



**FAMILY-SCHOOL RELATIONSHIP:
social representations of elementary school teachers**

**RELAÇÃO FAMÍLIA-ESCOLA:
representações sociais de professores do ensino fundamental**

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Abstract

This article analyzes teachers' social representations of the family-school relationship in public elementary schools in Marataízes-ES, Brazil, based on Serge Moscovici's Theory of Social Representations. The research was conducted in two stages during the second half of 2023. The first consisted of applying a Likert-type questionnaire to 41 teachers, addressing dimensions such as teaching and learning, citizenship, and future, with data organized via Google Forms and analyzed in Excel. In the second stage, semi-structured interviews with five teachers were examined using IRaMuTeQ software. The results reveal representations that value the partnership between family and school, emphasizing communication as a structuring element. Teachers recognize the importance of parental involvement in students' holistic development, while also pointing out challenges related to discrepancies in expectations, socioeconomic limitations, and the redefinition of institutional roles within the contemporary educational landscape.

Keywords: Education; representational analysis; teachers; public school.

Resumo

Este artigo analisa as representações sociais de professores sobre a relação família-escola no contexto de escolas públicas do Ensino Fundamental em Marataízes/ES, fundamentando-se na Teoria das Representações Sociais de Serge Moscovici. A pesquisa foi realizada em duas etapas no segundo semestre de 2023. A primeira consistiu na aplicação de um questionário tipo Likert a 41 docentes, abordando dimensões como ensino-aprendizagem, cidadania e futuro, com dados organizados via Google Forms e analisados no Excel. Na segunda etapa, entrevistas semiestruturadas com cinco professores foram examinadas com o auxílio do software IRaMuTeQ. Os resultados evidenciam representações que valorizam a parceria entre família e escola, com ênfase na comunicação como elemento estruturante. Os docentes reconhecem o papel do envolvimento parental no desenvolvimento integral dos alunos, embora apontem desafios relacionados a discrepâncias de expectativas, limitações socioeconômicas e à redefinição de papéis institucionais no cenário educacional contemporâneo.

Palavras-chave: Educação; análise representacional; docentes; escola pública.

Introduction¹

This article aims to analyze teachers' social representations of the family-school relationship in the context of public elementary education in the city of Marataízes/ES, in light of the principles of the Theory of Social Representations (TSR), developed by Serge Moscovici (1961). The relationship between family and school is one of the central axes of the educational field, shaped by multiple historical, social, cultural, and institutional influences. The family acts as the primary nucleus of socialization and the construction of symbolic and affective bonds, while the school is configured as a space for systematized knowledge, guided by legal guidelines and public purposes aimed at the integral education of students.

Understanding the interface between these two institutions requires attention to subjective dynamics and socially constructed meanings, especially in contexts of intense transformations. The family, as an institution, has undergone significant structural changes, influenced by reconfigurations in gender roles, multiple forms of parenting, and material inequalities (Faco; Melchiori, 2009; Azeredo, 2020; Hintz, 2001). In turn, the school is under pressure from new social and political demands that redefine its role in the daily lives of communities. In this sense, the Theory of Social Representations offers a theoretical and methodological framework that allows researchers to investigate how teachers develop, share, and update their everyday knowledge about the family-school relationship. According to

¹ This article derives from the dissertation “Representações sociais de familiares e professores acerca de suas relações no processo educacional do ensino fundamental em Marataízes – ES” (Fernandes, 2023). The research was approved by the Ethics Committee of a Brazilian university, under CAAE registration 66131122.100000.5284, in accordance with Resolution 466/2012 of the National Health Council. Data collection occurred exclusively after obtaining formal consent from participants, duly recorded in the Informed Consent Form (ICF), ensuring full respect for human dignity throughout the process.

Jodelet (2002), such representations consist of socially constructed and shared forms of knowledge that guide practices and enable the constitution of intersubjective realities.

The choice of this approach is also justified by three fundamental dimensions: social, theoretical, and legal. In the social dimension, it is recognized that strengthening the articulation between family and school contributes to the promotion of meaningful learning, the development of socio-emotional skills, and the citizenship development of students, in addition to acting in the mediation of conflicts and in the prevention of school dropout (Szymanski, 1997; Jodelet, 2001). The theoretical dimension emphasizes the importance of social representations for understanding the tensions, values, beliefs, and symbolic projections that structure the relationship between family and school. These elements, when shared in the school routine, influence practices, expectations, and the meanings attributed to the role of each institution. Studies such as those by Gilly (2002), Gilly and Farioli (1988), Sousa (2002), Lima *et al.* (2008), Santos (2014), and Iandas and Koga (2024) show that such representations organize the field of interactions and allow us to understand the dynamics of recognition, conflict, and collaboration that characterize this institutional dialogue. The legal dimension is anchored in documents such as the Federal Constitution of 1988, the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (Brazil, 1996), and the Statute of the Child and Adolescent (Brazil, 1990), which assign to the family, society, and the State the shared responsibility for guaranteeing the right to education, calling on schools to create spaces for dialogue with legal guardians.

In this scenario, educational studies offer support for understanding the link between family and school. The family, as highlighted by Faco and Melchiori (2009), is a group structured around ties of blood or affinity, and is also a space for symbolic construction and transmission of cultural values (Azeredo, 2020). Rodriguez, Gomes, and Oliveira (2017) point to the transition from traditional family models to more diverse forms, resulting from transformations in social arrangements and parental functions. Hintz (2001) highlights the impact of technological and cultural factors on these transformations, and Rohenkohl and Castro (2012) interpret the family as a system in tension, in which conflicts can strengthen bonds rather than weaken them.

