Creating Brave & Productive Learning Environments for Young Adolescents: Parents' Perspectives of Teacher-Parent and Teacher-Student Relationships

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Abstract

Teachers are masters of content and of creating connections (e.g., students-content, students-students, teacher-students, teacher-parents). Both impact one's ability to create and sustain brave and productive learning environments. Teachers connect students to the content, and to each other. At the top of the list of important connections are teacher-student and teacher-parent relationships. In the current paper, we examine these relationships from the perspective of parents of middle school students with disabilities, an under-studied group. We describe theories of learning that support investigating these relationships from parents' perspectives and outline why this could be an impactful lens for teachers to consider. We share questions asked and surveys used to better understand teacher-parent and teacher-student relationships from middle school parents' perspectives and describe the results of eight studies that have focused on parents of students with disabilities. Parents confirmed that teacher-student and teacher-parent relationships are important to their students' learning. Results also suggest that there are limited reliable measures assessing parents' perspectives of teacher-student and/or teacher-parent relationships. Implications of these findings for future research and teaching practices are explored.

Introduction

A parent receives a call from her 14-year-old daughter who just witnessed a physical altercation in a special education classroom. The parent, understanding the implications of her daughter's mental health disability, asks her daughter if she can go to a place where she can relax and calm down. The student does so and later that night shares that no one had checked in on her or followed up to see how she was feeling. Later that semester, during a parent-teacher conference, the parent shares concerns about her daughter's continued anxiety resulting from the physical altercation she witnessed at school. The mother is repeatedly asked, "But was your daughter even involved in the fight?" After being asked several times, the parent leaves the conference feeling as if the conversation had gone nowhere. For the next several weeks, the parent takes her daughter to a series of counseling appointments and works with her daughter's medical doctor to see if the student would benefit from other therapies. Meanwhile, the parent is receiving notes from the administration indicating she is not answering the special education teacher's attempts to contact her. The parent is confused about this as she is responding to emails. Near the end of the semester, the school's administration reaches out to share that her daughter will be receiving an athletic suspension because of an incident at school. The parent attempts to share her daughter's history and asks for empathy and compassion from the administration, sharing that students like her daughter need a little bit extra. She goes on to share her daughter's history and how her daughter began to give up on school when consequences were delivered without compassion. The administrator states that there is nothing that can be done and goes on to ask why the parent has not responded to the special education teacher's emails. The parent shares she has willingly participated in special education meetings and has also responded to the special educator's emails, but still feels unheard and feels her daughter's challenges and needs are misunderstood. She feels tired and defeated. Outside of the meeting, the parent reflects on her desire to help create brave and productive learning environments for her daughter. She feels having positive teacher (and administrator)-parent and teacher-student relationships is foundational to establishing these types of environments. She wonders if having these types of relationships is possible or if her daughter's disability and the fact that she is a person of color make it too challenging.

The parent described above is a mother participating in a longitudinal research study being conducted by the first author (see Butler et al., 2019). The excerpt is a summary of the 1625-word response this parent shared when asked

how her young adolescent daughter was doing in school. The mother was not sure what could be done but shared difficulties in establishing and sustaining positive teacher-parent relationships (TPRs) and teacher-student relationships (TSRs). The mother identified as a Tribal Nation member and shared the importance of operating within a love-based vs. fear-based framework and her Nation's beliefs that there are no bad people, that labels are not helpful, and that everyone has a purpose. As is evident in the story, this mother felt there was a disconnect between her home culture and that of the school and that it negatively impacted her daughter's ability to feel brave and productive at school. We will be grounding this review in two of the most common contextual models of relationships: family systems theory and ecological systems theory (Belsky, 1981; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998). This mother's feelings highlight a key component of both models: teacher-student and teacher (and administrator)-parent relationships are embedded within the larger school community system, as well as cultural and subcultural contexts. When these contexts are disconnected as the mother in the excerpt above felt they were, teacher-student and teacher (and administrator)-parent relationships can be negatively impacted. Ultimately, the mother's feelings resulted in her removing her daughter from the school and paying for her to attend a private school. "It's all stressful. I'm just trying to do what's right for her, but it's difficult. There's always something wrong."

