Parental Involvement on Education: Moroccan Muslim Migrant Parents' Perspectives with Children Enrolled in Spanish Schools

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ABSTRACT

Aim. This research aims to analyse Moroccan Muslim migrant parents' perceptions on their involvement with the school. This involvement is examined considering several dimensions: communication, networking, participation, decision-making, cultural and religious recognition and educational support. Furthermore, it focuses on identifying the barriers to this involvement.

Methods. The study follows a mixed-method design. In the first stage, a questionnaire was administered to a non-probabilistic sample of 162 Moroccan Muslim migrant parents. During the second phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a total of 12 Moroccan Muslim migrant mothers. A descriptive statistical analysis and a deductive content analysis were carried out for quantitative and qualitative data respectively.

Results. There is high communication between Moroccan parents and the schools. However, their involvement in school activities, the Parent's Association and parent-teacher meetings are hindered by linguistic deficiency, socio-economic barriers and working constraints. They tend to create more networks with other Moroccan parents, since they find local parents to be hard to approach. It is seen that parents are consulted on decision-making processes related to their children academic performance and development. However, their cultural and religious backgrounds are often overlooked, which subtly excludes them. Moreover, they still struggle to be supported with home education, especially helping with homework.

Conclusions. Parents show willingness to be involved, but they struggle with several barriers. Specific measures and policies that minimise these obstacles are needed. This would be beneficial for fostering the inclusion of Moroccan Muslim migrant parents a their children, reality that has been little studied thus far.

Keywords: parental involvement, Moroccan migrant parents, language barriers, formal education, parental engagement

Introduction

Schools in western societies are characterised by their growing heterogeneity, having to welcome and accommodate a wide variety of migrant students and their families (Melnikova, 2022; Ortiz-Cobo et al., 2023; Pearce & Lewis, 2018). In this sense, parents have a supportive role in fostering the inclusion and attainment of their children in their education, which can be enhanced by higher parental engagement in the school life (Graham et al., 2022; Karpontini, 2024; Medaric et al., 2022). However, in Europe, migrant parents involvement with schools is still lower compared to the non-migrant parents (European Commission, 2019).

This lack of involvement can be explained by the difficulties migrant parents face when arriving to the host country, that hinder their participation (Kamp & Mansouri, 2010; Medaric et al., 2022). They have to navigate a completely new and unknown education system (Karpontini, 2024; Medaric et al., 2022; Smith & Johnson, 2019). Furthermore, they struggle with language and socio-economic barriers, as well as demanding working hours (Al-deen & Windle, 2015; Arnaiz-Sánchez et al., 2017; García et al., 2024; Habib-Allah, 2019). In fact, they have to bear with these obstacles while they are expected to show extraordinary levels of engagement and participation, answering pre-conceived demands of 'good parents' that are often dismissive of minoritised parents (Antony-Newman, 2018; Crozier, 2001).

In this sense, Muslim migrant parents have to face an extra barrier to this participation, since they have to endure the recent growing discrimination and Islamophobia in the West (Keddie et al., 2019; Torres-Zaragoza & Llorent-Bedmar, 2024; Weiss et al., 2024). They are victims of racialised discourses, that portray them as inaccessible and indifferent, which negatively influences the way in which they are treated and the expectations that schools and teachers have of them (Ghaffar-Kucher, 2014).

Teachers' views on migrant parents influence their attitudes towards them. Therefore, teachers who show more sensitive and accepting practices enhance parental participation and involvement within the school community (Glock et al., 2018; Karpontini, 2024; Watkins & Noble, 2016). In this sense, schools are spaces for fostering inclusion by attending migrant parents more urgent needs and creating support networks (Garreta-Bochaca, 2016; Pearce & Lewis, 2018). In this same vein, Muslim migrant parents, although struggling to get involved (Antony-Newman, 2018; Arnaiz-Sánchez

et al., 2017; Habib-Allah, 2019; Kamp & Mansouri, 2010), are also aware of its benefits, since they tend to prioritise education and see it as a resource to provide a better future for their children (Al-deen & Windle, 2015).

