



Unveiling the Complexity: Intersectionality of Disability in Multicultural Rehabilitation

Xinhua Yu, PhD; Chrisann Schiro-Geist, PhD; Patrick Krolak, MBA; Sushmitha Nandiki; Jun Cai; Jayasimha Reddy Tippireddy
The University of Memphis Institute on Disability

Research Objectives

- Explore the impact of intersectional factors such as race, gender, and socioeconomic status on employment outcomes among people with disabilities.
- Highlight the need for inclusive practices in vocational rehabilitation services to address the unique challenges faced by marginalized groups.
- Advocate for further research and policy interventions to bridge the gap between disability studies and other fields, such as critical race theory, feminist theory, and queer theory.

Background

- Challenges Faced by Marginalized Groups: Discrimination and barriers encountered by individuals at the intersection of multiple identities.
- Inclusive VR Rehabilitation Practices: Importance of adopting culturally competent and inclusive approaches in rehabilitation services.
- Drawing from Kimberlé Crenshaw's concept of intersectionality, we delve into the compounded challenges faced by individuals navigating the intersection of disability with other identity markers such as race, gender, and socioeconomic status.
- Through a multidimensional approach, we aim to shed light on the unique experiences of marginalized groups, emphasizing the need for inclusive policies and interventions in multicultural rehabilitation.
- By examining the intersectionality between socioeconomic factors and disabilities, we strive to contribute to a deeper understanding of social justice and equity in vocational rehabilitation practices.

Settings and Participants

- Surveys of vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselors were linked with their VR client data from three states from 2014 to 2018.
- Analytic data included counselors with complete responses and their clients who were not employed at the time of VR application and aged between 16 to 60.
- Those clients who had disabilities too significant to be employed or deceased before exit the program were excluded.

Outcomes

- Employment status, weekly wages and working hours per week at the VR exit.

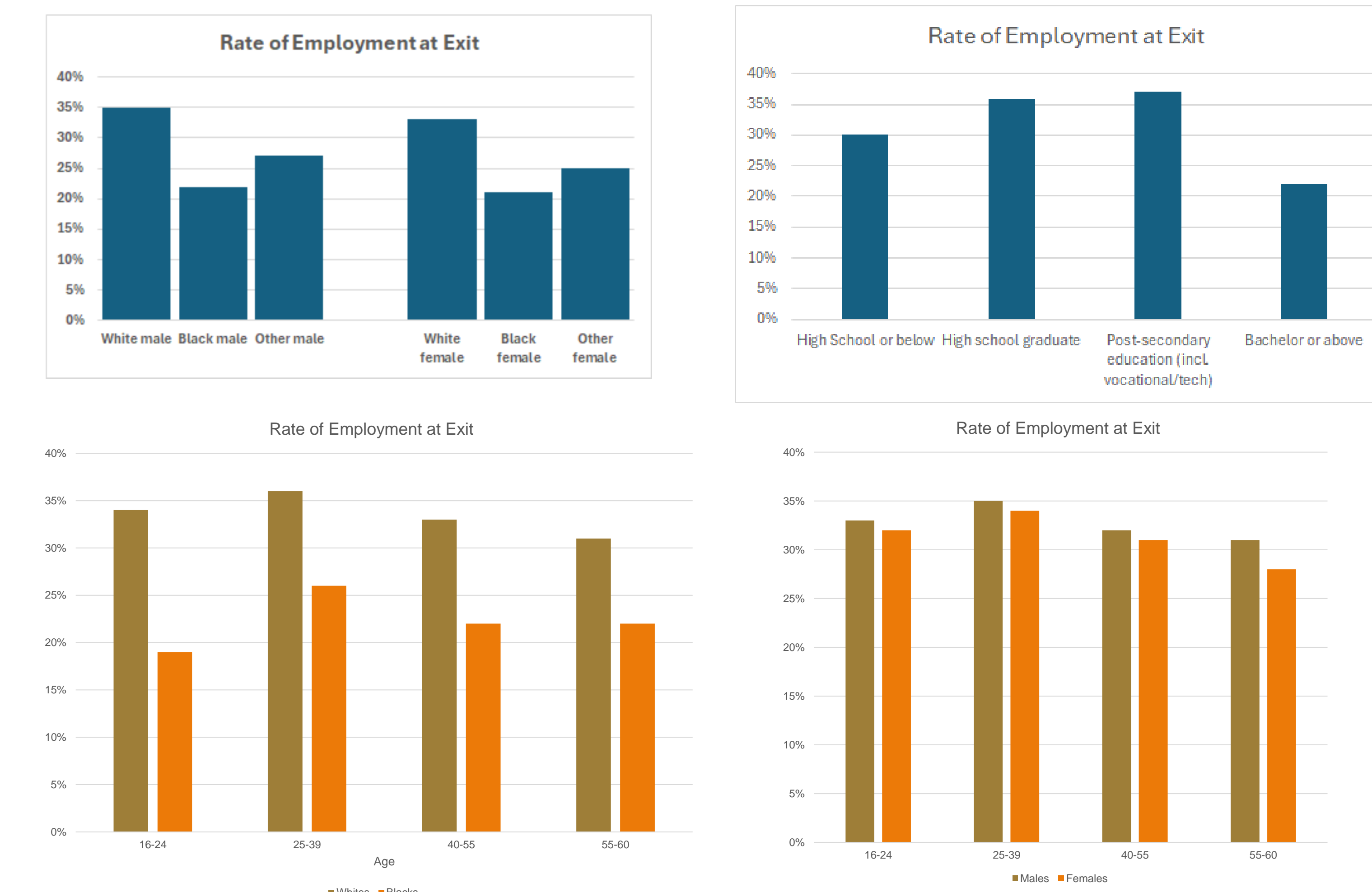
Interventions/Exposure

- Survey data: counselor's age, gender, working experience and preparedness of VR counseling
- VR client data: client's age, race, gender, education at application, prior employment status, support, and disability types and disability significance
- Intersectionality of Disability: Analyzing how race, gender, and socioeconomic status intersect with disability to shape individuals' experiences in employment.

Data Analysis

- Descriptive statistics for employment status by client's age groups, race, gender, and education, intersecting with disability status
- Rate comparisons with chi-squared tests
- Multi-level logistic regression for comparing rates between various intersectional factors, adjusting for other variables
- Additional sub-group analysis by different disability types and significance
- SAS 9.4 and Stata 16.1

Results



- Of 27,109 VR clients, the overall employment rate at exit was 33%, with mean weekly wage \$354 (SD: \$231) and 11.5 (SD: 16.3) hours per week.
- Among those aged 25-45 and with high school or above education, the employment rates were 31% for white males, 27% for white females, 26% for black males, and 24% for black females.
- Further examinations based on the hourly earnings and working hours showed similar patterns of disparities.

Conclusions

Race, gender, education, and other socio-economic status not only have an independent impact on the chance of employment at closure among people with disabilities, but these factors combined had a much larger impact on the employment disparities than each factor alone, indicating the existence of intersectionality among these factors.

Policy Implications: persistent intersectionality for policy formulation and public discourse in the field of multicultural rehabilitation.