça oficinas para os pais ou os encaminha para

oficinas disponíveis na comunidade, os pais podem obter compreensão e aprender como apoiar ainda mais o aprendizado de seus filhos em casa. À medida que as escolas adotam uma abordagem de explorar os *fundos do conhecimento* das famílias, elas podem adaptar oficinas e orientações aos pais para atender às suas necessidades enquanto aprendem as bases de seu conhecimento e os recursos e pontos fortes que possuem (Moll, 2019). Compreender que alguns pais terão necessidades e poderão necessitar de apoio adicional em áreas como as plataformas online utilizadas para comunicação e preenchimento de formulários, a utilização de ferramentas linguísticas e a compreensão do currículo beneficiará a escola em saber como apoiar as suas famílias. Da mesma forma, reconhecer que todos os pais têm muito a oferecer à escola de seus filhos através do enriquecimento do currículo e da promoção do uso do capital cultural criará as bases para o envolvimento ativo dos pais. Usar os bens de capital cultural das famílias na escola e na sala de aula pode ajudar alunos, professores e pais a desenvolver uma melhor compreensão de si mesmos e dos outros, bem como promover a cooperação entre a casa e a escola (Lee & Bowen, 2006). As escolas podem não apenas usar *os fundos de conhecimento* das famílias para gerar novas ideias, mas, em última análise, podem cultivar um ambiente que seja academicamente orientado e aproveitar esses recursos para o aprendizado (Molly, 2019), resultando em um ambiente escolar colaborativo, engenhoso, respeitoso e inclusivo.

### **Atendendo às Necessidades Linguísticas**

Pais Latinos participantes deste estudo expressaram gratidão pelo uso da escola de uma mensagem de texto de tradução automática, facilitando a comunicação direta dos pais com o professor de seus filhos. Ter uma barreira linguística foi apontado como um dos principais fatores que impedem o envolvimento dos pais. Os pais também fizeram várias referências ao sentimento de que a barreira do idioma os impedia de se envolver em conversas mais profundas e

significativas com o pessoal da escola sobre seus filhos. Além disso, a falta de compreensão de informações somente em inglês, como os formulários enviados para casa nas pastas de seus filhos, também representava um desafio para atender às expectativas da escola de comunicação e envolvimento abertos de duas vias. Manter os pais informados pode exigir que a escola invista tempo e talvez dinheiro em recursos adicionais para atender às necessidades linguísticas das famílias que atendem. A comunicação casa-escola não precisa se limitar a boletins informativos e formulários em papel (Kim, 2009). Com a vasta disponibilidade de recursos linguísticos projetados para auxiliar na comunicação escolar, é fundamental que as escolas levem em consideração como as famílias entendem as informações enviadas para casa. Desde aplicativos de tradução e ferramentas on-line para mensagens de vídeo, as escolas hoje podem escolher recursos e auxílios que melhor atendam às necessidades linguísticas de suas famílias e ajudem a preencher a lacuna na comunicação.

Alguns pais compartilharam ferramentas que usam para entender os formulários enviados para casa, mas nem sempre são precisas e, portanto, sugeriram maneiras pelas quais a escola poderia ajudá-los a superar a barreira do idioma. Algumas das ideias que partilharam consistiram em ter um tradutor a gravar uma mensagem de vídeo para enviar às famílias através do sistema de mensagens de texto já implementado em toda a escola, ajudar os pais a partilharem ferramentas com outras famílias através de vídeo ou reuniões presenciais, ensinar aos pais como empregar recursos adicionais que as escolas já possam ter e usar plataformas que suportem opções de tradução que limitarão a necessidade de traduzir todos os documentos e formulários enviados para casa. Os pais estavam esperançosos com suas sugestões ponderadas, mas expressaram que, embora a escola de seus filhos pareça acolhê-los, eles não sentiram que tinham um lugar para compartilhar sua opinião e fazer sugestões. Um dos pais recordou que, no início

do ano letivo, a escola partilhava com os pais a política de envolvimento parental que nem sempre era traduzida, e que, durante a primeira reunião de pais e professores, recebiam um formulário em que tinham a oportunidade de partilhar ideias. No entanto, esse documento nem sempre foi traduzido e os pais não estavam familiarizados com o processo, uma vez que fizeram suas sugestões. Essa desconexão também pode influenciar o envolvimento dos pais. Para cultivar parcerias casa-escola e construir o conceito de que tanto a escola quanto as famílias devem aprender umas com as outras (Gonzalez & Moll, 2002), a comunicação deve ser construída sobre uma base sólida de respeito mútuo, honrando diferentes perspectivas e nutrindo a colaboração .