In the school context, Santos (2014) differentiates the educational functions of the family and the school, understanding them as complementary in the formation of the subject. The fulfillment of this complementarity requires mutual trust (Freire, 1996) and appreciation of teachers' knowledge, especially that which involves interpersonal relationships (Tardif, 2002). Dutra (2013) emphasizes cooperation between school and family as a central element in

the construction of learning environments. On the other hand, Polonia and Dessen (2005) draw attention to the difficulties in articulating the two institutions, resulting from different roles and expectations. Enguita (2004) and Fontana and Gomes (2020) reinforce the need to review such articulations in light of economic and cultural transformations, while Doula (2013) highlights the importance of public policies aimed at inter-institutional dialogue.

The positive impacts of family involvement on learning processes are also widely discussed. Oliveira and Marinho-Araújo (2010) demonstrate that family involvement favors the development of cognitive and affective skills in students. Carvalho (2019) reaffirms that integration between school and family enhances learning. Baia and Machado (2021) observe that bonds in the school environment are strongly influenced by sociocultural aspects, and Bock, Furtado, and Teixeira (2018) emphasize the role of social interactions in human development. Tardif (2021), in turn, argues that the continuous improvement of education depends on a solid and dialogical partnership between teachers and guardians, based on the mutual recognition of educational responsibilities.

In summary, the reviewed studies converge toward an understanding of the family-school relationship as a socially and historically situated process, permeated by challenges, tensions, and possibilities. Strengthening this articulation emerges as a necessary condition for promoting an education committed to equity, the holistic development of students, and the construction of solid institutional bonds among the various actors involved in educational practice.

Method

This exploratory quantitative-qualitative research (Chizzotti, 2018) was guided by the psychosocial sociogenetic approach supported by Denise Jodelet within the scope of TSR studies, and the research was conducted in the first half of 2023.

The two schools where the field study was carried out were in Marataízes, ES, Brazil, and had a Basic Education Development Index (IDEB) of 6.5 in the Early Years of Elementary Education, indicating similar performance. School 1 had 42 teachers, of whom 23 worked in the early years, serving 332 students. School 2 had 61 teachers, 29 of whom were responsible for the early years, and served 479 students (Brasil, 2023).

Both institutions had water, electricity, and a sewage system, but no waste collection service. Regarding accessibility, School 1 had handrails, guardrails, and wider doors to accommodate accessibility, while School 2 only had doors with suitable dimensions. Neither school had ramps, tactile paving, or specific signage.

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The physical facilities also differed. School 1 had a computer lab, teachers' lounge, storage room, and library, while School 2 had a cafeteria and an indoor sports court but no computer lab or multifunctional resource rooms. Both schools lacked large recreational areas, such as playgrounds, covered patios, and multipurpose spaces. Located in rural areas, the schools were situated within a socioeconomic context marked by agriculture and fishing, which directly influenced their educational dynamics.

The study was conducted in two complementary phases, detailed below. The first phase of the investigation, exploratory in nature, involved the voluntary participation of 41 teachers – 18 from School 1 and 23 from School 2 – from a universe of 103 teachers working at the time of the research. The main characteristics of this group are summarized below in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Participants profile I

Category	Variables	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Sex	Female	33	80.5%
	Male	8	19.5%
Age Group	20 to 30 years	2	4.9%
	31 to 40 years	17	41.5%
	41 to 50 years	17	41.5%
	51 to 60 years	5	12.2%
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual	37	90.2%
	Homosexual	1	2.5%
	Not identified	3	7.3%
Religion	Catholic	12	29.3%
	Evangelical	24	58.5%
	Atheist	1	2.4%
	Not identified	4	9.8%
Race	White	23	56.1%
	Black	4	9.8%
	Mixed Race	14	34.1%

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Family Income	Up to R\$ 1,903.98	1	2.4%
	R\$ 1,903.99 to R\$ 2,826.65	2	4.9%
	R\$ 2,826.66 to R\$ 3,751.05	7	17.1%
	R\$ 3,751.06 to R\$ 4,664.68	12	29.3%
	Above R\$ 4,664.68	19	46.3%
Disability	Yes	1	2.4%
	No	40	97.6%
Years of Service	1 to 5 years	5	12.2%
	5 to 10 years	7	17.1%
	10 to 15 years	13	31.7%
	More than 15 years	16	39.0%
Role	Classroom Teacher	23	56.1%
	English Teacher	1	2.4%
	Physical Education Teacher	4	9.8%
	Art Teacher	2	4.9%
	Special Education Teacher	11	26.8%
Specialization	Lato Sensu Postgraduate	31	75.6%
	Stricto Sensu	7	17.1%
	Continuing Education	3	7.3%

Source: authors (2025)

