

Inclusion

Exploring Transition Planning Among Racially Minoritized Parents of Children with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities using DisCrit and QuantCrit --Manuscript Draft--

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Abstract:	Alongside ongoing efforts to increase postschool outcomes of racially minoritized young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), little is known about their parents' experiences in the special education transition planning process. We conducted a transition survey with 362 racially minoritized parents of children with IDD. Using the frameworks of DisCrit and QuantCrit, we explored parents' needs, their expectations for their child to live a high quality of life, and how often they encountered challenges when accessing transition services. Our findings suggest that most parents (a) desired community-based resources, (b) prioritized collectivist expectations for their child, and (c) encountered challenges with advocacy. Parents' perspectives also differed significantly based on their racial identity. We discuss implications for research, practice, and policy.

Abstract

Alongside ongoing efforts to increase postschool outcomes of racially minoritized young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), little is known about their parents' experiences in preparing for and navigating the transition planning process. We conducted a transition survey with 362 racially minoritized parents of children with IDD. Using the frameworks of DisCrit and QuantCrit, we explored parents' needs, their expectations for their child to live a high quality of life, and how often they encountered challenges when accessing services. Our findings suggest that most parents (a) desired community-based resources, (b) prioritized collectivist expectations for their child, and (c) encountered challenges with advocacy. Parents' perspectives also differed significantly based on their racial identity. We discuss implications for research, practice, and policy.

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Exploring Transition Planning Among Racially Minoritized Parents of Children with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Using DisCrit and QuantCrit

The transition from high school to adulthood is often marked by many choices and opportunities related to employment, postsecondary education, and lifestyle preferences. Students with disabilities often make these important decisions in partnership with their families, educators, friends, and community members (IDEA, 2004). As a young adult's network evolves and expands, their parents (or other caregivers, legal guardians, and extended family members) remain a prevailing source of support for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) across their lifespan. Thus, understanding parents' perspectives of postschool outcomes is critical in preparation for transition and throughout the process to predict and shape outcomes for children and young adults with IDD (Blustein et al., 2016). Given that parent views are likely to evolve as their child progresses through K-12 education (Blustein et al., 2016), it is essential to understand how these perspectives differ across parents at various stages of the transition process.

Prior research underscores the importance of individualizing the definition of success for the transition to adulthood based on student preference, family input, or cultural values (Henninger & Taylor, 2015). Notably, a successful transition should not be defined only by common benchmarks, such as participation in postsecondary education or employment, but also by incorporating parents' expectations for their child with IDD. This is particularly important for the diverse and growing population of students and parents who have been racially minoritized in the education system and within society (Trainor et al., 2019).

Landscape of Transition for Racially Minoritized Youth

Despite decades of transition-related policy and research, post-high school outcomes of racially minoritized young adults with disabilities remain bleak. Data from the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS-2) reported that only 19.1% of African American and 14.6% of Hispanic young adults with disabilities were enrolled in a four-year college, as compared to 19.6% of White young adults with disabilities (Newman et al., 2011). Discrepancies in employment also revealed that 48.0% of African American and 53.6% of Hispanic youth were employed outside the home, as compared to 64.5% of their White peers (Newmann et al., 2011). Particularly, racially minoritized youth with IDD who were employed received lower hourly wages, worked fewer hours, and received fewer employment benefits (e.g., paid vacation, health insurance, and retirement benefits) than their White peers (Newman et al., 2011). As evidenced by the NLTS-2 data, postschool outcomes of racially minoritized young adults are traditionally reported alongside or compared to their White peers, limiting opportunities to examine their growth trajectories and outcomes independently (Trainor et al., 2019).

Hirano and colleagues (2018) reviewed 22 studies with predominantly racially minoritized populations with IDD and found that parents experienced the following transition planning challenges: limited transition knowledge, lack of access to adult transition services, and mismatched goals and value systems between parents and service providers. Systemic inequities experienced by specific subgroups of racially minoritized parents also offer meaningful insights into the reality of transition planning and outcomes. Lo and Bui (2020) surveyed and interviewed 25 Chinese and Vietnamese parents of youth with autism and intellectual disability to explore their experiences with transition planning. They reported that while parents highly desired to participate in the transition planning process, they sought more community-related support and expressed gaps between their definitions of adulthood success and those defined by educators.

Interviews with five Black parents and their youth with IDD revealed a lack of trust between the family and the school system due to systemic oppression associated with the intersectionality of race and disability, lower expectations of the youth's skills and abilities by school personnel, and limited access to transition planning resources (Scott et al., 2021). Shikarpurya & Gilson (2024) conducted a mixed methods study to understand the adversities experienced and the strengths leveraged by South Asian parents in the transition planning process. The findings noted that parents encountered significant challenges related to transition planning knowledge and voicing their concerns when navigating the transition planning process. However, they used their social capital and community resources to mitigate these systemic adversities. Furthermore, a secondary analysis of NLTS-2012 data including 280 predominantly Latinx (71.0%) English learners (EL) noted that parents desired more resources regarding postschool opportunities for their young adults and shared that most of their transition planning goals were developed by the school personnel (Trainor et al., 2019). Although the demographic characteristics of each of these populations are culturally and linguistically diverse, systemic challenges in the transition planning process are common across these subgroups. Indeed, it is imperative to bolster the perspectives of racially minoritized parents as their experiences are vital to creating a culturally responsive transition planning process. When outcomes for racially minoritized youth are informed by parent perspectives and presented in a cultural context, services and supports can be targeted accordingly.

Purpose of the Study

While prior research has offered a cumulative account of the transition-related perspectives of racially minoritized parents (Hirano et al., 2018; Shogren, 2011), the experiences of subgroups of racially minoritized parents are less widely documented. Our study contributes

to a deeper understanding of the experiences of racially minoritized parents to inform and increase their postschool outcomes. We integrated the frameworks of DisCrit and QuantCrit to examine historical systems of power and racial inequities within the transition planning process for racially minoritized parents of children with IDD. Specifically, we conducted a multi-state study examining the collective and individual needs, expectations, and challenges of racially minoritized parents of children, adolescents, and young adults with IDD when preparing for and navigating the transition planning process. The following research questions explored these perspectives collectively across the sample and by racial subgroups:

1. Which transition planning resources do racially minoritized parents consider the most important, and how do their perspectives differ by racial identity?
2. Which post-school outcomes do racially minoritized parents consider the most important for their child to have a high quality of life, and how do their perspectives differ by racial identity?
3. How often do racially minoritized parents face systemic challenges when accessing services, and how do their perspectives differ by racial identity?

