PARENTS' PERSPECTIVES ON THEIR PARENTING STYLES AND INVOLVEMENT IN TRANSITION PROGRAMS FOR THEIR ETHNIC-MINORITY YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

By

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine parents' lived experiences when considering the impact of their parental involvement and parenting styles on their ethnic minority youth with disabilities, transition outcomes, and mental health. Specifically, the research sought to explore how parents' levels of engagement in their children's education may interact with the potential challenges associated with their race/ethnicity and cultural practice that can influence how their parenting styles are expressed.

To guide the research, theoretical frameworks utilizing Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and Joyce Epstein's Parental Involvement Model, including the overlapping spheres of influence. A qualitative phenomenological research design was used in this study to produce in-depth experiences of parents of ethnic-minority youth. One-on-one interviews with ethnic minority parents of students with disabilities who are participating in transition planning were conducted to obtain data needed to address the research questions. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews with seven participants, who were parents of ethnic-minority youth with a disability who had an Individualized Education Plan or 504 plan.

The findings included five key themes that were coded as follows: (a) Ecological Issues, (b) Involvement Requires Different Levels of Advocacy, (c) Impact on Parents, (d) Impact on Youths, and (e) Positive Support Systems and Personal Resiliency. Through these findings, the parents discussed what were their perceptions of assisting their ethnic-minority youth with disabilities. The perceptions held by these parents explored their parenting styles, involvement with service providers, their experiences having a child with a disability, and the impact of their participation in the transition process on their perceived quality of life.

The study's results were favorable, shedding light on the considerable impact of the transition process on parents and their youth. The research identified gaps in the literature concerning ethnic-minority youth with disabilities and provided a deeper parental perspective. It also highlighted the need for future research to address the identified barriers, guiding the development of targeted interventions for ethnic-minority youth with disabilities.

Keywords: Disability, Ecological Model, Ethic-Minority Youth, Parenting Style, Parental Involvement, Parental Perceptions, Transition,

Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths (Proverbs 3: 5 -6 KJV)

This Dissertation is dedicated to my beloved mother, Gloria Brooks. You kept me grounded in my faith and sacrificed for your children so we could be where we are today. I know if you were here today, I would hear you say, “I am so proud of you, baby.”

I also want to dedicate this Dissertation to my abuela, “Mama Caesar.” You instilled in us the importance of being a Caesar. You loved every family member in a very special way and maintained your faith in our heavenly father.

To my daughter Layla, you have been my rock and cheerleader.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The need for vocational rehabilitation (VR) for transition-aged youth has been a concern for decades (Rowe et al., 2015; Scheef & McKnight-Lizotte, 2021; Sung et al., 2015). With the implementation of the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA, 2014), the focus has been on improving employer engagement and increasing employment outcomes for transition-age youth (Anderson et al., 2017). Thus, the delivery of services by the state VR agencies is guided by legislation and regulatory agencies (Carlson et al., 2020; Taylor et al., 2019).

Obtaining and maintaining employment is an expected role for adults. Being employed gives students higher self-esteem and greater confidence about the world of work (Cobb et al., 2013). Postsecondary employment outcomes for transition-age students with disabilities have improved over the past decade (Grigal et al., 2019; Snell-Rood et al., 2020). The economy is increasing favorably; thus it is anticipated that jobs for youth with disabilities will continue to increase (Spash, 2021).

However, with the improvement of the overall VR success over the past few years, minority students with disabilities continue to fall behind their peers in achieving competitive employment (Vryhof & Balcazar, 2020). While documentation provides support that minority students are underrepresented in the workplace, research continues to find that minority students with a documented disability have experienced poor outcomes in the VR system (Ji et al., 2015). Although positive parental support has been a predictor of postsecondary education success for students in general, a similar level of support is needed for students with disabilities who exit school and either attend postsecondary education or enter the world of work (Hirano & Rowe et al., 2018; Olson, 1997).

Although parents are generally supportive of having their children with disabilities obtain meaningful employment disabilities after high school, this perception may or may not be consistent with their child's social interactions, academic and career goals, and outcomes, as well as financial independence (Fichten et al., 2020). Parents are limited in associating the type of work and the work environment needed for their children to be successful. This lack of awareness can result in their child lacking sufficient resources and being free of obstacles to sustaining work (Reimann et al., 2019). This is especially true for students with disabilities (Wehman et al., 2015). Literature has demonstrated different barriers that parents of students with disabilities face (Curtiss et al.,2019; Hirano & Rowe et al., 2018; Rispoli et al., 2019). According to Hirano and Shanley et al. (2018), two specific barriers, i.e., multiple sources of stress and lack of resources, have reduced their ability to participate actively in their student's transition planning.

Families continue to play an important part in students with disabilities in terms of social capital and support (Hirano & Rowe et al., 2018). The benefits of having families, including parents, involved at different levels of the students' services have been demonstrated to be meaningful (Hirano & Shanley et al., 2018). Thus, understanding factors that can contribute to successful parental involvement and student success would become important to provide appropriate strategies to facilitate these collaborative relationships and actions. These factors can include concepts such as parenting styles and parental expectations.

Parenting Styles, Involvement, and Engagement

Baumrind (1968) began investigating child-rearing patterns that parents exhibited while raising their children. The discussion of this concept dates back to the 1960s and credits Baumrind (1968) with identifying the primary parenting styles (i.e., authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive) that play a role in parental thinking and practices. According to Baumrind, parenting styles underlie the relationship between children and parents. The relationship is based on parents' authority, which is used to manage their children's behavior and consciously and unconsciously influence how their child is socialized.

Studies further show that parents' demands to socialize their children are based on their parenting styles and how communication is provided to their children (Baumrind, 1978; Mikeska et al., 2016). Darling and Steinberg (1993) theorized that parenting styles influence child development. They identified three aspects of parenting styles that influence child development, including (a) how socialization was directed, (b) parenting styles used to help their children attain goals, and (c) the quality of the environment where socialization occurred.

Family culture has a significant impact on how children are raised. Studies show that nearly 25% of children reside in single-parent households (United States Census, 2022). Single-parent households account for the variance in the family's socioeconomic status, along with factors such as cultural, ethnic, and spiritual ideologies (Sanvictores & Mendez, 2021). Depending on the parenting style used by ethnically diverse families, academic and social outcomes are a good predictor of the level of involvement demonstrated by the parent (Matejevic et al., 2014).

Another concept of interest to study is parent involvement/parent engagement. Parent involvement and parent engagement are often used interchangeably, although there are clear distinctions between these two constructs (Goodall & Montgomery, 2014; Mac Iver et al., 2018; Semke & Sheridan, 2012). Parental involvement includes the interactions between parents and children at home, as well as in academics and community agency settings (Doi et al., 2020). In contrast, Goodall and Montgomery (2014) defined parent engagement as a more significant commitment that implies active participation in school-based activities deeper than parent involvement. Children’s success in their academic or community agency outcomes is highly related to their parent’s involvement and level of engagement (Hornby & Blackwell, 2018).

Despite the importance of parent engagement in their child’s academic and service plans, researchers have shown a decline in parental engagement from elementary to high school (Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2010; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler’s (1995) model of parental involvement is essential to understanding parental motivation and assessing declines in parental engagement. High levels of parental involvement during the transition process can also increase engagement by transition-aged youth with disabilities. Parents also perceived that their child’s academic and community agencies did not provide support to assist their child to achieve their goals (Mawene & Bal, 2018). Inconsistencies between the parent’s perception of their engagement in their children’s lives and perceptions of school personnel on parents’ engagement with the academic and community agency could be used to explain declines in parental involvement (Laxman et al., 2019; Paseka & Schwab, 2019)

In relation to ethnic minorities, the educational climate could seem strange, possibly even hostile. According to Marschall and Shah (2020), lower-income and minority parents could have had negative experiences as a result of schools’ representation and reproduction of middle- and upper-class beliefs and communication styles. Sociocultural norms and practices that value middle-class and White “culture,” which typify schools, along with parents’ disadvantages and lack of resources, play a role in the lower levels of involvement among poor, working-class, or minority parents, particularly in school-based activities.

Statement of the Problem

In the United States, over 7.3 million (14%) public school children aged 3 to 21 were receiving services under the Individuals with Disability Education Act (Nowicki, 2018). Of the 14% of public school children receiving services under an IDEA, 85% of those students were identified with a racial/ethnic group other than White (National Center for Education Statistics, 2021). The most common disabilities, such as learning disabilities and developmental disabilities, accounted for more than 40% of students with disabilities (Foley, 2006).

A paucity of research has been found regarding parental involvement of youth with disabilities and their VR outcomes. More specifically, research in the vein of parenting styles of youth with disabilities and their VR outcomes is outdated. Traditionally, when discussing the influences of parental involvement and parenting styles, these topics have been discussed with regard to younger children (Paulson, 1994). Parental involvement, whether positive or negative, is a characteristic of parenting styles or ways of interactions that researchers have studied (Lara & Saracostti, 2019; Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Oyserman et al., 2004).

Youth with disabilities encounter many barriers when transitioning from high school to work or post-secondary education (Sosnowy et al., 2018). Students with disabilities are entitled to a high-quality transition planning process and should be encouraged to participate in VR services (Rast et al., 2020). According to IDEA 2004 (n.d.), transition planning that includes VR should be started before the student with a disability turns 16. Creating high-quality transition planning and engaging VR services requires family and community support (Roux et al., 2021).

A child’s mental and physical capabilities can impact how parents communicate and participate in school activities, including transition programs (Case, 2000; Shakespeare et al., 1999). Parents may be unaware that their personal experiences and backgrounds influence their level of involvement (Papoudi et al., 2021). The variety of perspectives parents hold can be seen as an asset to the transition process (Edwards & Kutaka, 2015).

Researchers suggested that parents deal with many issues that can impact their level of involvement (Epstein, 2007; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). While these issues are not listed hierarchically, the most common factors impacting parenting involvement are the parents' mental and emotional health, socioeconomic status, and cultural influences (Brown et al., 2020). Caregivers recognize that their emotional, physical, social, and financial responsibilities can be burdensome and complex (Javalkar et al., 2017). Caregiver burden can result in higher perceived social stigma and negative perceptions of their caregiving responsibilities (Cassidy et al., 2013)

An examination of the current research literature suggests that a gap exists in research focused on parental involvement, parenting styles, and transitional outcomes of minority students with disabilities in the VR system (Marcucci, 2020). Few minoritized students with disabilities are competitively employed once they exit high school. Obtaining and maintaining employment is a standard societal expectation for adults. Although the literature supports the relationship between positive parental support and higher education success, less is known about the relationship between positive parental involvement and the success of students who are exiting school and entering the world of work (Phoenix et al., 2020).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the lived experiences of ethnic minority parents regarding transition planning for their adolescent child with disabilities. This investigation includes parents' self-report of their parenting styles and characteristics (age, marital status, gender, educational level, employment status, emotional health, etc.) and their impact on parent involvement in activities associated with transition planning. Ultimately, this study would like to understand all these collective experiences that affect both the minority adolescents and the parents themselves.

I looked at the overall lived experience of how being an ethnic-minority parent may elicit different parenting styles and their experiences in their involvement with service providers and their child's transition planning, which may affect their child's transition success and quality of life.

Conceptual Framework

To guide this study, Epstein's Parental Involvement Model and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory were used as the conceptual frameworks. Epstein's Parental Involvement framework is important in highlighting the need to develop partnerships between the home, school, and community and provide support for students throughout their education. Parental involvement models have been explored for years (Erdener & Knoeppel, 2018; Garcia & de Guzman, 2020; Jeynes, 2018).

Bronfenbrenner's theory is used to explain the influence that the social environment has on human development. The Ecological Systems Theory focuses on the context of an individual's life by way of developmental levels. These developmental levels occur in the scope of intertwined systems, such as family, school, and the workplace (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). This model further highlights the sociocultural aspects of influencing student success, thus emphasizing the need to pay attention to how underserved populations, such as those from minoritized backgrounds, have a different experience.

Research Questions

The following research questions were examined in this study:

Overarching Research Question: What are the lived experiences of ethnic minority families who have a child with a disability in the process of transitioning from high school to adult roles (e.g., educational planning, vocational planning)?

Subquestion 1: How do ethnic minority parents perceive their parenting styles when interacting with their children?

Subquestion 2: How do ethnic minority parents perceive their involvement with service providers?

Subquestion 3: How has the lived experiences of ethnic minority parents of a child with a disability perceived that the transition process can promote educational and vocational success?

Subsequestion 4: How has ethnic minority parents' participation in the transition process with their child with a disability influenced their perceived quality of life?

Significance of Study

This study investigated parenting styles and parental involvement in activities linked to transition planning for ethnic minority students with disabilities and how this has affected student success and parents' quality of life. The findings of this study can help understand the experience among students with disabilities and their families regarding participation in transition planning and preparation for life after high school. Understanding how their status as a minority may have an influence on their parenting styles and may affect their level of involvement with transition services is important. Parenting styles and level of involvement can affect their students' success as well as the parent's quality of life. With this information, stakeholders, including different service providers, could become cognizant of existing challenges facing these minority families and their students with disabilities and allow service providers to find effective ways to work collaboratively with the families and students. These service provider groups can include a wide range of service providers such as VR counselors, special education transition professionals, and teachers in the secondary and postsecondary (secondary programs for students ages 18 to 26). Other stakeholders, such as administrators and policymakers, can consider implementing changes at the systems level. Parents of students in these settings may be interested in the findings. Ultimately, a better system can be established to ensure that parents and service providers can work collaboratively to provide appropriate support to students with disabilities as they transition from high school to postsecondary education or the workforce.

Methodology

A qualitative phenomenological research design was used. A sample of seven ethnic-minority parents of students with disabilities who are involved in transition planning were recruited to participate in one-on-one interviews with the researcher. Ethnic minority parents were recruited from high schools that offer transition planning for students with disabilities in a Midwestern State. Participants were also recruited using snowball sampling by way of word of mouth from parents. After screening for eligibility, the appointment transitioned to the consent forms and the interview using the Zoom platform. During the interviews, parents were asked to describe their parenting styles, level of involvement in their children's education and vocational rehabilitation activities, as well as their perceptions of their student's success and their family's quality of life. The interviews lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes. Data from the one-on-one interviews was analyzed using thematic analysis, with two individuals (myself and two Ph.Ds in education and health and human services) coding the data to ensure interrater reliability.

Summary

A qualitative, phenomenological approach was utilized to address the research questions. I collected data from seven ethnic-minority parents of youth with significant impairments in their perspectives of their parental involvement, parenting styles, and overall perceived quality of life. The data collected were consistent with the research questions and guided the thematic analysis to code the parent's responses. The emerging themes showed significant findings that connected with the theoretical framework utilizing Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model. Data obtained from this result has profound implications for educators, practitioners, and future research.

Definition of Terms

Emerging Adulthood. Emerging adulthood is the stage of life where the individual is between being an adolescent and an adult. This stage of life is usually classified as between the age of 18 – 25 years. During this phase, the emerging adult is interested in pursuing additional training or becoming economically independent (Hochberg & Konner, 2020).

Individualized Educational Program (IEP). The IEP is a time for teachers, parents, school administrators, or other knowledgeable stakeholders to share their expertise regarding the child, including related services personnel and the children themselves (whenever appropriate), to work collaboratively to develop an IEP that could assist in enriching the educational results for children with disabilities (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2000).

Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA). IDEA describes mandates for services to all children with disabilities, in addition to providing funding and a system to monitor and evaluate state and local programs (U.S. Dept of Education, 2000).

Parental Engagement is a greater commitment that implies active participation in school-based activities that is deeper than parental involvement (Goodall & Montgomery, 2014).

Parental Involvement is the interactions between parents and children at home as well in academics and community agency settings (Doi et al., 2020).

Parenting Styles play a crucial role in shaping the relationship between the child and the parent. The authority that parents have is not just for controlling their children's behavior, but also consciously and unconsciously shaping how their child is socialized, empowering parents in their role (Baumrind,1978).

Pre-employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) must be made available Statewide to all students with disabilities, regardless of whether the student has applied or been determined eligible for VR services. Pre-ETS means the VR agency must provide the required activities and be authorized.

Student with a Disability is an individual who is in an educational program; meets certain age requirements; and is eligible for and receiving special education or related services under IDEA; or is an individual with a disability for purposes of section 504 of the Act (U.S Dept of Education, n.d).

Transition Planning is a process to prepare students for moving from high school to adulthood. It assists the students and their families by providing information, adult service programs, and identifying goals for future planning (Coons-Harding et al., 2019).

Youth with a Disability is not younger than 14 years of age and not older than 24 years of age. There is no requirement that a "youth with a disability" be participating in an education program (U.S. Dept of Education, n.d).

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Parent involvement is an essential aspect of transition planning and student success. Parents are often the primary caregivers of their children, and the dynamic relationship with their children extends beyond the context of the home environment. An extensive body of research has explored parenting styles and effects on parental-child relationships and parent involvement when working with the school. However, limited research has focused on the relationship between parenting styles and parental involvement in working with other service systems, such as in a VR setting. This section of the literature review examines the theoretical framework, as well as the current landscape of the relationships among parent involvement, parenting styles, parenting characteristics, and VR student outcomes.

Theoretical Framework

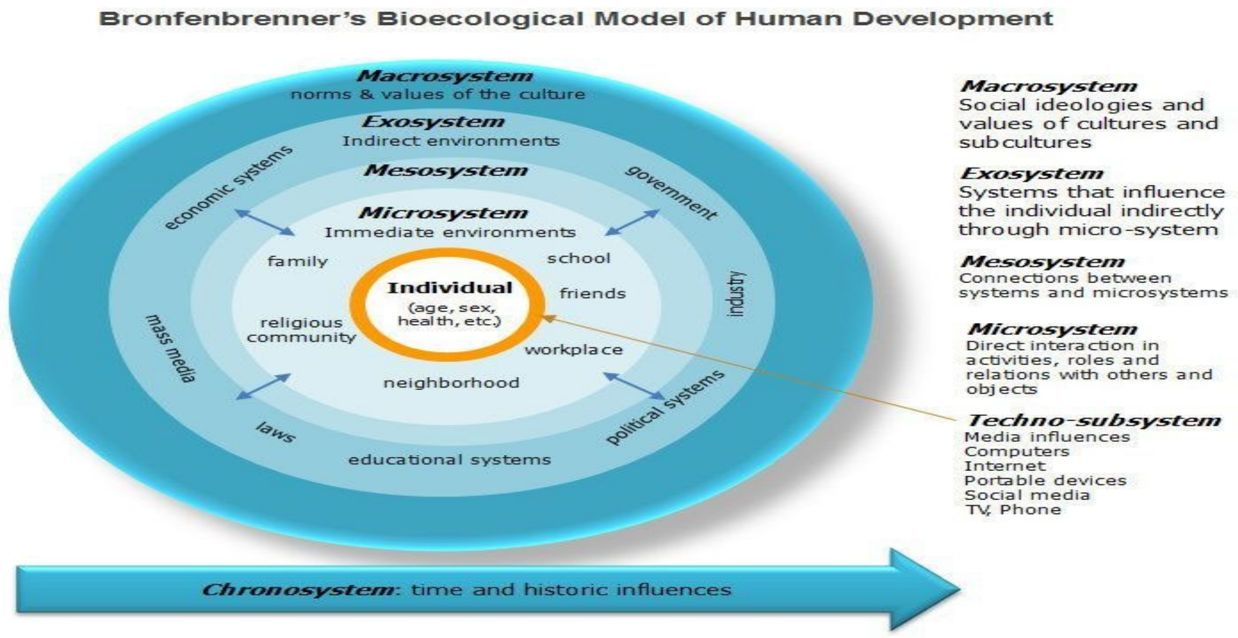
Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and Epstein's model of Parental Involvement (Epstein, 1992) are used to guide the current study. Bronfenbrenner's theory is an Ecological Systems Theory that is mainly used to explain the influence that the social environment has on human development. This theory will be used to explain the parents' role in the transition process and parental involvement. Bronfenbrenner's theory also speaks to the context of society and how culture plays a role in human development. Epstein's model of Parental Involvement is essential in developing partnerships between the home, school, and community to support students throughout their education. This model will provide insight into the importance of collaboration with VR, which focuses on preparing transition-aged students for postsecondary school.

Ecological Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory establishes a fundamental framework for highlighting how one's social environment explains a parent's role in the transition and VR process. To understand the child's development, Bronfenbrenner theorized that one must understand the five levels of the ecological system and how each level inevitably interacts with and influences the others in all aspects of the child's life (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Bronfenbrenner's five levels are (a) microsystem, (b) mesosystem, (c) ecosystem, (d) macrosystem, and (e) chronosystem, which are categorized from the most personal level within the child to the broadest context outside the child. The child is conceptually at the center of all five levels and details their influence on child development. Figure 1 presents a graphical representation of Bronfenbrenner's five levels of the Ecological Systems Theory.

Figure 1

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory



The microsystem, level 1, of the Ecological Systems Theory, involves one's immediate environment, where the child/adolescent interacts with siblings and parents in their home, along with peers and teachers in school. Bronfenbrenner (1979) defined a microsystem as a pattern of roles, activities, and interpersonal relationships experienced by the child/adolescent in a given setting. For example, adolescents have relationships with their transition coordinators and their parents. Adolescents, preparing for their adult roles, can be influenced by their transition coordinators and parents. The interactions that occur in the microsystem are bi-directional as to how the child/adolescent reacts to individuals in the microsystem and will influence how these individuals behave towards the child/adolescent (Tissington, 2008).

The mesosystem is level 2 of Bronfenbrenner's ecological system. Mesosystems represent the relationships between two or more settings where the child/adolescent participates. For example, this system includes the child/adolescent's home, school, and community life as well as the family, work, and social life of an adult. The mesosystem is the connections that occur in the microsystems and the influence it has on the child/adolescent's development. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), if a parent is engaged in the relationships maintained and sustained by their child/adolescent, the child/adolescent's development is affected positively. In contrast, if the child/adolescent's parent routinely criticizes and does not support the child/adolescent relationships, the child/adolescent can have a cognitive imbalance, possibly negatively affecting their development (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2019).

The exosystem is level 3 of Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems. The exosystem is the connection between two or more settings in which the child/adolescent participates (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The child/adolescent does not participate in each setting; however, all settings have events that influence processes within each setting in which the child/adolescent was a participant (Betancourt & Khan, 2008). The indirect nature of the exosystem influencing factors shape the child/adolescent's development. For example, an adolescent has recently met their VR counselor to participate in VR services to obtain employment. Participating in the program requires the parent to complete paperwork, as the adolescent is a minor. The parent sleeps from working two jobs all night and does not complete the paperwork. The adolescent returns to the VR counselor with incomplete paperwork and is unable to participate in transition services that could eventually lead to competitive integrated employment.

The macrosystem is the fourth level of Bronfenbrenner's ecological system. The macrosystem is the largest of the five levels. The macrosystem carries tenets of the microsystem, mesosystem, and ecosystems, including the broader context of culture, subculture, and other social environments. The macrosystem context of culture and social environments references one's belief systems, lifestyles, barriers encountered in the society, and the interactions that occur (Tudge et al., 2009). For example, children of color living in poverty develop differently than their White counterparts who are not living in poverty (Wulczyn et al., 2013).

Children of color living in poverty have to develop resilient traits to survive in their environment. The macro system, in the context of cultural factors, explains children's lived experiences and the importance of resiliency. To shape healthy resilience in children, the microsystem and cultural context of the macrosystem must include parents who have healthy rearing and attachment relationships (Zakeri et al., 2010).

The chronosystem is the fifth and final level of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. The chronosystem gives a narrative to the evolution and development of external systems of the time (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The chronosystem explains the effects of change and constancy in the child/adolescent environments and the roles others play (Panopoulos & Drossinou-Korea, 2020). For example, adolescents may have changes in neighborhoods, schools, or economic stresses held by their caregivers.

Parental Involvement Model

The Epstein and Van Voorhis (2010) model of Parental Involvement presents the importance in developing partnerships between the home, school, and community to support students throughout their education. As these partnerships evolved, student outcomes were expected to improve. Epstein has devoted decades to studying and publishing research on parental involvement.

In 1995, Epstein published her theory of Parental Involvement , with this theory continuing to evolve over time (Epstein et al., 2018). The notion of overlapping spheres of influence recognizes the three key contexts in which students learn and grow: home, school, and community. These contexts can be drawn together or driven apart, according to the external model. The model includes sections that indicate how some practices are carried out separately by schools, families, and communities, as well as portions that overlap to show how some practices result from collaboration. The internal model of the idea of overlapping spheres of influence demonstrates where and how complex and important interpersonal ties, exchanges, and patterns of influence take place between individuals at home, school, and in the community (Epstein et al., 2018). The overlapping spheres of influence suggested that students acquire needed knowledge when parents, professional staff, and community organizations work together, sharing responsibilities for student success (Epstein et al., 2018). The model developed by Epstein et al. (2018) examined each level of parent involvement that contributes to student learning and success. Epstein et al. has continued work on the six domains and has established a model of six types of involvement that reflect multi-level partnerships, with families, educators, and communities working collaboratively.