The Importance of Teacher-Parent and Teacher-Student Relationships

As this case illustrates, and teacher preparation standards and research support, TPRs and TSRs are key to creating brave and productive learning environments for students. For example, the Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE) teaching standards (2012) describe successful middle school teachers as being able to document their ability to collaborate with parents, other family members, and caregivers of students between 10 and 15 years of age (AMLE, Standard 5: Middle Level Professional Roles). Furthermore, teachers must demonstrate that they value family diversity and cultural backgrounds and are able to capitalize on assets and initiate collaboration with parents and others to promote overall well-being and improve educational outcomes (AMLE, Standard 5). Also included is a statement related to the type of relationships that are important: Successful teachers "engage in practices that build positive, collaborative relationships with families from diverse cultures and backgrounds (e.g., race, ethnicity, culture, age, appearance, ability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, family composition)" (p. 16). Bishop and Harrison (2021) share specific examples of teacher practices related to this standard. Teachers listen closely, observe, stay attuned to silence, recognize families may face challenges that can be traumatic, stand up for young adolescents and their families when social injustices implicitly or explicitly occur and engage in appropriate communication between home and school. The same should be true for administrators in their relationships with parents as well if parents like the mother in the opening excerpt are to feel heard and as if their children's needs and challenges are understood.

The importance of TPRs and TSRs is also described for kindergarten through 6th-grade teachers in the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation standards (CAEP, 2018). For example, the CAEP standards describe effective teachers as those who consider their own biases and the impact these have on teaching practices and relationships with learners and their families. Additionally, effective teachers are described as those who understand the emergence of emotional responses in children and realize those responses are affected by both social contexts and by the nature of their relationship with parents and teachers.

TPRs and TSRs are important to teachers, students, and parents (Bishop & Harrison, 2021; Boonk et al., 2018; Epstein, 2005; Hill et al., 2018; Krane & Klevan, 2019; Mo & Singh, 2008; Pate & Andrews, 2006). For example, Neyhus and Neyhus (1979) suggested that parents' perceptions of effective family-school partnerships were impacted by their perceptions of the TPR. Parent perceptions of TSRs have also been investigated, with emphasis of unique student-level characteristics that appear to make the relationship more impactful. For example, Krane and Klevan, through thematic analysis of 14 parent interviews, found that parents felt collaboration between home and school was necessary for promoting students' well-being in schools, especially for students "at risk." Parents' responses suggested that these collaborations positively impacted TPRs and TSRs, both of which were described as critically important. The authors of this study share suggestions on

how to include parents in meaningful ways and share the importance of recognizing the unique opportunities to involve young adolescents in this work.

Teacher-parent relationships (TPRs) and teacher-student relationships (TSRs) are important and impacted by the complex relational work between teachers and parents (Huguley et al., 2021; McIntyre & Garbacz, 2014; Nygreen, 2019). Although complex, researchers have primarily examined this topic from the viewpoint of teachers and students (e.g., Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Hughes & Kwok, 2007) and focused primarily on evaluating parental involvement rather than gathering parents' perspectives (e.g., Pate & Andrews, 2006). In this paper, we examine research related to parent perspectives of TPRs and TSRs. We pay particular attention to parents like the mother described at the beginning of the paper (i.e., parents of young adolescents from non-dominant cultures who have a disability) as there is much evidence that families of students with disabilities from non-dominant communities face a plethora of obstacles preventing them from engaging in collaborative relationships (see Buren et al., 2018, for more). Additionally, we focus on young adolescence (i.e., 10 to 15-year old students), as a summary of research for this developmental period is needed.

As in related work, the term "parent" will be used in this review to capture a variety of primary family caregivers (e.g., stepparents, grandparents, foster parents, guardians, etc.). There are many investigations of family-school partnerships that highlight the importance of the perceptions of these caregivers (e.g., Hong et al., 2016; Kim, 2009). Researchers have identified specific strategies for improving family-school partnerships (Epstein, 2005; Mapp, 2003; Walker et al., 2005) and important reasons for this work, including the fact that it can contribute to improved student outcomes and more effective use of conflict resolution practices (Lake & Billingsley, 2000; Woods et al., 2018). We also have guidance from federal legislation that mandates the incorporation of family-school partnership programs that foster high achievement for all learners (e.g., Every Student Succeeds Act [ESSA]; 114th Congress; Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act [IDEIA], 2004). Although attended to in the literature over 40 years, more work is needed to understand the intricate relational work required to progress in this area (Nygreen, 2019).

Relationship System Models

As alluded to earlier, we have followed past scholars' recommendations (Dawson & Wymbs, 2016; Vickers & Minke, 1995) in grounding our review within two of the most common contextual models of relationships: family systems theory and ecological systems theory.

