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Trans reality in the educational system: A systematic review

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ABSTRACT

The educational system is an important socializing agent. It is often regarded as solution to the social problems that society suffers. Nevertheless, at the same time the school setting is where trans people suffer a high discrimination, even knowing the implications that this entails in the mental health of these people. Therefore, with the intention of moving away from the clinical view of the trans reality, this updated systematic review focus on trans minors within the educational system. ProQuest, Scopus and Web of Science databases were used to research the literature, and 39 articles were selected. Results indicate that in order to overcome the bad school climate perceived by trans students, laws, educational policies and school regulations that address this reality are necessary. A lack of teacher training is highlighted despite the fact that the attitude of teachers towards trans students can make a difference in their lives. Consequently, teachers should be provided with the tools to deal with different trans realities they encounter in their classrooms.

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La realidad trans en el sistema educativo: una revisión sistemática

RESUMEN

El sistema educativo es un agente socializador importante. En muchas ocasiones, es señalado como solución de los problemas que padece la sociedad. Sin embargo, al mismo tiempo, es donde más discriminación sufren las personas trans, aun sabiendo las implicaciones que esto conlleva hacia su salud mental. Por esta razón, y con la intención de alejarse de la perspectiva clínica de la realidad trans, se ha realizado una revisión sistemática de la literatura centrada en los cinco últimos años para conocer qué tipo de estudios se realizan con menores trans y cómo están vinculados al sistema educativo. Las búsquedas se han realizado utilizando las bases de datos Proquest, Scopus y Web of Science y se han seleccionado 39 artículos. Los resultados indican que, para superar el mal clima escolar que perciben las personas tras, son necesarias leyes, políticas educativas y reglamentos escolares que recojan expresamente esta realidad. La falta de formación del profesorado es evidente, aunque su actitud ante el alumnado trans puede marcar la diferencia. En consecuencia, se debe dotar al profesorado de herramientas para responder a las distintas realidades trans que se encuentran en las aulas.

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Palabras clave:

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Introduction

Gender diversity has existed in all times and cultures. It is becoming increasingly common to find trans students in the classroom, but their situation has not yet been normalized in terms of equal treatment (Bragg et al., 2018). Gender is a multifactorial construct. According to Gender Spectrum (Kurt, 2017), an organization committed to gender sensitivity and inclusion, gender can be understood in three ways: biological gender (according to the

sex assigned at birth); gender expression (the external representation); and gender identity (how the person feels, how they believe they are). Cisgender means that the sex-gender identity with which a person identifies coincides with the one assigned at birth (Real Academia Española, 2020). It is the opposite term to trans, which is understood as a person who does not identify with the sex-gender assigned at birth or simply differs from the sexual binarism (McBride, 2021). Sociology (Davy & Cordoba, 2020) has emphasized the role of the hidden curriculum in schools, where the student body is a passive receptacle of gender socialization. Roles, stereotyped expressions and binary gender identities are maintained. These same authors, citing Freire, emphasize that the starting point for social change is the oppressed people, once they overcome the limit situations, marking schools as important places of struggle.

Research on trans students is an emerging field, especially in secondary education, where the United States is a leader (McBride, 2021). More and more research are being conducted on gender from an educational perspective. Different studies show that by the age of 5.4 years, trans people are already aware that they do not meet cultural expectations according to the gender they were assigned at birth (Bartholmaeus et al., 2017). Being a transgender or gender nonconforming person exposes one to multiple forms of prejudice, discrimination, violence, and harassment (Ancheta et al., 2021; McBride & Schubotz, 2017; Reisner et al., 2020; Zeeman et al., 2017).