This model of parent involvement includes six different types that include: (a) parenting, (b) communicating, (c) volunteering, (d) learning, (e) decision making, and (f) collaborating. Epstein and Van Voorhis (2010) described *parenting* as helping all families understand child and adolescent development and establishing home environments that support children as students. Parents are essential sources of support for students with and without disabilities and play a vital role in decisions that students make in obtaining employment (Lindsay et al., 2017). Parental involvement allows for connections in the community and helps students transition to the world of work, essentially improving the student's competitiveness in the workplace (Lindsay et al., 2016).

Epstein et al. (2018) defined *communication* as establishing two-way exchanges using varied technologies regarding school programs and student progress. Effective communication is needed between ethnic-minority parents and the school personnel. It includes strategies such as schools having an open-door policy, schools being intentional on their outreach strategies, and parents being receptive to increasing communication with the school, by providing their most recent contact information (Williams & Sànchez, 2013). The quality of communication expressed by parents can range from simple to complex and includes the amount of time parents spend communicating with their students. An increase in parental communication can affect the career readiness of students with disabilities in their career decision-making positively (Schroedel & Carnahan, 2019).

According to Epstein et al. (2018), *volunteering* involves recruiting and organizing parents to help at school, at home, and in the community. Volunteering allows for students to participate in activities outside of the school and for parents to discuss career-related activities with their students (Epstein, 2007). Researchers have found that when interventions of school-based volunteering were encouraged, adolescents developed positive youth development attributes such as competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring (Truskauskaitė-Kunevičienė et al., 2018). Adolescents are inclined to volunteer when their parents are involved in the process. Parents who openly discuss topics such as civic duties or civil participation are more likely to instill behaviors such as volunteering in their children (Bird et al., 2020; Van Goethem et al., 2014; Vézina & Poulin, 2019). Stukas et al. (2016) found that parents are primary models of giving and volunteering and their actions can be very influential in children's prosocial behaviors.

Epstein et al. (2018) asserted that *learning* at home is related to providing information and ideas to families regarding helping students with homework and other curriculum-related materials. Understanding the relationship of parental involvement, homework support, and impact had on academic achievement have been argued by scholars for many years (Mora & Escardibul, 2018; Nuñez et al, 2017). Parental involvement in their child's homework is led by parent motivation, teacher encouragement and engagement, and the current academic functioning level of their children (Cunha et al., 2015; Moé et al., 2018). Williams et al. (2017) conducted a study on the parental-involvement and found that involvement with homework increases the students' self-efficacy. According to Williams et al., children are committed to learning, developing coping strategies to problem-solve, and accepting feedback from their significant others.

Epstein et al. (2018) described *decision-making* as having family members serve as representatives and leaders on school committees, and as advocates for their children and other children in making school and community participation decisions. Students transitioning from school to the world of work requires effective career decision-making skills. If a student lacks support to develop effective decision-making skills, they may be challenged in choosing a career, and their self-efficacy could be negatively impacted (Xin et al., 2020). Career decisions for students with disabilities include knowing the technical skills needed to perform the job, understanding the competencies required to attain the job, and having transferable skills that can be used to perform the job (Morningstar et al., 2017). Parental involvement enables students to have access to career exploration resources and provides students with the confidence and motivation needed to set and seek out career goals (El-Hassan & Ghalayini, 2020).

Collaborating with the community provided a means of identifying and integrating community-based resources and services to strengthen school programs and enable students to serve the community. Communities are impacted by the quality of education achieved by their community members and the type of vocational opportunities available (Smithson, n.d.) Community-based programs are necessary to empower underserved families, acknowledge the voice of the family, and support involvement (Mac Iver et al., 2018; Sanders, 2009). VR programs provide community-based programs and support for students with disabilities. VR practitioners have had to rely on their creativity to ensure that community involvement occurs for students with disabilities (Miller et al., 2018).

Parental Involvement and Engagement

Although Epstein and researchers used different terms and concepts in parental involvement that may also suggest elements of concepts in the parental engagement literature, distinctions have been made between parental involvement and engagement. While Epstein and researchers lay the groundwork conceptually on parental engagement, subsequent researchers further refine the concept of parental engagement. Parental involvement and parental engagement have been the subject of research for decades (Boonk et al., 2018; Epstein, 1992; Hoover-Demsey & Sandler, 1997; Zarate, 2007). Jeynes (2018) postulated that social science research has evolved from parental participation to theories of parental involvement and engagement. Parental involvement is an action that is held by the parents and could be influenced by the parent's rearing and environmental factors (Epstein et al., 2004). Parental engagement is action that is facilitated by the parents within the academic and social setting (Mapp et al., 2008). The divergence from parental involvement to engagement is subtle and is important when considering ethnic-minority youth with disabilities in transition settings (Scanlan, 2008).

Parental Involvement in Transition Planning and Implementation

The importance of parental involvement in transition planning at the school settings and indicators for success has been the subject of research for many years (Wilcox et al., 2019). Parental involvement during transition planning is essential when working with students because legislation mandates that students are unable to make autonomous decisions until the age of 18 years (Cohen et al., 2015). At the age of 18, students no longer are legally dependent on their parents or guardians to assist with the VR process, unless parents or guardians pursue guardianship or power of attorney. The decision for parents to seek guardianship is usually done with good intentions to protect their children (MacLeod, 2017).

When parents are involved in the transition process, students with disabilities tend to have more successful employment outcomes than students with disabilities whose parents were not involved. Parental involvement is linked to students who work more hours and receive higher wages than students who have little to no parental involvement (Hirano & Rowe et al., 2018). Being employed at a competitive integrated rate leads to students' overall satisfaction in their lives and helps meet the basic economic needs of the family. Students and parents agreed that building connections with employers and working with governmental agencies can lead to successful employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities (Hedley et al., 2017).

Researchers have examined the benefits of parental involvement in academic settings relative to students' ethnic and socioeconomic status (Altschul, 2011; Day & Dotterer, 2018). According to Altschul (2011), positive effects of Mexican American parents begin in the home, with no association found between parent involvement in school and academic achievement. Day and Dotterer (2018) found that positive parent involvement was especially helpful for African American and Hispanic females, but not for White students. Although these findings were not specific to students with special needs, the benefits of parental involvement extend beyond academic settings and have positive potential in VR settings.

Kurth et al. (2019) conducted a study of special education supports required for students with disabilities. The researchers found that the least restrictive and/or inclusive environments have an influence on students' academic achievement. Parental involvement in Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) has the potential to improve the quality of academic success that their students can achieve. Yell et al. (2020) conducted a study of the IEP process as a measure for success and found that student and parental involvement were necessary. When compared to reported absences from school and vocational training, parental involvement was highly correlated with positive employment outcomes. When identified as a covariate to social and environmental variables, such as socioeconomic status, parental involvement was a positive element. Gonzalez-DeHass et al. (2005) completed a comprehensive review of the literature to examine how students' perceptions of their motivation and academic self-competence mediated the relationship between environmental contexts and academic achievement. When students perceived that parents valued the importance of effort and academic success, students had higher perceived academic competence and placed a higher priority on their academic ability, effort, and grades.

Kraemer and Blacher's (2001) study focused on the transition experience of transition-aged students with severe intellectual disabilities from the perspective of parents. The study assessed the parent's level of involvement and opportunity to be involved in the transition planning process. Results indicated specific themes on the types of parental involvement that included behavioral involvement, cognitive involvement, and emotional involvement. Based on their analysis of the types of parental involvement levels, many parents reported that they were satisfied with their level of involvement.

Weak ties remain between African American parents and their children's schools, despite the benefits of parental involvement in education being well documented (Brandon, 2007). The most important effect of parental involvement for students is improved academic and social accomplishment. Lack of cooperation between parents and teachers can lead to unfavorable attitudes that are frequently reflected in poor parental involvement. To build and maintain open lines of communication with parents and strengthen school-family ties, educators must be aware of the elements that affect parental involvement. Brandon (2007) identified nine elements that served as barriers to African-American's parental involvement: (a) cultural and/or linguistic diversity, (b) economics, (c) family composition, (d) parent educational level, (e) school-home communication, (f) parent-teacher interaction, (g) school–parent interaction, (h) success of the child in school, and (i) personal constraints (e.g., lack of time, lack of transportation, lack of childcare).

In exploring cultural and/or linguistic diversity, parental involvement and student outcomes varied by ethnicity (Garbacz et al., 2018). The United States Bureau of the Census proposed that by 2050, culturally and linguistically diverse groups are expected to represent a majority of the population (Colby & Ortman, 2015). Kouros et al. (2017) conducted a review of the literature and found that links between parent practices and mental health and emotional well-being outcomes for their children varied in diverse ethnic groups. Kouros et al. noted that parents' behaviors and attitudes about parental involvement were based on their families' socialization process, which also varied among various ethnic groups.

Cultural Impact on Parental Involvement

From early colonization by Puritans in the United States, the Puritan culture has had a strong influence on education. Puritan parents provided their children with Bibles at an early age. The parents taught their children to read and follow the practices of their religion. Puritans believed that the responsibility for educating children was not solely the responsibility of parents, but also included family and community members. The responsibility of the parent extended beyond the classroom, as parents had an obligation to secure vocational directions for their children (Morgan, 1988).

If the parent was unable to meet educational and vocational responsibilities, Biblical references were used to correct the parent’s limitations. In contrast to current western society, fathers played more active roles in their children’s education and vocation than the mother. Also, Puritans believed that educators needed to involve parents in the educational process and were aware that this partnership could not be accomplished if a positive collaboration was not established between educators and parents (Jeynes, 2010).

The Industrial Revolution and cultural influences in the 1800s had a substantial influence on modern-day parental involvement. Due to the move from an agricultural society to a more industrialized society, fathers were leaving the "family farm" to find more financially sustainable jobs in factories. Family structures began to change in the 1960s, with divorce rates increasing, and marriage rates decreasing (Baumard, 2019; Wagner, 2020). Researchers (Grätz, 2017; Jeynes, 2010) reported that the limited presence of fathers was a factor in parental involvement becoming more difficult.

Research indicates that parents from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) groups are more likely to accept Western modern culture explanations that are not only biomedical in nature but those which offer a more scientific explanation (Kirby et al., 2018). Considering the medical model, parents of students with disabilities believed that medication prescribed during pregnancy affected the development of their child. For example, ethnic-minority parents have attributed premature birth, oxygen deprivation, forceps delivery, induced labor, and cerebral aneurysm as possible causes for their child's disability (Lynch et al., 2018). Also, parents attribute many environmental factors such as air and water pollution, preservatives in food, and toxic waste disposal as additional reasons why their children have a disability which potentially could have a causal effect on parent's seeking academic or VR support (Diken, 2006).

Cooper (2021) and Yan (1999) provided a brief conceptualization of diverse families' types of parental involvement and rationale for their particular type of involvement. Poor minority parents often were less knowledgeable and involved in their children's educational programs than European American parents of students in the same programs (McWayne et al., 2016; Parker et al., 1999). Families with lower income and less social capital often lack the ability to engage fully with educational and support services (Inoa, 2017). Studies on childhood development led to a greater understanding of the interrelatedness of families and cultural stories in special education programs (Escalante-Barrios et al., 2020; Gothberg et al., 2019).

The effects of social-cultural influences on childhood development are accepted in models such as the conceptual model, ecological model, transactional models, and relationship-based models (Diken, 2006). Several empirical and conceptual papers dive into the substantial influences of each model, however, these models are a great introduction to understanding contexts from which culture is derived (Bricout et al., 2004; Palmer & Harley, 2012; Rees, 2017). These cultural models also focus on the child and their family while examining cultural expectations to improve parent and child relationships.

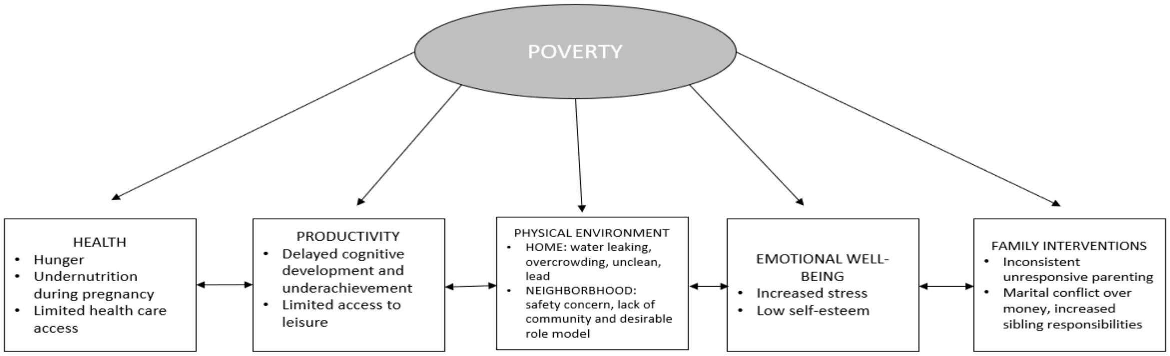
The most utilized conceptual models of disability are solely dependent on characteristics of the individual's disability and the role of the physical, psychological, and social aspects of the environment (Masala & Petretto, 2008). The socio-psychological environment includes disparity in health care and technology families may encounter but increases cultural awareness (Dirth & Branscombe, 2017). Ecological frameworks are developed to explain, measure, and interpret individual, environmental, and social factors (Wise, 2016). Simplican et al. (2015) researched the ecological model of individuals with disabilities and found that the culture of the community and family influenced the promotion of social inclusion.

The transactional aspect of the ecological model provides a framework of how children with disabilities and their families interact with meso level institutions such as school and community agencies (Bricout et al., 2004). The transactional model considers interactions had by the child and parent in various life contexts such as the home (King et al., 2018). Relationship-based models are typically defined from a socio-relational framework because it confirms inclusion (Reindal, 2008). A social-relational framework of disability posits that disability is defined by and exists through the lived experience of that individual and their families (Cologon, 2016).

Family structure and community are important when considering one's socioeconomic status. When there are limitations to the family structure and community involvement, there is a high probability that the family is living in poverty (Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). Park et al. (2002) analyzed the effect of family structure on poverty and from their findings developed the Impact of Poverty on Family Life Domains model. Income growth would suggest a decrease in the nation's poverty levels. Although family income is increasing, individuals with disabilities remain economically disadvantaged, resulting in higher poverty levels. In a thriving economy, jobs are in abundance, however, individuals with disabilities have lower employment rates than their able body counterparts. The Family Quality of Life Domains identified five key impacts of poverty on the family. The five key impact areas are health, productivity, physical environment, emotional well-being, and family interventions. Figure 2 presents a graphical image of Park et al., (2002) Family Life Domains Models.

Figure 2

Family Life Domains Model



Health. Parents are role models of effective health promotion for their children. Parents are faced with challenges to being role models based on health disparities that families face

(Perry et al., 1988). Socioeconomic status (SES) and education affect a family's use of health care services. Flores et al. (1999) conducted a study on the impact of ethnicity and parent education on health and the use of health care services. They found noticeable disparities in family health care services and ethnic-minority families tended to have higher intervals between visits to their doctors. Wallander et al. (2019) suggested that SES and minority racial/ethnic status were connected, with members of many minority groups having lower SES that also is known to affect health.

Productivity. The productivity domain highlights delayed cognitive and development, underachievement, and limited access to leisure activities. Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities need skills and competency to participate in community activities (Hall, 2017). Employment offers individuals with disabilities opportunities to be productive and engage in positive social networking while earning a wage (Lysaght et al., 2017). Parents who are proactively involved in social activities with their children from an early age, tend to be active advocates when negotiating work duties and hours of work for them (Wilson et al., 2017).

Physical environment. The third domain, physical environment, suggested that regardless of individuals' economic statuses, they have the right to live in safe and comfortable environments. Parents who are uninvolved may not be willing to take steps needed to reduce problematic behaviors of their children. As a result, the children may threaten the safety and well-being of community residents (Roche et al., 2007).

Emotional well-being. The fourth domain, emotional well-being, encompasses aspects of happiness, positive thinking, and one's ability to adapt to stress. Allison et al. (1999) conducted a scientific study and found that ethnic minorities are susceptible to encounter stressful life experiences. Parents who are involved with their children are described as warm and encouraging of education and vocational goals (Wang et al., 2019). Furthermore, parents who promote proactive approaches to managing educational and vocational activities tend to have children who embrace a positive outlook on their activities and increase their emotional engagement (Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014).

Family interaction. The fifth domain is the family interaction component that is characterized by an individual's emotional, relational, and invisible components of life. The indicators include family routines, relationships among family members, roles, emotional climate, communication, and behavior/discipline. Parent's perception of their parental involvement is mediated by positive elements of the parent's environment and ability to communicate openly with those involved in their child's education (Park & Holloway, 2018)

Youth from certain racial and ethnic minority backgrounds, poverty, and/or with a disability, often face distinct challenges in attending school, leading them to miss more school relative to their non-minority, more than socio-economically advantaged and non-disabled peers (Gee, 2018). Children of color in our public elementary, middle, and high schools, especially children who identify as Multiracial, Pacific Islander, Native American, African American or Hispanic are chronically absent (missing at least 15 days during the school year) at higher rates versus their White counterparts (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2018; Sullivan, 2004). Youth who live in poverty are more predisposed to being absent from school. This predisposition is rare amongst youth who come from households that are more economically advantaged. Nearly 25% of students with disabilities miss more than 15 days of school. High school aged youth with disabilities are estimated to miss about 24.8% of school, compared to their non-disabled counterparts that only missed less than 16% of schools.

School aged children without a stable home are inclined to have many educational challenges. These challenges include but are not limited to the absence of necessities such as food and clothing; poor healthcare and medical services; a lack of quality mental health services; interruption of education due to mobility; and trauma. Evidence suggests that homeless children experience a disproportionately high rate of disabilities. When compared to children who are not homeless, twice as many students with learning disabilities and three times the number of students with behavioral and emotional problems are homeless (Patterson et al., 2012). Considering the economic challenges, it is apparent that the parent/s have many other competing priorities to provide the basic needs of their son/daughter than being an active participant in their son/daughter's academic or VR program.

Parental Perspectives on Involvement

Parents can be a great source of support in assisting their children in transitioning from high school to their adult roles (Ryan et al., 2023). A child's mental and physical capabilities can impact how parents communicate and participate in school activities, including transition programs (Case, 2000; Shakespeare et al., 1999). Parents may be unaware that their personal experiences and backgrounds influence their level of involvement (Papoudi et al., 2021). The variety of perspectives held by parents can be seen as an asset to the transition process (Edwards & Kutaka, 2015).

Researchers suggested that parents deal with many issues that can impact their level of involvement (Epstein, 2007; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). While these issues are not listed hierarchically, the most common factors impacting parenting involvement are the parents' mental and emotional health, socioeconomic status, and cultural influences (Brown et al., 2020). Caregivers recognized that their emotional, physical, social, and financial responsibilities can be burdensome and complex (Javalkar et al., 2017). Caregiver burden can result in higher perceived social stigma and negative perceptions of their caregiving responsibilities (Cassidy et al., 2013)

According to the National Institute of Health (NIH, 2020), mental illnesses occur in nearly one in five American adults, with approximately 52.9 million living with mental illness. The emotional and mental health of the parent has marked risks to their children, including problems at school and the child withdrawing from school and social activities (Boursnell, 2014). Parents with mental illness may lack the motivation to care for their children (Thomas & Kalucy, 2003). The lack of motivation can be due to parents lacking the ability to balance their mental health systems with their caregiving responsibilities (Reupert & Maybery, 2007). Parents may be burdened by the effects of mental illness and the lack of financial support. Parents make a conscious decision to not seek support to avoid the stigma they may encounter (Goodyear et al., 2015)

The poverty estimate in the United States shows that nearly 11.9% or 37.9 million people in the United States live at or below the poverty level (Creamer et al., 2022). The 37.9 million people living in poverty included Whites (8.2%), Native Americans (20.0%), Blacks (19.6%), and Hispanics 17.0% (Creamer et al., 2022). Families living in poverty are typically low-wage single-income households (Anderson, 2018). Studies have found that parental financial stress has been linked to negative impacts of parental involvement (Lawson et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2011; Radey, 2018). Vadivelan et al., 2020 conducted a study on caregiver burden, with mothers indicating that caregiving for their children with disabilities is a deterrent to being gainfully employed and able to save money for the future. The researcher further noted that if a mother is able to save money, it is for a limited time because most available money is spent on family emergencies.

Cultural differences can shape parents’ perspectives on their caregiving burden. In comparison to White caregivers, Black caregivers demonstrated greater resilience in overcoming obstacles but had limited access to agency support (Mui, 1992). White caregivers were more likely to problem-solve how to support their children by seeking agency support. Ethnic minority women caregivers had cultural values of interdependence which could explain why ethnic minority caregivers seek or trust agency support (Holmes et al., 2020). A study of parental cultural differences found that nonWhite parents reported negative interactions with their children’s school and community representatives and chose not to participate in school-related activities (Lechuga-Peña & Brisson, 2018).

Parenting Styles

Parenting styles are a set of behaviors that parents communicate in the parent-child relationship. Darling and Dowdy (2010) found that parents' communication patterns create an emotional space for their children. Parents have the responsibility to raise their children to adhere to social standards and avoid harm to themselves and others (Meeussen & Van Laar, 2018). Parenting styles are how parents rear their children to be healthy, thriving both physically and emotionally (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020).

Kretchmar-Hendricks (2017) identified parenting as the process of raising children and providing them with protection and care that ensure healthy development into adulthood. Parenting styles examine which patterns of parenting practices are used by the parent and how these patterns are connected to their children’s development (Kuppens & Ceulemans, 2019). Parenting styles also are combinations of a parent's attitudes towards children; while Considering the emotional climates in which the parent’s behaviors are conveyed (Bi et al., 2018; Williams et al., 2009).

Frameworks have been developed to conceptualize parenting styles that influence the parent-child relationship. The two best-known models of parenting styles are Baumrind's 1968 parenting styles model and Maccoby and Martin's 1983 model. Scholars have noted that Maccoby and Martin's model is a reconceptualization of Baumrind's 1968 model (Dwivedi & Luqman, 2015; Karki et al., 2020; Sokol et al., 2017). Baumrinds's (1968) model and Maccoby and Martin's (1983) model emphasized that there are specific combinations of parenting practices that impact child development. Both models detailed combinations of parenting styles (e.g., authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, and neglectful) in their research.

Maccoby and Martin (1983) expanded Baumrind's permissive parenting style into two different types: permissive parenting (also known as indulgent parenting style) and neglectful parenting (also known as uninvolved parenting style). Maccoby and Martin's (1983) model re-conceptualized the parent-child relationship in two dimensions, consisting of degrees of parental responsiveness to psychosocial needs, based on the conception of three dimensions by Baumrind (1968), which described parent-child interaction, namely disciplinary strategies; warmth and nurturance, communication styles, as well as expectation of maturity and ability to self-control. Demandingness refers to the extent that parents control their child's behavior or demand maturity and is associated with academic performance and problem behavior (Kuppens & Ceulemans, 2019). Responsiveness refers to the degree to which parents are accepting and sensitive to their child's emotional and developmental needs. Parent responsiveness can predict children's social competence and functioning (Maccoby & Martin, 1983).

The configuration of Baumrind's conceptualization of this scale focused more on the parenting styles and less on the development of the child. Baumrind's parenting style highlights the interaction of parenting styles and child development (Baumrind, 1968, 1971, 1978).

Baumrind's models further asserted that children of authoritative parents thrived in their developmental milestones, while children of authoritarian and permissive parenting had negative outcomes (Baumrind, 1968). Based on the four typologies of parental involvement, including demandingness and responsiveness, Maccoby and Martin (1983) configured the four typologies from high to low on the demandingness and responsiveness scale.

Types of Parenting Styles

Authoritative parenting style. Baumrind (1966) defined authority as "an individual whose expertness befits him to designate a behavioral alternative for another where the alternatives are perceived by both" (p. 887). Authority is the relationship between two groups, where one group has power, control, and influence over the other group (Haugaard, 2018). Parental authority is easier to manage when children are between the ages of five and eight years than when one becomes an adolescent at approximately the age of nine years. Adolescents want to remain autonomous individuals and make their own decisions. However, many adolescents lack the emotional and intellectual development to make autonomous decisions, with parents having a moral right to apply authority over the adolescent (Gheaus, 2018).

Baumrind (1966) suggested that authoritative parents are both demanding and responsive and want their child to be assertive, as well as socially responsible, self-regulated, and cooperative. The authoritative parenting style is the unique balance of authoritarian and permissive parenting styles (Baumrind (1971). Authoritative parenting is the most accommodating parenting style in Baumrind's model and aids in increasing personal and social responsibilities in adolescents (Nyarko, 2011). Baumrind (1968) proposed that authoritative parents attempt to direct their child but only in a rational manner. The authoritative parent encourages their children to participate in communication and provides a rationale to an action taken. The child's interest is taken into account and parents base their decisions on their child's desires to assert their autonomy (Bornstein & Bornstein, 2007). Parents who possess an authoritative parenting style are more educated and are low in psychological control of their children (Barber, 1996).

Authoritative parents are prone to using positive reinforcement and induction to steer their children. According to Baumrind (1971), induction involves explaining reasons and consequences to aid children in forming and conceptualizing what is right and wrong. Authoritative parents want to create a balance of respecting their children's personality while reinforcing conformity and achievement demands (Grusec et al., 2000). Authoritative parenting is used more in western culture and builds children's social competence, which is linked to success as adults (Baumrind, 1978).