Family Systems Theory

Family systems theory (Belsky, 1981) is traditionally used to describe how members of a family unit (e.g., each of the caregivers, the child, siblings, and any other extended family members) influence each other. The family unit, according to Belsky, can be seen as:

1. Involving a complex system of relationships, including not only the caregiver-child relationship but also the relationship between or among the child's caregivers if the child has multiple caregivers;

2. Including bidirectional influences, meaning that not only can caregivers influence their children, but children can also shape their development through the influence they exert on those around them;

3. Consisting of a dynamic system that is in a constant state of flux as a result of both planned and unplanned changes that cause disruptions within the family system that can prompt subsequent changes in the way members of the system relate to one another; and

4. Being just one microsystem embedded within more extensive cultural and subcultural contexts and influenced by the broader context of the practices and beliefs of the society in which we live.

We agree with Vickers and Minke (1995), who argue that family systems theory can be used in a similar way to describe how members of TPRs and TSRs influence each other. The relationships among a student, their teachers, and their parents can also be viewed as a complex system of relationships;

1. Each member of this complex system of relationships can be seen to bidirectionally influence the other;

2. This system is dynamic, in that relationships among members change in response to planned or unplanned changes; and

3. Teacher-student relationships and teacher-parent relationships can be viewed as microsystems, both embedded within larger cultural and subcultural contexts.

Ecological Systems Theory

This last point is also highlighted by Dawson and Wymbs (2016) and Krane and Klevan (2019), who suggest the added benefit of grounding discussions of TPRs and TSRs within broader ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Sabol & Pianta, 2012). Viewing TPRs and TSRs from this perspective reminds us to look not only at the way in which individuals within these relationships influence each other but also at the way in which relationships among individuals (e.g., TPRs) influence other relationships among individuals (e.g., TSRs). In fact, Krane and Klevan highlight the importance of the interactions among all members of the system, what they refer to as the "tripartite" relationship among parents, teachers, and students.

This approach also appears consistent with Pianta's (1999) conceptual model of TSRs. While Pianta's model does not explicitly mention TPRs or parent perceptions of TSRs, it does highlight "external influences of the systems in which the [teacher-student] relationship is embedded" (Hamre & Pianta, 2006, p. 30). Hamre and Pianta focus on the school system in which TSRs are embedded in discussing these external influences. However, we would argue that teacher-student relationships are also embedded within the larger school community system, of which parents are an essential part.

Selection of Studies

We searched broadly to identify possible studies, using multiple search-term pairings (e.g., parent perspectives and students with disabilities; parent perspectives and surveys/inventories/ scales) in multiple databases such as ProQuest, ERIC and PsycINFO. Once we located what we believed to be a comprehensive list of instruments that measured parents' perceptions of TPRs or TSRs, we reviewed the reference lists and obtained relevant studies. As it was our intent to better understand the perspectives of parents of middle school students with disabilities, as well as measures that have been used to evaluate the relationships, we accepted studies that used both quantitative and qualitative procedures to answer their research questions.

In all, 85 studies published in peer-reviewed journals were identified as possible studies to include in this review. Upon closer investigation, 77 studies were not included because they were not a study (e.g., Walker et al., 2005), were a study but did not include the perspectives of parents of students with disabilities (e.g., Kohl et al., 2000; McKenna & Millen, 2013) or parents of middle school students (e.g., Minke et al., 2014), included only teacher perspectives (e.g., Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Hughes & Kwok, 2007), and/or had limited or no information about procedures used in the study (e.g., Balcells-Balcells et al., 2019).

As can be seen in Table 1, eight studies met the criteria to be included in this review. All studies were published in peer-reviewed journals and evaluated the perceptions of parents of middle school students with disabilities of TPRs and/or TSRs. In the following paragraphs, we describe the measures and study results.

Table 1

Teacher-Parent Relationships and Teacher-Student Relationships Surveys, Statements & Questions

