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INTRODUCTION

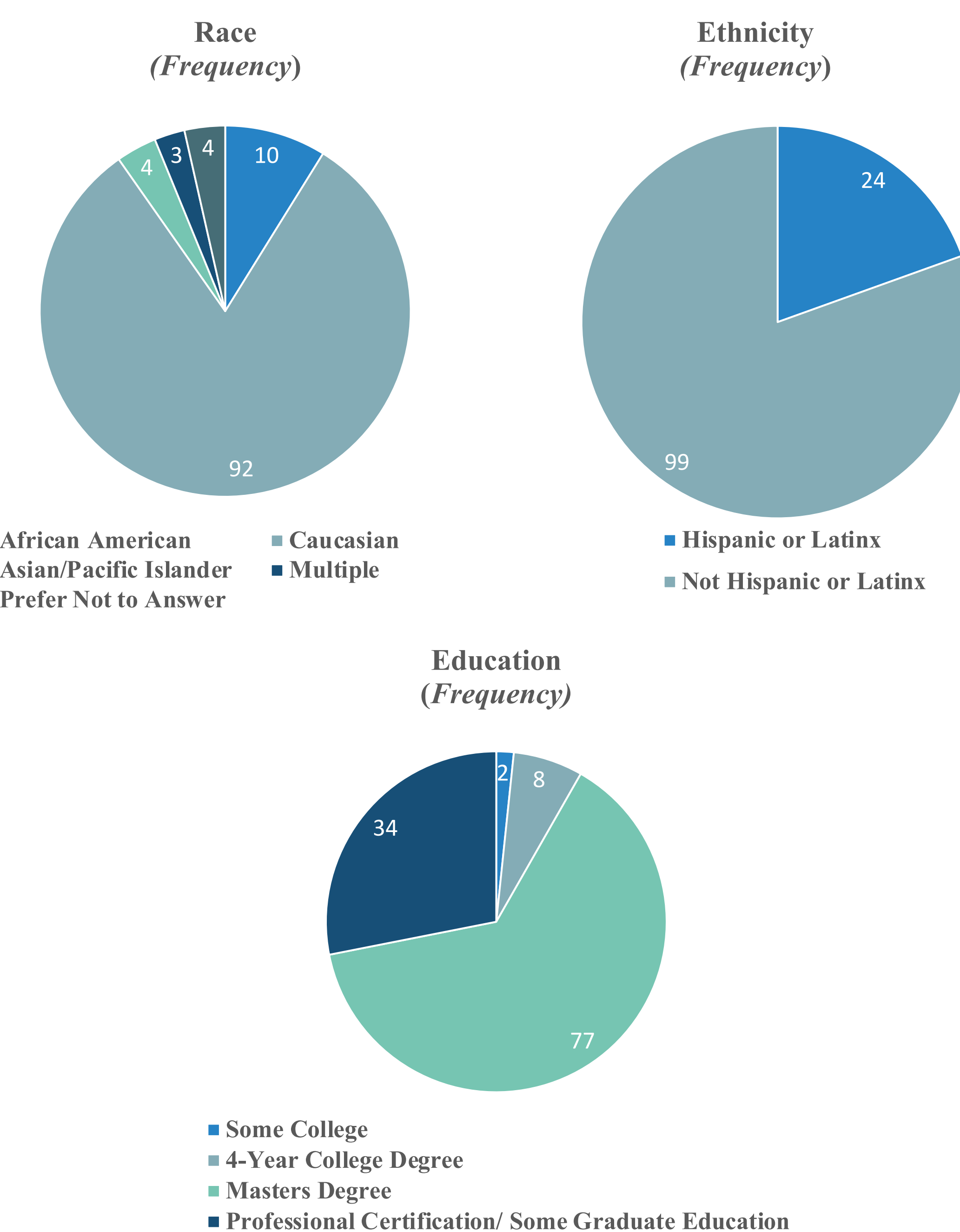
Students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) make up the largest growing segment of students receiving special education in the US¹. New school transitions (i.e., pre-school to kindergarten, elementary to middle school, and middle to high school transitions) are particularly worrisome for students with ASD, due to the associated disruption in routine and increased social and academic demands². In order for pre-transition teachers to better support students with ASD during transitions, it is important to first understand how teachers perceive the effectiveness of current transition practices and their students' transition success.

