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## Comparative Study of Hope and Psychological Well-being among the Parents of Physically and Intellectually Disabled Children

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**Abstract:** Parents of children with disability experience significant stress. Purpose of this study was to explore the differences on hope and psychological well-being among the parents having physically and intellectually disabled children. It also studied if there was any significant relationship between hope and psychological well-being. Sample comprised of 200 parents having differently abled children 35-45 years of age (100 parents having physically disabled children and 100 parents having intellectually disabled children). Simple random sampling technique was employed for data collection. Hope and Psychological well-being scales were used to assess hope and psychological well-being of the respondents respectively. The differences in the obtained data were analyzed using independent sample t-test and the relationship was analyzed using Pearson's correlation analysis. The results revealed a statistically significant difference between the parents having physically disabled children and parents having intellectually disabled children on hope ( $t = 4.83$ ,  $P < .01$ ) and psychological well-being ( $t = 5.77$ ,  $P < .01$ ) variables. The findings also reveal a strong, positive and statistically significant correlation between hope and psychological well-being ( $r = .684$ ) among the parents having differently abled children.

**Keywords:** Hope; Psychological well-being; Parents having differently abled children.

## 1. Introduction

The most prestigious moment for parents is when they are blessed with a child. Parents aspire and dream a lot for their children. It may result a ‘catastrophe’ for them in case, their child is diagnosed as disabled. The family members can experience a range of emotions in response to their child’s disability which may include ambivalence, anger, denial, depression, embarrassment, fear of stigma, grief, guilt, shock and even withdrawal. These feelings, the family experiences are caused by realization that the anticipated normal child, they had waited for nine months was never born (Kaur & Arora 2010). Parenting of this disabled child is not an easy task as lot of stressors and stress reactions are experienced by them (Peshawaria, 1992; Orr, Cameron, Dodson, & Day 1993). These stressors and stress reactions include anger, depression, extra financial burdens, sadness, dealing with child’s problematic behavior, and other emotional reactions (Baker, Heller, & Henker 1996). Emotional reaction is the most commonly witnessed impact among these parents (Olshansky, 1962; Kaslow & Cooper, 1978). Besides, child’s problematic behaviour parents own physical and mental health is also at risk. Due to their child’s disability, parents have to suffer an unending sense of loss. Their expectation about the child goes up sided down. This feeling of loss and expectation about their child can lead them to a long-term cyclical distress or sadness. However, some parents show better tolerance of these stressors than others.

### 1.1. Differently Abled

The term differently abled was first coined by US Democratic National Committee in 1980s as an alternative term used to refer disabled and handicapped conditions. It was introduced with the belief that it would give a positive message and may help to avoid discrimination with disabled ones. There are several kinds of disabilities. The cause of disabilities may be congenital/hereditary or acquired/environmental. Congenital causes are spinal cord injuries like spinal bifida, cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophies etc. Acquired causes of disabilities include road traffic accidents, war, sports injuries etc. For the sake of present study, following types of disabilities were considered.

<b>Intellectual Disabilities</b>	<b>Physical Disabilities</b>
Mental Retardation	Hearing Impairment
Autism	Visual Impairment
Cerebral Palsy	Locomotor Disability

### 1.2. Hope

The concept of ‘hope’ has been interwoven with the western psyche in both its secular and sacred traditions. Hope is an exception as it comes into play when the circumstances are dire, and

things are not going well. In the words of Richard Lazarus, it is “fearing the worst but yearning for better”. Hope as an expectation, greater than zero, of achieving the goal. According to (Snyder, Harris, Anderson, Holleran, Irving, Sigmon 1991), “Hope is a positive motivational state that is based on an interactivity derived sense of successful (a) Agency (goal-directed energy), and (b) Pathways (planning to meet goals)”. Pathway thinking is an alternate route to reach the desired goal when the original route is blocked. It reflects the perceived capacity to generate new routes to the desired goals (Snyder 1999). Several pathways can be imagined for a specific goal but, only one primary pathway would be pursued by a person at a time. If the selected pathway is blocked, the person can use the alternative pathway. Agency thinking is a perceived capacity to find the motivation to use pathways in order to reach the desired goals (Snyder, Harris, Anderson, Holleran, Irving, Sigmon 1991). Hope is not a typical form of positivity. Most positive emotions arise when we feel safe and satiated. Hope can be both a state and a trait. Trait hope represents long-term levels of hope. State hope reflects short-term forms of hope (Monsson 2010). Persons scoring high on hope scale, score high on all the three dimensions. Those scoring low on hope scale, score low on all these three dimensions (Snyder, Harris, Anderson, Holleran, Irving, Sigmon 1991). Persons scoring high on hope will pursue their goals actively and energetically. They can pursue their goals in a unique and challenging way as compared to individuals with low hope. People with low hope have fewer and more avoidance based goals than their counterparts (Snyder & Fromkin 1980, Langelle 1989).