Authoritative parenting styles encourage autonomy and are associated with positive youth outcomes, such as self-regulation and positive social adjustment (Cheah et al., 2009). According to Duineveld et al. (2017), authoritative parents who support autonomy create nurturing spaces for self-regulation and promote their children's wellness. Baumrind (1971) proposed that parents using authoritative parenting styles have a positive influence on the psychological effects of adolescents. Hirata and Kamakura (2018) conducted a study of Japanese adolescents and found that authoritative parenting styles allowed students to establish good self-esteem and intentional engagement in the self-change process of personal growth.

Authoritative parenting: high demandingness. high responsiveness. Authoritative parents are both demanding and responsive. Parents can be controlling of their children but do not restrict their actions (Baumrind, 1968). Parents monitor their children's behavior and are generally aware of where their children are and with whom they are interacting (Lo et al., 2020). The children of authoritative parents are given age-appropriate expectations. Parents provide firm control and supportive two-way communication (Estlein, 2016). Also, children of authoritative parents tend to have better performance and fewer behavioral problems and are relatively self-reliant, independent, and self-motivated (Liu & Wang, 2022).

Authoritative parenting encourages that child to provide verbal feedback. Children who were reared in authoritative settings typically are socially responsible, competent, and independent thinkers (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). The child is reared on rigid compliance to rules, respect for work, and parental bonding will lack warmth (Lokoyi, 2015). Although authoritative parents trust their children, higher levels of parental control exists for girls when compared to boys (Aunola et al., 2000).

Authoritarian parenting style. According to Baumrind (1966), authoritarian parents want to mold and control their children's behavior and attitudes. The authoritarian parent tends not to be affectionate with their children, values obedience, and is more punitive in nature. Parents who followed a more authoritarian style believed it was important to restrict autonomy, create order and structure, and assign household responsibilities (Varma et al., 2018). In prior research, authoritarian parents believed that child-rearing included teaching the child to do God's will and if the child went against God's will, parents met the resistance with discipline. Authoritarian parenting constricts communication between child and parent, expecting that whatever parents said to their child was true (Garcia & Serra, 2019).

Authoritarian parenting was further studied and found to be associated with negative outcomes. These outcomes might include low self-esteem, decreased academic success, increased substance use, and increased anxiety (Phillips et al.,. 2017). Bajaria (2015) conducted a study of college students with learning disabilities and found that parents who displayed an authoritarian style had students with lower self-esteem when compared to typically developing students.

Research has found that culture and socioeconomic status have a significant impact on parenting styles (Chen et al., 2018; Jaiswal & Choudhuri, 2017). Students whose parents were ethnically diverse identified their parents as more authoritarian in parenting style when compared to European American students (Dornbusch et al., 1987). Kelley et al. (1992) explored parental disciplinary styles in culturally diverse families and revealed that single parents who were younger and had limited education were more likely to be authoritarian, unlike two-parent households, who were older and educated, tended to have authoritative parent styles.

Authoritarian parenting: High demandingness, low responsiveness. Authoritarian parents place demands on their children but do not balance those demands by their acceptance of their children (Baumrind, 1968). Maccoby and Martin (1983) found that parents have an obligation to fulfill their children's needs, but the authoritarian parent is power-assertive and places strict limits on allowing their children to express their needs. In turn, children of authoritarian parents typically have to beg for attention, or in some extreme cases, parents of authoritarian parents do not allow their children to initiate conversation (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). Authoritarian parenting constricts children's development because parents are demonstrating negotiation techniques while incorporating discipline.

Parents have strong stances that they must have authority over the child and want to maintain such authority by expressing it in front of others (Marchand et al., 2019). Children who do not respond to the authoritarian action of their parents often are met with severe punishment. The oppressive behaviors by authoritarian parents often are regarded as autocratic parents. The autocratic dimension of parenting results in children having lower social interaction with their peers and because of being obedient towards their parents, they generally are submissive to their peers. These children are not affectionate and lack spontaneity, curiosity, or originality (Maccoby & Martin, 1983).

Authoritarian parenting: Cultural Considerations. Cultural considerations have been given to the authoritative parenting style. Garcia and Gracia (2014) identified higher degrees of parental strictness that are considered to be more important than warmth. European and Latin American cultures are considered horizontal collectivist and have the same rearing expectations unlike vertical collectivist, such as Asian or Arabic (Chao, 2001). Table 1 presents characteristics of horizontal and vertical collectivism along with the countries that are most likely to have each type of collectivist culture. Western societies have a propensity to rear their children using the authoritative parenting style. Using the authoritative parenting style can promote healthy children, with Western values becoming applicable in nonwestern societies (Checa & Abundis-Gutierrez, 2018).

Table 1

Horizontal and Vertical Cultural Collectivism

	Individualism (I)	Collectivism (C)
Horizontal (H)	HIs emphasize independence, rights, social equality, uniqueness, and self-reliance “I want to do my own thing	HCs emphasize interdependence, equality, or sameness with others, common goals, responsibility, cooperation, and sociability. “We can do this together.” Do not submit to authority like VC.
	African-Americans, Norwegians, Swedish, Australian	Brazilian, Some Latin contexts, Israel Kibbutz
Vertical (V)	VIs emphasize personal achievement, status, competition, power, and pleasure. “I want to be the best.”	VCs emphasize conformity to the group, enhancing status of their in-groups (relative to out-groups) tradition and complying to authority. “We are better than others.”

Table 1 (cont'd)

	European Americans, France, England	Japan, South Korea, China, India

Note: Wu, 2021

Permissive parenting style. Baumrind (1971) identified permissive parenting as noncontrolling, non-demanding, and relatively warm. The children of permissive parenting usually were not self-reliant and had low levels of exploration and self-control. According to Baumrind (1978), a permissive phototype of adult control requires parents to behave in an affirmative, acceptant, and benign manner towards the impulses and actions of their children. Uji et al. (2014) found that parental permissiveness increased children's narcissistic tendencies and paternal permissiveness heightened the chances for the child to have self-esteem issues.

The permissive parent is non-punitive and affirmative towards the child's desires and actions. Parents do not assume the responsibility for shaping their children's behavior, allowing the child to act as they wish (Baumrind, 1966). In considering the main three typologies of parenting style, permissive parenting styles allow children to have as much freedom as is necessary for physical survival. Permissive parenting styles allow children to be free of any form of restraint as physically possible (Baumrind, 1971).

Robinson et al. (1995) conducted a study to identify specific parenting practices that are associated with authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting typologies. Within permissive parenting typology, researchers found that parents had a lack of follow-through and ignored misbehavior, which resulted in low levels of self-confidence of their children. Permissive parents are low in control or high in warmth (Hubbs-Tait et al., 2018). Permissive parents are more lenient about behavior standards for their adolescents. Parental permissiveness does not provide a clear parental expectation of societal interactions and parents are less likely to set requirements for academic achievement. In consideration of cultural influence, Shumow et al. (1998) found that African American parents reported being more authoritative than European American parents who were more inclined to be permissive.

Permissive parenting (indulgent): Low demandingness. high responsiveness. Permissive parenting under the Maccoby and Martin (1983) model asserted that parents are indulgent. Parents are inconsistent with rules and lack involvement in their children's life. However, unlike authoritative parenting, permissive parents have a warm and accepting attitude towards their children. Parents in this style are non-demanding and lack parental control (Lavrič & Naterer, 2020). They do not encourage their children to regulate their emotions intentionally and do not monitor the child's behavior (Pinderhughes et al., 2000).

The indulgent-permissive exert tolerance in regards to their children's impulses, with little punishment and avoidance of enforcing any control. Adolescents of permissive parents usually make their own decisions, as their parents exhibit a cool or uninvolved demeanor (Fatima et al., 2020). For example, adolescents of permissive parents may decide to not participate in VR services because they are unaware of the importance of the demands of moving into adulthood and the responsibilities of employment that come with becoming emerging adults.

Neglectful parenting (uninvolved): Low demandingness. low responsiveness. The involvement of a parent is highlighted by the parent's attentiveness in the child's school or community activities (Georgiou, 1996). Although uninvolved parents have made an emotional commitment to not be involved, their behavior towards their children is evidence of a lack of care and involvement. Maccoby and Martin (1983) have classified the neglectful and uninvolved, exhibiting low control of their child's behavior and low concern over the socioemotional development of the child. Neglectful parents are neither responsive nor demanding. They do not support or encourage their child's self-regulation, and also often fail to monitor or supervise the child's behavior (Carreras et al., 2019).

Neglectful parents do not establish boundaries or expectations for their children to succeed because they are so consumed by their own lives and have no time to attend to the daily activities of their children. The level of involvement in this parenting style, not only lacks attention from the parent but the parent avoids all costs to engage in any level with their child (Perez-Gramaje et al., 2020). Uninvolved parents appear to be abrasive, unresponsive, and unsupportive (Huver et al., 2010).

Uninvolved parents refrain from exerting control and can appear to be highly involved because of the high amount of autonomy. A direct relationship of an uninvolved parent leaves the child neglected and left at a distance by their parent. If a parent engages with their children, it is only a means to terminate the unwanted interaction that they must have with the child. For example, an adolescent and their transition coordinator might constantly ask the parent to complete paperwork for their adolescent to participate in VR services. To terminate unwanted interactions with their adolescent, the parent may unwillingly sign documentation for their minor to participate in VR. However, parents will have no further involvement in the program, with the VR counselor and transition coordinator likely to have failed communication from parents.

Vocational Rehabilitation and Educational Policy

Vocational Legislation

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a federal law, was historical legislation because it stressed the importance of the individual with a disability in their rehabilitation planning and advocated for the civil rights of individuals with disabilities (Phillippe et al., 2020). Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was intended to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities and requires reasonable accommodations to qualified students with disabilities who attend schools that are receiving federal financial assistance (Sassu, 2018). The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was amended in 1990 to increase emphasis on transition planning, supported employment, and client assistance programs, as well as provide services to individuals with disabilities from certified rehabilitation counselors and school transition specialists.

The Americans with Disability Act (ADA) of 1990, also known as Public Law 101-336, was signed into law by President George W. Bush. The purpose of the ADA is to:

1. to provide a clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities.
2. to provide clear, strong, consistent, enforceable standards addressing discrimination against individuals with disabilities.
3. to ensure that the federal government plays a central role in enforcing standards established in this Act on behalf of individuals with disabilities; and
4. to invoke the sweep of congressional authority, including the power to enforce the fourteenth amendment and regulate commerce, to address major areas of discrimination faced day-to-day by people with disabilities.

The ADA includes Title 1 (employment), Title II (government services including transportation, Title III (public accommodations), Title IV (telecommunications), and Title V (miscellaneous provisions). Title 1 of the ADA is an application to employment policy and states that no covered entity shall discriminate against a qualified individual with a disability in the job application process, hiring, advancing, firing, employee wages, job training, or any other conditions of employment.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), signed by President Obama (U. S. Department of Education, 2014), has been the most important piece of legislation passed since the Americans with Disability Act of 1990 (Marrone, 2016). The act emphasized services to transition-aged youth and classified five domains of Pre-Employment Transition Service (Pre-ETS) delivery to this population, including (a) job exploration counseling, (b) work-based learning opportunities, (c) counseling for post-secondary education, (d) workplace readiness training, and (e) training in self-advocacy. This act also was credited with moving individuals with disabilities out of sheltered workshops and prohibiting earning deviated wages (Hoff, 2014). A major emphasis of this act was to move individuals with disabilities into high-demand jobs and connect them to businesses that would employ them.

WIOA further emphasized the importance of transition planning and services. In conjunction with WIOA, IDEA defined transition services as a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability designed to be within a results-oriented process (U. S. Department of Education, n.d.). The focus is on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities, including career development. These activities could include postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. Student transition services also should be based on the individual needs, taking into account their strengths, preferences, and interests; and includes (a) instruction; (b) related services; (c) community experiences; (d) development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives; and (e) if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and provision of a functional vocational evaluation (U. S. Department of Education, 2017, para 2).

Educational Legislation

Students who are covered under Section 504 are entitled to a free appropriate public education (FAPE). Students receiving services under an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) can receive transition services during secondary education (Lipkin et al., 2015). In contrast, students who receive services under a 504 plan are not eligible for transition services, although a few school districts may assist in the transition planning process. While school-based transition services are not consistently offered to students with 504 plans, transition services are available from the VR Agency (Fish & Smith-Augustine, 2015).

In 1990, the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA) was created as a modification of the Education for all Handicapped Children Act (1973). Congress reauthorized IDEA in 2004 and most recently amended the IDEA through Public Law 114-95, the Every Student Succeeds Act, in December 2015 (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). A focus of this act was to provide the least restrictive environment necessary to meet the needs of students. IDEA requires educators and parents to develop IEPs that list diagnoses, academic supports, and transitional services that agencies are expected to provide (Skiba et al., 2008).

The IDEA legislation mandates that students with disabilities have IEPs or 504 plans in place if they require support and accommodations in the academic setting. The mandates primarily focus on providing these services for students with disabilities. However, students are minors and require the advocacy and involvement of their parents/caregiver. Parents/caregivers ensure that students are involved in the IEP planning process, collaborate with educational and VR providers and assist in navigating their transition plan (Yehahey & Mestanova, 2015).

Educational institutions have the responsibility to determine if students with disabilities should be serviced under an IEP or a 504 plan. First the parent or a teacher places a request for an evaluation for special education services. The child is evaluated for a 504 or IEP. IEP eligibility is determined if the child's disability adversely affects their education performance. If a child does not qualify for an IEP, but the disability substantially limits one or more major life activities, a determination may be made that the child is eligible for 504 services (Lipkin & Okamoto, 2015).

Transition Planning and Outcomes

Students with disabilities are at a pivotal point in their lives, as they begin to transition from their local education agency to an adult employment services agency. Transition planning is a process that is initiated by the local education agency for students with disabilities who have IEPs or 504 accommodation plans (Cameto et al., 2004). The transition planning team includes representatives from the local education agency, VR agencies, community mental health agencies, and disability support groups, as well as the school transition specialist, parents, and the student. According to the National Longitudinal Study 2 (Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2019), transition planning typically begins at 14 years of age. IDEA requires that local educational agencies provide transition planning that focuses on future education, as well as employment and independent living for students with disabilities (Wilczenski et al., 2017).

In 1985, transition specialists were introduced to efforts by the Department of Education Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (OSERS) to offer paid and integrated community employment opportunities for people with disabilities. The request for proposals was instrumental in specifying federal grants to transform traditional segregated day activity programs into integrated supported employment programs (Novak et al., 2003). The grant provided a clear definition of transition-related outcomes, requiring a systematic review of all interventions with high school youth with disabilities whose outcomes included academic performance, the transition from school to work, or dropout prevention (Cobb & Alwell, 2009).

The local education agency employs staff referred to as transition coordinators. The transition coordinator has many tasks in the high school, including employment counseling. Job titles include transition supervisor, transition specialist, transition planner, vocational planner, school-to-work coordinator, employment placement coordinator, employment specialist, and special education lead (Asselin et al., 1998). The competency domains of the transition coordinators include knowledge of agencies and system changes, development and management of Individualized Transition Plans (ITP), vocational assessment and job development, advocacy and legal issues, job training and support, and assessment (deFur & Taymans, 1995). The transition coordinator is responsible for delivering services using a team approach and a cooperative effort with the parent and student (Lillenstein et al.,, 2006).

In 2014, the WIOA mandated that youth with disabilities gain competitive integrated employment with the state VR agency and the local school district responsible for youth with disabilities to gain these positions (Roux et al., 2021). The VR counselor's role is to assist individuals with disabilities in preparing for, obtaining, or maintaining employment. The VR counselor possesses a skilled set of talents to provide vocational guidance and counseling and help individuals meet their employment goals. The role of the VR counselor is on a spectrum that includes, but is not limited to, having vast knowledge about various disabilities, counseling and guidance, vocational evaluation, resourcefulness about the and knowledge of the labor market, and training to meet employer needs (Leahy & Szymanski, 1993; Leahy et al., 2019) .

Parent involvement in transition planning can increase attendance and graduation rates of students who receive services under an IEP or 504. IDEA outlines that parents are equal partners in the IEP program (Landmark et al., 2013). Parents collaborate with transition coordinators and VR counselors in improving academic and vocational outcomes, such as attending IEP meetings, supporting the student in signing the documentation, and assisting the student in problem-solving to identify school-to-work vocational options (Tucker & Schwartz, 2013; Zeitlin & Curcic, 2014).

Students are active participants in the transition planning process, with parents modeling collaboration, which motivates students to feel motivated and have autonomy in directing the IEP and VR services (Cavendish & Connor, 2018). Students with disabilities are required by IDEA 2004 amendments to participate in the IEP process and transition planning development (Cavendish et al., 2019). Students must be taught how to actively engage in the process. Eisenman et al. (2015) suggested that involving school personnel and parents can encourage students to participate in their education planning. Since the inception of IDEA, student-led transition planning meetings have been encouraged and allow students to feel they have an important role in the transition process (Thoma et al., 2001).

Students transitioning to adult roles, such as the world of work or educational training can be a complex process. This process is one that students must negotiate. Many students move into emerging adult roles immediately following the completion of high school. Student outcomes are influenced by parental characteristics, socio-economic conditions, and availability of agency services (Kohler & Field, 2003).

Employers play integral roles in assisting transition-age youth and emerging adults move into competitive, integrated employment (Roux et al., 2021). According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2020), approximately 18.4% of youth with disabilities, from16 to 19 years of age are employed, and approximately 40.2% of emerging adults with disabilities from 20 to 24 years of age are employed. The rate of employment for youth without disabilities is 31.4%, with emerging adults without disabilities employed at a rate of 68.5% (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020). VR practitioners must move from traditional approaches to assist transitioning youth with disabilities acquire jobs (Awsumb et al., 2020), including working with employers and teaching students hidden contextual factors to employment. These contextual factors should include students' understanding diversity in the workforce, building social networks, and bonding and trusting employers (Boonen et al.,, 2018; Chang & Busser, 2020).

Transition planning teams support individuals with disabilities in navigating the school-to-work process. According to Plotner et al. (2020), transition planning teams are an interconnected network of agencies that should support students and identify future goals. The goals identified should reflect students' strengths, needs, and plans for the future. Transition planning teams develop and facilitate interagency collaboration to provide direct support to students, including access to community resources and funding support for community engagement activities and work activities.

The goal of transition planning is to have a successful transition or transition-related outcome for students with disabilities. Parents defined outcomes based on their child's disability, parental confidence in the capabilities of their children, and parental knowledge of strategies to promote independence (Powers et al., 2005). Schools, VR programs, and disability support services can be influential for youth in transition to obtain necessary skills to improve employment outcomes (Lindsay et al., 2016). Halpern (1994) studied the IDEA of 1990 and found that transition programs that measure outcomes associated with transition, including employment, participation in postsecondary education, maintaining, and/or experiencing the satisfaction in the student's personal and social relationship are successful if interventions are used to help students achieve employment. Successful programs help students become empowered that can result in self-determination, with students able to evaluate their progress, identify their post-school employment goals, and have the types of experiences during school and in their communities that build their confidence.

Transition services are available to provide all students with disabilities with the necessary support to achieve their postsecondary goals. However, students of color are faced with disparities in educational and vocational achievement. Harper (2017) identified five areas to help educators and communities understand racial and ethnic disparities in special education: (a) disparities in disability identification by race and ethnicity, (b) segregated educational systems, (c) disparities in the rates of school suspensions, (d) IDEA provisions intended to address racial and ethnic disparities are underused, and (e) greater flexibility to implement comprehensive, coordinated early intervening services (CEIS) may help school districts address special education disparities, and improve academic outcomes for children of color with disabilities.

Carter et al. (2012) found that the effect of rehabilitation laws revealed that further research is required to address the employment of young transition students with disabilities, as these students are further marginalized based on discrimination and biases faced in the workplace. Society is growing diverse as each year passes. By 2050, culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) groups are expected to represent a majority of the population (According to the United States Bureau of the Census (n.d.). These CLD groups will represent a disproportionate number of students who receive special education services (Geenen et al., 2001). Although variation in rates of participation in post-secondary education and employment for youth with disabilities exist across the preceding studies, African American youth with learning disabilities had lower rates of high school completion and participation in college, and lower rates of employment in comparison to White and Hispanic youth with learning disabilities (Ji et al., 2015).

Summary

In conclusion, parents' decisions to remain involved in their child's academic and vocational programming is complex. Their decisions to stay engaged may be mediated by many variables, such as race, age of their child, disability of the child, parenting styles, etc. While each of these variables do not exist independently, they are interrelated and can have an impact on the vocational outcomes of the child. This chapter on the literature review included a presentation of the benefits of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems model and Epstein's Parental Involvement model. The types of parental involvement and parenting styles were examined concerning racial-ethnic minority groups and transition-aged youth with disabilities.

Parental involvement is a decision that a parent makes to be engaged in their child's academic and vocational activities. There are many factors to the intensity of parental involvement such as cultural and socioeconomic considerations and the emotional health of the parent. Parental involvement is based on intrinsic characteristics of parents but requires the intentionality of the parent to stay engaged and ensure their child is successful academically and vocationally - a concept that the parental engagement or family school partnership further refined by notable researchers (e.g., Sheridan, Garbacz).

Parenting styles are socially and environmentally reinforced based on the various traits of parents. Baumrind (1991) and Maccoby and Martin (1983) identified four parenting styles (authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, and neglectful) that influence the parent-child relationship. Authoritative parents are high in responsiveness and demandingness. Authoritative parents set high expectations but are more inclined to assist their child in their academic and vocational explorations.

VR agencies and academic institutions work together to provide transition services to students and youth with disabilities. Transition planning was made relevant due to IDEA and the call for VR collaboration in Rehabilitation Act amendments and WIOA. VR counselors are to provide pre-ETS services and ensure transition-aged youth have positive employment outcomes. The remainder of this research examines parents' perceptions of their engagement in their children's transition planning and factors that may contribute to their child's VR success as well as the impact on their own wellbeing.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

The purpose of this study was to examine the lived experiences of ethnic minority parents regarding transition planning for their adolescent child with disabilities. This study included parents' self-report of their parenting styles and characteristics (age, marital status, gender, educational level, employment status, emotional health, etc.) and their impact on parent involvement in activities associated with transition planning. An examination of how the transition process as an ethnic minority ultimately affected both the adolescents' outcomes and the parents' overall outcomes were also done. Chapter 3 presents the methodology for collecting and analyzing the data needed to address the research questions. The topics included in this chapter are the research design, research questions, role of the researcher, participants, sample size, data collection procedures, instrumentation, data analysis, and trustworthiness. Each of these topics is discussed separately.

Research Design

A qualitative phenomenological research design was used in this study. One-on-one interviews with ethnic minority parents of students with disabilities who are participating in transition planning were conducted to obtain data needed to address the research questions. This type of design is appropriate when examining the lived experiences of participants who have all experienced the same phenomenon. In this study, the phenomenon experienced is having an ethnic minority student with disabilities participate in transition planning. Semi-structured one-on-one interviews were conducted with parents to obtain rich data that can be used to provide in-depth information on their perceived parenting styles, parenting characteristics, and the extent of parental involvement in the transition process for their students with special needs as a minority.

Furthermore, the impact on student success, parents' wellbeing, and quality of life were examined.

Research Questions

The following research questions was examined in this study:

Overarching Research Question: What are the lived experiences of ethnic minority families who have a child with disability in the process of transitioning from high school to adult roles (e.g., educational planning, vocational planning)?

Subquestion 1: How do ethnic minority parents perceive their parenting styles when interacting with their children?

Subquestion 2: How do ethnic minority parents perceive their involvement with service providers?

Subquestion 3: How has the lived experiences of ethnic minority parents of a child with a disability perceived the transition process can promote educational and vocational success?

Subsequestion 4: How has ethnic minority parents' participation in the transition process with their child with a disability influenced their perceived quality of life?

Role of the Researcher

Vagle (2018) asserted that in phenomenological research, researchers should take raw data and analyze it within the phenomenological reduction. Researchers are expected to set aside their prejudices and biases and collect data with integrity and keeping an open mind. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) stated that the researcher should be honest and authentic when speaking with participants. Researchers can collect the necessary information and depict the true essence of the participants' lived experiences when using a phenomenological research design (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Renjith et al., 2021).

I have roughly 20 years of experience in the field of vocational rehabilitation and working with transition-aged youth. Currently, I am employed as a Disability Service Counselor for a community college where I use my skills and aptitude in counseling to work with students with disabilities. My work with students includes building trust with participants, using active listening skills, and displaying empathetic communication skills helped me gain a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of the parents who will be interviewed.

My responsibilities as a researcher included facilitating the interviews, which is the key instrument in data collection. I interpreted the data to identify trends and themes relevant to the research question. I intentionally reflected on my experiences as a vocational rehabilitation professional working with secondary education youth. During the data analysis process, I was aware of my prejudices regarding parental involvement and engagement in the transition program. I reduced my biases by creating questions capturing the participants' lived experiences. I maintained a reflexive journal to record all relevant information about the interviews and attempts to reduce my biases.