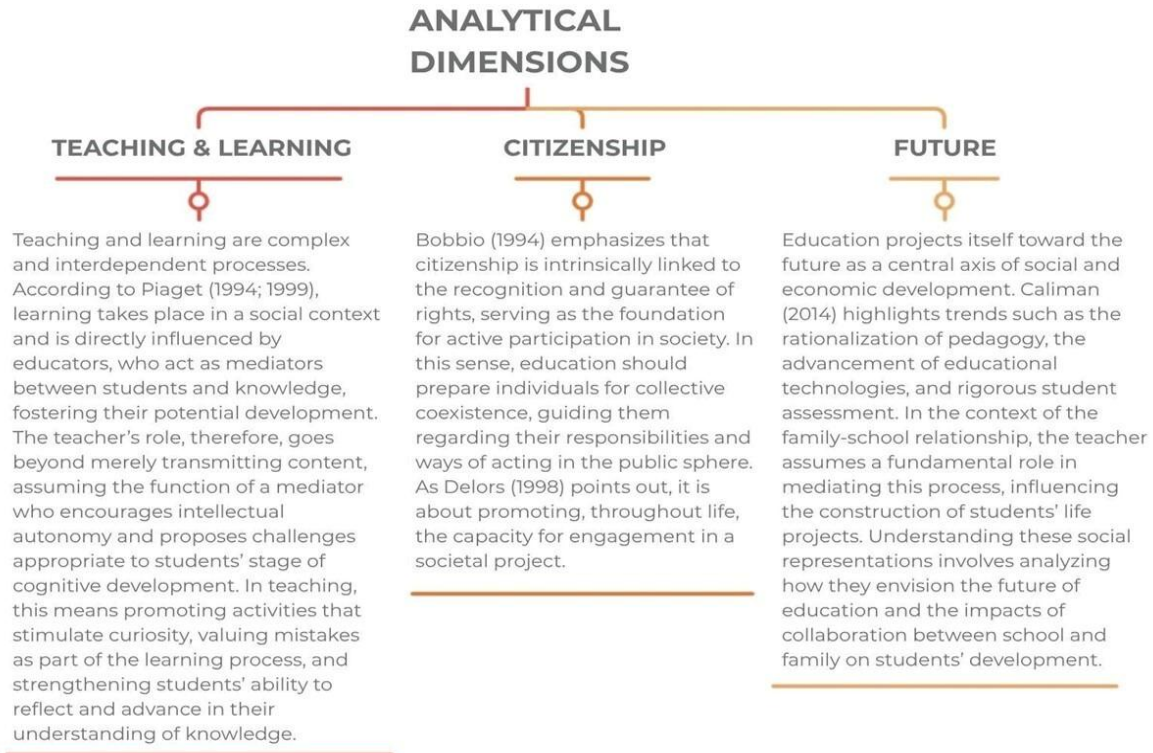
Data collection in this first phase of the investigation was carried out using the “Snowball” technique (Bernard, 2005; Dewes, 2013), allowing broader reach and dissemination of the research. Regarding the research instrument, an online questionnaire (Google Forms) was used, made available on the school’s communication channels – *Facebook*, *WhatsApp*, and e-mail. The instrument was structured in two sections: the first required sociodemographic information, while the second aimed to capture the teachers’ psychosocial positions and attitudes (Doise, 1992) regarding the relationship between family and school.

In the second part of the questionnaire, 18 evaluative statements were formulated on a Likert² scale, based on TSR and studies on the family-school relationship (Souza, 2014; Wiczorkiewicz; Baade, 2020).

² It is worth noting that the data collection instrument was designed using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 point for Strongly Disagree to 5 points for Strongly Agree.

These statements were organized into three complementary analytical dimensions, which, according to the literature review (Chamon, 2014; Ribeiro; Cruz, 2013), underlie the phenomenon of the family-school relationship³. Each dimension addressed different aspects of this object of study, as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Diagram specifying the analytical dimensions



Source: authors (2025)

For the analysis of the data collected, the *Excel*® statistical software and the report provided by *Google Forms* were used. Thus, tables and analytical summaries were constructed in accordance with the responses to support a univariate analysis (Doise, 1992). Subsequently, the data were interpreted according to the aforementioned theoretical framework.

In turn, in the second phase of the investigation, which was in-depth in nature, five (5) Elementary School teachers from the same schools involved in the first phase of the investigation voluntarily participated, with the following general characteristics as shown in Figure 3.

³ It should be highlighted that this initial data collection instrument was validated in accordance with the expert group methodology. In this regard, the instrument was developed under the guidance of researchers specialized in the field of Social Representations Theory (SRT) and in the study of the family-school relationship, namely: Carvalho *et. al* 2021; Tardif, 2002; Delors, 1998; Monteiro; Castro, 2008.

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Figure 3: Participants profile II

Control No.	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Marital Status	Religion	Academic Background	Specialization	Teaching Experience
1	Female	37	White	Married	Catholic	Biological Sciences and Pedagogy	Lato Sensu	13 years
2	Female	34	Mixed Race	Married	Evangelical	Portuguese/ English and Pedagogy	Lato Sensu	14 years
3	Female	42	Mixed Race	Married	Evangelical	Pedagogy	Stricto Sensu	21 years
4	Female	45	Mixed Race	Married	Evangelical	Pedagogy	Stricto Sensu	22 years
5	Female	46	Mixed Race	Married	Evangelical	Pedagogy	Stricto Sensu	27 years
Typical Case	Female	40	Mixed Race	Married	Evangelical	Pedagogy	Stricto Sensu	19 years

Source: authors (2025)

In order to deepen the data produced in the first stage of the study, as well as to highlight possible psychosocial tensions underlying the social representations of the family-school relationship in the group investigated, data collection in this second stage was conducted through a semi-structured collective interview (Gaskell, 2014), whose script was developed based on the same analytical dimensions mentioned (see Figure 2).

To support data categorization and analysis, the free software IRaMuTeQ (version 2014) was used, which allows for statistical analysis of textual data. The software's Descending Hierarchical Classification (DHC) was applied, followed by the interpretation of the data based on the theoretical framework.

Drawing on Leblanc (2015), an analytical reading of the words in each class of the Classification Dendrogram was carried out, considering them within the context of the spoken sentences (textual analysis). This procedure made it possible to identify categories and subcategories that were consistent with the overall meaning of each class.

During these stages, data triangulation was carried out (Minayo, 2005; Souza; Zioni, 2003), supported by the psychosocial framework of the Theory of Social Representations (TSR) and by studies on the family-school relationship (Bastos; Dessen, 2024; Serpa *et al.*, 2024), which contributed to revealing teachers' social representations regarding this relationship.

