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Intersectionality of disability and cultural/linguistic diversity in the UK: a literature review

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This article explores the intersectionality of cultural and linguistic diversity and having a child with a disability, highlighting the unique challenges faced by parents from a minority ethnic background at this intersection. With increasing globalization, diverse and multicultural populations have become more prevalent, necessitating inclusive systems that address the unique needs of minority ethnic groups. Understanding the experiences of parents at the intersection of cultural and linguistic diversity and having a child with a disability is crucial for providing equitable access to education and support. This paper provides an overview of studies conducted in the UK, focusing on the challenges faced by culturally and linguistically diverse families from a minority ethnic background with children with disabilities and emphasizing factors such as religion, cultural beliefs, language barriers, and unique insights into specific populations. The findings emphasize the need for a comprehensive understanding of the intersectionality of cultural and linguistic diversity and disability to create inclusive educational environments that empower all children, irrespective of their cultural background or abilities.

KEYWORDS

intersectionality, disability, cultural diversity, linguistic diversity, literature review, minority ethnic background

Introduction

Culture refers to a collective system of values, beliefs, practices, and norms that are passed down from one generation to the next within a particular group or society. These shared elements have a profound impact on individuals' thoughts, behaviors, and social interactions (Janicijevic et al., 2018), and play a crucial role in shaping a child's development (Rogoff, 2003). With increasing globalization, many countries have experienced a transition towards more diverse societies, characterized by the coexistence of multiple cultures (Andersone and Helmane, 2018; Torres and Tarozzi, 2019). It is important to recognize its significance in all aspects of education from birth onwards.

In the UK, minority ethnic groups make up a significant portion of the education system, accounting for 34.5% of students in general education schools and 31% in special education schools. Moreover, 19.5% of students enrolled in school systems do not speak English as their first language (Explore Education Statistics, 2023). These groups comprise diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, each with unique needs. Failure to address these needs can put them at a disadvantage [Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), 2009]. It is crucial to design education systems that address the needs of these diverse communities, ensuring equitable access to the same educational opportunities as other groups, which refers to the majority ethnic group(s) and students who speak English as their first language. For this reason, not only the language of instruction but also cultural values, beliefs, and expectations should be taken into account while trying to create an equitable learning environment for all. Importantly, the presence of diverse ethnic backgrounds contributes unique and invaluable perspectives that can be shared and integrated into the classroom environment.

In addition to being from a minority group, having a disability creates a different experience for these children (Khanlou et al., 2014). The progression of this experience and the meaning it represents must be understood in order for these children to access the necessary education to which they are legally entitled. The intersectionality of both being a child from a minority group and having a disability gives rise to a multifaceted experience that necessitates a comprehensive understanding. By acknowledging and addressing the unique challenges faced by these children, fostering inclusive environments, and providing tailored support, society can work towards creating an educational system that empowers all children, regardless of their background or abilities.

Many cultural factors affect the perception and experience of disability and how an individual with a disability exists in society based on their cultures, including elements such as religious beliefs, value judgements, and traditions (Rogers-Adkinson et al., 2003). For a more inclusive society to be possible, it is considered necessary to understand the concept of disability in different cultures and to reveal how that concept is experienced in a culturally and linguistically diverse context (Ravindran and Myers, 2012).

Although efforts have been made since the 2000s to be more inclusive of the experiences of minority ethnic groups in disability studies, the literature still reflects a medical approach or focuses on the experiences of parents (Berghs and Dyson, 2022). Due to the problematization of disability with this medical approach, there is still a need to reposition disability with theoretical insights and illustrate the links with other social factors, including culture (Liasidou, 2012). Within the field of disability studies in education, there is a noticeable research gap regarding the insufficient recognition and incorporation of intersectionality as a vital aspect of its investigations (Walton, 2023).

The aim of this paper is to provide a review of the research that describes the views and experiences of parents in the UK who are at the intersection of being from minority backgrounds and having a child with a disability regarding the concept and identification of disability, as well as their experiences and challenges while accessing services.

Intersectionality of cultural and linguistic diversity and disability

The concept of intersectionality was introduced by the legal scholar and critical race theorist Kimberlé Crenshaw. It refers to the complex and interconnected systems of oppression faced by African-American women. Intersectionality highlights how social categories such as race and gender intersect at a micro level to shape their individual experiences and how these categories overlap to create multiple layers of discrimination and privilege (Crenshaw, 1991). She argued that although racism and sexism often intersect in people's lived experiences, feminist and antiracist practices have historically treated them as separate issues, resulting in a gap.

Intersectionality, therefore, offers a framework for recognizing and tackling the specific obstacles encountered by people who belong to multiple marginalized groups (Randall and Curran, 2023). The notion of intersectionality has been influential traction in various fields, including education, and serves as an analytical approach for exploring the complexities of identity and power dynamics (Cole, 2009; Ferree, 2018; Byerly et al., 2023; Wright, 2023). While providing a comprehensive way of thinking (Thomas, 2020; Woods and Brink, 2021), it offers a deeper understanding of the ways in which structural discrimination operates in society (Waitoller and Artiles, 2013).