Unfortunately, several studies state that there is still a gap in the literature regarding migrant parents' involvement (Antony-Newman, 2018; Melnikova, 2022). This is concerning, as parental involvement has numerous benefits on migrant parents, their children and the school community as a whole (Erkenbrack, 2025; Karpontini, 2024; Medaric et al., 2022; Reininger & Santana-López, 2017; Yang et al., 2021). In fact, this involvement impacts positively on their childrens' educational outcomes, as they tend to show positive attitudes towards education and less disruptive behaviour, greater socio-emotional development, and higher motivation and school attendance rates (Erkenbrack, 2025; Karpontini, 2024; Reininger & Santana-López, 2017; Yang et al., 2021). Moreover, parental participation sets an example for their children to follow, who will engage within the school, and thus, lay the foundations for their future inclusion and participation in society (Medaric et al., 2022). In this sense, this engagement also benefits migrant parents, as their higher presence in the school life fosters the creation of networks and relationships with other parents, that, in turn, enhances their access to school resources, such as information, support, etc. (Erkenbrack, 2025; Karpontini, 2024). This parental involvement, not only brings more social capital to migrant parents but also to the school community (teachers, other parents, students…), as migrant parents can also benefit the school with their own social capital, tackling stereotypes and stigmatisation (Erkenbrack, 2025).

In Spain, several studies have been conducted regarding the participation of migrant parents, with a vague interest in Moroccan families. In these researches, it is seen that Moroccan parents tend to participate less than parents of Latino origin (Santos-Rego & Lorenzo-Moledo, 2009; Lozano-Martínez et al., 2014). However, little has been studied about the reasons behind this lack of participation of Moroccan families, which are only compared to other minority/majority groups. In this sense, Silvia Carrasco et al. (2009) focused specifically on Moroccan families' involvement and they discovered that their participation tends to be judged and questioned by teachers, without really digging into the barriers or reasons that could trigger these situations.

In the face of this reality, this study focuses on Moroccan Muslim migrant parents' involvement in schools in the area of Seville, Andalusia, Spain. Moroccan parents are chosen owing to being the Muslim migrant majority collective as well as one of the largest migratory groups in Spain (Instituto Nacional de Estadística [INE], 2024; Unión de Comunidades Islámicas de España [UCIDE], 2023). Specifically, according to the latest demographic data, there are a total of 883.243 registered Moroccan inhabitants in Spain, of which 163.585 are settled in Andalusia (INE, 2022). Andalusia is the second autonomous community (after Catalonia) with the highest percentage of Muslim migrant students, which constitute 13% of the total population of Muslim students enrolled in primary and secondary public education (UCIDE, 2023). It can be

deduced the majority are of Moroccan origin. This is explained by the fact that the Muslim population makes up 5% of the Spanish population, of which more than half are migrants (55%), and 36% being Moroccan (UCIDE, 2023). Therefore, there is also a high presence of Moroccan parents in schools .

In order to study parental involvement we established the following research questions: What are the Moroccan Muslim migrant parents' perceptions on their school involvement? What are their opinions on the barriers that hinder their involvement? We hope that by giving answer to these questions, we can develop measures and policies that can provide support and foster the participation and involvement of Moroccan Muslim migrant parents.

In this study, parental involvement is defined as a multi-dimensional reality, that includes communication, networking, educational support, participation and decision-making. Thus, parent involvement entails a constant flow of information and communication between the school and parents; the creation of networks with the members of the school community (such as other parents, teachers, etc.); support and help for curriculum activities and home learning (i.e. homework); family participation in school activities and events; and allowing parents to join decision-making processes in the school (Epstein, 2018; Karpontini, 2024).

Aims

This research aims to analyse Moroccan Muslim migrant parents' perceptions on their involvement in the school. To give answer to this, the following specific objectives are stated:

- − Analyse parental involvement in the school regarding communication, networking and participation in school activities.
- − Examine parents' perceptions of their involvement in their children education: decision-making, cultural and religious recognition, curricular and educational support.
- − Identify the barriers to this involvement from the parents' perspective.