Data Presentation and Analysis

With the aim of interpreting the data more accurately, the presentation and analysis were structured to align with the exploratory and in-depth phases of the investigation that guided the study. Thus, in the first investigative phase, different views were identified among the group under study as they reflected on the family-school relationship, as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Teachers' views on dimensions of the family-school relationship⁴

Dimensions	Statements	SD	DIS.	IND.	AGR.	SA	M
1. Teaching and Learning	1.1 I feel the need to listen to the questions and proposals of guardians/family members regarding the teaching and learning process.	2.4%	0%	19.6%	39%	39%	4.10
	1.2 I am satisfied with students' acceptance of the methodology offered during my classes.	2.4%	4.9%	7.3%	39%	46.4%	4.21
	1.3 I believe that the moral values of the students' families/guardians contribute to guiding my pedagogical practice.	4.9%	7.2%	22%	4.9%	61%	04.09
	1.4 I understand that students show different behaviors and changes after certain content is taught.	2.4%	7.2%	22%	26.8%	41.5%	3.97
	1.5 I have experienced conflicts involving the family-school relationship unrelated to the teaching-learning process.	24.3%	14.6%	22%	29.3%	9.8%	2.85
	1.6 The school where I work already engages with guardians to provide guidance on how to support the teaching-learning process.	2.4%	2.4%	12.2%	26.9%	56.1%	4.31
2. Citizenship	2.1 I feel fully represented by the moral values taught/lived by the school where I work.	0%	2.4%	17.1%	34.1%	46.4%	4.24
	2.2 I usually check whether my students are applying in real life what they are learning in class.	0%	0%	7.3%	29.3%	63.4%	4.56
	2.3 I believe the content taught at school helps students become responsible citizens towards others and society.	2.4%	0%	9.8%	24.4%	63.4%	4.46
	2.4 I believe the school where I work has developed political-pedagogical actions to promote inclusion of students and families in school life.	0%	0%	12.2%	24.4%	63.4%	4.51
	2.5 I engage in the school's political-pedagogical actions.	0%	0%	7.3%	19.5%	73.2%	4.65
	2.6 I interact better with the school when other social services (e.g. health, safety, food) are also offered.	24.4%	7.3%	14.6%	22%	31.7%	3.29
3. Future	3.1 The school where I work is concerned with alerting families and students about the risks and consequences of dropping out.	0%	0%	7.3%	19.5%	73.2%	4.65
	3.2 I try to raise students' awareness about their responsibilities as members of society.	0%	0%	7.3%	14.7%	78%	4.70
	3.3 In my view, education quality does not always reach all students equally.	2.4%	7.3%	19.5%	17.1%	53.7%	4.12
	3.4 I believe the school is responsible for guiding students' life projects.	4.9%	4.9%	19.5%	36.6%	34.1%	3.90
	3.5 The school where I work engages the family-school relationship to better assist the student with their life planning.	0%	0%	12.2%	24.4%	63.4%	4.51
	3.6 I participate in actions with families to better guide my students.	4.9%	0%	17.1%	29.2%	48.8%	4.17

Source: authors (2025)

In general terms, the positions of the investigated group regarding the statements within the "Teaching-Learning" dimension predominantly indicated a higher level of agreement (Dimension Mean: 3.92). More specifically, it was found that the group recognizes the need to listen to the questions and proposals of guardians/family members in the students' teaching and learning process (ASS.⁵ 1.1); feels satisfied with the acceptance of the methodology offered to students throughout the classes (ASS. 1.2); believes that the moral values of students' families/guardians contribute to the orientation of their pedagogical practice (ASS. 1.3);

⁴ To enhance the understanding of the abbreviations used, the following acronyms are presented: Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (DIS), Indifferent (IND), Agree (AGR), and Strongly Agree (SA). Additionally, the last column of the table displays the mean (M) of the responses. This average value indicates the prevailing tendency in the group's views regarding each statement. In this sense, values closer to 0 reflect a stronger inclination toward total disagreement, whereas values closer to 5 indicate full agreement with the statement.

⁵ The abbreviation ASS. stands for assertive or statement, used here to indicate the numbered survey items (e.g., ASS. 1.1 = Assertive 1.1). It bears no relation to any colloquial or inappropriate usage of the term in English.

understands that students display different behaviors and manifest behavioral changes after certain content is addressed (ASS. 1.4); reports having experienced conflicts in the family-school relationship regarding the students' teaching and learning process (ASS. 1.5); and acknowledges that the school where they work has already summoned the students' guardians for guidance on how to assist the teacher in the teaching and learning process (ASS. 1.6). A most relevant finding in this analytical dimension concerns the group's oscillating position when assessing the existence of conflicts in the family-school relationship with regard to the teaching and learning process (ASS. 1.5). When contrasting the agreement positions (39.1% – AGR and SA) with the disagreement positions (38.9% – DIS and SD), it is observed that there is a division within the group's representational elements: while one portion sees the relationship as marked by conflicts, the other does not perceive this issue as predominant. This finding suggests that, although collaboration between family and school is widely acknowledged, there are also tensions and challenges that permeate this relationship.

Overall, this first analytical dimension reinforces the centrality of teaching and learning as the structuring axis of teachers' social representations of their relationship with students' families, predominantly characterized by a fruitful partnership between the institutions. The results corroborate previous studies (Carvalho, 2019), which point to the interaction between family and school as a determining factor in students' educational success. Teachers emphasize the need for ongoing dialogue, the strengthening of partnerships, and, above all, the convergence of values and interests between families and schools, aiming at the students' development.

However, as pointed out by scholars of Social Psychology (Guareschi; Roso, 2014; Bajoit, 2009; Doise, 1990), every social relationship – by articulating interactions between Ego and Alter within a complex, dynamic, and contradictory context – may be characterized by both collaboration and opposition. Thus, the data show that for part of the group investigated, social representations of the family-school relationship are not configured solely as a space of partnership, but also as a field marked by tensions and conflicts related to the teaching and learning process. In other words, even in this initial phase, the dimension simultaneously highlights both the relevance of collaboration and the challenges inherent in the interaction between these two entities.

