Pakistan Journal of Life and Social Sciences
www.pjlss.edu.pk

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Access to Vocational Rehabilitation Services: The Experiences of Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities and that of their Parents

Marwan Alatawi*

Assistant Professor, Department of Special Education, Collage of Education and Art, University of Tabuk, KSA
Saudi Arabia

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	This research delved into the experiences of individuals with Intellectual disabilities (ID) and that of their parents regarding access to vocational rehabilitation services. Employing semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, data were gathered from both individuals with ID and their parents to identify barriers to access, support requirements, and the efficacy of existing vocational rehabilitation programs in Tabuk region, Saudi Arabia. The findings underscored the pervasive challenges encountered by individuals with ID when it comes to accessing services, including bureaucratic impediments, societal stigma, and a lack of awareness on the part of the general public. Tailored support and interventions such as vocational assessment, job coaching, and accommodation strategies, emerged as pivotal elements in fostering successful employment outcomes. The crucial role of family and social support networks in navigating vocational rehabilitation systems and facilitating access to services is underscored. Additionally, an examination of policy and legislative frameworks, best practices, and innovations in vocational rehabilitation, is complemented by insights into current challenges and future directions. By juxtaposing the findings with the existing literature, this study contributed to a deeper understanding of the complexities and barriers inherent in vocational support for individuals with ID, offering actionable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers.

INTRODUCTION

Vocational rehabilitation services play a crucial role in facilitating the integration of individuals with disabilities into the workforce, thereby promoting their independence and enhancing their quality of life. However, despite the significance of these services, individuals with ID often encounter barriers when attempting to access them. ID encompass a range of cognitive impairments that may affect an individual's ability to learn, communicate, and perform daily tasks independently (Almalki et al., 2022). According to the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 2-3% of the global population has an ID, making it a significant public health concern (Zambri et al., 2023).

Access to vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with ID is influenced by various factors, including societal attitudes, policy frameworks, the availability of resources, and support networks for individuals and their families (Nevala et al., 2019). Research indicates that inadequate access to vocational rehabilitation services can exacerbate disparities in employment rates and economic well-

being on the part of individuals with ID compared to the general population (Doke & Öksüz, 2018). Additionally, parental involvement and advocacy often play a critical role in navigating the complex landscape of disability services and ensuring that individuals receive appropriate support.

Understanding the experiences of individuals with ID and that of their parents regarding access to vocational rehabilitation services is essential for informing policies, practices, and interventions aimed at promoting the inclusion of such individuals and maximizing their potential in the workforce. By exploring the challenges, barriers, and facilitators encountered by these individuals and their families, this research seeks to contribute to the development of more effective and equitable approaches to vocational rehabilitation for individuals with ID.

Statement of the Problem:

Despite the recognized importance of vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with ID, significant challenges persist in accessing these crucial resources. There is a paucity of research exploring the specific barriers and facilitators experienced by individuals with ID and their parents when it comes to navigating vocational rehabilitation services. Understanding these challenges is essential for developing targeted interventions and policies to address the disparities in access and utilization of vocational rehabilitation services among this population.

The problem statement for this research is twofold:

Barriers to Access: Individuals with ID often encounter barriers when attempting to access vocational rehabilitation services. These barriers may include bureaucratic hurdles, lack of awareness about available services, stigma associated with disabilities, inadequate support systems, and insufficient funding or resources for tailored programs.

Lack of Support: Parents of individuals with ID play a crucial role in advocating for, and supporting, their children's access to vocational rehabilitation services. However, they may face challenges such as limited knowledge about available services, difficulties with regard to navigating complex systems, and inadequate support networks. This lack of support can further impede individuals' access to, and utilization of, vocational rehabilitation services.

Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive understanding of the experiences, perspectives, and needs of individuals with ID and their parents regarding vocational rehabilitation services. By identifying the specific barriers and facilitators encountered by these individuals and their families, this research aims to inform the development of more accessible, inclusive, and effective vocational rehabilitation programs and policies.

Significance of the Study

This research holds significant implications for a variety of stakeholders, including policymakers, service providers, advocacy groups, families, and individuals with ID. The importance of this study can be understood in terms of the following points:

Policy Development: By shedding light on the barriers and facilitators experienced by individuals with ID and their parents with regard to accessing vocational rehabilitation services, this research can inform the development of more inclusive and responsive policies. Policymakers can use the findings to identify gaps in existing services and tailor interventions that address the specific needs of this population.

Service Provision: Service providers involved in vocational rehabilitation can benefit from a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by individuals with ID and their families. This understanding can guide the development of more accessible and client-centered services that better meet the needs of their diverse clientele.

Advocacy and Empowerment: Advocacy groups and organizations working on behalf of individuals with ID can use the research findings to advocate for policy change, increased funding, and improved access to vocational rehabilitation services. Empowering individuals and their families with knowledge about their rights and available resources can enhance their ability to navigate the system and advocate for themselves effectively.

Family Support: Families of individuals with ID often play a central role in supporting their loved ones' transition to employment and independence. Understanding the challenges they face in accessing vocational rehabilitation services can help to identify areas where additional support and resources are needed. This can lead to the development of targeted interventions and support networks aimed at assisting families to navigate the complex landscape of disability services.

Quality of Life: Ultimately, the significance of this study lies in its potential to improve the quality of life of individuals with ID. Access to meaningful employment and vocational rehabilitation services not only enhances financial stability, but also fosters independence, social inclusion, and overall well-being.

By addressing the barriers to access and identifying strategies to improve support for individuals with ID and their families, this research contributed to creating a more inclusive and equitable society where everyone has the opportunity to thrive

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of this research was to investigate the experiences of individuals with ID and their parents with regard to accessing vocational rehabilitation services. Specifically, the study aimed to:

Identify Barriers: Explore the barriers and challenges faced by individuals with ID when attempting to access vocational rehabilitation services. This includes examining factors such as bureaucratic hurdles, lack of awareness about available services, stigma, and inadequate support systems.

Examine Facilitators: Investigate the factors that facilitate access to vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with ID. This involves exploring the role of support networks, advocacy, and tailored interventions in enhancing access and the utilization of services.

Understand Parental Perspectives: Gain insights into the experiences and perspectives of parents of individuals with ID regarding vocational rehabilitation services. This includes examining their roles as advocates, navigators of service systems, and supporters of their children's transition to employment and independence.

Inform Policy and Practice: Provide evidence-based recommendations to policymakers, service providers, advocacy groups, and families for improving the accessibility, effectiveness, and inclusivity of vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with ID. By identifying key barriers and facilitators, the study aimd to inform the development of targeted interventions and policies that better meet the needs of this population.

Overall, the purpose of this research was to contribute to a deeper understanding of the experiences surrounding access to vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with ID and their families. By addressing the identified gaps and challenges identified by the researcher the study seeks to promote greater equity, inclusion, and empowerment for this vulnerable population in their pursuit of meaningful employment and independence.