Participants

The study participants included minority parents of adolescents and emerging adults with disabilities. The adolescents and emerging adults were in high school or exiting high school to a post-high school transition program. They were also involved in transition planning as part of their IEPs and 504 plans. The parents were asked to participate in one-on-one interviews with the via Zoom.

Sample Size

A sample of seven (7) ethnic-minority parents of adolescents and emerging adults with disabilities participated in the one-on-one interviews. While the number of participants may be a smaller range, the critical issue was that I continued to recruit participants until data saturation was reached. Data saturation is the point in interviewing when no new information is obtained from including additional participants (Peoples, 2021). According to Hennink and Kaiser (2021), a sample of nine to 17 participants can achieve saturation. Instead of concentrating on whether or not there is sufficient data to create a theory (as in theoretical saturation), saturation is mainly concerned with determining the sample size. When used in a more general sense, the term "saturation" refers to the point in the data-collecting process at which no further problems or insights are discovered, and data begin to repeat themselves to the point where further data gathering is unnecessary. This indicates that a sufficient sample size has been reached.

Procedures

After obtaining permission from the Michigan State University Institutional Review Board (MSU IRB) to conduct the study, I initiated the data collection process. I requested that local high schools with a center-based program and vocational institutions that cater to students with disabilities distribute invitation emails to parents of junior, senior, and post-high school level students with disabilities who are participating in transition training. The invitation email included the purpose of the study, the extent of parent participation in the study, benefits, and risks associated with participating in the study, and most importantly, an explanation of the voluntary nature of participation (see Appendix A) and the recruitment flyer (see Appendix B). The email also provided my cell phone number and email address so parents could contact me if they were interested in participating in the study. Parents either sent an email or called to express interest in the research. I also attended a transition fair at a local Midwestern school district. I recruited several parents who volunteered to participate in the research. I took the parents/guardian's phone number and email, provided them with a recruitment flyer, and informed them that I would contact them to make an appointment for the interview at their convenience. Parents were contacted in the order their email or call was received. I also prioritized the parents that I met at the resource fair. All parents who were interested in participating were scheduled a Zoom meeting at the date and time that was convenient for them.

During the research meeting, I shared my role in the research and the rationale as to why I was conducting this study. The parents were then asked a few questions to determine if they met the criteria for inclusion in the study (see Appendix C). During the meeting, I explained the purpose of the study and reviewed the informed consent with the parents. The parents were then allowed to cease their involvement in the research or make the informed decision to continue. Once a parent agreed to move forward, the parents were asked to acknowledge their consent via the Zoom meeting verbally. The parents were emailed a copy of the informed consent form (See Appendix D). After receiving their verbal consent, we proceeded to the demographic questionnaire (see Appendix E) and the interview questions (see Appendix F). The interviews lasted about 45 to 60 minutes to complete. After completing the interview, each participant were given a $25.00 gift card from Amazon as a token of appreciation for their time.

Member checking

After the interviews were completed, I had the responses transcribed. I read the transcriptions and corrected any errors (e.g., spelling errors, typos, misinterpreted words, etc.) in the scripts. After completing the transcriptions, I emailed the transcribed interviews to the parents for member checking. Member checking involves sharing interview transcripts with participants to verify the accuracy of the transcribed interviews (Stahl & King, 2020). The parents were asked to review and approve the transcripts, making any necessary changes or additions to improve their responses' accuracy. The parents appreciated the member check process as they were able to verify the authenticity of their comments and fill in any gaps that may have occurred during the interviews. Trust is an essential component of the member-checking process. The parents were instructed to return the interviews and any changes they wanted made to the researcher in five working days. Any transcripts not returned were considered correct as written.

Instrumentation

The parents were asked to complete a short demographic survey before starting the interview; after this survey was completed, the interview started. The questions on the interview protocol were developed from the review of literature and the researchers' experiences working with adolescents and emerging adults with disabilities. The interview included four broad topics that are aligned with the research questions. Each topic has two questions that parents were asked to reflect on.

Before conducting the interviews, the interview protocol was shared with a vocational rehabilitation counselor, a special education supervisor, and a director of special education, who resided in the geographical location as the researcher. They were asked to review the questions and make changes that can improve readability and reduce ambiguity. In addition, they were asked if any additional questions were needed or if some should be eliminated as they were beyond the scope of the study. They were asked to provide a memo or verbal feedback if any changes were suggested. All decided to provide verbal feedback and no changes were made to the instrumentation.

Data Analysis

The transcripts were read multiple times to understand the essence of what parents convey about their involvement in their children's transition process. The transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis to determine patterns and themes in the parents' responses in each of the questions. Peoples (2021) suggested that using qualitative analysis software may not be appropriate for phenomenological studies because the essence of what the participants discuss may be lost if the analysis of the words is done individually. Inductive coding was used to simplify and reduce the number of codes that can provide evidence of trends and patterns in the data (Saldana, 2016). Although a theoretical framework was mentioned as the basis to guide the conceptualization of this study in Chapter 2, the framework was not considered when deriving the themes and subthemes for data analysis. As the number of codes was reduced, themes began to emerge that were used to address research questions.

The following steps were utilized when analyzing the data.

1. I used a reflective journal to maintain control of my reactions to the interview responses.
2. I immersed myself in the data and utilized bracketing to refrain from any biases held.
3. All interviews were recorded on Zoom. I listened to each interview and hand-transcribed the data.
4. I read each transcription and listened to the audio recording to understand voice inflections that could reflect deeper feelings on the interview questions. I also used this method if I felt any disconnection from the parent's experiences or the context of their responses.
5. While listening to and reading the transcripts, I tried to make meaning to what the parents were saying.
6. Once all interviews were transcribed, I broke the transcription into smaller chunks by each interview question.

7. I used Microsoft Word to find common words or phrases the parents used in each interview question. I highlighted the common words or phrases in different colors.
8. I also printed out the transcripts and used colored sticky notes to visualize the repetitive words.
9. I pulled the early codes into a tally chart based on the times that common word, phrase, or mention was in the transcripts. Table 2 represents the common mentions I identified when initially coding the data.

Table 2

Coding mentions and color codes used

Mentions	Code	Code Color
19	Advocacy – at all levels	🟦
13	Disability severity - impacting relationships and experiences	🟨
12	Systemic issues	⬜
11	Positive support systems	🟩
7	Social integration	🟩
7	Informal/Peer support – this is what the parent is receiving	🟥
6	The parent's disability impacts experiences and relationship	🟪
6	Support - lack of	▨
5	Stigma – b/c of the child's disability they are being stigmatized	🟦
5	Child's stability -Desire for their child's stability in various contexts	🟪
5	Caregiver burden	🟧
3	Minorized status	🟥
1	Resources – lack of	🟫
1	Guilt and shame	🟩

10. I then grouped the codes based on similar meanings to identify themes. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), a theme captures the significant aspects of the data that correspond to the research questions and some level of pattern of response or meaning within the data set.
11. I reviewed and refined the themes by grouping them into more prominent themes and smaller sub-themes. Once I defined each theme and sub-theme, I gave them a final label. I further wrote a more detailed description on the operational definition of each theme and sub-theme based on the data.
12. Throughout the steps above, I worked with two individuals who hold PhD.s in Education and Social Science who have experience in research. We reviewed the transcripts, met and discussed any similarities or differences in coding.
13. With the operational definition of the themes and sub-themes as the basis, the themes and subthemes were revised in terms of categorization and how they fit with each other with multiple iterations. This was done with the PhD coders accordingly until consensus was made. This helped with intercoder reliability and bracketed my bias, allowing for various insights on the research study topic.

In addition to employing the steps identified, I took frequent breaks from the data to have a straightforward thought process and allow the researcher to gain additional insight into the data.

Data management

Each participant was assigned a numerical code. The seven participants were numerically coded, beginning with the number one and ending with the number seven. All data was stored on the researcher's password-protected computer, and a copy was uploaded onto the University's

Microsoft OneDrive. Data stored includes the Zoom recordings, audio transcripts, demographic survey, interview responses, and consent documents. The folders used to store the participants' data were labeled with the parents' numerically provided codes. The university's IRB requirements will be upheld, and the data will be stored for three years on the university's Microsoft OneDrive as indicated in the IRB.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative research is important for demonstrating the level of confidence in the accuracy and interpretation of the data collected from parent interviews. The current study aims to confirm that data collection and analysis to be reliable. In this qualitative phenomenological study, credibility, conformability, dependability, and transferability are the four criteria to determine trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Table 3 presents the four criteria and their relationship to reliability and validity.

Table 3

Quality in Qualitative Studies

Criteria	**Issues**	**Solution**
Credibility (Internal Validity)	Truth value	Prolonged and persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, **member checking**, deviant case analysis
Transferability (External Validity)	Applicability	Thick description, referential adequacy, prevention of premature closure of data, reflexive journal
Dependability (Reliability)	Consistency	Dependability audit, reflexive journal
Conformability (Objectivity)	Neutrality	Conformability audit, reflexive journal

Credibility

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), credibility is the qualitative research equivalent of internal validity in quantitative research. Credibility provides the researcher with confidence that the transcribed interviews are accurate (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Vagle, 2018). Credibility is determined by continuously checking and re-checking the transcribed interviews using audio recordings, reflexive journal notes, and results of the member-checking process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Rolfe (2006) affirmed that data validity is necessary in a valid research study, and once validity is established, the information has a meaningful truth. I used bracketing both during the interviews and the data analysis to assure that my biases and assumptions regarding transition programs for students with disabilities reflect the thoughts and ideas of the respondents and not mine. According to Collier-Reed et al. (2009), my use of bracketing allowed me to understand parenting of minority students involved in transition planning from their point of view.

Transferability

The concept of transferability applies to the concept that the outcome of the research can be applicable in different settings. The participant's information regarding their parental involvement in their students' transition planning, their self-reported parenting style, and reasons for participating in the research can be a basis for the transparency of the research that would support the research's feasibility of transferability (Stahl & King, 2020). Furthermore, results were based on specific verbatim responses by parents of adolescents and emerging adults with disabilities on planning for transitioning from public education to appropriate adult roles.

Dependability

After establishing credibility, Rose and Johnson (2020) argued that findings do not need to be validated independently. As asserted by Rose and Johnson, credibility and dependability may be aligned with validity rather than reliability. To assure dependability, the study used an interview protocol that was approved by the dissertation committee. The same questions were asked to each participant to establish consistency.

Confirmability

To ensure that data collection was consistent, an audit trail was adopted that can describe data collection approaches based on the research design and methodology. Second, the researcher can describe the process of interviewing and transcribing audio recordings of the interviews to ensure that the responses are accurately presented (Soratto et al., 2020). Defining the processes used in analyzing data and providing the study's findings in detail will provide further evidence of the study's confirmability.

Ethics

The research used the highest level of ethical assurance to protect human participants in this study. The researcher is a Licensed Professional Counselor in a Midwestern State and a Nationally Certified Rehabilitation Counselor who is required to uphold the professional Code of Ethics. American Counselor Association (ACA) and the Commission on the Certification on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) have professional values that the researcher will uphold, including Nonmaleficence and Beneficence. The researcher also has over 19 years professional experience that was used to maintain sensitivity to the credibility of the research that is garnering the lived experiences of caregivers and the perceptions of their involvement in the vocational and transition process.

The Michigan State University Institutional Review Board approved my proposal before I conducted any human subjects research. Written informed consent forms were used to explain the purpose of the research, the involvement of the participants, risks and benefits, and assurances of confidentiality. Participants were notified that their participation is voluntary, and they can rescind their participation in the study at any time. The consent forms were reviewed with the participants prior to their participation. After addressing any questions, the participants were asked to provide their verbal consent. To maintain the confidentiality of the participants, alphabetical markers were assigned to each parent and used on the interview transcripts and in the report when providing direct quotes. The researcher used rigid provisions to avoid bias and present trustworthy and reliable results.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the lived experiences of ethnic minority parents regarding transition planning for their adolescents with disabilities in a Midwestern state. Chapter 3 presents the methodology and philosophical groundwork of phenomenological research, as well as addressing the perceptions parents have of their parental involvement and whether their parenting styles influence their involvement. An explanation of how the participants' data sets were obtained was provided. Lastly, the data was analyzed using thematic analysis which involved coding the transcripts and then combining and recording the transcripts iteratively. During this analysis, themes emerged that addressed the overall research question and sub-questions and provided information on parent perceptions of transition planning for their students with disabilities. Chapter 4 presents the analysis of the qualitative data collected and summarizes the interview responses and themes that have emerged to explain parental experiences with transition planning for students with disabilities in public education programs.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine the lived experiences of parents when considering the impact of their parental involvement and parenting styles on their ethnic minority youth with disabilities and transition outcomes, as well as their mental health. Specifically, the research sought to explore how parents' levels of engagement in their children's education may interact with the potential challenges associated with their race/ethnicity and cultural practice that can influence how their parenting styles are expressed. Moreover, how the resulting experience of being an ethnic minority family and youth with disability undergoing the transitioning process may have an impact on the youth and the parent were explored.

The overarching research question was: What are the lived experiences of ethnic minority families who have a transition-age youth with a disability in the process of transitioning from high school to adult roles (e.g., educational planning, vocational planning)? Based on the primary research question, four sub-questions were included in this study:

Subquestion 1: How do ethnic minority parents perceive their parenting styles when interacting with their children?

Subquestion 2: How do ethnic minority parents perceive their involvement with service providers?

Subquestion 3: How have the lived experiences of ethnic minority parents of a child with a disability perceived the transition process can promote educational and vocational success?

Subsequestion 4: How has ethnic minority parents' participation in the transition process with their child with a disability influenced their perceived quality of life?

The researcher used a semi-structured interview to collect the data. Seven participants were pre-screened to meet the participation criteria, and were asked eight pre-determined interview questions. The participants were notified that they did not have to respond to any questions, and were encouraged to provide additional information that was salient to the research topic.

Participant Demographics

Before proceeding with the interview questions, each participant provided their demographics, including age, gender, ethnicity, marital status, number of children, number of children with a disability, highest level of education, and employment status. The information for each participant is included in Table 4. A short description of each of the participants follows the table.

Table 4

Participant Demographics

*Participant Name**		*Age*	*Gender*	*Ethnicity*	*Marital Status*	*# of children*	*# of children with disabilities*	*Highest level of education*	*Employment status*
P1	Dawn	35	Female	African-American	Single	1	1	H.S Diploma	Unemployed
P2	June	61	Female	African-American	Married	2	2	Some College	Employed – Full-time
P3	Ester	51	Female	African-American	Single	1	1	Some College	Employed—Full-time
P4	Francine	44	Female	African-American	Married	4	3	Master's Degree	Employed-Full-time
P5	Augusta	50	Female	African-American	Widowed	4	3	Some College	Employed – Part-time
P6	Chahna	46	Female	South Asian American	Married	3	1	Doctorate Degree	Employed – Full-time

Table 4 (cont'd)

P7	Dave	47	Male	African-American	Single	1	1	Some College	Employed – Full-time

* The participants' names have been changed to honor the anonymity of the participants.

Participant 1. Dawn is a 35-year-old African American female. Dawn reported that she is single and never married. She has a high school diploma and is unemployed. Dawn reported that she receives Social Security benefits, as she is permanently disabled. Dawn reported that she has one daughter, who is 16 years old and in the 10th grade. Her daughter receives special education services via an IEP from their local high school. Dawn's daughter is diagnosed with multiple impairments, including learning disabilities, mental health impairments, and auditory processing disorder.

Participant 2. June is a 61-year-old African American female. She is married and has two children, who are 20 and 35 years old. June's 20-year-old son had been diagnosed with autism, and he currently resides in the home. Her son receives special education services and attends an adult vocational transition program in the metro area. June's 35-year-old daughter lives outside the home and has a 16-year-old daughter. June reported that she has some college credits that could be applied toward a post-secondary degree. She is employed full-time, and her earnings support the household.

Participant 3. Ester is a 51-year-old African American female who is single and never married. Ester has a high school diploma and earned some credits toward a college degree. Ester's daughter is 20 years old and has been diagnosed with a rare neurogenetic disorder called Angelman's Syndrome. Ester's daughter receives special educational services at an adult vocational transition program, where she will exit at 26 with a Certificate of Completion.

Participant 4. Francine is a 44-year-old African American female. She has a Master's degree and is employed full-time. Francine is married with four children. Her son is 16 years old and has been diagnosed with anxiety disorder and attention deficit disorder. He receives a 504 Plan from his local high school. Francine has three other children, who are 18, 10, and 5 years old. Francine reports that three of her four children are diagnosed with cognitive or mental impairment.

Participant 5. Augusta is a 50-year-old African American female. She has a high school diploma and earned some credits towards a college degree. Augusta is a widow, as her husband passed away. Augusta is employed part-time and receives government assistance to supplement her income. Augusta's son is 18 years old and diagnosed with mild cognitive impairment. Her son receives special education services under an IEP from his local high school. Augusta has three other children, aged 21, 14, and 7. Augusta stated that her 7-year-old daughter is diagnosed with Autism and her 14-year-old daughter has a visual impairment.

Participant 6. Chahna is a 47-year-old South Asian-American woman. She has a doctorate and is employed full-time. Chahna reports that she is married with three children. Her son is 21 years old and has been diagnosed with Autism and Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. He attends a post-high school vocational transition program in his local school district. Chahna has two other children, who are 18 and 14 years old.

Participant 7. Dave is a 47-year-old African American male. He holds a high school degree and earned some credits toward a post-secondary degree. Dave is self-employed and works full-time. Dave reports that he has one son, 17 years old in the 11th grade. Dave's son is diagnosed with Autism and mild cognitive impairment. Dave is a single father as his son's mother passed away over two years ago.

Themes

In this study, five major themes were identified: (a) Ecological Issues, (b) Involvement Requires Different Levels of Advocacy, (c) Impact on Parents, (d) Impact on Youths, and (e) Positive Support Systems and Personal Resiliency. Each major theme is further divided into sub-themes. The themes and sub-themes are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Themes and Subthemes

Themes	Subthemes
1. Ecological Issues	1a. Poor Public Policy and Eligibility Lead to Ill-Equipped Educational and Disintegrated Community Services 1b. Shortage of Educational and Specialized Services 1c. Societal Stigma due to Race and Ethnic Status
2. Involvement Requires Different Levels of Parental Advocacy	2a. Parents' Needs to Actively Advocate for Their Youths to Receive Services 2b. Parents' Advocacy Action Sets a Role Model for Their Youths
3. Impact on Parents	3a. Parents Worry about the Youths' Future 3b. Adverse Parental Mental Health
4. Impact on Youths	4a. Adverse Impacts on the Youths' Vocational and Educational Activities 4b. Adverse Social Interactions 4c. An Authoritative Parenting Style is Influenced by the Needs to Care for their Youth.
5. Positive Support Systems and Personal Resiliency	5a. Alignment of Youths' Interests and Transition Goals: The youth's transitional support system positively aligns youths' interests 5b. Community Agencies' Abilities to Coordinate Mental and Medical Supports 5c. Parents Acts as Positive Support System for Their Youth 5d. Family and Community are Available as Informal Support. Available as Informal Supports

Theme 1: Ecological Issues

The *Ecological Issues* theme is the first theme that emerged in response to the overall research question about the lived experiences of being a minority parent having a youth with disability in a transition age. The first sub-theme is *Poor Public Policy and Eligibility Lead to Ill-Equipped Educational and Disintegrated Community Services*. The second sub-theme is *Shortage of Educational and Specialized Services*. The third sub-theme is *Societal Stigma due to Race and Ethnic Status.* Operationally, this first theme conveys three different aspects of external or environmental issues that relate to the transition process and/or services experienced by these minoritized youths with disabilities and their parents. Specifically, the systematic issues have created barriers that led to services that are not readily available to these youths and families, whether they are not equipped, well integrated, or adequate such as financial and educational supports as well as health and mental health services. The nature of governmental policies and systems have limited their youths' eligibility in services. Uniquely, being a minority, systemic racism still persists that has caused discrimination against them. In the following paragraphs, each sub-theme will be further elaborated with quotes. Parents also mentioned that because of their youth's race, they were required to make decisions that were motivated by their societal factors.

Poor Public Policy and Eligibility Lead to Ill-Equipped Educational and Disintegrated Community Services. In this subtheme, parents discussed the challenges they had with getting their youths into disability-specific programs. Specifically, parents reported that governmental policies and program eligibility criteria often hinder their child in delaying or even not being able to enroll in certain services.

June, the mother of a 20-year-old son with autism, supported her son throughout high school. Now that her son is an adult, she would like her son to have stable employment. However, June has endured challenges with getting her son the support he needs for employment from a vocational rehabilitation agency that she trusts could help her son. June mentions:

> And also in his transitional period when he was in high school, he had state vocational rehabilitation services. Although my son was not eligible for them to continue to work with him, we tried to do vocational work with a private agency but he wasn't at the high enough level to be in that particular facility. So when I tell you I've been to different [pre vocational] facilities, they had a summer program that year, the year before in 11th grade, we tried to get him into a local private vocational rehabilitation agency. That did not work out for him. That just didn't gel. He was not independent enough to have those services. As a result, he was not eligible for the State's vocational rehabilitation agency, which is okay, you find these things out.

Francine, the mother of a 16-year-old son with anxiety and attention-deficit disorder, discussed the eligibility of academic services. Francine states that while she was pleased with the services that the school was providing, she understood that systematically the academic institution still was not equipped to meet the academic support of her son, as every year, she had to go through the tedious eligibility process, she states:

> So for me, ultimately it has been positive. And even that it was negative because it's like, but, but it's not the school to me. It's more systemic. A person is doing well and we gonna take away their support and they're supposed to continue doing well. Well, no, the reason they're doing well is because of that support. And I understood it was systemic, but it doesn't make it any better. Like, I was pissed. And the fact of having to go through that

> whole thing all over again was really aggravating. So that sounds like it. Yeah. That was a negative, but I knew it wasn't the school.

A third parent, Chahna, has a 21-year-old son with autism, in a post-high school transition program. Chahna expressed the difficulties she had coordinating services for her son's developmental disability agency even though her son needs multiple supports. In this case, it highlights the inadequacy of services to address the reality that transition needs are often comprehensive and integrated in nature:

> So their argument is, well, we cannot have two services simultaneously. You cannot have community living supports and skill building. So it has to be skill-building. And of course, they don't want an outsider to see what they're doing. That's the bigger truth. I said, what if I come and be your extra set of eyes? Okay parent, I need a break. What if I send his sibling to be the extra set of eyes? No, there's no solution. It's till I find, we don't have enough direct care workers to give you one-on-one. We cannot have two services overlap. So all these kind of questions make it seem like for what are you running your service just to fill your boxes? Not really to address Ben's needs because he would've benefited amazingly if they let his worker, who's just some, a friend in the community that we trained if she had just attended skill building for whatever skill that was.

Dawn, the mother of a 17-year-old daughter who has multiple impairments, reported that systemically her daughter is not given the academic support they need. Dawn's daughter realizes that the school should be providing more support but they are not:

> She [the daughter] knows that. I mean, she's been impacted about the fact that she doesn't get any support at school. That's probably the thing that makes her upset the most. And now she wants to say something about that. That's probably the thing that makes her

> more upset the most is not getting anything at school, not getting support at school from not being able to depend on any teachers or IEP teacher or social worker. I mean that's got to hurt as a kid. You get I'm saying that you can't turn to nobody.

Shortage of Educational and Specialized Services. In the second sub-theme, parents conveyed that their children were not receiving their educational and other specialized services, such as specialized services due to a shortage of such service options or providers. For example, Dave is a single father of a 16-year-old son who was diagnosed with autism and attention deficit disorder. Dave's son attends a suburban middle-class school that should have financial support from the community. However, Dave stressed that his son was not being told about the available service options, leaving Dave feeling unsupported by his son's school district. Dave stated:

> I don't think there's a lot of resources out there. I have been made aware that there are vocational options and postgraduate stuff from high school available for him, but I have not received a lot of information for him going forward with his future.

Another parent, June, discussed the application requirements of specialized programs and the shortage of providers. The requirements to receive community support and the lack of service providers systematically affect her son:

> It's a systemic issues. Like even now I have a case supports coordinator working with me. They talk a lot. They have a lot of forms to fill out. It's all great. That's part of their job. But when it comes to it, there's not, you know, biggest issue right now is lack of direct care workers. And that's across the board. It's not her fault. So everything is delayed because we cannot find what we need. Or sometimes when he was younger, we just couldn't find the kind of services that was needed. I'd say as he's getting older, it's more because there is high anxiety. What's gonna happen after 26? There's one local vocational

> placement program, there's one other thing. You know, you just have so few options and long waiting list, people trying to get to the same services. So my frustration is more systemic.

Another parent, Francine, voiced her dissatisfaction with the lack of academic resources provided and the personnel in supporting her son’s needs.“I think that in the public school system, because the barriers are resources. Resources. That's the barriers that I have struggled with with my son's journey is resources. When I say resources, that's manpower”.

Societal Stigma Due to Racial-Ethnic Status. Societal stigma due to racial-ethnic status was the third sub-theme identified under the main theme *Ecological Issues*. Parents stated that because of their youths’ racial and ethnic identity, they continue to face pervasive discrimination. As a result, parents often had to assist their youths, dealing with the nuance of navigating social interactions of different cultures and incorporating family elements into service to meet cultural needs.

