

Psychological Well-Being Among the Parents of Developmentally Disabled Children and Typically Developing Children

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Abstract

The present study examines the psychological well-being of parents of typically developing children and parents of children with developmental disabilities. A descriptive survey method was adopted for the study. The sample consisted of 100 parents, including 49 parents of typically developing children and 51 parents of children with developmental disabilities. Psychological well-being was assessed across dimensions such as satisfaction, efficiency, sociability, mental health, and interpersonal relations using a standardized scale. The data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and independent samples t-test. The findings revealed that parents of typically developing children scored higher on most dimensions of psychological well-being. Significant differences were observed in efficiency, sociability, mental health, and interpersonal relations, whereas no significant difference was found in the dimension of satisfaction. The results indicate that parents of children with developmental disabilities experience comparatively lower psychological well-being. The study highlights the need for psychological support and intervention programs for parents. It also emphasizes the role of educational institutions in promoting parental well-being. Overall, the study contributes to understanding the mental health needs of parents in special and inclusive settings.

Keywords: Psychological Well-being, Parents, Developmentally Disabled Children, Typically Developing Children.

Introduction:

Psychological well-being is an essential aspect of human life that reflects an individual's mental health, emotional balance, life satisfaction, and ability to cope with daily challenges. It refers to a positive state of functioning in which individuals feel satisfied with their lives, maintain healthy relationships, and effectively manage stress and emotional difficulties. Psychological well-being is particularly important in family life, as parents play a crucial role in nurturing, guiding, and supporting their children's development. Parenting is a demanding responsibility that requires emotional stability, patience, and adaptability. The psychological well-being of parents directly influences family relationships, parenting practices, and the overall development of children.

When parents possess good psychological well-being, they are better able to provide emotional support, maintain positive interactions, and manage stressful situations effectively. However, parenting challenges can become more complex when parents raise children with developmental disabilities such as intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorder, cerebral palsy, or other neurodevelopmental conditions. These children often require continuous care, special education, medical attention, and emotional support. As a result, parents may experience higher levels of stress, anxiety, social isolation, and emotional burden compared to parents of typically developing children. Several studies have shown that parents of developmentally disabled children often face psychological challenges due to caregiving responsibilities, financial pressures, limited social support, and concerns about the future of their children. These challenges may influence their psychological well-being, emotional stability, and quality of life. In contrast, parents of Typically Developing Children may encounter typical parenting challenges related to education, behavior management, and social development, but the intensity of stress may differ.

Understanding the psychological well-being of parents in both groups is therefore essential for developing effective support systems, counselling services, and intervention programs. By comparing psychological well-being among parents of developmentally disabled children and parents of Typically Developing Children, the present study seeks to provide insights into their emotional experiences and coping patterns. The findings may contribute to the development of family support strategies that promote better mental health and well-being among parents.

Review of Literature:

Smith, L. E., Greenberg, J. S., and Seltzer, M. M. (2019) examined the psychological well-being of parents raising children with developmental disabilities. The study found that parents of children with developmental disabilities reported lower levels of psychological well-being and higher stress compared to parents of typically developing children. The findings highlighted that caregiving responsibilities and behavioural challenges significantly influence parental mental health.

Khamis, V. (2020) investigated the psychological well-being and stress levels among parents of children with intellectual disabilities. The results revealed that parents of children with intellectual disabilities experienced greater emotional strain and lower psychological well-being compared to parents of Typically Developing Children. Social support and coping strategies were found to play an important role in improving parental well-being.

Peer, J. W., and Hillman, S. B. (2021) studied stress, resilience, and psychological well-being among parents of children with autism spectrum disorder. The findings indicated that parents caring for children with autism reported lower psychological well-being due to caregiving demands, social isolation, and emotional exhaustion. However, resilience and family support were identified as important factors in maintaining psychological health.

Yadav, S., and Sharma, R. (2022) examined psychological well-being among parents of children with intellectual disabilities in comparison with parents of Typically Developing Children. The study reported a significant difference between the two groups, indicating that parents of children with disabilities experienced higher emotional stress and lower levels of psychological well-being.

Patel, M., and Desai, H. (2023) conducted a comparative study on psychological well-being among parents of special needs children and parents of Typically Developing Children. The results showed that parents of children with developmental disabilities reported greater emotional burden and lower life satisfaction, emphasizing the need for counseling services and support programs for such parents.