This article focuses on the intersection of cultural and linguistic diversity and disability, specifically within the context of being a parent of a child with a disability while also belonging to a minority ethnic group in Western society in the UK. The researchers adopted an intersectional approach to investigate how parents from ethnic minority backgrounds navigate the intersection of marginalization and oppression stemming from both their ethnic identity and their child's disability status. By attending to the interplay of multiple systems of power and inequality, the study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by parents from marginalized backgrounds in caring for a child with a disability.

Culture is the system of values used by a society in the process of organizing individual and social lives and interpretations of existence (Ergur, 2017). Different cultures shape the interpretation that individuals give to the things that surround them (Earley, 2006) and serve as a source of identification for their members (Stahl et al., 2010). Hall (1990, as cited in Yang et al., 2021) introduced the term "cultural identity" as a means to comprehend how individuals and groups position themselves within the wider cultural landscape. They defined it as a dynamic concept embodied by a multitude of factors, including history, migration, colonization, globalization, and social interactions. These factors not only shape cultural identities but also motivate the creation of multiple ethnic and/or religious cultures that transcend national boundaries (Stahl et al., 2010; Portera, 2020). This social structure requires the application of an egalitarian approach in which every culture can progress in interaction and the development of universal approaches in various fields, including education (Lopez et al., 2000; Khanlou et al., 2014). Culture directly influences the educational expectations, values, parenting practices (Chen et al., 2002; Cheremshynski et al., 2013) and decision-making processes (Bayat, 2007; Neely-Barnes and Dia, 2008; Dinora and Bogenschutz, 2018) within families.

Within the context of disability, cultural factors play a crucial role in shaping the family's response to disabilities, such as autism. For example, a study conducted by Habayeb et al. (2020) found that Arab-American families tend to conceal the diagnosis of autism from their extended family members and grandparents, in particular, have difficulties in understanding the child's need for support. In contrast, in another study conducted by Sicherman et al. (2018) with a population of 60% white and 22% Hispanic participants, it is noted that grandparents notice the symptoms in the child earlier, enabling earlier diagnosis.

Therefore, considering the components of culture in the life history of a child with a disability can significantly enhance the understanding and facilitation of appropriate services. By taking culture into account, service providers can gain valuable insights into the child's background and parents' beliefs, values, and traditions, which can influence their perceptions of disability and their expectations for support.

While these components may be relatively easy to take into account and understand in the culture where parents have grown up, culture can be a form of exclusion in services received in another country due to immigration (Gencer, 2017). The existing constructions are based on Wester-centric approaches to pedagogy, and the expectation of an "ideal child/student" was created within this cultural notion, resulting in the domination and oppression of the "non-ideal" ones, leading to additional needs. Recognizing the presence of more than one form of exclusion in a child's life multiplies these needs (Liasidou, 2012).

Many studies have shown that families from minority backgrounds who have a child with a disability face both linguistic and cultural difficulties in accessing official services and experience challenges when interacting with specialists (Fellin et al., 2013; Lindsay et al., 2014; Hanson and Espinosa, 2016). They are unable to receive services due to limited accessibility (i.e., they cannot receive normal public services because of linguistic, cultural, or disability obstacles) (Harris and Bamford, 2001).

Nevertheless, delays in language skills in the early years can be perceived as expected if the child is learning English as a second language, which may result in late recognition of the disability (Ennis-Cole et al., 2013). A study conducted by Mandell et al. (2009) showed notable racial and ethnic disparities in the identification of autism among eight-year-old children. The research indicated that children of African-American, Hispanic, Asian, and diverse ethnic backgrounds exhibited a lower likelihood in contrast to Anglo-American children in terms of having an officially documented autism diagnosis.

On the other hand, when traditional methods are used in the teaching process, unnecessary referrals to special education due to the cultural and linguistic diversity of the student may lead to misplacement [Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), 2009; Ortiz et al., 2011; Hoover et al., 2016]. This is one of the major causes of confusion with children are accessing early intervention services. Therefore, it becomes imperative for all involved stakeholders to be mindful of their social and cultural approaches and beliefs (King et al., 2013).

Intersectionality of cultural and linguistic diversity and disability in the UK

According to a report published by the UK Department of Health (2001), despite statutory principles forbidding racism of any kind [Race Relations (Amendment) Act, 2000], the group characterized by cultural and linguistic diversity experiences challenges in accessing services and their families' needs are not adequately met. On a similar note, the Building Great Britain Report (2005) and the House of Commons Health and Social Care Committee (2019) have mentioned similar access issues for culturally and linguistically diverse children and their parents and stressed the need for universal approaches. Another important point in the Building Great Britain Report (2005) is that parents have limited opportunities to express themselves and raise their concerns.