Survey	TPR and/or TSR Statements	Participant Description
Family Empowerment Scale (FES, Koren et al., 1992) 6/12 statements relate to PTR	**TPR:** 1. Professionals should ask me what services I want for my child. 2. I am able to work with agencies and professionals to decide what service my child needs. 3. My opinion is just as important as professionals' opinions in deciding what services my child needs. 4. I make sure that professionals understand my opinions about what services my child needs 5. I make sure I stay in regular contact with professionals. 6. I tell professionals what I think about services being provided to my child.	**Burke, Rios, Garcia, & Magaña (2020)** N = 92 Autism = 100% Latino = 54% White = 46% Age M (SD): Latino = 7.71 (3.7) & White = 11.93 (5.01)
Family-Professional Partnership Scale (FPPS; Summers et al., 2005) 11/18 statements relate to PTR	**TPR:** 1. Let you know about the good things your child does 2. Use words that you understand 3. Pay attention to what you have to say 4. Are available when you need them 5. Are people that I can depend on and trust 6. Value your opinion about your child's needs 7. Are honest, even when they have bad news 8. Protect your family's privacy 9. Show respect for your family's values and beliefs 10. Listen without judging your child or family 11. Are friendly	**Burke & Goldman (2015)** N = 507 Autism = 100% White = 90% Black = 5% Latino = 4% Asian = 0.90% Age M (SD): 10.71 (4.24) **Burke, Rios, Garcia, & Magaña** (See above) **Eskow et al. (2018)** N = 313 Autism = 100% Registry & Waiver Families: White: 51% & 63% Black: 31% & 23% Asian: 8% & 10% Latino: 6% & 8% American Indian: 0.9% & 0.5% Age M (SD): 11.70 (4.91)

Home-School Partnership Survey (HSPS; Adams & Christenson, 1998) 4/11 statements relate to TPR and TSR	**TPR:** 1. Are doing a good job in keeping me informed of the progress of my child 2. Are doing a good job in encouraging my participation in my child's education 3. Respect me as a capable parent **TSR:** Teachers care about my child	**Adams & Christenson (1998)** N = 55 SLD or EBD = 100% White: "Slightly over half of parents" (p. 10) Black: "Majority of non-white portion" (p. 10) "Middle School Students" = 100%
Parent-Teacher Involvement Questionnaire (PTIQ; Kohl, Lengua, McMahon, & Conduct Problems Research Group, 2000) 10/21 statements relate to PTR	**TPR and TSR:** 1. Called child's teacher. 2. Written child's teacher. 3. Stopped to talk to teacher. 4. Attended teacher-parent conference. 5. Enjoy talking with child's teacher (TPR) 6. Feel teacher cares about my child (TSR) 7. Feel teacher is interested in knowing me (TPR) 8. Feel comfortable talking with the teacher about my child (TPR) 9. Teacher pays attention to my suggestions (TPR) 10. Ask teacher questions/suggestions about my child (TPR)	**Power, Mautone, Soffer, Clarke, Marshall, Sharman, Blum, Glanzman, Elia, & Jawad (2012)** N = 199 ADHD = 100% White = 73% Black = 22% Multiracial = 4% Asian = 2% Grade level, M (SD) 3.5 (1.2)

Parent-Teacher Relationship Scale-II (PTRS-II, Vickers & Minke, 1995) 24/24 Statements relate to PTR	**TPR:** 1. We trust each other 2. It is difficult for us to work together. 3. We cooperate with each other. 4. Communication is difficult between us. 5. I respect this teacher. 6. This teacher respects me. 7. We are sensitive to each other's feelings. 8. We have different views of right and wrong. 9. When there is a problem with this child, this teacher is all talk and no action. 10. This teacher keeps his/her promises. 11. When there is a behavior problem, I have to solve it without help from this teacher. 12. When things aren't going well, it takes too long to work them out. 13. We understand each other. 14. We see this child differently. 15. We agree about who should do what regarding this child. 16. I expect more from this teacher than I get. 17. We have similar expectations of this child. 18. This teacher tells me when s/he is pleased. 19. I don't like the way this teacher talks to me 20. I tell this teacher when I am pleased. 21. I tell this teacher when I am concerned. 22. I tell this teacher when I am worried. 23. I ask this teacher's opinion about my child's progress. 24. I ask this teacher for suggestions.	**Azad, Minton, Mandell, & Landa (2020)** N = 49 Autism = 100% Black = 37% White = 31% Latino = 24% Asian = 4% Middle Eastern = 2% American Indian/Alaskan Native = 2% Age M (SD) 7.3 (1.6) Grades 3-5 – 28.6%

Focus Groups or Interviews Only Angell et al. 7/8 Interview Questions Related to TPR	**TPR:** **1.** How would you generally describe your relationship with [child's name]'s teacher? [teachers] **2.** Describe the trust you have in the professionals who work with your child. [Do you trust the education professionals who work with your child? . . . Probe: Please describe this trust/lack of trust . . .] **3.** Have there been situations or experiences that have increased your level of trust in the professionals who work with your child? [Tell me about this/these . . .] **4.** Have there been situations that have decreased the trust you have in the professionals who work with your child? [Tell me about this/these . . .] **5.** Do you tend to trust other people or distrust them? Does it take time for you to develop trust in someone? **6.** How much contact have you had with your child's education professionals? Have you had contact on a regular basis, occasionally, seldom . . . ? Have your interactions been generally positive? Generally negative? Please describe some . . .	**Angell, Stoner, & Shelden (2009)** N = 4/16 identified as Middle School Students Total & Middle School Sample White: 75% & 25% Latino: 19% & 50% Black: 6% & 25% SLD: 19% & 0% ADHD = 19% & 25% Deafness = 19% & 75% Other: 19% & 0% Autism: 13% & 0% Developmental Delay: 5.5% & 0%