OBJECTIVE

This study aims to explore the teacher and child related factors that predict pre-transition teachers' perceptions regarding their students' upcoming transition.

PARTICIPANTS

Data were collected at four sites in the surrounding areas of Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Rochester, and Sacramento.



METHODS

Pre-transition teachers (n=126) were surveyed regarding their:

- Perception of aspects of their student's transition (**TEQ**)
 - TEQ 1:** How effective has communication been about the transition process between you and the child's current school team during this school year? (*5-point Likert*)
 - TEQ 2:** Based on current transition planning, how successful do you think the child's transition will be to his/her new school? (*5-point Likert*)
 - TEQ 3:** How much transition support planning has been provided to you by the child's current school team during this school year? (*5-point Likert*)
 - TEQ 4:** How satisfied are you with the way the child's current school team is preparing them for their future school? (*5-point Likert*)
- Burnout & Callousness (**Maslach Burnout Inventory³**)
 - Burnout:** I feel burned out from my work (*7-point Likert*)
 - Callousness:** I have become more callous towards people since I took this job. (*7-point Likert*)
- Network Support (**Social Dynamics of Intervention, SoDi⁴**)
 - Teachers were asked to identify 5 people from the students' home/community and 5 people from their own professional community that have supported their students transition during the past 6 weeks.
- Student problem behavior (**School Situations Questionnaire; SSQ⁵**)
 - Teachers were asked to rate the presence/absence of challenges in 9 classroom situations.
 - Students were assigned a score out of 9, indicating the number of situations that teachers identified as challenging.

DATA ANALYSIS

- Descriptive analyses were conducted to characterize participant demographics, and teachers' reported perceptions related to the upcoming transition.
- GLMMs were conducted to determine how **teacher's burnout, teachers' network support and student's problem behavior** contribute to teachers' perceptions of their students' upcoming transition.
 - Fixed effects:** Teachers' years of experience teaching special education, student's placement, type of transition, site, cohort and time.
 - Random effects:** Nested variable for teachers within schools.

RESULTS

Teachers in this sample reported that they:

- Received *some support* from their current school team
- Were *mostly satisfied* with their communication with their current school team
- Were *mostly satisfied* with the way their current school team prepared the student for transition.
- Felt that their students' upcoming transition will be *somewhat successful*.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Teacher and Student Variables

	M (n)	SD
Teacher Variables		
Effective Communication (TEQ 1)	3.13 (161)	.115
Transition Success (TEQ 2)	3.19 (163)	.077
Transition Planning (TEQ 3)	2.72 (162)	.111
Support		
Satisfaction with Preparation (TEQ 4)	3.10 (162)	.108
Burnout	2.07 (159)	.123
Callousness	.78 (159)	.094
Network Support Size	4.99 (161)	.183
Student Variables		
SSQ	4.84 (167)	.225

Predicting teachers' perceptions of students' transitions:

- Lower Teacher's burnout** ($F(6,86) = 2.556, p < 0.05$) and **fewer student problem behaviors** ($F(1,115) = 5.549, p < 0.05$) predicted how successful teachers expected their students' transition to be.
- Larger teachers' support network** ($F(1,110) = 4.120, p < 0.05$) predicted more teacher satisfaction with the way that their current school team was preparing their students for the upcoming transition.

CONCLUSIONS

The current study finds that:

- Teachers' perception of **students' successful transition** is predicted by
 - Fewer challenging student behaviors in the classroom.
 - Lower levels of teacher burnout.
- Teachers' **satisfaction with the way current school team prepared the student for transition** is predicted by
 - Size of teachers' network of support.
- These findings suggest that, in order to facilitate successful transitions, special attention should be given to supporting the health and functioning of both individual team members and the overall team, including:
 - Team-based approach to transition planning.
 - Addressing students' challenging behaviors.
 - Addressing teacher burnout.

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