

Northwest University

Improving Communication Between the Shoreline School District and Ethiopian Families with
Children in Special Education

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Integrative Project II

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ABSTRACT

The research aimed to establish and prove the importance of effective communication between school staff and migrant parents of children with special needs. The focus of the study was on Shoreline District School. The schools are amongst the ones which have adopted the inclusion of children with special needs in their curriculum. The target population was migrant Ethiopian parents who have their children with special needs attending these schools. Focusing on this population gave the study a sense of objectivity regarding the research and the consecutive results. In addition, the focus on this particular population underpinned the research to identify the gaps in language learning and teaching. By the end of the project, the focus was to establish a strategy for effective communication between migrant parents with children with learning disorders and their children's respective teachers (Hassan and Gardner, 2002). The findings from the study showed that there is a communication challenge between the school staff and the parents of migrant children, which hinders effective service delivery. Essentially, Shoreline schools are obligated to provide a language learning program for their students and develop a way to facilitate the parents. Language teaching for the parents is essential as the successful mainstreaming of migrant children with special needs depends on the cooperation between all caregivers.

Keywords: Communication, children with special needs, shoreline schools District, migrant parents

INTRODUCTION

Caregiving for children with special needs is an uphill task considering all spheres of life. Past the parent is actively involved in their role as the primary caregiver, it is vital to consider the roles played by other indirect caregivers. Therefore, the school is a secondary source of care for any child, with the teacher being the primary care provider. The aspect of care provision becomes even more complex if the child in question has unique needs. Caregiving for such a child goes past what is the norm. Instructors in the school setting must be knowledgeable about caring for such children. The need to be knowledgeable on the instructor's part is mainly in consideration of the several programs that have been rolled out to ensure the inclusion of special needs children in the regular school setting (Dyson, 2001). According to education specialists, this push for inclusion comes with the discovery that as much as children with special needs have diverse learning capabilities and needs, socialization is also an essential aspect of learning. Past the problems with inclusion, poor communication between the teacher and parent has arisen. This happens once a child with special needs is mainstreamed. The instructor and the parent must work together to ensure the healthy academic development of the child.

For the sake of this study, the focus was on the challenges of communication that come with mainstreaming children from migrant families. The challenge of mainstreaming these migrant children comes mainly with communication barriers between the teacher and the student and the teacher and the parents. Most researchers have focused their research on this topic. It is, however, essential to note that for instruction to be successful, the teacher has to get help from the parent from whom most of the child's social learning is based (Hassan and Gardner, 2002). The conclusive findings of this research were based on a case study conducted on the population of the Ethiopian migrant community based in the Shoreline School District.

Effective communication between teachers and parents of special needs children benefits all parties involved. Such communication helps to improve the child's overall development. The child is motivated to attend school regularly and develop a positive attitude towards schoolwork and homework. Regular communication with parents also enables teachers to teach better special needs children (Sapta et al. 2018). Parents can contribute to guiding teachers on their children's strengths, weaknesses, and how they learn best. Communicating with parents improves their reputation from parents, which results in improved teacher morale. Good communication also benefits special needs parents. Parents get ideas from teachers on how to help and support their children's learning. They get to appreciate the role of teachers in their children's lives and become more confident about the value of their school involvement. An effective communication plan will benefit special needs children, their parents, and teachers.

The Ethiopian community within the Shoreline district faces several challenges that are barriers to communication between parents and teachers. The biggest challenge is the language barrier since most of them cannot speak English, which prevents proper communication. The parents' cultural background is also a hindrance since they continue to face culture shock. In addition, most Ethiopian migrant families have low levels of education, which hinders their ability to support their children. The schools also lack interpreters as intermediaries between the parents and the teachers (Lumbago, 187).

After conducting the study, several solutions were determined to improve communication between parents and teachers of special needs students from the Ethiopian community in the Shoreline District. One of the solutions is to establish the importance of both the school and home environments to the student. The next step would be to set up language teaching programs for the parents to increase their involvement since they could easily monitor their children's

academic progress. Schools will also introduce peer support groups for parents to share their experiences (Shi, 20).

Therefore, the research investigated thoroughly and established the gaps in communication between the instructors and the parents within this migrant community. Based on the findings from the case study, the study proposed solutions to the communication barriers. These solutions primarily established how the Shoreline School District can develop better communicative strategies between their instructors and the migrant parents. They have children with special needs (Gothberg et al., 2019). Arguably, the demystification of the communication barriers between the instructors and the Ethiopian migrant parents who have children with special needs within the Shoreline School District will go a long way toward ensuring the successful mainstreaming of these children

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Field Work Management

The focus was on conducting a fieldwork study to complete the following research. Therefore, achieving the research required going beyond getting research material online to the ground, the Shoreline School District. In addition to getting to the setting, it was also necessary that I follow all the steps recommended within the fieldwork guidelines to get conclusive and comprehensive results. I ensured that my research management was thorough (Czaniarwska, 2019). The first step towards ensuring a conclusive field work-study that I undertook was building a team to assist me in research. The team I made was a group of three college students who were as committed to getting the proper findings as I was. To ensure uniformity within this team, I assigned each individual a specific task. Since four procedures must be followed within a field work-study, I provided each team member handled a particular process (Cornell et al.,

2020). This separation of tasks came a long way in ensuring no overlapping or disagreements over who should do what during the research period.

In addition to selecting an efficient team, it was also important that a site visit be done before the commencement of the field study. It would be impractical to begin the field study before having an idea of the disposition of the location where I would be basing my findings. The site visit I conducted came a long way in ensuring that my team and I acquainted ourselves with the research environment. In addition, the site visit enabled the team and I to establish the proper timeline for our study (Adams and Lawrence, 2018). The establishment of the timeline came after we had familiarized ourselves with the target population and acquired the due permissions from the stakeholders within the Shoreline School District.

Further, the site visit was vital in helping recruit the people involved in the study. It was impossible to include the entire population of Ethiopian migrant parents, their children with special needs, and the instructors in the study. My team and I had to select the correct sampling methods to establish which individuals would be incorporated during the survey. Sampling the population was necessary as it enabled us to narrow down our prospective participants, and thus those included were only the ones who could bring in comprehensive insights.

Sampling Techniques

Sampling usually forms the basis of the entire study during any research, whether qualitative or quantitative. I used the probability sampling technique to consider the importance of selection for any research methodology. Probability sampling ensured that all members within the target population had an equal chance of being selected as participants for the study. My research study's success depended on members of the Shoreline school division, who were divided into three demographic groups. The most effective probability sampling method for me

would be cluster sampling. Cluster sampling divides the entire target population into individuals representing them (Cypress, 2018). Therefore, my cluster sampling technique required dividing the target population into teachers, students, and parents. These three groups of individuals were the basis of my entire research methodology. After grouping my target population into their definitive clusters, I applied the simple random sampling technique for each set. I selected three members from each group to participate in my study with simple random sampling. By utilizing these two probability sampling methods, I ensured that my research findings were not biased, seeing as every member of the population had an equal chance of being picked. In addition, probability sampling enabled me to use the diversity of the target population to my ultimate advantage seeing as each diverse aspect of individuals was represented within my study (Jackson et al., 2015). Moreover, with probability sampling, I was ensured of accurate and verifiable data, as I had confirmed that the material collected was high quality.

Methods of Field Study

After putting my research team in place and sampling the population for my research, the next step was to follow the five distinctive methods of field study step by step. These steps were assigned as tasks to my research team, with each required to record their findings for the comprehensive compilation of the final report. The first step within the field work-study that was conducted was direct observation. Direct observation for this study was carried out within all the required ethical bounds considering that the school exists as a public setting. Direct observation was carried out during the site visit, and this involved making subtle observations on the target population and how they interacted with each other and their environment (Adams and Lawrence, 2018). The target population did not know they were being observed subtly carrying these observations. It was easy to collect findings while they were in their natural disposition.

The research was not based on bias as there were no interactions between the researcher and the subject of the study (Cypress, 2018). Direct observation formed a concrete basis of the research as it was based entirely on non-interference with the matter.

The next step I followed for my fieldwork study was participant observation. Participant observation, in this case, differed from direct observation in that I conducted it after I had already sampled my population and narrowed them down to the participants of my research methodology. Therefore, I was also actively involved with my sample population, thus necessitating me to participate in the research. For this part of the research, I shaped the flow of the conversation I had with my participants. The success of this part of the fieldwork study depended entirely on creating a rapport with my subjects. Therefore, the aim was to ensure that the environment was open and free of judgment, thus ensuring that each participant had the free will of expression (Harrison et al., 2017). The main aim of my research was to eradicate the communication barrier between the Ethiopian migrant parents and the instructors of their children with special needs. After having separate discussions with these two clusters, it was possible to bring them together and facilitate them in charting the solution to the existing communication barriers.