On occasions, school is the setting where adolescents with sex-gender diversity experience a high rate of discrimination (Bower-Brown et al., 2021). Cisheteronormativity and cisgenderism (the widespread ideology that pathologizes and delegitimizes non-cisgender identities) mark the school day-to-day, in language, curriculum and school regulations (Bower-Brown et al., 2021). Heterosexuality and gender conformity are the desirable norm (Harris et al., 2022). In addition, transgender women of color experience the highest rates of violence and discrimination (Allen et al., 2020). The factors that directly affect school climate belong to the hidden, clearly binary curriculum. The curriculum does not incorporate LGBTIQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual and minority gender identities) issues and, therefore, non-binary identities are invisible (Paechter et al., 2021). Curricular isolation is evident, especially in the field of sports (Hanimoglu, 2019). The use of sex-segregated facilities is another factor that generates anxiety among trans people (Davies & Kessel, 2017), as it can be understood as a cisnormative aggression (McBride & Neary, 2021). There are schools that have opted for gender-neutral bathrooms (Bragg et al., 2018; Harris et al., 2022) or third choice bathrooms (McBride & Neary, 2021), although some voices suggest that it would be better not to rely on regulations ruled by sex-based classifications (Meyer & Keenan, 2018). Nevertheless, despite the lack of studies on the subject, there is often a refusal to share facilities with trans people, citing safety risks or discomfort (Sørli, 2020).

Cognitive isolation intensifies the feeling of not belonging. Therefore, for trans people, being self-educated is the only resource to better understand their condition and to be able to express their needs and desires (McBride & Neary, 2021). The lack of support for gender diversity from faculty and educational policies makes students feel unable to transition, generating great stress for them (Bower-Brown et al., 2021). A school environment with cisnormative nuances, which involve microaggressions, paralyzes the process of transition for many adolescents (McBride, 2021). It is also crucial that the social transit is led by the person themselves (Meyer & Leonardi, 2018), since the fact of transiting may involve typecasting and they may, as in the case of Jamie (this is the person analyzed in the case study in Davies & Kessel's study), not want to belong to the group of transgender people but to the group of boys (Davies & Kessel, 2017). In the case of non-binary people, the

transit is further complicated, as all transition plans are contemplated from a binary approach (Meyer & Keenan, 2018) and the combination of fear of other people's opinion and the experiences of transphobia suffered make non-binary people afraid of transiting in the educational setting (Paechter et al., 2021).

Thus, perceptions of school climate are often worse among trans adolescents (Day et al., 2018). Concealment of gender identity at school is a recurrent strategy to avoid bullying and/or exclusion (Sørli, 2020). The rate of absenteeism, self-harm, and suicide attempts is very high among transgender, non-binary, or gender nonconforming adolescents (Allen et al., 2020; Davies & Kessel, 2017; Harris et al., 2022; Omercajic & Martino, 2020). Consequently, there are many voices that point to the educational system as a solution to social inequality, due to its great socializing power. There is a changing perspective on how to understand the trans reality, but the clinical point of view is still in the majority. Different investigations indicate that a critique of the educational profession towards gender sensitivity and cisgender culture is urgently needed, in order to reflect on school policies and/or cultures and to confront cisheteronormative gender regimes (Bragg et al., 2018; Harris et al., 2022; Phipps & Blackall, 2021).

To improve school climate, the entire educational community must be involved and communication channels must be created where everyone has a voice (Meyer & Leonardi, 2018). It is important that all students feel safe and supported, creating support groups led by the students themselves (Hobaica et al., 2021). It is necessary that teachers have the appropriate training to make school cultures, spaces and groups more inclusive (Bartholmaeus et al., 2017; Demissie et al., 2018; Russell et al., 2021). Some studies highlight that the understanding treatment offered by a single professional person in the educational community can provide invaluable support for trans students (McBride, 2021), and positively influences their academic performance (Ullman, 2017). Thus, from pedagogies such as Border Crossing, education professionals are invited to see themselves as agents of transformation (Walsh & Townsin, 2018). Therefore, the objectives of this systematic review are: (1) to provide an updated view (last five years) of the reality of underage trans persons from articles elaborated with an educational and social perspective, and the intention to move the trans reality away from a medical-clinical view. To determine the different aspects of the educational field that interfere in the full development of trans persons; and, (2) to locate where articles related to this topic are being published and their impact factor, to identify the field of research, the type of participants and methodology used, and the mental health factors associated with the educational system.

Method

A systematic review of the literature has been conducted according to the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses) statement following Ciapponi (2021) and Page et al. (2021), with the intention of transparently documenting the process.