Method

Theoretical Frameworks

We conducted a culturally adapted replication of a transition survey created by Blustein et al. (2016) to explore the experiences of racially minoritized parents navigating transition planning. We integrated components from two conceptual frameworks to inform the adaptation of the original survey and design of the present study. First, Dis/ability Critical Race Studies (DisCrit) explores the intersection of race and disability within disability studies and special education (Annamma et al., 2018). The theory maintains that race and disability are socially

constructed gatekeepers of identity that further perpetuate the marginalization of racialized individuals.

Researchers have employed DisCrit in multiple ways in special education. For instance, Padía & Traxler (2020) used DisCrit to explore systemic barriers encountered by undocumented high school students with disabilities who experienced marginalization in transition planning. Additionally, Scott and colleagues (2021) implemented the framework of DisCrit to understand the impact of race and disability on self-determination among Black youth with IDD and their families. Notably, our study contributes to the growing endeavors to use DisCrit in examining transition practices and strengthen the voices of racially minoritized parents navigating future planning outcomes. Although we considered all the tenets of DisCrit in the design and analysis of the present study, we were particularly guided by tenets four, five, and seven to develop and analyze the survey. We were guided by these tenets because they elevate the voices of marginalized individuals, integrate historical aspects of intersectionality, and encourage activism and resistance. For instance, we asked survey questions that reflected challenges encountered by racially minoritized parents as a result of historical marginalization (e.g., not having a voice). Informed by the core principles of DisCrit, in our analyses, we centered the voices of racially minoritized parents and explored parents' advocacy and agency as forms of resistance.

Second, our quantitative data analysis was informed by critical race quantitative intersectionality (later termed QuantCrit) to understand how statistics have disadvantaged individuals from racially marginalized communities using a deficit perspective (Covarrubias & Velez, 2013). QuantCrit combines critical race theory and quantitative methodology to address racial inequality within quantitative analyses. Gillborn and colleagues (2018) posit that (1) numbers do not have agency and, therefore, do not speak for themselves; (2) racism is rooted in

societal structures and actions; (3) racial categories are not static or neutral; and (4) numbers should actively promote social justice. QuantCrit offers an antiracist lens that centers marginalized voices and contextualizes numerical outcomes.

The framework of QuantCrit has been used in higher education literature to develop a strengths-based survey instrument for undergraduate students (Sablan, 2019) and as a tool to culturally contextualize survey findings related to the degree attainment and employment outcomes of racially minoritized students (Huber et al., 2018). To our knowledge, only one study has used both DisCrit and QuantCrit to explore student outcomes in special education (Cruz et al., 2021). Specifically, the authors combined the lens of DisCrit and QuantCrit to examine how racially minoritized students in special education were disciplined disproportionately more than their peers and identified how race and disability impacted exclusionary practices in schools.

In our study, we used the framework of QuantCrit to formulate our research questions, notably focusing on centering race and prioritizing the perspectives of racially minoritized parents. QuantCrit served as a tool to guide the contextual analysis and interpretation of our quantitative findings, enabling a culturally comprehensive understanding of the data. Guided by the tenets of QuantCrit, we conducted statistical analyses with the acknowledgment that numbers independently do not carry agency. In our analysis and interpretation, we anchored the experiences of racially minoritized parents without a direct comparison to their White peers. Rather than forming comparisons, we presented the descriptive statistics for all parents by group and individually to highlight the differences in their racialized experiences, thereby informing tailored transition planning practices. This approach was purposefully utilized to elucidate and amplify the differences within these communities, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of their diverse experiences.

Additionally, we explicitly included social and racial identity markers to contextualize parents' transition experiences. For instance, we asked participants about their racial identity, country of birth, language spoken at home, comfort with speaking English, and religious affiliation in the parent demographic section of the survey. By including explicit racial and social identity markers, we also disaggregated the “culturally and linguistically diverse” monolithic term often associated with non-White and multilingual generalizations (Addy, 2015). Notably, our objective was to move away from monolithic generalizations by highlighting the differences within parents' transition planning expectations, needs, and challenges to guide culturally informed postschool preparation for students with IDD. Additionally, using a DisCrit and QuantCrit lens, we adopted the term *racially minoritized* to acknowledge the power difference between White and racially unrepresented populations and avoid masking the diversity within these populations (Addy, 2015). We also acknowledge that racial categories do not represent the voices of all subgroups and may disadvantage individuals if not explored from a disaggregated lens.

Researchers' Positionality

The first author is an assistant professor of special education who identifies as a South Asian American woman. The second author is an associate professor of special education and identifies as a White woman. The third author is a visiting professor of special education and identifies as a Latina. The fourth author identifies as a Chinese American researcher in higher education. All the research team members are invested in disaggregating racial monoliths in special education in pursuit of social justice and equity.

Recruitment

This study sought to expand on the work of Blustein and colleagues (2016) by recruiting racially minoritized parents from the United States. We recruited from 295 organizations across the United States with a focus on organizations that served youth with IDD. These included faith-based organizations ($n = 44$; e.g., places of worship and faith-oriented special needs programs), parent/caregiver support groups ($n = 59$), school districts ($n = 20$), local and national advocacy organizations ($n = 85$), sports and summer camp programs ($n = 20$), therapy centers ($n = 10$), inclusive postsecondary education programs ($n = 10$), libraries ($n = 11$), and social media groups ($n = 36$; e.g., Facebook and Twitter). Additionally, we advertised on radio shows, posted flyers in local community centers, and used word-of-mouth communication. We sent an email to each organization, which included a description of the survey with options to complete the survey online or via telephone in English, Hindi, and Spanish. The organizations distributed the flyers and descriptions about the study to their members using social media, emails, and listservs. Recruitment lasted for one year. We offered a \$10 Amazon gift card to 30 parents who completed 60% or more of the survey in a randomly selected drawing.