Method

The study follows a mixed-method design with an ethnographic approach, which includes questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The study was divided in an initial quantitative phase, that was followed by a qualitative stage, to further explain and complement the quantitative data gathered thorough the study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Hammersley, 2006).

For the first stage, a questionnaire was designed for Moroccan Muslim migrant parents, that aimed to explore their perceptions on the involvement in their children's

educational life. This instrument's validity and reliability was previously assessed and guaranteed with a pilot sample of 36 parents, that were considered sufficient for the analysis (Torres-Zaragoza, 2024). It was also translated into Darija, main dialect spoken in Morocco, to ensure higher participation, since one of the limitations found was a lack of knowledge of Spanish. This research followed a non-probability sampling (Revilla et al., 2015). Firstly, a purposeful sampling (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Schreier, 2012) was used to access parents from the area of Seville, and with children enrolled in formal education. Secondly, the parents initially approached were asked to refer us to other parents that they knew of. Hence a snowballing sample was also carried out, as it allows reach to inaccessible populations, that tend to be sensitive to the topics studied (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Schreier, 2012). Finally, a total of 162 Moroccan Muslim migrant parents participated.

This sample size is considered adequate for a non-probabilistic sampling, especially after the difficulties to access this group (Baker et al., 2013; Revilla et al., 2015). The sample constraints do not undermine the adequacy of the data obtained, since the ethnographic approach focuses on the understanding of socio-cultural processes, rather than a fixed outcome (Hammersley, 2006). Moreover, the quantitative data is complemented by the qualitative results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017).

Table 1

Socio Demographic Characteristics of the Quantitative Sample

Items	Variable	Frequency (%)
Gender	Masculine	41.9
	Feminine	58.1
Age	26-30	7
	31-35	8.1
	36-40	23.3
	41-45	16.3
	46-50	15.1
	51-55	7
	56-60	12.8
	61-65	1.2
	Missing values	9.3
Work situation	Student	3.5
	Paid work	61.6
	Unemployed	5.8
	Retired	26.7
	Unpaid domestic work	2.3
	Student and unemployed	1.2
Highest level of education	None	10.5
	Primary	44.2
	Secondary School	34.9

Items	Variable	Frequency (%)
	University degree	4.7
	Master's degree	0
	PhD	3.5
Spanish language knowledge	High	18.6
	Intermediate	59.3
	Low	18.6
Children's place of birth	España	35.3
	Marruecos	49.4
	España y Marruecos	4.7
Children's educational stage	Early childhood	7.1
	Primary education	10.7
	Secondary education	15.5
	A levels/VET	14.3
	Early childhood, primary and secondary education	6.0
	Early childhood and primary education	7.1
	Early childhood and secondary education	1.2
	Primary and secondary education	16.7
	Primary, secondary education and A levels/VET	2.4
	Primary education and university	1.2
	Secondary education and A levels/VET	13.1
	A levels/VET and university	2.4
	University	2.4
Type of school	Public	97.7
	Private	2.4

Source. Own research.

During the second phase, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a total of 12 Moroccan Muslim migrant mothers, who were also recruited through purposeful sampling (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017; Schreier, 2012). The mothers selected met the following characteristics: they lived in the area of Seville, had children enrolled in formal education and wanted to participate voluntarily. Only mothers were interviewed, due to their accessibility. They were easier to find in the places where they were recruited (i.e. schools, associations, mosques, etc.) and more willing to collaborate voluntarily than the fathers. This sample was accepted since they were considered to offer meaningful and valuable information about the issue under study. In this sense, they were asked for further information regarding their participation and involvement within the school, that would support the previous quantitative results. The interviews were conducted by a female researcher and a Moroccan translator. Thus gender, migration status and positionality were always taken into consideration during these exchanges (Yip, 2023).

Instruments and Data Analysis

The quantitative instrument was formed by a total of 6 factors, that inquired about their children relationship with the school, barriers to inclusion, religiosity…, among others. In this study, we only focus on the dimension regarding parental involvement. The validity and reliability of the model confirmed the structure of this dimension, that was formed by 9 items (Torres-Zaragoza, 2024). This dimension measured parental involvement in their childrens' education, guided by the theoretical categories for this construct: communication, networking, educational support, participation and decision-making (Epstein, 2018; Karpontini, 2024). This dimension used a 4-point Likert scale with answer options from totally disagree to totally agree. The quantitative data was statistically analysed with the programme Jamovi.v. 2.5.3 with statistical syntax combination in R. A descriptive statistical analysis was conducted.