In turn, regarding the positions expressed by the studied group in response to the statements in the "Citizenship" dimension, a high degree of agreement was observed (Dimension Mean: 4.30%). It was identified that the group: feels fully represented by the moral values taught and practiced by the school (ASS. 2.1); usually verifies whether students apply

the teachings provided by the school in their social interactions (ASS. 2.2); believes that the contents taught contribute to the formation of students as citizens responsible for the Other and for society (ASS. 2.3); understands that the school develops pedagogical actions aimed at the inclusion of students and the broader school community (ASS. 2.4); is actively committed to the school's political-pedagogical initiatives (ASS. 2.5); and interacts more effectively with the institution when partnerships with other state agencies are established (ASS. 2.6).

Based on these findings, it can be inferred that, when reflecting on the family-school relationship in the context of citizenship development, the teachers in the study perceive themselves as co-responsible agents in building and implementing citizenship within the school environment. Accordingly, they position themselves as active agents both in monitoring and assessing students' civic practices in daily school life and in engaging in social actions aimed at strengthening and implementing the school's political-pedagogical guidelines, as well as promoting inclusion for students and the school community. Furthermore, it is evident that within these positions, certain representational elements crystallize, reflecting a core belief held by teachers: hope in the knowledge and values developed by the school and in its ability to foster individuals who are co-responsible for the shaping of Others and of society itself. In other words, teachers express trust in students' civic formation and in their potential to become critical and participatory citizens.

In a symmetrical manner, it is interesting to observe that, when we contrast the positions of agreement (39.1%) and disagreement (38.9%) in ASS. 2.6, a narrow oscillation is observed, which may suggest that, for a portion of the teachers, the partnership between the school and other state apparatuses is indifferent, whereas for another portion, these partnerships are considered fundamental for fostering a bond and interaction with the educational institution. This finding is significant, as it signals that, for some of the respondents, their role within the school and their institutional bond are not necessarily articulated with support networks and other state agencies, which may indicate a fragmented view of their function, detached from an integrated perspective on 21st-century education, as proposed by Delors (1998), Tedesco (1998), Morin (2000), and other scholars.

This fluctuation in positions may reveal a certain hesitation, on the part of some teachers, in supporting the construction of an educational system in which citizenship is developed through the articulation between schools and other State institutions. This issue may be analyzed in light of Novoa (1998), Fernandes Enguita (1989), and Mialaret (2013), who emphasize the school's role in the 21st century as a state apparatus, and highlight the need to understand it not as an isolated entity, but as part of a broader social mechanism whose

effectiveness is either strengthened (or weakened) depending on its connection with other institutions.

Finally, regarding the positions expressed by the group in relation to the statements in the “Future” dimension, a high level of agreement was recorded (Mean of the Dimension: 4.33%). More specifically, the group: recognizes that the school in which they work seeks to alert families and students to the risks and consequences of school dropout (ASS. 3.1); strives to raise student awareness of their responsibilities as members of society (ASS. 3.2); understands that the quality of education does not always reach all students equally (ASS. 3.3); believes that the school has a role in guiding students' life projects (ASS. 3.4); acknowledges that the institution promotes the family-school partnership to better support students in planning their trajectories (ASS. 3.5); and takes part in actions with families aimed at enhancing student guidance (ASS. 3.6).

Based on these positions, it becomes evident that the group expresses optimistic representational elements concerning students' futures. These elements point to a school environment that understands the family-school relationship as a central axis in the construction and ongoing development of students' life projects (Damon, 2009), forming a mediating space between school knowledge and the social challenges present in the educational trajectory. In other words, the data in this analytical dimension highlight a group of teachers who reaffirm their social commitment to supporting students' future development through education, understood as a formative process for developing competencies, skills, and conditions necessary for the critical exercise of citizenship and individual autonomy (Nóvoa, 2019). At the same time, as already noted in previous studies (Ramos; Monteiro; Santos, 2024; Santana; Chamon; Sordillo, 2022; Tartuce; Souza; Almeida, 2023), the centrality of the family-school relationship is once again confirmed as a structuring element of the educational process, even if that relationship may, at times, be marked by conflict, as seen in ASS. 1.5.

In this sense, it is noteworthy that the representations of students' future, as expressed by those investigated, are constructed based on a logic of co-responsibility, in which the school, teachers, family, and the students themselves assume interdependent roles in the constitution of young people's identity and trajectory. This dynamic reinforces the school not only as a teaching space, but as a territory of subjective and social construction, where teachers not only transmit knowledge but also act as mediators of expectations and values that guide students' paths beyond the classroom (Charlot, 2000; Dubet, 2002).