Participants

Our inclusion criteria included racially minoritized parents or caregivers of a child with IDD between the ages of birth to 21 years old. We included parents of younger children to emphasize the importance of preparing for transition early and to better understand the needs of parents prior to the beginning of the legally mandated transition process. Our recruitment efforts to capture parents of children, adolescents, and young adults are reflected in our sample, in which most participants (67.0%) had children between 10 and 21 years old, either actively engaged in the transition process or approaching its end with recent or imminent high school

completion. Specifically, 29.0% of children were between 10 and 15 years old ($n = 84$, $M = 12.34$), and 38.0% were between 16 and 21 years old ($n = 110$, $M = 18.92$).

Participants indicated their role (e.g., parent, legal guardian, or other caregiving relative) as part of the inclusion criteria. Thus, we use the term “parents” to collectively describe 98.7% of participants who identified as parents and 1.3% who identified as legal guardians or other caregiving relatives on the survey. Additionally, participants were able to read or communicate in English, Hindi, or Spanish, had access to the internet or a telephone, and resided in the United States. Given the focus on understanding and elevating the underrepresented experiences of racially minoritized parents, participant responses were excluded from analyses if they identified as White.

We collected 738 responses and only analyzed responses from 362 parents who identified as racially minoritized (see Table 1). They identified as Latinx (37.3%), Black or African American (23.2%), South Asian (7.5%), East/Southeast Asian (5.2%), biracial (4.4%), Native American (1.1%), and Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian (1.1%). While this study aimed to enhance the visibility of all racially minoritized parents, it is important to acknowledge its limitation in not further highlighting additional racial subgroups. For instance, although we disaggregated the underrepresented experiences of parents within the collective “Asian” category (e.g., South Asian and East/Southeast Asian; Fong, 2022), further disaggregation (e.g., Middle Eastern and North African population) is imperative to capture a more comprehensive understanding of the diverse experiences among various subgroups of racially minoritized parents.

Parents’ highest education level included high school or less (12.1%), some college or a 2-year college degree (22.9%), and a 4-year college or professional degree (60.6%). Average

household incomes varied, with incomes less than \$30,000 (15.5%), \$30,000 to \$69,999 (38.1%), \$70,000 to \$99,999 (22.9%), and more than \$100,000 (23.5%). Parents could select multiple diagnoses for their children. The most commonly reported disability category was autism (43.4%), followed by intellectual disability (11.3%), developmental delay (9.7%), and multiple disabilities (7.5%), while some (3.0%) reported a diagnosis of both autism and intellectual disability. Although we focused on the perspectives of parents of children with IDD, our larger goal was to amplify the widely underrepresented experiences of racially minoritized parents in transition preparation and planning. Thus, we did not exclude participants from the analysis based on their children's diagnosis. As such, approximately one-third of the sample reported a diagnosis that did not fit under the criteria of IDD (Table 1). Besides two parents who did not know their child's diagnosis, all parents reported a diagnosis of a disability based on 13 disability categories in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004).

Survey Instrument

We culturally adapted the transition survey created by Blustein and colleagues (2016) to inform and strengthen the transition planning experiences of racially minoritized parents. We used this survey due to its clarity of questions and the broad range of topics that addressed child and adult needs during the transition process. The original survey included sections related to (a) parent and child demographics, (b) post-school expectations, (c) employment goals and barriers, (d) previous employment experiences, and (e) the role of school-based services. The first and the third authors, who are fluent in Hindi and Spanish, respectively, reviewed the original survey, made adaptations to maximize its relevance for minoritized parents, and translated the survey to Hindi and Spanish to broaden accessibility.

Specifically, we made three adaptations to the survey created by Blustein et al. (2016). First, we added questions to the section on post-school expectations that were culturally responsive and were informed by tenet four of DisCrit (e.g., volunteering or giving back to the community, being successful in demonstrating daily life skills, and attending religious services). Second, we developed two new sections, *parent needs* and *parent challenges*, to align with tenets five and seven of DisCrit by centering and amplifying the perspectives of racially minoritized parents (e.g., I would like more information about local support resources and services for my child) and asking questions related to parent challenges due to historical marginalization (e.g., challenges related to differences between home and school values or their voice not being heard by individuals). Finally, we removed questions from the original survey that focused on specific child demographics, such as the severity of disability and functional abilities of the child. We removed those questions using a DisCrit lens to reduce the reliance on the traditional norms of socially constructed disability labels and to keep the survey centered on parent perspectives.

We asked three community members in our networks to review the survey for consistency and clarity in each language. The three community members were fluent speakers of the language in which they reviewed the survey and identified as parents of a child with IDD. The community members suggested some minor linguistic changes. Next, the survey was piloted with three additional parents who expressed satisfaction with completing the survey. The present study includes data analysis from four of the seven sections: (a) parent demographics, (b) additional information parents need to better plan for adulthood outcomes, (c) postschool expectations of parents for their child to have a high quality of life, and (d) how often parents encountered challenges when accessing services.

Parent Demographics

Parents indicated their relationship to the child, age, sex, household income, marital status, occupation, level of education, race, their zip codes. Using the lens of QuantCrit, we also asked questions related to social and racial markers of identity, including their country of birth, years lived in the United States, comfort with speaking English, language spoken most often at home, and their religious affiliation.

Parent Needs

We developed this section using DisCrit tenets five and seven. Parents rated on a four-point Likert-type scale (1 = not at all important, 2 = a little important, 3 = somewhat important, and 4 = very important) how important it was for them to receive more information about future planning areas. Survey items included topics related to advocacy, local support, employment, financial planning, and living opportunities. Cronbach's alpha was $\alpha = 0.788$.

Parent Expectations for a High Quality of Life

We adapted this section using DisCrit tenet four. We asked parents to evaluate on the same four-point Likert-type scale the importance of 14 items for their child to have a high quality of life. Survey items included topics related to higher education opportunities, community-based engagement, daily living skills, and relationships. Cronbach's alpha was $\alpha = 0.895$.

