Latina and Anglo Female Adolescent and Parent Values During the IEP Transition Process

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Abstract
Adolescent students with disabilities receive special education services in order to help them transition out of high school into adulthood. This transition process involves goal-setting, meetings, revision of individualized education plans, and student and parent participation. It is a crucial step in helping these young students be successful in adulthood. Latina and Anglo female students with disabilities and parents of Latina and Anglo female students with disabilities were studied. It was specifically examined how important traditional Latino values were to the groups of participants and how much the participants felt these values were being incorporated into the transition process by school personnel. Significant results were found in relation to the value of familismo. These findings have implications for successful transition processes for Latina adolescents with disabilities and their families.

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Latina and Anglo Female Adolescent and Parent Values During the IEP Transition

Process

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Natalie Kollross

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APPROVED BY THE COMMITTEE:
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Abstract

Adolescent students with disabilities receive special education services in order to help them transition out of high school into adulthood. This transition process involves goal-setting, meetings, revision of individualized education plans, and student and parent participation. It is a crucial step in helping these young students be successful in adulthood. Latina and Anglo female students with disabilities and parents of Latina and Anglo female students with disabilities were studied. It was specifically examined how important traditional Latino values were to the groups of participants and how much the participants felt these values were being incorporated into the transition process by school personnel. Significant results were found in relation to the value of familismo. These findings have implications for successful transition processes for Latina adolescents with disabilities and their families.

Keywords: Latino, transition, special education, cultural values
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INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to evaluate how identification with and perception of cultural values may affect the transition process for Latina and Anglo female students who have disabilities, as well as parents of Latina and Anglo female students who have disabilities. Participants were evaluated during their mandated high school transition planning process. This transition process is mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and involves special education services that target preparing students with disabilities who receive special education to transition to adulthood via goals related to postsecondary education, vocational training, independent living, and employment. It was examined how a person's cultural values affect and influence the transition process. The perceptions of teachers’ alignment with students' and parents' values and culture was examined. This study provides information about how culturally-sensitive the transition process may be for Latino and Anglo females and their families.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following research questions and hypotheses were addressed in this study. The answers to these questions provide information that is of significance to Latino and Anglo families and their adolescent children with disabilities.

Research Questions

Question 1: Is there a difference in level of importance of values of personalismo and familismo between Latina students and their parents?

Question 2: Is there a difference in level of importance of values (personalismo/familismo) between Anglo students and Latina students and between Anglo and Latino parents?
Question 3: Did those families who placed a high importance on values (familismo/personalismo) perceive a high level of manifestation of behaviors congruent with these values from school staff during IEP meetings?

Question 4: Is there a difference of this perception among Latinos and Anglos?

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There will be a higher importance of values (personalismo/familismo) among Latino parents.

Hypothesis 2: There will be a higher importance of values among Latinos overall as compared to Anglos.

Hypothesis 3: Individuals who place more importance on these values will actually perceive that school staff manifested these values less often than those individuals who placed less importance on the values.

Hypothesis 4: Latinos will perceive that school staff manifests these values less often overall than Anglos do.

Significance of the Study

This study provides rich information about the transition process from high school to adulthood for Latina and Anglo females with disabilities and their families. Cultural values were examined in order to provide information about the participants' interaction with school personnel during transition planning as well as the participants’ expectations, values, and behavior during this time. It may give insight into what maintains, changes, or affects parental and student involvement in the transition process for Anglo and Latina individuals. Information is provided as to how school personnel may better understand students and their families and how best to serve them, implement interventions, address goals, problems, and structure meetings and other events as part of special education services. Cultural values have been minimally studied in the context of how they pertain to special education. This study adds to the sparse existing literature, provides more of a
foundation for future research on this topic, and helps pinpoint what specific variables need to be addressed and examined in future research.

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

There has not always existed a tradition of providing specialized assistance and education to children with disabilities. Moreover, the cultural and linguistic needs and differences of the child and the child’s family have not always been considered in providing special education services. Children with disabilities and their families deal with many difficulties and stressors in their daily lives. A fair and adequate education for these children has been a battle to obtain. These same children and families who are also ethnically or racially diverse deal with even more struggles to obtain fair and competent special education services which they can understand and which do not impose more discrimination upon them. This review of the literature describes the challenges children with disabilities and their families have encountered and progress that has been made, but it also specifically addresses Latino female children with disabilities and their families who encounter a unique set of problems within the education system of the United States. Special focus was paid to adolescent Latino and Anglo female children and their families during the transition from high school to adulthood and beyond, as well as how the role of cultural values and their relationship to individuals and families manifests during this process and transition.

**Individuals with Disabilities Act**

In 1975 the Education of All Handicapped Children Act (PL-142) was passed that provided grants to schools in order to help serve children with disabilities. It was written within the act that children with disabilities were entitled to transition services (i.e.
services to help transition them into adulthood). Despite this entitlement to transition services, students did not always receive adequate preparation for transition into adulthood and research showed that these students’ quality of life was negatively impacted by this lack of preparation (Powers, Gil-Kashiwabara, Geenen, Powers, Balandran, & Palmer, 2005; Wagner, Newman, D’Amico, Jay, Butler-Nalin, Marder, & Cox, 1991; Wagner, Blackorby, Cameto, Hebbler, and Newman, 1993). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was created in 1990 which outlined a more detailed description of free services which students with disabilities are entitled to obtain (see Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA], 1990, 2004). Included in these services, are transition services which are mandated to begin at age fourteen with a formal written statement to be included in the Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Implementation of transition services may begin at an earlier age if the special education team deems it necessary. An example might be that the child plans on exiting high school before graduating which can occur for many children with disabilities (Wagner et al., 1991). In 1993 the results of The National Longitudinal Transition Study of students with disabilities showed poor outcomes for these students after exiting from high school or public education (Wagner, Blackorby, Cameto, Hebbeler, & Newman, 1993). These children were less likely to be employed, be living independently, and integrated into their communities. From this, President Clinton passed amendments to IDEA in 1997 which mandated that school personnel receive training in order to help these students transition to adulthood and that school personnel be “responsible” for transition services and “accountable for the outcomes” (Edmondson & Cain, 2002, p. 11).
Individualized Education Plan

An integral part of IDEA and special education services is the IEP—the vessel through which services are planned, described, coordinated, and accounted. It is a document that is meant to be tailored to the individual child but carried out by teamwork among special education staff (special education teacher, school psychologist, speech therapist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, etc.), school personnel, teachers, parents, and the child. The IEP must contain several components. It must describe the student’s current academic level of functioning and performance including his or her strengths and weaknesses. There must be a list of short-term and annual goals or objectives for the student which contains objective and measurable criteria as well as projected dates of initiation of services and projected duration of services. A list of the special education services the student is going to receive is listed as well as the placement of the child (mainstream, learning center, etc). Planned time for exposure and experience with non-disabled children and participation in state- and district-wide assessments is documented. The progress of the students towards the goals is documented. The IEP is developed by the special education team, teachers, parents or guardians, and, as best practice, the students. It is a collaborative process and each member must consent to the content and plan of the IEP. The IEP is in place in order to ensure that every student receives a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment and that there exist safeguards at every step of the process and implementation to ensure quality of services (Edmondson & Cain, 2002; Kupper, 2000). Each academic year the IEP is reviewed and revised as needed depending upon the progress and success the child has made with the goals. There are “special factors” or “exclusionary factors” which
should be carefully considered when assessing a child for services and when creating and maintaining an IEP. Such factors include the child’s behavior, visual or hearing impairment, language proficiency or bilingualism, communication needs, and assistive technology needs. These factors may exclude a child from being eligible for certain disabilities, such as learning disabilities, if it is deemed that a child’s problems are more likely a result of one of the problems above. For example, if a child is getting poor grades it may be a result of a language deficit in English or a hearing problem which will dictate the need for much different services. These factors should also be considered as supplementary needs of the child which, if addressed, may help the child achieve the education goals more easily. For example, if a child has a behavioral or communication disorder this may be impacting his or her academic functioning, but if the child receives behavioral supports or speech therapy this may greatly aid the quality of special education the child receives and, subsequently increase the gains towards their academic goals.