On the other hand, the Equality Act (2010) strictly prohibits any kind of unfair treatment towards people with disabilities and those who care for them. This includes both direct and indirect forms of discrimination, which are defined as "the effect of disadvantaging persons with a disability." Similarly, in educational settings, the Department of Education and Department of Health (2015) makes it clear that no action leading to the exclusion of a child with a disability is allowed. Parents and the children themselves have the right to file complaints if they face any discrimination or attempts to exclude them. However, despite these protective regulations, several forms of exclusionary practices, including systemic forms such as off-rolling (Done et al., 2021) and societal forms such as a lack of an accessible environment and relationships (Goodley and Runswick-Cole, 2010), still persist and continue to influence the lives of both children and their parents.

Method of literature review

This literature review examined published primary research with the aim of exploring the experiences of parents in the UK who come from minority backgrounds and have a child with a disability. The studies included in this review met the following criteria: they (a) focused on parents who come from minority backgrounds and have a child with a disability, (b) were conducted in the UK, (c) were published in English, (c) were peer-reviewed and (d) were published between 2000–2023. Studies focusing on the experiences of refugee and asylum-seeker parents were excluded.

Search terms used included variations and combinations of the following keywords: Parents, children with disabilities, experiences, cultural and linguistic diversity, minority background, intersectionality, United Kingdom. These searches were applied to various databases via the Anglia Ruskin University Library's "all library collections" service, which included Medline, PsycINFO, Sociological Abstracts, ERIC, Web of Science, JSTOR, and Scopus. Additionally, internet searches were performed using Google Scholar. Other relevant publications were sought through the references from related publications.

Using the criteria mentioned above and search methods, a total of 27 studies were identified that met the review criteria. Descriptive information about the articles, including details about the article features, minority group studied, the aim of the research, participants, data collection techniques, methods, and results, were presented in Table 1, and these findings have been interpreted accordingly.

Results and discussion

To gain insight into the unique experiences at the intersection of cultural and linguistic diversity and disability, several studies have investigated the experiences of ethnic minority parents who have a child with a disability. These studies have illuminated the challenges faced by these groups and have highlighted the shortcomings of current services in addressing their needs. Table 1 provides a descriptive overview of these studies, including details such as the aim of the study, participants, methods, data collection techniques, and the findings of each study.

TABLE 1 Studies carried out on the intersectionality of disability and cultural and linguistic diversity in the UK.

Article	Minority group	Aim	Participants	Data collection	Methods	Results
Fazil et al. (2002)	Pakistani and Bangladeshi	Explore the experiences of parents who have children with learning disability and understand the compound of disability and culture	20 parents (15 Pakistani, 5 Bangladeshi)	Structured questionnaire Semi-structured interview	Interviews as part of an action research project/ Qualitative.	The problems that parents face are: (a) economic barriers, (b) communication problems with service providers arising from both lack of communication and language barriers, (c) limited support from extended family and lack of fulfilment of psychological support needs.
Bywaters et al. (2003)	Pakistani and Bangladeshi	Investigate the background of negative clichés in the views of professionals with children from an ethnic minority.	19 families	Semi-structured interview	Interviews as part of an action research project	The religious beliefs of families are perceived, but their effect is limited. A fatalistic approach does not mean that they do not support any help or education. Ableist and sexist approaches are more dominant in cliché views. There is a limitation on how informed parents are of their children's medical situation, and social constructs cause this situation to be interpreted incorrectly.
Hatton et al. (2003)	Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Indian, East African Asian	Build an in-depth understanding of the identification process experiences of parents have children with severe learning disabilities.	26 parents (qualitative) 136 parents (quantitative)	Semi-structured interview (with a smaller group) Structured quantitative interview	Mix method (Qualitative and Quantitative)	About half of the families suspected the issue, and mostly they applied to their GP for help. They think their GPs took the application seriously. The diagnostic process was carried out in English, regardless of family preferences, which caused confusion and a lack of information. After identification, the parents needed extra support to tell other people in the family, but they could not obtain it. A small number of parents thought that they were exposed to discrimination because of their ethnic background, but other parents mentioned that White staff members were more helpful than South Asian ones.
Hubert (2006)	Caribbean, Indian and East African	Exploring how services for parents are utilised, needs and barriers to access	30 people (19 women-11 men) caring for a person with learning disability	Informal Interview	Grounded theory approach/Qualitative	Carers' satisfaction is high, but services are limited and insufficient.
Raghavan and Waseem (2007)	Pakistani and Bangladeshi	Describing the services used by young people from South Asia with learning disabilities and mental health problems.	35 young people (26 men-9 women)	Semi-structured interview	Qualitative	People have been accessing services through GPs, social services, and volunteer organisations. There is an absence of knowledge of services; the problem is communication in a different language and a need for culturally responsive services.
Croot et al. (2008)	Pakistani families	Gain an understanding of how parents perceive the child's disability	16 parents	Interview	Qualitative	Parents have both religious and medical explanations for the cause of the child's disability. They used medical explanations to shoot down the cultural schemas about disability in their community.
Devapriam et al. (2008)	Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, and other south Asian groups White British, White Irish or other European	Check the level of stress and unfulfilled requirements in services	742 carers from South Asian or White background	Structured interview	Secondary data analysis	Need for care is more intense in the South Asian group, especially for the people who have health and psychological problems. Stress exists in both groups.