Parent Challenges

We developed this section using DisCrit tenets five and seven to identify challenges experienced by racially minoritized parents. Parents evaluated 14 items on a five-point Likert-type scale (1 = 0% never, 2 = rarely, less than 10% of the time, 3 = sometimes, around 50% of the time, 4 = usually, over 70% of the time, 5 = every time, 100%) to indicate how often they experienced challenges when navigating services for their children. Most survey items included challenges that could be generalized across school experiences related to advocacy, stigma,

linguistic barriers, and community and family support. We also asked broader items pertaining to transition planning goals that were applicable not only to parents of transition-aged youth but also to those with younger children, such as their extent of knowledge of employment opportunities after high school. Cronbach's alpha was $\alpha = 0.88$.

Data Analysis

Guided by the framework of QuantCrit, we conducted group and individual descriptive statistics to emphasize the differences in parents' experiences, purposefully moving away from racial monoliths, and reinforcing the significance of their diverse racialized perspectives. Drawing from the principles of QuantCrit, we sought to deepen our understanding of the specific differences within the responses from racial subgroups of parent, fostering a more comprehensive exploration of parents' experiences. As such, we analyzed each survey item using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests for each survey question after first assessing data for violations of assumptions, with the racial identities used for mean comparison and the survey question response as the dependent variable. If the results of the ANOVA were statistically significant, then we conducted Tukey's post-hoc comparison tests to determine the specific source of group mean mismatch. We conducted all statistical analyses using R Core Team 4.1.1 with a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. Missing data varied widely between the different measures. Due to the specificity of our sample, we addressed missing data using pairwise deletion.

Results

We conducted a survey of 362 racially minoritized parents of children with IDD between the ages of birth to 21 years. Most surveys ($n = 289$) were completed in English, followed by Spanish ($n = 21$) and Hindi ($n = 3$). Parents resided in the Southern (51.0%), Midwestern (30.0%), Northeastern (9.0%), and Western (10.0%) regions of the United States, representing 20

states. The research findings are summarized collectively for the sample and individually by racial subgroups.

Parent Needs

We asked parents how important it was for them to know about various transition preparation and planning resources, including advocacy and employment opportunities, for their child. Overall means across all topics were high, ranging from 2.53 to 3.46 on a four-point scale (Table 2). Overall, parents highly desired information about local support resources and services ($n = 243$, $M = 3.46$), however South Asian parents (difference = 0.75, $p = .007$) and Latinx parents (difference = 0.63, $p < .001$) reported statistically significantly higher mean responses compared to Black parents (Table 2; see supplementary materials). Additionally, when compared to Native American parents, the responses were also statistically significantly higher for South Asian parents (difference = 0.92, $p = .007$), biracial parents (difference = 0.92, $p = 0.031$), Latinx parents (difference = 0.80, $p < .001$), and East/Southeast Asian parents (difference = 0.79, $p = .045$).

Furthermore, parents collectively expressed a strong need to know about addressing their concerns during school meetings with their child's teachers ($n = 238$, $M = 3.19$). While this need was relatively high for most parents, Native American parents rated this need as much lower ($M = 2.20$; Table 2). When exploring by racial subgroups, we found that the mean response was statistically significantly higher for Latinx parents (difference = 1.32, $p < .001$), South Asian parents (difference = 1.11, $p = .005$), and biracial parents (difference = 1.20, $p = .012$) compared to Native American parents (see supplemental materials). Finally, we found that parents highly desired to receive information about services/agencies to help their child find a job after high school ($n = 241$, $M = 3.16$; Table 2). Although this need was strongly shared by all subgroups,

South Asian parents (difference = 1.06, $p = .001$), Latinx parents (difference = 0.72, $p < .001$), and biracial parents (difference = 1.06, $p = .015$) had statistically significantly higher mean responses compared to Black parents (see supplemental materials). Additionally, when compared to Native American parents, the responses were statistically significantly higher for East/Southeast Asian parents (difference = 1.34, $p < .001$), South Asian parents (difference = 1.97, $p < .001$), Latinx parents (difference = 1.64, $p < .001$), Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander parents (1.90, $p = .007$) and others (1.82, $p = .044$).

Parent Expectations for a High Quality of Life

We also explored adulthood milestones racially minoritized parents expected from their children for them to have a high quality of life. Overall means of parent expectations ranged from 2.29 to 3.26 on a four-point scale (Table 2). Collectively, parents indicated it was important for their child to graduate from high school ($n = 242$, $M = 3.26$), although they rated attending a four-year college much lower ($n = 241$, $M = 2.77$). Disaggregated findings about high school graduation expectations revealed that the mean response compared to Black parents was statistically significantly higher for Latinx parents (difference = 0.52, $p = .012$). Additionally, the mean response compared to Native American parents was also statistically significantly higher for East/Southeast Asian parents (difference = 1.34, $p = .001$), Latinx parents (difference = 1.14, $p < .001$), and South Asian parents (difference = 1.12, $p = .010$).

Parents highly expected their child to strengthen their daily living skills by living by themselves ($n = 243$, $M = 2.86$) or with roommates ($n = 242$, $M = 2.86$). While parents collectively rated living in a group home much lower ($n = 242$, $M = 2.29$), we found that Native American parents reported higher expectations for this outcome than other subgroups ($n = 20$, $M = 3.25$; Table 2). For instance, the mean response compared to Black parents was statistically

significantly higher for Native American parents (difference = 0.92, $p = .018$), and the mean response compared to Native American parents was statistically significantly lower for biracial parents (difference = -1.43, $p = .010$), East/Southeast Asian parents (difference = -1.31, $p = .008$), and Latinx parents (difference = -1.03, $p = .003$). Finally, we also found that parents highly expected their children to participate in social activities (e.g., have a strong group of friends, $n = 240$, $M = 3.08$) and volunteer within their communities ($n = 243$, $M = 3.06$) to have a high quality of life. Although we noted statistically significant differences between the responses among subgroups for expectations related to having a strong group of friends (Table 2; see supplemental materials), we did not find any significant differences for expectations related to volunteering.

Frequency of Systemic Challenges

Lastly, we asked parents to indicate how often they faced challenges when accessing services for their children. Overall means ranged from 2.16 to 3.76 on a five-point scale (Table 2). Collectively, parents frequently (ex. 50% or more of the time) encountered challenges related to limited knowledge about planning for their child after they are no longer there ($n = 229$, $M = 3.76$), knowledge of employment opportunities ($n = 229$, $M = 3.36$), and financial barriers ($n = 229$, $M = 3.27$). Additionally, 41.5% of parents encountered challenges related to their voices not being heard by school administrators or other individuals involved in future planning over 50% of the time ($n = 229$, $M = 3.11$). Finally, 29.8% of parents reported that other individuals (e.g., friends, family and community members) support them in accessing services more than 10% of the time ($n = 218$, $M = 2.16$).