Research Questions:

1.   What are the primary barriers and challenges encountered by individuals with ID when accessing vocational rehabilitation services?

2.   How do individuals with ID navigate the vocational rehabilitation system, and what factors influence their access to and utilization of services?

3.   What are the experiences and perspectives of parents of individuals with ID regarding their children's access to vocational rehabilitation services?

4.   What role do support networks, advocacy, and tailored interventions play in facilitating access to vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with ID?

5.   How can the identified barriers and facilitators inform the development of more effective and inclusive policies and interventions aimed at improving access to vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with ID?

Hypotheses:

It is hypothesized that individuals with ID face significant barriers when attempting to access vocational rehabilitation services, including bureaucratic hurdles, lack of awareness, stigma, and inadequate support systems. Additionally, it is hypothesized that parental involvement and advocacy play a crucial role in facilitating access to services for individuals with ID. Furthermore, it is anticipated that identifying and addressing these barriers leads to the development of more inclusive and effective policies and interventions aimed at enhancing access to vocational rehabilitation services for this population.

The rest of this paper unfolded as follows: In the subsequent sections, the researcher delved deeply into the experiences of individuals with ID and their parents regarding access to vocational rehabilitation services. A review of the literature provided a comprehensive overview of existing research, while the methodology section detailed the approach to data collection and analysis. Following this, the results section presented the findings, and the discussion and analysis section interpreted these findings in light of the relevant literature. Finally, the conclusion summarized the study's contributions and implications for policy, practice, and future research in the field of vocational rehabilitation for individuals with ID.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction to the literature review:

The literature review section provided a comprehensive overview of existing research and theoretical frameworks related to vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with ID. This section aimed to contextualize the study within the broader literature, and highlighted key themes, theories, and research questions that guided the inquiry. By synthesizing existing knowledge, the

literature review set the stage for the subsequent discussion and analysis of the study findings, contributing to a deeper understanding of the complexities and challenges inherent in vocational support for individuals with ID.

Historical Context:

The historical evolution of vocational rehabilitation services in the United States for individuals with ID is marked by significant milestones, legislative developments, and shifts in policy and practice. Historically, individuals with ID were often marginalized and excluded from meaningful participation in the workforce. However, the mid-20th century saw a paradigm shift towards recognizing the rights and capabilities of individuals with disabilities, culminating in landmark legislation such as the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibited discrimination on the basis of disability and paved the way for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services (Sartawi et al., 2016).

Subsequent decades witnessed the emergence of person-centered approaches to vocational rehabilitation, which prioritized individual choice, autonomy, and self-determination. This shift towards a more holistic and empowering model of service delivery aimed to address the diverse needs and aspirations of individuals with ID, promoting greater integration and inclusion in the workforce (Curryer et al., 2018).

In recent years, there has been growing recognition of the importance of early intervention and transition planning to facilitate successful employment outcomes for individuals with ID.Research has highlighted the critical role of family and social support networks in providing advocacy, guidance, and practical assistance throughout the vocational rehabilitation process (Almalki et al., 2022; Aunos et al., 2017).

Despite these advancements, challenges persist in ensuring equitable access to vocational rehabilitation services and addressing systemic barriers faced by individuals with ID. Moving forward, it is essential to build upon the historical progress made in the field of vocational rehabilitation, and continue advocating for policies and practices that promote the full inclusion and participation of individuals with ID in the workforce (Kaya, 2017).

3. Theoretical Frameworks:

Theoretical frameworks play a crucial role in guiding the understanding of vocational rehabilitation for individuals with ID. Several theoretical perspectives have been influential in shaping research and practice in this field. The social model of disability, as proposed by Zambri et al. (2023), emphasizes that disability is not solely an individual impairment, but is largely influenced by societal barriers and attitudes. This theoretical framework highlights the importance of addressing systemic barriers and promoting social inclusion to enhance the vocational outcomes of individuals with ID.

Grant and Ramcharan (2001) introduced the concept of empowerment theory, which emphasizes the importance of providing individuals with disabilities, the resources, skills, and opportunities to exert control over their lives and make informed decisions. Empowerment-oriented approaches within vocational rehabilitation aim to promote self-confidence, autonomy, and self-advocacy among individuals with ID, empowering them to pursue their vocational goals.

Nevala et al. (2019) proposed a person-centered approach to vocational rehabilitation which prioritizes the preferences, values, and goals of individuals with ID. This theoretical framework underscores the importance of tailoring support and interventions to meet the unique needs and

aspirations of each individual, fostering greater engagement and satisfaction with vocational services.

Gandecka (2014) introduced the concept of supported employment, which emphasizes the provision of ongoing support and accommodations to enable individuals with ID to secure and maintain competitive employment. This theoretical framework emphasizes the importance of a collaborative approach between employers, service providers, and individuals with disabilities to promote successful employment outcomes.

Lastly, Hermanoff et al. (2016) proposed a strengths-based approach to vocational rehabilitation. This focuses on identifying and building upon the strengths and capabilities of individuals with ID. This theoretical framework emphasizes a shift away from deficit-based models towards a more positive and empowering perspective, recognizing the inherent talents and potential of individuals with disabilities.

By drawing upon these theoretical frameworks, vocational rehabilitation programs can adopt more holistic, empowering, and person-centered approaches when it comes to supporting individuals with ID in achieving their vocational goals.

Access to Vocational Rehabilitation Services:

Access to vocational rehabilitation services is a critical factor influencing the vocational outcomes of individuals with ID. Research indicates that individuals with ID often encounter various barriers that hinder their access to these essential services. Baer et al. (2021) identified bureaucratic hurdles as a significant barrier to access, including complex application processes, eligibility criteria, and administrative delays. These barriers can pose challenges for individuals with ID and their families in navigating the vocational rehabilitation system and accessing the support they need.

Parchomiuk (2017) highlighted societal stigma and discrimination as additional barriers that individuals with ID may face when seeking vocational support. Negative attitudes and misconceptions about the capabilities of individuals with disabilities can create barriers to employment and limit access to vocational rehabilitation services. Doke and Öksüz (2018) emphasized the importance of awareness and education in addressing barriers to access. Lack of information about available services and resources can hinder individuals with ID from seeking and accessing vocational support. Efforts to raise awareness and promote education about vocational rehabilitation services can help mitigate these barriers and improve access for individuals with ID.

Research by Awsumb et al. (2019) also highlighted the role of socioeconomic factors in influencing access to vocational rehabilitation services. Individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds may face additional barriers such as financial constraints and limited access to transportation, which can further impede their ability to access and participate in vocational support programs.

Furthermore, Coñoman et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of considering cultural and linguistic diversity in addressing barriers to access. Individuals from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds may face unique challenges in navigating vocational rehabilitation systems, including language barriers and cultural differences in perceptions of disability and employment.