Research strategy

The research has been conducted in April 2022 and searched for articles published between 2017 and 2021. Three databases have been consulted: Proquest, Scopus and Web of Science. In the first one, two different searches have been made, one of them using the thesaurus and the terminology used was social development OR sexual Identity AND school. The rest of the searches have been made using the combination of the words transgender AND school. Table 1 shows the databases consulted, the terms used in the searches

Chart 1
Summary of selected articles

Author (year)	Type of source	Journal name and quality index	Field	Participants	Methodology and research tool used	Subjects
Allen et al. (2020)	Academic article Research	<i>Journal of School Health</i>	Experiences	287 TGN (transgender, non-binary and gender nonconforming) adolescents 12-22 years old. Experiences in elementary school, middle school or high school.	Online questionnaire to assess school belonging, safety and resources. To be completed in 15-25 minutes and they have charged \$5 to participate.	Discrimination
Ancheta et al. (2021)	Academic article. Review	JIF: 2.118 JCI: 0.97 <i>Journal of School Nursing</i>	Prevention and inclusion	Adolescents LGBTQ (n = 6)	Qualitative. Relationship between mental health and school climate.	Transphobia Victimization Harassment, Bullying, Victimization, Violence
Bartholbmaeus et al. (2017)	Academic article Research	JIF: 2.835 JCI: 1.35 <i>Teaching and Teacher Education</i>	Prevention and inclusion	75 primary school teachers and 105 prospective teachers in South Australia	Questionnaire on attitudes towards inclusion and comfort and safety in working with trans and gender diverse students.	Marginalization, Exclusion, Bullying, Discrimination, Violence
Bower-Brown et al. (2021)	Academic article Research	JIF: 3.272 JCI: 2.25 <i>Journal of LGBT Youth</i>	Experiences	UK adolescents (13-17 years, 5 for each age) trans binary (25), non-binary (25) and gender questioning (out of 16 only 4 meet the criteria).	Qualitative. Questionnaire of closed and open questions, focusing on: school experiences and their situation in the school context and the differences existing among the three groups.	Discrimination
Bragg et al. (2018)	Academic article Research	JCI: 1.18 <i>Sex Education-Sexuality Society and Learning</i>	Experiences	100 young people between 12-14 years old	Qualitative. Group workshops (2 hours) and optional individual interviews.	Bullying Transphobia, Discrimination, Violence
Coulter and Miller (2018)	Academic article Research	JIF: 2.646 JCI: 1.24 <i>American Journal of Public Health</i>	Prevention and inclusion	Data from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's School Health Profiles related to LGBTQ youngsters	Analysis of health-related measures by U.S. schools that include LGBTQ supportive practices.	Harassment
Davies and Kessel (2017)	Academic article Review Research	JIF: 9.308 JCI: 2.01 <i>American Journal of Psychiatry</i>	Experience and discrimination at school	Jamie, transgender teenager	Case study. Analysis of the experience of a transgender adolescent in the educational setting. Mental health implications and the impact of sex-segregated spaces.	Absenteeism, Bullying, Bullying, Victimization, Rejection

Chart 1 (Continued)

Author (year)	Type of source	Journal name and quality index	Field	Participants	Methodology and research tool used	Subjects
Davy and Cordoba (2020)	Academic article	<i>Journal of GLBT Family Studies</i>	Experiences	23 family members who support their trans or gender-diverse daughters and sons. Women (n = 17); Men (n = 4);	Qualitative. Interview (between 60-120 min.) with open-ended questions about experiences related to school staff, the contribution made to the school and their response.	Bullying, Marginalization, Oppression
Day et al. (2018)	Research Academic article	JCI: 1.05 <i>Journal of Youth and Adolescence</i>	Experience and perception of school climate	Trans (n = 2) 838814 Californian teens, 9679 transgender	2 questionnaires: California Healthy Kids Survey and California Student Survey.	Absenteeism, Victimization, Bullying, Harassment
Demissie et al. (2018)	Research Academic article	JIF: 4.381 JCI: 1.24 <i>American Journal of Public Health</i>	Prevention and inclusion	Administration and teachers responsible for health education in secondary schools	Analysis of School Health Profiles questionnaires from each state in 4 cycles: 2008, 2010, 2012, and 2014.	Victimization, Stigmatization, Discrimination, Harassment, Bullying
Eckes (2021)	Research Academic article	JIF: 9.308 JCI: 2.01 <i>Laws</i>	Prevention and inclusion	Laws, constitutional provisions and jurisprudence.	Analysis of legislation related to sex discrimination.	Harassment, Bullying, Violence
Ehrensaft and Rosenthal (2019)	Review Academic article	<i>Pediatrics</i>	Prevention and inclusion	> 3000 LGBTQ adolescents	Online questionnaire.	Sexual Assault
Feijoo and Rodriguez-Fernandez (2021)	Research Academic article	JIF: 7.125 JCI: 2.66 <i>International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health</i>	Prevention and inclusion	24 studies on bullying	Analysis of Spanish studies and their incidence in the LGBT+ population.	Harassment Gender-based bullying, Victimization
Ferfolja and Ullman (2021)	Review Academic article	JIF: 3.390 JCI: 0.87 <i>Pedagogy, Culture and Society</i>	Experiences, perception and prevention	Family members with children of diverse gender and sexuality (n = 13), 12 mothers and 1 father.	Mixed. Online survey and interviews (online and in person).	Discrimination
Gower et al. (2018)	Research Academic article	SJR: 0.62 <i>Prevention Science</i>	Prevention and inclusion	Secondary school students (n = 31183)	Anonymous questionnaire.	Bullying Harassment Bullying, Harassment, Violence, Absenteeism, Victimization
	Research	JIF: 4.060 JCI: 1.46				