We found four statistically significant differences among subgroups related to their challenges (Table 2; see supplemental materials). First, on the survey item related to challenges

with getting their voices heard, we found that Latinx parents' mean responses were statistically significantly lower as compared to Black (difference = -0.64, $p = .017$) and Native American parents (difference = -1.17, $p = .002$). Second, as compared to Black parents, the mean responses were statistically significantly higher for East/Southeast Asian parents (difference = 1.61, $p = .001$) and Latinx parents (difference = 0.74, $p = .013$) for receiving help from other individuals to access services. Third, we found that the mean responses on language barriers were statistically significantly lower for Latinx parents (difference = -0.65, $p = .031$) as compared to Black parents. Finally, we found that the mean response compared to Native American parents was statistically significantly lower for Latinx parents (difference = -1.15, $p = .005$) on the differences between home and school values.

Discussion

Race, Dis/Ability, and Transition Planning

We used the theoretical lenses of DisCrit and QuantCrit to explore racially minoritized parents' post-school expectations, transition-related needs, and how often they encounter challenges when preparing for and navigating the transition planning process. Overall, the specific findings within subgroups affirm the importance of disaggregating the monolithic term "culturally and linguistically diverse" to reveal the rich, nuanced variability that is often buried when perspectives are condensed into a singular view. We interpreted the findings using QuantCrit to offer several contributions that contextualize racialized inequities and strengthen support systems for racially minoritized parents in the transition planning process.

Local/Community Support Structures

First, our work affirms prior research (e.g., Blustein et al., 2016; Hirano et al., 2018) by emphasizing the need to equip parents of children with IDD with more targeted transition

planning resources. Our findings further guide toward *how* transition services and resources can be structured to respond to parents' preferences. Specifically, the findings suggested that parents highly desired to know more about localized community-based support ($n = 243, M = 3.46$). Parents' desire to receive support from local organizations and communities is meaningful because this need is not only preferential but often a product of ongoing distrust of larger organizations due to experiences based on one's race and disability (Annamma et al., 2018). Prior research suggests that historical systems of oppression and marginalization have led to increased distrust among minoritized parents within the broader special education systems, including transition planning services (e.g., Shikarpurya & Gilson, 2024; Snell-Rood et al., 2020).

Reorienting Transition Outcomes

Second, our findings suggest that racially minoritized parents often prioritize collectivist expectations for their children to lead a high quality of life (Vanegas et al., 2021). While these perspectives could have differed based on the disability and age of the child, our study illuminated the differences in parent expectations based on race and racialized experiences. Notably, the collectivist expectations we found contrast with the White, western-oriented lens that often dictates traditional transition taxonomies and the language used to describe adulthood goals in the IDEA (2004). Collectively, participants in this study considered collectivist outcomes, such as volunteering or engaging in community services ($n = 243, M = 3.06$) and building strong friendships ($n = 240, M = 3.08$), more important than individualistic expectations, such as living independently by themselves ($n = 243, M = 2.86$). Alongside the focus of school-based transition planning on specific adult milestones (e.g., employment or

higher education), parents often preferred a holistic approach that reflects community engagement and social relationships (Sanderson & Bumble, 2022).

However, when analyzing based on subgroups, our findings offer a much richer, more nuanced description of these preferences that allows for more precision in cultural values rather than making assumptions based on overgeneralizations. Although prior literature indicates racially minoritized parents prefer their child to live at home (Shogren, 2011), our findings suggest this preference may differ depending on the subgroup. For example, our analysis demonstrates that most Native American parents preferred group homes compared to the preferences of other subgroups. Other racially minoritized parents did not rate group homes as highly as Native American parents; however, parents did express that it was important for them to know more about group homes ($n = 242$, $M = 2.53$), indicating a need to inform and equip parents in this domain. The push and pull factors between collectivist values maintained at home versus the individualistic values in schools may also lead to further disempowerment and disconnect for Native American parents and other racially minoritized parents of children with IDD ($n = 238$, $M = 2.85$).

Finally, we found that while most parents expected their children to graduate from high school ($n = 242$, $M = 3.26$), they had lower expectations for two-year college ($n = 243$, $M = 2.82$), four-year college ($n = 243$, $M = 2.77$), or inclusive college programs ($n = 241$, $M = 2.87$). These expectations could be considered an opportunity gap (Ladson-Billings, 2007), whereby the distrust in systems, historical oppression, intentional marginalization, and access to services play a crucial role in informing and preparing parents for higher education opportunities. For instance, research with Black parents of youth with IDD indicated that transition professionals expected students and their parents to settle or reduce their expectations, despite students' progress in their

transition goals (Scott et al., 2021). By intentionally omitting a direct comparison with a White-dominant population, we posit that these parents do not need to “catch up” to traditional transition outcomes. Hence, our findings indicate that those opportunities may not be as readily available or offered to racially minoritized students, inviting further reexamination of their expectations, access, and outcomes.

Advocacy and Reclaiming Agency

The importance of advocacy has been underscored across all three domains of the survey (i.e., parent expectations, support needs, and challenges). Parents identified advocacy as one of the most important areas they wanted to learn more about ($n = 238$, $M = 3.19$). Our findings reflect an ongoing need to reexamine systemic barriers that reinforce racial inequities and limit parental agency in transition planning. For instance, prior research with Latinx parents demonstrates that school professionals often do not listen to parents’ needs (Burke et al., 2020). Latinx parents have also reported being afraid to ask transition professionals about school-based resources due to ongoing racialization and assumptions made by professionals based on their immigration status (Aleman-Tovar et al., 2022). Notably, we must dismantle systemic barriers using culturally competent practices and partner with parents using an equity and dignity-based lens to make space for parents to reclaim their agency in the transition planning process.