(Continued)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Article	Minority group	Aim	Participants	Data collection	Methods	Results
Durà-Vilà and Hodes (2009)	White British, South Asian, Black, Middle Eastern/Arab, White European, Mixed	Determine whether there is any difference in use and benefit from services based on ethno-cultural diversity	242 children (information collected from teachers from 4 different schools)	Cross-sectional survey	Cross-sectional study/ Quantitative	There is a statistically significant difference between ethnic groups. Family structure was found to be a predictor for service utilisation and social service community support.
Strand and Lindsay (2009)	All ethnic groups	Determine whether there is an overrepresentation of special education in any ethnic group compared with White British. The joint effects of socio-economic status, gender and age on rates are examined and the effect of ethnicity compared with socioeconomic status, gender, and age is studied.	6.469.113 children	Collected from Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC), Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI), free school meal (FSM)	Quantitative	Chinese and South Asian students are less numerous than other groups, and Pakistani students represented more. Also, when socioeconomic status is taken into consideration, Black African children are more likely than White British children to be in special education setting. Socioeconomic status and gender have a stronger correlation with disability status than ethnicity.
Hatton et al. (2010)	Majority and minority ethnic groups	Understand family perceptions of the reasons and explanations for challenging behaviours, family support systems and differences between and within groups	14 family members (7 minority ethnic groups, 7 majority ethnic groups)	Semi-structured interview	Phenomenology/ Qualitative	Family members from ethnic minorities tended to report negative experiences. The challenging behaviours varied in each individual. Although positive views did exist, most families reported limited support from the local community and services. They think their lives are intertwined with that of their son/daughter.
Bonell et al. (2012)	White British, Black or Black British, other	Understand the difference in experiences of two different groups with learning disability and mental health problems	32 people (for Delphi consultation) 24 people (for interview)	Likert scale questionnaire and Interview (Delphi Consultation)	Delphi consultation / Quantitative	Two groups have positive experiences of services, but the British Black group has fewer positive ratings.
Croot (2012)	Pakistani	Determine the components related to care of the child based on the perception of parents with children with learning disability and critique regarding cultural competence	11 parents and 1 grandparent	Interview	Qualitative	Participants focused on the relationship with professionals, in which these components are common in all ethnicities and cultural background.

(Continued)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Article	Minority group	Aim	Participants	Data collection	Methods	Results
Croot et al. (2012)	Pakistani	Discover how parents overcome living in the UK and having a child with learning disability	9 families (11 parents and 1 grandparent)	Interview	Qualitative	Childcare responsibility is shared between parents and their extended family support them in times of need. Family approach and levels of support from school differ. A number of families thought schools were helpful in the child's care provision, and a few parents believed that school was just a place for spending time and being cared for. One group also described challenges with school. Faith affects all components, including education, perceptions of the concept of disability and being a parent. Also, parents' attitudes to the difficult situation could change the cultural atmosphere.
Heer et al. (2012)	Indian Sikh and Pakistani Muslim	Discover cultural perceptions of caregiving by families with children with learning disability	4 Indian Sikh, 5 Pakistani Muslim parents	Focus group interview	Phenomenology/IPA	Interpretations of disability are that it is based on God's decision, and a result of bad behaviours and inadequate health care in pregnancy. The main problem of their children is having a communication issue. They feel anger and displeasure with their GP due to insufficient assessments and feel blamed by the service provider because of family marriages. They think having communication with personnel from the same cultural background is not helpful. They are anxious about the future lives of their children and need more help in their interactions.
Gilligan (2013)	Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslim families	Inform parents about cultural and religious misbeliefs about autism	16 parents	Observation (in training sessions) Interview (for feedback)	Qualitative	Most of the parents stated that they were satisfied with the training they received, and that their actions would have been different if they had received this input before. Also, talking about autism in a community and with people who share the same experiences is a relief.
Heer et al. (2014)	South Asian families	Address challenges and solutions based on service providers' thoughts, to provide culturally responsive care for people with learning disability	20 service providers working with South Asian families	Focus group interview	Phenomenology/IPA	The main challenge is the language barrier, and they are trying to overcome the challenges in five steps: frustration, building engagement, acceptance of diversity, accomplishment and searching for the right way for the future.
Heer et al. (2015)	South Asian families	Discover the effect of culture on the caring styles of parent who have children with learning disability	7 parents	Interview	Phenomenology/IPA	They have concerns about being vulnerable and lack of knowledge about safety. The early signs were based on speech, language, and social skills. Lack of knowledge about child development and the characteristics of disability caused delays in identification. The cultural community of family members has negative perceptions and higher expectations and directs the family to alternative treatments. Families have issues with the language, the two-faceted adaptation process (disability and UK) and their ongoing responsibilities.