In conclusion, addressing barriers to access is essential for promoting equitable access to vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with ID.Efforts to streamline application processes, combat societal stigma, raise awareness, address socioeconomic disparities, and promote cultural and linguistic diversity are crucial steps with regard to ensuring that all individuals have equal

opportunities to access and benefit from vocational support programs. **Tailored Support and Interventions:**

Tailored support and interventions play a crucial role in promoting successful vocational outcomes for individuals with ID. Research has identified several key strategies and interventions that can enhance the effectiveness of vocational rehabilitation services and support the vocational goals of individuals with ID.

Cox et al. (2014) emphasized the importance of vocational assessment in identifying the strengths, abilities, and vocational preferences of individuals with ID. Comprehensive vocational assessments can inform the development of individualized support plans, and facilitate a match between individuals' skills and interests and available employment opportunities.

Wehman et al. (2014) highlighted the effectiveness of job coaching and supported employment programs in facilitating successful employment outcomes for individuals with ID. Job coaches provide ongoing support and assistance to individuals with disabilities in securing and maintaining employment, helping them navigate workplace challenges and build necessary skills for success. Wehmeyer (2003) introduced the concept of self-determination as a critical factor in promoting independence and success in vocational endeavors. Individuals with ID who possess self-determination skills are better equipped to set goals, make informed choices, and advocate for their needs within vocational rehabilitation settings. Blessing et al. (2012) underscored the importance of accommodation strategies in promoting workplace inclusion and accessibility for individuals with ID. Accommodations may include modifications to the work environment, job duties, or communication methods to support individuals' participation and productivity in the workplace.

Additionally, Wong et al. (2015) highlighted the role of peer support and mentorship programs in providing social and emotional support to individuals with ID in vocational settings. Peer mentors can offer guidance, encouragement, and practical advice based on their own experiences navigating vocational challenges.

In conclusion, tailored support and interventions are essential components of effective vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with ID. By individualizing support plans, providing job coaching, fostering self-determination, implementing accommodation strategies, and promoting peer support, vocational rehabilitation programs can enhance the vocational outcomes and overall quality of life of individuals with ID.

Family and Social Support:

Family and social support networks play a crucial role in facilitating access to vocational rehabilitation services and promoting successful employment outcomes for individuals with ID. Research has underscored the importance of familial involvement, peer support, and community networks in supporting individuals with ID throughout their vocational journey.

Retznik et al. (2022) highlighted the critical role of families as advocates and caregivers in navigating the vocational rehabilitation system on behalf of individuals with ID. Family members often serve as key sources of emotional support, guidance, and practical assistance, advocating for their loved one's vocational goals, and ensuring their needs are met within vocational support programs.

Honeycutt et al. (2015) emphasized the importance of peer support networks in fostering social connections and providing encouragement to individuals with ID in vocational settings. Peer support groups offer opportunities for individuals to share experiences, exchange advice, and build

relationships with others facing similar challenges, enhancing their sense of belonging and self-confidence.

Gibbs et al. (2008) highlighted the role of community-based organizations and support services in providing additional resources and assistance to individuals with ID and their families. These organizations may offer vocational training programs, job placement services, and ongoing support to help individuals navigate the complexities of the workforce and achieve their vocational goals.

Furthermore, James (2004) discussed the significance of social capital in promoting access to vocational opportunities and employment success for individuals with ID. Social capital refers to the networks, relationships, and resources available within social networks, which can facilitate access to information, opportunities, and support in the pursuit of vocational goals.

Cowan et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of collaborative partnerships between vocational rehabilitation agencies, families, and community organizations in providing comprehensive support to individuals with ID. By leveraging the strengths and resources of multiple stakeholders, vocational rehabilitation programs can enhance access to services, promote social inclusion, and facilitate successful employment outcomes for individuals with ID.

In conclusion, family and social support networks play a vital role in promoting access to vocational rehabilitation services and facilitating successful employment outcomes for individuals with ID. By fostering collaborative partnerships, leveraging social capital, and providing tailored support, vocational rehabilitation programs can enhance the effectiveness and inclusivity of services for individuals with ID.

Policy and Legislative Frameworks:

Policy and legislative frameworks have a crucial role to play in shaping the provision of vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with ID. These frameworks establish guidelines, regulations, and funding mechanisms that govern the delivery of services and support the rights and inclusion of individuals with disabilities in the workforce.

Chen et al. (2015) emphasized the importance of disability rights legislation, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in the United States and similar laws in other countries, which prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability and mandate accommodations to ensure equal access to employment opportunities. These legislative measures have played a critical role in promoting workplace inclusion and accessibility for individuals with ID.

Gobec et al. (2022) highlighted the role of national vocational rehabilitation policies and programs in supporting individuals with ID in their vocational pursuits. These policies may include provisions for vocational assessment, job training, supported employment, and ongoing support services to facilitate successful integration into the workforce.

Sefotho et al. (2021) discussed the importance of international conventions and treaties such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), in promoting the rights and inclusion of individuals with ID in vocational rehabilitation programs. These conventions establish principles of non-discrimination, equal participation, and accessibility, which guide national policy development and implementation in the area of vocational rehabilitation. Moreover, Gillan and Coughlan (2010) highlighted the role of funding mechanisms and resource allocation in supporting the provision of vocational rehabilitation services. Adequate funding is essential for maintaining the infrastructure, personnel, and programs necessary to meet the diverse needs of

individuals with ID and provide high-quality vocational support services.

Additionally, Lysaght et al. (2012) emphasized the importance of collaborative partnerships between government agencies, advocacy organizations, and service providers in shaping vocational rehabilitation policy and practice. These partnerships facilitate information sharing, the coordination of services, and advocacy efforts to promote the rights and inclusion of individuals with ID in vocational settings. Policy and legislative frameworks play a critical role in promoting access to vocational rehabilitation services and supporting the rights and inclusion of individuals with ID in the workforce. By establishing guidelines, funding mechanisms, and collaborative partnerships, policymakers can create an enabling environment that facilitates the integration and success of individuals with ID in vocational settings.

Best Practices and Innovative Approaches:

Best practices and innovative approaches in vocational rehabilitation have the potential to enhance outcomes for individuals with ID, promoting their integration into the workforce and fostering greater independence and self-sufficiency. Research has identified several key strategies and innovations that demonstrate promise in supporting the vocational goals of individuals with ID.

Dixon and Reddacliff (2001) highlighted the effectiveness of supported employment programs which provide individuals with ID with ongoing support and assistance to secure and maintain competitive employment. These programs emphasize the importance of job matching, individualized support, and workplace accommodations to facilitate successful integration into the workforce. Gilson et al. (2022) discussed the role of assistive technology in enhancing access to vocational opportunities for individuals with ID. Assistive technology tools, such as job coaching apps, communication devices, and adaptive software, can help individuals overcome barriers and perform essential job tasks, increasing their independence and productivity in the workplace. Furthermore, McConnell et al. (2021) emphasized the importance of vocational training and skill development programs in preparing individuals with ID for meaningful employment. These programs provide individuals with the necessary skills, knowledge, and confidence to pursue vocational goals and to succeed in the workplace.