Additionally, while Black and Native American parents desired less knowledge about addressing their concerns than other subgroups (Table 2), they still faced ongoing challenges with having their voices heard by transition personnel. Although the parents might have had sufficient knowledge of how to communicate their concerns with staff, they often face systemic challenges that discount their voices against transition stakeholders. Racially minoritized parents

have a long history of systemic educational exclusion in the United States and are burdened with advocating to prove they are engaged, involved, and represented (Kalyanpur et al., 2000).

Lastly, parents indicated that accessing services was a collaborative initiative. Some parents used informal networks (e.g., friends, community members, family, and local organizations) to access services, particularly East/Southeast Asian and Latinx parents ($n = 218$, $M = 2.16$). Although majority of the parents did not identify linguistic challenges, since most participants had lived in the United States their whole lives and spoke English fluently, the language and terminology of special education was a barrier many navigated using informal support ($n = 226$, $M = 2.25$). Informed by prior research emphasizing parent strengths in navigating the transition planning process (Shikarpurya & Gilson, 2024), we interpreted parents' use of informal networks as an act of advocacy toward reclaiming their agency. Parents found other support networks to understand and navigate complex systems, despite not being heard by schools and feeling disconnected in the planning process.

Limitations and Future Research

This study represents the first of its kind to explicitly focus on the transition needs, expectations, and challenges of racially minoritized parents of children with IDD. However, the findings should be interpreted alongside the limitations. First, although we were primarily interested in the perspectives of parents of children and youth with IDD, one-third of our sample reported a disability diagnosis for their child that would not be categorized as IDD. Given the lack of research in this area and our commitment to acknowledging the DisCrit tenets in our study design (e.g., tenets two, three and four related to identity), we decided to include these participants in the analysis and not make comparisons on the basis of disability labels. Relatedly, we removed demographic questions related to the specific support needs of the child using a

DisCrit lens. However, this limited the extent to which we could draw conclusions about the transition experiences related to specific support needs of youth with IDD. Overall, given the present study's focus on capturing the unique perspectives of racially minoritized parents, we felt that the shared experiences in the IEP and transition process were not defined based on disability type and contributed to more similarities than differences across our sample. However, we recommend caution when extrapolating our findings only to the IDD population and recommend future research to expand on this work.

Second, despite our efforts to recruit a heterogeneous, multi-state sample, 51% of parents were based in the South, primarily from major metropolitan cities. These demographics and corresponding perspectives may not reflect a diverse, nationwide sample. Future research could aim for more equitable representation across the United States. Given what our findings indicate about informal networks, future researchers could use these networks as avenues for outreach and recruitment (e.g., faith communities and parent support groups). Third, although we aimed to broaden accessibility by making the survey available online in three languages, we acknowledge that some potential participants may have been excluded due to not speaking these languages or having internet or phone access. Future researchers could make resources available in more languages and make print copies available at places of worship, community centers, and other places where prospective participants would frequent. Fourth, as we were uniquely interested in the perspectives of parents, we only collected data from one parent or caregiver per family. Since transition is a collaborative process with multi-faceted perspectives, it is critical to understand the input of all family members, including the transition-age student. Future research could include the voices of youth alongside their parents, siblings, or other caregivers through surveys or interviews to see how these viewpoints intersect or diverge.

Fifth, as our study centered on minoritized voices away from the White-dominant culture, we reported data representing only the voices of minoritized parents. Although we acknowledge that each culture, and indeed each family, is unique, for simplicity in reporting and ease of generalization of findings, we relied on predetermined racialized labels to characterize parents (e.g., Latinx, South Asian or Black). However, we did not further disaggregate the Middle Eastern/North African population, posing a significant limitation to the representation and visibility of this population. Additionally, by not capturing specific participant demographic characteristics (e.g., race of child, race of both parents, and specific biracial identities), we could have excluded participants who may have had similar experiences. Future research could deepen these findings by disaggregating the data further, asking for additional demographic characteristics, and focusing on the unique identities that transcend traditional racial or cultural labels. Finally, since ANOVA is used to determine differences in average responses between groups, we could not establish any predictive relationship between participants' characteristics and their responses to the survey items. Future research could also explore qualitative or mixed method responses to complement and strengthen quantitative metrics.

Implications for Practice and Policy

Our findings have significant implications for practitioners along a broad spectrum of education and transition planning for students with IDD, including teachers, coordinators, and administrators. First, there are many different metrics for defining a successful transition, especially in the areas of daily living and employment. Although a White-dominant, western, individualistic worldview may hold an unwavering focus on independence and self-determination, this should not replace the value of interdependence as an indicator of success, especially when interdependent, informal networks may be seen as the preferential model of

community living for some students and their parents. As suggested by our findings, many parents prefer their youth to live at home and volunteer within their community. Thus, these interdependent community-living preferences could be reflected within their transition planning and self-determination goals. Practitioners could explore holistic transition planning opportunities with parents and their youth that include collectivist and community-centered goals (e.g., learning transportation routes close to a frequented cultural community center; Sanderson & Bumble, 2022). Second, school-based practitioners could lean into the informal networks that many minoritized parents prioritize. For example, alternate settings for meetings could be considered and school-based practitioners could offer to invite community members to the meetings who comprise these informal networks, such as faith leaders, extended family members, and advocates.

Third, our findings reveal critical opportunity gaps for minoritized parents of students with IDD, as evidenced by a lack of knowledge and lower expectations in critical areas, such as postsecondary education options. Culturally aligned training and targeted resources are needed in these areas to equip students and their parents with all the tools to make informed decisions. For instance, transition professionals could partner with local disability organizations to disseminate resources related to postsecondary education programs for students with IDD and invite parent advocates to share their experiences. Rather than a vertical approach where information is strictly disseminated from school to parent, a horizontal approach that engages multiple community partners could offer a more meaningful transition planning experience for racially minoritized parents and their youth with IDD.

Our findings also lead to two critical policy recommendations targeted at systems-level changes. First, while parents are deemed essential in the transition process, their level of

engagement and agency remains unclear (IDEA, 2004). As suggested by our findings, the voices of racially minoritized parents are often not being heard by transition professionals. As such, in the next reauthorization of IDEA, state and federal policymakers could develop explicit guidelines related to parents' roles in the transition planning process. These guidelines could include information about parents' rights, offer examples of parent engagement, and suggest frameworks to collaborate with parents using an equity and dignity-informed lens. This could offer additional transparency and accountability to ensure parents have equitable engagement and agency in the transition planning process. Second, as schools represent a hierarchy of oppression, especially for racially minoritized families, intentional systemic investments are needed to integrate community organizations as key stakeholders in the transition process. While professionals are encouraged to collaborate with community organizations, a mandate that explicitly enforces community integration could strengthen these partnerships. As youth transition into their adult roles, it is important to employ multiple, preferential systems of support that go beyond school-based resources for meaningful adult living.