Within the step of participant research within a field study, it is also vital that a researcher carry out an ethnography of their participants. Ethnographic studies of the participants within a research methodology form social research. For the sake of my research and the findings that I was looking forward to, social research was necessary to ensure that I understood the cultural disposition of my participants. In addition, my participants were already pre-disposed as diverse, with each of the sampled clusters coming from a culture of distinctive cultural practices and

language (Czaniarwska, 2018). The migrant group was Ethiopian, and the teachers came from various cultural backgrounds. By conducting an ethnographic study, I established how these two groups could best move past their communication barriers and ensure the smooth mainstreaming of migrant children with special needs (Fusch et al., 2017). The final and most important steps I carried out during my field studies were conducting qualitative interviews and case studies. The interview questions I asked my participants were open-ended and were carried out both within focus groups and at the individual level. For my case study, I conducted an in-depth analysis of previously published works on the inclusion of migrant disabled children. By looking through these insights, I could run them compared to my research problem, and thus I got plausible solutions. The solution is to be continued in the next draft.

SOLUTION

From the comprehensive fieldwork study, the participants, who were teachers, migrant Ethiopian parents, and their children with disabilities, could have a sit-down and chart forward ways to navigate the communication barriers. The first step towards creating these solutions was establishing that both the school and home environments were focal in instilling knowledge in the student. It was established to develop effective communication between the primary caregivers within both these environments (Greenberg et al., 2016). One strategy to abolish this communication barrier between the parent and the teacher was to set up language teaching programs for migrant parents (Jackson et al., 2015). Most migrant parents were not conversant with English, as their first language was their mother tongue. The Shoreline District School would offer language teaching programs for these parents to ensure a mutual understanding between them and the teachers.

Further on, it was established that the teachers would facilitate these language teaching programs for the parents to ensure that these two groups got involved in productive interactions meant for the child's academic development (Lloyd, 2018, Lumbago and Tesfaye, 2020). In addition, with the language learning programs in place, it would be easier for the parent to be even more actively involved in monitoring their child's academic progress. The Shoreline School also offered one of its halls for the monthly peer group meetings for Ethiopian migrant parents with children with disabilities.

Conclusion

Conclusively, as much as inclusion programs and strategies are essential for the socialization of children with special needs, schools must identify each stakeholder's role in the education system. Definition of roles is vital within any social setting as it reduces disagreements. It is easier to chart down a systematic way of solving a problem if it arises (Lloyd, 2018). In addition, inclusion programs should consider the diverse needs of the students and the parents who play an essential role in ensuring their children's academic success.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Children with special needs, especially those with learning disorders, require much more effort into their caregiving process than normal children. In most cases, children with special learning needs are usually born into families of fully functional parents. These parents have had no previous experience with a special needs child. There are also problems in handling children with learning disabilities from migrant families. The aspect of communication is the main issue with such families. Language learning and family communication will be more difficult for the children with disabilities in these families than native US citizens. Society then needs to orient

such parents and provide them with much support. Essentially, a child with special learning needs automatically also has unique needs. The school exists as the focal point for knowledge acquisition. Therefore, the call for inclusion should also vouch for immigrant children with special needs.

In most cases, the trend has been that special schools are created for children with special needs (Audrey et al., 44). While this approach has been efficient in ensuring that these children's learning needs are catered for, it does little to cater to their behavioral learning. For migrant children, isolation and taking them through a system whereby everyday interactions are limited will hinder their language learning capabilities greatly.

The most effective way of learning behavior is via interactions; as such, schools should come up with means to mainstream immigrant children with special needs. In addition, the school as a social institution more significant than a family should develop initiatives to orient parents of immigrant children with special needs if mainstreaming is effective (Schleicher, 21). Such orientations are essential as they ensure that the child receives wholesome support from their instructors and parents, the primary caregivers. In the following study, an analysis will be carried out on how the Shoreline schools can effectively communicate with the parents of Ethiopian immigrant children with disabilities by developing various projects to orient them within the American school system. Arguably, the care of children, especially immigrant children with special needs, should be a collective one that involves all members of society if inclusion is achieved.

Learning Programs for Parents

In most cases, parents of children with special needs usually navigate unfamiliar territory. Therefore, it is not uncommon for such a parent to feel confused and constantly fear that their

child will not live up to their full potential. In the process of worrying, a parent will often forget to provide their child with the necessary care. For Ethiopian migrant families, it is even more difficult for parents to bring up their disabled children in line with the provisions of the new schooling system. When such children are mainstreamed, it becomes difficult for them to keep up as the social learning they received from home was inefficient, and language barriers exist. Ethiopian migrant parents with disabled children adopt the doormat parenting mode in most situations. This parenting method usually then enforces the role of a parent in their child's life as permissive. This permissiveness is typically an attempt by these parents to compensate for the defects of their children and the parents' inadequacies in language teaching. (Hassan et al., 57). With such a parenting method, these parents show their children that they can get away with anything based on their learning disabilities. Such a child will be more favored than their other siblings in a big family, fostering hatred amongst siblings. It is difficult for parents to avoid such habits of favoring some individuals independently. Shoreline schools should take up this challenge and offer special parenting education for immigrant parents with children who have learning disorders. This parent education should be mainly concerned with language teaching to ensure effective communication.

Successful mainstreaming of migrant children with learning disorders should not be left to the school. Parents also need to play an active role in ensuring that their children are mainstreamed successfully. The school should be at the front line, ensuring that the learning offered to these children is carried on at home. For this all-rounded learning experience to be effective, the Shoreline schools must develop learning programs for parents of children with learning disabilities. During these programs, mentors are called upon to speak to the parents. Most of these parents understand that the mentors brought in should be conversant with the

Ethiopian language. In addition, teachers can inform parents of their children's learning progress through instruction models translated into a language they understand. With this kind of group, parents are constantly updated with their child's progress; therefore, it becomes easier to ensure that this progress continues at home (Yujeong and Thomas, 54). These teaching programs for Ethiopian migrant parents with disabled children should be set on a regular schedule if they will be effective. Having a regular schedule for such a program makes it easier for everyone to plan their time effectively and for language learning facilitation for the parents to be done efficiently. Parents of children with disabilities usually have much to handle concerning their children. A parent's instruction program should be held at least once or twice a month. Due to the gravity of the issues to be discussed, each facilitation program should run for two hours and follow up accordingly.

The Role of Peer Education

Parents of children with special learning needs often feel they are on their own to care for their children. This feeling of being neglected is further heightened by the social stigma surrounding individuals with disabilities, and the aspect of being an immigrant makes it even worse. Societies worldwide have yet to accept that being disabled does not disqualify one from being a community member. In addition, migrant families within communities have often been treated with many suspicions, which is seen even within the school systems. In most cases, disability is treated with ambiguity and a sense of unacceptance and unwillingness to accept these individuals in society. To be disabled and an immigrant thus comes with even more challenges. As such, the parents of such a child are left alone to handle their children. People from the outside will keep voicing their opinions on how they feel such a child should be raised. Such ideas usually come from being judgmental of the cultural disposition of the immigrants,

often regarded as inferior and inexperienced in dealing with a disabled child. Isolation also comes in because due to the hard work of handling a disabled child, a parent may often get lost in the motions and disregard their social life completely (Hassan et al., 56). Such a parent often forgets the notion of self-care as the only focus is caring for their children. Societies should develop support groups where Ethiopian migrant parents with such children come together and share their experiences to eliminate such feelings of loneliness in the care provision for disabled children. This form of shared experiences is what makes up peer education. Shoreline schools should take the initiative and be intentional about hosting these peer support group meetings for their immigrant parents.

With a peer support group for migrant parents with disabled children, it becomes more accessible for parents to partially let go of the burden of care as they find a group of people they can relate. In peer support meetings, parents of disabled children sit together and share their experiences, allowing them to take comparative studies and discussion. Through these sharing experiences, the parents do not feel isolated anymore as they have identified individuals who suffer the same issue (Shi, 20). Despite the popularity of social media and its vast spread capabilities at information capacity, there is still little information concerning migrant families who have taken their children with disabilities through the American schooling system. In addition, most people who have been affected due to their child being disabled have difficulty sharing their experiences on online platforms. This unavailability of information online is a challenge for new parents who have never dealt with a disabled child, especially in a foreign country. Parenting a disabled child is not the same as parenting an average child; parents have to be objective with their chosen parenting method. Poor parenting due to lack of knowledge often leads to the development of learned helplessness by the child (Jackson et al., 148). This is a

disposition whereby disabled children have been enforced with the learning that they are not supposed to do anything for themselves. These children have always been oriented by their parents to do things for them. Such children often depend on their caregivers as they are of the mental orientation that they cannot achieve anything independently. Therefore, a school-initiated peer group for parents with disabled children will go a long way in enabling a parent to let go of parenting methods that are not productive for their children and adopt more productive ones. In addition to Shoreline schools initiating such a platform, parents have a more significant opportunity to interact with each other and their children's instructors, thus improving their language learning capabilities.