Chart 1 (Continued)

Author (year)	Type of source	Journal name and quality index	Field	Participants	Methodology and research tool used	Subjects
Green et al. (2018)	Academic article	<i>Journal of Adolescent Health</i>	Prevention and inclusion	Education professionals (n = 96)	Qualitative. Semi-structured interviews (45-60 minutes).	Harassment, Victimization, Violence, Stigma, Bullying
	Research	JIF: 4.828 JCI: 1.58				
Hanimoglu (2019)	Academic article	<i>Journal of Education and Training Studies</i>	Prevention and inclusion	The 10 domains of the National Association of School Psychologists	Analysis of the center's orientation capacity to improve lives of LGBT people.	Bullying, Discrimination, Stigma, Harassment, Victimization
Harris et al. (2022) (early access)	Narrative review Academic article	<i>Cambridge Journal of Education</i>	Experiences and isolation	6 secondary schools, 5 groups of students (n = 38), 32 of LGBT identity, faculty and staff	Mixed. Online surveys and interviews with faculty and staff about LGBT + students.	Isolation, Harassment, Bullying
	Research	JIF: 2.207 JCI: 1.37				
Hobaica et al. (2021)	Academic article	<i>Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy</i>	Prevention and inclusion	49555 female and male students, with 1835 transgender or gender-diverse students.	Healthy Youth Survey (HYS): analysis of the relationship between school policies, bullying experiences, and mental health implications.	Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination
	Research	JIF: 1.162 JCI: 0.50				
Jones (2017)	Academic article	<i>Sexual Health</i>	Prevention and inclusion	Legislation and educational policies	Analysis of studies in relation to educational laws and policies.	Violence, Discrimination, Transphobia, Bullying
	Review	JIF: 2.706 JCI: 0.67				
Kurt (2017)	Academic article	<i>Journal of School Counseling</i>	Prevention and inclusion	Guidelines of the American School Counselor Association and Title IX of the Educational Amendments	Qualitative. Analysis of legislation and guidelines from the perspective of school guidance staff.	Discrimination, Bullying, Harassment
Martino et al. (2020)	Narrative review Academic article	<i>Educational Review</i>	Prevention and inclusion	Primary and secondary school teachers (n = 3)	Qualitative. Interviews with teachers and management staff about their experience with trans students.	Discrimination, Violence, Harassment
McBride (2021)	Research (case study) Academic article	<i>Journal of LGBT Youth</i>	Experiences	83 studies on the experiences of trans students in secondary education	Analysis of trans students' experiences.	Vulnerability, Aggressions, Violence, Harassment, Bullying
	Review	JCI: 1.18				

Chart 1 (Continued)