Conclusion

The social constructs of race and disability produce real-life consequences for racially minoritized communities when preparing for the transition to adulthood for students with IDD. Our findings emphasize the importance of recognizing unique family needs from a strengths-based orientation that does not compare them to a dominant, White population. It is essential for educators, transition practitioners supporting students with IDD, and policymakers to move beyond assumptions of what a "successful transition" looks like and listen to parents to reshape the pathways for a unique journey that best reflects each student and their parents.

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Table 1*Demographic Characteristics of Racially Minoritized Parents and their Children. N = 362*

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>N (%)</i>
<i>Parents</i>	
<i>Race</i>	
Black/African American	84 (27.1)
American Indian/Native American	21 (6.8)
East/Southeast Asian	19 (6.1)
South Asian	27 (8.7)
Latinx	135 (43.5)
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	4 (1.3)
Biracial	16 (5.2)
Other	4 (1.3)
<i>Relationship to child</i>	
Mother	257 (85.7)
Father	39 (13.0)
Legal guardian or other relative	4 (1.3)
<i>Years lived in United States</i>	
Entire life	133 (58.1)
> 20 years	50 (21.8)
10-20 years	33 (14.4)
1-10 years	13 (5.7)
<i>Comfort with speaking English</i>	

Very comfortable or fluent	212 (92.1)
Somewhat comfortable	10 (4.3)
Very little or not comfortable	8 (3.5)
<i>Child</i>	
<i>Disability</i>	
Autism	157 (43.4)
Intellectual disability	41 (11.3)
Developmental delay	35 (9.7)
Speech or language impairment	30 (8.3)
Multiple disabilities	27 (7.5)
Hearing impairment	24 (6.6)
Functional delay	21 (5.8)
Emotional disturbance	18 (5.0)
Other health impairment	18 (5.0)
Orthopedic impairment	11 (3.0)
Visual impairment	5 (1.4)

Note. 376 participants identified as White and were excluded from analysis. Parents could select multiple diagnoses for their child.

Tables

Table 2.

Survey Responses by Racial Identity

<i>Survey Items</i>	<i>Racial Identity</i>								
	Overall	Black/ African American	American Indian/ Native American	East/ Southeast Asian	South Asian	Latinx	Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	Biracial	Other
	M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)	M(SD)
<i>Parent Needs: How important is it for you to know more about the following future planning resources?</i>									
Local resources	3.46 (0.83)	3.07 (1.01)	2.90 (0.45)	3.69 (0.60)	3.82 (0.53)	3.70 (0.68)	4.00 (0.00)	3.82 (0.60)	4.00 (0.00)
Post-high pathways	3.39 (0.96)	2.76 (1.17)	3.75 (0.64)	3.31 (1.14)	4.00 (0.00)	3.63 (0.71)	3.75 (0.50)	3.64 (0.67)	4.00 (0.00)
Daily living skills	3.29 (0.97)	3.17 (0.93)	3.50 (0.76)	3.19 (1.11)	3.47 (0.87)	3.34 (0.98)	3.50 (1.00)	3.18 (1.25)	3.33 (1.16)
Addressing concerns	3.19 (0.95)	2.97 (.88)	2.20 (0.62)	3.00 (1.09)	3.31 (1.08)	3.52 (0.84)	3.50 (1.00)	3.40 (0.70)	3.00 (1.73)
Finding a job	3.16 (1.08)	2.76 (1.11)	1.85 (0.93)	3.19 (1.22)	3.82 (0.53)	3.48 (0.86)	3.75 (0.50)	3.82 (0.60)	3.67 (0.58)
SSI	3.08 (1.03)	2.78 (0.95)	2.25 (0.85)	3.44 (0.96)	3.44 (0.73)	3.29 (1.04)	3.75 (0.50)	3.36 (1.21)	3.33 (1.16)

Religious services	2.77 (1.12)	2.76 (1.01)	2.90 (0.72)	2.94 (1.24)	2.71 (1.31)	2.73 (1.19)	2.75 (1.26)	3.18 (1.17)	2.00 (1.73)
Group homes	2.53 (1.07)	2.42 (0.97)	2.20 (0.62)	3.00 (1.03)	2.65 (1.11)	2.63 (1.16)	3.00 (0.82)	2.27 (1.19)	2.00 (1.73)

Parent Expectations: In the future, how important are the following in providing your child with a high quality of life?