Raising Awareness amongst the Masses

Widespread disability awareness is the only way to reduce the stigma and social prejudices that have been formed about disabled individuals and migrant communities. The spread of biases and establishing them is proper and usually due to illiteracy and general ignorance by the masses. Therefore, spreading awareness concerning a matter is an effective way of ensuring that everybody gets educated on how to deal with disabled individuals in their respective communities. The school exists as the focal social learning institution after home. The school is vital in raising awareness concerning disabilities amongst migrant communities. A school can raise awareness both within and outside itself (Schleicher, 18). Shoreline schools can get actively involved in spreading awareness concerning disabilities by embracing the inclusion of immigrant communities and mainstreaming children with disabilities amongst these communities. A child with a disability can partakes in regular children's classes by implementing mainstreaming.

Whether or not to mainstream a child lies primarily on their capabilities. Over the years, schools have been developed for children with special needs, which means they are excluded from regular school. Any instance of a child portraying learning defects is usually enough to cause to send them to a particular school. Children with disabilities from Ethiopian migrant families are disadvantaged as they are generally not conversant with the English language. English is the language of instruction at Shoreline schools, just as it is with other schools. Non-discriminate admission of migrant children into special schools is often ineffective as some can learn within a regular system if they are accorded efficient English language instruction.

The general ignorance that all learning disabilities should be handled in a particular school is a form of discrimination and stigma against the migrant disabled who have difficulties speaking English as it is not their mother tongue (Qi, 20). Mainstreaming and pushing for full inclusion in learning institutions is thus a step towards reducing the stigma surrounding disability amongst Ethiopian migrant communities. Mainstreaming is an advantage to disabled children and the other children in the typical classroom who get insights into how they should live with the disabled in society. In addition, with mainstreaming of these migrant children, children learn to appreciate other people's cultures early.

Raising awareness in a school environment also revolves around hosting events meant to orient people on the rights of disabled migrant individuals and their plight within society. Shoreline schools can plan these events with other significant events such as the disability awareness day. Celebrating this day which comes once a year on December 3, is a way of recognizing the disabled members of society and showing them that they matter. As such, this event should be attended by disabled and ordinary people to offer support and acceptance for the migrant disabled (Greenberg et al., 56). During such circumstances, the school should invite

facilitators to educate the masses on living with the disabled in society and on the essence of diversity.

Understanding the plight of people living with disabilities from migrant communities enables the groups to collectively stand up and fight for the rights of these individuals. As individuals develop acceptance and consecutively understanding, it becomes easier to view children with disabilities as people, and thus, the alienation was initially formed towards the end (Dyson, 455). Raising awareness within the schooling system is the beginning of the enforcement of legislation that advocates for the rights of disabled individuals who come from migrant communities. Legislation could allow disabled individuals to partake in co-curricular activities within school systems. This is then reflected across the broader spectrum of society, whereby individuals who are not disabled stand up for the disabled. This unanimous acceptance of disabled individuals in society by the masses creates an all-inclusive community that promotes equality. In the end, interacting with the various communities during such events is a step towards enhancing effective communication between parents and their children.

School-Based Interventions

The Individualized Education Plan (IEP) exists as a program whereby all the child's primary caregivers work together to ensure healthy development. This program fosters the inclusion of disabled children in a regular school to ensure they grow to their full potential. In addition, it ensures that the child receives specialized care in their specific learning institutions on top of traditional education. This program maintains checks and balances in the public-school setting. It ensures that a student receives learning within a minimally restrictive environment (Zollers et al., 160, Luda go and Tesfaye, 6). With an IEP, the behaviorist, in collaboration with the child's teacher and parent, maps out a strategic mode of instruction for the child. As such,

there is no generalized form of IEP as each child has their own unique needs and capabilities (June et al., 85, Jackson et al., 154). Within an IEP, a set of educational goals that a child should achieve within a set period are indicated. For the Ethiopian migrant children, the IEP formulated by shoreline schools should also include language teaching. It then becomes the responsibility of the teacher and the parent to ensure that the child is making strategic steps toward achieving the set educational goals every day. This parent involvement also ensures they are always in close contact with their child's instructor. As such, effective communication is provided.

For a child to be legible for an IEP program, they must first meet all the requirements stipulated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Within the IEP, various provisions must be included in the child's evaluation to establish if they are fit for the program. It is necessary to establish the functional and academic capabilities of a student chosen as eligible for an IEP. For Ethiopian migrant children, language capability, especially in English, should not be strict, as it is not the child's first language. These evaluations should be run on an annual basis to ensure no irregularities. In addition, an IEP should establish the types of unique resources a child requires for their wholesome learning (Jackson et al., 156). To successfully implement an IEP, a behaviorist assigned to the child must evaluate all the insights they receive from the caregivers. These evaluations are the basis of how such a student's learning schedule should look.

In some cases, there required to be modifications within the standard school setting to accommodate a migrant disabled child (Claire, 34). Therefore, the school has to make provisions in the IEP of how they will make the relevant modifications to ensure the successful mainstreaming of the child. An IEP guideline outlines the least restrictive environment (LRE) suitable for each child. The LRE guideline regulates the number of hours a child should spend in

the mainstream program. A balance is thus created according to individual capability between the hours the child spends in general education and special needs education.

Shared Understanding between Teacher and Parent

On top of being considerate and cautious in dealing with children with special needs, teachers should also specialize in dealing with the parents of such children. This cooperation between the teacher and the parent ensures the child's overall well-being. In some cases, it has been established that teachers have wanted to impose on the parents and imply that they are the experts in the child's well-being. Such an imposition leads to poor relationships, and the consequences of the scuffles bounce back to the student. Therefore, the instructor and the parent must develop a shared understanding. This is because all efforts are directed toward the wholesome wellness of the child. There should be no speculations over who the expert is with these considerations, as everything is a joint effort (Umansky et al., 89). The child spends most of their time with their parents, and most of their essential learning is from the home environment; the teacher must initiate communication with the parent or the guardian in charge of the child (Yuan and Ishiyama, 99). Strategic contact with the parent enables the teacher to understand the child's social orientation (Gregory and Mullins, 42). This way, they view the child's family background and lifestyle and make sense of their certain behaviors.

How to execute the plan

During my fieldwork, I have learned many things and had conversations with families, special education teachers, and community members. I have interviewed 13 Ethiopian families who all have special needs children. Based on their answers, I concluded that the following plan would improve the grievance of those families.

One, the school district should hire a well-educated interpreter who knows about special education as well as the American school system. Most school interpreters only interpret the word for the word, not the context, which leaves the families with confusion and questions. During my interview, I presented this idea to the district special education and equity directors. Two, I have a plan to make a presentation to the district family advocates team. As the primary role of this team is to advocate for families and communities in the Shoreline district, the support I gained from them amplified my concerns and pushed the district authorities to consider policy changes or do something.

Third, I planned to present my project to the school district board; this was tentative and based on how busy the school board is. However, I met with the superintendent on January 6, 2021, and explained my paper and offered her if I can share my finding with school admins. I also shared some of the strategies that I thought might be beneficial to solve the concerns I discovered in my research.

Four, I connected with the East African community, Ethiopian churches, and Ethiopian local associations. I educated these groups about the American school system and encourage them to do their parts.

Five, I developed a triangular model called SFH (School, Family, Health Care). This model connects the three stakeholders to be part of the decision-making regarding special education. I came up with this idea because, in my interviews, I discovered that families trust their doctors and nurses regarding their children's health, as disabilities and special needs are part of health issues. One mom shared during the interview, " my health care provider knows my child from birth and whatever related to health, I want my child's doctor or nurse to get

involved." However, implementing this model is difficult for many reasons and not as easy as I think.

The Sixth action was connecting with Puget Sound Educational Service Department (PSESD) Initially, I just had a random conversation with some staff about my project. And those PSESD staff invited me to do some presentations for their early learning staff but after a couple of attempts, the plan failed due to schedule conflict. However, I am still working on reaching out to Puget Sound Educational Service Department (PSESD) special education department and sharing my research. Certainly, sharing my research with the agency is so essential because, the agency monitors federal funds for most early learning centers in the Puget Sound area, including the Shoreline early learning center. Therefore, bringing PSESD on board is crucial for policy change.

Finally, I connected with the Shoreline early learning center director and the head of Child Fine. Child fine is the first step of evaluation for the entire district to determine if the child qualifies for special education or not. Once the child passes this step, the next step is meeting with a school psychologist who further evaluates the child. I asked the director to share my project, and the director said she would be happy to share when they all are early learning special educators and child fine dispatchers have a meeting, and I shared it with all.

Conclusion

Conclusively, handling a child with a disability and ensuring their appropriate social orientation is not a role only for the child's parent. All key players in society, especially the school that is the focal learning point, should make efficient adjustments to ensure that these children can comfortably fit into their systems. As such, schools must embrace mainstreaming to

ensure that every student, despite their mental or physical capability, is included in the learning experience.