Transition Services

Once the child reaches the age of fourteen and continues to receive special education services, transition services must begin to be addressed with consideration to the types of classes the child will need in order to reach his or her post-secondary education goals or needs (Kupper, 2000). At age sixteen there must be a formal statement of transition services the child will receive in order to meet post-secondary school goals. These practices are mandated by the IDEA and each child is entitled to receive these services (IDEA, 1990, 2004). According to IDEA (2004, amended 2006) the definition of transition is
…a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that: Is designed to be within an results-oriented process, that is focused 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 postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment); continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation; is based on the individual child’s needs, taking into account the child’s strengths, preferences, and interests; and includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation. (Section 34 CFR 300.43[a]).

The IEP will contain measurable short-term and long-term transition goals which are tailored to each child. Long-term transition goals may include things such as attending college or vocational training or securing a paid job. Short-term transition goals may include meeting with a vocational rehabilitation counselor, help with filling out college applications, and considering living arrangements. The IEP also contains a list of services which will aid in transition into adulthood as well as a list of service providers.

According to the IDEA mandates and previous literature, there are five areas that should be covered in transition planning: future employment, home living, recreation and leisure, community participation, and post-secondary job or education (Kupper, 2000; Matuszak, Langel, & Goldberg, 1996; Johnson, 2005). A student should receive a vocational assessment as well as career counseling to help match interests and skills to future employment possibilities (Matuszak et al, 1996). The student and his or her family must
begin to think about what kind of setting in which the child will live. Different settings include at home with family, independently alone or with a roommate, subsidized housing, with the aid of a Personal Care Assistant if the child has medical needs, in an adult foster care or other supported living services if the child needs more supervision and services and cannot live independently. It is also important to pinpoint specific leisure activities or hobbies the child enjoys to help ensure the child can access these things in the future. For example, the transition team may need to discuss transportation options or disability accommodations to meet with friends, attending the movies, or joining a sports team. Participation in community activities is an important part of integrating into society as an adult. Students need to know what resources are in their community and how to access them. They may need assistance with such things as voting or public transportation. A decision must be made of whether the student wants and is capable of pursuing post-secondary education, whether it is college or vocational training. The transition team may need to help the student in taking the necessary coursework to prepare for college or training, choosing and applying to colleges or programs, and/or setting up disability services at the intended educational institution. It is the responsibility of the special education team to contact outside service providers including vocational rehabilitation counselors, community leaders, mental health professionals, to help provide all of the mandated services or reach the child’s transition goals. The student and family must also understand the students’ rights will be transferred to the student at the age of majority (deFur, 2000). This means the student will be his or her legal guardian unless a parent or family member seeks and obtains guardianship of the student when he or she becomes an adult. Overall, the transition services should have
a plan which “provides the basic structure for preparing an individual to live, work, and play in the community as fully and independently as possible” (Matuszak et al., 1996, p. 11).

Not only must the required and mandated services be completed, but the services must be fulfilled in specific ways. Edmondson and Cain (2002) stress that transition services should begin as early as possible and should be collaborative in nature. It is also emphasized that students and parents should participate in the transition process and that a comprehensive plan should be developed which includes specific, realistic, personal goals which are based on the students’ interests, needs, and strengths (Matuszak et al., 1996; deFur, 2000; Edmonson & Cain, 2002; Johnson, 2002; Kupper, 2000).

Outcomes of Transition Services

There has been much research on the outcomes of transition services for youth (Wagner et al., 1991; Wagner et al., 1993; Wagner, Newman, Cameto, & Levine, 2005; Hasazi, Furney, & DeStefano, 1999; Powers, et al., 2005; Cobb & Alwell, 2009; Finn & Kohler, 2009) including the National Longitudinal Transition Study of Special Education Students (NLTS) completed in 1990 and the National Longitudinal Transition Study of Special Education Students-2 (NLTS-2) completed in 2003. The NLTS contained data collected historically from 1985 and 1986 as well as future data collected through 1990. The sample consisted of over 8,000 students ages 13-21 in special education across the United States. Data was also collected in 1990 from a subsample of 800 students (Wagner, et al., 1993). The post-secondary school outcomes for children who had transitioned from high school to adulthood were studied. The study was aimed at gathering information about special education programs and transition plans and
implementation of the plans at different schools across the United States. Data was gathered via parent and student phone interviews, mailed surveys, and reviews of school records and school programs. Wagner and colleagues (1991, 1993) disseminated the first results of the study. Both promising and discouraging outcomes were found. Thirty-eight percent of the sample of students dropped out of high school prior to graduation. And poor academic performance was common for most of the students. Females were more likely than males to receive support services; however those services were grossly underutilized. Also, most of the students took vocational coursework in high school. With regard to the transition goals and plan, most students had transition goals, but most students did not have transition plans. Students diagnosed with an Emotional Disturbance (ED) were the least likely to have transition goals or plans in their IEP’s. Overall, 56% of students had employment goals, 28% had vocational goals, and 23% had goals for college. Vocational rehabilitation counselors were the support staff most likely to be called in to provide services but only one third of the students received any contact or support from representatives from local vocational training schools or from colleges. Mental health agencies only represented 7% of outside agencies which were contacted for support for the student. None of the children diagnosed with ED had a mental health worker contacted on their behalf.

Post-school outcomes from the reports on the National Longitudinal Transition Study of Special Education Students (Wagner et al., 1991; Wagner et al., 1993) were surprisingly positive in some areas, while lacking in other areas. Overall, students with ED, learning disability (LD), and intellectual disability fared the worst after high school. Better outcomes were seen for those students who had parents who were involved in the
transition process and for those students who had transition goals in their IEP, and for
those who attended college after high school. Among those who needed it, one third of
the students were receiving help from tutors, counselors, skills trainers, physical
therapists, etc. Arrest rates rose sharply after a period of three years post-high school,
with the highest rates for those diagnosed as ED. Fifty-seven percent were competitively
employed after 3 years, however this was still lower than the percentages of the general
population of same-aged peers. Thirty-seven percent were living independently (alone or
with a spouse or roommate). A high number were married or cohabitating with a
romantic partner. However, there were a high number of single mothers from the sample.
Most of the sample (95%) was living with parents directly after exit from post-secondary
education. And two years after high school 14% were enrolled in post-secondary
education, with the highest number of students enrolled in vocational training college
followed by enrollment in a two-year college.

The NLTS-2 was very similar to the NLTS but data was collected beginning in
2001 and taken thereafter every two years until 2009. The mean ages for the students
when the study began were ages 13 through 16. The overall sample included data for
6,888 students. A comparison of the NLTS and NLTS-2 data (up until data collection
from 2003) was performed (Wagner, et al., 2005). It found the school completion rate had
increased and, subsequently, school dropout rate decreased. More students lived
independently after high school, but the majority still lived with their parents.
Membership in leisure activities and groups or sports teams rose significantly, however
rates of participation in community service stayed the same. There was an increase in
employment rates, but not an increase in overall salary. However, students were more
likely to have retail jobs rather than maintenance or heavy labor jobs. The number of students enrolled in college doubled while those enrolled in vocational training remained static. There was the greatest increase in those students attending a two-year college. And, overall, students seemed more engaged in finding work or obtaining post-secondary education. Disappointingly, the number of students arrested, fired from a job, or who received disciplinary action in high school rose significantly. All of these statistics, though mostly positive, are still below those of students in the general population without disabilities.