Additionally, this dimension contained an extra multiple-choice item that followed a multiple response combination analysis (Agresti & Liu, 1999). This item could not be included in the validation process, as its multiple choice nature can lead to biases and misinterpretation of the variables (Wirth & Edwards, 2007). Moreover, it is worth highlighting that for the data analysis, the item 'I share the norms and values that are taught in my children's school' was included from another dimension of the questionnaire. This item belonged to a dimension that focused on the parental opinion about education in schools. This dimension aligns with the parental involvement one, and this item was considered to bring rich and insightful information for the aims of this study. Hence, it was decided that it would also be included.

The semi-structured interviews were formed by open-ended questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). The design was based on the results obtained from the questionnaires. Therefore, the interview was intended to deeply study issues that arose from the quantitative results. The interview focused on aspects related to their involvement in schools. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. The data analysis was conducted with the programme AQUAD 7 (V.7.6.1.1.) following a deductive thematic content analysis, in which categories were created from the previous quantitative analysis (Schreier, 2012).

Ethical Considerations

Participation was voluntarily and every person involved signed and informed consent. Anonymity and confidentiality were assured while managing the data.

Results and Discussion

Results are displayed following the multiple dimensions of parental involvement. Therefore, the first section focuses on parental involvement regarding participation, communication and networking, specifically dealing with parent-teacher meetings as a way to communicate and participate. The second section examines aspects related to decision-making, including their cultural and religious diversity recognition in those processes, and other educational and curricular support.

Communication, Participation and Networking

Quantitative Data

Family participation was measured with a 4 point Likert scale (1=totally disagree; 2= disagree; 3= agree; 4= totally agree). Results (table 2) show that parents do not often participate in the parent's association (2.24) and do not normally interact with local parents (2.24), with the lowest means, an arithmetic median around 2 and high standard deviations (SD). This states that there is a wide range of responses, although the majority of them accumulate in the disagree option. In this sense, there is a higher tendency to mostly interact with Moroccan parents, with a higher mean value (2.45) and the median punctuation in 3 (agree). However, the standard deviations are also high, which means there is a broad range of responses, with parents either interacting more or less with other Moroccan families.

Moreover, it can be seen that the item "I participate in activities organised at my children's school (e.g. matches, plays, festivals)", also has one of the lowest mean values (2.25). However high SD are identified, thus, there is a wide variety of responses. This finds explanation on the qualitative data that stresses the parents' constraints to participate, that would be discussed later.

Finally, the items "my children's school notifies me about workshops and training activities for parents" and "my children's teacher informs me about my childrens' progress at the school", show higher mean punctuations, (< 3), and small SD. Therefore, there is a great deal of communication between the school/teachers and these families, which aligns in other studies conducted with migrant parents in Spain (Arnaiz-Sánchez et al., 2017; Habib-Allah, 2019).

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics on Parental Involvement

Item	M	Mdn	Mode	SD
I participate in the school's parents' association of my children's school	2.24	2	1.00	1.043

Item	M	Mdn	Mode	SD
I participate in activities organised at my children's school (e.g. matches, plays, festivals)	2.25	2	1.00	1.204
My children's school notifies me about workshops and training activities for parents	3.13	3	3.00	0.777
My children's teacher informs me about my children's progress at the school	3.16	3	3.00	0.740
At my children's school I mostly interact with local parents	2.24	2	1.00	1.031
At my children's school I mostly interact with Moroccan parents	2.45	3	3.00	1.086

Source. Own research.

Qualitative Data

Qualitative data allows further examination on this involvement, which is affected due to the intersectionality of their socio-economic and migrant status. Demanding working hours, lack of economical resources and linguistic deficiencies can affect this participation, which would be developed next.