HS Graduation	3.26 (1.01)	2.97 (0.93)	2.35 (0.75)	3.69 (0.70)	3.47 (1.07)	3.49 (0.10)	3.75 (0.50)	3.36 (1.21)	4.00 (0.00)
Daily living skills	3.25 (1.03)	3.03 (1.06)	2.55 (0.89)	3.69 (0.60)	3.59 (0.87)	3.32 (1.09)	3.50 (1.00)	3.82 (0.41)	3.67 (0.58)
Strong friendships	3.08 (1.02)	2.78 (1.0)	2.20 (0.52)	3.56 (0.73)	3.65 (0.86)	3.21 (1.06)	3.75 (0.50)	3.45 (0.82)	4.00 (0.00)
Volunteering	3.06 (0.96)	2.92 (0.85)	3.05 (0.76)	3.06 (1.06)	3.53 (0.80)	2.98 (1.08)	3.75 (0.50)	3.55 (0.82)	3.67 (0.58)
Using transportation	3.06 (1.07)	3.00 (0.95)	3.00 (0.86)	3.25 (1.07)	3.24 (1.09)	3.06 (1.20)	3.50 (1.00)	2.82 (1.33)	3.33 (0.58)
Working full time	2.99 (1.08)	2.89 (0.94)	2.95 (0.83)	3.25 (1.00)	3.41 (1.00)	2.82 (1.22)	3.50 (0.58)	3.09 (1.22)	3.33 (1.16)
Managing finances	2.99 (1.10)	2.83 (0.96)	2.85 (0.81)	3.19 (1.11)	3.29 (1.05)	3.04 (1.24)	3.25 (0.96)	3.09 (1.30)	2.67 (1.16)
Working part time	2.94 (1.01)	2.97 (0.91)	2.15 (0.99)	3.31 (0.79)	3.12 (1.17)	2.90 (1.04)	3.50 (0.58)	3.18 (0.98)	4.00 (0.00)
Attending IPSE	2.87 (1.10)	2.85 (1.00)	2.80 (1.06)	3.13 (0.96)	3.29 (0.99)	2.75 (1.20)	3.00 (1.16)	2.91 (1.22)	4.00 (0.00)
Living w/ roommates	2.86 (1.02)	2.85 (0.87)	2.95 (0.76)	2.37 (1.26)	2.82 (1.13)	2.97 (1.04)	2.75 (1.26)	2.73 (1.42)	2.67 (1.16)
Living alone	2.86 (1.19)	2.86 (1.08)	2.80 (0.95)	3.00 (1.21)	2.94 (1.35)	2.86 (1.29)	2.25 (0.96)	3.00 (1.34)	2.33 (1.53)
2-year college	2.82 (1.13)	2.82 (0.97)	2.95 (0.83)	2.63 (1.31)	3.00 (1.17)	2.74 (1.25)	3.50 (0.58)	2.73 (1.42)	3.67 (0.58)

4-year college	2.77 (1.10)	2.81 (0.93)	2.75 (0.85)	2.56 (1.26)	3.00 (1.17)	2.66 (1.18)	3.75 (0.50)	2.91 (1.51)	3.67 (0.58)
Living with family	2.77 (1.04)	2.47 (0.90)	2.25 (0.55)	3.19 (1.11)	3.00 (1.12)	2.91 (1.12)	3.00 (0.82)	3.45 (1.04)	3.00 (1.00)
Religious services	2.60 (1.12)	2.68 (1.06)	2.20 (0.83)	2.44 (1.26)	2.59 (1.23)	2.57 (1.18)	3.25 (0.96)	3.09 (1.04)	2.67 (1.53)
Getting married	2.59 (1.13)	2.67 (0.95)	2.20 (1.11)	2.00 (1.10)	2.94 (1.09)	2.60 (1.24)	3.25 (0.96)	2.91 (1.30)	2.33 (0.58)
Having children	2.40 (1.15)	2.50 (1.04)	2.45 (1.0)	1.56 (0.89)	2.47 (1.23)	2.42 (1.22)	3.00 (1.41)	2.55 (1.37)	2.00 (1.00)
Living in a group home	2.29 (1.10)	2.33 (1.08)	3.25 (0.64)	1.94 (0.85)	2.24 (1.20)	2.22 (1.14)	2.50 (1.00)	1.82 (1.08)	1.67 (1.16)

Parent Challenges: How often do you face the following challenges when accessing services for your son/daughter?

Uncertainty after me	3.76 (1.23)	3.45 (1.17)	3.30 (0.87)	4.67 (0.62)	3.71 (1.61)	3.98 (1.22)	2.50 (1.00)	4.30 (0.95)	3.00 (2.83)
Employment KN	3.36 (1.29)	3.61 (1.15)	3.80 (1.20)	3.79 (1.31)	3.12 (1.36)	3.09 (1.32)	2.25 (1.26)	3.40 (1.43)	4.00 (1.41)
Financial challenges	3.27 (1.24)	3.17 (1.27)	3.95 (0.95)	3.40 (1.35)	2.71 (1.53)	3.28 (1.16)	3.25 (0.96)	3.30 (1.25)	3.50 (2.12)
Higher education KN	3.24 (1.25)	3.21 (1.56)	3.10 (1.02)	3.60 (1.30)	3.29 (1.49)	3.22 (1.32)	2.25 (0.50)	3.40 (1.43)	4.00 (1.41)
Not being heard	3.11 (1.22)	3.37 (1.11)	3.90 (0.85)	3.13 (1.06)	2.76 (1.48)	2.73 (1.18)	3.25 (1.50)	3.70 (1.34)	2.00 (1.41)
Future planning KN	3.09 (1.09)	3.17 (1.11)	3.05 (0.76)	3.47 (1.19)	3.35 (1.32)	2.91 (1.07)	2.50 (1.29)	3.60 (0.97)	3.00 (1.41)
Stigma or taboo	2.89 (1.35)	3.23 (1.27)	3.40 (1.47)	2.67 (1.63)	2.59 (1.58)	2.71 (1.25)	2.00 (1.16)	2.70 (1.16)	1.50 (0.71)

Special education KN	2.88 (1.17)	2.92 (1.04)	2.65 (1.0)	3.20 (1.32)	2.94 (1.60)	2.92 (1.21)	2.50 (1.29)	2.40 (0.97)	2.00 (1.41)
Religious/community support	2.86 (1.32)	3.13 (1.20)	2.70 (0.66)	2.67 (1.35)	2.94 (1.52)	2.67 (1.42)	3.00 (1.63)	3.60 (1.27)	1.00 (0.00)
Differences between home-school values	2.85 (1.28)	3.10 (1.18)	3.65 (1.27)	2.73 (1.10)	2.47 (1.55)	2.50 (1.16)	3.50 (1.73)	3.30 (1.64)	2.50 (0.71)
Family members' support	2.83 (1.30)	2.94 (1.23)	2.95 (0.89)	2.60 (1.50)	2.12 (1.41)	2.82 (1.35)	3.00 (0.82)	3.50 (1.43)	2.00 (1.41)
Language barriers	2.25 (1.30)	2.71 (1.26)	2.55 (0.76)	1.67 (0.90)	1.82 (1.43)	2.07 (1.35)	3.00 (1.83)	1.44 (1.01)	1.00 (0.00)
Others help me access services	2.16 (1.37)	1.68 (1.24)	1.53 (1.02)	3.29 (1.73)	2.13 (1.36)	2.42 (1.28)	2.00 (1.73)	2.78 (1.64)	3.00 (0.00)

Note. N = 362; HS = high school; KN = Knowledge; IPSE = inclusive postsecondary education program; SSI = social security income.



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