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APPENDIX A

THEORY OF CHANGE APPROACH

Like any other migrant community living in the United States, the Ethiopian community within the Shoreline District continues to face its fair share of challenges. These challenges are mainly within the social sphere, whereby communication challenges make interactions with people outside their communities complex. For the following series of writings, the focus has been on the communicative challenges between teachers within the Shoreline District Schools and the parents of Ethiopian children. The focal point is parents' communication challenges with children with special needs. In the age of inclusion within the school system, there has been much integration of children with special needs into mainstream schools. While this is a crucial move meant to improve the socialization of these children, it comes with various challenges (Hassan and Gardner, 68). For the Ethiopian community within Shoreline District, the move to include their children went with the challenge of communication barriers. While the children receive instruction in English as a second language, the parents who are the primary caregivers of the children receive no such training. Because of this communication barrier, it becomes difficult for the teacher and the parent to collaborate on matters concerning the intellectual nourishment of the child with special needs.

The necessity to Change Methodology

This study's previously proposed research methodology faced challenges based on its field study. In the wake of the coronavirus, interactions were limited to being virtual due to government prohibitions and lockdown measures. As such, researching this study proved to be an uphill task and essentially a violation of the recommendations by the government to maintain social distance. In the interest of adhering to the guidelines by the government and the ministry

of health, the research of this study had to change course and take to the virtual space. After encountering challenges with the fieldwork study, the most appropriate virtual space to conduct the research was the Zoom video interphase. The video interphase selection was the closest one can get to actual physical interaction (Fusch et al., 87). Making phone calls to the study participants would have been somewhat inefficient as recording some aspects of the participant's responses, such as facial expressions, would be impossible. Zoom also presented the advantage of recording the conversation for future reference. These recordings would then come in handy during the transcription of the research data before interpreting the findings.

Narrowed Scope of Participants

Additionally, further narrowing the scope of the study, it was discovered that migrant Ethiopian parents with children with disabilities were the most affected by the communication barrier between them and their students' teachers. As a specialist and family engagement advisor within the Shoreline District, my profession also necessitated this narrowing down the participants (Cypress, 45). I am well equipped with the migrant communities within the Shoreline District face in my specialization. My professional capabilities enabled me to research within the Ethiopian community efficiently. Previously, the scope of this study had been generalized to parenting within the range of the Ethiopian and American cultures. This generalization in the content of the study was due to the established success of mainstreaming American children with disabilities compared to their Ethiopian counterparts within the Shoreline District. Essentially, the reason behind this previous scope was the perception that the parenting of the American parents was superior to that of the Ethiopian ones. This scope of the study was further supported by the evident academic success of the American children with special needs within the mainstream capacities. However, upon close interaction with the

Ethiopian parents within the district schools who had children with special needs, the discovery was that the challenge was not on the parenting mode alone. Instead, the challenge was communication barriers between the teachers and the parents. This challenge was due to the limited English proficiency of the Ethiopian parents (Cornell et al., 145). Like their children, English was a second language, and the reality of their children having special needs meant that this limitation reflected directly on their academic performance. To focus primarily on the communicative needs of the migrant parents and for comprehensive findings, I selected 13 Ethiopian parents with children with special needs within the shoreline district. Therefore, the number of participants was not too little or too many but just enough to gather comprehensive results (Cypress, 87). Comprehensiveness, in this case, would be because I could get divergent views from a group of individuals with a similar challenge.

Choice of Interview Questions

By transitioning from fieldwork to researching within a virtual platform, some approaches needed to gather information from participants from the field study can be changed. Virtual research meant observing my participants' physical disposition would be impossible. Therefore, carrying out any observations on my target population was impossible. Virtual research meant that after seeking consent from all the necessary authorities, including my selected participants, I had to ask the formulated interview questions (Czaniawska, 90). These interview questions were vital as they would provide an in-depth insight into what the Ethiopian shoreline district parents felt were the communicative challenges between them and their teachers. The questions were a combination of closed-ended and open-ended to get varying responses that would necessitate finding solutions to the challenge. Closed-ended questions, as the term suggests, would bind the reactions of the parents within certain spheres as needed by the

research. On the other hand, open-ended questions would encourage the parents to be expressive and discuss the nature of the communicative challenges to the specifics. Therefore, the designed interview questions for the parents were as follows;

1 Do you have prior knowledge or information of what special education is? Yes or No. Please explain.

2 Are you satisfied with how the school and teachers initially communicated with you about the special education service? Yes or No. Please explain.

3 Did you read all the Individualized Education Program (IEP) documents and understand its stipulations well? Yes or No. Please explain

4. Do you think that interpreters are helpful during IEP review? Yes or No. Please explain.

5 What are some common challenges you face during communication about special education services?

6 How do you think communication of special education services to Ethiopians can be improved?

7 If there were one thing you wished the special education specialists would know about your family or culture, what would it be?

8 If you were a teacher trying to explain special education to parents, what would you do to get the message across to them effectively?

9 How do you rate school communication with Ethiopian families? 1-5

Motive of Research

Due to the onset of the coronavirus, which eliminated the possibility of carrying out a conclusive field study, it is not only the scope of the research that changed but also its motive. In

one aspect, the participants were narrowed down to migrant Ethiopian parents with children with disabilities. The research and the consecutive findings would focus on finding these parents' solutions. Essentially, the study aimed to create a compelling hypothesis of what the parents perceived as communicative barriers between them and their children's special-needs teachers (Fusch et al., 60). Essentially, the parents' challenges as hindrances to effective communication were based primarily on English being a second language (Cleathham et al., 57). In the following section, an analysis will be carried out on the possible causes of the communicative barriers between the two groups, teachers and parents, from the parents' perspective.

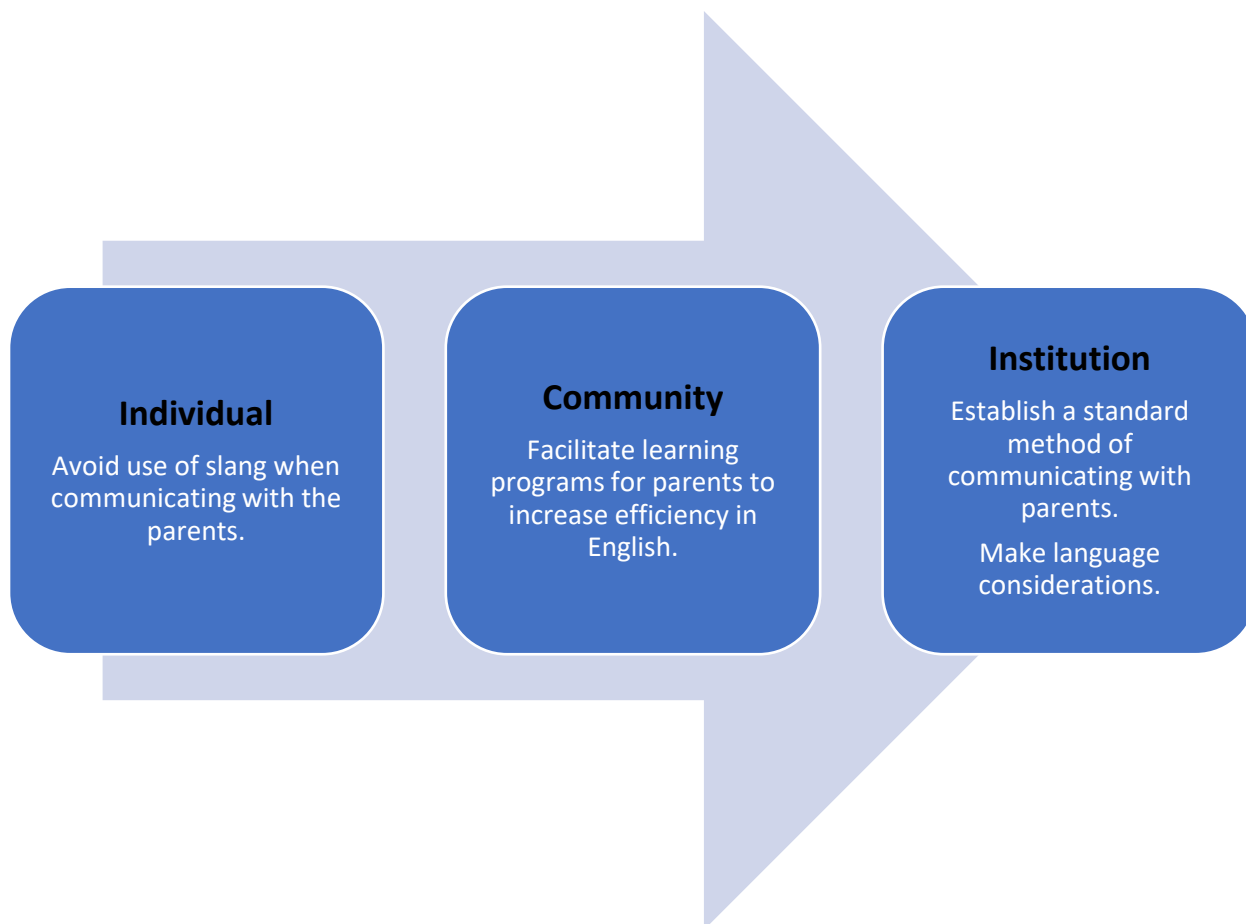
Additionally, the ways to implement changes within the shoreline school district to aid communication will be explored. For the success of the identification of the challenges and the empirical finding of solutions to help education facilitation for children with special needs, the change model will be utilized (Dyson, 45). The following are some of the dispositions of the parents within the aspect of communication that hinder their effective collaboration with teachers in instruction of their children;