Author (year)	Type of source	Journal name and quality index	Field	Participants	Methodology and research tool used	Subjects
McBride and Neary (2021)	Academic article	<i>Gender and Education</i>	Experiences	19 trans youth between 15 and 24 years of age	Qualitative. Workshops and semi-structured interviews (30-90 minutes) (workshops n = 6, interviews n = 7 and both n = 6).	Marginalization, Discrimination, Vulnerability
McBride and Schubotz (2017)	Research	JIF: 2.081 JCI: 1.42 <i>Child Care in Practice</i>	Experiences	Trans (TGNC) youth aged 12-23 years (n = 5)	Mixed. Questionnaire Young Life and Times Survey interviews.	Transphobia, Bullying, Discrimination, Victimization
Meyer and Keenan (2018)	Academic article	SJR: 0.34 <i>Gender and Education</i>	Prevention and inclusion	10 school policies	Analysis of regulations for the inclusion of trans persons.	Harassment, Bullying, Discrimination, Violence
Meyer and Leonardi (2018)	Review	JIF: 2.081 JCI: 1.42 <i>Sex Education-Sexuality Society and yarning</i>	Prevention, inclusion and training	26 educators from Quebec (11 kindergarten and elementary school teachers, 12 secondary school teachers and 3 diversity specialists).	Semi-structured interviews (Skype, 60-120 minutes).	Transphobia, Bullying, Harassment
Morgan and Taylor (2019)	Academic article	JIF: 2.646 JCI: 1.24 <i>Sociology</i>	Prevention and inclusion	United Kingdom education policy	Analysis of the impact of Emma Maltby's transgender educational initiative within educational policies and developments regarding gender identity.	Bullying
Omercajic and Martino (2020)	Review	JIF: 4.816 JCI: 2.19 <i>Frontiers in Sociology</i>	Prevention and inclusion	A non-binary person in charge of drafting school regulations and two educators, one trans and one cis.	Qualitative. Semi-structured interviews and analysis of school regulations.	Harassment, Victimization, Absenteeism, Marginalization
Paechter et al. (2021)	Academic article	JIF: 4.816 JCI: 2.19 <i>Pedagogy Culture and Society</i>	Experiences	8 non-binary gender adolescents, 13-18 years old.	Semi-structured interviews (online messages and/or Skype).	Transfobia, Bullying, Discriminación
Pampati et al. (2020)	Research	JCI: 0.96 <i>Journal of School Nursing</i>	Experiences and perception	542 adolescents between 13-18 ≤, 186 trans.	Quantitative. 40-minute questionnaire.	Harassment, Bullying, Aggressions, Victimization, Discrimination, Absenteeism
Parkinson (2017)	Academic article	JIF: 2.835 JCI: 1.35 <i>Sexual Health (Online)</i>	Prevention and inclusion	The Safe School program.	Program analysis.	Bullying, Discrimination
	Review	JIF: 2.706				

Chart 1 (Continued)

Author (year)	Type of source	Journal name and quality index	Field	Participants	Methodology and research tool used	Subjects
Phipps and Blackall (2021)	Academic article	JCI: 0.67 <i>Pedagogy Culture and Society</i>	Experiences	Trans student (1) and physical education teacher (1)	Qualitative. Case study. Semi-structured interviews.	Marginalization, Transphobia, Bullying, Violence, Harassment
Reisner et al. (2020)	Research Academic article	JCI: 0.96 <i>Prevention Science</i>	Experiences	28 LGBTQ students and 19 school nurses and psychologists	Mixed. Group discussions and online survey to identify factors that facilitate or impede the reporting of bullying of LGBTQ population.	Bullying, Victimization, Sexual Violence
Russell et al. (2021)	Research Academic article	JIF: 4.060 JCI: 1.46 <i>Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Sciences</i>	Prevention and inclusion	4 strategies for a safe school.	Analysis of 4 strategies for a safe school: explicit anti-bullying policies, teacher training, commission for gender identity and sexual orientation, inclusive curriculum and spaces.	Bullying, Discrimination, Victimization
Sørli (2020)	Review Academic article	SJR: 0.99 <i>International Journal of Children's Rights</i>	Experiences	Family members of trans children (n = unspecified) and teachers of 3 primary and secondary schools (n = 4).	Semi-structured interviews with families (2-4 hours) and teachers (30 minutes).	Harassment Bullying
Ullman (2017)	Research Academic article	SJR: 0.42 <i>Sex Education</i>	Prevention and inclusion	704 sexually and gender diverse adolescents 14-18 years old	Online survey on the treatment of sexuality and diverse gender by peers and faculty.	Exclusion Discrimination Social and curricular marginalization, Harassment, Isolation, Absenteeism, Victimization, Transphobia.
Walsh and Townsin (2018)	Research Academic article	JIF: 2.646 JCI: 1.24 <i>English in Australia</i>	Prevention and inclusion	BCP (Border Crossing Pedagogy)	Analysis of how BCP improves school climate for sexually and gender diverse individuals.	Discrimination, Violence, Bullying, Transphobia, Harassment, Hostility
Zeeman et al. (2017)	Review Academic article	JIF: 0.422 JCI: 0.26 <i>Journal of Youth Studies</i>	Prevention and inclusion	Adolescents aged 14-19 (n = 97), 5 trans	Qualitative. Group talks (2 hours) on resilience and emotional well-being of trans people.	Transphobia, Bullying, Marginalization, Exclusion, Stigmatization.
Note:		JIF: Journal Impact Factor in WoS (Web of Sciences) JCI: Journal Citation Indicator in WoS (Web of Sciences) SCImago Journal Rank (SJR)				