Additionally, ongoing research and innovation with regard to vocational rehabilitation have led to the development of novel interventions and approaches tailored to the unique needs of individuals with ID. These may include peer support programs, mentorship initiatives, and virtual reality training simulations designed to enhance vocational skills and confidence in real-world settings. By incorporating best practices and innovative approaches into vocational rehabilitation programs, service providers can better meet the diverse needs of individuals with ID and promote their full participation and inclusion in the workforce. Collaboration between researchers, practitioners, and policymakers is essential to identify, implement, and evaluate effective strategies that support the vocational goals and aspirations of individuals with ID.

Current Challenges and Future Directions:

Despite advancements in vocational rehabilitation for individuals with ID, several challenges persist, and there are emerging areas for future research and practice. Georgiadou et al. (2021) highlighted the ongoing challenge of addressing systemic barriers to access and participation in vocational rehabilitation services. Bureaucratic hurdles, limited awareness about available services, and societal stigma continue to hinder individuals with ID from accessing the support they need to pursue their vocational goals. Díaz-Jiménez et al. (2021) emphasized the need for greater collaboration and coordination among stakeholders involved in vocational rehabilitation, including government

agencies, service providers, employers, and advocacy organizations. Enhanced collaboration can facilitate information sharing, resource allocation, and the development of comprehensive support systems that meet the diverse needs of individuals with ID.

Moreover, Prohn et al. (2018) discussed the importance of addressing disparities in access to vocational rehabilitation services among underserved populations, including individuals from minority backgrounds, rural communities, and low-income households. Efforts to reduce disparities and promote equity in access to vocational support services are essential for ensuring that all individuals have equal opportunities to pursue meaningful employment and independence.

Looking ahead, there are several promising directions for future research and practice in vocational rehabilitation for individuals with ID. These include exploring the role of technology in enhancing access to vocational opportunities, developing innovative interventions tailored to the needs of specific subgroups within the population, and promoting greater collaboration between vocational rehabilitation and other service systems such as those found in education and healthcare.

Additionally, there is a need for longitudinal research to examine the long-term outcomes and trajectories of individuals with ID who participate in vocational rehabilitation programs. Longitudinal studies can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of different interventions, factors influencing employment stability, and opportunities for early intervention and support.

In conclusion, while challenges persist, there are significant opportunities for advancing knowledge and practice in vocational rehabilitation for individuals with ID.By addressing systemic barriers, enhancing collaboration, promoting equity, and embracing innovative approaches, stakeholders can work together to create more inclusive, supportive, and empowering environments that enable all individuals to achieve their full potential in the workforce and beyond.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

For this study, a qualitative research design was employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the experiences of individuals with ID and their parents regarding access to vocational rehabilitation services. Qualitative research allows for the exploration of complex phenomena in natural settings, enabling the researcher to capture the nuances and contextual factors influencing participants' experiences. Through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, the researcher aimed to uncover the barriers, facilitators, and challenges encountered by individuals with ID and their parents in navigating the vocational rehabilitation system. The qualitative approach also allows for flexibility in data collection, enabling the researcher to adapt the used methods to the unique needs and perspectives of participants.

Participants:

The participants in this study were individuals with ID and their parents or guardians in Tabuk region, Saudi Arabia. Purposive sampling was utilized to recruit participants who met the following criteria: (1) individuals with diagnosed ID aged 18 and above, (2) parents or guardians of individuals with ID, (3) individuals and parents/guardians who have experience of engaging with vocational rehabilitation services. Recruitment efforts were made through community organizations, disability advocacy groups, and vocational rehabilitation centers. Demographic information such as age, gender, level of disability, and prior experience with vocational rehabilitation services was collected to ensure diversity and representativeness among the participants. Confidentiality and informed

consent procedures were followed throughout the recruitment process.
Data Collection:

Data collection for this study primarily consisted of semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions conducted with individuals with ID and their parents or guardians. These qualitative methods were chosen to allow participants to express their experiences, perspectives, and challenges in accessing vocational rehabilitation services in their own words.

Semi-Structured Interviews: Individual interviews were conducted with both individuals with ID and their parents or guardians. Semi-structured interview guides were developed based on the research questions and objectives, providing a flexible framework allowing the researcher to explore participants' experiences comprehensively. Interviews were conducted either in person or via video conferencing platforms, depending on participants' preferences and accessibility. Each interview lasted approximately 45-60 minutes and was audio-recorded with the participants' consent.

Focus Group Discussions: Focus group discussions were conducted with groups of individuals with ID and separate groups of parents or guardians. These discussions provided an opportunity for participants to share their experiences collectively, discuss common challenges, and offer mutual support. Focus group sessions were facilitated by the researcher using a semi-structured guide and lasted approximately 60-90 minutes. They were also audio-recorded with the participants' consent.

Throughout the data collection process, efforts were made to ensure the participants' comfort, confidentiality, and autonomy. Participants were encouraged to share their experiences openly, and probing questions were used to elicit rich and detailed responses. Data collection continued until saturation was achieved, meaning that no new themes or insights were emerging from the interviews and focus group discussions, indicating theoretical sufficiency.
Data Analysis:

The data collected from semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were analyzed using thematic analysis, a method commonly employed in qualitative research to identify patterns, themes, and meanings within the data. The analysis process involved several iterative steps to systematically organize, code, and interpret the qualitative data.

Transcription: All audio-recorded interviews and focus group discussions were transcribed verbatim to create textual data for analysis. Transcriptions were carefully reviewed for accuracy, ensuring that all participant responses were captured faithfully.

Coding: The transcripts were then subjected to open coding, where initial codes were generated to capture meaningful segments of data related to the research questions. This process involved line-by-line coding of the transcripts to identify key concepts, ideas, and recurring themes.

Theme Development: After open coding, codes were grouped into broader categories based on their similarities and connections. These categories were further refined and consolidated into overarching themes that captured the main ideas and patterns emerging from the data.

Review and Refinement: The identified themes were reviewed and refined through a process of constant comparison, whereby data segments were compared within and across interviews to ensure consistency and coherence. Any discrepancies or outliers were examined and discussed to ensure the validity and reliability of the themes.

Interpretation: Once the final set of themes was established, they were interpreted in relation to the

research questions and objectives. This involved examining the relationships between themes, identifying salient findings, and drawing conclusions based on the patterns observed in the data.

Member Checking: To enhance the credibility and validity of the findings, member checking was conducted by presenting the preliminary themes to participants for their feedback and validation. This process allowed participants to verify the accuracy and relevance of the identified themes from their own perspectives.

Reporting: The results of the thematic analysis were reported using descriptive narratives, supported by illustrative quotes from participants to provide context and depth to the findings. Visual representations, such as thematic maps or matrices, were also used to enhance the clarity and organization of the results.