Hasazi and colleagues (1999) examined the implementation of IDEA transition mandates in nine sites/schools across rural and urban United States. A cross-case analysis was begun in 1996 and evaluated five “model” sites and 4 “representative” sites. The model sites were those which had an excellent reputation for implementation of IDEA mandates. The representative sites were those which demonstrated progress in implementing the mandates despite encountering typical challenges a school or site encounters such as lack of funds, competent staff, time, etc. The authors visited all of the sites, conducted interviews, observations, and document reviews. The authors found that the model sites, overall, implemented system-wide interventions and collaboration, maintained a family-centered approach, and met all mandated policies and practices. These sites also facilitated professional development of staff as well as fostered effective collaboration and coordination of services. It was found that the model sites needed to improve upon having more student participation in the transition services and plan, extending services to students with ED, and utilizing outcome data of their program in order to make improvements. The authors found that the representative sites did very well
in interagency collaboration, encouraging and providing time for professional development, and having staff who were caring and innovative, bringing novel ideas and action to the transition process. For example, one site created a separate transition course for 9th through 12th grade students. It was found that the representative sites needed to expand their services to include and accommodate students with a wider range of disabilities (mostly ED) and a wider range of ages (especially the 18-21 age range).

In a study by Powers and colleagues (2005) the transition planning practices were again examined for quality of implementation and concordance with IDEA 1997 and 2004 reauthorization mandates. The study consisted of 399 special education students who were randomly selected from two large urban school districts in the western United States. The students ranged in age from 16-22. Results indicate that transition services were lacking for most of the students. Twenty-four students, or 6% of the sample, did not have any transition goal. Of those who did have transition goals in the IEP, 63.1% had little to no detail of the goal or how it was supposed to be met. There was little reflection of students’ interests and desires in the goals. There was little reference to future support and accommodations needed for the student after high school. On average only 4.38 out of the 12 necessary transition areas were addressed in the transition goals and plan. Post-secondary education such as vocational training or college, leisure activities, and medical goals or supports was rarely addressed. Overall, the quality and quantity of the transition services was lacking and did not meet IDEA mandates.

A quantitative and qualitative systematic review of studies on transition planning and outcomes was conducted by Cobb and Alwell (2009). Thirty-one studies were examined with a total of 859 students represented in the various studies. A summary of
the findings indicate that transition programs which were student-focused found these students had significantly better post-school outcomes than did students in other types of transition programs or services. Overall, there was a need for more parent involvement, a need to allow students to feel heard and valued in the IEP meetings, and a need for an extended amount of time for IEP meetings. There was also evidence for a change in transition services to focus less on helping students with their homework in high school and focus more on assisting them in developing meta-cognitive strategies such as problem-solving as well as developing their interests and talents in an effort to teach life-long skills.

Finn and Kolher (2009) examined the compliance of transition mandated services in relation to the suggestions of the Transition Outcomes Project (TOP). The TOP was created in response to reports from school personnel of the difficulties in implementing the mandated transition services as well as due to the poor transition outcomes found in research (O’Leary, 2000). The TOP outlines the steps educators need and should take to help ensure transition services are being implemented correctly and in concordance with the IDEA mandates. It also outlines a process of evaluating the contents of the IEP to ensure quality and agreement with mandates. Compliance with transition services as well as compliance with suggestions of the TOP was examined in 13 school districts in a Midwestern state with a total of 166 students represented in the study. These districts were specifically utilizing the TOP to ensure quality of services and data was collected pre-TOP training and post-TOP training. Results indicated that after using the TOP student participation improved with 15% of student participation still lacking. About one fifth of the total IEP’s did not meet compliance with the mandates pre- or post-education
from the TOP. However, one fifth did meet compliance with mandates post-training whereas they did not meet pre-training. Sixty percent of the students had an IEP which contained transition statements or goals starting by age 14, as required by IDEA. Results also indicated there were good descriptions for student’s desires or visions for after high-school; however these were not realistic given the needs of the students. Also, there was a decline post-analysis in invitations made to outside agencies to provide transition services to the students. Overall, some progress was made, however the majority of schools still needed to improve their IEP transition goals and plans in order to comply with IDEA mandates.

Transition Outcomes for Latino Students

Compared to Anglo or White students, Hispanic students have continued to fare worse over time in their respective transition outcomes. Demonstrated in a comparison of the NLTS to the NLTS-2, Latinos barely made any gains by the year 2003 as compared to a similar cohort in the year 1985 (Wagner et al., 2005). Latino students with disabilities did increase their participation in community and leisure activities such as participation in sports teams or volunteering in the community. Their enrollment in post-secondary education and training did increase, though not significantly. The number of Latino students living independently did not change over time. Latino students with disabilities overall, did not earn more money at jobs, nor did they obtain more paid jobs. Alternatively, White students with disabilities had a significant increase in independent living, finding paid work, wage earned and attending college. Also, African American students with disabilities had a significant increase in attendance at four-year colleges and obtaining paid jobs.
More compelling evidence was ascertained from interviews and questioning of Latino students and families during the NLTS in 1987 (Newman, 1992). Latinos represented 8% in the NLTS study, which was comparable to the general population at the time. When compared to Anglo and African American students, Latinos were the most likely to have never received vocational training during high school, were the least likely to work during high school and participate in extracurricular activities. Latinos in the study, on average, missed the most days of school and were the most likely to drop out of high school. These statistics likely affected the transition of Latino youth leading to much poorer outcomes.

In a dissertation study by Hasnain (2001) poor outcomes for Latino students were noted despite an emphasis on transition planning. A subset of data was taken from the National Health Interview Survey on Disability (NHIS-D) in 1994 and 1995 with almost 2,000 Latino, African American, and White students with disabilities ages 18-26 represented in the sample. Post-transition outcomes revealed that Latino students had the lowest percentage of post-secondary education enrollment, 4.4% compared to 6.7% of White students. They were working at a paid job significantly less than White graduates, 45.9% compared to 63.4% for Whites. However, about fifty percent of the Latino students were married and a higher percentage of Latino students spent time with friends and engaged in leisure activities as well as spiritual and religious activities.

Minority students, especially Latinos, continue to represent a significantly lower percentage going to college, getting paid jobs, and participating in the community. This data continues to show areas in which the special education transition process needs to improve. Even after two national longitudinal studies on transition and numerous federal
mandates, these services are not meeting the students’ needs, goals, or expectations, especially among culturally and linguistically diverse students, including Latinos. Many areas and practices have been improved upon and, statistically, Latino students are doing better in some areas after transition into adulthood. However, Latinos continue to fare worse than African American and Anglo students with disabilities, and all continue to remain below the general population of same-aged peers without disabilities. Due to the data above, researchers continue to provide recommendations with which to improve the transition process and outcomes for Latino students with disabilities.

Latino Students in Special Education and Transition

The data on Latino students with disabilities suggests that special education and transition services are still not meeting the needs of these students and they continue to show poorer post-secondary school outcomes than Anglo and African American students. National statistical data show that in 2008 twenty-two percent of public high school students in the United States were Latino (US Department of Education, 2010). The current study includes a sample of high school students recruited from schools in Oregon and California. Statistical data from Oregon and California show that in 2005 a little over 15% of public high school students were Latino (US Department of Education, 2008) while over 32% of public high school students in California in 2006 were Latino (Fry & Gonzales, 2008). Despite improvement in post-school outcomes, services are still lacking. Several researchers have proposed ways in which school personnel can provide culturally sensitive and relevant services to Latino students and families.

