CONSIDERATIONS FOR SERVING TRANSITION-AGE HISPANIC YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES IN STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

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University of Wisconsin-Madison
June 8, 2023
AGENDA

1. Introduction
2. Comprehensive Approach Towards Understanding Transition-age Hispanic in Vocational Rehabilitation Programs
3. Facilitators and Barriers of Employment Among Transition-age Hispanic Youth Study
4. Transition Professionals’ Perceptions Towards Serving Transition-age Hispanic Youth
5. Transition-age Hispanic Youths’ Engagement in VR services
COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING VR OUTCOMES OF TRANSITION-AGE HISPANIC YOUTH

Study 1
Predictors of employment of transition-age Hispanic youth

Study 2
Transition professionals’ perceptions on the engagement of transition-age Hispanic youth in VR programs and implications of training

Study 3
Factors influencing engagement in VR of transition-age Hispanic youth
Study 1

FACILITATORS AND BARRIERS OF EMPLOYMENT AMONG TRANSITION-AGE HISPANIC YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

Castruita Rios et al., in press
EMPLOYMENT RATES OF TRANSITION-AGE YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES (AGES 16-24)

(U.S. Department of Labor, 2023)
### Challenges Faced by Transition-Age Youth with Disabilities in Obtaining Employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical and emotional changes</th>
<th>Limited work experiences</th>
<th>Motivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-confidence</td>
<td>Unrealistic experiences about work life</td>
<td>Accessibility to comprehensive and current career information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inaccessible transportation</td>
<td>Discrimination in the workplace</td>
<td>Support systems in place</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Langi et al., 2017; Lindsay, 2011; Ose & Jensen, 2017; Pandey & Agarwal, 2013)
• Transition-age youth with disabilities (Awsumb et al., 2020)

• Visual impairments and blindness (Cimera et al., 2015)

• Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (Glynn & Schaller, 2017)

• Traumatic brain injury (Rumrill et al., 2016)

• Autism spectrum disorder (Kaya et al., 2016)
CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY HISPANIC INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Dual Minority Status

Acculturation Patterns

Environment & Social Experiences

(Quiñones-Mayo et al., 2000; Velcoff et al., 2010)
TRANSITION-AGE HISPANIC YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES EMPLOYMENT RATES

Have lower employment outcomes than White or youth of other racial/ethnic groups (Sima et al., 2015)

Youth with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) were less likely to achieve competitive employment than White youth with ASD (Kaya et al., 2016)

Youth with visual impairments and blindness were more likely to achieve competitive employment than White (Cimera et al., 2015)

Youth with ADHD were 1.4 more likely to obtain employment than White, but youth between the ages of 16-19 earned less than White youth (Glynn & Schaller, 2017)
PURPOSE

To identify the variables associated with employment and weekly earnings at exit in transition-age Hispanic youth VR participants.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What demographic factors, barriers to employment, and services are associated with transition-age Hispanic VR participants exiting in competitive integrated employment after being served by state vocational rehabilitation agencies?

2. What demographic factors, barriers to employment, and services are associated with weekly earnings of transition-age Hispanic VR participants exiting in competitive integrated employment after being served by state vocational rehabilitation agencies?
## Method of Study

### Data Source
- Rehabilitation Service Administration (RSA-911) database
- 48-month period (FY 2017-2020)

**Inclusion criteria:**
- Identified as Hispanic
- Between the ages of 14 and 25
- Exited the system between July 2017 and June 2020

\[ n = 52,048 \]

### Variables

**Independent variables:**
1. Demographic factors
2. Disability category and public supports received
3. Barriers to employment
4. Pre-employment transition services (pre-ETS)
5. Vocational rehabilitation services

**Dependent variables**
- Employment at exit
- Weekly earnings

### Data Analysis
- Descriptive analysis
- Logistic regression
- Stepwise regression analysis

*Variables with <1% of the sample were dropped in regression analyses*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable Levels</th>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demographic factors</td>
<td>• Sex</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Age at application</td>
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<td>• Race/ethnicity</td>
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<td>Disability category and</td>
<td>• Mental health</td>
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<td>public supports received</td>
<td>• Physical disability only</td>
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<td>• Sensory and</td>
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<td>• communication</td>
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<td>• disability only</td>
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<td>• Medicaid</td>
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<td>• Medicare</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Supplemental Security Income (SSI)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Barriers</td>
<td>• Low-income status,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>single parent, homeless runaway, foster care youth, ex-offender status, English learner, migrant and seasonal farmworker, cultural barriers, basic skills deficient, exhaust Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), long-term unemployed, displaced homemaker, and dislocated worker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-ETS</td>
<td>• Counseling on</td>
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<td>enrollment opportunities, instruction in self-advocacy, job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, and work readiness training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VR services</td>
<td>• 35 VR services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DESCRIPTIVE DATA - RQ 1

