



A Study of Life Satisfaction of Parents of Mentally Challenged and Normal Children

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Abstract:

The purpose of this research is a study of life satisfaction of parents of mentally challenged and normal children. In this study 20 parents of mentally challenged children and 20 parents of normal children (total 40) were taken as sample. The purposive and accidental sampling techniques were used for selection of the sample. Life Satisfaction Scale by Q.G. Alam and R. Shrivastav were used as tool. The 't' test was used for the analysis of data.

Result shows that parents of normal children have higher life satisfaction as compared to parents of mentally challenged children.

Keywords: *Mentally challenged children, Normal children,*

1. Introduction

Parenting is a privileged responsibility of both mother and father together of preparing the child for society. Parents are the first role model for their children. Children always observe and adapt their parents' language, attitudes, personality characteristics, actions and behavior. They build up their own personality strengths, characteristics, and learn how to cope with stressful situations based on their ego strengths and value system as per their parents. Through parents, children learn in their childhood that how to be good worker, spouse and parent and also good human being.

The parents influence the development, socialization and well-being of their children and children in turn affect the well-being of their parents (Frank J. Floyd, Kenta A., 1993). Birth of every child is most gratifying experience in a couple's life. Child brings along with him a major change in social, interpersonal, emotional, economical, psychological and physical state. Every parent has their expectations and dreams for their children.

Hereditary, brain injury, genetics, delivery complications and other factors could affect the child's normal development. This leads to the occurrence of abnormal cognitive, behavior, psychological and physical patterns and also socio-emotional problems, which could be incapacitating and have a lifelong effect on the development of the child.

Birth of the special child is a major shock for the parents and has distressing effects on social, family, psychological, emotional, economical and interpersonal relationship of the parents. It affects parenting skills, parenting attitude, which in turn effects the psychological, social, emotional and personality development of the child. The Intelligence Quotient (IQ) 70 and below indicated the range of mental retardation from mild to profound level. Special child has its special ways of education, training, reaction and behavior as compared to normal child. They are also a part of our society and equally important for our social constitution. To help special need children it is necessitate that their parents are healthier and happier.

All over the world, research work is being done to understand parental attitudes, their emotional and reaction state, anxiety, frustration, adjustment, life satisfaction, mental health etc. and with every

research our understanding is being enriched to help professionals, researchers, society and parents themselves to extend a healthier and more supportive and encouraging atmosphere and relationship with special need children. Parenting life satisfaction and mental retardations, all these factors have been accurately been studied in this research.

Life satisfaction is the way people show their emotions and feelings (moods) and how they feel about their directions and options for the future. It is a measure of well-being and may be assessed in terms of mood, satisfaction with relations with others and with achieved goals, self-concepts, and self-perceived ability to cope with daily life challenges. It is having a favorable attitude of one's life as a whole rather than an assessment of current feelings. Life satisfaction has been measured in relation to economic standing, amount of education, experiences, and residence, as well as many other topics.

Life satisfaction is an overall assessment of feelings and attitudes about one's life at a particular point in time ranging from negative to positive. It is one of three major indicators of well-being: life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect (Diener, 1984). Ruut Veenhoven (1993) has best summarized Life Satisfaction; "Life satisfaction is the degree to which a person positively evaluates the overall quality of his/her life as-a-whole." According to Cribb (2000), life-satisfaction is one of the pointers of 'apparent' quality of life along with other indicators of mental and physical health. It is referred as an assessment of the overall conditions of existence as derived from a comparison of one's aspiration to one's actual achievement. According to Diener, Oishi, & Lucas (2003), it is assumed that the less the incongruity between the individual's desires and achievements, the more life satisfaction he/she has. Buetell (2006) suggests that life satisfaction is attributable to a family of personality, genetic, and social-cognitive factors such as goal-directed activity, self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and environmental support.