An overarching theme in the literature is to first consider the culture of the Latino student (Avoke & Simon-Burroughs, 2007; Black, Mrasek, & Ballinger, 2003; Bruns &
Even if the student or the parents speak English, there still may exist a strong tie to traditional Latino values depending on the acculturation level of the family and its individual members. The traditional Latino culture is collectivistic rather than individualistic (as is the mainstream culture of the United States). Latinos place focus on the group or family and an emphasis on doing what is best to further the group as a whole, rather than further the individual person. Avoke and Simon-Burroughs (2007) as well as Black, Mrasek, and Ballinger (2003) explain that in order to consider the collectivistic nature of the culture, school staff can foster collaboration among all members of the team and family, assess for interests of both the student and the family as a whole, invite extended family members and friends to the meetings, and consider family-oriented goals as a healthy alternative to individual-oriented goals. For example, a student may need and want to live with his or her parents after graduation in order to help in the house or care for family. School personnel should not push for independent living if this is not the best option and the desire of the child. Important factors such as acculturation level of all family members, primary language of all family members, socio-economic status (SES), country of origin and historical relevancies should all be assessed at the outset of providing special education and transition services (Avoke & Simon-Burroughs, 2007; Black et al., 2003; Kim & Morningstar, 2005). Family members may have varied levels as well as context-dependent (i.e. behavior limited to certain contexts, or situations) levels of acculturation. They may have varied levels of both English and Spanish proficiency if their first language is an indigenous language. Low SES can create a variety of barriers to meeting transition goals, including paying for college, obtaining a residence, getting to work, etc. Another important aspect to assess is
discrimination and history of the student and family. The student may face discrimination at school and may need to be prepared to face and handle discrimination in the workforce and college. The family’s history is important as the family may have immigrated to escape violence in their country of origin or there may have been other important traumatic events to consider which may dictate the types of transition goals that are made. Being an undocumented (illegal) immigrant or migrant family can create fears, lack of parental participation, and lower student attendance and academic success (Chaudry, Capps, Pedroza, Castañeda, Santos, & Scott, 2010; King-Stoops, 1980) which can impact special education and transition services.

Another overarching theme is that of school personnel gaining self-awareness of their own culture and values and examining how they differ from those of the student and family (Avoke & Simon-Burroughs, 2007; Black et al., 2003; Bruns & Fowler, 1999; Trainor, 2008). This is a very important step to gaining cultural competence (Sue & Sue, 2008). It is important to recognize one’s own biases to not mistakenly allow their influence in how one interacts with a student and the family as well as the way in which services are created and implemented.

Some studies have shown that Latino families consider the IEP and transition process too formal or professional and not personal enough (Harry, 1992; Kim and Morningstar, 2005). Traditional Latino culture values personable interaction and the school environment, especially the meetings and paperwork, can seem very cold and impersonal to families. This formal and professional nature of the school environment leads to mistrust of the school personnel. This mistrust coupled with misunderstanding of professional jargon, special education process, and transition process in English and even
in Spanish, leads families to withdrawal of participation in services for their child. Latino parents value having more power in decision-making for their children (Black, et al., 2003) and the transition process, often student-focused, can diminish the perceived power and influence of the adult which can also lead to mistrust and dissatisfaction. Equally as important, another traditional Latino value--respect--disguises this mistrust, misunderstanding, and dissatisfaction (Black, et al., 2003; Harry, 1992). In the Latino culture, teachers and professionals are highly respected individuals and parents can display passive agreement in strong deference to authority not to disrupt the personable relationship. Respect is maintained in lieu of asking questions even if one does not understand. If these factors are not understood by the special education team, there will likely be negative consequences to the student’s transition process and outcomes.

Each phase of the transition process including meetings, paperwork, times scheduled, goals listed, goal implementation, agencies contacted, and should ideally incorporate culturally relevant and sensitive practices. If this occurs, students and families will collaborate and participate more readily – a crucial factor in dictating success of the transition outcomes of the student. The family can be a students’ largest and most powerful resource. Latino families often include extended family members, friends of family, and community members all of whom can participate and offer knowledge and resources to the student in transition (Trainor, 2008; Bruns & Fowler, 1999). This social and cultural network should be considered by school personnel as a great opportunity to gain information about the student, form relevant transition goals, elicit participation from the family, as well as gain resources for the student--all in a culturally relevant and sensitive way.
Latinas and Special Education

The current study will focus on a group of female Latina students. Latina students, with and without disabilities, have been shown in the literature to display different behaviors, values, and academic performance than that of their male counterparts. It is important to address and examine the differences in the special education process for Latinas due to gender roles and stereotypes.

Traditional gender roles and values in a Latino family may place certain expectations on Latina students. Latino families often maintain traditional gender roles and disabled members of the family often stay home and do not work. There may be an even lower expectation for Latina women with disabilities to work given the traditional value for women to stay home and care for the children rather than go outside the home to work (Meier-Kronick, 1993). However, in a study of Latinas transitioning to college (Sy & Brittian, 2008) it was shown that family obligations did not affect their residential or work plans. This may be because the students already knew they would live at home or already planned work schedules around known family obligations.

In another study (Powers, Hogansen, Geenen, Powers, & Gil-Kashiwabara, 2008) a group of students with disabilities and parents of students with disabilities were evaluated to find gender differences in the transition experiences and services received. The sample included students and parents from a variety of ethnic and racial backgrounds, including 16% Latino responders. Culturally and linguistically diverse youth responders rated going to college as very important, more so than Anglo responders did. Also, there was a gap between the importance placed on receiving services to succeed in the community and actually receiving these services among male
and female respondents. Male student respondents placed high importance on this, but rarely received the necessary training, whereas females did receive it. This difference was even greater among minority male and female students, most likely due to traditional cultural roles. In a different direction, minority male students were the least likely (even compared to Anglos) to state that adults in their lives expected less of them because of their gender, while minority females were the most likely to endorse this. This pattern was also true among the parent responders. Both minority male and female student and parent responders indicated that girls were more likely to obtain more attention from teachers and were expected to live independently after high school, while male students were expected to have children after high school. Although, the authors of the study found that minority male and female students and parents of students with disabilities have high expectations for after high school and endorse many important transition activities as important to them, IEP’s for both male and female students did not always reflect these goals and expectations.

Other research has looked at possible ways to mitigate the negative outcomes due to gender for students with disabilities. In a study of Latina students with learning disabilities who were either placed in a coed or single-gender classroom, it was found that the Latinas in the single-gender classroom fared much better (Madigan, 2002a). Being in the girl-only classroom led to increases in attendance, grades, positive attitudes towards school, positive teacher interactions, and positive female peer interactions. These students felt more free and comfortable participating in class without the worry of being harassed or ridiculed by a male student. They also felt more comfortable with a female teacher who they felt understood them better. The Latinas in the coed classroom said that
they were distracted by the male students and felt uncomfortable saying anything in class for fear of rejection. As a result, their attendance and grades were poor. Moreover, because the Latinas in the single-gender classroom became more involved in school and formed a personal relationship with their teacher, their teacher, in turn, formed a personal relationship with the students’ parents which improved overall satisfaction with school and increased parental involvement in school. Overall, Latinas in both classrooms encountered struggles at school due to gender and ethnicity. They revealed that they were targets of discrimination and were often assumed to belong to a gang and expected to drop out of school. The single-gender classroom seemed to change some of these stereotypes.

In a similar study, Latinas and African American female students with learning disabilities who attended either a coed or single-gender classroom were evaluated (Madigan, 2002b). The findings were similar, however it seemed that the single-gender classroom did not cause a significant improvement in attendance, satisfaction, or grades for the African American students as it did for the Latina students. The impact of cultural values and gender roles may be more pervasive for Latina students in special education. It may be more beneficial for teachers and special education staff to consider this when implementing services to Latinas.

