



Quality of Life of Parents of Mentally Challenged Children

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Short Profile

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Abstract

In this study, an attempt has been made to study the Quality of Life of parents of mentally challenged children. 'Quality of Lifescale '(Sharma & Nasreen, 2014) was used to collect data from a sample of 180 parents of mentally challenged children studying in various special schools in Kanniyakumari district. Normative survey method was used. Analysis of the results revealed that gender wise significant difference is noted in the Quality of Life of parents of mentally challenged children. No significant difference is noted in the Quality of Life of parents of mentally challenged children based on locality.

Keywords: Parents, Mentally Challenged Children, Gender, Quality of Life.

Introduction

Quality of Life is defined as ‘individuals’ perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns.’ (WHOQOL Group, 1995).

The parents influence the development, socialization and well-being of their children and children in turn affect the well-being of their parents (Floyd, Kenta, 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 of parents. Every parent has their expectations and dreams for their children.

Parents having mentally challenged children experience a variety of stressors and stress reactions related to the child's disability. Parents of mentally challenged children have to play an important role in fulfilling tasks that parents of children without such conditions are not confronted with, such as initiating and supporting the child's professional help-seeking (Logan and King, 2001; Sayal, 2006) or providing elevated and continuous levels of informal care (Chan, 2011). Furthermore, parents might experience negative emotions, such as worries and anxiety about whether someone else will assume the caregiving role for their child if they were no longer capable or around to do so (Corcoran et al., 2015; Klages et al., 2016). In turn all these may affect the Quality of Life of parents of mentally challenged children.

Need and Significance of the study

Presence of a mentally challenged child in a family affects the parent's as well as all the other members of the family. Parents commit a long-term care for these children round the clock of the child. This has a significant impact on the Quality of Life of parents of mentally challenged children. Parents who have mentally challenged children are often reported to have physical and psychological distress related to caring of their children and affect their Quality of Life. The physical and psychological problems of parents are vast. Based on the functional level of the mentally challenged children, the problems of parents may differ. They overcome bitter experience and various unfocused aspects in the process of bringing up the mentally challenged children.

Quality of life is generally taken as the standard of living or a realistic attitude of comfortable living state with the close relationship to the ones. So a detailed study on the Quality of Life of parents of mentally challenged children becomes need of the hour.

The researcher having experiences of dealing with the mentally challenged children and their parents, have direct experiences with their living conditions. Hence a study on the Quality of Life of parents of mentally challenged children is conducted. Moreover it is hoped that the outcome of the study will help to understand the implication of Quality of Life and to frame suitable steps to enhance the Quality of Life.

Objectives

1. To study the level of Quality of Life of parents mentally challenged children (Total sample and sub samples.)
2. To find out whether there is any significant difference in the Quality of Life of parents of mentally challenged children with regard to the background variables gender and locality,

Hypotheses

1. There exists significant difference in the mean scores of Quality of Life of fathers and mothers of mentally challenged children .
2. There exists significant difference in the mean scores of Quality of Life parents of mentally challenged children belonging to rural and urban locality.

Methodology

The investigator adopted normative survey method for the study. Data was collected from a sample of 180 parents of mentally challenged children studying in different (children's age range between 5-years) special schools of kanniyakumari district in TamilNadu state using random sampling technique. Quality of Life Scale (Sharma & Nasreen, 2014) was used to collect data. For illiterate parents, interview was conducted. Quality of Life Scale included 42 statements in the eleven dimensions namely Life Satisfaction, Goals and Motivation, Spirituality, Happiness, Hopes and Wishes, Stress Reduction, Frustration, Hopes and Self-care, Effectiveness, Efficiency of myself, and personal evolution. Reliability of the scale is 0.821. Construct validity was also established. The data were analysed using percentage, and t test.

Results and Discussion

Table 1

Different levels of Quality of Life of parents of mentally challenged children

Category	Count	percent
Low	20	11.11
Medium	130	72.22
High	30	16.67

From the table, it is clear that majority of parents of mentally challenged children possess moderate level of Quality of Life (72.22% moderate, 11.11% low and 16.67%high) .This result is in agreement with the findings of Crnkovic et al. (2018) which indicated that majority of parents of mentally challenged children have moderate level of Quality of Life.

Table 2

Gender wise comparison of Quality of Life of parents of mentally challenged children.

Category	Mean Value	SD	N	t	P
Male	95.65	10.73	132		
				**	4.667
				0.000	
Female	88.27	8.84	48		

Note ** indicates significant difference at 0.01 level.

The calculated t value (t-4.667, p< 0.01) is significant at 0.01 level. It indicated that gender wise differences existed in the Quality of Life of parents of mentally challenged children. Mean values showed that mothers' of mentally challenged children passes lower Quality of Life than fathers. This

result is in agreement with the findings of Kazmi et al., (2014), Misra et al., (2017), Nerlin et al. (2013), Kumar et al., (2013) which also indicates gender differences in the Quality of Life of parents of mentally challenged children.

Table 3

Locality wise comparison of Quality of Life of parents of mentally challenged children.

Category	Mean	S.D	N	T	P
Rural	93.81	10.72	151		
Urban	93.00	11.03	29	0.364	0.716

From the above table it is clear that the calculated t value ($t=0.364$; $p>0.05$) is not significant at any level. It indicated that there is no locality wise differences existed in the Quality of Life of parents of mentally challenged children. This result is in agreement with the findings of Oguzturk (2008) which indicates locality differences in the Quality of Life of parents of mentally challenged children.

Discussion and Conclusions

The study revealed that nearly three fourth of parents of mentally challenged children had moderate level of Quality of Life. The compromised Quality of Life of parents of mentally challenged children needs to be considered and addressed by health professionals who are in contact with them. Gender exerts an important role in the Quality of Life of parents of mentally challenged children and mothers possess lower Quality of Life compared to fathers. Parents of mentally challenged children should be given individual and group support to cope with the everyday challenges. As the mothers are more vulnerable in this sense, more social support should be given to them. Individual counselling to be given to the parents to equip them with the competencies for dealing with their children. Better child care and child treatment opportunities to be given to them which in turn will improve their Quality of Life.

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