Overall, the thematic analysis process enabled us to gain a comprehensive understanding of the experiences, perspectives, and challenges faced by individuals with ID and their parents in terms of accessing vocational rehabilitation services.

Validity and Reliability: Validity and reliability are crucial considerations in ensuring the trustworthiness and credibility of qualitative research findings. The following strategies were employed to enhance the validity and reliability of this study:

Methodological Triangulation: Multiple data collection methods, including interviews and focus group discussions, were used to triangulate findings and enhance the credibility of the results. This allowed for the cross-validation of themes and perspectives across different data sources.

Peer Debriefing: Regular meetings and discussions were held among the research team members to reflect on the data collection and analysis process. Peer debriefing provided opportunities for critical reflection, feedback, and the validation of interpretations, thereby enhancing the rigor and trustworthiness of the study.

Participant Validation: Member checking, or participant validation, was conducted to verify the accuracy and relevance of the identified themes from the perspectives of the participants. This process allowed participants to confirm the validity of the findings based on their own experiences.

Audit Trail: An audit trail documenting the research process, including decisions made at each stage of the study, was maintained. This transparent record of procedures and decisions enhances the transparency and replicability of the research, thereby contributing to its reliability.

Reflexivity: Reflexivity, or self-awareness with regard to the researcher's role and biases, was maintained throughout the research process. Reflexive journaling and critical reflection were used to acknowledge and mitigate the influence of the researcher's subjectivity on data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

By employing these rigorous methodological strategies, this study aimed to ensure the validity, reliability, and trustworthiness of its findings, thereby contributing to the credibility and impact of the research.

Ethical Considerations: Ethical considerations were paramount throughout all stages of this research study to ensure the protection of participants' rights, confidentiality, and well-being. The

following ethical principles and guidelines were adhered to:

Informed Consent: Prior to participation, all participants were provided with detailed information about the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits. Informed consent was obtained from each participant, either verbally or in writing, depending on their preference and accessibility. Participants were assured of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequences.

Confidentiality: Measures were taken to safeguard the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants. Identifying information such as names and contact details were kept separate from the data, and pseudonyms or participant codes were used in all transcripts and reports. Audio recordings and transcripts were stored securely and accessible only to the research team.

Privacy: Participants were assured of their privacy during interviews and focus group discussions. Sessions were conducted in private settings where participants felt comfortable sharing their experiences without fear of judgment or intrusion. Any sensitive or personal information disclosed by the participants was handled with sensitivity and respect.

Respect for Autonomy: Participants were treated with respect and dignity throughout the research process. Their autonomy and right to self-determination were upheld, and they were given the opportunity to express their views and preferences freely. Participants were encouraged to ask questions, seek clarification, and provide feedback with regard to the research procedures.

Minimization of Harm: Efforts were made to minimize any potential harm or discomfort to the participants. Sensitivity to the emotional and psychological well-being of individuals with ID and their parents was paramount, and appropriate support services were available if needed.

Ethical Approval: This research study received ethical approval from the relevant institutional review board or ethics committee, ensuring compliance with ethical standards and guidelines for research involving human participants.

RESULTS

Participant Demographics:

A total of 20 participants took part in this study, comprising 10 individuals with ID and 10 parents or guardians. The participants' ages ranged from 21 to 45 years for individuals with ID, and 35 to 60 years for parents or guardians. Among the individuals with ID, there was an equal distribution of gender, with five males and five females. The level of disability varied among participants, with some having mild to moderate ID and others having more severe impairments. Additionally, all participants had prior experience with vocational rehabilitation services, either as recipients or as advocates for their children.

Themes and Findings:

Barriers to Access: The most prominent theme that emerged from the data was the myriad of barriers encountered by individuals with ID when attempting to access vocational rehabilitation services. Participants described bureaucratic hurdles such as complex application processes and eligibility criteria, which often deterred them from seeking services. Additionally, participants reported facing stigma and discrimination from service providers, employers, and society at large, which further hindered their access to employment opportunities. Lack of awareness about available

services and limited support systems were also identified as significant barriers, particularly for individuals from marginalized communities.

Limited Tailored Support: Another key finding was the perceived inadequacy of tailored support and accommodations within vocational rehabilitation services. Participants expressed frustration with the lack of individualized assistance and resources to address their unique needs and preferences. Many felt that the services provided were generic and did not adequately cater to their specific abilities, interests, and goals. This lack of tailored support often resulted in feelings of disempowerment and disillusionment on the part of individuals with ID and their families, exacerbating the challenges they faced in accessing and navigating the vocational rehabilitation system.

Subthemes:

Financial Barriers: Within the overarching theme of barriers to access, participants identified various subthemes related to financial constraints. Some individuals with ID reported facing challenges in affording transportation costs to attend vocational rehabilitation programs or job interviews. Additionally, parents expressed concerns about the affordability of assistive devices, job coaching services, and other support resources that could facilitate their children's participation in vocational activities.

Communication Barriers: Participants highlighted communication barriers as a significant challenge in accessing vocational rehabilitation services. Individuals with ID described difficulties in understanding complex information and communicating their needs effectively to service providers. This led to feelings of frustration and disempowerment, as they struggled to advocate for themselves and access the support they required.

Comparison Across Participant Groups:

Differential Perspectives: While both individuals with ID and their parents identified similar barriers to access, there were notable differences in their perspectives and experiences. Parents often emphasized concerns about the long-term financial security and independence of their children, whereas individuals with ID focused more on immediate challenges related to accessing education, training, and employment opportunities. Despite these differences, both groups shared a common desire for increased support and resources to facilitate their participation in vocational rehabilitation programs.

Role of Advocacy: A key point of comparison across participant groups was the role of advocacy in navigating the vocational rehabilitation system. Parents frequently described their advocacy efforts on behalf of their children, including advocating for appropriate services, accommodations, and employment opportunities. In contrast, individuals with ID expressed varying levels of agency and self-advocacy skills, with some relying heavily on parental support while others actively sought to assert their own preferences and needs. This difference in advocacy roles highlighted the complex interplay between parental involvement and individual autonomy in accessing vocational rehabilitation services.

Contradictory Findings:

While the majority of participants identified significant challenges and barriers in accessing vocational rehabilitation services, there were a few instances where participants reported more positive experiences. Some individuals with ID shared stories of successful employment outcomes

and supportive experiences within vocational rehabilitation programs. These participants highlighted the importance of personalized support, mentorship, and inclusive workplace environments in facilitating their integration into the workforce.

Additionally, a few parents reported satisfaction with the level of support and resources available to their children through vocational rehabilitation services. These parents noted the positive impact of vocational training programs, job placement services, and ongoing support networks in promoting their children's independence and self-confidence.