Note. Own elaboration.

and the relationship between the articles identified, discarded and selected ($n = 39$).

Procedure: corpus selection

Three phases have been established to select the articles (Figure 1): (1) *Identification* of the articles: listing the articles in the databases using the terminology described in Table 1 ($n = 18379$) and applying the filters specified in the section Eligibility criteria ($n = 565$); (2) *Screening*: excluding articles that do not fit the subject matter according to titles, abstracts, and keywords ($n = 47$) and eliminating duplicates ($n = 6$); y, (3) *Eligibility*: discarding 2 of the 41 articles selected because they do not meet the language criteria and do not fit the population criteria. At the end of the selection process, the corpus of this systematic literature review has been reduced to 39 scientific articles.

Eligibility criteria

The established fields of study have been: trans persons, gender identity and education. Most of the articles obtained have been closely linked to the clinical view of the trans reality, so after applying the filters in the databases and reading the title, abstract and keywords of the remaining articles, 47 articles have been selected. The research papers analyzed have been exported to the RefWorks bibliographic reference manager and duplicates have been eliminated. The study population has focused on trans children, but also on the people who constitute the educational community. Some of the studies have included trans persons of legal age, but the information collected refers to their stage as non-university students (minors). Another study, on the other hand, was excluded because it focused exclusively on trans university students. The aim has been to include papers written in both Spanish and English, between the years 2017–2021, but the fact of doing the search in English has meant that all but one of the selected articles are written in English. This one research has been excluded for not meeting the language criteria, as it is written in Portuguese. All the selected articles have been analyzed and coded using NVivo software.

Results

The section responds to the objectives: bibliographic analysis of published articles related to the subject and identification of the educational aspects that influence the development of trans students. Therefore, this section is divided in two. On the one hand, classified articles collect author, year of publication (2017–2021), type of source and publication, journal name and quality index, typology of participants and methodology used. The field of research of each of the sources consulted and those related to experiences linked to prevention and inclusion have been identified.

20% are from 2017, 23% from 2018, 8% from 2019, 18% from 2020 and 31% from 2021, the latter having the highest number of articles. The methodology used in the articles has been quantitative (3%), qualitative (28%) or mixed (10%), considering that most (59%) of the articles in the corpus do not specify the methodology used. The 64% (25 studies) of the articles have generated primary data with original research. Three of them have had more than 30,000 participants (one of them almost 840,000), three with more than 500, three between 300 and 100, three between 100 and 50, 12 with less than 50 and in two the total number of participants is not specified. As for the population studied, 39% of the articles focused on secondary and high school students, 33% on laws, studies, methodologies or other documents already published (the 13 reviews), 15% on teachers and educational professionals, and 5% on families. The data have been summarized in Chart 1.

The 100% of the articles refer to unfavorable situations that this group suffers in the educational environment and how it negatively influences their mental wellbeing. All articles have been classified in two fields: Experiences (41%) and Prevention and inclusion (59%).