Statement of problem: “Psychological Well-Being Among the Parents of Developmentally Disabled Children and Typically Developing Children”

Significance of the Study: The present study is important because psychological well-being plays a crucial role in maintaining mental health, emotional balance, and effective parenting. Parents of developmentally disabled children often experience higher levels of stress, anxiety, and emotional burden due to continuous caregiving responsibilities. Studying their psychological well-being helps in understanding their emotional needs and coping abilities. The findings may help psychologists, educators, and counsellors design support programs for parents of children with disabilities. The study also provides a comparison between parents of Typically Developing Children and developmentally disabled children in terms of psychological adjustment. Such knowledge can help in improving family support systems and intervention strategies. It may also assist special educators and rehabilitation professionals in planning parent guidance programs. Ultimately, the study contributes to improving parents' quality of life and mental health.

Objective: To compare the psychological well-being of parents of developmentally disabled children and parents of typically developing children.

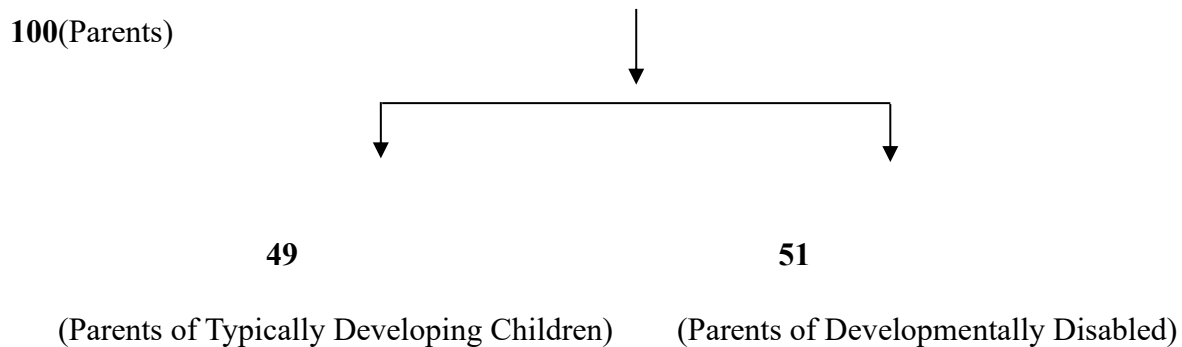
Hypothesis: (H₀₁) There would be no significant difference in the scores of psychological well-being factors between Parents of Developmentally Disabled Children and Typically Developing Children.

Research Design:

The nature of the present research problem did not permit the use of an experimental method, as the variables under investigation could not be manipulated or controlled by the researcher. Therefore, a quantitative descriptive research design was adopted for the study. The investigation was carried out using the survey method, which is suitable for studying existing conditions and comparing groups on selected variables. In this approach, the variables related to psychological well-being had already occurred prior to the investigation, and the researcher examined them in their natural settings without any intervention.

Data were collected from the selected respondents using a standardized psychological well-being scale and analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques such as mean, standard deviation, and t-test to identify differences between the groups.

Sample: The sample for the present study consisted of 100 parents, including parents of typically developing children and parents of children with developmental disabilities, within the age range of 25 to 45 years. The participants were selected from various schools and special institutions. Initially, a larger sample was approached; however, due to incomplete responses, only 100 respondents were included in the final analysis. The sample was further classified into two groups: parents of developmentally disabled children (51) and parents of Typically Developing Children (49). The categorization was based on the type of children and relevant institutional records. This classification facilitated a comparative analysis of psychological well-being between the two groups.



Tools: For the present research work, the following psychological test was selected.

Psychological Well Being Scale: Psychological Well Being Scale-SDCP designed by Sisodia, D.S. and Choudhary, P. was used to measure the psychological well being. The test-retest reliability was 0.87 and the consistency value for the scale is 0.90. The scale also demonstrates satisfactory validity. The scale has five dimensions.

Data Collection Procedure: For the present study, data were collected from parents of typically developing children and parents of children with developmental disabilities selected from schools and special institutions. Prior permission was obtained from the concerned authorities before administering the tool. The researcher established rapport with the respondents and clearly explained the purpose of the study to ensure their cooperation. Informed consent was taken from all participants, and they were assured of confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. The standardized Psychological Well-being Scale was administered individually or in small groups, depending on the convenience of the respondents. Clear instructions were given to fill in the questionnaire, and any doubts were clarified on the spot. The respondents were requested to answer all items honestly and completely. After completion, the filled questionnaires were collected, checked for completeness, and only properly filled responses were considered for final analysis.