Latino Cultural Values and Special Education

Traditional Latino culture holds many important values. These values, as shown in the literature, can impact the transition process in a number of ways and are important to consider when creating and implementing special education services for Latino students. Two values, personalismo, or personalism, and familismo, or familism, are
central to the Latino culture and will be investigated in the present study. Personalismo is defined as “valuing and building interpersonal relationships” with an importance placed on social intelligence and skills (Santiago-Rivera, Arredondo, & Gallardo-Cooper, 2002, p. 44). Personalismo is manifested in the warm and friendly manner in which Latinos interact with other people and one another. Even when Latinos interact with professionals or people of high status, personalismo is maintained, valued, and expected. Familismo is defined as a “preference for maintaining a close connection to family” (Santiago-Rivera et al., 2002, p. 43). This stems from the collectivistic nature of Latino culture in that the individual works to provide for the good of the group and sacrifices oneself for his/her family, friends, and extended family. Familismo is manifested in behaviors and practices such as keeping obligations to the family, sharing with members of one’s family, taking care of one’s own children and those of other family members, and providing support to everyone in the family. In traditional Latino culture there is not a focus on nuclear family but rather the “nuclear” family is seen as including extended family such as cousins, aunts, uncles, compadres, or godparents, as well as friends of the family and important members of the community. Familismo and personalismo have important implications for the Latino family who has a child with disabilities who is transitioning to adulthood.

The values of personalismo and, especially, familismo have been shown to affect the transition process and outcomes for Latino students with and without disabilities. Parents often value social intelligence above that of other cognitive abilities. There is a value of children being well-behaved and well-mannered in school above that of being excellent students (Zuniga, 1992). Latino children may be taught to understand, respond to, and master very complex social interactions and relationships. As a result, Latinos
may have a strong “sensitivity to nonverbal indicators of feelings” (Zuniga, 1992, p. 197) and may rely on surrounding context or nonverbal behaviors in a conversation, whereas Anglos rely more on verbal information without much context. Parents may expect that school personnel interact in a warm and friendly manner which is consistent with personalismo. However, IEP meetings and services are often formal which creates problems for Latino parents and students. The value placed on social intelligence by Latino parents may also create rifts between the values of educators and those of parents and may impact the transition goals and, subsequently, employment outcomes for Latino students (Meier-Kronick, 1993). Personalismo is something which school personnel can easily use to connect with Latino parents and students and help increase parental participation and better transition outcomes for students.

Familismo provides a social network and support system for each member of the family. Personalismo helps to maintain and cultivate relationships within this social network which includes not only family members but friends, community members, etc. The importance of family offers a very valuable support system and means of coping for Latino parents and students with disabilities. The entire family works together to care for the disabled child, providing child care, respite services to the parents, as well as emotional or financial support (Meier-Kronick, 1993; Keefe, Padilla, & Carlos, 1977; Zuniga, 1992). Adult Latinos are also more likely to live at home with parents, especially if they are disabled (Desmond, 2009; Meier-Kronick, 1993). The family helps protect and provide for not only the child with a disability but also his or her parents and siblings. Each member gives something, maintaining the obligation and commitment to the family. This value may help Latino students with disabilities succeed in their transition to
adulthood. However, there has been some research which shows familismo may create disadvantages for Latino students with disabilities.

Post-secondary school employment and education may be negatively affected by the value of the familismo. Latino students with disabilities may be more likely to live at home with family after entering adulthood and may be less likely to pursue employment opportunities because they receive support at home and may not be expected to work (Meier-Kronick, 1993). Obligations to family may affect the quality and quantity of work Latinos can achieve. They may miss more days of work due to family gatherings, events, or crises which, most likely, will affect their pay and employment status. However, on the other hand, Latinos work very hard and long hours in order to provide for their family which is connected to the value of familismo (Meier-Kronick, 1993). In the literature it is shown that post-secondary education may also be affected for non-disabled Latino students (Desmond, 2009). Latino students may decide not to attend college because they do not want to leave home or are expected to stay home. Also, the rate of Latino students attending college is still low overall, and the students may feel uneasy about being one of the only people in their family to attend college. The family may also see it as an individualistic identification, rather than conforming to the standards of the group. If a Latino student does attend college, they are more likely to live at home which may be beneficial in terms of providing a social network of resources, however it can also be detrimental if family obligations detract from studying. Latino students are more likely to go to college and be successful in college even while living at home if their parents are highly-educated (Desmond, 2009). These factors are important to consider for Latino students with disabilities. They may feel even more pressure to conform to tradition or to
the group, to live at home, and desire to keep their support network rather than form goals to attend college or work outside the home.

Summary

There has been tremendous growth, improvement, and change regarding special education and transition services for children in the United States. Federal mandates and guidelines for best practice exist to help school personnel, students, and families. Explanations of how to successfully transition students with disabilities into adulthood are evident in the literature. Moreover, there exists much literature on how to successfully transition Latino students and their families while considering cultural values and implications and being sensitive to families’ needs and desires. However, Latino students with disabilities continue to have poorer transition outcomes than both Anglo and African American students with disabilities. It has been shown it may help improve the transition process, parent participation, and outcomes if cultural aspects and traditional Latino values are considered in the schools. Two key Latino values, personalismo and familismo, may both negatively and positively impact students’ success in transition. This study aimed to discover differences in the values of personalismo and familismo for Latinos and Anglos. Groups of Latino students and Anglo students with disabilities were compared using data compiled regarding the transition process. Groups of Latino parents/caregivers and Anglo parents/caregivers of children with disabilities were compared using similar data. This research provides knowledge of the importance both Latinos and Anglos place on the values of personalismo and familismo during the transition process as well as how often these groups perceived school personnel matching these values during the transition process. The data obtained will help in developing or
modifying the transition process in hopes of improving outcomes for Latino students with disabilities as they enter into adulthood.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

Data on the participants has already been collected as part of two larger research studies. The overarching study (Powers, Hogansen, Geenen, Powers, & Gil-Kashiwabara, 2008) was focused on gender differences among adolescents, both Anglo and Latino. In this study participants came from two, urban school districts from two different states in the Western United States. The first school district (District 1) had a population of approximately 52,000 students across 90 schools with an ethnic/racial makeup of 60% European American, 17% African American, 11% Latino/a, 10% Asian, and 2% American Indian. The second school district (District 2) had a student population of approximately 90,000 students across 89 schools with an ethnic/racial makeup of 45% Latino/a, 20% African American, 18% European American, and 11% Asian American. District 1 had approximately 12% of students who received special education services as compared to 8% in District 2.

The specific data for the current study came from a smaller study called Helping All Latinas Achieve (HALA) which recruited participants from the two school districts in larger study described above. Participants for the HALA study were recruited by sending surveys to only Latina and Anglo females who received special education services and to parents of Latina and Anglo female adolescents who received special education services. The parents of students with disabilities were not necessarily the parents of the student responders in the sample; parent and student responders were selected randomly and were
not selected based on their relation to one another. Surveys were sent randomly to both students and parents. There were a total of 1520 adolescent surveys and 1520 parent surveys across the two school districts in the larger study. Both English and Spanish surveys were sent (Spanish surveys were sent to all Latino students and families). Latinas and Latino families were oversampled in order to contain a balanced sample of both Anglo and Latino participants.