(Continued)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Article	Minority group	Aim	Participants	Data collection	Methods	Results
Munroe et al. (2016)	African immigrants	Understand perception of having a child on the autism spectrum, and the caring experiences of African immigrant parents living in the UK	6 mothers	Semi-structured interview	Phenomenology/IPA	Having a child on the autism spectrum is affecting acculturation. There is a conflict between cultural beliefs and the medical approach. This causes confusion.
Sandhu et al. (2016)	Turkish speaking Turkish, Kurdish and Cypriot Turkish	Discover the migration stories of Turkish-speaking families with a child with an intellectual disability	5 families (22 family members)	Semi-structured interview	Qualitative/Narrative analysis	Before migration, the centre of their lives was caring for their children. Their reasons for migration are based on political motives or limited services for children with learning disability. When they came to the UK, they struggled to reach idealised UK facilities and lived with relatives. In their current situation, they cannot manage working life, and as for the education their children receive, they think "it is better than nothing." For the future, their expectation is to continue life in the UK without any anxiety about going back. Also, there is despair about the future.
Fox et al. (2017)	Somali migrant community	Evaluate the needs of families with children with autism and how health, education and care services can support them.	15 parents with children with autism	Interview	Community-based participatory research approach/Qualitative	The families had difficulty in making sense of the process due to a lack of knowledge about what autism is and cultural perception of the symptoms. They had to overcome their own lack of knowledge during the process. As the parents noticed the symptoms, referrals were made by the health visitor or nursery. Families whose diagnosis was carried out by a team experienced shock, denial, and sadness. Access to services and the process are more challenging in that the families are not familiar with English and specific terminology. Social service applications are less easy due to long waiting times or fear of the child been taken away if they are seen to be having difficulty.
Oliver and Singal (2017)	Migrants from Pakistan, Bulgaria and Poland	Explore the reflections of the teachers and parents of children with disabilities who are in a special education school in the East of England regarding their educational experience within the intersection of migration and disability.	Teachers: 6 head teachers/teacher/ teaching assistant Parents: 4 migrant parents who have a child with a disability	Interview	Case study method/ Qualitative	While teachers emphasized the importance of the partnership with the parents, they mentioned language, lack of knowledge regarding the previous history of parents and the long working hours of the parents as barriers to involving parents in education. They emphasised the wrong placement of the students because of the language barrier. Parents tend to compare their home country and the UK. Based on that comparison, their approach to the disability evolved, and they were pleased with the services. Linguistically and ethnically diverse migrant support staff is mentioned as the key to a successful parent-teacher partnership in terms of maintaining communication.

(Continued)

TABLE 1 (Continued)

Article	Minority group	Aim	Participants	Data collection	Methods	Results
Rizvi (2017)	British Pakistani	Explore the experiences, attitudes and role of mothers who have children with learning disability	5 mothers	Semi-structured interview		Mothers were the first ones to realise the difference in a child. Perceptions of disability are shaped by the provision for children, religious attitudes, and interactions over time. Also, perceptions of disability affect decisions about schooling.
Durling et al. (2018)	Bangladeshi	Exploring how the cultural approach and applications affect the experiences of Bangladeshi parents who have children with learning disability	4 parents, 4 family members and 6 community members	Interview	Thematic analysis/ Qualitative	Three themes were highlighted by participants: being unfamiliar with the terminolgy of learning disability, having a common and shared life culture, and sharing parenting roles.
Rizvi (2018)	British Pakistani	Understand maternal preferences regarding the educational setting of a child with disabilities.	8 mothers	Semi-structured interview	Intersectional Framework/Qualitative	The mothers stated that the main factor in decision-making is the child's needs. The general preference is for special education schools which have a shared area with a mainstream school, but they also prefer special education schools to have a more inclusive appearance. There is a need to improve inclusiveness in school systems.
Selman et al. (2018)	Somali	Exploring how parents overcome or resist labelling.	15 parents have children with autism	Interview	Community-based participatory research approach	Parents are being exposed to discrimination via labelling. The community does not have descriptive words for autism, and they are describing children as "sick, naughty, different." This situation causes them to be socially isolated.
Aabe et al. (2019)	Somali	Perceptions and views of parents regarding autism, identification of autism, experiences and challenges while accessing services	15 Somali parents	Interview	Community-based participatory research approach	Cultural beliefs in the community, behaviour problems, and having a disability increase hidden trials and keep children from accessing early services.
Hussein et al. (2019)	Somali parents	Discover the access to information and awareness of parents who have children on the autism spectrum Determine the understanding of typical or atypical development Replicate a similar study with a different sample in the UK	32 parents who have children with autism ($n = 16$) or without autism ($n = 16$)	Interview with vignettes Semi-structured interview	Quantitative and Qualitative methods	Somali parents have inadequate information and bias about autism. They are ready to identify their children with a label, and for that reason, people tend to hide autism. They think autism does not exist in their country and have limited facilities and services. Faith is a facilitator for acceptance, but at the same time, it affects their intervention and concepts of the reason for autism. There is a need to contribute to supporting their knowledge, awareness, and capacity building.