Interactions with Parents. During the interviews, there were some mothers that stated having interactions with local parents, as can also be seen in the high SD values for this item in the quantitative results. However, only E3 developed a deeper relationship with local parents outside the school life. Experience that is worth highlighting, since schools are spaces for promoting parent communication and networking, which is also key in fostering their children's inclusion (Melnikova, 2022; Pearce & Lewis, 2018).

> It is wonderful, they are all friends of mine. There are 25 mothers from my daughter and my son's class and they are all friends of mine. I always go with them on trips, we go to the beach, we go for lunch. (E3)

The majority of the respondents manifest superficial relationships with other parents, with whom they claim to have positive interactions. This aligns with Julia Kast et al. (2021)'s study, that discovered non-migrant parents had accepting attitudes towards migrant students and their families, and showed signs of high levels of awareness and ethical behaviour. Although positive, mothers report very few opportunities for those encounters to happen, which explains the quantitative results. E5 and E2 are proof of this, since having to work minimised their chances to foster further and meaningful interactions with local parents: "The times that my husband has gone, because he has to work and couldn't go much, it's been good, always good. We never had any problem with other parents. (E2)"; "We work and that makes it hard for us to meet other parents. Our relationship has been positive, but we haven't had much of a relationship with the parents. (E5)".

Nevertheless, some mothers still struggle to interact with local parents, who tend to be inaccessible, as E4 and E9 state. "When I came here, I had a good relationship with the teachers, but the parents are all a bit… distant. They are all like that, I don't

have any friendship with them. (E4)". In fact, E9 even justifies these attitudes. This finds explanation in numerous studies that prove Muslims are one of the most vulnerable minority groups towards discrimination and marginalisation in educational settings, owing to the growing islamophobia over the last decades in western societies (Keddie et al., 2019; Torres-Zaragoza & Llorent Bedmar, 2024; Weiss et al., 2024). "I don't know them, I see them at the school door, but they have their group, they talk together and then they pick up their children and they leave. They're busy, I understand. (E9)"

These negative experiences with local parents can be one of the causes that explain them having greater interactions with other Moroccan parents. Another reason for this inclination could be the phenomenon of ethnic homophily, since families are more prone to look for support and create bonds with people who they feel identified with (Kast et al., 2021; Zhao, 2023). In this sense, E5's excerpt sheds light in this matter: they create strong links and networks with other family members and friends in order to support each other linguistically and to adapt to the new demands associated with arriving to a new country. "My elder children adapted so quickly, so when there were any problems with language, they could translate anything that was needed or for everything. That made things very easy not just for us, but for our friends that were here" (E5).

It is also seen that Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have recently become powerful tools to reinforce communication between parents. E5 states that having a WhatsApp group with other parents has increased their involvement and communication with the school activities and parents. The reality was that she did not live with her older children. "Now, I do have a WhatsApp group, there weren't these things back in the days my elder children were at school. Now, it's true that I have one and we keep in touch, and it's true that we're more involved." (E5)

ICT can be helpful to help migrant families ability to create networks and bonds, while they have to navigate a new social and educational system (Ortiz-Cobo et al., 2023). Therefore, more ICT resources should be taken into consideration as a mechanism to foster participation. Especially when some of the mothers that benefitted from the WhatsApp group, were also the ones who claimed not having interactions with local parents.

Parents' association. Quantitative results showed that parents barely participated in the Parent's association. This aligns with Habib-Allah (2019) that states migrant families get involved in Spanish schools in different ways, such as fostering school attendance and helping with homework, but did not participate in the Parent's association. However, the reasons for this lack of participation were not studied.

In this sense, qualitative data allowed us to identify the barriers to this involvement. Neither participant 2 nor her husband were members of the Parent's Association since they needed to pay a fee: "No, when my children were there, there was a fee for the Parent's Association, and we didn't want to pay to belong to a parents' group. (E2)".While E5 and her husband had to work: "It's true that we have never been part of the parent association because we both work and at the end of the day, that makes it hard to participate." (E5).