The present study utilized the data collected from the total participants (n=211) in the HALA study. Participants who identify as Hispanic, Chicano/a, or Latino/a will from herein be referred to as “Latino/a” while the participants who identified as White, Caucasian, or European American will herein be referred to as “Anglo.” The participants in the current study included both Latina adolescents (n=49) and parents of Latina adolescents (n=51) as well as Anglo female adolescents (n=52) and parents of Anglo female adolescents (n=59). Seven Latina students were not born in the U.S., but had immigrated to the U.S. by age six. Twelve of the Latina students did not speak English as their primary language. Twenty-three Latino parents were not born in the U.S., but 57% of them had immigrated to the U.S. between ages 18-31. Sixteen Latino parents did not speak English as their primary language. These students received special education services from either District 1 or District 2. The students were also preparing to transition from high school to the workplace, vocational school, college. etc. as part of their Individualized Education Plan (IEP). These students were receiving special education services to aid them in the transition out of high school. The average age for the Anglo student participants was 17.75 (SD=1.32) and the average age for the Latina student participants was 16.49 (SD=1.86). This difference in age was significant (t = 3.94, df =
There was a range of disabilities as identified by the student or parent participants. The students identified as having the following disabilities: 60% learning disabilities, 15% emotional/behavioral disability, 12% other health impaired (e.g. ADHD), 9% hearing impaired, 6% visually impaired, 5% mobility impaired, 4% cognitively impaired, and 21% described as “other.” The parents identified their children as having the following disabilities: 59% learning disability, 17% emotional/behavioral disability, 14% other health impaired, 8% cognitively impaired, 7% hearing impaired, 5% mobility impaired, 4% visually impaired, and 23% described as “other.” However, these categories were not mutually exclusive.

Instrumentation

Each participant completed either a student form or a parent form of a survey. The student survey contained 91 items/questions while the parent survey contained 95 questions. The survey used was the Young Adult Transition Expectations and Experiences (YATEE; see Powers et al., 2008) questionnaire. Using the questionnaire, information was gathered regarding the transition process out of high school and into adulthood for students and parents of students with disabilities. There is a youth/student form (YATEE-Y) and a parent form (YATEE-P). There is also a Spanish and English form for both the parent and the student. The YATEE contains items that question the respondent regarding his/her opinions and values during the transition process and in the future. Sixty-nine of the questions are answered using two distinct Likert-scale sets of responses (i.e. “not important,” “sort of important,” “quite important,” and “very important;” or “not much,” “sometimes,” “quite a bit,” and “a lot”). This first set of questions asks about the importance and value of different activities that may take place
in the next five years. For example, one question asks “During the next five years, how important will it be for you to get married or have an intimate, committed relationship.” The next set of questions asks about how important certain things are and how often they occurred in the past year. These are questions regarding social support, educational support, participation in the transition process, participation in the IEP meetings, etc. A sample question is “My IEP meetings are helpful to me?” Nine questions ask about perceptions of gender differences among male and female students and are answered as “girls,” “boys,” or “both the same.” An example of a question in this area is “Which students are most likely to get attention from teachers?” There was a set of questions regarding the existence of mentors in the students’ life (YATEE-Y form only). The final set of questions is demographic in nature and included questions about age, race/ethnicity, language use, and so on.

For the purposes of this study, several questions in the YATEE survey were identified that will be used to measure the Latino cultural values of personalismo and familismo. Items were chosen on the basis that they fit with the definitions and explanations of both cultural values (Santiago-Rivera et al., 2002; Marin, 1993; Ramirez, 1969) and on the degree with which the items matched the items in the Multiphasic Assessment of Cultural Constructs-Short Form (MACC-SF; Cúellar, Arnold, & González, 1995). According to Cúellar and colleagues, Familismo is defined as the “importance an individual places on the family, and his or her attitudes towards the family” (1995, p.341). Familismo is also the degree to which a person relies on family members for support, spends time with family, interacts with family and includes them in important aspects of their lives. Personalismo is defined by Cúellar and colleagues as a
“warm and personal way of relating to an individual” (1995, p.342). It is a way of interacting with and showing respect to someone by taking the time to get to know them.

Degree of fit or match of the items that will be used to measure the two cultural values was assessed qualitatively by both the principal investigator and the dissertation committee. No statistical analysis was run in order to deem whether an item was significantly similar to the items in the MACC-SF. The items on the MACC-SF are in the form true/false questions. Sample items from the MACC-SF that assess familismo include “relatives are more important than friends,” “my family frequently participates in school-sponsored activities for our children,” and “I expect my relatives to help me when I need them.” Sample items from the MACC-SF that address personalismo include “I like to greet people in a friendly manner when I see them,” “I try to get to know everyone I meet,” “I like to talk about the weather with people to help start up a conversation,” and “I can trust many people to do me favors.” These items align well with, or are very similar to, the items taken from the YATEE that assess the same values. The items from the YATEE that measure familismo include items which ask the importance of such things as living close to family, having children, and taking care of family. Other items ask how important things are and how often they occur such as teacher's respecting their family and their families' encouragement. And two items ask if teacher's invite other family members to meetings as well as if meetings are scheduled at convenient times for their family to attend. The items from the YATEE that measure personalismo include items which assess whether teachers are interested in the participants' ideas and opinions, share their own experiences with them, and treat the participants in a “warm and friendly
manner.” The questions from the YATEE which assess the cultural values of familismo and personalismo are contained in Table 1.

Table 1

*Cultural Value Items From YATEE*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YATEE-Y Familismo</th>
<th>“During the next five years, how important will it be for you to…”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item 3</td>
<td>“Live on my own or with friends?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 4</td>
<td>“Live in the same house or apartment as my family?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 5</td>
<td>“Live nearby my family (but not in same house or apartment)?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 9</td>
<td>“Have children?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 10</td>
<td>“Take care of my parents, sisters, brothers or other family members?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 13</td>
<td>“Go to a college close to my family home?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Item 32           | “Learn the traditions and values of my culture or family background.” |
| Item 40           | “Learn about how to plan for and raise a family.”                |

| Item 73           | “Teachers invite other people besides my parent(s) to attend my IEP meetings (for example, other family members or people who know me well)” |
| Item 74           | “My IEP meetings are scheduled at times that are convenient for my family to attend?” |
**YATEE-P Personalismo**

“How important are each of the following things to your daughter and how often did each one happen in the past year?”

**Item 22:** “Teacher’s listen to her and they are interested in her opinions.”

**Item 23:** “Teachers respect her culture or family background.”

**Item 26:** “Teacher’s respect her family’s point of view.”

**Item 28:** “Teacher’s share their experiences with her.”

**Item 78:** “Teacher’s treat my daughter in a warm and friendly way at her IEP meetings?”

**YATEE-P Familismo**

“During the next five years, how important will it be for your daughter to…”

**Item 3:** “Live on her own or with friends?”

**Item 4:** “Live in the same house or apartment as her family?”

**Item 5:** “Live nearby her family (but not in same house or apartment)’?”

**Item 9:** “Have children?”

**Item 10:** “Take care of her parents, sisters, brothers or other family members?”

**Item 13:** “Go to a college close to her family home?”

How important are each of the following things for your daughter and how often did each one happen in the past year?

**Item 32:** “Learn the traditions and values of her culture or family background.”

**Item 40:** “Learn about how to plan for and raise a family.”

**Item 73:** “Teachers invite other people besides the parent(s) to attend IEP meetings (for example, other family members or people who know my daughter well)”?

**Item 74:** “The IEP meetings are scheduled at times that are convenient for our family to attend?”

**Procedures**

This study utilized the previously gathered, recorded, and de-indentified data from the HALA study. In order to address the research questions and test the hypotheses, specific data was isolated and analyzed. The current study utilized the data from all student participants, both Anglo and Latina as well as from all parent participants, both Anglo and Latino/a, for a total of 211 participants. Data from specific sections of the YATEE forms were used which address the values of personalismo and familismo within
the IEP meeting, items which address the importance of and frequency of the values of personalismo and familismo being met or maintained, in general, by teachers, and items which address demographics.