- Sample size \( n = 52,048 \)
- Majority of the sample was male (60.6%)
- Mean age was 23 years old \( (SD = 1.61) \)
- Disability type:
  - Mental health disability (86.7%)
  - Sensory and communication (8%)
  - Physical disability (4.9%)

Race demographics

- White: 87%
- Black or African American: 3%
- American Indian: 1%
- Hispanic only: 1%
- Asian: 1%
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander: 3%
RESULTS - RQ1: PREDICTORS OF EMPLOYMENT AT EXIT

Most significant positive predictors

- Short-term job supports
- Age at application
- Maintenance

Most significant negative predictors

- SSI recipient
- Long term unemployment
- Assessment

Final model explained 6% of the variance (Nagelkerke $R^2 = .058$)
DESCRIPTIVE DATA - RQ 2

• Sample size ($n = 17,798$)
  • About 34% exited in employment
• Majority of the sample was male (63.6%)
• Mean age was 23 years old (SD = 1.52)
• Disability type:
  • Mental health disability (88.4%)
  • Sensory and communication (7.5%)
  • Physical disability (4.1%)
• Weekly earnings ($M = $339.12; SD = $199.58$)
RESULTS - RQ2: PREDICTORS OF EMPLOYMENT AT EXIT

Most significant positive predictors

- Male
- Sensory and communication disability
- Job search assistance

Most significant negative predictors

- Disability significance
- SSI recipient
- Basic skills deficiency
- Long-term unemployment

Final model explained 5.1% of the variance
(Nagelkerke $R^2 = .051$)

Scan QR code for further details of table with results
Summary of findings

- **Constant predictors** of employment and weekly earnings included:
  - Males (+)
  - Job search assistance (+)
  - SSI recipient (-)
  - Long term unemployment (-)
  - Assessment (-)

Findings consistent with the literature

- **Sociodemographic variables and employment**
  - Gender differences in employment outcomes (Awsumb et al., 2020)
  - Not receiving social security benefits positively associated with employment (Rumrill et al., 2016)
    - Similar finding among transition-age youth with autism (Kaya et al., 2016)
- **VR services and employment**
  - Receiving services enhances the likelihood of obtaining employment at exit (e.g., Jin et al., 2015)

Implications

- Need for VR counselor training relating to serving transition-age youth from underrepresented groups
  - e.g., Awsumb et al., 2020; Plotner et al., 2012
- Underutilization of VR services (pre-ETS and individualized) by transition-age Hispanic youth with disabilities
- Future studies should examine the effects of mental health factors in attainment and retention of employment
MENTAL HEALTH AND EMPLOYMENT

• Mental health is important in terms of:
  • Work motivation
  • Working with others
  • Self-advocacy
  • Self-esteem
• Mental health and these concepts are critical for job attainment and work retention
• Data collected by state VR agencies does not include information on mental health
TRANSITION PROFESSIONALS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS SERVING TRANSITION-AGE HISPANIC YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES: ENGAGEMENT, COMPETENCY, AND TRAINING

Castruita Rios et al., in progress
AIMS OF STUDY

(1) To identify the factors influencing participants’ perceptions on the vocational rehabilitation engagement of transition-age Hispanic youth

(2) To examine the group differences between participants with no training versus some training as it relates to perceived competency, knowledge on pre-ETS, and vocational rehabilitation engagement

(3) To investigate whether having some ability to speak Spanish impacts participant’s perceived competency in serving transition-age Hispanic youth
• Data was collected via two technical assistance centers:
  1. Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center for Quality Employment (VR-TACQE)
  2. National Technical Center on Transition (NTACT:C)

• Analysis
  • Descriptive analysis
  • Correlation Analysis
  • Independent samples t-test

• Variables:
  • Sociodemographic (e.g., age, gender, disability, ability to speak Spanish)
  • Working alliance
  • Vocational outcome expectancy
  • Vocational rehabilitation engagement
  • Competency in transition services
  • Competency in serving transition-age Hispanic youth
  • Knowledge on pre-ETS
  • Importance of pre-ETS
DESCRIPTIVE FINDINGS

Organization

- Majority of participants were from State VR program
  - General Agency (56.8%)
  - Combined Agency (14.4%)

Professional Role

- Majority had a role as a:
  - Local VR representative (51.4%)
  - State vocational agency provider (23.8%)

Years of Professional Experience

- $M = 15.69$ ($SD = 9.33$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sociodemographic Characteristics of Sample ($n = 118$)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>Prefer not to answer</td>
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<td>Race</td>
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<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
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<td>Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander</td>
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<td>Hispanic</td>
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<td>Disability</td>
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<td>Family Member or Guardian of Person with a Disability</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Geographic Area</td>
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<td>Rural</td>
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<td>Urban</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to Speak Spanish</td>
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<tr>
<td>No ability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basic (survival)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Novice (simple context)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fluent</td>
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<td>Native speaker</td>
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<td>Conversational</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Note. Participants age ranged from 27-70 years old ($M = 46.09; SD = 9.84$).
## CORRELATION ANALYSIS