### **Implicações Para a Política e a Prática**

Os resultados deste estudo ilustram as implicações para a política e a prática não apenas para os participantes do estudo, mas também para as famílias de outros alunos multilíngues. As três recomendações são iniciativas bastante simples que podem ser implementadas por distritos e escolas. Cada uma dessas implicações é discutida nesta seção.

Pais Latinos que falam Espanhol de MLs do ensino fundamental que participaram deste estudo consideraram seus papéis como críticos para o sucesso acadêmico de seus filhos. Apesar de sua forte conexão percebida com a educação de seus filhos, 5 dos 10 pais participantes foram desafiados a se comunicar com o pessoal da escola devido ao seu nível de proficiência em inglês. Uma mudança na prática para fornecer acesso equitativo às famílias de alunos multilíngues seria garantir que os educadores recebam desenvolvimento profissional focado na conscientização cultural e de estratégias de ensino. Além disso, as escolas precisam implementar recursos de linguagem para ajudar as famílias a navegar melhor no sistema educacional americano e se conectar à escola de seus filhos. Os cinco primeiros pais relataram que dependem da experiência de outros membros da comunidade latina para participar da escola e entender as informações



enviadas para casa nas pastas de seus filhos. Embora os outros pais tenham descrito poder se conectar com a escola, eles também expressaram o desafio de apoiar o sucesso acadêmico de seus filhos, uma vez que não estão familiarizados com o currículo e se sentem despreparados para auxiliar o aprendizado em casa.

Para efetivamente construir parcerias casa-escola, os esforços de envolvimento dos pais devem levar em consideração a população que atende, incluindo suas necessidades culturais e financeiras. A implementação de orientações para pais Latinos de MLs que falam Espanhol em um idioma que eles possam entender, semelhante ao que está disponível para todos os pais em inglês, pode servir como uma oportunidade para educar e promover a conscientização dos pais sobre as expectativas de envolvimento da escola e de se envolver com o currículo. Ao aumentar a conscientização dos pais sobre as expectativas da escola, o suporte linguístico disponível para auxiliar no aprendizado em casa e uma visão geral do currículo por meio de oficinas para pais, os pais Latinos que falam Espanhol podem aceitar e estar mais preparados para suas responsabilidades adicionais para o sucesso da vida acadêmica de seus filhos. Por sua vez, educadores e administradores enviam mensagens e apoiam os esforços de envolvimento dos pais em toda a escola para todos os pais, independentemente de sua cultura e idioma, podem mudar o enredo e o envolvimento de pais Latinos de MLs na educação de seus filhos.

Finalmente, o orçamento distrital e escolar designado para atender às necessidades dos MLs e famílias que não falam inglês deve contabilizar a compra de dispositivos e serviços de tradução para atender às necessidades linguísticas da população que atende. As escolas, muitas vezes, precisam arrecadar dinheiro e enviar subsídios locais para complementar seus esforços de envolvimento dos pais e fornecer aos professores recursos em sala de aula. Portanto, uma mudança de política para estabelecer recursos linguísticos em todo o distrito, incluindo serviços e

dispositivos de tradução juntamente com orientações para usar adequadamente esses serviços e recursos para atender às necessidades linguísticas de sua população multilíngue, cultivaria parcerias equitativas entre casa e escola e apoiaria os esforços de envolvimento dos pais para os pais Latinos.

### **Conclusão**

O aumento de alunos multilíngues Latinos que falam Espanhol nas escolas americanas desafia os educadores a identificar maneiras de se conectar com esses alunos e suas famílias e aumentar o envolvimento dos pais. Vários fatores podem influenciar o envolvimento de pais Latinos, a saber, a percepção dos pais sobre seu papel, pontos fortes, barreiras e responsabilidades (Eccles & Harold, 1996; Jefferson, 2014; Marzano, 2003; Pena, 2000; Shah & Marshall, 2005). Historicamente, os pais Latinos são retratados como indiferentes ou desinteressados na educação de seus filhos (Delgado-Gaitan, 2001, 2004; Haro, 2004). Os resultados deste estudo sugerem caminhos que questionam a definição tradicionalmente reconhecida e aceita de envolvimento dos pais e a deturpação do nível de participação dos pais Latinos na educação de seus filhos. Os pais, neste estudo, desafiam as concepções anteriores de falta de cuidado e envolvimento dos pais Latinos.