Culture and Background

The parents' cultural background is essentially Ethiopian, as they are immigrants to America. They were coming to America just like any other individual; coming to a new country was a culture shock to them in several aspects. Because of the inclusion of their children with special needs into the mainstream education system, the culture shock came in because in Ethiopia, as is the case within many African countries, education, especially for those with special needs, is not of essence (Gothberg, 58). In most cases, a child with special needs is rejected within the Ethiopian community, and taking them through school is viewed as a waste of monetary resources. Additionally, the concept of inclusion of children with special needs into a

regular classroom is unheard of to the parents' knowledge; a special needs student should be in a special needs school. In America, however, going to school is essentially the right of every child, regardless of whether they have special needs. As such, parents are mandated to take their children to school under federal law, and failure to do so causes legal implications for the parent. With all the cultural disposition of the parents put into consideration, the Shoreline school district should come up with various ways to facilitate Ethiopian parents into the American education system that includes children with disabilities (Cornell et al., 89).

In most cases, facilitation programs for the parents usually draw the American culture as superior to the Ethiopian culture and any other. This imposition of superiority automatically gives the parents a negative attitude concerning what they are to be facilitated. As such, most Ethiopian parents view inclusion programs as yet another way for Americans to make impositions on them and establish the pre-supposed superiority of their culture (Harrison et al., 46). Within the change model, the way to change these negative attitudes by the migrant parents is by taking a more welcoming approach of explaining what the inclusion program consists of while highlighting its advantages. The following diagram represents the expected perceptions changes if cultural considerations are made while facilitating the Ethiopian parents.



Challenges with Language Proficiency and Education Level

Language proficiency is the ability of an individual to be within the capacity to use a given language accurately while making sensible comprehension and conveying a message effectively. The development of language proficiency for any individual usually begins at a tender age when the child is in the stage of word learning, approximately one year. Within this perspective, language proficiency is a skill that cannot be easily taught during adulthood as one is supposed to develop it over time. In the case of the Ethiopian parents at the Shoreline school district, they are proficient in their native Ethiopian language (Cypress, 109). As such, English is a new language whose structure is a significant deviation from the structure of their native languages. For the migrant Ethiopian parents, English is the third language for most of them.

Most of these parents' English learning comes from picking up words from interactions within their workplace, and as such, they have no form of training in the language. This lack of proficiency in the English language further bars the communication between the teacher and the parent.

Additionally, as the state of the parents within the US is migrant, most of them have yet to acquire official US citizen status. These individuals have yet to undergo standardized tests that measure English proficiency. Even after passing the proficiency tests, English being a second or third language will still be a barrier that prevents the parent from communicating with their children's teachers (Dyson, 128). One way to solve the challenge of language proficiency is by ensuring that any communication made from the school to the parents is straightforward and does not use any form of slang that can be confusing for the parents. Additionally, the school should ensure regular check-ins with the migrant parents to ensure that communications are within their comprehension capabilities. Further, the teachers who are also core caregivers to the children should be constantly oriented on keeping the communication between them and the parents simple and to the point (Harrison et al., 126).

Within language proficiency, another barrier that could hinder effective communication between the parent and the teacher is the low levels of education for migrant families (Jackson et al., 156). For most migrant families, America symbolizes new great opportunities for them and their children. Therefore, education is one perceived opportunity that migrant parents want their children to maximize. However, with little or no formal training, navigating within a new, dominantly English community comes with several challenges. Formal education is unique for migrant Ethiopian parents within the shoreline district. As much as they desire to see their children excel in it, they are within no capacity to facilitate this learning effectively. In one

aspect, these parents have little to offer regarding guidance to their children on matters such as selecting subjects as it is an unfamiliar path to them (Harrison et al., 187).

Furthermore, the lack of formal training means they cannot comprehend inclusion. Stipulations within the Individualized Education Program (IEP) are new to them, and understanding these stipulations encompassed within extensive documents becomes a challenge. In a normal situation where the child was abled, the parents' comprehension of the IEP would not be challenging as the children would offer guidance. In the case of the migrant Ethiopian parents, this is impossible as the children in question have special needs and require specialized care across all aspects (Lloyd, 35). To effectively handle the communication challenges of the lack of formal education, the school should intentionally facilitate programs that provide proper training for migrant Ethiopian parents.

Lack of a Trained Interpreter

The school has already recognized that communication is the primary barrier standing between the collaboration between the migrant parents and the teachers of their children with special needs. Having identified this communicative barrier, the school sought to communicate better with the parents by hiring interpreters. However, despite taking this approach, there still exist challenges in the facet of interpretation (Lloyd, 47). For one, the interpreters hired are American-born Ethiopians. They are native English speakers; thus, their comprehension of the native Ethiopian languages is minimal. Some of the challenges the interpreters face include difficulties hearing the speakers. If the Ethiopian migrant parent speaks too fast, the interpreter could easily miss out on hearing some words, leading to misinterpretation or no interpretation.

Most of the interpreters hired are not native Ethiopians language (Amharic) speakers; they lack knowledge of the culture of the natives, and as such, misinterpretation is highly

probable. The lack of expertise in local culture cannot be remedied by proficiency in the native Ethiopian language. Most interpreters generally understand the native Ethiopian language (Lumbago, 187). As such, they lack knowledge of the specific languages spoken within the various regions of Ethiopia (Trainor et al., 79, Umansky et al., 57). The migrant Ethiopian parents do not come from one area. Therefore, although the language spoken is the same across the country, certain variations exist in some words and sentence structures. Thus, an efficient interpreter should note all these cultural differences that cause variations in language. Most interpreters, as the Ethiopian migrant parents have noted, interpret literally within the aspect of cultural knowledge. This means that some meaning of what the parent wants to say to the teacher is lost during interpretation, thus causing further misunderstandings (Motamedi et al., 76). The only way that the school can remedy the misinterpretation issue is by hiring interpreters of Ethiopian origins. On the other hand, when the school district employs Ethiopian-born interpreters, this individual also lacks knowledge about the subject and sometimes misinterpret the context due to the literal interpretation of the word.

RESULTS

The current study used 11 respondents who were Ethiopian migrant parents of children with disabilities. These parents were assessed with interviews designed to collect information on their challenges with school and teachers of their disabled children. The current study was conducted in the Shoreline District. The results of the questionnaire are described in this section.

The respondents were asked, "Do you have prior knowledge or information about special education? Yes or No. Please explain." As prompted in the question, the respondents were required to state either Yes or No and provide descriptions of their answers. The researcher visualized the Ethiopian parents' responses in a bar chart, as shown in Figure 1.

Out of 11 parents, three (27.27%) stated the Yes response, while eight (72.73%) indicated the No answer. Most of those parents who gave a No response said they had never heard about special needs back in their native country, Ethiopia. For instance, one of the parents explained their lack of knowledge in special education: "Because I never read or learned about it. Nobody also told me when I was in Ethiopia." Another parent shared, "I never had any exposure until I came to the USA and worked at school. It is not a widespread issue back home." Also, another parent cited, "Because I never heard about it, everything is hidden when it comes to developmental disabilities back home. The first time I heard this was here in the USA." The responses suggested that the Ethiopian education system does not have a unique program for children with special needs. Even if the program is there, it is not well-publicized to allow parents with such children to get aware of the particular program and enroll their disabled children in it. Those parents who gave Yes responses indicated to have learned about special education while in the USA. For instance, one parent stated, "I learned in college here in the USA and had exposure in the community. Before that, I did not know anything about special education." Another parent indicated, "I have learned from a nonprofit organization I was working with." Only one parent was told to have learned a little about special education while in college in Ethiopia. The parent stated, "I heard a little bit back home when I was in college."