Aims

The academic studies conducted in the UK have focused on exploring the intersectionality of cultural and linguistic diversity and disability. These studies aim to shed light on various barriers and challenges faced by ethnic minority families with children with disabilities while also providing unique insights into the experiences of these families. The factors investigated include:

- The influence of religion on parental views regarding disability (Bywaters et al., 2003; Croot et al., 2008, 2012; Heer et al., 2012; Rizvi, 2017; Aabe et al., 2019; Hussein et al., 2019).
- The importance of cultural factors in shaping the experiences and perceptions of families (Fazil et al., 2002; Hatton et al., 2010; Heer et al., 2012; Selman et al., 2018; Aabe et al., 2019; Hussein et al., 2019).
- The role of language and communication barriers in creating challenges for families and service providers (Fazil et al., 2002; Bywaters et al., 2003; Hatton et al., 2003; Raghavan and Waseem, 2007; Heer et al., 2014; Sandhu et al., 2016; Fox et al., 2017).

Participants

In the context of United Kingdom's diverse cultural landscape, extensive research has been dedicated to understanding the experiences of minority groups. Among the studies reviewed, seven studies focused on a variety of minority groups, while 17 studies specifically focused on the experiences of South Asian participants, including those of Indian, Bangladeshi, and/or Pakistani origin. According to Office for National Statistics (2021), the largest ethnic group in the UK, other than the White group, was "Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh," comprising 9.3% of the population.

Six studies included African parents, and four of these specifically focused on Somali parents. Notably, a study conducted by Barnevik-Olsson et al. (2008) in Stockholm, compared Somali and non-Somali background children with regard to the overrepresentation of autism. The study found that the prevalence of autism in children of Somali origin was three to four times higher than among non-Somali background children, and all the autistic Somali background children in their study had a comorbid learning disability. The significant representation of demographic groups could lead to increased research enquiries in these areas.

Additionally, one study focused on Turkish, Kurdish, and Cypriot Turkish parents. The Essex County Council (2011) noted that child second language learners of Turkish origin experienced challenges in special education referrals because issues related to a disability and language problems could be confused. Notably, research on children of Turkish origin with a disability and their parents is very limited in England (Sandhu et al., 2016). This emphasizes the importance of addressing the specific needs and experiences of this underrepresented group in research and services.

The majority of studies analyzed in this review specifically examined parents from South Asian backgrounds. However, it is important to note that cultural influences on parenting may vary considerably between South Asian countries and those coming from other cultural and ethnic backgrounds (e.g., Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America). Therefore, considering this diversity is crucial when interpreting the findings of this review. The United Kingdom's diverse population necessitates additional research involving various communities to better understand the intricacies of each culture and its interface with the prevailing societal framework.

Methods

The majority of studies included employed qualitative research methods, utilizing a range of methodological approaches such as; phenomenology (Hatton et al., 2010; Heer et al., 2012, 2014, 2015; Munroe et al., 2016), collaborative approaches like action research (Fazil et al., 2002; Bywaters et al., 2003) and community-based participatory research (Fox et al., 2017; Selman et al., 2018; Aabe et al., 2019), intersectional frameworks (Rizvi, 2017; Rizvi, 2018), case-study approaches (Oliver and Singal, 2017), narrative approaches (Sandhu et al., 2016), and grounded theory (Hubert, 2006). While a few studies incorporated both quantitative and qualitative methods (Hatton et al., 2003; Hussein et al., 2019), four studies used quantitative survey designs through secondary data analysis (Devapriam et al., 2008), cross-sectional studies (Durà-Vilà and Hodes, 2009), and Delphi consultation (Bonell et al., 2012). The reviewed studies employed diverse methodological approaches, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter and indicating a significant reliance on qualitative approaches to explore the topic.

Quantitative and qualitative approaches each have their own strengths and weaknesses. Quantitative methods, particularly survey designs, facilitate efficient data collection, examination of attitudes and opinions, and the surveying of geographically dispersed individuals (Creswell, 2015). On the other hand, qualitative research plays a crucial role in generating suitable questions, developing hypotheses, and providing a deeper understanding of human processes (Bölte, 2014). While survey designs allow researchers to identify trends and gain initial insights into experiences, qualitative methods offer a more comprehensive approach. Phenomenology, in particular, was frequently employed in the studies reviewed. Its focus on the meaning of the relationship between individuals (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016) and their world holds promise for exploring life experiences and obtaining profound insights into them (Gay et al., 2009; Taylor et al., 2016). Nonetheless, it is worth noting that the reliance on specific study designs by the same research groups highlights a lack of variety in the application of these approaches.