Através deste estudo, percebi que a percepção de que os pais que falam Espanhol não se preocupam em se envolver na educação de seus filhos talvez possa derivar da definição tradicional e amplamente aceita de envolvimento dos pais e do que é percebido como um nível adequado de envolvimento de todos os pais ao nível da escola. Além disso, mesmo com uma forte política de envolvimento dos pais na escola, apoiada pelos líderes escolares para implementar iniciativas de envolvimento dos pais que sejam culturalmente inclusivas, a forma como o envolvimento dos pais Latinos se desenvolve, está vinculada à dinâmica nos

relacionamentos e comunicações entre eles e os professores, administradores e outras pessoas na escola de seus filhos ao longo do ano lectivo e em um determinado contexto.

Como acontece com qualquer iniciativa em nível de escola, a implementação dos esforços de envolvimento dos pais está sujeita a que as partes interessadas vejam a necessidade e o valor de fazê-lo. A consideração da composição cultural da população que atende, bem como a reflexão sobre as práticas passadas no compartilhamento de informações sobre as expectativas de envolvimento escolar, é fundamental para examinar possíveis conflitos no conhecimento atual do envolvimento dos pais na escola e como os pais Latinos veem eles mesmos e seu papel na educação de seus filhos.

As parcerias casa-escola são muito impactadas pela comunicação; portanto, para que os esforços de envolvimento dos pais sejam eficazes e bem-sucedidos, é fundamental compreender e aceitar as preocupações de todas as partes interessadas. Quer um pai Latino esteja morando nos EUA há alguns dias ou alguns anos, os esforços para informar e envolver esse pai é vital para o sucesso acadêmico de seus filhos. Além disso, selecionar e fornecer oportunidades de desenvolvimento profissional visando a comunidade da escola e os recursos linguísticos para facilitar a comunicação casa-escola pode eliminar obstáculos existentes e potenciais à implementação bem-sucedida de parcerias casa-escola de pais Latinos.

Os pais deste estudo descreveram seu papel na educação de seus filhos com características de um pai altamente envolvido. Apesar de expressarem sentir-se despreparados para atender às questões relacionadas ao currículo dos deveres de casa de seus filhos, os pais relataram ser responsáveis por apoiar seus filhos além do acadêmico e da escola. Os pais apoiavam os interesses de aprendizagem de seus filhos, ofereciam um espaço confortável para fazer o dever de casa e as tarefas de leitura em casa, certificavam-se de que frequentavam a

escola e que se comportavam bem dentro e fora da escola. Alguns pais adotaram uma abordagem mais ativa, ajudando na conclusão do dever de casa e na participação em eventos da escola além das conferências de pais e professores, características de pais que moram nos EUA há mais de cinco anos. Como resultado, aqueles que ganharam confiança e familiaridade com as expectativas da escola manifestaram um senso recém-adquirido de seu papel na educação de seus filhos como pais Latinos recém-chegados. Por esta razão, é imperativo reavaliar e modificar a definição e os conceitos tradicionais reconhecidos de envolvimento parental para incluir as definições, percepções e papéis compartilhados pelos pais Latinos participantes deste estudo. O envolvimento dos pais deve incorporar um significado mais amplo de envolvimento dos pais na educação de seus filhos, que inclua as vozes compartilhadas neste estudo, para que o envolvimento dos pais Latinos possa ser melhor compreendido, e o pobre retrato histórico de que eles não dão atenção à educação dos filhos seja eliminada de nossas escolas.

As percepções dos pais Latinos sobre seu papel na educação de seus filhos refletem e contribuem para seu envolvimento e informam como eles entendem seus papéis e responsabilidades no apoio à aprendizagem de seus filhos nas escolas americanas. Este estudo destaca a importância de como os pais latinos de língua espanhola percebem seu papel no que se refere a oportunidades equitativas de envolvimento na educação de seus filhos.