- *Experiences*: 16 of the 39 selected works (41%) refer to school experiences lived by trans people, often included in the LGBTQ group. They also collect experiences of their cis peers, in order to establish relationships. The experiences have been narrated by trans people, by their family members or by the educational staff working with this student body (Allen et al., 2020; Bower-Brown et al., 2021; Bragg et al., 2018; Davies & Kessel, 2017; Davy & Cordoba, 2020; Day et al., 2018; Ferfolja & Ullman, 2021; Harris et al., 2022; McBride, 2021; McBride & Neary, 2021; McBride & Schubotz, 2017; Paechter et al., 2021; Pampati et al., 2020; Phipps & Blackall, 2021; Reisner et al., 2020; Sørli, 2020).
- *Prevention and inclusión*: The field of prevention and inclusion is represented by 23 of the 39 articles selected (59%), all of which are reviews except one. They are based on the analysis of laws, educational policies, methodologies, previous questionnaires or studies on experiences or through questionnaires, interviews, even workshops (Ancheta et al., 2021; Bartholbmaeus et al., 2017; Coulter & Miller, 2018; Demissie et al., 2018; Eckes, 2021; Ehrensaft & Rosenthal, 2019; Feijoo & Rodriguez-Fernandez, 2021; Gower et al., 2018; Green et al., 2018; Hanimoglu, 2019; Hobaica et al., 2021; Jones, 2017; Kurt, 2017; Martino et al., 2020; Meyer & Keenan, 2018; Meyer & Leonardi, 2018; Morgan & Taylor, 2019; Omercajic & Martino, 2020; Parkinson, 2017; Russell et al., 2021; Ullman, 2017; Walsh & Townsin, 2018; Zeeman et al., 2017).

Factors that interfere in the development of trans people

Analyzing the corpus, we have also extracted the factors related to mental health from an educational and social perspective, with the intention of distancing the trans reality from the medical-clinical vision and determining the different aspects of the educational field that interfere in the full development of trans people. It has been possible to identify and structure five thematic areas:

- *Mental health*: 100% of the selected scientific papers refer to the fact that the school experiences of trans people have negative impact on their mental health. It is clear that their gender condition makes them more likely to suffer bullying, discrimination, harassment, violence, etc. in the school environment compared to their cis peers.
- *School climate/culture*: 97% of the articles refer to the fact that schools, as a general rule, are not equipped to respond to the needs of trans and gender-diverse people.
- *Lack of teacher training*: 69% of the articles echo the lack of teacher training to work with trans students in a positive way. It is up to the families to provide training to the educational environment.
- *Segregated spaces*: 46% of the articles indicate that segregated spaces, such as bathrooms, have negative implications for the group.
- *To transit or not to transit*: This issue is approached in 39% of the articles analyzed and it is emphasized that the lack of support for gender diversity by teachers and educational policies makes students feel unable to make the transition, generating a high degree of stress.

Discussion

From the information recorded in the review, the lack of research on trans students in kindergarten and elementary school

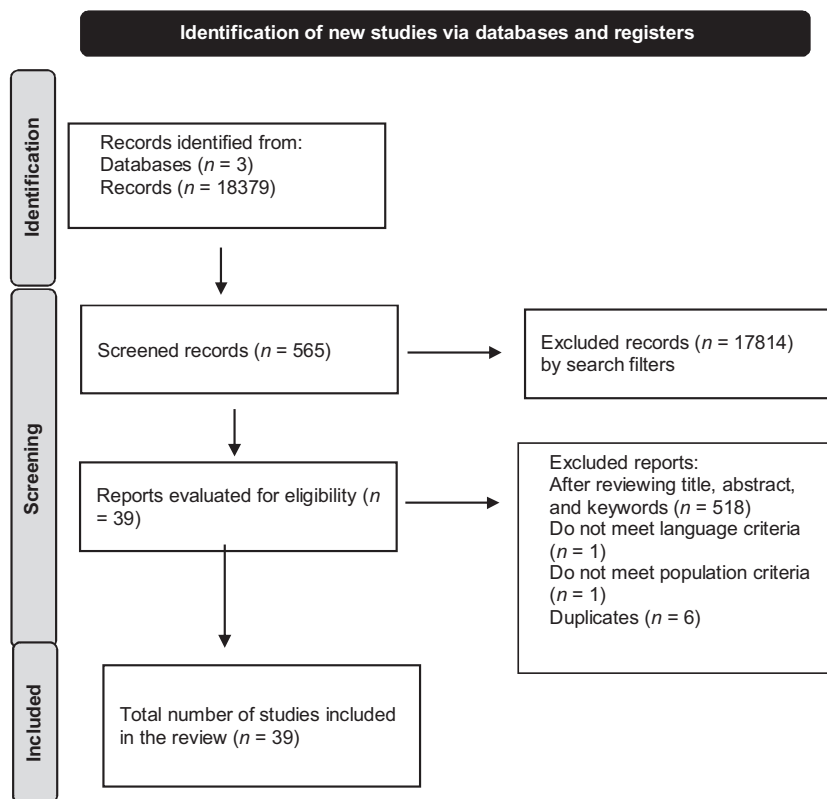


Figure 1. Phases and data of the selection strategy.