In a final stitching of closure, the data produced in the first investigative phase evoke a constellation of representational elements surrounding the family-school relationship, as

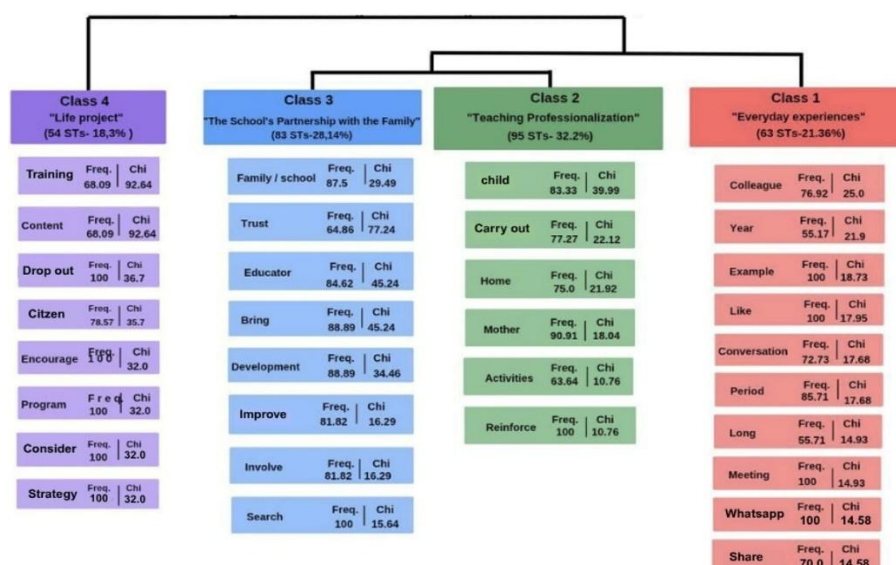
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perceived by the group of teachers investigated. In a concise synthesis, among the prevailing representational elements, we highlight the teachers' recognition that the family-school relationship, although fertile for the developmental process of students, is at times marked by conflict. Furthermore, the group emphasizes their sense of professional commitment and social responsibility (Tedesco, 2010; Gatti, 2013) by stressing the relevance of their profession in fostering the citizenship of students; in this vein, the data suggest a prevailing tone of optimism and hope among teachers regarding the future of their students.

From a psychosocial lens grounded in social representations theory as applied to education, the results produced at this stage, though still preliminary, reveal that the relational fabric between family and school, for the group investigated, is woven from the understanding that both institutions are co-responsible across various social dimensions for students' development. Teachers position themselves as fundamental social agents in the deepening and structuring of this relationship. In turn, in the second investigative moment, through the processing of the collective interview using IRaMuTeQ software (2014), four classes emerged, comprising 357 text segments, of which 295 (82.63%) were used. A total of 12,585 occurrences and 1,623 unique elements were identified, with an average of 4,195 occurrences per text.

When analyzing the dendrogram from left to right, it is observed that in the first axis of partition, Class 4, "Life Project" (18.3%), is separated from the others, indicating greater statistical distance between this class and the rest. On the opposite side, a second axis of partition emerges, revealing Class 1, "Daily Experiences" (21.36%), and subsequently, Classes 3 and 2 – "The Partnership between School and Family" (28.14%) and "Teacher Professionalization" (32.2%), which show greater statistical proximity to each other (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Classification by IRaMuTeQ software



Source: authors (2025)

In short, Class 4 (18.3%), categorized as “Life Project”, gathered narratives that show how the group investigated understands the family-school relationship in terms of the construction and ongoing development of students’ life projects. The testimonies initially indicate a critical analysis of contemporary reality, marked by intense social, cultural, and economic transformations. According to the participants, such changes have made the world “more difficult” (Deponents 2 and 4), which has led schools and families to undergo a process of abrupt and forced restructuring in an attempt to ensure not only students’ continued enrolment in school, but also their future prospects.

Thus, in the assessment of the group studied, the configuration of the school, which had previously enjoyed a more clearly defined organizational logic and a well-structured spatiotemporal framework, has acquired new contours, leading the institution to take on new social responsibilities that were formerly regarded by society as belonging exclusively to the domain of the family. Thus, the deponents point out that schools and teachers today must establish an education grounded in ethical and moral values, attentive not only to programmatic content and the formal curriculum, but also bearing the duty of fostering students’ development as citizens endowed with the skills and competencies necessary for social coexistence. As the excerpt reinforces:

[...] – however, as a result of recent social transformations, teachers have been called upon to perform not only the role of teaching curricular content, but also to contribute to the formation of values that were traditionally considered the responsibility of the family (Deponent 3).

At the same time, reaffirming teachers' social commitment, the intervention strategies and practices the school has sought to implement to promote the development of students' life projects are mentioned. Thus, unanimously emphasizing their focus on the development of student success and the realization of their dreams, the teachers reiterate that, in the context of shaping life projects, the school has provided learning moments that transcend mere content-based teaching and learning, remaining attentive to the formation of these students as integral subjects immersed in a vast social context in which the future is understood as uncertain and marked by threats to the dignified condition of the human person. As the excerpt illustrates:

[...] – we develop projects to improve relationships between students and we also seek to engage with parents, after all, our role is not restricted to teaching academic skills and content, but also to developing values and social skills (Deponent 1).

In turn, in Class 1 (21.36%), categorized as “Daily Experiences”, narrative fragments are gathered relating to the group's assessment of the family-school relationship in everyday school life, with two subcategories emerging: 1. Regarding the teaching and learning process; 2. Post-pandemic school context.

Regarding the first subcategory, it was found that the group reiterated the centrality of the family-school partnership in the teaching and learning process. In the group's assessment, student education should not be understood solely as a responsibility of the school, which is predominantly discussed in society, for the group, although schools exercise legitimacy in society as an environment whose social function is to promote formal education, this legitimacy should not be restrictive or even eclipse the family's responsibility in the students' educational process. At the same time, the group emphasizes that the development of an inclusive school that is capable of fulfilling the right to education for people with disabilities and syndromes presupposes the strengthening of the family-school relationship. As highlighted in the fragment: “[...] – the family plays a fundamental role, when the family offers support and guidance to the child, the child has a greater chance of doing well in their studies, the family base is essential for educational success.” (Deponent 2).

The second subcategory presents reports on the daily experiences of the family-school relationship in the post-pandemic period. For the group investigated, although the pandemic brought school and family closer together, promoting care and support in the face of grief and psychosocial trauma generated by COVID-19, it also imposed significant challenges. Among these, the following stand out: difficulties in using educational technologies (mainly due to low digital literacy and inequality of access), concerns about the assessment of learning, a decline in the quality of teaching, student absence, failures and school dropouts.