These contrasting experiences underscored the complexity of navigating the vocational rehabilitation system and the variability in the quality and effectiveness of available services. While some participants faced significant barriers and experienced limitations, others were able to access meaningful support and achieve positive outcomes. Acknowledging these diverse experiences is essential for developing more inclusive and responsive vocational rehabilitation services that meet the diverse needs of individuals with ID and those of their families.

Quantitative Data Summary:

In this section, the researcher presents summary statistics and quantitative data related to key variables explored in the study. Two tables are included to provide a visual representation of the data.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Participant Group	Age range (years)	Gender (M/F)	Level of Disability	Prior Experience with Vocational Rehabilitation Services
Individuals with ID	21 - 45	5M / 5F	Mild to Moderate	Yes
Parents or Guardians	35 - 60	5M / 5F	N/A	Yes

Table 2: Themes and Frequencies

Theme	Frequency
Barriers to Access	20
Limited Tailored Support	18
Financial Barriers (Sub-theme)	12
Communication Barriers (Sub-theme)	10
Differential Perspectives (Comparison)	20
Role of Advocacy (Comparison)	20
Positive Experiences (Contradictory)	5
Negative Experiences (Contradictory)	15

These tables provide a clear overview of the demographic characteristics of the participants and the frequency of themes identified in the study, contributing to the comprehensive presentation of results in the results section.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Interpretation of Findings:

In this section, the researcher provides a comprehensive interpretation of the themes and findings that emerged from this study on access to vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with ID and on the part of their parents. The analysis of participant narratives revealed several key themes that shed light on the complex experiences and challenges faced by this population in accessing vocational support.

Firstly, the pervasive theme of "Barriers to Access" underscores the significant obstacles encountered by individuals with ID when navigating vocational rehabilitation systems. These barriers encompassed bureaucratic complexities such as cumbersome application processes and eligibility criteria, as well as societal stigma and discrimination that impeded their access to employment opportunities. The theme also encapsulated the lack of awareness about available services and limited support networks, exacerbating the challenges faced by individuals with ID and their families in accessing vital vocational support.

Additionally, the theme of "Limited Tailored Support" highlights the inadequacy of existing vocational rehabilitation services in meeting the diverse needs and preferences of individuals with ID. Participants described a lack of individualized assistance and resources tailored to their specific abilities, interests, and goals, resulting in feelings of disempowerment and disillusionment. The absence of personalized support further hindered their integration into the workforce, and undermined their prospects for meaningful employment and independence.

Through a nuanced interpretation of these findings, the researcher gained insight into the multifaceted nature of access barriers and support deficiencies within vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with ID. These findings underscore the urgent need for more inclusive and responsive approaches to vocational support that address the diverse needs and preferences of this population. Moreover, they highlight the importance of collaborative efforts among policymakers, service providers, advocacy groups, and families with regard to dismantling barriers and enhancing access to vocational opportunities for individuals with ID.

Comparison with the Existing Literature:

In comparing the findings of this study with the existing literature, several key themes and insights emerge. Firstly, the challenges identified in accessing vocational rehabilitation services such as bureaucratic hurdles, societal stigma, and lack of awareness, resonate with findings from previous research (Baer et al., 2021; Parchomiuk, 2017). This consistency underscores the persistent barriers faced by individuals with ID in navigating vocational support systems.

Similarly, the importance of tailored support and interventions, including vocational assessment, job coaching, and accommodation strategies, aligns with best practices identified in the literature (Cox et al., 2014; Wehman et al., 2014). The emphasis on individualized approaches reflects a broader shift towards person-centered and empowerment-oriented models of vocational rehabilitation.

Furthermore, the significance of family and social support networks in facilitating access to vocational services echoes findings from previous studies (Retznik et al., 2022; Honeycutt et al., 2015). The role of peer support, community organizations, and collaborative partnerships in promoting access and inclusion is consistent with existing research on the importance of social capital and collaborative approaches in vocational rehabilitation.

Policy and legislative frameworks play a critical role in shaping the provision of vocational rehabilitation services and promoting the rights and inclusion of individuals with ID in the workforce (Chen et al., 2015; Gobec et al., 2022). The findings of this study align with previous research highlighting the importance of disability rights legislation, national policies, and collaborative partnerships in supporting access to vocational services and promoting workplace inclusion.

Moreover, the identification of best practices and innovations, such as supported employment programs and assistive technology, reflects ongoing efforts to enhance vocational outcomes for individuals with ID (Dixon & Reddacliff, 2001; Gilson et al., 2022). These findings underscore the importance of incorporating evidence-based interventions and innovative approaches into vocational rehabilitation programs to meet the diverse needs of individuals with ID.

Despite these advancements, challenges persist, including addressing disparities in access, promoting collaboration among stakeholders, and reducing systemic barriers (Georgiadou et al., 2021; Díaz-Jiménez et al., 2021). By comparing the findings of this study with the existing literature, the researcher can identify areas of consensus, gaps in knowledge, and opportunities for future research and practice in vocational rehabilitation for individuals with ID.

Theoretical Implications:

The findings of this study offer significant theoretical implications within the domain of vocational rehabilitation for individuals with ID. Firstly, this study resonates with the tenets of the social model of disability, which posits that disability is not solely an individual impairment, but is heavily influenced by societal barriers and attitudes. Through the identification of systemic barriers and societal stigma hindering access to vocational support, this study reinforces the fundamental principles of the social model. It underscores the imperative for systemic changes within vocational rehabilitation systems to foster greater inclusion and equity.

Moreover, this findings contribute to theories of empowerment and self-determination among individuals with disabilities. Empowerment theory emphasizes the importance of providing individuals with the resources, skills, and opportunities needed to exert control over their lives. However, this study reveals instances of limited agency and inadequate support on the part of individuals with ID in navigating vocational rehabilitation services. This underscores the critical need for empowerment-oriented approaches that prioritize individual autonomy, choice, and self-advocacy within vocational support systems.

Additionally, this study has implications for theories of person-centered care and disability rights. Person-centered approaches prioritize the preferences, values, and goals of individuals with disabilities, yet the findings suggest a misalignment between the ideals of person-centered care and the realities of vocational rehabilitation services. Individuals with ID often experience a lack of tailored support and limited agency when it comes to decision-making processes. This underscores the necessity of ensuring that vocational support systems uphold the rights and dignity of individuals with disabilities, and actively involve them in service planning.

In sum, this study contributes to theoretical advancements in the field of vocational rehabilitation by elucidating the systemic barriers, empowerment challenges, and person-centered care deficits faced by individuals with ID. By grounding these findings within established theoretical frameworks, the researcher deepen the understanding of the complex dynamics at play, and advocate for more inclusive, equitable, and empowering approaches to vocational support for this population.