Consequently, socio-economic barriers can also limit parental involvement, especially in the Parent's association. Financial needs and/or demanding working hours prevent them from being able to participate. Thus it is useful to develop measures that are sensitive to these needs and that better include these families.

School's activities. It is noted that parents do not normally participate in their children's school activities. Participation that is limited due to economical and working constraints. This is the case of participant 2 that, owing to financial reasons, lives in the middle of the countryside, far away from the town and the school. This prevents her from learning Spanish and participating in any kind of social life, and, more specifically, her children's school life.

> When my children were at school I didn't have an environment to be able to learn Spanish because, we lived in the countryside, 4 km away from the village, we didn't even have a neighbour to be able to learn [...] No, I didn't go to most of my children's activities, maybe on one occasion when my husband wasn't working. As I was far from the town, I didn't have the means to go to see them, so I was very limited, my husband had to take me in the car. (E2)

This is concerning, since parents that lack access to the school life, are not only indirectly isolated but also deprived from the opportunities that the school culture provides, which raises questions about equity and accessibility (Kamp & Mansouri, 2010; Karpontini, 2024). In this same vein, E5 states that, despite their efforts to participate, they have to work most of the time. "We haven't participated much, for example, when there were events in the school, we have always tried to go if we didn't have to work, of course." (E5)

It is evident that the intersectionality of their socio-economic and working status determined this participation, making every parents' experience different. For example, E7 has the chance to attend to these activities, since she is unemployed, and balances her husband's inability to participate due to work: "My husband Works, so it's me who goes when there is something. My daughter tells me what we have to do and I say yes. (E7)". Likewise, E9 is also able to go to these activities and she also expresses her wish to involve as a key to fostering the inclusion of her children. This is crucial, since parents engagement is proven to have enormous benefits on their children's educational experiences and involvement within the wider society (Medaric et al., 2022).

> The school organises activities with families and their children. I always want to participate, to share with my children and also with the teachers and other parents. I do all of this for the sake of my children, so they're fine in the school. (E9)

Results highlight parents' interest to participate in the school life of their children and their barriers to fully engage. In fact, it provides reasons for the lack of involvement reported on the quantitative data. This is important, since migrant parents tend to consider education a priority, but their participation is hampered by obstacles that can exacerbate due to their cultural and socio-economic capital (Al-deen & Windle, 2015).

Parent-Teacher Meetings

Quantitative data on participation stated that families were well communicated with the school and teachers. Although there is a great deal of communication with the school, table 3 shows that 31.3% of the families still have difficulties to communicate with the school due to linguistic deficiency. The reality is it could be hindering this communication, and thus, their involvement (García et al., 2024; Karpontini, 2024).

We also focused our interest on their participation on parent-teacher meetings. In this sense, more than half of the parents (68.7%) did not go to those sessions. The reasons for not attending parent-teacher meetings were varied. A concerning number could not go due to working reasons (57.1%), followed by language barriers (26.8%). It is worth highlighting that, although in a small percentage, not knowing the form teacher and not understanding how parent-teacher meetings work were also obstacles for this participation.

Table 3

Frequencies on Parental Involvement in Parent-Teacher Meetings

Item		Frequency (%)
I have difficulties communicating with my children's school because I do not speak Spanish well	Yes	31.3
	No	68.7
If you do not attend parent-teacher meetings, choose the main reasons*	I do not speak Spanish well	26.8
	I have to work	57.1
	I do not know my children's form teacher	1.8
	I do not know how the parent-teacher meetings work	3.6
	Other	
	− Do not speak Spanish well	1.8
	− Have to work	
	− Do not know the form teacher	
	− Do not speak Spanish well	3.6
	− Have to work	
	− Have to work	5.4
	− Do not know how parent-teacher meetings work	

Note. This is a multiple-response item (with a maximum of 3 answers). The 'other' section contains the different sets of answers/ categorical variables of the respondents. A multiple response combination analysis (Agresti & Liu, 1999) was conducted, as it provides information regarding the patterns of responses. In this sense, it is interesting to understand the group of answers as a cluster, which would be insightful to better understand the barriers that parents face, and the frequency in which they struggle with multiple barriers at the same time.

Source. Own research.