	7. Do you think that your cultural background [your race, ethnicity, education, income level] in any way influences your level of trust in others or in education professionals? If so, how?	Intellectual Disability: 5.5% & 0%
Jegatheesan Semi-Structured Interview with questions related to both TPR and TSR	**TPR & TSR** 1. Asked about experiences in communicating with health care and special education professionals and the resulting relationships. 2. Asked to make recommendations that foster positive parent-professional interactions.	**Jegatheesan (2009)** N = 23 parents - 3/24 students between 10 and 15 Asian = 100% Total / Middle School Students Autism = 79%/100% Downs Syndrome = 13%/0% Other = 8%/0%

***Note*:** Information is sorted alphabetically based on survey name followed by the qualitative study. TPR = Teacher-parent relationships; TSR = Teacher-student relationships.

Findings

Across the eight studies, the authors examined the perceptions of parents of middle school students with disabilities regarding TPRs and TSRs. Across all eight studies, a total of 1,242 parents completed a survey and/or were interviewed. One study focused solely on perspectives of parents of middle school students (Adams & Christenson, 1998; N = 55 middle school parents) and one study isolated outcomes for middle school students (Angell et al., 2009; N = 4). The remaining six studies included at least some parents of middle school students (i.e., students whose ages ranged between 10 to 15 or who were in grades 4 to 9). Related to specific disability types, most parents indicated their student(s) were autistic (79%; 980/1242). Also represented were parents of students with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD; 16%; 200/1242), Specific Learning and/or Emotional Behavioral Disabilities (SLD, EBD; 4%; 55/1242) and Deafness (1%; 3/1242).

Most participants represented in the eight studies identified as White (range 31% to 90%). Participants also identified as Latino (range 4% to 54%), Asian (range 0.9% to 100%), Multiracial (4%), Middle Eastern (2%) and American Indian (range 0.5% to 2%). Many participants identified as mothers, although fathers and other primary caregivers also provided input.

TPRs: Perspectives of Middle School Parents of Students with Disabilities

We identified three validated survey instruments and one set of semi-structured interview questions that have been used to evaluate TPRs from the perspective of middle school parents of students with disabilities: the Family-Professional Partnership Scale (FPPS), Summers et al., 2005); the Family Empowerment Scale (FES) Koren et al., 1992); and the Parent-Teacher Relationship Scale-II (PTRS-II), Vickers & Minke, 1995). In the following section, we provide more information about these surveys and share results from studies that have included middle school students.

The Family-Professional Partnership Scale (FPPS) (Summers et al., 2005)

The FPPS is an 18-item survey with two subscales: the Child-Professional subscale (9 items) and the Family-Focused Relationship subscale (9 items). Eleven of the 18 items measure PTRs (see Table 1). For example, one statement asks respondents to indicate the extent to which teachers listen without judging their child or family. The FPPS has been found to have acceptable test-retest reliability (Summers et al., 2005) and strong Cronbach alphas (e.g., .94 for the Family-Focused Relationship (Burke & Goldman, 2015). Three studies have used the FPPS to examine perspectives of parents of students with disabilities related to parent-teacher relationships (Burke & Goldman; Burke et al., 2020; Eskow et al., 2018).

Eskow and colleagues (2018) used the FPPS when surveying 197 parents of students with disabilities. The results from this paper were part of a larger state-level effort aimed at improving autism services. For this study, they created questions to evaluate symptom severity (5 items), perceived improvement over the last 12 months (1 item), quality of life questions (25 items) and the FPPS (18 items). The authors also investigated parents' satisfaction with the efforts of their student's primary teacher when working with families. Their findings indicated that relationship perceptions were related to parent perceptions of student academic progress during the previous school year. There was no relation between teacher-led TPR-building activities (e.g., how the teacher communicates) and overall partnership satisfaction scores. The authors concluded by sharing, "It seems that the type of relationship parents find most meaningful and effective is not a personal relationship with the teacher but the relationships that are focused on what a child needs to succeed" (p. 21).