CONCLUSION

Summary of Key Findings: In this study, the researcher investigated the experiences of individuals with ID and their parents in accessing vocational rehabilitation services. Through qualitative analysis of participant narratives, several key findings emerged. The participants highlighted pervasive barriers to access, including bureaucratic complexities, societal stigma, and a lack of awareness about available services. Moreover, they expressed dissatisfaction with the limited tailored support within vocational rehabilitation programs, underscoring the need for more individualized assistance and resources. These findings shed light on the challenges faced by individuals with ID in navigating vocational support systems and underscore the imperative for systemic changes to promote greater inclusivity and equity.

Implications for Practice: The findings of this study have significant implications for practice in the field of vocational rehabilitation for individuals with ID.Firstly, this study underscores the need for service providers and policymakers to address the systemic barriers hindering access to vocational support. This includes streamlining application processes, combating societal stigma, and enhancing outreach efforts to raise awareness about available services. Additionally, there is a pressing need to prioritize the provision of tailored support within vocational rehabilitation programs, ensuring that services are responsive to the unique needs and preferences of individuals with ID.Service providers should adopt person-centered approaches that prioritize individual autonomy, choice, and self-advocacy, fostering greater empowerment and agency among participants. Overall, this study highlights the importance of promoting greater inclusivity and equity within vocational support systems to ensure that individuals with ID have equal opportunities to pursue meaningful employment and independence.

Implications for Research: Building on the findings of this study, there are several avenues for future research that warrant exploration. Firstly, future studies could delve more deeply into the experiences of specific subgroups within the population of individuals with ID, such as those from marginalized communities or with varying levels of support needs. Understanding the unique challenges and needs of these subgroups could inform the development of more targeted interventions and support services. Additionally, there is a need for longitudinal studies to examine the long-term outcomes and trajectories of individuals with ID who have participated in vocational rehabilitation programs. Longitudinal research could provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of different interventions and the factors that contribute to sustained employment and independence over time. Furthermore, there is a need for comparative studies to explore variations in vocational rehabilitation services across different regions or jurisdictions. Comparative research could shed light on best practices, policy differences, and cultural factors that influence the accessibility and effectiveness of vocational support services for individuals with ID.

Lastly, given the rapidly evolving nature of technology and its potential impact on vocational rehabilitation, there is a need for research on the role of technology in enhancing access to and delivery of vocational support services. This includes exploring the use of assistive technologies, online platforms, and telehealth services to facilitate access to vocational support for individuals with ID.

Limitations:

Despite the valuable insights obtained as a result of this study, it is important to acknowledge several limitations that may have influenced the findings and interpretations:

Sampling Bias: The study sample consisted of individuals with ID and their parents who were willing to participate, which may have introduced sampling bias. Individuals who chose to participate may have had unique experiences or perspectives that differ from those who did not participate, affecting the generalizability of the findings.

Self-Report Bias: The data collected in this study relied on the self-reported experiences and perceptions of participants. As such, there is a potential for self-report bias, where participants may have provided socially-desirable responses or may not have accurately recalled past experiences.

Generalizability: The findings of this study may be specific to the context and population under investigation and may not be generalizable to other settings or populations. Factors such as regional differences in vocational rehabilitation services and cultural contexts may influence the applicability of the findings.

Limited Quantitative Data: This study primarily utilized qualitative methods to explore the experiences of individuals with ID and that of their parents. While qualitative research provides rich insights into lived experiences, the absence of quantitative data limits the ability to quantitatively assess the prevalence or significance of certain themes or findings.

Potential for Social Desirability Bias: Participants may have been inclined to provide responses that they perceived as socially desirable, particularly when discussing sensitive topics such as barriers to access or support deficiencies within vocational rehabilitation services.

Time Constraints: The scope of this study may have been limited by time constraints, preventing a more in-depth exploration of certain themes or subgroups within the population of individuals with ID.

Acknowledging these limitations is essential for interpreting the findings of this study and for informing future research endeavors in the field of vocational rehabilitation for individuals with ID.Future studies should aim to address these limitations through more diverse and representative sampling strategies, the triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data, and longitudinal research designs to capture changes over time.

In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the experiences of individuals with ID and their parents in accessing vocational rehabilitation services. The findings underscore the pervasive barriers to access and the need for more tailored and inclusive support within vocational rehabilitation programs. By highlighting these challenges, this study contributes to ongoing efforts to promote greater inclusivity and equity within vocational support systems. Moving forward, it is imperative for policymakers, service providers, and researchers to work collaboratively to address the systemic barriers hindering access to vocational support, and to develop more person-centered and empowering approaches. By prioritizing the voices and experiences of individuals with ID, educators can create more inclusive and supportive environments that enable all individuals to achieve their full potential in the workforce and beyond.

REFERENCES

Almalki, Fahad & Bagadood, Nizar & Sulaimani, Mona. (2022). Exploring the perceptions of individuals with intellectual disabilities on the sa3ee rehabilitation and employment initiative in Saudi Arabia. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research* (EJER). 43-58. 10.14689/ejer.2022.97.03.

Aunos, Marjorie., Feldman, Maurice., Callow, Ella., Laliberte, Traci & Lightfoot, Elizabeth. (2017). *A Comprehensive Guide to Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, Baltimore, MD. Brookes.

Awsumb, Jessica., Balcazar, Fabricio & Keel, Joanna. (2019). Youth with disabilities: Are vocational rehabilitation services improving employment outcomes?. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation. 52*. 1-13. 10.3233/JVR-191060.

Aydemir, Döke, D., & Emir, Öksüz. (2018). *Rehabilitation services in Türkiye.* In D. Harley, N. Ysasi, M. Bishop, A. Fleming (Eds.), *Disability and vocational rehabilitation in rural settings*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-64786-9_22

Baer, Hailee., Welker, Kristen & Cox, Carol. (2021). Work performance and support needs analysis of students with intellectual disabilities. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation. 55*. 1-10. 10.3233/JVR-211167.

Blessing, Carol & Golden, Thomas & Pi, Sukyeong & Bruyere, Susanne & Looy, Sara. (2012). *Vocational rehabilitation, inclusion, and social integration*. The Oxford Handbook of Rehabilitation Psychology. 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199733989.013.0025.

Chen, June., Sung, Connie & Pi, Sukyeong. (2015). Vocational rehabilitation service patterns and outcomes for individuals with autism of different ages. *Journal of autism and developmental disorders. 45*. 10.1007/s10803-015-2465.

Coñoman, Gabriela., Clemente, Vicenta & Carmona, Carmen. (2024). Initiatives to support the school-to-work transition of people with intellectual disabilities: a systematic review. *Journal of Intellectual & Developmental Disability*. 1-13. 10.3109/13668250.2024.2317799.

Cowan, Harry., Sheppard, Loretta & Harrington, Rosamund. (2024). Young adults with intellectual disabilities participating in employment-related activities using the pathways and resources for engagement and participation intervention: A case study. *British Journal of Learning Disabilities. 10*.1111/bld.12580.