Hina Ayaz Habib, Alia Asmat, and Sabahat Naseem (2016) investigated the relationship between satisfaction with life and perceived social support of parents having children with intellectual disabilities. For this purpose, 66 parents were approached. Results indicate that satisfaction which is person's personal evaluation of self is related to the support that they perceive from others. Support gives us relief and work as an asset when someone is in a stipulation of dissatisfaction. Furthermore, supplementary results reflect that social support is a predictor of satisfaction among parents. When parents perceive that they are getting support from society, they would be satisfied with their lives and when they perceive that they are not supported by the society, they would be dissatisfied. The identification of underlying factors generates the findings to bring the fact to light that ample attention should be paid to the aspect of parents' emotional and social life so that, they might be able to control their emotional weakness and which will help them to provide a healthier atmosphere at home to their children and family as well. Strachan (2005) found that the fathers of disabled children were less satisfied with their life as compared to the fathers of children without any disability; however, social support plays a major role in managing stressful life circumstances. Ahmadpanah (2001) have shown mothers of mentally retarded children compared to those of the normal children have generally lower health levels, more stress and lower life satisfaction and psychological well being level. Singer (2006) indicated that mothers of the disabled children suffer more from depression and their general health level is at greater risk. Bumin et al. (2008), investigated anxiety, depression and life equality among mother with disabled children. Results of the research revealed that such mothers are more anxious and depressed. An increase of depression and anxiety level will worsen life satisfaction. Furthermore, mothers of healthy children act much better in terms of professional performance than mothers with mental retardation. Emergence of disability among the children will cause emotional disorders and higher economic problems.

2. Objective

- To study life satisfaction of parents of mentally challenged and normal children.

3. Hypothesis

Ho₁: There is no significant difference between the mean scores of life satisfaction of parents of mentally challenged and normal children.

4. Variables

4.1 Independent Variable:

In present study parents of mentally challenged and normal children are taken as independent variables.

4.2 Dependent variable

The dependent variable is the score of life satisfaction which is obtained by the each subject on relevant test.

4.3 Control Variable

- Only those parents were selected whose children's age is between 10 to 20 years.
- Only working parents were selected for the study.

5. Sample

In this study 20 parents of mentally challenged children and 20 parents of normal children (total 40) were taken as sample from Ahmadabad city of Gujarat state. The purposive and accidental sampling techniques were used for selection of the sample. Parents of mentally challenged children were selected from Blind People Association. Parents of normal children were selected from Loyla School.

6. Tool

Life Satisfaction Scale by Q.G. Alam and R. Shrivastav were used as tool. The scale has 60 items. Every item is to be responded either in yes or no. There is no other alternative. Every 'yes' response is assigned 1 mark and 'no' response is assigned 0 mark. Maximum score is 60 and minimum score is 0 marks. The higher the score more is the life satisfaction. Test-retest reliability of this scale is 0.84., and validity is 0.82.

7. Procedure

After established rapport, life satisfaction scale was administrating individually to every subject. The responses of scale have scored as per scoring key. The obtained data from 40 subjects were analyzed with the help of mean, and 't' test.

7.1 Result and Discussion

Table1: Showing Result of t on Score of Life Satisfaction of Parents of Mentally Challenged and Normal Children

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	MD	SED	t Value	Significance
Parents of Mentally Challenged Children	20	36.78	6.67	6.11	2.02	3.02	0.05
Parents of Normal Children	20	42.89	6.11				

Table 2: Showing Mean Scores of Life Satisfaction of Parents of Mentally Challenged and Normal Children

Group	Parents of Mentally Challenged Children	Parents of Normal Children
MEAN	36.78	42.89
N	20	20

As mentioned in the table 1, calculated t is 3.02, which is significant at 0.05 levels of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is not accepted. It can be concluded that there is significant difference between the mean scores of life satisfaction of parents of mentally challenged and normal children.

Table 2 shows that the mean score of parents of mentally challenged children is 36.78 and the mean score of parents of normal children is 42.89. So, it can be concluded that parents of normal children have higher life satisfaction than parents of mentally challenged children by getting high mean score.

All parents want for a healthy child but, some parents though not by their choice, are forced into situation of having a child with disability. Generally it is seen that mentally challenged child is not well accepted in society. Their parents find more difficulties to cope with non acceptance of their children. Mother of mentally challenged child face higher stress and pressure, as compare to mother of normal child as she has owning the major responsibilities of bringing up the child. Mothers of mentally challenged children have continued to struggle among meeting the household work, job and disabled child's extra needs. Because of multiple conflicts and day to day stress, they have more health related problems and psychological issues as compared to mothers of normal children. Fathers usually take long time to regulate with the situation of having a disabled child. Usually they do not share their problems with others and hiding their true feelings, which make more difficult for them to adjust in a healthy way. Parents of mentally challenged children have more marital problems because of the conflict of sharing the additional demands for caring of the child. Sexual problems may also arise because of fatigue, lack of privacy and fear of birth of another child.

Inability to perform routine work, poor interpersonal relationship, marital conflicts, additional responsibilities and financial crisis effect life satisfaction of parents of mentally challenged children.

8. Conclusion

- Life satisfaction of parents of normal children is higher than parents of mentally challenged children.

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