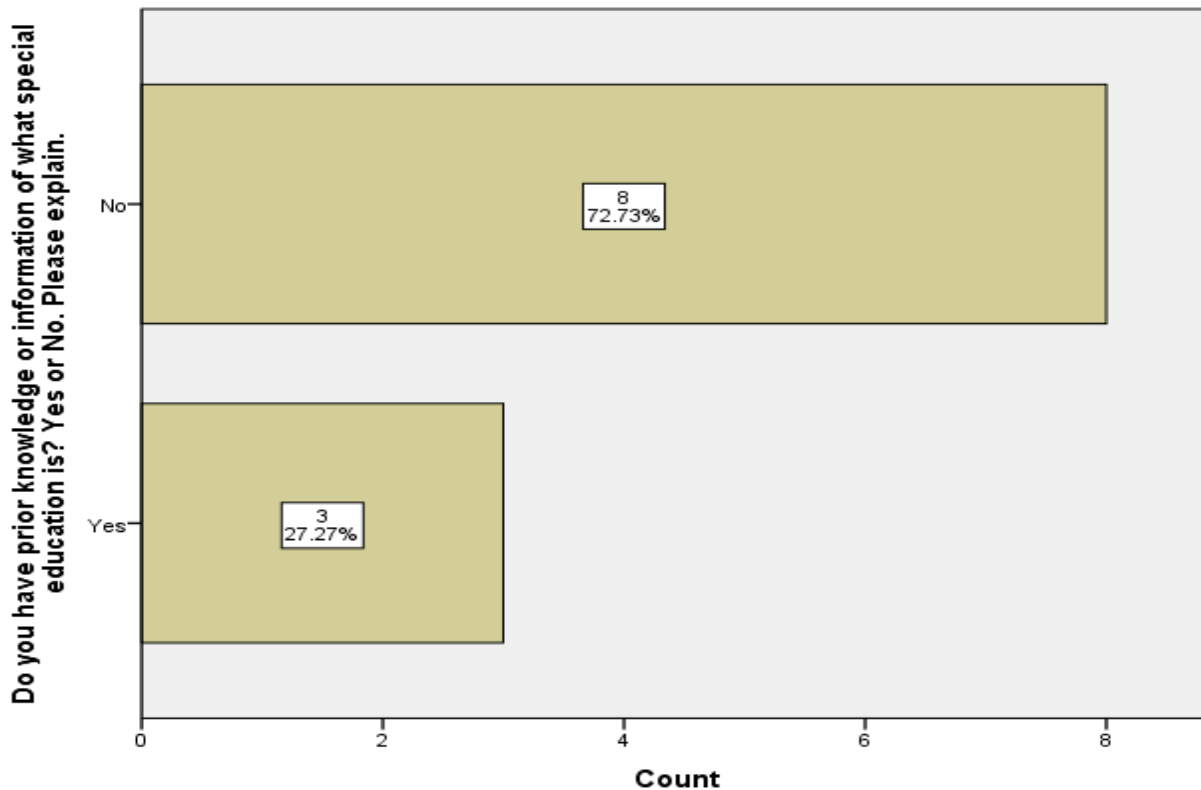


Figure 1. A Bar Chart for the Parents' Knowledge of Special Education

The researcher sought parents' responses on whether they satisfied the school requirements per the communication about special education programs. In this case, the researcher asked, "Do you satisfy how the school and teachers initially communicated with you about the special education service? Yes or No. Please explain." The researcher constructed the bar chart shown in Figure 2, indicating the number of parents who stated either Yes or No. The chart showed that out of 11 parents, only three (27.27%) said Yes, while eight (72.73%) said No. Those who said no complained about poor communication from the school and teachers. Some parents felt teachers gave them wrong explanations, requesting them to place their children in disability groups and programs to which they never belonged. To instantiate, a parent stated, "Because, the approach, the explanation about my child is wrong. The teacher reported that my child has some mental illness or other disabilities." Another parent said, "Because the teacher

told me on the first week of the school and asked me if they can put my child in PM class than AM." Also, some parents failed to acknowledge the disability conditions of their children. For instance, a parent said, "Because when I told the teacher my child has no disabilities, she will not listen to me, and she keeps convincing me and goes her way."

Additionally, some parents complained about shallow and timeless communications, for example, "Because all the decisions are quick without many details." The parents' responses also showed a complete lack of parents' inclusion in making the decisions concerning their parents. For instance, "Nobody consults with me, they just called me and informed me, and all conversations were one-sided. No parent's consideration at all."

The parents who stated Yes suggested that the teachers explain and convince them about the disability conditions of their children. For example, one parent stated, "Because they discussed with me and evaluated her and placed her in the program." Another parent said, "I didn't have any prior knowledge, but the teacher and the school made me understand what special education means."

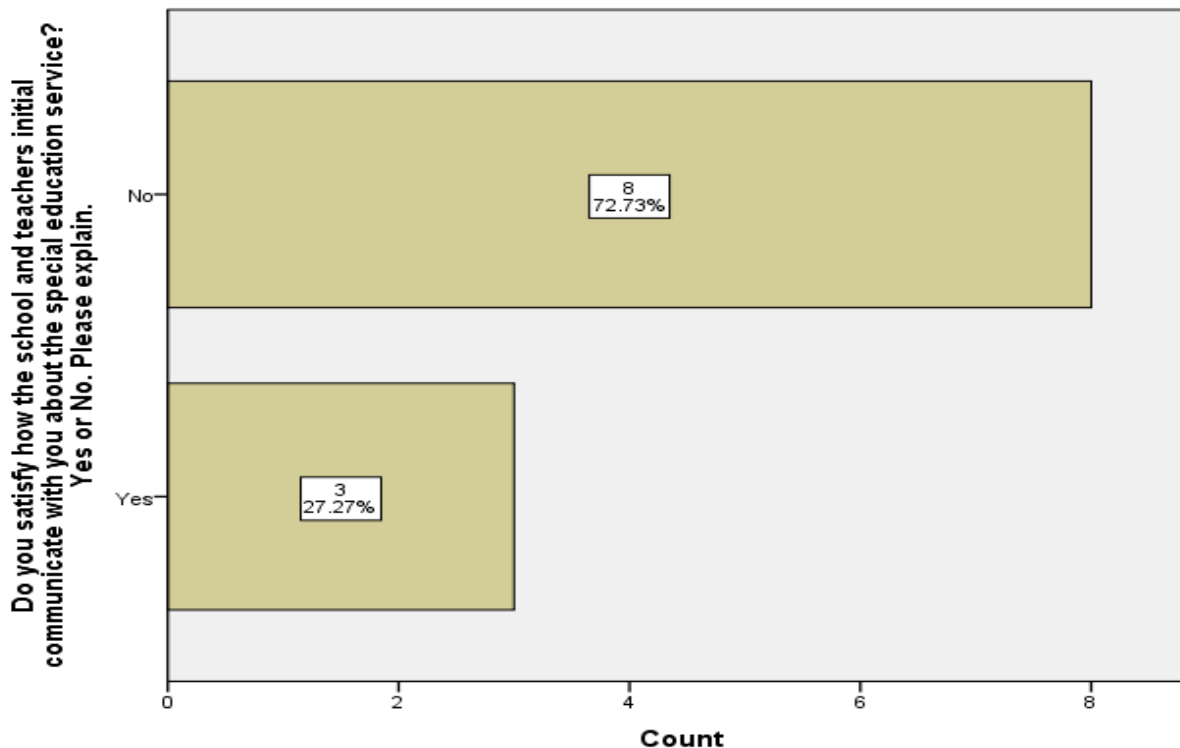


Figure 2. A Bar Chart for Parents' Satisfaction of School Communications by Parents

The study investigated whether the Ethiopian parents understood the Individualized Education Program (IEP) documents. This was done using the question, "Do you read all the Individualized Education Program (IEP) documents and understand them well? Yes or No. Please explain." The responses were illustrated in a bar chart, as shown in Figure 3. The chart showed that the fewest individuals, 3 (27.27%) out of 11, indicated the Yes response, while most individuals, 8 (72.73%), indicated the No answer. The parents who said No commented on the complicated English language used in the IEP documents. For instance, one of the Ethiopian parents stated, "It's very complicated to read and understand since I am ELL. I always take the IEP report to my child's doctor, who uses a professional interpreter and makes me understand more." Another parent said, "I don't understand anything about IEP. I always must find someone who makes me understand, but still, IEP documents are hard to understand." Also, one parent

suggested that the IEP language is dynamic and medical that ordinary English speakers cannot comprehend. The parent stated, "Because the terminology has to do with the medical terms and more academic words, the language of the IEP changes every time, and regular English speakers even don't quite understand." Some parents cited that the main challenge of the IEP to them is that English is a second language, and they are not well conversant with it.

The parents who said Yes indicated to have had a better understanding of the English language. Some stated that they read and ask for clarification wherever they fail to understand. For instance, "I read, and I will ask questions if I don't understand." One parent indicated that to be learned, and thus, reading and comprehending are not an issue, "I read, and I will ask questions if I don't understand."