Burke and Goldman (2015) also used the FPPS. They surveyed 507 parents of students with autism to understand the relationship between, in part, the parents' perceptions of TPRs and the likelihood that they would use procedural safeguards (i.e., mediation and due process) which are made available through the IDEIA (2004). The procedural safeguards are in place to help schools and parents resolve conflicts and help students receive a free and appropriate public education. For this study, parents completed the 163-item survey that, in part, included the FPPS. The participants shared whether they had ever been involved in mediation or due process. The authors then evaluated whether there was a relation between various characteristics (e.g., TPR scores) and their answers to the procedural safeguards question. The authors reported that parents whose FPPS scores indicated a weaker TPR were more likely to file for due process.

The Family Empowerment Scale (FES) (Koren et al., 1992)

The second survey we found that evaluated parents' perceptions of TPRs was the FES. The FES is a 12-item survey. Six of the 12 items relate to the perceptions parents have of PTRs. For example, one question asks the respondent to share the extent to which they are able to work with agencies and professionals to decide what service their students need. Koren and colleagues have reported Cronbach alphas ranging from .77 to .88 for the FES. Four studies have used these surveys to study perceptions of TPRs among parents of students with disabilities (e.g., Burke et al., 2020, see Table 1). Two of these studies used the FPPS to study perceptions of TPRs specifically among parents of students with autism (Burke & Goldman, 2015; Eskow et al., 2018).

Burke and colleagues (2020) used both the FES and the FPPS, in part, to explore the differences between White and Latino families with respect to special education knowledge, empowerment, and family-school partnerships. Their goal was to use this information to develop culturally responsive interventions. Their participants all had autistic students and were registered for advocacy training. The survey used in this study contained items related to special education knowledge (10 multiple choice questions), a subscale of FES (i.e., the empowerment with the service delivery system subscale – 12 items), and the full FPPS (18 items). The results indicated the parents who identified as Latino scored lower on the special education knowledge section and "demonstrated significantly less empowerment with respect to navigating the service delivery system compared to White participants" (p. 80) responding lower to questions such as, "My opinion is just as important as professionals' opinions in deciding what services my child needs" (p. 79). There was also a significant positive correlation between empowerment and TPRs. The authors suggested that relationships may improve as parents improve their empowerment, with or without targeted assistance from schools.

The Parent-Teacher Relationship Scale-II (PTRS-II) (Vickers & Minke, 1995)

The PTRS-II contains 24 statements related to parent perceptions of TPRs. This survey is entirely dedicated to measuring TPRs, and respondents' answers are organized around two constructs: joining behaviors and communication-to-other behaviors (see Table 1). Multiple studies have used the PTRS-II survey to evaluate perceptions of TPRs among parents of students with disabilities, but only one has included parents of middle school students (Azad et al., 2020). Reported Cronbach alphas for the PTRS-II were reported as .91 (Azad et al.).

Azad and colleagues distributed pre/post-PTRS-II surveys to examine the relation between PTRS-II scores and the use of specific teacher-recommended practices at home. Their participants were 49 parents of students with autism in kindergarten through fifth grade. The authors found that parent perceptions of TPRs were more positive when parents implemented teaching practices similar to those being implemented at school.

Semi-Structured Interviews (Angell et al., 2009)

The perspectives of middle school parents of students with disabilities related to TPRs have also been evaluated using focus groups or interviews (Angell et al., 2009). In Angell and colleagues' study, participants were asked to describe their interactions with education professionals and to reflect on the role that trust played. Angell and colleagues interviewed 16 mothers of students with disabilities in grades preschool through high school. During the face-to-face interviews in participant-selected locations (e.g., coffee shops), the authors asked parents eight questions about trust (see Table 1). For example, "Describe the trust you have in the teachers who work with your child" and "Describe the relationship you have with your child's teacher." The authors identified three areas that influence trust: family factors, teacher factors, and school factors. Those related to family factors included a parent's disposition to trust, history of trust in education professionals, and the child's communication with the parent. In the study, mothers shared that "communication that was frequent, honest, and immediate when concerns arose facilitated trusting relationships" (p. 167).

TSRs: Perspectives of Middle School Parents of Students with Disabilities

In all, an additional three studies, not included in the parent perceptions of TPRs section, were reviewed to better understand the perspectives that parents of middle school students with disabilities had regarding TSRs (Adams & Christenson, 1998; Jegatheesan, 2009; Power et al., 2012). These studies were either interview-based (Jegatheesan) or used scales that included limited subscales or items addressing TSRs, such as the Home-School Partnership Survey (HSPS) (Adams & Christenson), and the Teacher-parent Involvement Questionnaire (PTIQ) (Kohl et al., 2000). A total of 277 parents, some of which were parents of middle school students, participated in these studies.