Given this scenario, participants reported that it was necessary to adopt organizational strategies to intensify dialogue with families, especially during the most critical moments of the pandemic and in the period afterward. As strategies, they mentioned the use of WhatsApp, videoconferencing rooms, online meetings, digital information sharing, and active search, with the aim of reducing dropout, as evidenced by the following excerpt:

[...] – It has been a constant challenge throughout the period in which we have been working. However, I have noticed that, after the pandemic, there was greater closeness between some parents and the school institution. For example, communication through WhatsApp groups by class — something that was not so common before — is now adopted by most schools. This proximity, established by WhatsApp, allows for greater interaction with parents. Given this, I believe that, every day, there is an improvement in this

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relationship with parents, although we recognize that we have not yet been able to effectively reach everyone (Deponent 4).

Given this last data, it is observed that the records of the difficulties faced by the school community during and after the COVID-19 pandemic align with previous studies (Sousa; Ens; Oswald, 2023; Santos; Silva; Sousa, 2024), which showed that the educational impacts generated by this critical context reoriented psychosocial elements that constitute teacher subjectivity — especially with regard to their professionalization — and altered their attitudes towards concrete reality and their relationship with the Alter.

As Santos (2021) and Gatti (2020) argue, the psychosocial chasm of inequalities and injustices laid bare and intensified by the pandemic provoked a profound reconfiguration of social relations, to the point that the phenomenon became crystallized as a “total social fact” (Mauss, 1974), disruptively impacting institutional and social dynamics. Thus, it is possible to underscore that the social representations constructed during this period are part of a broader web of meanings and significations, inscribed in a time of exceptionality (Apostolidis; Santos; Kalampalikis, 2020), which crossed and redefined the ways of being, acting, and educating.

In turn, in Class 3 (28.14%), categorized as “Partnership between School and Family”, narrative extracts referring to the group’s evaluation of the school’s association with the family are grouped. Two subcategories are crystallized: 1. Dialogue and trust between actors; 2. Relational limitations.

Regarding the first subcategory, the data converge in the recognition of dialogue as a strategic and essential means of interaction between school and family, as pointed out by the deponents. It is worth emphasizing that dialogue is repeatedly mentioned as a fundamental instrument for resolving conflicts, providing clarifications, and, above all, as a privileged pathway for approach and understanding family realities.

Furthermore, the teachers highlight that the effectiveness of this dialogue is not established immediately, but results from a gradual, continuous process, anchored in the mutual construction of trust between the institutions involved. In this process, sincerity and explicit objectivity in communicating the expectations and interests of both parties — regarding the student's integral development — are considered central elements. As the excerpt illustrates:

[...] – this partnership between educators and parents is crucial and evident in promoting efficient communication between family and school; a child who receives support from their parents has more effective and faster learning than one who is supported only at school (Deponent 1).

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It is important to emphasize that although dialogue is conceived as one of the structuring links in the family-school relationship, the deponents recognize that sensitive issues — such as grade retention, assessment, school dropout, and their implications — are still addressed only incipiently or with limited institutional coordination, especially when such issues are raised by family members and teachers with management bodies, particularly the Department of Education.

The second subcategory addresses the limitations and obstacles observed in the family-school relationship. Teachers repeatedly express criticism toward school management and the Department of Education, which, according to them, require actions or interventions that go beyond their responsibilities and should properly be within the families' domain. As a result, they feel pressured to take on roles they consider inappropriate or that may amount to incompetence or recklessness. In addition, they report that families frequently shift to the school responsibilities that properly belong to the State as a whole, treating the school institution — and especially the teacher — as the sole agent responsible for structural issues such as strikes, the absence of school meals, or a lack of teachers, as the following excerpt illustrates:

[...] – there are a number of measures that fall under the family's responsibility to provide the necessary materials. [...] [However], there are times when the school demands too much in a single direction without considering the participation and contribution of the parents, and in the end the blame often falls on the teacher who is not understood (Deponent 3).

The last class generated — Class 2 (32.2%), categorized as “Teaching Professionalism” — brings together narrative fragments that express a set of values, representational elements, beliefs, knowledge, attitudes, and skills developed by teachers throughout their training and experiences in their daily interactions with the school and students. From this class, two subcategories emerge: 1. The weight and responsibility of teaching work; 2. Care and support⁶.

The first subcategory highlights the weight and responsibility attributed to teaching by the research participants. For the group investigated, teaching goes beyond the transmission of programmatic content, implying the responsibility of contributing to the civic formation of students. This formation, according to the depositions, involves the mediation of values, beliefs,

⁶ In this study, the term *care and support* is used to translate the Portuguese concept of *acolhimento*, which encompasses more than emotional comfort or physical assistance. It refers to an ethically grounded and relational practice in Brazilian educational discourse, wherein teachers and schools engage in attentive listening, emotional availability, and responsive actions toward students and their families. This concept is especially relevant in contexts marked by vulnerability and social inequality, and is viewed here as an expression of professional commitment and social responsibility.

and social norms, articulated with the principles of collective coexistence, which gives the educational process a character linked to the broader social reality.

