**Title**: Examining the Relationship among Knowledge, Parental Stress, and Family Empowerment for Latinx Parents of Children with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

**Authors**: Hyeri Hong1 and Kristina Rios1

**Introduction**: Latinx families of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) face numerous challenges in navigating educational and support systems, often stemming from cultural, linguistic, and systemic barriers (Zarate et al., 2021; Rodriguez et al., 2019). These barriers can hinder effective communication with service providers, contribute to heightened parental stress, and reduce family engagement in educational planning and advocacy (Moreno & Lopez, 2018). Parental stress is particularly salient among Latinx parents of children with IDD, as they often encounter additional stressors related to immigration status, socioeconomic disparities, and lack of access to culturally appropriate resources (Mendez & Vega, 2020). Elevated levels of stress can impact parents’ perceptions of empowerment and their ability to effectively advocate for their children (Gonzalez et al., 2020).

This study aims to explore the relationships among knowledge, parental stress, and family empowerment in Latinx parents of children with IDD. Although previous research has examined these factors independently, limited attention has been given to how they interact within this population. Understanding these relationships can inform the development of culturally responsive interventions that reduce parental stress and enhance family empowerment, ultimately improving educational outcomes and family-school partnerships for Latinx families (Zarate et al., 2021).

**Method**: We conducted structural equation modeling analysis in Mplus 8.10 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2017) using 96 Latinx parents of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities who responded to the Family Empowerment Scale, Parental Stress Index-Short Form (PSI-SF), and Knowledge scale. Goodness of fit was evaluated by using comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker Lewis index (TLI), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). Models are considered to be adequate fits if CFI and TLI are larger than or equal to 0.90 and RMSEA is smaller than 0.08 (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

**Results**: Following the guidelines of acceptable model fit provided by Hu and Bentler (1999), each of the overall indices suggested that the bifactor model fit the data adequately: CFI = .904, TLI = .90, RMSEA = .046. The results of the structural model revealed that knowledge is positively related to empowerment. That is, more knowledgeable parents tend to be more empowered. Knowledge is also positively associated with parental distress (PD) and parental-child dysfunctional interaction (PCDI). It is interesting to see that parents with greater expertise typically exhibit higher levels of PD and PCDI. Finally, empowerment is negatively related to perceptions of the child as difficult (DC). In other words, less empowered parents tend to have higher DC stress.

**Discussion:** The findings from this study provide valuable insights into the complex dynamics between knowledge, parental stress, and empowerment among Latinx parents of children with IDD. Consistent with prior research, the positive association between knowledge and empowerment suggests that parents who are more informed about their child’s condition and rights within the educational system are likely to feel a greater sense of agency and control (Salas et al., 2021). This is particularly important for Latinx families who often face cultural and systemic barriers that can undermine their sense of empowerment and hinder their ability to effectively advocate for their children (Mendez & Vega, 2020). However, the positive relationship between knowledge and the dimensions of parental stress—parental distress (PD) and parent-child dysfunctional interaction (PCDI)—raises critical considerations. Although knowledge may enhance parents' confidence and engagement, it can also heighten their awareness of the disparities and challenges they face, potentially increasing stress levels (Gonzalez et al., 2020).

1California State University of Fresno

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