Qualitative data confirmed these quantitative results, since participation in parent- teacher meetings was mainly hindered due to language and working barriers. For example E9, despite having a great level of Spanish, felt insecure about fully understanding what the teacher had to say and, thus, she did not attend: "My husband speaks Spanish perfectly because he's been more tan 21 years in Spain, but I don't. When there's a parent-teacher meeting or another kind of meeting to talk about the kids, my husband goes" (E9).

Moreover, E2 is not able to go because she does not speak the language and her husband has to work. This is an actionable point for schools, since not understanding basic information hinders parents' communication and involvement in a system that often impedes them to ask for specific support or help (Medaric et al., 2022; Smith & Johnson, 2019).

> It's true that we hardly ever go to parent-teacher meetings, because my husband is the one who speaks Spanish, but he always had to work and he couldn't reconcile his schedule with the teachers'. And I didn't know Spanish and in that time there was not an interpreter in the school. If they had to tell me something, they normally told my kids and they told me. (E2)

In this sense, some of the mothers that struggle with communication find alternative solutions, by getting help from other family members or even their children, as E3 states. However, this highlights the schools' lack of measures and/or resources, such as interpreters or network collaborations, that could ease communication and support these families, (García et al., 2024; Habib-Allah, 2020). "My children would translate sometimes. Also, since my brother was here too, he would also help us" (E3).

Attending parent-teacher meetings is essential, since in person interactions are more enriching and guarantee better communication with the families, while fostering their involvement (Karpontini, 2024). E11 agrees by stating how valuable these meetings are, and that teachers can make a difference in these experiences. In this sense, teachers attitudes towards cultural diversity and minority students and parents are determining in fostering their inclusion and well-being (Gay, 2013; Glock et al., 2018; Medaric et al., 2022).

> Everything is perfect with the teacher. I like her, she's nice. The teacher sometimes calls me for a meeting and she asks me about my daughter, she tells me how she's doing, that she's better, that she adapts and is very active…I like it that we talk about this and she's really nice (E11)

Consequently, there is a need for better resources and measures that encourage parent participation and face-to-face communication between parents and teachers (Habib-Allah, 2020; Karpontini, 2024). In turn, this can also guarantee enormous benefits for their children development and academic success (Graham et al., 2022; Medaric et al., 2022; Melnikova, 2022).

Involvement in Education: Decision-Making and Support

Quantitative Data

This dimension also used a 4 point Likert scale, from 1= totally disagree to 4=totally agree. Table 4 shows that the majority of parents agree to share the norms and values that are taught in their children's schools, as stated in mean values above 3 (3.23) and small SD. Furthermore, parents agree they have been consulted on issues related to their children's education, with mean values closer to 3, a median and mode in 3 and low SD, hence, the majority of the responses accumulate on that rate.

However, for the items "I have been invited to my children's school to talk about Islam and/or my culture" and "my children's school have asked my opinion on the development of activities related to my culture/religion", there are low mean and SD values. This states that parents and students' cultural and religious identification tend to be overlooked in schools. Perhaps, there are not many celebrations regarding their cultural/religious diversity either. This aligns with Medaric et al. (2022) that state that when migrant parents are involved in school discussions, the main issues are centred on academic performance, and tend to ignore their cultural background and experiences.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics on Parental Involvement: Decision-Making

Item	M	Mdn	Mode	SD
I share the norms and values that are taught in my children's school	3.23	3	3.00	0.687
My children's school has consulted me on issues related to their education	2.86	3.00	3.00	0.866
I have been invited to my children's school to talk about Islam and/or my culture	1.73	2	1.00	0.822
My children's school have asked my opinion on the development of activities related to my culture/religion	1.38	1.00	1.00	0.558

Source. Own research.

Qualitative Data

It is seen that parents showed involvement with the schools' values and culture, while still having strong cultural bonds to Morocco. E9's excerpt is an example of that, since she encourages their children to adopt and share the school values, without forgetting their culture of origin. Hence, this concept of 'Clash of Civilisations' (Huntington, 1996), that western societies like to claim and use as an argument to justify Islamophobic and discriminatory practices against Muslims was proven wrong (Haynes, 2019).