Note: (Ciapponi, 2021; Page et al., 2021).

Table 1
Research strategies

Databases	Terminology	Articles identified according to filters	Articles discarded	Articles selected
Proquest (Tesauro Eric)	(MAINSUBJECT.EXACT("social development") OR MAINSUBJECT.EXACT("sexual Identity")) AND mainsubject(school)	206	204	2
Proquest	mainsubject(transgender) AND mainsubject(school)	80	73	7
Scopus	(TITLE-ABS-KEY (transgender) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY (school)	116	102	14
Web of Science	transgender (Topic) and school (Topic)	163	147	16

Note. Own elaboration.

is evident. One of the articles (McBride, 2021) mentioned that non-conforming behaviors are tolerated in primary school, but are problematized in gender secondary school. This shows that secondary it is necessary to conduct more research and field work in primary and early childhood education, in order to work on prevention and avoid these situations in school. The existing literature on trans people is focused on white people of medium-high socioeconomic level, which provides safer educational environments with school changes or access to other services such as clinical treatment, highlighting the limitations of lower class trans people. The studies reviewed show that young trans people with disabilities start from a greater disadvantage as they are exposed to greater surveillance, infantilization, lack of self-determination, etc. (McBride, 2021).

Regarding the role of teachers, it is emphasized that they do not have adequate training and that this is reflected in the lack of legislation and educational policies, especially those related to gender-based discrimination (Eckes, 2021). Specific legislation is necessary to promote training on gender diversity, although it is

not an essential factor for teachers to act with empathy, understanding and support for all students. In terms of segregated spaces, the review conducted shows that adequate legislation affects any policy or regulation. Meyer and Keenan (2018) bet on gender neutral so that they are not based on sex classification. In addition, the literature shows that school uniforms can generate similar problems, since the classification is based on stereotypical sex-gender parameters, causing the same discomfort to the trans population (McBride & Neary, 2021).

The educational context is a hostile place for trans students, especially in secondary school. All articles have focused on the health consequences. Educational policies and regulations are necessary to address the harassment and discrimination faced by transgender students, but the attitude and training of education professionals may be even more important than any regulation. And, in turn, it is important to insert content referring to this group in the curriculum, without forgetting about non-binary people, and the need to break with cisheteronormativity.

In summary, the analysis of the selected articles confirms the influence of educational contexts on the poor mental health of these people, their gender condition being the only cause for it. It is necessary to move towards spaces and facilities that are not classified by gender, and the same with respect to uniforms or sports practices. It is necessary to have transit plans to help and include people of non-binary gender. It is evident the role that the educational environment can play for a real normalization of trans or gender diverse people, since the society of the future, politicians, legislators, doctors, teachers, etc. are now in our classrooms. Only by providing adequate education on gender identity to students in the classroom, starting from the youngest, will it be possible to bring about a social change in favor of these people.

The most significant limitation found when preparing this work has been that the vast majority of the articles obtained as a result of the searches in the databases have been closely linked to a clinical perspective. All these researches have been discarded since the main objective of this study is focused on giving an educational and/or social vision of the trans reality. In addition, there are very few references and information regarding non-binary people and there is very little diversity in terms of race, socio-economic status or other possible factors sensitive to multiple discrimination.

Very few references were found to the early childhood and primary education stages. This may be due to the fact that the United States is leading research in this area, and the curriculum most closely related to gender identity, such as sex education (although the relationship is not sufficiently justified), is much more limited than in other European countries. For all these reasons, it is evident that research is also necessary, especially in the earliest stages such as early childhood and primary education, expanding the sample to different social backgrounds, races, ethnicities and people with functional diversity, in addition to ensure a greater presence of non-binary people.

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