Data collection techniques

In line with the chosen methods, interviews, which are considered one of the fundamental data collection techniques in qualitative research (Creswell, 2015), were widely employed in the studies. Through open-ended conversations, participants were able to share their stories and emotions, providing researchers with a rich understanding of the complex dimensions of disability within cultural contexts. In-depth interviews facilitated insights into the lived experiences and unique challenges faced by culturally and linguistically diverse families with disabilities. For instance, Hubert (2006) employed informal interviews to explore the perspectives of individuals caring for an individual with a learning disability, encompassing various Caribbean, Indian, and East African backgrounds.

Results

Among these groups, *the influence of religion on perspectives regarding disability* emerges as a significant common factor. Notably, Heer et al. (2012) focused their study on Indian Sikh and Pakistani Muslim participants, shedding light on how parents within these communities frequently relied on religious definitions and coping mechanisms to interpret their child's disability. This reliance on religious beliefs raises questions about the potential implications for educational psychology. Bywaters et al. (2003) revealed that despite believing that the lives of children with disabilities were in God's hands, Pakistani and Bangladeshi families still sought professional support. While this suggests an inclination to integrate secular assistance, it is crucial to examine the extent to which religious perspectives may limit or enhance the effectiveness of educational interventions. Similarly, Croot et al. (2008) found that Pakistani families often interpreted disability as a test or punishment from God or as God's will and a gift. Such interpretations, rooted in religious ideologies, raise concerns regarding the potential impact on parental attitudes and expectations regarding their children's educational experiences.

Likewise, Heer et al. (2012) highlighted that Indian Sikh and Pakistani Muslim parents perceived their child's disability as either God's decision or as a consequence of their own past actions. These explanations, based on religious beliefs, may shape parental attitudes towards seeking specialized educational support and addressing their children's unique learning needs. Rizvi (2017) reported that British Pakistani parents regarded their children with disabilities as both a blessing and a punishment from God while concurrently drawing strength from their faith to cope with the challenges. These intertwined notions of blessings and punishments, rooted in religious convictions, may have implications for how parents engage with educational professionals and their receptiveness to inclusive educational practices. Moreover, Hussein et al. (2019) uncovered the fact that Somali parents viewed their faith as instrumental in accepting a child with autism. However, their occasional attribution of the cause of autism to supernatural entities like 'jinn' and reliance on faith-based figures like sheikhs for support raise questions about the potential impact on seeking evidence-based educational interventions and fostering a comprehensive understanding of autism within the community.

The findings of studies conducted in Australia and Thailand parallel observations in UK-based studies, emphasizing the significant role of religion in shaping attitudes towards disability. King et al. (2016) found that participants from Southeast and South Asia in Australia described disability as the result of 'karma' or punishment for past wrongdoings. This negative perception led to poor treatment, stigma, and feelings of guilt and shame among individuals with disabilities. Similarly, King and King (2011) observed stigmatization based on religious beliefs in Thailand, where disability was seen as a consequence of karma or past deeds, resulting in mistreatment and limited advocacy. Addressing these cultural beliefs and biases is crucial for promoting inclusive education and support for individuals with disabilities in diverse cultural contexts.

One of the most consistent points is *the importance of cultural factors in shaping the experiences and perceptions of families having a child with a disability*. For example, Heer et al. (2012) found that cultural beliefs about disability, such as the belief that it is caused by bad behaviors during pregnancy, can impact how families manage their child's condition. Similarly, in Chinese communities, parents may be held responsible for their child's disability, leading to stigmatization and reluctance to seek essential services (Liu and Fisher, 2017). Bywaters et al. (2003) also revealed that professionals working with children with disabilities from minority ethnic backgrounds may have limited views due to ableist and sexist approaches, lack of information, and incorrect interpretation of cultural and social constructs. However, other studies, such as Croot et al. (2012) and Gilligan (2013), highlight that cultural beliefs can also shape attitudes towards care and treatment, emphasizing the need for culturally responsive approaches to education and training. These findings demonstrate the importance of greater cultural awareness and sensitivity among professionals working with children from diverse backgrounds. Despite the negative experiences reported by families from minority ethnic backgrounds (Hatton et al., 2010), Su (2007) found that Taiwanese immigrant families with disabled children expressed overall satisfaction with their lives in the United States. They attributed this to the integration of their own cultural values into parenting and practical skills learned from the mainstream culture, which empowered them to deal with their child's disabilities more effectively.