One parent, Francine, discussed the difference between her youth’s interactions at a predominantly White educational institution and their youth’s interactions at a predominantly Black athletic club. The following quote represents a general adjustment of the youth being in different cultures in different settings:

> I think being in high school and the age he's at in a predominantly White district, his social interactions have been impacted. And I think he feels a little awkward around his friends at school that looked like him. because he has always interacted with kids that didn't look like him. So my conversation with him has been around you. You don't need to make new friends if you don't want to just because they're Black. You make friends with people who you feel comfortable with regardless of their color. And I was like, if

> you feel the need to have a Black friend, you got a whole team of them that you see every day, why do they have to be at school with you? And he's like, I don't know. So that's kind of where we left it. So going into this year, we'll see what that looks like. So I think that's been the biggest thing for him.

Another parent, Chahna, discussed how her culture is more of a collectivistic society and wanting her son’s disability service providers to focus on the entire family unit. Chahna mentions her challenges with wanting a collectivistic approach rather than the individualistic stance the mental health agency took. Chahna said:

> Right. The systems, we worship the system. The system is the center. And if my son fits it, he fits it great. If he doesn't too bad. But it should be that the family is the center. And what are our needs. For example, when he was young, when I took him to therapy, this is a totally not even a school example, private therapy that we were paying for through our insurance. I'd be like, can you include his younger siblings in therapy? That way you're working on goals like socialization or no, we have, you know, their challenges are real because I'm also an occupational therapist. Well, what about the other children? They might get hurt if we have neurotypical children in the sensory arena playing with him, working on occupational therapy goals. I'm talking about my own example, right?

Theme 2: Involvement Requires Different Levels of Parental Advocacy

The second theme is named *Involvement Requires Different Levels of Parental Advocacy,* and it has two sub-themes. The two sub-themes emerged operationalized in two ways in terms of the intentionality of the advocacy when it comes to their involvement with the service providers and their youths. The first sub-theme is: *Parents’ Needs to Actively Advocate for Their Youths to Receive Services.* Parents act on behalf of their youths with disabilities for services they perceive as necessary to improve their youth's outcomes that are both immediate and as future, such as education, disability benefits and mental health services. The second sub-theme is: *Parents' Advocacy Action Sets a Role Model for Their Youths.* The intention is that parents advocate for their youths as a way to show their youth that they are valued as a person, and that the parents set a model for them to see the importance of advocacy so that they know and can advocate for their own in the future.

Parents' Needs to Actively Advocate for Their Youths to Receive Services. In this subtheme, parents act on behalf of their youths with disabilities for services they perceive as necessary to improve their youth's outcomes. The primary services that the parents advocated for the youths were education-related types of services. However, they are also aware of the necessity of other non-educational services, thus advocating for services beyond school. Such examples include disability benefits and mental health services. For instance, June, the parent of a 20-year-old son with autism, stated that because of her advocacy, she was able to facilitate the program that would meet the needs of her son. June's response on her experiences with the transition team was:

> I'm going to say probably not because, I'm going to say I'm one of the fortunate ones because I advocate and I was an active part. I knew the school system and when I say that I was at the top. My son's social worker in preschool, not preschool. When he was in head start at the one school, his social worker moved up in the ranks to be the head of the ASD program. She always followed my son and his journey, and working with his teacher consultants. When I tell you, because I was an active parent and I met these people earlier in my son's educational career, his teacher consultant I knew who was

> teachers, consultants. I met everybody every school year. I gave everybody a summary of my son.

Francine mentioned that if she had not advocated for services for her son to ensure that his educational needs met his disability-specific needs.

> I feel like right now he's just, he's doing his thing and he is developing his own rhythm and routines. And I do more of a check-in, for instance, when he got to high school, he went from an IEP in middle school to a 504 in high school. And one of the first things I did when he started high school, actually it was before he started, was the summer before I contacted the special ed department and said, I like to schedule a meeting within the first two weeks of school. because what you, I, I know you have what's on paper, but you don't know him. So we, I did the same thing when he went to middle school too, because in elementary they had seen him from kindergarten, so they knew how much he had progressed all those years, from what it was in kindergarten through fifth grade and the challenges he had.

Parents also conveyed services that are needed for their youth beyond education. For example, Chahna, whose son with autism is 20 years old and in a transition program, asserted, “The school will make suggestions, but it's up to you. So it's really the journey. The burden is on the parent, and some manage to do it well. Others struggle, but everything is really parent-driven”.

June, the parent of a 20-year-old son, also mentioned the need to advocate for her son beyond high school. June claims that her advocacy allowed her son to receive disability-specific transition services.

> He's not going to that center. And it was kind of because they even sent people to my front door trying to get him to go to the center, And I said, he's not going to the center. I

> said, he is not going to the center. Because my question was, if I send him in his transition IEP, if he goes to the center, will he get a high school diploma? And they said no. I said, then there's no reason for me to send him to that center because I want him to have something more.

Parents Advocacy Action Sets as Role Models for Their Youths. The second sub-theme addresses an element of advocacy that conveys that the parents use themselves as a model to teach their youth the concept of self-advocacy and/or feeling empowered to advocate for themselves. This appears to be a way that parents can prepare their youth to become more independent in the future. As such, Francine, the parent of a 16-year-old son, reported that she wants to ensure her child is independent in his decision-making because she is concerned about whether he will be able to handle his personal affairs when he reaches adulthood. Francine stated:

> And I'm like, just kind of getting information so they can hear it. Either I'm asking or they will ask and then they'll kind of take off and ask more questions. So as we've gotten, as he's gotten older, he will just kind of do that on his own independently. Or he'll, if he hears about a job or has knows someone that does something, he'll ask questions on his own. He'll look things up to research it. He does use the Zello program that the district uses. When he did it the first time, I think he was in sixth grade, I did it with him and I was like, oh my gosh, this is awesome.

Dawn also mentioned the importance of empowering her youth. This empowerment led to self-advocacy efforts that her youth can use in high school and beyond. Dawn refers to “going to war” as fighting for services. Dawn shares:

> It’s going to be for a good cause and you [youth] are going to go to war [fighting for services]. And I'm like, you know, I'm going to war for you. That's all it for. I'm going to war. We getting our kids ready to go war. Yep. And that's all she care about is that we going to war to go win. She wanted to leave this school, but things, she was like, no, I'm going to go to war. If you want to go to war for my mommy, we can go to war. I said, I'll go to war for you. I'll go to war.

Augusta, the parent of an 18-year-old son with mild cognitive impairments, advocates to encourage her son to make better decisions and encourages her son to be more autonomous. She indicates:

> I encourage him to be more independent. So that's kind of where I am now with, with him because he's 18 and because, you know, soon enough he'll, he'll wanna, you know, go off and get his own place. So I'm really working on trying not to be so hands-on because he's a boy and he's 18, so I don't wanna be too, you know, but yeah, right now I'm really more so pushing him towards more independent skills, so he depends less on me.

Theme 3: Impact on Parents

Impact on Parents is the third theme that emerged from the parent interviews. Parents openly discussed the impact in multiple dimensions that range from psychological impact about their youths’ future as well as on themselves. These impacts span across the timeframe from current to future. There are two sub-themes in terms of impacts on the parents. The first sub-theme is *Parents Worry about the Youths’ Future.* Parents expressed their worries about the daily routine and their youth’s overall independence as to the person who would provide the long-term support their youth would receive if they could no longer care for their youth. In addition to worrying about their life care planning, parents had concerns about their youth with disability having stability in their overall quality of life. The second sub-theme, *Adverse Parental Mental Health*, the parents also conveyed how their caregiving role was impacting their overall mental health stemming from the cumulative years of taking on the caregiving role.

Parents Worry about the Youths' Future. Several parents discussed feelings of being uncertain and unsettled with not knowing what type of long-term support will be available for their youth with disabilities after they are no longer able or available to provide caretaking. June states that she has devised a comprehensive plan of care for her son with autism, but she still expresses apprehension regarding the substitute caregiver she has arranged for him.

> Although my daughter is listed as the backup guardian in case something happens to me and my husband, will she be able to manage? So I have to put some things in place in order for that transition to happening or not happening.

Augusta ponders whether her son will possess the capability to independently care for himself from daily living skills to being independent as an adult in her absence.

> You know, maybe that, that might need to be an area focused on is like how life after high school will affect them and like things they may need to concentrate on and, like how to go to a store and purchase things by themselves. Like something that simple I kind of took for granted that I don't even think he knows how to go in there by himself and make sure he doesn't get cheated out of his money. So, just certain things like that, like more independent skills. I think a lot of attention should be put on real life skills after they graduate because what, what if a parent dies or a caretaker dies? How would they, you know, take care of themselves as, you know, as they best that they could, you know? Yeah. So just some real life skills. I think teaching them that would be a good thing.

Chahna considers her culture and its collectivistic nature as a guide for deciding how to plan for her son.

> But oh yeah. One other negative might be future planning. That's when religious culture comes in too, where, you know, there is not, I don't know if there's full acceptance. And so it makes sense of, you know, yeah. That long-term planning, what happens after me, I don't know if it's unique to race, but it's been challenging. 'cause I know personally as a professional, I write a lot about the challenges of long-term planning, writing that plan, that person-centered plan for when he, we are not there. It is harder, I'd say in our culture. It's not necessarily, yeah, I don't know. It's just with the extended family to have those conversations is very difficult. I don't know if it's race-specific, but I deal with that. That's all.

Adverse Parental Mental Health. The first sub-theme on *Impacts on Parents* focuses on the negative impacts on the parents themselves. Parents expressed that providing care for their youth with disabilities can also result in caregivers experiencing emotional stress and anxiety. Regularly dealing with healthcare and educational systems and managing challenging emotions might adversely affect the emotional well-being of parents. June mentioned how caring for her youth and family with disabilities overshadowed her ability to cope with her emotions.

> Of everyone that’s is disabled that I have to take care of it’s, well now four with my granddaughter, that my husband is disabled, my son is disabled, and my daughter is disabled. And now I don't think my grand, I don't call my granddaughter disabled, but she has some talent. And so we've sacrificed time for ourselves. I have wounds, I'll call them. I have wounds. I love that I have wounds, war wounds. I have war wounds. But we're okay. I've had not only taking care of them, but loss of a mother and my sister is disabled.

> So you come to the realization, a lot of reflection, counseling suffer from anxiety myself.
>
> So everybody's got anxiety because that's part of the process.

Ester is the parent of a 20-year-old daughter with a rare neurogenetic disorder. Ester's daughter has limited communication skills. Ester has a range of emotions due to her daughter's communication skills. Parents find it difficult to understand their child's needs and feelings, leading to frustration and added stress in daily interactions. Ester expressed her thoughts:

> The difficult part of it is that even though she has a disability, I wish that she could talk a little bit more to communicate with you because I just want to know her thoughts. I want to hear her voice. And that's hard. As hard as it's after the tough days that we have had up until this day here. I wouldn't change it for anything. It works. God did make no mistakes. He made her his image and I just have to take it. And he's giving me the tools and sometimes when she gets under my skin, I have to step away. Cause it's not always easy. The Lord Jesus Christ.

Another parent, Dave, delayed his own personal pursuits, such as dating, in favor of his caregiving responsibilities. Dave's decision to delay his personal gratifications can lead to significant implications for his mental health, including stress, social isolation and loss of identity.

> Well, being that I am a little older now, so, not wanting leave him home alone, for too long, that would probably be the only thing that I see is holding me back. You know, certain behaviors tend to be a little annoying at times. It can be stressful……..
>
> Well, you know what, I've, I'm the type of guy, I've always put others first and make sure that the family was taken care of and all that stuff. So I just recently, within the last year or so, decided that I'm gonna start focusing on me a little more. So on occasion I do get a

> break. I may take myself out to eat or something. I did try to date until one point in time, but that was another story in itself.

Theme 4: Impact on Youths

Impact on Youth was the fourth theme developed from the parent's responses, and there are three sub-themes. Parents spoke about the impact the transition process is having on their youth. Parents identified that the impact of the transition process on a youth can be substantial, affecting multiple parts of their youth's life, such as communication, education, social interactions, and general well-being. The first sub-theme, *Adverse Vocational and Educational Impact,* discusses the negative impact on the youth's vocational and educational aspects. The second sub-theme, *Adverse Social Interactions* relates to the impact on the youth's social aspects. Social domains include the youth's communication needs and their social interaction with others. The third sub-theme which has a significant impact on youth is the parenting style of the caregiver is *An Authoritative Parenting Style is Influenced by the Needs to Care for their Youth.* The third subtheme considers how the parenting style of the caregiver is a bidirectional relationship to their perception of their involvement.

Adverse Vocational and Educational Impact. The first sub-theme on the impact on youth focuses on the vocational and educational aspects of their lives. Parents mentioned that during the transition process, youths' impact was negatively impacted as services may not be adequately provided, often stemming from the severity of the disability that they end up not being able to engage in vocational activities. When the parents discussed their experiences with being involved with their youth, Dawn expressed the barriers her daughter was experiencing when looking for employment.

> It's very difficult. It is very difficult because when she wants to do job interviews and stuff like that, she's like, I have to tell them I'm dyslexic. And she feels like she doesn't get a job interview or something because she feels like it's because she's dyslexic.

June reported that, because of the severity of her son's disability, he did not qualify for state vocational rehabilitation support and was unable to be referred to a job training facility.

> My son was referred to the state vocational rehabilitation agency. Although my son was not eligible for them to continue to work with him, we tried to work with a private vocational agency, but he wasn't at the high enough level to be in that particular facility. So when I tell you I've been to different facilities, they had a summer program that year, the year before in 11th grade, we tried to get him into that private vocational agency. That did not work out for him. That just didn't gel. He was not independent enough to have those services.

Dave stated that because the school's transition support team was not proactively working on their behalf, it was adversely impacting his son's mental health and motivation.

> Yeah, a little bit too much time on his hands. I think he's bored, but I don't know if anxiety's a little bit, but I could tell he's upset that he no longer has that security that he had back in school. but yeah, he's, he's dealing with it, but I think right now he, I think if he was employed, that would take his mind off of that because he has too much time right now to think about it because he's, he's not employed.

Adverse Social Impact. The second subtheme parents identified to impact their youth is the social context. Parents conveyed that engaging in social interaction facilitates successful communication, which is an imperative aspect of adulthood and is an expected norm, collaboration, comprehension of societal conventions, and the formation of relationships beyond the immediate family unit. However, this is often a challenge for their youth. Dawn understood how her daughter's disabilities impacted her social interactions but Dawn desires for her daughter to have social engagements with others.

> But also it's just difficult with her sometimes because her anxiety gets to her. So I have to pull her out of her shell a lot. And it's hard when it comes to real life. She's always nervous and scared about life. So yeah, it is very difficult. It's so difficult with her and her disabilities or her health problems that she has, especially with the hearing sensitivity and hyperacusis, every time she goes down she has to wear the headphones and she doesn't like doing it. And I tell her all the time, you can't be in your shell. And when it comes to the real world, you're not going to be able to do that. You have to socialize and be involved with the world out there and do things like people do, like normal people do somewhat.

Francine recognizes that her son is undergoing the process of becoming an adult, but due to his impairment, he exhibits impulsiveness and appears younger than his chronological age. Francine was worried that her son's lack of social skills could affect his ability to connect with his peers, which in turn could have a negative impact on his mental well-being.

> And then you have a kid who even though they seem like they're good and everything's great and 99% of the time they are, sometimes they don't act like they're 15 or the medicine isn't working the way it's supposed to that day and they can be a little impulsive or intrusive or they don't maintain those bubble thoughts. And then they come across as that weird kid. So going into high school, his expectation was like he was gonna have the same friends and the same group of people that he had from kindergarten through middle or kindergarten through, fifth grade and then through middle school. And it didn't turn

> out that way and he was really hurt and he was really disappointed. Behavior isn’t an issue. So that's social component and it aggravates me as a parent because you don't wanna see your kid hurt.

Ester highlighted how difficult it is for her young person to communicate with others and voiced worries about social interactions. Ester says she's not sure if she's satisfying her youth's needs because they are nonverbal. This parent is also worried about her ability to communicate to others the needs of her youth.

> Oh, I have to be more because one of her disabilities is she's nonverbal. So I have to communicate with her and it's not always easy trying to make the best decision for someone because even though I'm her parent, I'm not in her head. I can't make the decisions, but I have to learn how to make more decisions over her adult life. So she's not cognitively cared to do sign language and her fine motor skills won't allow her to do it either. But I'm looking into getting her a communication device, not if she got a little bit older. And I think that she can put words together cognitively, but doesn't have a way to output.

Chahna’s perspective diverges from Ester’s in terms of understanding and addressing the communication requirements of her child. She highlights the impact of her son’s restricted communication skills on his emotional well-being, indicating a deeper level of concern and attentiveness toward his needs. In her interview, Chahna stated:

> Now we call it more like persevering to achieve his goals. Not as considerate of other people's needs. Now that he is not aware, the anxiety becomes, I wanna do this, I wanna do this. He can keep repeating and can get stuck. So in childhood we call it more echolalia. Now as he is growing up, we feel it's anxiety-related perseverations, which if

> we don't, so the way we have to manage it is with schedules and negotiating and, you know, sometimes you have to give in.

An Authoritative Parenting Style is Influenced by the Needs to Care for their Youth. The third theme regarding impact on youth is how an authoritative parenting style is influenced by the needs of their youth. Parents identified that their parental approach involved fostering autonomy in their youth through a combination of clear rule-setting and boundary establishment. Additionally, parents emphasized the importance of maintaining open lines of communication, actively being attentive to their youth's thoughts and concerns. Furthermore, parents highlighted their responsiveness to the needs of their youth with disabilities, alongside their commitment to establishing and upholding high expectations for their youth's achievement.

June and Ester indicated that they were raised in a more authoritarian household, because their parents had rigid rules and expected their children to follow directions or face swift discipline. Although June and Ester reported they were raised in an authoritarian household, they have developed a more authoritative parenting style to parent their youth with disability. June mentions that her parenting style is to meet the communication needs of her son, who had speech delays during his childhood development.

> And so when I think about that, my parenting thought, My oldest daughter mentioned that I felt that I was strict. I just had a more open acceptance of listening, wanting her to communicate and everything. And so I was brought up in a very strict home. And so my daughter's parenting style is different because she was brought up in a two-parent home. And so where my son, I guess I would say I got my awakening when I went to preschool and his teacher was like, do you want your coat? My son responded, coat? I realized that my son was pulling the wool over my eyes.

Ester mentions that her parenting style is influenced by her authoritarian rearing, but she is more open to allowing her son to make mistakes, as her son is aged 18.

> My parenting style is a little bit different than my mom because I'm different than, I'm not on a spectrum, so it was a little bit tougher. So I'm a little bit lax with raising a little bit. And especially now that she's 18 and over, I try to treat her like an adult. I let her make choices instead of just telling her what it's going to be. I'll allow her to make choices now. I'll give her the selection that she can make a choice. She does get in trouble, get reprimanded, get time out. If she's not doing what is asked of her.
>
> I try not to tell her what to do. I try to ask her what to do, give her look at a question, can you instead of go do.

Francine, Augusta, and Dave mentioned their responsibility of rearing Black males and the parenting style they must use to ensure their youth is making the appropriate choices.

Francine contends that in the upbringing of ethnic-minority youth with disabilities, she must provide support to her son while also ensuring that his decisions are influenced by the societal constructs regarding the impact of her son's race.

> But sometimes when it gets into those conversations and they're like, but why can't I, why can't I hang out with my friends and walk up to here that and the other, because you're gonna be the only little black boy in the group and I don't want you walking down the street with them because I've seen them together and they act very silly and doing stuff and getting in trouble. And if you're out there, you're probably gonna be the one to get in trouble. So to prevent that, I'll drop you off or you just can't do that. So I'll say things like that because my thing is, if my parent can't tell me the truth, why should I think society will? And I'll tell him that too. Like, I'm gonna tell you the truth. Anything I say to you is

> not to hurt you because I love you. You go out in these streets, you don't, people have their own motivations. My goal is to help you and to support you and to give you the best advice that I can. If you take it, that's fine, but just know I'm still a parent.

Augusta asserts that her approach to parenting is less strict due to her awareness of societal perceptions regarding gender variances. This adaptability, according to the parent, enables her son to demonstrate greater autonomy.

> I encourage him to be more independent. So that's kind of where I am now with, with him because he's 18 and because, you know, soon enough he'll wanna, you know, go off and get his own place. So I'm really working on trying not to be so hands-on because he's a boy and he's 18, so I don't wanna be too, you know, but yeah, right now I'm really more so pushing him towards more independent skills, so he depends less on me.

In the context of parenting dynamics, Dave grants his son the freedom to choose his own path while recognizing the responsibility to offer support and advice after decisions have been finalized.

> Well, I definitely don't treat him any differently than, if he were a quote-unquote normal child, you know, I, you know, my job as a parent and as a father raising a male is to guide him and teach him what it is to be a man. So I try to let him make his own decisions and try to get him to understand that every decision he makes come with comes with a consequence. probably should be a little more, tougher on him. But, you know, I just, take the guiding role versus being, you know, strict or anything like that. I'm not really strict with him, you know? Kinda let him trying to form his own identity and find his own path, but I correct him if need be.

Chahna explained that the challenge of raising a child with a disability necessitated a significant adjustment in her parenting style. This adjustment was crucial to ensure that her son receives the appropriate support, care, and guidance tailored to their needs.

> I don't know if it's any different for him versus others. I think with my son, what we've noticed with his ADHD and autism is we just repeat the same things. Our expectations are lower for him, but it's being repeating and also being consistent. It's maybe our son has taught us the importance of consistency more than the other two because we realize when we change our plans and we have different structures, it affects Ben the most than the others. So anything we change, so I think it has made us more focused, consistent parents overall, it's just improved our parenting style.

Dawn was one parent in the given group of seven who reported a more permissive approach to parenting compared to the others. Throughout the interview, it was evident that Dawn placed her daughter's emotional well-being above all. However, rule-making is more of a requirement than the desire of how she wishes to raise her daughter.

> Okay, I won't even hold you up on it. It's hard because I'm a young mom and I'm a teen mom and when I try and make new mommy friends, it's hard because when I try and go on to school and make mommy friends, they don't care for me too much because they're like, oh, she's a young mom. Her parenting skills is not like old fashioned. Her parenting skills is as if she's still young and hanging out there. But to me, I'm still young in my mind and I let my daughter speak. She doesn't have any, she doesn't have any, what's the word we say? I'm going to say boundaries in a way somewhat or whatever. I forgot the word, but it's something like, yeah, she doesn't have any filters that much. She got rules on filters, but she got a lot of filters of no filters. So she got a lead way, a lot of leadway.

Theme 5: Positive Support Systems and Personal Resiliency

Despite the overwhelmingly challenging lived experience during the transition process and the persistent growing issues faced by families and youth with disabilities, as well as the impacts posed on them, parents still conveyed some positive lights in their experience. The fifth theme revolves around the ecological systems but in a positive way, which has four subthemes. The first two themes relate to positive aspects of services while the last two themes relate to the resiliency of the parents and the community. Specifically, subtheme 1, *Alignment of Youths's Interests and Transition Goals with Existing Transition Supports,* discusses how there are certain educational institutions have existing transition supports that provide services that align the interests of youths with disabilities, thus, enhancing and allowing them to achieve their life goals. Sub-theme 2, *Community Agencies' Abilities to Coordinate Mental and Medical Supports,* also speaks to the positiveness of some community agencies that have the capacity to coordinate health and mental health services for youth with disabilities, which are also essential transition components. Subtheme 3, *Parents Acts as a Positive Support System for Their Youth,* speaks to how parents are a positive agent that is a support itself for the youth. Compared to sub-theme 3, subtheme 4, *Family and Community are Available as Informal Support. Available as Informal Supports,* discusses about support for the parents rather than parents as a support for others.

Alignment of Youths' Interests and Transition Goals with Existing Transition Supports. In this first subtheme parents discussed the importance of their youth's transitional support system positively aligning with their interests and educational and vocational goals. Parents identified that in the context of high school and post-high school setting, it was important to have their youth in educational institutions that aligned their youth's interests and transition goals, within the existing transition supports. The available transition supports ensure that the educational and developmental pathways for their youths are implemented to support their youth’s goals beyond high school.

Francine's son attends a predominantly White institution. She was pleased with the academic software that her son’s schools used to identify their vocational goals.

> And the school does that. They use educational software, which is a pretty awesome career exploration thing for transition youth. He's gone to a college, I forget what they call it, camp Campus Crawl, where he could just ask questions and get information about the college. We're already gonna tour college in our state that he has interest in.

June states that her son’s teacher was instrumental in helping him find summer employment. June also states that she has since shared this information with other members of her family.

> As a matter of fact, because I knew, and that was through his teacher, his senior year, again, his IEP teacher said, Hey, my son could get a summer job. So that was a new program and it's been going on through the school system. So as a result, my granddaughter turned older, I told her, you're getting a job for the summer.