From this perspective, the teacher is understood as an agent directly involved in shaping the school and social trajectories of students, assuming a role of co-responsibility in their civic formation and in preparing them for entry into the world of work. Professional training is considered a necessary condition, but the participants also emphasize the importance of training that encompasses relational and human dimensions, in order to enable work with children and young people in the process of development. Thus, the depositions reveal representational elements that associate teaching work with the articulation between school, family, and student, with an emphasis on the teacher's commitment to the student as a subject of rights and a citizen in formation. As the fragment highlights:

As educators, we know that our mission is to promote an education grounded in equality, working to ensure that everyone receives care and support. But the truth is that we are still not fully inclusive; true inclusion is not yet a reality. I will share my experience at the school where I work, which addresses the issue of inclusion, referencing the topic mentioned about discrimination. Regardless of the students' conditions or characteristics, we do not observe this type of behavior among our students here. Our focus, in projects and in practice, is always to encourage respect for others as human beings, without emphasizing issues such as religion, race, or other differences, unless necessary. Over time, we have had students of all backgrounds at school, and the children generally do not show prejudice — not even toward students with special needs. They consistently demonstrate great love, affection, care, and support, without any kind of discrimination.

In turn, the second subcategory highlights teaching professionalism associated with care and support, according to the group investigated. For the participants, given the social disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent aggravation of inequalities, the school is seen as responsible for offering care and support to students and their families, as a way to ensure the realization of the right to education.

The defence of this approach is not aligned with the traditional perspective of care or welfare, often linked to the history of teaching (Libâneo, 2012; Saviani, 2021; Nóvoa, 2009), but rather with the teacher's social commitment to understanding and recognizing the contingencies and specificities faced by students and their families in the educational process. In this sense, care and support are connected to the school's efforts to develop strategies that meet educational needs and expand learning opportunities. The deponents also report that this care and support takes place within a context of structural limitations, marked by a shortage of material and pedagogical resources, a lack of adequate conditions for inclusion, and a general undervaluing of teaching work, both by the State and, in some cases, by families.

In an interpretive summary, the results of this second investigative phase reveal shared representations centered on the expansion of the school's social role and the teacher's commitment to the comprehensive education of students. The participants' accounts indicate that citizenship education, understood as the construction of values, beliefs, and social norms in line with collective coexistence, goes beyond the teaching of curricular content and includes the school as a co-responsible entity for students' life projects (Class 4), as well as for mediating relationships among individuals, families, and society.

In Classes 1 and 3, dialogue is valued as a key strategy in the family-school relationship, seen as a means of addressing educational inequalities and strengthening learning processes. At the same time, teachers express feelings of overload and responsibility displacement, as they report being assigned tasks that exceed their institutional role, especially regarding evaluation, school dropout, and structural issues that should fall under the State's responsibility. In Class 2, the representational elements center on teaching professionalism linked to care, support, and relational ethics. Teachers see themselves as agents in the development of social subjects, working in environments marked by structural vulnerabilities, a lack of recognition, and psychosocial challenges intensified by the pandemic. Overall, the identified social representations demonstrate a professional *ethos* that articulates responsibility, co-responsibility, and social commitment to the student as a citizen in formation.

By cross-referencing the data gathered in both phases of the investigation, it is possible to identify social representations that position the family-school relationship as a complex relational construct, simultaneously marked by partnerships, tensions, and institutional challenges. In the first phase, teachers represented this relationship as essential to student development, recognizing its fruitful nature while still permeated by conflicts, and expressed a strong ethical commitment to the citizenship education of their students. The coexistence of optimism regarding students' futures and a sense of co-responsibility between school and family reveals a social representation sustained by a sense of professional mission and institutional belonging, in which teachers perceive themselves as mediators of institutional ties and protagonists in students' holistic development. In the second phase, these representations are further developed and strained by the expanded demands placed on public schools in the post-pandemic context, evidencing a process of resignification of the teaching role (Figure 6).

Figure 6: QRCode- Summary of results⁷

⁷In order to facilitate access to the summary please go to: https://drive.google.com/file/d/10l4fZpRtl_a0Dnb9W-sKZhfZ5I9sMZbh/view?usp=sharing



Source: qr-code-plus

Final considerations

This research aimed to understand the social representations of teachers regarding the family-school relationship in the educational context of students attending public elementary schools in Maratáizes/ES. The results point to the formation of social representations that articulate co-responsibility between school and family as a foundational axis of the students' educational process.

In the first phase of the research, teachers revealed representations of the family-school relationship as essential to student development, recognizing its formative potential, although marked by tensions and conflicts. The deponents' accounts reflect an appreciation for dialogue and partnership, permeated by a sense of institutional belonging and an ethical commitment to students' citizenship education. Teachers see themselves as symbolic mediators between the family and school spheres, invested with a mission that goes beyond the simple transmission of content and is anchored in the education of socially and politically situated individuals. This understanding is linked to the contributions of Gatti (2013) and Tedesco (2010), who conceive teaching as a form of social action committed to emancipation and human development.

In the second phase of the research, these representations are challenged by the demands placed on public schools in the post-pandemic scenario, characterized by structural weaknesses and intensified psychosocial challenges. A movement toward resignifying the teaching role is observed, with emphasis on the expansion of the school's responsibilities and the transfer of duties previously assigned to families or the State. Teachers begin to see their role as both increasingly central and increasingly vulnerable, amid function overload and a lack of institutional support. Teaching professionalism is evoked with a strong emphasis on ethical and relational care and support, highlighting the efforts made by teachers to address both the educational and emotional needs of students and their families.

In general terms, the representational elements identified compose a symbolic fabric that inscribes teaching subjectivities (Novaes, 2015) within a position of commitment and co-responsibility in educational processes. The social representations constructed by teachers express a professional *ethos* that combines affective, ethical, and social dimensions, reflecting

a pedagogical practice anchored in the recognition of inequalities and in the desire for transformation. This perspective reinforces the understanding of social representations as symbolic forms that organize practices and guide conduct, as postulated by Jodelet (2001) and Moscovici (2012), and are fundamental to understanding how teachers experience, signify, and act in their relationships with families and students.

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