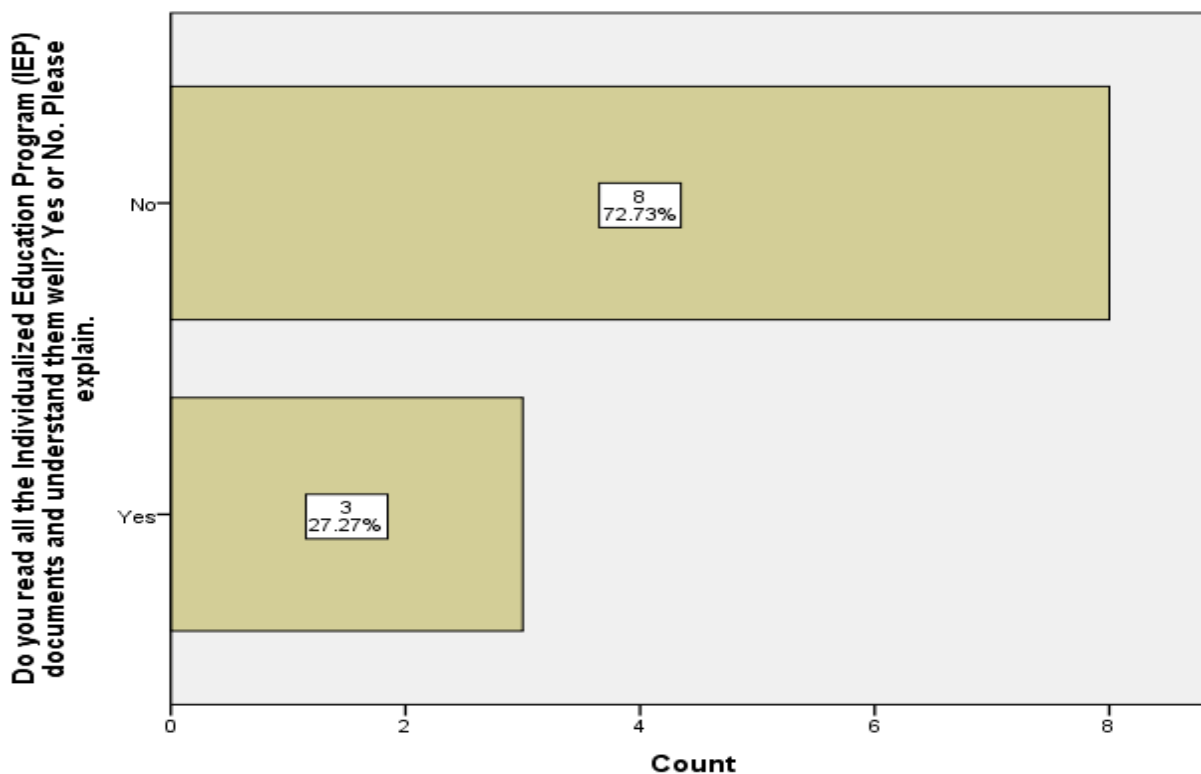


Figure 3. A Bar Chart for the Parents' IEP understanding

The analysis investigated if an interpreter would be helpful to the parents while reviewing the IEP. The following question was asked, "Do you think an interpreter is helpful during IEP review? Yes or No. Please explain." The question responses are in a bar chart, as shown in Figure 4. Of 11 parents, 5 (45.45%) indicated Yes, while 6 (54.55%) said No. The parents who said No suggested that even the interpreters are not trained on IEP, and thus they also do not understand it. For instance, "I am sure the interpreters also do not know. I have used interpreters many times and had a better understanding than them." Also, another parent cited, "Because interpretations have no clues or knowledge about the subject. How can one interpret something they do not know?" The parent further indicated that they do not find the meaning of the interpretation. Another parent suggested that the interpreter interprets the IEP as ordinary English without understanding the context, "The interpreter does not know the subject and interprets word for word, not the context, which is very confusing."

The parents who said Yes emphasized the interpreter's necessity to know the IEP language well. For example, "But the interpreters should be someone who knows the details about the subject." Another parent stated, "Because an interpreter never passes all my expressions, most interpreters are not even qualified. They need to be trained by linguistic professionals." Some parents said that the interpreter helps them ask their questions to the teacher and share ideas, "The interpreter helps me share my ideas and ask the teachers questions."

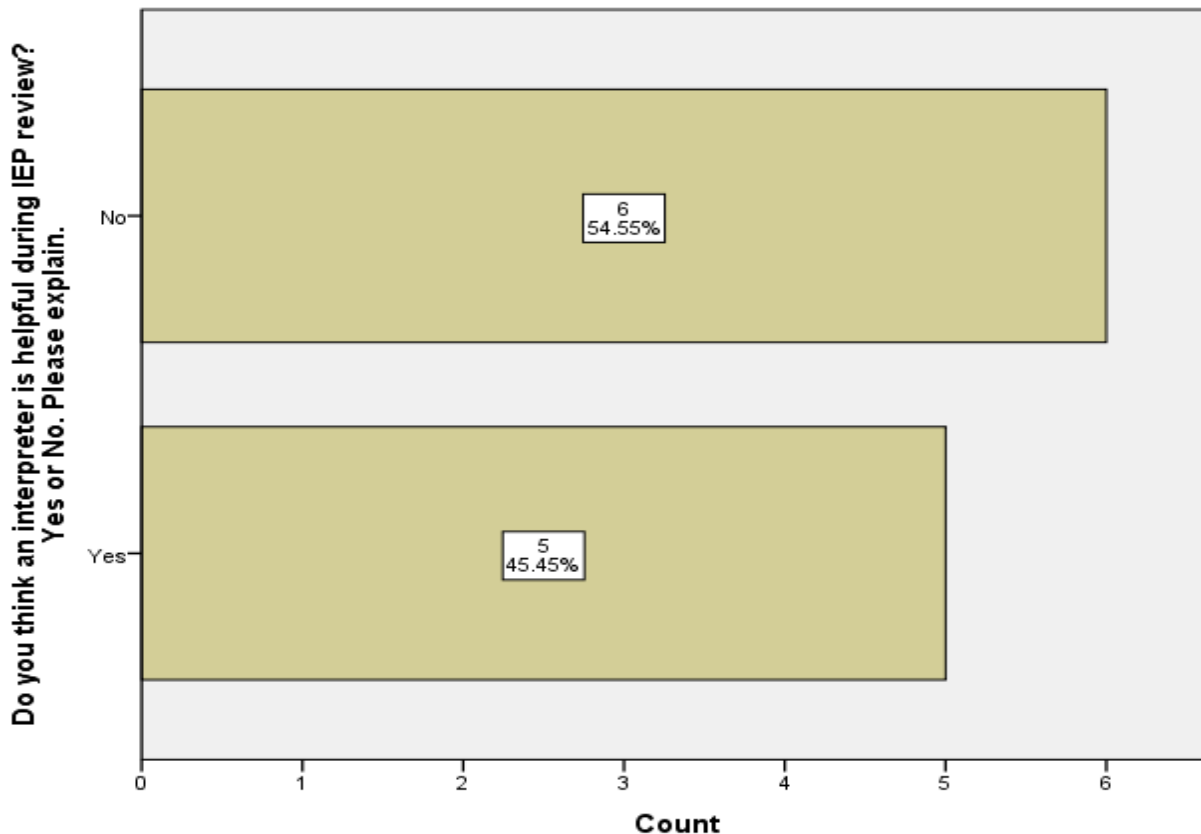


Figure 4. A Bar for Parents' Opinions on the Helpfulness of an Interpreter

The researcher wished to know the challenges the Ethiopian parents face in communicating about the special education programs. This query was performed using the question, "What are some common challenges you face during communication about special education services?" The problem of the language barrier was prominent among the parents' responses. Some parents indicated not to understand the English language in meetings. This problem forces most parents to agree with whatever teachers tell them blindly. For instance, a parent stated, "Language problems. Everybody supports whatever the teacher says during meetings, but not me." Another parent indicated, "Language barrier is another big challenge." As per the responses, another dominant challenge was that teachers monopolize decision-making and completely rule out parents' opinions. They make their conclusions concerning a child's

disability even when unsure. For instance, a parent stated, "Judgement of my child. The teachers already concluded that there is something wrong with my child." Another parent cited, "I do not see empathy or sympathy. The decision does not much involve the parents. Nobody advocates for parents at all." One parent suggested that teachers exaggerate a simple condition, making it look like a severe disability, "They present my child-like someone who has severe disabilities while his problem was just a speech delay." Also, another challenge was the lack of a platform or relevant persons to whom parents can express themselves. For example, one parent said, "no system in place where I can go and share." Nevertheless, another parent said, "Parents do not know whom to talk to besides the teachers."

Another challenge consistently appearing in the parents' responses was the cultural background. Some parents said that coming from a non-English speaking background hindered their communication, making them and their children face cultural stigma. For instance, a parent said, "My community started talking about my child's speech delay, and it was uncomfortable." Another parent stated, "Please understand our background and all those barriers, including the culture." The background and cultural barriers highly hindered the parents from understanding their children's rights and the responsibilities of teachers toward their disabled children. This was evidenced when a parent said, "Lack of understanding of the rights of a child and the rights of school or administrators."