The Home-School Partnership Survey (HSPS) (Adams & Christenson, 1998)

A modified version of the HSPS was used in a study by Adams and Christenson (1998). As shown in Table 1, the modified HSPS survey included an 11-item "Trust Scale" with questions related to parent perceptions of *both* TPRs and TSRs. Adams and Christenson reported high Cronbach alphas ranging from .92 (teachers) to .94 (parents). In the study, graduate students also conducted 45-minute home interviews with a total of 122 parents of seventh grade students, 55 of which were parents of students identified as having a learning disability or an emotional and behavioral disability. Parents of students with disabilities receiving more intensive types of special education services had higher HSPS scores (lower perceptions of TPRs and TSRs) than those receiving less intensive supports. There was not a difference in HSPS scores between parents of students with disabilities and other parents.

The Parent-Teacher Involvement Questionnaire (PTIQ) (Kohl et al. & Conduct Problems Research Group, 2000)

The PTIQ used one study (Power et al., 2012) and consists of 21 items related to both parent perceptions of the PTRs and PSRs (see Table 1). The Cronbach's alphas for this scale have consistently hovered around .88 (Power et al.).

One research group has published several papers that use the PTIQ to examine the impact of two different family-school partnership

interventions, one of which relates to middle school students. Power and colleagues (2012) investigated the impact of the FSS and the Coping with ADHD through Relationships and Education Intervention (CARE). The 199 parents who participated in this study had students with ADHD in Grades second to sixth. The authors reported that both interventions improved the quality of the TPRs.

Semi-Structured Interviews (Jagatheesan, 2009)

The final study reviewed was one completed by Jegatheesan (2009). The author interviewed 23 first-generation Asian-American mothers of children with developmental disabilities. Jegatheesan conducted one two-to-four-hour interview with each participant. The following recommendations related explicitly to improving PTRs: (a) when needed, qualified and competent interpreters must be utilized; (b) it is vital for educators to understand a family's culture to build a respectful and trusting relationship; and (c) when interacting with families, professionals should seek to acquire and appropriately use interpersonal skills such as compassion, patience, and respect. This recommendation stemmed from some participants' observations that teachers did not seem committed to their children's well-being, did not exhibit patience with their children, and did not show sufficient respect for their culture, time, and concerns, making it difficult for the mothers to trust the teachers. If teachers more frequently reassured parents, helped them understand, and shared a positive outlook on their children's potential, participants believed that would help create healthier TSRs. In short, this study seemed to indicate that it is a combination of both teachers' cultural competence and interpersonal skills that impacts parent perceptions of TSRs.

Discussion

As discussed earlier, relationship systems models (e.g., family systems theory, ecological systems theory) offer an important lens to use when considering TSRs and TPRs. Parent perspectives of both are impacted by the larger cultural and subcultural contexts within which these relationships are embedded. While, as Table 1 illustrates, some of the studies described above did involve culturally diverse samples, even among those that did, most did not mention the role that race or culture may have played. There were a few exceptions.

One research group used the FES and FPPS to examine whether Latinx and White parents of students with autism experienced different barriers when attempting to access special education services and if these differences related to parent perceptions of TPRs (Burke et al., 2020). The authors surveyed 50 Latina and 42 White mothers of students with autism using the FES, the FPPS, and some special education knowledge statements. The authors reported no differences between White and Latinx parents on the FPPS, although the FES showed some differences. The largest effect sizes related to communication (e.g., "I tell professionals what I think about services being provided to my child") and feelings of affiliation and support (e.g., "My opinion is just as important as professionals' opinions in deciding what services my child needs"). The authors suggested that one can better develop culturally responsive pedagogical practices by knowing that these disparities exist.

Our results also indicate a gap in the literature related to parent perspectives in regard to TSRs. Whereas much research has been conducted to investigate the perceptions that teachers and students have regarding these relationships, very little has been done to investigate the perceptions of parents. In their review of research on TSR, Sabol and Pianta (2012) appeared to recognize this, calling for further studies examining the perceptions of multiple informants associated with these relationships. While the authors did not explicitly mention parents, we believe that the parent perspective is critical to better understanding TSR. Unlike in the case of TPR, few measures have yet been designed to assess parent perceptions of TSR, and few studies have been conducted to examine the association between parent perceptions and other variables. Fewer still have focused primarily on parents of middle school students with disabilities, as we have done in this review. Most measures and most studies instead have focused on teacher and student perceptions or trained expert observations of TSRs.