> We are really proud of being Moroccan and we're happy our children are also raised within the Moroccan culture, but, for example, I say this a lot to my kids: "the land where you live and eat is here, so you have the same values as another Spanish person". (E9)

In this sense, parents are also consulted on issues related to their children's education. However, schools do not consider parents' opinions on aspects related to their ethnic, cultural and/or religious imaginary when organising activities related to their culture, as E7 claims. Schools, under discourses of equality and pedagogies of the indifference, tend to overlook the diversity of minority groups, which can hinder their inclusion and involvement (Gay, 2013; Graham et al., 2022; Keddie et al., 2019). "They've never called me to talk about Moroccan culture, just if my child has a problem or something like that. Same for Islam, they don't call me for that, never" (E7).

It is evident that schools do not often involve them when organising cultural activities, if they actually are celebrated. This raises questions on how to expect their involvement when their identities are not acknowledged. There is a need for schools to find different ways to encourage parents engagement, by building trust and initiating communication and participation (Melnikova, 2022). Especially, when parents are an asset to foster social cohesion and the academic success of their children (Karpontini, 2024). In this sense, all the mothers interviewed, valued education and encouraged their children to study, E8 is an example of that: "I'm really happy, my children are happy in school and their studies are going well, I tell them it is really important that they study, for their future and their life, you know?" (E8).

This encouragement is really interesting, since it shows that parents, although finding barriers for their participation and involvement, still worry and expect their children to have the most enriching experiences in their schools. Nevertheless, it was noted that mothers reported difficulties in helping their children with their homework due to language barriers. This obstacle sometimes intertwined with their educational level and/or illiteracy. In this sense, participant 2 claims she and her husband 'had no idea', making it impossible for them to help their children directly. Consequently, they have to find alternative solutions to make up for it, by benefiting from support teachers at school. No, we really had no idea. Actually, if my children had difficulties, the support teacher helped them a lot. There were support teachers at the schools to help them with the homework" (E2).

In conclusion, there is need for better material and personal provision for these parents, that can help them minimise those barriers that deter them from participating. Furthermore, schools and teachers must acknowledge their role in fostering parental engagement, since more inclusive and responsive approaches successfully include and foster the participation of migrant parents (Medaric et al., 2022).

Conclusions

In the light of these results, it can be seen that there are still areas in which parent participation can be encouraged. In this sense, it is necessary to develop policies and educational measures that provide language support for migrant families. This can increase communication and ease challenging situation for Moroccan migrant families, such as going to parent-teacher meetings or other activities organised in the school.

It would be interesting for schools to take the initiative and create a collaboration network with other parents and local agents from the community. In this sense, considering the intersectionality of the barriers to participation, measures should be adjusted to the specific needs they identify in these migrant families. For example, in the case of the mother who could not go to school due to living in the countryside (E2), it would be interesting to have some support figures that could provide transport, increase her Spanish level and better connect her to the school culture. Furthermore, extra measures to support parents to help with their children's homework could be helpful.

ICT was found to be advantageous for informing and communicating with these families. Developing school-based platforms for networking and sharing information, such as webpages and forums, as well as implementing video-calls, would be extremely positive in fostering their involvement. These measures could be useful in keeping migrant parents connected to the school, especially when they are not able to be physically present.

It can be seen that Moroccan Muslim migrant parents are often involved and value their children's education. Nevertheless, their cultural and religious identifications tend to be overlooked, which implicitly marginalises them from the school culture and life. In this sense, it is necessary that schools develop activities and practices that better recognise minority groups pluralism. By doing this, not only would they become more welcoming places for migrant students and parents, but they would also create spaces that they feel entitled to participate in and belong to.

In conclusion, parents face barriers to this involvement, but they are willing to participate to the best of their ability. Financial, language and working constraints were identified as the most actionable points. Therefore, specific measures and policies that minimise these obstacles are needed. This would be beneficial not only for Moroccan Muslim migrant parents but also for their children, which would foster their inclusion in the school life and the society.

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to containing information that could compromise the privacy of research participants.

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