Community Agencies’ Abilities to Coordinate Mental and Medical Supports. The second subtheme is *Community Agencies Abilities to Coordinate Mental and Medical Support*. Parents stated that they felt it was critical for their youth’s community agency to assist in coordinating mental and medical support. Parents who voiced confidence in the community agency servicing their youth fostered a sense of trust and collaboration to ensure that their youth’s needs were understood and effectively addressed. Parents who believe their youth’s agency is authentically committed to their youth’s overall well-being are more likely to feel positive about the community agency's efforts, as it aids in providing a supportive environment for their youth. Several parents said that finding resources for their children was difficult and that finding services might not have been possible without a strong network of supportive people.

Ester mentioned that her daughter had a limited capacity to care for herself. Due to this limited care capacity, Ester understood that her role as custodial parent would extend into her daughter's adult years.

> So I had to work with an agency that assisted in her guardianship, and that took a lot because it was during the pandemic and she was turning 18 and she was getting ready to go to Georgia. So the agency helped out a lot, So that looked like supporting me in court with the guardianship. It supported me with all the preliminary work, The Psych eval, physical eval, and I just like a mental cognitive evaluation. And they provided all of that with the exception of the medical, they just gave me paperwork to take to her doctor. This entire process took something like eight months.

Augusta expressed the positive interaction she had with her son's educational team. She stated that the educational support system is working with her son on securing employment.

> I think they worked with him very well, especially when he was younger and it was, more severe, his speech delay, but I think overall they did pretty good in catching him up, uh Helping him with his, yep. I think she helps out a lot. I know she's really busy because she probably has to take on a lot of other people that she's helping. But, she does have resources that she's able to hook us up with and, she did tell me to, you know, they, she wants to talk with Aaron so that she can get more of an idea of what specifically he needs help with in terms of employment. So, I think she is doing her best to try to make sure that she helps him.

Another parent, Dave, wants to ensure that his son's mental health is being addressed by their service providers. Dave claims that following his son's loss of his mother, he collaborated with the mental health agency to promptly arrange bereavement therapy for his son. He affirms that the mental health agency actively engages in attentive listening and effective communication during the process of care coordination.

> But there were a couple of things that I wanted to address with the counselor. And he lost his brother and his mom. So grief counseling is something that she's working on with, and she works with him about social cues and all those other things. So as far as interacting with her, you know, she's pretty, you know, she communicates, communicates a lot with me.

Parent Act as a Positive Support System for their Youth. In this third subtheme, parents identified that they are helping their youth by providing a positive support system. Positive support systems help their youth feel empowered and confident in reaching their full potential. When parents consistently provide their youth with encouragement and direction, this provides a foundation where they can develop their sense of self and explore their passions.

Ester states that she felt a sense of support from her daughter's school district. Based on the positive support the school is providing, Ester reports that she does not have to be overprotective of her daughter and allow her the autonomy to explore her identity. She mentioned that:

> So I think she's enjoying her freedom when we are apart. And I have to say that I work at the same school that she attends, so I'm not a helicopter mom. I have enough time to do that at home. So I think she appreciates the separation. So I think it has impacted her well

> in transitioning into a young lady with more freedom with me. Giving her more freedom at school.

Augusta states that she is involved in the life of her son. She states that she probes about his day to help him navigate the world around him.

> I know I'll ask him, how was you, you know, how was work? What happened today? So I'm, I am asking questions to make sure just in case something may have happened that he doesn't understand, he should have been upset about that, like, that shouldn't have happened. So I ask questions just to kind of get an idea of what his day was like.

June states that supporting her son extends beyond the educational institution and the community agencies. June has taken the lead in exposing her son to community activities that are in alignment with her son's hobbies and interests.

> He loves it. We go to our exhibit and we take a picture of him near his artwork and we have him right now. We have him drawing faces and he basically draws objects and things, but he can draw people, he can draw, people draw. So one thing that makes a skill. That my granddaughter has done is had him do a self portrait of himself. And I know that he happy because he drew himself with such a big, big that I said, and it just glowed. The picture just glowed. And I said, thank you heavenly father. We're doing something right. He's happy, he's balanced. The only thing that I have before the end of the year that I hope I can accomplish is that I want to give him a trip to another state and visit their aquarium….. But yeah, we expose them to as many things as possible.

Family and Community are Available as Informal Support. In this fourth and final subtheme that impacts youth, parents identified family and community members who offer support in navigating their youth's disability services. Parents mentioned that they benefited greatly from having family and community support as informal networks to navigate the complexities of rearing youth with disabilities. Parents referenced the networks provide insights to community services, while the parents offered emotional encouragement. These support networks not only alleviated feelings of isolation but promoted a sense of community. Chahna stated that she had to be very involved and resourceful in finding peer support that had the same values and needs as she had. Chahna conveyed that because of the support of her peer group, she is considering helping her son start his own small business.

> So I think I've learned the most just by talking to other parents. I haven't received as much help from school as I thought I would. So essentially I'd summarize that by parents have to be proactive, seek out their own information. Being part of internet support groups, back in the day it is how I built my expertise. Like from other parents, older parents who've done this before. Again, I feel success is if parents start their own businesses for their children, great. It's all up to the parents. So right now I'm educating myself how to start a business because I don't think in his center, for transition, being at a level three, he's ever going to get a job. But he does a lot more for me. So we as other parents, we network, we meet, how can we start a business? Totally parent-driven again and the school, I don't know, like even simple suggestions when you give ideas, Hey look, there is a building here that they could clean. Can you set it up? So that's our community. It's a church we are connected to. If you can set it up, we can continue this. They're [the school] so restricted in all their rules and limitations. So they're doing things in their own space in different spaces.

June, the mother of a 20-year-old, also received informal/peer support. However, June discussed how she developed a reciprocal relationship, by giving back to others. June stated:

> And so I try to help parents. I'm not as active as I used to be, but I try to help parents and tell parents. And I've been a support to parents who have exceptional children because, I've been fortunate. That's why I said each year I did talk a little bit with my local parent advocacy agency about different things, advocacy, but I didn't have to use them. I just learned information. Going to health fairs. See, I work at health fairs, I go to health fairs, baby showers and everything and my job. So when these people are out in the community, hey, I'm at their table, Hey, what do you do? So I would take that, glean my information.

Summary

Chapter 4 presents the results of exploring the lived experiences of parents of ethnic-minority youth, navigating the transition from high school to adulthood. This research used the phenomenological approach, utilizing structured interviews on seven parents of ethnic-minority youth from a Midwestern state.

The qualitative data resulted with five major themes and subthemes that provided an extensive understanding of the one major research question with four sub questions. These themes were guided by the researcher's theoretical framework of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) and Epstein's Parental Involvement Framework (1991), with the influence of Baumrind (1968) and Maccoby and Martin (1983)'s Parenting Styles. The five themes identified were (1) *Ecological Issues*, (2) *Involvement Requires Different Levels of Parental Advocacy*, (3) *Impact on Parents*, (4) *Impact on Youths*, and (5) *Positive Support Systems and Personal Resiliency*. Chapter 5 will provide a thorough discussion of how the findings relate to the current literature as posed by the research questions. Discussion will be tied back to the theoretical frameworks. Chapter 5 will also discuss the implications for research, education and practice.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSIONS

Transitioning to adulthood tasks, such as from high school to work or post-secondary education can be challenging for youth with disabilities (Sosnowy et al., 2018). It is crucial that these students, who are entitled to a high-quality transition planning process, are encouraged to participate in their transition planning, including educational and vocational rehabilitation (VR) services (Rast et al., 2020). As per IDEA 2004 (n.d.), transition planning, including VR, should commence before the student with a disability turns 16. However, creating such high-quality transition planning and engaging in VR services necessitates robust family and community support. The role of parents in this process is not just crucial, but it is the cornerstone of successful transition planning because families often become the primary advocates for adult services post-school and lifelong support for people with disabilities (Smith & Anderson, 2014).

The purpose of this study was to examine the lived experiences of ethnic minority parents regarding the transition planning process for their adolescent child with disabilities. This investigation included parents' self-reports of their parenting styles and characteristics (e.g., age, marital status, gender, educational level, employment status, emotional health, etc.) and their impact on parent involvement in activities associated with transition planning. Ultimately, this study also aimed at understanding how these collective experiences affect both the minority adolescents and the parents themselves.

This study employed a phenomenological methodology, using a semi-structured interview guide, to explore the lived experiences of seven parents of ethnic-minority transition-aged youth with disabilities. The parents shared their experiences of their youth's transition from school to the world of work and their level of involvement during this process. They also discussed how environmental factors, such as the systems and their race and ethnicity, played a significant role in affecting the whole process. This approach allowed for a deep and nuanced understanding of the transition process.

The overarching research question was: What are the lived experiences of ethnic minority families who have a transition-age youth with a disability in the process of transitioning from high school to adult roles (e.g., educational planning, vocational planning)? Based on the primary research question, four sub-questions were included in this study:

Sub question 1: How do ethnic minority parents perceive their parenting styles when interacting with their children?

Sub question 2: How do ethnic minority parents perceive their involvement with service providers?

Sub question 3: How have the lived experiences of ethnic minority parents of a child with a disability perceived the transition process can promote educational and vocational success?

Sub question 4: How has ethnic minority parents' participation in the transition process with their child with a disability influenced their perceived quality of life?

To reiterate, the five themes and sub-themes that emerged from the seven participants are as follows. Theme 1: *Ecological Issues*, with three sub-themes: Sub-theme 1: *Poor Public Policy and Eligibility Lead to Ill-Equipped Educational and Disintegrated Community Services*; Sub-theme 2: *Shortage of Educational and Specialized Services*; and subtheme 3: *Societal Stigma due to Race and Ethnic Status*. Theme 2: *Involvement Requires Different Levels of Parental Advocacy*. This theme has two sub-themes. Sub-theme 1: *Parents' Needs to Actively Advocate for Their Youths to Receive Services*, and Sub-theme 2: *Parents' Advocacy Action Sets a Role Model for Their Youths*. Theme 3: *Impact on Parents* has two sub-themes, with sub-theme 1 as *Parents Worry about the Youths' Future*, and sub-theme 2 *Adverse Parental Mental Health*

Theme 4: *Impact on Youth* with three sub-themes: Sub-theme 1: *Adverse Impacts on the Youths' Vocational and Educational Activities*; Sub-theme 2: *Adverse Social Interactions*; and Sub-theme 3: *An Authoritative Parenting Style is Influenced by the Needs to Care for their Youth.* Theme 5: *Positive Support Systems and Personal Resiliency* has four sub-themes. Sub-theme 1 is the *Alignment of Youths' Interests and Transition Goals with Support*. Sub-theme 2 is *Community Agencies' Abilities to Coordinate Mental and Medical Support*. Sub-theme 3 is: *Parents Acts as Positive Support System for Their Youth*. Sub-theme 4 is: *Family and Community are Available as Informal Support.*

The discussion is presented thematically with literature supported that is tied to the research sub-questions. It is worth mentioning that this study was guided based on the Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), as the themes and subthemes were also consistently mapped into the systems conceptualized in this model. Therefore, a discussion of the themes in relation to the Bronfenbrenner systems will not be done but will only be discussed in the next paragraph as a conceptual framework. However, the Bronfenbrenner systems will be mentioned in each of the themes when they are relevant. Lastly, the study's strengths, limitations, and recommendations for future research and transition professionals are discussed.

Conceptually, this study uses Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory as a framework to guide the understanding of the pertinent aspects of the transition process for youth with disabilities. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model is a framework that is utilized to understand the complexity of different systems intertwined that influence a child's human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The themes and subthemes from this study consistently align with painting a compelling picture of the lived experience of both the youth with disabilities and the parents based on the breakdown of the sub-questions, centering the student with disabilities as the system. Furthermore, the themes and sub-themes consistently highlight how Bronfenbrenner's different systems, including those that are the closest to the systems and moving outwards, i.e., parents, school systems, and teachers, community providers, stigma, culture, and the passage of time, each system can have an impact on the youth and/or the parent. Therefore, this further reinforces the importance of considering all aspects of a person (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) when working with them, whether the role is a a professional or as a researcher conducting research.

The Ecological Model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) consists of five levels that influence youth's development, emphasizing that the child is at the center of the system, and the importance of environmental factors and social influences that shape the development and behaviors. Furthermore, the model posits that all aspects of the systems are taken as a holistic approach in the sense that a child's development involves a dynamic, reciprocal interaction between the environment, societal, biological, cultural and psychological factors. With the child or the youth at the center, the five levels are the (a) Microsystem, (b) Mesosystem, (c) Exosystem, (d) Macro system, and (e) Chronosystem.

To recap, parents discussed their youth's interactions with their peers and teachers in the school. Bronfenbrenner (1979) defined the microsystem as having the most direct and immediate impact on the child. In this study, the parents at home, and the teachers and the transition providers in the school contribute to this system of the youth in preparing the youth for their adult roles. First, the two sub-themes in theme 2 highlight how parents' level of involvement became an important part of the youth's life as they are strong advocates for their transition-age child for services as well as setting a role model to teach their transition-age child self-advocacy skills. Second, in theme 4 on the *Impact on Youth*, the first two sub-themes present on the negative impacts on the vocational, educational and social outcomes on the youths; while sub-theme 3 presents on how the parenting style was shaped by the nature of the youth with a disability. Sub-theme 3 of theme 5 further speaks to the parents as a positive support system for their youths with disabilities. Parents as a resource and advocate for individuals with disabilities is well documented (e.g., Graetz, 2010; Trainor, 2008), thus, highlighting the parents as the most immediate and impactful resource and support that shapes the development of the child.

The mesosystem is a component that incorporates other formal and informal social structures that may not directly interact with the child but may still influence the microsystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Examples include issues that occur with the parents or school personnel, or events that took place at home or at school that may affect the child. In this study, several sub-themes belong to this level as parents face difficulties with the interplay between several environmental factors, mainly on service-related matters that affect their youth's welfare. Specifically, in theme 1, subtheme 1 on the poor public policies, eligibility issues and fragmented post-transition services, as well as subtheme 2 on the shortage of educational and specialized medical/mental health services spoke to the formal and/or informal services that may or may not necessarily be directly or readily be needed by the transition-age youth at the time, but may have any impact on them in the near future. This entails the needs to synchronize among healthcare practitioners, educators, and community support services, as well as the needs to provide positive support for caregiving parents. As shown in theme 5, sub-themes 1 and 2 show the positive aspects of the transition service as well as mental and medical supports that can be available to support youth with disabilities. Successfully navigating these institutions frequently requires advocating for suitable educational adjustments, healthcare access, and social inclusion opportunities. Therefore, the successful coordination of these services will greatly influence the positive youth's development and the overall caregiving experience of the family (Hoffman & Kirby, 2022; Panopoulos & Drossinou-Korea, 2020; Stanley & Kuo, 2022)

At the exosystem level, Bronfenbrenner (1979) defines this system as those that provide other formal and informal social structures, but they may not directly interact with the youth child but may influence the Microsystem. In this case, this could be related to issues or events of the parents at home or at schools (e.g., stress of parents, resources or funding at schools). Theme 3's impact on parents, especially the adverse parental impact on their mental health could affect the child, thus belonging to the exosystem. Furthermore, the flipside of this is the sub-theme of theme 5 where family and community become the informal support for the caregiving family, which positively affects the caregiver, which in turns affect the caregiving for the youth.

Parents are subject to the influence of broader societal and institutional issues that indirectly impact their caregiving experience (Francis et al., 2020). This includes policies regarding the allocation of healthcare resources, the establishment of educational benchmarks, and the protection of the rights of those with disabilities. Families may face challenges due to structural impediments, including restricted availability of specialized services, insufficient insurance coverage, and societal prejudice against impairments (Jacobs et al., 2020). External influences might worsen stress and financial burden, affecting parents' capacity to offer optimal care and support for their children with disabilities. Therefore, acknowledging tackling these systemic obstacles to assist families in offering optimal care and opportunity for their children with disabilities.

The macrosystem, as defined by Bronfenbrenner (1979), is the broad cultural and intellectual framework that shapes attitudes towards impairments and influences the development of policies and practices. The cultural beliefs, social conventions, and legal frameworks surrounding disability rights differ significantly throughout societies. The one theme from this study that maps to this system is subtheme 3 of theme 1 on the societal stigma of race and ethnicity on these families and youth with disabilities. The experience of discrimination they face, together with disability can have profound effects on them. This is also one of the central research questions on how being a minoritized family and transition-age youth with disability's experience was like, which have shown to have a profound effect on the experiences of families who are parenting children with disabilities.

The chronosystem is the fifth and final level of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. Bronfenbrenner (1979) defines this system as the shift and transition over one's lifetime, with the environmental changes being somewhat predictive, such as developmental and/or life milestones or unpredicted events. This could also be one entering into a different environment with changes. In this study, the transition and the prediction of the youth's future itself is the chronosystem.

This system is influenced by individuals and their changing environment. It explains the positive and negative effects of change and constancy in the youth's environment and the role that others play (Panopoulos & Drossinou-Korea, 2020). Families experience emotional strain caused by the death of a family member or by societal stigma because of their youth's disability and ethnic-minority status. Also, as children mature and transition into different settings and/or milestones, they experience a combination of physical and cognitive transformations that interact with evolving social norms.

The response children have to various life transformations is influenced by the support they receive within the ecological system (Ellis-Robinson et al., 2023). For instance, when an adolescent transitions from high school to work, their emotional reaction can vary. Some may experience feelings of worry or unease, while others may feel a sense of excitement and joy. The concerned feelings experienced by ethnic-minority youth are exacerbated by societal stigmas surrounding disabilities (Lindsay & Dain, 2024).

When discussing youth with disabilities, the chronosystem is especially important since it demonstrates how the timing of the disability onset, diagnostic milestones, changes in support services, and cultural attitudes about disability may all have a substantial impact on their development (Mulisa, 2019). For example, developments in medical technology or changes in educational regulations over time might result in new opportunities and problems for young people with disabilities. Similarly, societal developments in attitudes toward inclusion and accessibility might alter individual experiences and consequences depending on when they occur.

Given that an overall picture of the discussion in relation to the Bronfenbrenner’s system was presented, the following discussion will be presented by each theme and sub-theme in more depth.

Theme 1: Ecological Issues

Theme 1 contributes to research sub-questions two and three, which pertain to parents’ involvement with service providers/systems and the lived experience of the transition process in promoting their youth’s educational and vocational services. This theme also highlights the importance and influence of the micro, meso, and exosystems in Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Model in relation to the provision of the quality of the services to support the students with disability.

The results of the first theme identified had three sub-themes. The first two themes were: 1) *Poor Public Policy and Eligibility Lead to Ill-Equipped and Disintegrated Community Services* and 2) *Shortage of Educational and Specialized Services*. These two sub-themes spoke to the inadequacy of the external and inherent systems, policies, services, and resources at the educational and community systems. The third sub-theme, *Societal Stigma due to Race and Ethnic Status*, discussed the centrality of how the parent's experiences were affected by the minoritized status in race and ethnicity of their youth. Specifically, students with disabilities, particularly those with severe disabilities, often are screened out for services, and the education system has not been equipped to streamline the assessment and eligibility process so that students can expedite the process so that they can receive the services on time.

In the broader context of the *Ecological Issues* theme, these results are consistent with what is shown in the current literature. Lombardi et al. (2022) studied the transition process and found that services beyond school were disintegrated and not aligned to meet the needs of the student. This pattern is also shown in the larger literature that fragmented services existed for high school graduates with disabilities since post-transition services no longer have the school system to provide a one-stop or centralized hub to gather the wide vast amount of needed transition services for adulthood (Watt & Kim, 2019; Wulczyn et al., 2013).

Poor Public Policy and Eligibility Lead to Ill-Equipped and Disintegrated Community Services

The first subtheme associated with *Ecological Issues* is *Poor Public and Eligibility Lead to Ill-Equipped and Disintegrated Community Services*. This sub-theme refers to how policies have not caught up to make services more effective or efficient to benefit youth with disabilities especially during the transition period. This results in putting these youths in a disadvantaged or even detrimental position in receiving services to remediate their disability, eventually leading to the delaying of their accomplishment of their intended goals.

Generally speaking, the pattern of inadequate and/or fragmented services for students with disabilities were all too common during the transition period (Friedman et al., 2013). In the transition world, this is a phenomenon where it is documented as “falling off the cliff” - a period when students with disabilities graduating from secondary school where families and students go from one school system where they provide services to the community where there is no unified system to provide the many different types of needed adult services . This causes the different types of services to become fragmented (Cheak-Zamora et al., 2015). The systematic issues of poor services, whether they are intended or unintended, have been shown to be due to different causes, including drastic decline in service (Anderson et al., 2017) and the inconsistent available services and support at post-transition services. Collectively, these also causes the identification and enrollment of such services difficult (Boehm et al., 2015; Shattuck et al., 2012).

Furthermore, policies and legislation are intended to exist to allow inclusion of services for individuals with disabilities, often may end up not serving their purposes. Parents from the current studies expressed that their transition-age youth often have their services delayed and/or cut off due to some of these policies. In fact, current literature shows how some legislations do in fact pose some negative consequences to people with disabilities (Blanchard et al., 2021; Chin, 2021) . For instance, The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) mandates the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team to develop a plan with goals and activities to help students with disabilities to transition to meaningful post-secondary education, employment and adult services (Griffiths et al., 2023; Lee et al., 2023) . However, studies showed that despite its mandate, there are considerable variations in when the transition plan starts and ends and the process (Wehmeyer et al., 2019), and the types of activities (Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, 2017). As mentioned earlier, as students exit school-based services, different types of adult services have different eligibility criteria, process, and there is no coordination among these services and often there are overlaps (Shogren & Wittenberg, 2020), thus, making post-secondary services fragmented and difficult to navigate. In employment, the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) Title 1 of (ADA) intends to protect against discrimination to employment for a qualified individual with a disability in the job application process, hiring, advancing, firing, employee wages, job training, or any other conditions of employment (Leslie et al., 2023). With Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Subpart D was intended to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities and requires reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities who attend schools that are receiving federal financial assistance (Sassu, 2018). Although these legislations were in place to support services for youth with disabilities, literature still showed that services remained inadequate to meet their youth's needs (Gow et al., 2020; Lewis & Muñez, 2023).

In the area of employment, a common challenge for individuals with disabilities that face related to disability benefits - a concept that often is difficult to understand to balance between working, earning and losing the support of disability benefits. According to Desphande and Li (2019), to initiate applying for disability benefits, persons must carefully assess their eligibility, complete comprehensive documentation, and furnish their medical documents for review. The application procedure is crucial for precisely targeting disability programs due to the inherent challenges of observing and verifying disabilities, which can be both complex and expensive (Yin et al., 2022). A lack of transparency in decision-making processes and accountability procedures is frequently present in public policy that is not effective (Moodie-Dyer et al., 2014). Though this disability benefit system is meant to benefit individuals with disabilities, the procedure can be complex and can be counterproductive for individuals with disabilities and families to maneuver around the system (Chin, 2021).

Shortage of Educational and Specialized Services

The second subtheme associated with *Ecological Issues is the Shortage of Educational and Specialized Services*. This concept specifically refers to insufficient educational and healthcare professionals as well as organizations within some community agencies that cannot adequately meet the healthcare needs of the population they serve. The results of this subtheme were supported in the current literature. For instance, Kanthasamy and researchers (2024) did a scoping review on caregivers' adaptation during the transition period for individuals with intellectual disabilities, one of the main themes identified was about the dissatisfaction with the wide variety of adult services, some of which include specialized services such as accommodation and employment support, realistic vocational training providers. Guthier-Boudreault et al. (2017) also reported that the late transition planning, as well as the lack of collaboration and lack of coordination of the vast levels of services further exacerbated the challenge about service. They also reported other services that are reported to be inadequate include day activity centers, respite care and health care, the last of which is consistent with what this study shows.

Although parents from this study reported about the shortage of service providers and specialized services, the literature reinforces the importance of having qualified service providers who can meet the needs of youth with disabilities. For example, Dirth and Branscombe (2017) attested that the quality of special education services is critical in determining the academic outcomes of students with disabilities. Plotner et al. (2020) also speaks to the importance of the relationship between the youth and their service providers and the level of service providers available to the youth.

Societal Stigma Due to Race and Ethnic Status

Societal Stigma Due to Race and Ethnic Status is the third theme under theme 1. This sub-theme supports the literature regarding societal stigmas that ethnic-minority youth with disabilities encounter due to their race and ethnic status. Conceptually, stigma makes an individual different from others in their society. The labels are placed on individuals with impairments in various ways.

McLeod (2023) examined the perceptions of stigma individuals face with a disability. The authors reported that youth with visible and invisible disabilities face inequalities, with the effects of social stigma based on race and ethnicity having a significant impact on parents and caregivers of ethnic-minority adolescents with disabilities. Consequently, parents identified that they must their youth with disabilities and help mitigate the effects of stigma (Manago et al., 2017). Also, parents must navigate the complexities of social interactions and their culture.

Similarly, parents must balance living in an individualistic society and embracing their cultural norms and collective approach to supporting their ethnic-minority youth with disabilities. Vertical collectivist cultures, like those found in many Asian and Latin American nations, prioritize the importance of family cohesion and harmony (Chao, 2001). Parents are instructed from an early age to emphasize the needs and goals of the family rather than their own desires. This cultural value fosters a sense of obligation and accountability in preserving the honor and cohesion of the family. Vertical collectivism emphasizes hierarchical ties within groups when individuals prioritize the aims and well-being of their immediate family unit over their own individual ambitions or accomplishments (Wu, 2021). Parents frequently choose a vertical collectivism strategy in child-rearing due to cultural values and societal standards.