Another common point is *the role of language and communication barriers* in creating challenges for families and service providers. Fazil et al. (2002) found that Pakistani and Bangladeshi parents who have children with disabilities face multiple barriers to accessing support, including economic barriers, communication problems, and limited support from extended family. This issue is particularly acute for families who have recently migrated, as they may lack familiarity with the culture and customs of the host country, which may result in significant obstacles in accessing basic services, such as housing, nutrition, and heating, when they arrive in the UK. Consistently, an integrative review of 25 studies conducted in various countries, including Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States, identified a comparable issue among immigrant parents who have a child with a disability. Additionally, the review highlighted that a lack of awareness of basic rights hindered parents' help-seeking behavior (Alsharaydeh et al., 2019).

Due to these barriers, parents may struggle to communicate effectively with social services and may not know what is expected of them. In order to address this issue, it is crucial for individuals to seek out support systems that can improve their information literacy regarding the social and formal sources of the community and government. Charities such as Doosti[1] and IMECE[2] aim to promote the integration of migrants and refugees into the community and to support them in building the capacity to access support services independently.

The process of identifying and accessing disability services for children is often challenging, particularly when the diagnostic

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[1] https://doostisalford.com/

[2] https://imece.org.uk/tr/

procedures are conducted in English, as this can lead to confusion amongst parents/guardians who do not speak the language. Studies conducted by Heer et al. (2014), Fox et al. (2017), and Oliver and Singal (2017) emphasize the difficulties faced by families who are caring a child with a disability and do not speak the language of the host country, resulting in increased barriers to accessing services, communicating with providers, and navigating complex care systems.

Similarly, Hubert (2006) found that although carers express satisfaction with services, these remain limited and inadequate. These challenges align with findings from other countries, where parents' limited proficiency in the dominant language also hampers effective communication with service providers and their understanding of available services (Miller-Gairy and Saul Mofya, 2015; Sakai et al., 2019). The absence of translated materials compounds the language barrier (Sakai et al., 2019). Moreover, the use of specialized terminology by educators and medical professionals poses additional challenges for parents in comprehending and accessing services (Jegatheesan et al., 2010; You and Rosenkoetter, 2014; Khanlou et al., 2017).

These findings underscore the universal nature of barriers faced by immigrant families with children with disabilities. Regardless of the country, language proficiency and cultural perceptions of child development significantly influence parents' ability to access services, comprehend the diagnostic process, and effectively engage with healthcare professionals. In order to address these challenges, it is imperative to develop inclusive practices that consider linguistic diversity and cultural beliefs and that provide accessible resources. Culturally appropriate explanations and support from professionals are essential in overcoming these barriers (Kizildag et al., 2023). By embracing these strategies, equitable and effective support can be provided to families navigating the process of identifying and accessing disability services.

Conclusion and recommendations

In conclusion, this paper has tried to explore the intersectionality of cultural and linguistic diversity and disability, revealing a unique set of challenges faced by parents from a minority ethnic background who have a child with a disability. By examining the experiences of parents, this research highlights the pressing need to address cultural and linguistic factors in service provision. The findings consistently highlight a lack of knowledge about the specific nature of the needs of children with disabilities and their parents, resulting in communication challenges between families and experts. Moreover, cultural barriers hinder effective communication during the referral and diagnostic process. Immigrant families often face economic hardships, compounded by limited support from extended family networks influenced by cultural structures. It is essential to recognize and address these barriers comprehensively. Improving communication channels and providing comprehensive support can help bridge the gap between families and experts, ensuring that children with disabilities receive the specific and appropriate care they need. Additionally, psychological assistance should be made available to these families to help them cope with the unique challenges they face. Upon consideration of the unique insights provided by each study, common themes and issues emerge, underscoring the significance of cultural and linguistic factors, comprehensive support, and improved communication channels for serving families and children with disabilities.

Moving forward, it is recommended that researchers prioritize conducting systematic literature reviews and review background articles. This approach provides a comprehensive understanding of the topic, identifies knowledge gaps, and establishes a solid foundation for future research. Additionally, in order to address the challenges faced by minority ethnic groups with disabled children, researchers should focus on action research and intervention studies. By implementing and evaluating interventions, evidence-based solutions can be developed to support these families effectively. The findings of the articles reviewed in this paper have important policy implications, emphasizing the need for advocacy efforts to inform policymakers about the specific needs and experiences of minority groups with children with disabilities. This can lead to the development of inclusive policies and the allocation of resources to better support these families. Furthermore, while this paper contributes to the recognition of intersectionality in disability studies, it is focused on the experiences of parents who have a child with a disability and come from a minority ethnic background. Further studies may expand the literature on the lived experiences of minority ethnic people and children with disabilities. Lastly, future research should strive to include a more diverse range of ethnic backgrounds within minority groups to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the experiences and challenges faced by all minority groups with children with disabilities.

Author contributions

GK contributed to the conception of the study, reviewed the literature, and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. PC contributed to writing the discussion of the literature and improving the manuscript. All authors contributed to the manuscript revision, read, and approved the submitted version.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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