The researcher believed that the parents could suggest how the communication process for special education services may be improved. This belief was assessed using the question, "How do you think communication of special education services to Ethiopians can be improved?" The parents prominently stated that Ethiopian parents should be educated about the unique education program. They emphasized that special education should be publicized to

create awareness among the Ethiopian community. This was shown when some parents said, "Give information about special education and teach the community, so let the community have awareness about what special education is all about."

Another instance is "Dispersing information to parents of support group." Other parents suggested that teachers should be informed on how to express negative information to parents concerning new cases of disabilities in their children, which would aid in avoiding stress on the parents of children with special needs. This feeling was expressed when a parent said, "Give positive feedback and avoid giving negative feedback to the point where the parent stresses out." Another instance was when a parent said, "Before you approach a parent with bad news, please learn about the family's background since it will ease the communication."

Another suggested communication improvement approach was the provision of trained interpreters. Some parents indicated that Ethiopian native interpreters should be hired to bridge the communication gap. This was shown when a parent said, "Hire an Ethiopian language speaker to gap the bridge." Another parent indicated, "Use interpreter; skillful interpreter makes family comfortable." Some parents suggested that families with needy children should be connected to resources. This was seen when a parent said, "Connect families with resources." Another indicated, "connect families with resources that help them meet their needs."

The researcher investigated what the Ethiopian parents would wish the special education people were aware of their culture and family. The study asked, "If there was one thing you wished the special education people could know about your family or culture, what would it be?" Most parents suggested that the people concerned with special education should learn about their Ethiopian cultural background. For instance, a parent said, "I wish they knew our background and the culture we grew up in." Other parents cited that their culture does not allow them to

expose their disabled children due to fear of stigma. This was seen in such responses as, "We Ethiopians are not transparent about special children due to stigma from our community." In addition, some parents stated that a disabled child is associated with evils and curses in the Ethiopian culture. This makes them insecure about exposing children with disabilities to the community. In this regard, a parent said, "I wish they understood we are totally from a different culture that made us insecure about many things." Another parent expressed disability and special needs as a taboo, "I wish all know how special needs are taboo in Ethiopia. Also, a parent said that teachers should research and investigate a child's background to understand how to approach disabled children and their parents.

The study sought to explore the factors parents considered effective in relaying special education messages to parents. In this case, the researcher asked, "If you were a teacher trying to explain special education to parents, what would you do to be effective at getting the message to them?" One prominent response was that teachers create a good relationship with parents. For instance, one parent said, "More focus on building relationships with parents." Building relationships with parents was much emphasized, and more parents mentioned it. For example, another parent stated, "Build relationships with parents or someone in the family who has a better understanding of special education."

Another prominent theme was listening to parents and involving them in handling the special children since they are caretakers of the children at home. In this regard, a parent cited, "Educate parents and focus on them because they are the ones that deal with the children." Another parent noted, "Just listen to parents' concerns." Others stated that good communication is critical on the part of the teacher. Teachers should be polite and use simple language that the parents understand well. Also, some parents said that teachers should sit them down and seek to

convince them whenever they want to communicate with their disabled children. For instance, a parent said, "First, make parents comfortable by sitting and communicating with them. Please speak slowly and make sure we understand what you meant." Another parent indicated, "Oral communication with clear, understandable language." Other parents advocated the oral communication mode since they were not comfortable or learned enough to understand the written language. For instance, "Please no writing information because we do not read."

The researcher asked the parents to rate the school communication with the Ethiopian parents. The parents were presented with the following question, "How do you rate school communication with the Ethiopian families? 1-5" The ratings were recorded, and a histogram was constructed, as shown in Figure 5. The histogram showed that a majority of parents gave a rating of 2. The best rating was 4, provided by only one parent.

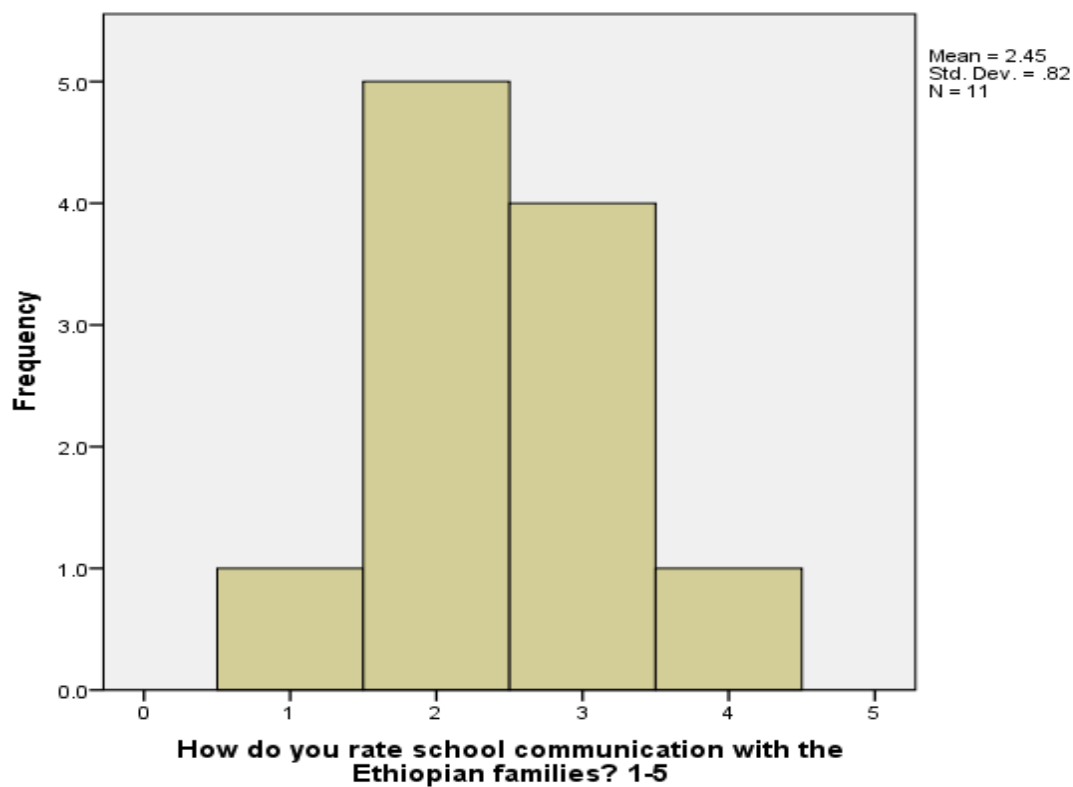


Figure 5. A Histogram for Parents' Ratings of the School Communication to Ethiopian Families

The researcher computed the descriptive statistics for the parents' ratings of the school communication. Table 1 shows the results. The average rating was 2.45, with a standard deviation of 0.82, suggesting a poor scale rating. The ratings closer to 1 were regarded as poor, while those closer to 5 were regarded as good.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics

N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation

How do you rate school communication with Ethiopian families? 1-5	11	1	4	2.45	.820
Valid N (listwise)	11				

Conclusion

The current study investigated the communication challenges between the Ethiopian parents of children with special needs and the school. The present research was carried out in the Shoreline District. It was found that the parents'-school communication was faced with various challenges. One of the challenges was found to be a language barrier. In this regard, the Ethiopian parents indicated having difficulties understanding English since it was their second language. Another challenge was illiteracy. Most parents demonstrated not knowing how to read or write the IEP and other special needs documents written in English. Others would not understand message communications sent to them by teachers in the form of emails. Another challenge was the lack of awareness of special education. Most parents did not know the meaning of special education since they had not heard it back in Ethiopia. The cultural barrier also affected the parents' notion and understanding of special education. This was evident when most parents said that disability is considered a curse and thus associated with evils. Also, the problem of poor communication skills is portrayed by teachers. Some parents said that teachers would inconsiderately talk to them about new cases of disabilities in their children. This made

parents get angry, hurt, and, at times, stressed, considering their love for their children. Other parents complained that teachers exaggerated simple conditions into severe disabilities. The poor communication issue made parents not cooperate and satisfy the school requirements.

To ensure that the special education programs are appropriately and adequately implemented to benefit migrant parents and their particular children, the highlighted challenges ought to be remediated in the best approaches possible. One of the approaches is to educate the Ethiopian parents and publicize the special needs programs. This will aid in creating awareness and understanding of special education among the Ethiopians. It will also generate some level of literacy among these parents. Another remediation is that the special needs school and teachers should seek to understand the parents' cultural backgrounds. This will help them create good relationships and thus cooperate in handling the special children. Another solution is that the schools and teachers should seek to get the Ethiopian parents' concerns and let them express themselves. These parents are the ones who take care of the children at home, and thus, good relations with them will ensure maximum unique care benefits to the disabled children. Schools should also provide knowledgeable interpreters who will be aiding parents in interpreting the IEP and other special needs documents. Teachers should ensure courtesy while communicating sensitive information to parents, ensuring they do not hurt them. In general, the special needs school and relevant authorities should treat the Ethiopian parents in a unique manner that takes care of their background instead of treating them like other parents who are American natives.

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