### Table 3.

*Correlation Analysis of Variables (n = 118)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. VRE</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>0.76</td>
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<td>2. VOE</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>0.88</td>
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<td>3. WA</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>.111</td>
<td>-.153</td>
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<td>4. Ability to speak Spanish</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>.124</td>
<td>-.052</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Pre-service training in transition-age</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>.183*</td>
<td>-.127</td>
<td>.019</td>
<td>-.049</td>
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<td>Hispanic youth</td>
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<td>6. In-service training in transition-age</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>.222*</td>
<td>-.047</td>
<td>.031</td>
<td>.127</td>
<td>.377**</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. In-service training hours in transition-age</td>
<td>18.54</td>
<td>57.47</td>
<td>.109</td>
<td>-.208*</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>.112</td>
<td>.191*</td>
<td>.186</td>
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<td>8. Perceived competence in transition</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>.168</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>.046</td>
<td>-.028</td>
<td>.088</td>
<td>.222*</td>
<td>-.002</td>
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<td>Hispanic youth</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Perceived competence in serving transition</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>.275**</td>
<td>-.067</td>
<td>.087</td>
<td>.375**</td>
<td>.245**</td>
<td>.373**</td>
<td>.158</td>
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<td>Hispanic youth</td>
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*Note.* VRE = vocational rehabilitation engagement; WA = working alliance; VOE = vocational outcome expectancy; pre-ETS = pre-employment transition services; *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01
GROUP DIFFERENCES

Pre-service Training
- Transition-age youth
- Pre-ETS
- Hispanic individuals
- Transition-age Hispanic youth

In-service Training
- Pre-ETS
- Transition-age Hispanic youth

Ability to Speak Spanish
- No ability vs some ability

Comparisons
1. Perceived competence in serving transition-age Hispanic youth
2. Perceived competence in transition services
3. Knowledge in pre-ETS
4. Importance on pre-ETS
5. Vocational rehabilitation engagement
RESULTS: GROUP DIFFERENCES

Pre-service Training
- Transition-age youth
- Pre-ETS
- Hispanic individuals

In-service Training
- Pre-ETS
  - Knowledge in pre-ETS
  - Perceived competence in serving transition-age Hispanic youth
- Transition-age Hispanic youth
  - Knowledge in pre-ETS
  - Perceived competence in serving transition-age Hispanic youth

Ability to Speak Spanish
- Transition-age youth
- Hispanic individuals

Scan QR code for further details of table with results
Study 3

AN EXAMINATION OF THE VOCATIONAL READINESS OF TRANSITION-AGE HISPANIC YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

Castruita Rios, in progress
OVERVIEW OF STUDY

**Purpose:** To identify factors that influence the engagement in vocational rehabilitation services among transition-age Hispanic youth with disabilities

**Research design:** mixed-methods cross-sectional exploratory study

**Theoretical framework:**
- Integrated Self-Determined Work Motivation Model (Tansey et al., 2017)
- Fourfold Acculturation Model (Berry, 1998)
MODEL BEING TESTED IN DISSERTATION

Demographics
- Gender
- Age
- Race
- Disability type
- English learner
- Geographic location
- Annual family income
- SSI/SSDI

Contextual factors
- Acculturation (BAS)
- Social support (MSPSS)
- Stigma (SSOSH; PSOSH)
- Counselor-client variables

SDT-SCT factors
- Autonomy (VRIMS)
- Competency (VSES)
- Relatedness (WAI-S)
- Outcome expectation (VOES)

Pre-ETS related factors
- Quantity
- Type
- Quality
- Relevance
- Usefulness

Self-Determination and Social-Cognitive Theory Factors

Pre-ETS

VR Engagement

Contextual Factors

Demographics
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the relationship between demographic, contextual factors, self-determination theory and social cognitive theory factors, and pre-ETS services related factors and VR engagement of transition-age Hispanic youth with disabilities?

2. Do perceptions of quality, relevance, and usefulness of pre-ETS services mediate the relationship between working alliance and VR engagement of transition-age Hispanic youth with disabilities?

3. What are the experiences of transition-age Hispanic youth with disabilities with pre-ETS?
   a) How is the delivery of pre-ETS as experienced by transition-age Hispanic youth with disabilities?
   b) How has receiving pre-ETS been supportive to transition-age Hispanic youth with disabilities in their journey to obtain employment?