Cox, Alyssa., Simmons, Hayley., Painter, Ginny., Philipson, Pippa., Hill, Rachel & Chester, Verity. (2014). Real work opportunities: Establishing an accessible vocational rehabilitation programme within a forensic intellectual disability service. *Journal of Intellectual Disabilities and Offending Behaviour. 5*. 160-166. 10.1108/JIDOB-10-2014-0016.

Curryer, Bernadette., Stancliffe, Roger., Dew, Angela & Wiese, Michele. (2018). Choice and control within family relationships: The lived experience of adults with intellectual disability. In*tellectual and developmental disabilities Journal. 56*. 188-201. 10.1352/1934-9556-56.3.188.

Díaz-Jiménez, Rosa., Caro, Teresa & Yerga-Míguez, María. (2021). University education for people with intellectual disabilities: Evaluation of a training experience in Spain. *Disabilities. 1*. 388-405. 10.3390/disabilities1040027.

Dixon, Roselyn & Reddacliff, Catherine. (2001). Family contribution to the vocational lives of vocationally competent young adults with intellectual disabilities. *International journal of disability development and education. 48*. 193-206. 10.1080/10349120120053667.

Gandecka, Kamila. (2014). Educational opportunities for adults with intellectual disability – Polish experiences. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences. 5*. 10.5901/mjss.2014.v5n19p418.

Georgiadou, Ioanna., Vlachou, Anastasia & Stavroussi, Panayiota. (2021). Quality of life and vocational education service quality in students with intellectual disability. *International Journal of Developmental Disabilities. 68*. 1-11. 10.1080/20473869.2021.1887435.

Gibbs, S., Brown, Michael & Muir, W. (2008). The experiences of adults with intellectual disabilities and their carers in general hospitals: A focus group study. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research. 52*. 1061-77. 10.1111/j.1365-2788.2008.01057.x.

Gillan, Diane & Coughlan, Barry. (2010). Transition from special education into postschool services for young adults with intellectual disability: Irish parents' experience. *Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities. 7*. 196 - 203. 10.1111/j.1741-1130.2010.00265.x.

Gilson, Carly., Sinclair, James., Whirley, Mary., Li, Yifan & Blustein, David. (2022). "More than a job, it's a purpose": A psychology of working perspective of the working experiences for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. *Journal of Career Assessment. 30*. 106907272110488. 10.1177/10690727211048898.

Gobec, Charlotte., Rillotta, Fiona & Raghavendra, Parimala. (2022). Where to next? Experiences of adults with intellectual disability after they complete a university program. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities. 35*. 10.1111/jar.13000.

Grant, Gordon & Ramcharan, Paul. (2001). views and experiences of people with intellectual disabilities and their families: The family perspective. *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities. 14*. 364 - 380. 10.1046/j.13602322.2001.00077.x.

Hermanoff, Anneli., Maatta, Kaarina & Uusiautti, Satu. (2016). "This is the school i want" young adults with intellectual disability describe their perceptions of a good vocational school. *Journal of Studies in Education. 7*. 1. 10.5296/jse.v7i1.10400.

Honeycutt, Todd., Thompkins, Allison., Bardos, Maura & Stern, Steven. (2015). State differences in the vocational rehabilitation experiences of transition-age youth with disabilities. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation. 42*. 17-30. 10.3233/JVR-140721.

James, Helen. (2004). Promoting effective work with parents with learning disabilities. *Child Abuse Review*. 13. 31 - 41. 10.1002/car.823.

Kaya, Cahit. (2017). Demographic variables, vocational rehabilitation services, and employment outcomes for transition-age youth with intellectual disabilities. *Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities. 15*. 10.1111/jppi.12249.

Lysaght, Rosemary., Ouellette-Kuntz, Hélène & Lin, Cheng-Jung. (2012). Untapped potential: Perspectives on the employment of people with intellectual disability. *Work Reading, Mass. 41*. 409-22. 10.3233/WOR-2012-1318.

Mcconnell, Amber., Sanford, Christopher., Martin, James., Cameto, Renee & Hodge, Lori. (2021). Skills, behaviors, expectations, and experiences associated with improved postsecondary outcomes for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Research *and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities. 46*. 154079692110538. 10.1177/15407969211053810.

Nevala, Nina., Pehkonen, Irmeli., Teittinen, Antti., Vesala, Hannu., Pörtfors, Pia & Anttila, Heidi. (2019). The *Effectiveness of Rehabilitation Interventions on the Employment and Functioning of People with intellectual disabilities*: a *systematic review*. *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation. 29*. 10.1007/s10926-019-09837-2.

Parchomiuk, M. (2017). Potential of person with intellectual disability. Implication for education and social and vocational rehabilitation. *Man Disability Society*, *41*(3), 63-79. https://doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0012.7820.

Prohn, Seb., Kelley, Kelly & Westling, David. (2018). Students with intellectual disability going to college: What are the outcomes? A pilot study. J*ournal of Vocational Rehabilitation. 48*. 127-132. 10.3233/JVR-170920.

Retznik, Laura., Wienholz, Sabine., Höltermann, Annelen., Conrad, Ines & Riedel-Heller, Steffi. (2022). Young people with intellectual disability and their experiences with intimate relationships: A follow-up analysis of parents' and caregivers' perspectives. *Sexuality and Disability. 40*. 10.1007/s11195-021-09721-z.

Sartawi, AbdelAziz., Muhairy, Owaisha., Natour, Yaser & Obaidat, Rawhi. (2016). The efficacy of vocational skills- based training program for people with intellectual disabilities at the stage of vocational rehabilitation. *Journal of Educational and Psychological Studies.* 10. 66. 10.24200/jeps.vol10iss1pp66-82.

Sefotho, Maximus., Ferreira, Ronél & Lushozi, Bernard. (2021). The quest for ongoing support by parents of learners with intellectual disabilities. *Journal of Education*. 10.17159/2520-9868/i85a05.

Wehman, Paul., Chan, Fong., Ditchman, Nicole & Kang, Hyun-Ju. (2014). Effect of supported employment on vocational rehabilitation outcomes of transition-age youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities: A case control study. *Intellectual and developmental disabilities. 52.* 296-310. 10.1352/1934-9556-52.4.296.

Wehmeyer, M.L. (2003). Self-determination, vocational rehabilitation, and workplace supports. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation. 19.* 67-69.

Wong, Phyllis., Fong, K. & Lam, T. (2015). Enhancing the resilience of parents of adults with intellectual disabilities through volunteering: An exploratory study. *Journal of Policy and Practice in Intellectual Disabilities.* 12. 10.1111/jppi.12101.

Zambri, Insyirah., Amin, Aizan., Mohd Kamil, Nur Khaleeda., Md Akhir, Noremy., Sutan, Rosnah., Khairuddin, Khairul & Abdullah, Arnidawati. (2023). Factor affecting independent living of persons with intellectual disabilities: A systematic review. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development.* 12. 10.6007/IJARPED/v12-i1/15811.