Statistical analyses that compare groups of participants with regards to specific variables were conducted. Data sets for parents and students were merged. Four variables were created: two variables measuring the importance placed on the values of personalismo and familismo and two variables quantifying the frequency with which these values were met or maintained by school personnel during the transition process. Anglo students were compared to Latina students and Anglo parents were compared to Latino/a parents. The two groups of parents and students were also compared to each other. All tests were conducted by the principal investigator under the supervision of the dissertation committee, using the de-indentified data of the HALA study.

In order to ascertain whether the four variables described above correlated with each other, or grouped into the four categories hypothesized by the investigator, a factor analysis was conducted. As seen in Table 2, the values of personalismo and familismo were split into two categories of importance and frequency of occurrence. The items of the YATEE ask the importance of certain things and how often those things occurred throughout the transition process. It was hypothesized by the investigator that there seems to be four distinct categories, or variables, on which to compare each group of participants. This hypothesis is due to the format of the YATEE as well as on the basis that the items which measure personalismo and familismo match with the definitions and explanations in the literature of both cultural values (Santiago-Rivera et al., 2002; Marin, 1993; Ramirez, 1969) as well as with the items in the Multiphasic Assessment of Cultural
Constructs-Short Form (MACC-SF; Cúellar, Arnold, & González, 1995). A factor analysis was conducted in order to further determine if the items relate to the different constructs of the four dependent variables, as hypothesized.

Table 2

*Four Variables Created Based on YATEE*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latino Value</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personalismo</td>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>Frequency of Occurrence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familismo</td>
<td>Importance</td>
<td>Frequency of Occurrence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to determine if there exists differences among groups of participants (i.e. among parents and students and among Latino and Anglo participants), a Two-Way Analysis of Variance was conducted for each of the four variables. The independent variables used were age of participant (two level variable: parent or student), ethnicity of participant (two level variable: Latino or Anglo). The dependent variables used were importance of personalismo or familismo and the frequency of personalismo or familismo. Post hoc analyses were not necessary because there were no more than two levels for each variable. Missing data was excluded in the analyses. These analyses were conducted in order to answer the research questions and address the hypotheses.
RESULTS

Included in this section are the results of the factor analysis and correlations conducted among the items in the YATEE as well as the analyses conducted to determine differences between groups of participants.

*Item Factor Analysis*

The dimensionality of the 21 items from the YATEE, which are theorized to represent the constructs of the four dependent variables, was analyzed using maximum likelihood factor analysis. The first factor analysis was not bound by a set number of factors. As a result, the test yielded 8 factors, which does not coincide with the a priori hypothesis of 4 factors (dependent variables). The 8 factors accounted for 71.45% of the variance. The results seem to indicate that the factors created contain either items which cluster close together on the measure itself, or items which have the same scale of measurement.

Another factor analysis was conducted using a forced-factor method to determine if the a priori hypothesis of 4 dependent variables, or factors, was correct. The results of the analysis, as shown in Table 3, do not indicate any interpretable results. The items do not seem to group together in any meaningful way. Moreover, several items fall into multiple categories, or factors. Two additional factor analyses were conducted using 2 forced-factors (Tables 4 and 5). These were to determine if all items which expressed importance of a value, or items which expressed the occurrence of values being met, grouped into two categories (familismo and personalismo). Again, items did not group together in a meaningful or consistent way. This may be due to the fact that the items are
all very similar and differences may be minute. Moreover, the constructs of both familismo and personalismo are very similar.

**Differences Among Groups**

In order to determine if and where differences lie among the groups of parent and students respondents on the measures of personalismo and familismo, four Two-Way Analyses of Variance (ANOVA) were conducted. An ANOVA was conducted for each dependent variable and was compared on the variables of both age (student or parent) and ethnicity (Latino or Anglo). Significant results were those deemed below a $p = .05$.

**Importance of Personalismo**

A 2 x 2 ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the differences of the importance of the value of personalismo among Latino and Anglo students and parents. The means and standard deviations are presented in Table 6. The ANOVA indicated no significant interaction between students and parents, $F(1, 197) = .621, p = .43$, partial $\eta^2 = .003$. There was also no significant main effect shown for ethnicity or age/respondent, $F(1, 197) = .985, p = .32$ and $F(1, 197) = .040, p = .84$, respectively. These results indicate that the dependent variable of importance of personalismo was not significantly different among Latino parents and students and Anglo parents and students.
Table 3

*Differences on Variable of Importance of Personalismo*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>9.33</td>
<td>2.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td>9.26</td>
<td>2.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>9.65</td>
<td>2.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td>9.07</td>
<td>2.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Occurrence of Personalismo*

A 2 x 2 ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the differences among Latino and Anglo parents and students on the occurrence with which they felt the value of personalismo was incorporated into the IEP transition process. The means and standard deviations are presented in Table 7. There was no significant interaction effect for occurrence of personalismo as a function of ethnicity or age/respondent, $F(1, 193) = .45, p = .50$. There was also no significant main effect for either ethnicity or age/respondent, $F(1, 193) = .54, p = .46$ and $F(1, 193) = .07, p = .79$, respectively. The results indicate no significant differences among Latino and Anglo parents and students on the dependent variable of occurrence of personalismo during the IEP transition process.
Table 4

Differences on Variable of Occurrence of Personalismo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>8.23</td>
<td>3.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td>8.20</td>
<td>3.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>8.65</td>
<td>3.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td>8.02</td>
<td>3.21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Importance of Familismo

A 2 x 2 ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the differences among Latino and Anglo students and parents on the dependent variable of importance of the value familismo. The means and standard deviations are presented in Table 8. The results of the ANOVA indicated no significant interaction between ethnicity and age/respondent, $F(1, 194) = .59, p = .45$. There were also no significant main effect found for age/respondent, $F(1, 194) = .53, p = .47$. However, there was a significant main effect found for ethnicity, $F(1, 194) = 31.97, p = .00$, indicating that Latino parents and students placed a significantly higher importance on familismo than did Anglo parents and students. According to Cohen (1988) this effect was small with a partial $\eta^2$ of .14.
Table 5

*Differences on Variable of Importance of Familismo*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Latino</td>
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<td>4.44</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td>10.31</td>
<td>3.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>13.77</td>
<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td>10.29</td>
<td>3.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graph 1

*Significant Results for Importance of Familismo*

*Occurrence of Familismo*

A 2 x 2 ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the differences among Latino and Anglo students and parents on the occurrence with which they felt the value of familismo.
was incorporated into the IEP transition process. The means and standard deviations are presented in Table 9. The results indicated no significant interaction between ethnicity and age/respondent, $F(1, 194) = .21, p = .65$. There was also no significant main effect for age/respondent, $F(1, 194) = .17, p = .68$. However, there was a significant main effect found for ethnicity, $F(1, 194) = 4.31, p = .04$, indicating that Latino students and parents reported significantly more occurrence of familismo being incorporated into the IEP transition process. According to Cohen (1988) this effect was small with a partial $\eta^2$ of .02.

Table 6

* Differences on Variable of Occurrence of Familismo *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>5.77</td>
<td>2.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td>5.25</td>
<td>2.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>6.04</td>
<td>2.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anglo</td>
<td>5.24</td>
<td>1.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Graph 2

*Significant Results for Occurrence of Familismo*
DISCUSSION

Adolescents with disabilities face a unique process of transitioning into adulthood, which involves several steps and coordinated efforts through school special education services. These adolescents need support to make this important transition, including no longer receiving special education services. The students and their families will need to decide where the student will live, who will help him or her, if they will seek further education or employment, and how they will stay connected to his or her community. Special education transition services are mandated through the IDEA to be provided to the student. These services and goals of transition are outlined in a student’s personal IEP, which must be updated regularly and thoroughly adhered to by school personnel. Unfortunately, it has been shown in past research that these guidelines are not always adhered to, nor are adequate transition services being provided to students with disabilities. Parents and students find the transition process confusing and often do not feel their wishes were supported or addressed. Many students with disabilities do not finish high school and have poor outcomes post-high school (e.g. high unemployment rates, low college attendance rates) if they do indeed graduate.

