Parental Activation, Empowerment, Advocacy and Self-Efficacy among ASD Caregivers
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BACKGROUND
• Active parental involvement with individuals with disabilities has been associated with better child academic and behavioral outcomes, higher levels of parent satisfaction, and improved home-school relationships (Herrold, O’Donnell, & Mulligan, 2008).
• Four constructs, i.e., empowerment, advocacy, activation (e.g., belief, knowledge, action, and persistence of managing child’s health care needs), and self-efficacy, have been used similarly throughout the literature when addressing parental involvement
• However, there is a lack of comprehensive understanding about how these constructs relate to and differ from one another.
• A lack of clarity in the similarities and differences between these constructs interferes with the understanding and facilitation of each in research and practical settings. The present study aimed to compare these four constructs.

STUDY AIMS
• Examine the bivariate relationships among empowerment, advocacy, activation, and self-efficacy.
• Examine how the subscales underlying the four measures are related.

METHOD
Participants
• Parents of individuals with ASD between the age of 3 and 21 years old (N = 227) completed an online survey through Amazon’s Mechanical Turk.

Measures
• Parent Activation Measure for Developmental Disabilities (PAM-DD)
• Family Empowerment Scale (FES)
• Parent Advocacy Scale (PAS)
• Tools to measure Parenting Self-Efficacy (TOPSE)

Statistical Analysis
• Aim 1: Correlations
  • Aim 2: Exploratory factor analysis using principal axis factoring and orthogonal varimax rotation was conducted (an eigenvalue cut-off of 1.0) to determine how the subscales underlying the four measures were related.

RESULTS
Table 1. Demographics
Child Variables
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Participants M (SD)</th>
<th>Gender (%)</th>
<th>Marital Status (%)</th>
<th>Working full time (%)</th>
<th>College graduate and above (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age of child</td>
<td>8.34 (5.55)</td>
<td>Female: 30.8 Male: 69.2</td>
<td>70.9 (Married)</td>
<td>79.3</td>
<td>57.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Correlations
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Parent Activation</th>
<th>Empowerment</th>
<th>Self-Efficacy</th>
<th>Self-Advocacy</th>
<th>Self-Efficacy</th>
<th>Self-Advocacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent Activation</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.72**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.64**</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowerment</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.26**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.67**</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>.64**</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Advocacy</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% of Variance Explained
Factor 1: 46.6 Factor 2: 13.7 Factor 3: 7.8

DISCUSSION
• The results indicate strong overlap between three putatively different measures of parental involvement (i.e., parent activation, empowerment, self-efficacy) in caring for a child with ASD.
• Parent self-efficacy, empowerment, and activation are positively related to each other and appeared to share a single underlying construct, whereas parent advocacy was independent from the other three constructs, except sharing similarities with family’s perception of their empowerment in community/political issues.
• Further work using confirmatory factor analysis and exploring measure differences in predictive validity are needed to strengthen and expand these tentative initial results.

REFERENCES