Implications for Research and Practice

Only two well-validated measures, the HSPS and PTIQ, currently exist that measure parent perceptions (middle school or otherwise) of *both* TPRs and TSRs among parents of students with disabilities. However, neither includes a sufficient number of items to examine parent perceptions of each relationship's specific

subscale components and the association between those perceptions and other adult and student outcomes.

An additional factor contributing to the limitations of the existing measures is that they do not adequately examine the perceptions of parents of color. While some studies reviewed included parents of color among their participants, they have not actively examined the role of cultural identity in shaping parent perceptions. The Native American mother profiled in the opening case study noted that parents of color like her often feel marginalized in school relationships. Varied cultural perspectives like the ones she shared regarding relationships among adults and the practice of assigning labels to children are essential for researchers to be aware of if they are to design measures of parent perceptions that are to be truly equitable for all families.

Throughout this article, we highlighted that we agree with scholars such as Vickers and Minke (1995) and Krane and Klevan (2019) that TPRs and TSRs are both part of one system of relationships. Therefore, we also see a particular need for one integrated measure of parent perceptions of each of these relationships that includes sufficient items addressing each of the relationships to permit users to examine variations among subscale aspects of each relationship. This would allow researchers to compare parent perceptions of each using parallel questions and provide opportunities to examine the interaction between parent perceptions of each and the combined effect of both on associations with other adult and student outcomes.

One possible model for a measure like this could be an adapted version of Furman and Buhrmeister's (1985) Network of Relationships Inventory (NRI), a child and adolescent self-report measure designed to allow respondents to report on characteristics of their relationships with multiple different individuals in their lives (e.g., mother, father, sibling, friend, romantic partner, teacher). Of the three versions of the NRI (the Social Provisions Version, the Behavioral Systems Version, and the Relationship Qualities Version), the Relationship Qualities Version (NRI-RQV) seems to have the most potential to be adapted to gather parent perceptions regarding TPRs and TSRs. This sort of adaptation of the NRI has been done before. Hughes and colleagues (2008) adapted the NRI to design a measure of *teacher* perceptions of *teacher-student relationships*, the Teacher-Student Relationship Inventory (TSRI). In their adaptation, Hughes and colleagues found certain scales relevant to child and adolescent reports of the relationships assessed using the original NRI were not relevant to teacher reports on TSRs, namely the "intimacy" scale.

Similarly, if we were to propose an adaptation of the NRI to gather information from parents regarding their perceptions of TPRs and TSRs, we would likely advise against the inclusion of the NRI-RQV Intimate Disclosure and Companionship scales. The remainder of the scales (Pressure, Satisfaction, Conflict, Emotional Support, Criticism, Approval, Dominance, Exclusion) appear to have at least some relevance to parent perceptions of TPRs and TSRs. However, some items within the scales might need to be deleted, and the wording of other items might need revision to be more directly applicable. Researchers may also want to consider including additional scales drawing upon the literature review completed in this article. For the reasons already discussed above, we would recommend that all or most of the scales call for respondents to report their perceptions of both TPRs and TSRs.

An integrated measure of parent perceptions of both TPRs and TSRs could also benefit educators directly. Schools that used such a measure would provide their staff with more comprehensive feedback from parents to foster effective connections between parents, students, and their teachers and would impact a teacher's success in creating brave and productive spaces for students. If the measure, as we recommend, includes enough items to measure multiple aspects of parent perceptions of each relationship, it could also help teachers better understand what parents see as the key relationship elements (e.g., trust, communication to or from, empathy). This increased understanding could be crucial to parents of color like the mother at the beginning who noted that she moved her daughter to a new school after feeling like her previous school did not value her perspective and input. Also recommended is that the newly constructed instrument be reviewed by those with voices from non-dominant groups to ensure that phrasing and tone are equitable, culturally-informed and accessible to all.

Results of studies reviewed in this article suggest educators must use this increased understanding to more effectively connect with parents and students early in the school year to establish trusting, supportive relationships. It should not stop there, however. Schools should use tools like the ones we reviewed and proposed to frequently seek out further ongoing parental feedback regarding these evolving relationships, and intentionally and explicitly use that feedback to maintain aspects of the relationships perceived by parents as working and adjust those that are not working. This is particularly important with parents of color and may take greater effort, especially in predominantly White schools, since parents of color often feel less connected to the school. The ultimate goal? The creation of brave and productive learning environments supported by equitable and culturally-responsive systems of communication and collaboration among multiple stakeholders and informed by the careful collection of parent feedback.

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