Theme 2: Involvement Requires Different Levels of Parental Advocacy

Theme 2: *Involvement Requires Different Levels of Parental Advocacy* connects to sub-questions one and two, highlighting the parents' perceptions of parenting styles and parental involvement. This theme also supports Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory at the micro and meso systems level. Results of the second theme further divide into two subthemes. The first subtheme was *Parents Needs to Actively Advocate for Their Youths to Receive Services*, and the second subtheme was *Parents' Advocacy Action Sets a Role Model for Their Youths*. These subthemes spoke both to the needs and the importance of parents being involved at every level of the transition process and the types of advocacy that the parents must be engaged in to ensure the needs of their youth with disabilities are met.

Parents Needs to Actively Advocate for their Youths to Receive Services

Parents Need to Actively Advocate for Their Youths to Receive Services is the first sub-theme. The findings strongly supported and are consistent with the current literature about the needs and the benefits of advocacy, as well as implying the benefits of self-advocacy. Ample studies showed that parents of transition-age students with special needs feel obligated to advocate for their children for services, whether they are educational, vocational or services beyond the school (e.g., Burke & Hodapp, 2016). However, they are often ill-equipped in terms of both the knowledge and advocacy skills to do so, which led to poor school outcomes (Laxman et al., 2019) and family outcomes (Burke & Hodapp, 2014).

More importantly, the concept of advocacy ties closely to parental involvement with the child as well as with the school and all necessary entities - a concept that is consistent with

Epstein’s parental involvement concept. Epstein defines advocacy as the process by which parents actively advocate for and promote their children's educational requirements and interests within the school system and community (Epstein, 2007). Epstein (2007) further stresses the importance of parental involvement in terms of staying involved and being informed of their youth’s education and community activities. The Epstein Parenting Model, particularly level five, emphasizes decision-making and promotes a cooperative approach in which parents actively include their children in conversations and choices related to family affairs. This decision-making level promotes empowerment, accountability, and mutual regard within the family unit (Epstein, 2007; Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2010).

To deepen the concept of parental involvement, Epstein and Van Voorhis (2010) further elaborate the model of family school partnership, a concept that is refined and studied by other researchers such as Bierman and Sheridan (2022); Sheridan and Kim (2015); Garbacz and Powell (2024).

This family school partnership emphasizes the significance of fostering collaborations that is intentional, bidirectional and equal in the partnership among the family, school, and the community to provide comprehensive services for the students with special needs throughout their academic journey. Therefore, collectively, the broader concepts of parental involvement, engagement or partnership, however the term is defined emphasized that the level of involvement of the parents is not only at home but also with multiple stakeholders such as schools and community service providers, and that the types of involvement must be nurtured to have well-supported collaborations through active participation among all groups that reciprocal, equal in partnership and intentional in nature (Epstein, 2007; Holmes & Sheridan, 2021; & Witte et al., 2023.

In order to achieve a higher level of partnership, Jeynes (2018) emphasized the relationship building between parents and the school personnel, and further advocated the importance of this overall climate change of the school to cultivate a nurturing and disciplined atmosphere. Similarly, Rispoli and researchers (2019) conducted a qualitative study on caregivers of transition-age students with autism about their parent’s role, many the themes that emerged, parents expressed a strong sense of collaboration and partnership with the school and more so with outside the school, and the needs to be an advocate for services for their child. Their study also mentioned that the establishment of the relationship is imperative for collaboration. According to Kruithof et al. (2020), parents reported that advocating for their youth was primarily influenced by the relationship they have with their youths.

As part of advocacy, parental involvement in the form of communication is discussed. For instance, Studies show that a child's cognitive and physical capacities might influence how parents communicate and participate in school activities, such as transition programs (Case, 2000; Shakespeare et al., 1999). Williams and Sanchez (2013) report that ethnic-minority parents require effective communication with school personnel. Furthermore, parents may lack awareness that their personal experiences and backgrounds may impact their level of involvement (Papoudi et al., 2021). The school systems that may influence the parents’ level of involvement (Epstein, 2007; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). The most prevalent factors that influence parental involvement are the parent's mental and emotional health, socioeconomic status, and cultural influences (Brown et al., 2020). Thus, practitioners must be able to act as an advocate for the parents and/or their children when they are in the blind spot. The diverse viewpoints held by parents must be noted as a resource during the transition process to help these families to navigate for the necessary services they deserve (Edwards & Kutaka, 2015).

Finally, Zarate (2007) conducted a study of ethnic-minority youth and found that in order for youth to be successful in their transition program, youth required parents who would advocate in the educational setting. Kohler and Field (2013) emphasized the role of socioeconomic conditions and parental involvement in shaping the educational and vocational outcomes of youth transitioning to emerging adult roles. These further emphasize that advocacy becomes even more important for underserved populations, such as families and students from minoritized backgrounds (Burke & Goldman, 2018).

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997), specific variables generate patterns of effect at important points in the parental involvement process. This model considers parental involvement forms, processes, and mediating variables that affect educational and developmental outcomes. Ample evidence also showed the benefits of parental involvement in terms of advocacy in positive outcomes in students in disabilities. For example, families of youth with autism who are more engaged with the school during the transition process have more positive post-school outcomes (Lee & Carter, 2012). Positive family and school partnership also results in greater likelihood of student participation in their own Individual Education Program transition meetings (Roux et al., 2021), employment (Carter et al., 2012) and college attainment (Chiang et al., 2012).

Parents Advocacy Action Sets a Role Model for Their Youths

Parents Advocacy Action Sets a Role Model for their Youths is the second sub-theme under theme 2, *Involvement Requires Different Levels of Parental Advocacy*. This sub-theme supports the literature regarding the level of parental involvement needed to advocate for their youths. For instance, the parents of middle and high school students with autism reported that in addition to seeing themselves as advocates for their child, they also see themselves the need to focus on their child as a self-advocate (Rispoli et al., 2019). When included in advocacy efforts, this approach motivates parents to campaign for their children's immediate needs and interests as well as their long-term growth and well-being (Burke & Hodapp, 2016). Parents, therefore, naturally teach children advocacy skills by participating in decision-making at a young age.

Epstein and Van Voorhis (2010) further stated that when parents actively display desirable behaviors, such as involvement in school and community activity, these parents can offer direct guidance and motivate their children to have similar characteristics, thus, supporting the transactional effort of role modeling. With proper and reasonable family involvement and positive advocacy, evidence shows its transactional benefits for youth with disabilities, thus further affirming that parents also advocate with the intent to set a role model for their children. Proper family involvement has been demonstrated to facilitate reasonable goals and expectations of caregivers and foster autonomy for youths (Simomsen & Neubert, 2013).

Theme 3: Impact on Parents

Theme 3 is related to sub-question four on understanding how the transition process influences the parents' perceived quality of life. Considering Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model, this highlights that parents are relationally influenced by the meso and exosystems that impact their youth.

The first subtheme associated with *Impact on Parents is Parents Worry for Youth's Future*. This sub-theme is predicated on parents having concerns about their youth's future. The second subtheme is *Adverse Parental Mental Health*. This sub-theme discusses the overall well-being of parents as they assist their youth through the transition process. The results for this theme support the existing literature.

Parents Worry about their Youths' Future

As primary caregivers, it is perhaps not surprising that parents continue to show concern about their child's future when their child transitions to a future when the service can be uncertain. *Parents Worry about their Youth's Future* is the first subtheme associated with the *Impact on Parents*. This sub-theme supports the research question and speaks explicitly to the direct impact being a caregiver had on the participants. In the current literature, parents are an important great source of support for assisting their children in transitioning from high school to adult roles (Awsumb et al., 2020; Sosnowy et al., 2018). Given the nature of the transition process and the associated stressors and persistent challenges faced about service matters, parents have been subject to the caregiving burden for a long time. With the falling-off-the-cliff phenomenon of adult services for transition-age individuals, it is natural for families to have this worry on their child's future due to these uncertainties (Cheak-Zamora et al., 2015; Curtiss et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2021).

Adverse Parental Mental Health

Adverse Parental Mental Health is the second subtheme associated with the *Impact of Parents*. This sub-theme speaks to the overall quality of life of parents identified during the research and is supported by several studies. Current literature supports the findings of this sub-theme.

Literature supports this theme that youth's outcomes and future relate to the caregivers' personal outcomes (Dozier et al., 2017). Parents reported that worrying about their youth's future was a substantial marker of their overall mental health. The findings further align with the literature on the parent's mental health and the caregiver burden experienced by the parents. As mentioned above, the amount of stressors associated with the transition process, and the need to provide caregiving to their child with disabilities naturally pose extra demands on the parents. Ample literature attested the caregiving burden resulting from this persistent caregiving role, especially when services are sparse and support is inadequate (Kanthasamy et al., 2017). Caregiving burden, if not alleviated properly, would affect the caregivers negatively, such as poor health, mental health and other family indicators (e.g., Gillan et al., 2010; Lee et al., 2019; Lee & Shivers, 2019).

Boursnell (2014) has noted that the emotional and mental health of the parents can present substantial risks to their children, including academic challenges and the child's withdrawal from social and academic activities, thus, reinforcing the reciprocal effect of wellbeing and support of parents in order to influence a positive impact on the transition-age youth The emotional, physical, social, and pecuniary responsibilities of caregivers were acknowledged as complex and burdensome (Javalkar et al., 2017). The influence of caregiver behaviors is also evident in research by Kouros et al. (2017); whereas caregivers' parenting styles reciprocate their youth’s emotional reactions.

Current literature shows that parents' interactions with their youth and parenting styles can influence the psychological well-being of both the children and the parents (Hoyle et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2019). For example, according to Jacobs et al. (2019), children are influenced by their caregivers' socio-emotional behaviors and reactions as early as infancy, and their children's responses reciprocally influence caregivers. Thus, based on this reciprocal influence of the caregiving relationship, it can significantly impact the caregivers’ mental health. Caregiver burden can increase perceived social stigma and negative perceptions of their caregiving responsibilities (Cassidy et al., 2013). Furthermore, researchers also discussed that parents’ wellbeing is affected due to the challenges of the negative interactions with service providers such as schools, community agencies and/or medical providers (e.g., Kanthasamy et al., 2017; Lee et al., 2021).

Theme 4: Impact on Youths

Theme 4, *Impact on Youth*, interweaves with sub-questions two and three on understanding parents' perceptions when interacting with their youth services. Considering the theoretical framework, the impact on youth happens at all Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model levels.

The first sub-theme is *Adverse Impacts on the Youth's Vocational and Educational Activitie*s, and the second sub-theme is *Adverse Social Interactions*. Subthemes one and two were derived from societal stigma and the impact the disability and ethnic-minority status have on the youth. The third sub-theme is *An Authoritative Parenting Style is Influenced by the Need to Care for Their Youth*. This sub-theme speaks to participants' parenting styles during the transition process and their impact on their youth.

Adverse Impacts on the Youth's Vocational and Educational Activities

Perhaps that the parents conveyed these negative impacts on their youth with disabilities are not surprising. Given that youth at the transition-age is at the developmental stage where they are preparing for adulthood where they are mostly likely focusing on having educational and/or vocational pursuits to prepare for their adulthood (Arnett, 2007) in order to lead an independent life. However, young adults with disabilities often face many complex transition challenges (Pandey & Agarwal, 2013). As a result, both the youth with disabilities and their families have bleak outcomes during the transition process. For example, in the Institute for Educational Leadership report in 2021, Cheng and Shaewitz (2021) reported that youth and young adults with disabilities (14-24 years old), there remains a significant gap in the high school attainment for students with and without disabilities, with the widest at more than 21%, college enrollment of 27.3% for those with disabilities (43.4% without disabilities), and 16% less for those with disabilities.

Xin and colleagues (2020) reported that youth with disabilities face many challenges in their career decision-making and are often underscored. The study emphasizes the necessity for individuals with disabilities to possess diverse skills to navigate the complexities of career choices successfully. Wehman et al. (2015) highlighted the significant impact of a youth's disability characteristics on their vocational outcomes. Rispoli and researchers' study (2023), when interviewed the parents of middle and high school students with autism about their expectations, and consistently shared educational and vocational concerns and impacts for their transition-age children.

Adverse Social Interactions

Adverse Social Interactions is the second theme that supports the *Impact on Youth*. This theme speaks to the social interactions impacted by the youth and their ability to communicate effectively This sub-theme findings are consistent with the current literature. According to Palmer and Harley (2012), individuals with disabilities, particularly those with long-term impairments, often encounter various barriers in their social interactions, which can negatively impact their participation in society and communication with others. Bricout et al. (2004) emphasize the importance of developmental and everyday living assistance for youth with disabilities. Caregivers play a crucial role in navigating the complexities of these youths' lives and providing guidance for social involvement. Morningstar and collegues (2017) investigation on youth with disabilities social interactions further accentuates the significance of effective communication for the emerging adults with disabilities in academic settings, particularly in fostering engagement and interaction with peers of the same age group.

Current literature further supports this sub-theme by examining the medical model of disabilities. Rees (2017) conducted a comprehensive study focusing on youth with severe impairments, revealing that individuals with severe disabilities encounter significant exclusion from social settings. This exclusion often stems from their limited communication abilities, leading to unmet educational and vocational needs among this population. Thus, the complex and intricacies of unique and wide aspects of disabilities and their impact on the youth with disabilities must be understood, and service must be identified and matched to address these challenges for them and their families.

An Authoritative Parenting Style Influenced by the Need to Care for Their Youth

The third theme of *Impact on Youth* is an authoritative parenting style influenced by the need to care for their youth. This theme suggests that their parents' parenting styles impact youth. Parenting styles are determined by the demands the parents expect their youth to respond to in society, and the responsiveness when the parents foster a sense of autonomy (Darling & Sterling, 1993). Parents have a moral responsibility to rear their children to meet social standards and thrive in their environment (Meeussen & Van Laar, 2018).

The study's results yielded a diverse representation of parents from various socio-economic statuses. Research suggests that parents who are authoritative in style are usually more educated and assert a low level of psychological demands of their youth (Barber, 1996). As supported by Baumrind (1971), this approach emphasizes the importance of striking a balance between being firm and nurturing, fostering their children’s social responsibility and enhancing personal accountability. The youth’s interest is considered when in community with community members, and they are encouraged to be involved in the transition process (Bornstein & Bornstein, 2007).

Theme 5: Positive Support Systems and Personal Resiliency

Theme 5 is associated with sub-questions one, two, and three on understanding parents' reports of having a positive support system and their ability to endure challenges. Considering Bronfenbrenner's theoretical framework, parents provide psychosocial and economic support to their youth. According to Bronfenbrenner's model, parents are positive support systems at many levels, including the meso and exosystems.

The results of the fifth theme identified four sub-themes. The first sub-theme is the *Alignment of Youths' Interests and Transition Goals*. The second sub-theme is *Community Agencies' Abilities to Coordinate Mental and Medical Support*. The first two sub-themes are expressed by parents wanting to have adequate services for their youth. The third sub-theme is that *Parents Act as a Positive Support System for their Youth*, and the fourth sub-theme is that *Family and Community are Available as Informal Support*. The final two sub-themes shed light on parents not having the support they need and being that source of support for their youth. Also, parents discussed that they needed to secure informal support systems in managing their youth's day-to-day affairs.

The results from the fifth theme are consistent with what was found in the literature. According to Epstein (2007), parents must have a favorable support structure to participate actively in their children's education and growth. An affirming network can offer motivation, assets, and prospects for parents to champion their children's needs in educational and societal settings. Hedley et al. (2017) states that parents should encourage social belonging in their youth, as many can feel isolated. Ethnic-minority caregivers had to overcome more obstacles than their White counterparts and had greater resiliency (Mui, 1992). Anderson (2022) conducted a study and found that caregivers desire informal support as they navigate multiple tasks for their youth with disabilities.

Alignment of Youths' Interests and Transition Goals

Alignment of Youth's Interests and Transition Goals is the first sub-theme under *Positive Support and Personal Resiliency*. This sub-theme speaks to parents wanting their youth's interests to align with transition goals. In support of this sub-theme, current literature found several studies that agreed with the results. Plotner et al. (2020) state that parents and transition planning teams are interconnected entities, especially when their goals and supports are all aligned to supporting students and determining their future objectives and goals

Wilczenski et al. (2017) conducted a study that highlighted the challenge students face when their career interests clash with the high expectations set by their parents, hindering their autonomy in decision-making processes. Cobb and Alwell (2009) emphasize the importance of student-focused career planning, suggesting that parents play a crucial role in shaping their children's interests and promoting engagement in extracurricular activities. Additionally, Mapp and colleagues (2008) argues that early parental involvement in decision-making empowers youth to develop l00ºself-efficacy and achieve their aspirations, underscoring the significance of parental guidance in facilitating successful career development pathways for young individuals.

Community Agencies' Abilities to Coordinate Mental and Medical Supports

Community Agencies' Abilities to Coordinate Mental and Medical Supports is the second theme under theme five. This sub-theme speaks to parents' desires for their youth's mental and medical providers to support their youth's goals. The current literature supports this sub-theme. According to Powers et al. (2005), youth goals encompass establishing transition teams that leverage strengths and foster interagency collaborations to enhance mental and medical care for young individuals.

In the realm of youth mental health services, Betancourt and Khan (2008) emphasize the crucial role that community agencies play in supporting the mental and emotional needs of young individuals. Furthermore, Lipkin et al. (2015) highlight the necessity for coordinated mental health and medical services for students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), underscoring the importance of community agencies' involvement early in providing holistic support. The study by Awsumb et al. (2020) reinforces these assertions by indicating a significant gap in addressing the multifaceted needs of youth with disabilities, emphasizing the indispensable role of community and family support in bridging this gap.

Parents Acts as Positive Support System for Their Youth

Parents Act as Positive Support System for Their Youth is the third theme under theme five. In this subtheme, parents discuss their role in empowering youth and fostering their confidence to reach their full potential. Consistent parental encouragement and guidance create a nurturing environment for young individuals to cultivate their self-awareness and pursue their interests. The findings underscore the important role of parents as an important source of support for individuals with disabilities and this concept is undoubtedly supported regardless of any demographic backgrounds (Lee et al., 2024). In addition to providing basic supports such as physical/day-to-day, emotional, instrumental supports, one of the many roles that parents play for their children with disabilities is to provide social capital so that they can access to resources, communities and to build connections among networks (Lee & Shivers, 2019; Trainor, 2008). Therefore, parents' involvement and being a part of the fabric of the youth's system, in fact, must be taken into account as a resource when working with people with disabilities. With

Epstein (2007)'s concept of parental involvement, it stresses the importance of parents staying involved and being informed of their youth's education and community activities. When positive and active parental involvement with youth, school and community can be established, youth's needs, services, and decisions can lead to successful outcomes. For example, empowerment, accountability, and mutual regard within the family unit (Epstein 2007; Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2010), positive post-school outcomes (Lee & Carter, 2012), increase student participation in Individual Education Program (Roux et al., 2021), employment (Carter et al., 2012), college attainment (Chiang et al., 2012), increase school and community activities (Xin et al., 2020) have been documented as successful outcomes demonstrated by parental support. Similar positive outcomes have also been shown for minority families and youth with disabilities in terms of their self-determination levels, motivation and confidence in pursuing postsecondary goals (El-Hassan & Ghalayini, 2020).

Family and Community are Available as Informal Support

Family and Community are Available as Informal Support is the fourth and final theme under theme five. Parents identified the power to rely on peer and other informal supports to assist them. Research has shown that parental social support can mitigate the effects of stress on parenting amongst ethnic-minority parents (Pinderhughes et al., 2000). More importantly, peer support has been increasingly evident in caregiving for those who have shown themselves to be even more powerful in showing collegiality in sharing resources and supporting others who have similar experience. Dieleman and colleagues (2019) further discussed the importance of peer networks in contributing to parental autonomy, relatedness, and competence.

Yeshiva (2015) found that the students and family members of students with disabilities expressed a need for familial and informal assistance. According to Hoover -Dempsey et al.

(2005), invitations from school community members can motivate parents to participate in their child's learning, as they suggest that participation is welcome, valuable, and expected. This is especially important for parents who may not be ready to be actively engaged but may require some additional guidance to improve their self-efficacy. Informal support positively impacts maternal, economic, parenting, and child outcomes, promoting psychological and economic well-being, positive parenting practices, and child outcomes, often through improved maternal well-being (Radey, 2018).

Strengths and Limitations of the Study

Although ample studies have been conducted to understand the lived experience of transition-age students and/or parents with disabilities, the unique investigation of the experience with vocational preparation has not been explicitly studied. A majority of quantitative studies and some qualitative studies focus on school-based domains. Given that the preparation of transition-age youth with disabilities also entails work, an understanding of their experience with pre-vocational preparation with school, or with vocational agencies is imperative in order to better understand any challenges and maximize the strengths. The current study has several strengths. This study was driven theoretically, using Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Model, thus, this study was carefully conceptualized. This study also attempted to incorporate multiple family concepts such as parental involvement and parental styles, that have been studied alone, into the transition experience when considering the experience of minoritized family and youths with disabilities. Family-related concepts are nuanced especially given their importance in collectivistic cultures in racial and ethnic minority families (Rao, 2023; Vanegas et al., 2021)

This study also intentionally investigated not only the impact of the transition process on the youth with disabilities but also on the parent caregiver, given that caregiving is a particularly important integral part of the system in the minority culture and that the research on caregiving support tends to be understudied. Another strength of the study was that the interviews were conducted via the Zoom platform, which allowed parents to meet at any time and any settings. As discussed before, the concepts of family-school partnership when working with families and students with disabilities, attested the needs to understand the challenges and work flexibly to accommodate the high caregiving responsibilities. Using the Zoom platform has allowed the participants to be able to be scheduled at the convenience of their schedules. Another strength was that the one-on-one interview allowed in-depth conversation, which turned out to allow bonding and disclosure of experience that contributed to this study.

Despite the innovation and strengths of the study mentioned above, there were some limitations that are worth mentioning that could be used to strengthen for future studies. While the use of phenomenological methodology allowed an in depth understanding of the lived experience of the parents of ethnic minoritized transition-age youth with disabilities, this methodology does not allow generalizability of the results. Therefore, generalizability would require future studies that employ different research methods such as quantitative methods. Along with the methodology, though the sample size of seven may have reached saturation, recruitment was based on convenient sampling. A more intentional recruitment strategy in reaching out specific minoritized/disability characteristics may generate different themes. For example, race and minoritized families with different linguistic backgrounds, youths with different levels of severity of disabilities, etc. are likely to generate different themes. Another limitation was that the use of phenomenological study limits the investigation of one group; perhaps the utilization of a different qualitative method could expand a multi-informant approach to understand first-hand experience from the experience of youth with disabilities. Giving a voice for individuals with disabilities will empower them as part of the movement to make changes. Other stakeholder's voice to involve can be professionals such as special education teachers, transition counselors, vocational counselors, and other practitioners. Therefore, having a more diverse sample could have provided more context in the exploration of group differences and solutions.

Implications of the Study

This research study focused on exploring the lived experiences of parents belonging to ethnic-minority groups whose children have disabilities and are enrolled in schools where Individualized Education Programs (IEP) or 504 plans are implemented. The study aimed to gain insights into how these parents interact with their local school districts regarding the educational support as well as vocational and other transitional-related preparation provided to their children.

Parents of ethnic-minority youths with disabilities in general have been referred to as uninvolved and unresponsive to the needs of their youth with disabilities. Contrary to this perception, results of this study have shown that parents were in fact concerned and involved in the transition process of their youth with disabilities. However, parents face many barriers, such as their youth have encountered in the educational setting and when they are referred to vocational rehabilitation programs. Parents also found additional adult services beyond educational and vocational domains necessary but at times difficult to identify, obtain, and/or receive for various reasons due to a combination of systemic issues, including policy, inadequacy/lack of services and/or professionals, as well as issues with a minority and a family with a disability. Collectively, the transition process has a negative impact on both the youth with disabilities and the parent. In light of this, it is also important to recognize that some educational and community resources were able to provide good services for youths with disabilities, and that there was resiliency in parent in being a support for their youth with disability as a advocate and role model, and that the community and peer support was imperative to support the parents. In the next section, I will discuss implications that can be applied to aspects including for educators, practitioners (e.g., , rehabilitation counselors, school, and community partners), and researchers based on the results.

Implications for Educators

Results emphasized the importance of having qualified service delivery professionals and the needs for advocacy on behalf of the ethnic-minority youth with disabilities and their families. As a rehabilitation counselor educator, to ensure that community agencies recruit qualified rehabilitation counselors, we must consider the pre-service training received at the college level. Rehabilitation educators are tasked with preparing future rehabilitation counselors. As educators training rehabilitation counselors working with disabilities, several implications are noted.