Statistical Analysis Techniques: The collected data were systematically organized, coded, and tabulated for analysis. Descriptive statistical techniques such as mean and standard deviation were used to understand the central tendency and variability of the scores. To examine the significance of differences between parents of Typically Developing Children and parents of developmentally disabled children, the independent samples t-test was applied. The level of significance was tested at 0.05 and 0.01 levels. The statistical analysis helped in interpreting the differences in various dimensions of psychological well-being between the two groups.

Results & Discussion:

Table 1 :Represents Mean, SD & t-values between parents of normal and developmentally disabled children for dimensions of Psychological Well-being.

Measures	Groups of Parents	N	Mean	SD	't' Value
Satisfaction	Typically Developing Children	49	44.20	8.86	0.82
	Developmentally disabled children	51	42.40	12.85	p > .05
Efficiency	Typically Developing Children	49	43.21	9.26	6.68
	Developmentally disabled children	51	29.11	11.74	p < .01
Sociability	Typically Developing Children	49	41.11	8.28	5.22
	Developmentally disabled children	51	31.34	10.30	p < .01
Mental Health	Typically Developing Children	49	38.96	7.50	5.05
	Developmentally disabled children	51	30.01	10.04	p < .01
Interpersonal Relations	Typically Developing Children	49	39.39	11.49	4.43
	Developmentally disabled children	51	30.97	6.88	p < .01

Table 1 presents a comparison of psychological well-being between parents of typically developing children and parents of children with developmental disabilities across different dimensions.

For the dimension of Satisfaction, the mean score of parents of Typically Developing Children (M = 44.20, SD = 8.86) is slightly higher than that of parents of developmentally disabled children (M = 42.40, SD = 12.85). The calculated t-value is 0.82, which is less than the critical value at the 0.05 level of significance with 98 degrees of freedom. This indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups in terms of satisfaction.

For Efficiency, the mean score of parents of Typically Developing Children ($M = 43.21$, $SD = 9.26$) is higher than that of parents of developmentally disabled children ($M = 29.11$, $SD = 11.74$). The calculated t-value is 6.68, which is greater than the critical value at the 0.01 level of significance with 98 degrees of freedom. This indicates a statistically significant difference between the two groups.

In the case of Sociability, parents of Typically Developing Children ($M = 41.11$, $SD = 8.28$) have a higher mean score compared to parents of developmentally disabled children ($M = 31.34$, $SD = 10.30$). The obtained t-value of 5.22 is greater than the critical value at the 0.01 level of significance, indicating a significant difference between the groups.

For Mental Health, the mean score of parents of Typically Developing Children ($M = 38.96$, $SD = 7.50$) is higher than that of parents of developmentally disabled children ($M = 30.01$, $SD = 10.04$). The calculated t-value is 5.05, which is significant at the 0.01 level, showing a meaningful difference between the two groups.

Regarding Interpersonal Relations, parents of Typically Developing Children ($M = 39.39$, $SD = 11.49$) have a higher mean score than parents of developmentally disabled children ($M = 30.97$, $SD = 6.88$). The obtained t-value of 4.43 is greater than the critical value at the 0.01 level of significance, indicating a statistically significant difference.

Overall, the findings reveal that except for satisfaction, all dimensions of psychological well-being show significant differences, with parents of Typically Developing Children demonstrating higher levels of psychological well-being compared to parents of developmentally disabled children.

Conclusion: The present study examined psychological well-being among parents of typically developing children and parents of children with developmental disabilities. The findings revealed that parents of Typically Developing Children scored higher on most dimensions of psychological well-being. Significant differences were observed in efficiency, sociability, mental health, and interpersonal relations. However, no significant difference was found in the dimension of satisfaction. The results indicate that parents of children with developmental disabilities may experience greater psychological challenges. Factors such as caregiving burden, emotional stress, and reduced social interaction may contribute to lower well-being. The study highlights the need for psychological and social support systems for such parents. Overall, enhancing parental well-being is essential for improving family functioning and child outcomes.

Educational Implications:

- Schools and special education centers should organize parent counseling, stress management programs, and support groups to enhance the psychological well-being of parents of children with developmental disabilities.

- Teacher training programs should emphasize parental involvement and sensitivity, enabling educators to collaborate effectively with parents and provide emotional and informational support.

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