4. What are some ways pre-ETS can be improved for transition-age Hispanic youth with disabilities?
2. Do perceptions of quality, relevance, and usefulness of pre-ETS services mediate the relationship between working alliance and VR engagement of transition-age Hispanic youth with disabilities?

3. What are the experiences of transition-age Hispanic youth with disabilities with pre-ETS?
   a) How is the delivery of pre-ETS as experienced by transition-age Hispanic youth with disabilities?

b) How has receiving pre-ETS been supportive to transition-age Hispanic youth with disabilities in their journey to obtain employment?

4. What are some ways pre-ETS can be improved for transition-age Hispanic youth with disabilities?
METHODS

• IRB Approval

• Recruitment:
  • Contacted state VR directors
  • Expanded recruitment via recruitment of participants via Prolific, reaching out to organizations, technical centers, and utilizing social media platforms

• A total of 149 participants were identified
  • VR ($n = 10$)
  • Prolific ($n = 3$)
  • Organizations ($n = 14$)
  • Social Media ($n = 122$)
DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Majority of the participants:

- 49% Female ($n = 73$), 48.3% Male ($n = 72$)
- 62.4% White
- 2.1% Amputation or missing limbs (primary disability; $n = 33$)
- 18.1% Anxiety disorder (secondary disability; $n = 27$)
- 67.8% Native language was English ($n = 101$)
- 82.6% Lived in urban areas ($n = 123$)
- 47% had a high school diploma or equivalent ($n = 47\%$)
- 18.8% had a $50,000$ to $59,000$ annual family income ($n = 28$)
- 41.6% were SSI recipients ($n = 62$)
- 94% lived with their family at the time of the survey ($n = 140$)
- 47.7% were third-and-higher generation Americans

Mean age of 20.12 years old ($SD = 1.13$)

Participants on average reported having had their disability for 7.6 years ($SD = 5.04$)
PRELIMINARY FINDINGS: PARALLEL MEDIATION ANALYSIS

Final model explained 66.1% of the variance \((R = .81, R^2 = .66, F(4, 79) = 38.51, p < .001)\)

Pre-ETS usefulness was the only mediator that demonstrated having a statistically significant indirect effect on the relationship between relatedness and VR engagement.

\((ab \text{ pre-ets quality } [95\% CI] = 0.26 [.10, .42])\)

*Note. Dotted line represents the effect of relatedness on VR engagement when mediators are not included.

\( ^+ p = \text{not significant.} \ ^* p < .05. \ ^{**} p < .01. \ ^{***} p < .001. \)
PRELIMINARY FINDINGS - MSPSS SUBSCALES

Final model explained 89% of the variance ($R^2 = .889$)

Statistically significant predictors included:
- PSOSH** ($B = -.181, p = .003$)
- WA* ($B = .219, p = .016$)
- VOES* ($B = .270, p = .021$)
- [Pre-ETS] Instruction in self-advocacy* ($B = .55, p = .019$)

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.  

- Hispanic youth were *less* likely to engage in services if they:
  - Had a higher perceived stigma of others in seeking help
- Hispanic youth were *more* likely to engage in VR services if they had a:
  - Stronger working alliance with their VR counselor
  - Higher vocational outcome expectancy
  - Received instruction in self-advocacy (pre-ETS service)
FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Utilizing qualitative methods to further examine the experiences of transition-age Hispanic youth receiving VR services

- Investigate the perspectives of transition-age Hispanic youth not currently part of VR programs to further understand factors impacting their engagement in services

- Comparative evaluation of outcomes and underlying services provided to other populations (e.g., White, African American)
  - Mixed findings surrounding Hispanic youth employment outcomes when compared to other racial/ethnic groups (e.g., Awumb et al., 2016; Glynn & Schaller, 2017; Kaya et al., 2016; Yin et al., 2021)
  - Assessment observed to be among the most frequently service provided to transition-age youth with specific learning disabilities (Kaya et al., 2021)

- Examine employers’ readiness to hire and employers’ climate for retaining transition-age Hispanic youth with disabilities

- Longitudinal study exploring the transition to adult services and then to work
Individual with disabilities, including transition-age youth, should have an equal opportunity and access to the engaging in the workforce and fully participate in society.

However, transition-age Hispanic youth with disabilities are less likely than their peers to exit in employment.

Although VR services such as short-term job supports and job search assistance have been noted to enhance the likelihood of employment at exit of transition-age Hispanic youth with disabilities, this group has been observed to underutilize services.

Vocational rehabilitation counselors' perspectives towards their experiences serving transition-age Hispanic youth with disabilities can help inform training needs to further strengthen the existing service delivery for this group.

Examining the experiences of transition-age Hispanic youth with disabilities who are receiving VR services can help researchers and practitioners recognize barriers and facilitators of youth's decisions to engage in services.
THANK YOU!

QUESTIONS?

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Website

Scan QR code for professional website and contact information