Rehabilitation educators play an essential role in preparing future rehabilitation counselors to advocate for their ethnic-minority students with disabilities. Educators must integrate curriculum elements that emphasize early intervention practice to ensure that rehabilitation counseling students understand the development requirements and potential obstacles encountered by individuals with disabilities at different levels. Future rehabilitation counselors should be provided with the knowledge and resources to encourage vocational and career counseling by utilizing case studies, having guest speakers who are experts in their industry, and providing opportunities to improve advocacy skills.

In addition to the clinical and counseling skills as well as community resources, future rehabilitation counselors must be cognizant about policy issues. Research suggests that rehabilitation educators are critical in promoting their future rehabilitation professionals in advocating and enhancing policy. Educators should incorporate policy analysis projects that focus not only on disability policy but also on how to advocate on behalf of their students for equality and access. parents also mentioned a lack of support from their school and service providers.

Understanding the unequal distribution of service providers is imperative in ensuring access to services for underserved populations (Andrilla et al., 2018). The shortage of educational and specialist services is crucial, as families may face a long waiting list that could delay youth's receiving critical developmental support (Mason-Williams et al., 2020).

As demonstrated, interagency collaboration is shown to be imperative towards the success of transition-age students with disabilities (Lee & Carter, 2012). Accordingly, it is imperative that educators train rehabilitation counselors to effectively collaborate with other experts, providing a multidisciplinary approach (Hartley & Tarvydas, 2022). Educators must promote the understanding of key stakeholders and partnerships involved, their roles and functions, and how to collaborate with educational institutions, community organizations, and governmental officials. The collaboration should be of a holistic nature and meet the needs of the ethnic-minority youth with various challenges. This includes providing medical care, mental health treatments, and facilitating access to important benefits. Finally, rehabilitation educators training future rehabilitation professionals play a crucial role in ensuring the pre-service professional is trained in multicultural aspects of one’s disability. In addition, being trained in multicultural counseling will allow future rehabilitation counselors with skills to avoid bias, discrimination, and stigmatizing students with disabilities and their families.

Implications for Rehabilitation Practitioners and/or Other Practitioners

First, practitioners who are responsible for the high-quality services and well-being of ethnic-minority youth with disabilities and their families must comprehend the distinctive challenges and requirements of this population. The youth service delivery team must be more informed about these challenges and requirements and advocate on behalf of their clients.

In addition, practitioners should build rapport not only with the student but with their parents/caregiver. Research supports that when practitioners build rapport with families, particularly with cultures that value collectivism, cultural sensitivity is appreciated, and the families start to trust their youth's service provider. With this in mind, culturally responsive educational systems are based on the principle that all students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds can achieve success in academic pursuits when their culture, language, heritage, and experiences are respected and utilized to support their learning and growth (Thorius et al., 2018).

Professionals should be involved in continuous education, learning, and professional development to ensure that vocational rehabilitation, educational, and community service providers are current in their culturally responsive approach. Practitioners must understand that their culturally diverse students will face disproportionately higher rates of discrimination in the education, vocational, and health systems. Practitioners who are trained in promoting diversity, equity, access, and inclusion ultimately serve clients more effectively and have better outcomes. For example, Donath and colleagues (2023) studied practitioners receiving professional development in diversity and inclusion. They found that when professional development is implemented appropriately, they can improve their knowledge, skills, and beliefs and increase student achievement.

Parental involvement is a critical component of understanding ethnic-minority students with disabilities success. Results from this study further support the six elements of Epstein's Parental Involvement Model and refinements of the concept of "involvement" as supported by other models such as parental engagement and family-school partnership (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997).

First, for practitioners, such as counselors, psychologists, and teachers, who work directly with youth with disabilities and families, it is imperative for them to understand the home environments that support the adolescent as a student. For parents of ethnic-minority youth with disabilities, this can be challenging due to cultural and linguistic barriers. Schools can play a crucial role in supporting these parents by providing culturally relevant resources and information on disability rights and services. By offering workshops and materials in multiple languages and collaborating with various disability agencies, schools can empower parents and help them navigate these challenges. In addition, schools should actively promote parental involvement workshops that focus on understanding their youth's disability and cultural influences. These workshops, offered at flexible times to accommodate working parents, are not just a convenience but a necessity, thus enhancing the parents' involvement by being intentional to create opportunities for them to be able to be actively engaged so that their knowledge and skills gained add to their efficacy to be better able to support their youth.

Communication remains one of the key revenues for conveying information and establishing positive working partnerships. However, for parents of ethnic-minority youth, communication with the school can be hindered by cultural differences and biases. To address this, parents should be encouraged to have frequent meetings with their youth's school and community personnel and utilize the available technology to stay informed. Schools and community agencies should have accessible and culturally diverse personnel to serve minority students with disabilities. Schools and community agencies should consider using multimodal communication and having reasonably flexible schedules to accommodate parents. Regular updates on students' academic and post-high school preparation should be done, such as students’ current transition progress as well as upcoming eligibility and planning of future services. If smooth transition and/or regular communication with the school/community can be achieved, this can ensure that services do not fall through the systems.

Another way to build partnership is to invite parents to volunteer to help and support the schools and other parents. Many parents have resources, and their lived experience can serve as valuable insights and support for other parents. Thus, parents can be recognized and appreciated for their parents' contributions, and they can serve as role models of community belongingness as well as for their youths. Furthermore, learning at home provides information and ideas to parents to help their youth at home with school and community activities. Parents play an active role in ensuring their youth learn at home and are trained on how to request services to meet their needs (Ramanlingam & Maniam, 2020). Therefore, they need to be equipped to support their role-modeling efforts to accommodate their youth’s disability needs (Coto et al., 2019). This can be achieved by the schools providing workshops that explore various learning styles and resources, while community agencies can provide youth with training and parents with support to assist their learning of new skills at home, as well as to promote employment information and training

Decision-making involves parents in school and community decision-making and developing parent leaders. Schools and community agencies should actively involve parents of ethnic minority youth in decision-making and ensure they have a seat at the table. However, schools and community agencies typically only respond to levels of involvement that mimic that of middle-class White families (Love et al., 2019). Schools and communities must not only remove bias. However, they must proactively create expectations that are only operationalized on the lived experience of that family and not generalized to their predominantly white standards. In addition, schools should recruit ethnic-minority parents to participate in school-shared governance meetings and parent advocacy groups in the community agency setting. This will give parents a sense of empowerment and personal agency. School leaders should also advocate for policies that support parents' ability to make decisions for their youth. Allowing for policies that reflect the needs of ethnic-minority youth can create a more inclusive school and community involvement.

Collaborating with the community is another cornerstone that includes identifying community resources and services. These resources and services strengthen school programs, family practices, and youth development. Schools should engage with local community agencies that offer support to the families and ensure that the family’s needs are being met. Parents identified concerns with community agencies not supporting their cultural influences and providing the support their youth requires.

According to Buren and colleagues (2020), ethnic-minority parents were knowledgeable about activities to support their youth. However, because of the scarcity of resources and providers, parents sought outside support to assist in the transition process. Schools and larger community agencies should consider partnering with private community agencies. To support this partnership building, events should be organized that allow families to be aware of other resources outside of the school and larger community agencies that should support their ethnic-minority youth. Also, schools and community agencies should advocate for policies that offer funding for culturally normed practices that parents' interpretations can inform of their youth's needs.

In conclusion, the parental involvement concept entails parents' actions to participate in their youth's education and community activities. However, parental engagement encompasses the actions parents must take and having a direct sense of ownership and commitment to parents' feelings about their role in their youth's education or community activities. Parental engagement essentially reflects an equal status, as well as a proactive and invested partnership. To enhance parental involvement, which will lead to engagement, the parents must be welcomed, and they can be intentionally engaged. Thus, taking involvement to the next and true level of engagement will help activate parents' strength and resources as an agent of change to improve the transition outcomes for students with disabilities (Sheridan et al., 2019). Finally, another practical implication at the systems level is related to the need for advocacy and policy enforcement and expanding the eligibility criteria for vocational rehabilitation services. Advocacy and policy enforcement necessitates ensuring equitable access to vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with significant disabilities as well as for ethnic minorities, aligning with legislative mandates such as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), an amendment to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. These laws aim to facilitate access to employment opportunities for workers with disabilities, fostering economic growth and bolstering the middle class, but less so for those in underserved populations such as individuals with disabilities, minoritized individuals, and families. Federal policymakers should, therefore, prioritize the enforcement of existing disability legislation and enhance training for local vocational rehabilitation units to serve individuals with disabilities better as intended by policy mandates. Relatedly, the expansion of the eligibility criteria of ethnic-minority youth when seeking vocational rehabilitation services requires changing eligibility criteria to be more inclusive of individuals with severe disabilities. Racial disparities among people with disabilities who pursued vocational rehabilitation services were evident (Yin et al., 2022). Ethnic-minority individuals with disabilities receive lower eligibility decisions and employment outcomes than their White counterparts. It is recommended that VR agencies change their policies to revise the definitions of impairment and functional limitations in order to capture a more diverse caseload and allow the individual to be more active in decisions made on their behalf.

Recommendations for Future Research

The results of the current study led to opportunities for future research. Research can enhance human knowledge, promote a creative approach to finding a solution, and share the findings across disciplines. The current study has provided future research opportunities to explore this topic. As mentioned in the limitations section, the phenomenological approach was taken because the topic pertaining to vocational services was understudied. Thus, the phenomenological nature has allowed an in-depth understanding of lived experience of the parents of ethnic minoritized transition-age youth with disabilities by focusing on family-related concepts such as parenting styles, parental involvement, as well as taking into account how the transition process has impact not only the youth with disability but also the parent. In future research, one direction can focus on investigating the concepts quantitatively and understanding the relationship among those concepts.

Another approach is that with the qualitative approach, there are other aspects that are worth exploring. Recruitment of minoritized families was difficult, thus, a more intentional and strategic reach out should be planned so that a more meaningful, specific minoritized/disability group or characteristic can be recruited to generate results that are tailored for them. For example, racially and minoritized families with different linguistic backgrounds and youths with different levels of severity of disabilities may have different challenges, needs and their impact may be different, and strategies and supports may be different. Using a different phenomenological method that could expand a multi-informant approach would allow a richer, first-hand understanding of the experience of the youth with disabilities to empower them as part of the movement to make changes. The inclusion of professionals such as special education teachers, transition counselors, vocational counselors, and other practitioners could also add to an understanding of another perspective.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the lived experiences of parents in relation to the influence of their parental involvement and parenting styles of their ethnic-minority youth with disabilities, particularly in terms of their transition outcomes and mental health. This study was designed based on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), as the themes and subthemes were consistently aligned with the systems envisioned in this model. Joyce Epstein's model of parental involvement and overlapping Spears also helped guide the conceptualization of this research project and the interview process. Several parents volunteered to participate in this study. The parents were provided with a semi-structured interview based on a phenomenological approach. The data collected from the parents assisted with answering the research questions and the supporting sub-questions.

The parents discussed the barriers and concerns they had pertaining to their ethnic minority youth being successful in the transition process and their perception of their parental involvement and parenting styles. The parents' interviews identified five themes that impacted their youth during their transition services. The five themes were (a) Ecological Issues, (b)

Involvement Requires Different Levels of Advocacy, (c) Impact on Parents, (d) Impact on Youths, and (e) Positive Support Systems and Personal Resiliency.

The results of this study have key implications for educators, practitioners, and areas of future study. The parents conveyed a sense of advocacy needed to support their youth, educational and disability policies that impact service delivery, having practitioners skilled in working with culturally diverse populations, and the overall impact of the transition process on the youth and their families. Therefore, transition-age youth with disabilities and their families face many challenges during this process, and they continue to be underserved. This issue is even more pronounced for those from racial and ethnic minority backgrounds. However, these families are strong advocates for their children, and society must not take their ability to manage as a sign of not needing the service. The fragmented service continues to be an unresolved issue in society.

Furthermore, this study contributes to the overall literature by providing research-driven support for ethnic-minority youth and exploring barriers their parents face. Culturally diverse families have the same parenting characteristics as White parents but are often seen as uninvolved. This study provides evidence that ethnic-minority parents are involved. However, ethnic-diverse students continue to fall behind in educational and vocational outcomes. This disparity is often due to systemic inequities and lack of access to resources that adequately address their needs. In this study, parents were given a voice to identify barriers and positive experiences supporting their ethnic-minority youth with disabilities in the transition program and provide recommendations for improved vocational and educational success.

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APPENDIX A: RECRUITMENT EMAIL SENT TO PARENTS/CAREGIVERS

Greetings,

My name is Adriza Caesar. I am a doctoral student in the Rehabilitation Counselor Education program at Michigan State University.
I am seeking your interest in participating in my study. My study is regarding the impact of parental engagement in vocational rehabilitation on caregivers' quality of life and student outcome among racial and ethnic minoritized transition-aged students with disabilities.
My study will examine parental involvement and the influence of parenting styles and parental characteristics (age, marital status, gender, educational level, employment status, emotional health, etc.) on ethnic-minority youth and their vocational rehabilitation outcomes. The finding of this study will contribute to the gap in the literature when studying transition outcomes for ethnic-minority students with disabilities.
Recruitment will include parents/caregivers of students (aged 14 – 26 years) with disabilities. Additional inclusion criteria will include parents from an ethnic minority (e.g., African American, Hispanic, caregivers, etc.); have at least one child with disabilities who are participating in transition planning, parents of junior, senior, and post-high school level students with disabilities who are participating in transition training and have access to a computer with internet
There are no known risks for anyone to participate in this research study. There are no costs to participating in the study and the study is voluntary. Those who participate will be given the opportunity to withdraw their consent at any time.
Parents will participate in a one-on-one interview to answer parental/caregiver perceptions of their parental engagement and parenting styles. All responses will remain confidential and can assure you that all data will be accessed only by this researcher and my dissertation chair, Dr. Gloria Lee. We will take all steps to protect individuals' identities.
I would like to speak with you if you would like to participate in the study.

Please contact me via email at caesara1@msu.edu or via phone at (248) 660-9415

APPENDIX B: RECRUITMENT FLYER

Figure B1

Recruitment Flyer

We invite you to participate in a web meeting interview to share your experiences about high school transition/youth services to individuals with a disability.

Participants Needed

We are looking for participants who meet the following criteria:

- Parents, guardians, or unpaid caregivers of ethnic-minority high school transition youth and young adults (14-26) with a disability

Participants may receive a $25 gift card

For more information, please contact

Adriza Caesar, M.A, CRC, Doctoral student
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MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY

APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT SCREENING FORM

Parents' Perspectives on their Parenting Styles and Involvement in Transition Program for their Ethnic-Minority Youth with Disabilities

Thank you for calling Adriza Caesar regarding your perception of the level of involvement needed to collaborate in your child's transition program. I would like to ask you a few questions in order to determine whether you may be eligible for the research. Before I begin the screening, I would like to tell you a little bit about the research. Understanding parental involvement and styles is very important when it comes to considering transitional outcomes for ethnic-minority students. I intend to understand what barriers have hindered the involvement of transition programs when it comes to your students with disabilities. The intent of the screening is to make sure you fit the criteria to participate in the interview.

Would you like to continue with the screening? The screening will take less than 10 *minutes*

Parents/Caregivers

I will ask you about your son or daughter's educational and disability status. If you are eligible to participate and if you are willing to participate, you participate one-on-one via web conferencing, in-person, or phone meeting where I will ask you questions regarding your perceived barriers to your son or daughter's vocational rehabilitation program. You do not have to answer any questions you do not wish to answer or are uncomfortable answering, and you may stop at any time. Your participation in the screening is voluntary.

Your answers will be confidential. No one will know your answers except for myself as the principal investigator and my faculty advisor, Dr. Gloria Lee, Michigan State University.

If you do not qualify for this study, your information will be redacted. If you qualify for this study and decide to participate, you will be given the research consent form to sign before we begin the individual interview. The individual interviews will be audiotaped but no identifiable names will be mentioned. The content of this interview will be transcribed. All documents will be kept as research records in an MSU restricted One Drive.

Would you like to continue with the screening?

- If no, thank you for your time.
- If yes, we will continue with the screening

1. Are you the parental caregiver of a child who is or was a high school student with an IEP, 504, or documented disability at school (Yes or No)?
2. Is your child's age greater than 14 but less than 26 (Yes or No)?
3. Is your child classified as an ethnic-minority student (Yes or No)?
4. Is your child receiving transition services as part of his IEP, 504, or disability?
5. What high school does (or did) your child attend?

If any of the answers above are "no" we thank you for considering participating, as we want to focus on the above criteria in this study.

If your answered "yes" to the above questions, please consider participating in this interview. If you need time to think about whether you would like to participate or not, please take my contact and feel free to contact me again. If you are interested in participating, I will make a note and will be in touch with you about the details of the phone interview or web conference call.

If you have concerns or questions about this study, please contact the investigator/researcher, Adriza Caesar at Office of Rehabilitation and Disability Studies Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology & Special Education 248-600-9415 or caesara1@msu.edu. Alternatively, you can contact the Faculty Advisor, Dr. Gloria Lee Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology and Special Education 463 Erickson Hall East Lansing, MI 517-432-3623 or leekalai@msu.edu.

If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Michigan State University's Human Research Protection Program at 517-355-2180, Fax 517-432-4503, or e-mail irb@msu.edu or regular mail at 4000 Collins Rd, Suite 136, Lansing, MI 48910.

Thank you again for your willingness to answer our questions.

APPENDIX D: PARENT/CAREGIVER INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Parents' Perspectives on their Parenting Styles and Involvement in Transition Programs for their Ethnic-Minority Youth with Disabilities

1. PURPOSE OF RESEARCH

We request your participation in answering interview questions, which will be held in person, via individual phone interview, or via web conferencing. Your participation will assist the researcher in gathering data on the perceptions of barriers to parental involvement. Researchers are required to provide the necessary information to inform you about the research study, to convey that participation is voluntary, to explain the risks and benefits of participation, and to empower you to make an informed decision. You should feel free to ask the researchers any questions you may have by contacting them.

2. WHO CAN PARTICIPATE

Parents/caregivers of a transition-age child who is an ethnic-minority student who has a disability diagnosis.

3. WHAT YOU WILL DO

You have completed the screening consent form and have been identified as a candidate to participate in this study.

a. **Parents/caregivers**: Your participation in this study consists of a one-on-one interview with the lead researcher. You will be asked open-ended questions that are intended to gather your thoughts regarding your son/daughter's transition program and discuss any barriers you may have in the process. The interview will last at least 45 to 60 minutes.

4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS

Participation in this study may generate data useful for a better understanding of parents'/caregivers' perceptions of barriers and the need for supporting their son/daughter within their vocational rehabilitation program; to potentially identify significant strategies that could help in the vocational rehabilitation program.

5. POTENTIAL RISKS

There are no foreseeable risks associated with participation in this study. However, we foresee the following potential issues:

i. Confidentiality and privacy. Your comments will remain confidential and your privacy will be respected. Our facilitators and researchers are trained to adhere to our ethical practice to address confidentiality and privacy issues.

ii. Feeling upset. Due to the researcher asking you to share information about you, and your son/daughter, you may feel upset during the discussion. The researcher is a trained professional who has the license to provide methods to handle stressful situations and feelings. We will also follow up with each participant to ensure his/her well-being and safety.

6. PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

The data for this study will be kept confidential. All information gathered in this study will be used only for research purposes and be accessible by the researchers in this study only. Information will be kept strictly confidential. No names or identifiers will be revealed for non-research purposes. The results of this study may be published or presented in a group format at professional meetings, but the identities of all research participants will remain confidential. All research materials will be treated confidentially; they will be identified by a unique code and will be stored in a locked file cabinet and/or password-protected server. The data collected for this research study will be protected on a password-protected computer or in a locked file cabinet on the campus of Michigan State University for a minimum of three years after the closure of the project. Only the appointed researchers and the Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) will have access to the research data. Your confidentiality will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law.

There is one exception to confidentiality we need to make you aware of. In certain research studies, it is our ethical responsibility to report situations of child abuse, child neglect, or any life-threatening situation to the appropriate authorities. However, we are not seeking this type of information in our study nor will you be asked questions about these issues.

7. YOUR RIGHTS TO PARTICIPATE, SAY NO, OR WITHDRAW

Your participation is completely voluntary. Refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you or your children are otherwise entitled. You may choose not to answer specific questions or to stop participating at any time. We would encourage you to complete all sessions and evaluation items so that we can get valid information for analysis purposes. However, we respect that you may not want to attend sessions or answer items that you do not feel comfortable. There is no consequence for withdrawal or incomplete participation. All the data collected from this study will be destroyed within three years.

8. COSTS AND COMPENSATION FOR BEING IN THE STUDY

There are no costs associated with your participation in this research study. You will be compensated with a gift card of $25.

9. CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have concerns or questions about this study, such as scientific issues, how to do any part of it, or to report an injury, please contact the principal investigator/researcher Adriza Caesar, Michigan State University Office of Rehabilitation and Disability Studies at caesara1@msu.edu or 248-660-9415 or you may contact Adriza’s research advisor, Dr. Gloria Lee at leekalai@msu.edu.

If you have questions or concerns about your role and rights as a research participant, would like to obtain information or offer input, or would like to register a complaint about this study, you may contact, anonymously if you wish, the Michigan State University’s Human Research Protection Program at 517-355-2180, Fax 517-432-4503, or e-mail irb@msu.edu or regular mail at 4000 Collins Rd, Suite 136, Lansing, MI 48910.

Your participation in this research is voluntary, and you will not be penalized if you refuse to participate or decide to stop.

Signing this document means that the research study, including the above information, has been described to you orally, and that you voluntarily agree to participate

If you agree to participate, you must be given a signed copy of this document and a written summary of the research.

________________________________ _____________
Signature of participant Date

________________________________ _____________
Signature of legally authorized participant Date
[only include if applicable]

________________________________ _____________
Signature of witness Date

APPENDIX E: DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

Family Information Questionnaire

Directions: Please complete the following form as thoroughly as possible. Please answer all questions truthfully. This information is being collected for research purposes only. Your information will be kept confidential and will not be shared in any way by the research team.

Child Information

1. Please indicate your adolescent child's gender:
____ Male
____ Female
____ Not listed (please specify): ___________________
____ Prefer not to respond

2. What is your adolescent child's birthdate? ______________________________

3. What best describes your adolescent child's race/ethnicity? (check one)
____ African American/Black
____ Asian/Pacific Islander
____ Hispanic/Latino
____ Native American/American Indian
____ White
____ Multiracial
____ Not listed (please specify): ________________________
____ Prefer not to respond

8. At what age was your child diagnosed with a disability? ________________

9. My child was first diagnosed with a disability by a:
____ Clinical psychologist
____ School psychologist
____ Medical doctor
____ Other, Please specify: ______________________________

10. What, if any, specialized services does your child currently receive? (e.g., speech therapy, private counseling, special education)
____
____

11. What, if any, specialized services have been provided to your child in the past?
____
____

12.. How many children do you have? ________________

13. What are the ages of your children? ____________________________

14. Among all the children you have, how many have a disability? ____________

15. Of your children that are between the ages of 14 and 26, what is their disability?
____

Parent Information

12. What is your birthdate? ________________________

13. What do you consider your ethnicity? (Check all that apply:)
____ African American/Black
____ Asian/Pacific Islander
____ Hispanic/Latino
____ Native American/American Indian
____ White
____ Multiracial
____ Not listed (please specify): ___________________
____ Prefer not to respond

14. What describes your highest level of education?
______ Some high school
______ High school diploma
______ Some college
______ Some graduate school
______ Graduate degree (master's level or higher)
______ Other, Please specify: __________________________

15. Please indicate your marital status:
______ Single
______ Married
______ Living with a domestic partner
______ Divorced
______ Widowed
______ Other, Please specify:___________________________

16. Thinking about all the sources of income you and your family received, what was the total gross income (before taxes were taken out) for your household **over the past year:**
_____ a) $5,000 or less
_____ b) $5,001 to $10,000
_____ c) $10,001 to $15,000
_____ d) $15,001 to $20,000
_____ e) $20,001 to $30,000
_____ f) $30,001 to $35,000
_____ g) $35,001 to $40,000
_____ h) $40,001 to $50,000

_____ i) $50,001 to $75,000
_____ j) $75,001 to $100,000
_____ k) $100,001 to $200,000
_____ l) $200,001 or more

17. Please indicate your employment status:
______ Full time
______ Part-time
______ Not working
______ Others, please specify: ___________

APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Involvement with others:

1. What are your experiences in being involved with your transition-age adolescent with a disability in his/her future planning (prompts: education, vocational, social, healthcare, mental health, etc.)?
2. What are your experiences in working with the different service providers when planning the future of your transition-age adolescent with a disability?

Intersectionality of Disability - Facilitators and Barriers:

3. Explain how the severity/extent of your transition-age adolescent with a disability affects your involvement - in the transition process for his/her future.
4. Explain how race/ethnicity has had an effect on your involvement in the transition process for your adolescent's future? (Prompts: what are the positive and negative factors that affected the transition process)?

Parenting Styles Impact on Transition Planning

5. How would you describe your parenting styles of your transition-aged adolescent with a disability?
6. How has the transition process affected your relationship with your adolescent child?

Impact on Caregiver and Child Outcomes

7. How has your ethnic minority adolescent with a disability been impacted during the transition process?
8. How has your adolescent child's ethnic minority status and type of disability impacted you as a caregiver during the transition process?