Poor outcomes are even more pronounced for students of ethnic and racial minority groups. There also exist differences between female and male perceptions of the transition process, family expectations, and goals for transition. In previous literature it has been maintained that it is important to provide culturally-competent transition services, and doing so may ease the process of transition as well as increase positive outcomes for students and families. In the Latino culture disability may be viewed and understood very differently than that of other cultures. Latino students and parents may
have very different goals for transition into adulthood. Moreover, there may be very different expectations of gender roles in the Latino culture, influencing family and student goals or wishes for after high school. It is important for school staff to consider these cultural differences and values in the transition process.

Two traditional Latino values, personalismo and familismo, are integral to the understanding of the Latino culture. These values influence the social interactions, family values, and decisions of Latino parents and students. As shown in the literature, these values may have an even larger impact on the transition into adulthood for female Latina students. Understanding and integrating these values into the transition process may be a crucial step in better serving Latina students with disabilities and their families. It is unknown in the literature whether or not these cultural values are considered, or even integrated into the transition process by school staff. The present study sought to discover if the particular traditional Latino values of personalismo and familismo were considered and integrated into the transition process for Latina and Anglo female students with disabilities and parents of Latina and Anglo female students with disabilities.

Summary of Findings

Surprising results were found after analyzing group differences between Latina and Anglo female students with disabilities and parents of Latina and Anglo female students with disabilities. The investigator sought to determine if there were differences among the groups of participants in relation to the values of personalismo and familismo.

Five hypotheses were tested by the investigator. The results of the analyses indicate that several hypotheses were not supported with significant findings, with evidence for the opposite effect. It was hypothesized that Latino participants would place
a higher importance on both personalismo and familismo as compared to Anglo participants. It was also hypothesized that Latino parents would place a higher importance on these values as compared to Latino students. Results indicate that Latino participants only differed from Anglo participants on the value of familismo, placing a higher importance on this value. However, Latino parents and students did not differ in the level of importance placed on familismo.

Finally, it was hypothesized that Latino participants would perceive, or report, less occurrence of personalismo and familismo being incorporated into the IEP transition process than that of Anglo participants. The statistical results did not support this hypothesis. With regard to familismo, Latino participants actually reported a higher occurrence of this value being incorporated into the transition process than did Anglo participants. Personalismo was not significantly different among groups.

In summary, it seems that the value of familismo may be important for school staff to understand, acknowledge, and incorporate into the steps and goals of the IEP transition process. If this occurs, it may significantly help improve stricter adherence to the steps of the transition process by school staff, parents, and students. It can help to provide more culturally-competent services to families, thus, providing them with a more understood, trusted, and invested experience. It may also help to improve the post-transition outcomes for female students with disabilities. The present finding provides information that at least one traditional Latino value is being considered and incorporated by school staff in at least two schools districts in the western United States. This is promising information for students attending those schools and involved in the special education transition process. Hopefully this information can help incite other school staff
around the country to begin to consider cultural values and how they affect the transition process, if they are not already doing so.

Limitations of Research

This study contributes to research on Latino students with disabilities and their families. It also contributes a unique perspective through consideration of cultural values in specific special education services. However, there were many limitations to the study. These limitations include geographic generalizability, statistical considerations, and variables studied.

The participants studied came from selected schools in only two western states. This greatly limits generalizability of results to other geographic regions, particularly those without such a strong history and presence of the Latino population. This narrowed participant sample may have also influenced the type of special education services offered. Given that some participants came from a school district in which there is a much higher percentage of Latino students compared to the national average, this may have skewed the results of the study. In particular, it was found that familismo was reported to be incorporated into the IEP transition process by school staff; however, this may be more likely to occur in a school with a higher percentage of Latino students.

There were some statistical limitations to the study. The size of the sample gave some limitation to the different variables which could be studied. For example, although immigration status was assessed in the YATEE, the sample size of the distinct groups was too small to run viable analyses on this variable. Another statistical limitation was the inconsistent results of the factor analysis. Items on the YATEE which were selected for this study did not cluster together in a meaningful way after conducting the factor
analysis. This may signify that the items were too similar to separate into distinct factors, or groups, or that the measure did not adequately assess the variables under study (i.e. importance and occurrence of familismo and personalismo). Thus, this may limit the confidence with which one can interpret the significant results.

Finally, another important limitation was the fact that only two traditional values were studied. Familismo and personalismo are very similar to each other in that there is a focus placed on people, importance of taking others into consideration, and a collectivistic mindset. The similarity of the two values may have affected results. Moreover, there is no evidence these two values are more or less important to Latinos or the transition process than other traditional values.

Future Directions

The present study has given some very specific information about the influence of cultural values in the IEP transition process. There are many areas in which future research may be focused in order to discover further information on this topic. Although it is promising that this study showed that some school staff are incorporating at least one cultural value into the transition process, it is unclear whether this is being done in other areas of the United States. It will be important to determine which schools and areas may or may not be providing these aspects of culturally-competent services.

In the future, it would be beneficial to focus on what specific techniques teachers are using in order to incorporate cultural values within the IEP transition process. Teachers may use specific, empirically-supported techniques or they may be behaving and interacting in different ways with both students and parents, thus, providing an atmosphere aligned more strongly with certain cultural values. It would also be
interesting to investigate teacher perceptions of incorporating cultural values into the transition process as well as their perception of the importance of doing so. The concordance between teacher’s importance placed on certain cultural values compared with those of students and parents may show how much or how little these groups differ on these values. These differences may have implications for how easily teachers can provide culturally-competent services. In other words, if teachers and parents align closely on certain cultural values, this may already be manifested within the IEP process making it easier for teachers to capitalize on providing culturally-competent services.

The investigator of the present study focused on a very specific group of participants and set of cultural values. It would be valuable to study the transition process with Latino and Anglo male students with disabilities. Males may differ from females in the importance they place on cultural values or how much they would like these values incorporated into the transition process.

Only two Latino values were examined in the present study. It will be important to examine other traditional Latino values including tener fe, machismo/marianismo, respeto, espiritualismo, and colectivismo. In order to provide culturally-competent services to students and families during the IEP transition process, several values will need to be considered. It is necessary to know which values students and families feel are important to incorporate into the transition process. This will help teachers and school personnel focus in on and incorporate the most relevant values. Moreover, the incorporation of values other than those of personalismo and familismo may hold more importance for successful transition outcomes for students. Longitudinal research can be done to investigate whether transition outcomes post-high school for students improved if
traditional values were incorporated into the transition process. It may also be important to study extraneous variables which may affect the participants such as immigration status and acculturation of the parents and students and/or situational or occupational stress of teachers, parents, and students. These factors may dictate the quality and quantity of transition services.

**Conclusion**

The present study helps to begin the research regarding the importance and incorporation of traditional cultural values into the transition process. Latina and Anglo female students with disabilities as well as parents of Latina and Anglo female students with disabilities were compared. Each group of participants rated the importance of the values of personalismo and familismo during the transition process. Each group also rated how often school staff members incorporated these values into the transition process. It was found that only Latino participants (both students and parents) rated the value of familismo as significantly important to them. Familismo was reported by Latino participants as being incorporated into the transition process by school staff members. This research has important implications for providing culturally-competent special education transition services to students and families. In accordance with past research, culturally-competent services are needed in order to help improve the outcomes of transition into adulthood for students with disabilities. In the future, this research should be extended to include other cultural values and variables with other samples of the population.
REFERENCES


Meier-Kronick, N. (1993). *Culture-specific variables that may affect employment outcomes for Mexican-American youth with disabilities.* University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, IL: Department of Special Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED372520)