### *1.3. Psychological Well-being*

Psychological well-being is equal to the good life or satisfaction with life in a hedonic sense. It has been regarded as synonymous with mental health and quality of life. It is based on subjective experiences and has both positive and as well as negative affects (Okun & Stok 1987). It is being studied by using both subjective and objective indicators. It is the subjective feeling of contentment, happiness, satisfaction with life experience, sense of achievement, utility, belongingness, no distress and dissatisfaction or worry. Psychological well-being is highly related to the emotional status of an individual (Bradburn 1969). Psychological well-being is generally interpreted as “happiness along with ones cognitive appraisal of how satisfying his or her life has been and is also encompassing positive future prospect of life hope” (Nishizawa 1996). Khan (2009) gave six distinct components of psychological well-being. They include self acceptance, purpose in life, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others and autonomy. According to Ryff (1989), the concept of psychological well-being was originally interpreted as a challenge in overcoming the hedonistic concept of well-being in psychology. Post (2005) observed that altruistic emotions and behaviors were associated with greater well-being, health and longevity. Individuals who are emotionally and behaviorally humane are likely to experience greater well-being. Boghle & Prakash (1995) observed

that person high on psychological well-being not only carries high level of life satisfaction, self esteem, positive feelings and attitudes but also manages tension, negative thoughts, ideas and feelings more efficiently. They developed a tool to measure the psychological well-being which comprises of twelve factors such as meaninglessness, self esteem, positive affect, life satisfaction, suicidal ideas, personal control, tension, wellness, somatic symptoms, daily life events/activities, social support and general efficacy. Chandukar & Chakraborty (2000) found that the prevalence rate of psychological distress is higher among mothers having mentally retarded children than mothers having normal children. The birth of a disabled child within a family is very stressful and difficult situation in which the parent's expectations turn upside down.

Heiman (2002) examines the emergence of resilience among parents having child suffering from mental retardation, physical and learning disabilities. Results revealed that most of these parents expressed frustration & dissatisfaction with their life. They further concluded that many among them try to maintain their routine life. Parents expressed the need for a strong belief in child and their future. Gallagher, Phillips, Oliver, & Carroll (2008) examined the predictors of excess psychological morbidity in parents of children with intellectual disability. Results show that parents of children with intellectual disability scored higher on depression and anxiety. Gau, Chou, Chiang, Lee, Wong, Chou, & Wu, (2012) compared the parents of children with autism, and parents of children with typically developing children, on psychopathology, marital relationship and family function. The results revealed that both parents of children with autism suffered from psychopathology and showed less dyadic consensus than parents of typically developing children. They also found that mothers of children with autism display more psychopathology and marital maladjustment than their fathers. Mosazadeh, Boromand, & Narimani (2014) compared the psychological well-being factors among the parents of mentally retarded children with those of normal ones. Findings revealed a significant difference on psychological well-being factors (positive relationship with others, mastering the environment, self acceptance factors, independence, having purpose in life, and personal development). Most of the studies above revealed an association between child disability and parental stress. It becomes important to explore the variables Hope and psychological well-being among the parents of differently abled children empirically.

### **Objectives of the study**

- To study the significance of difference between the parents having physically disabled children and parents having intellectually disabled children on hope and psychological well-being.
- To examine the relationship between hope and psychological well-being among the parents having differently abled children.

## Hypotheses

- **H<sub>1</sub>**- Parents having physically disabled children will score higher on hope and have better psychological well-being than parents having intellectually disabled children.
- **H<sub>1</sub>**- There will be significant positive relationship between hope and psychological well-being among the parents of differently abled children.

## 2. Materials and Methods

### 2.1. Participants

200 parents having differently abled children were selected through simple random sampling technique. The selected parents were divided into two groups; (Group A) parents having intellectually disabled children and (Group B) parents having physically disabled children. 100 parents in each group were studied. The data was collected from Composite Regional Center Bemina, Srinagar (Jammu & Kashmir). Differently abled children's were diagnosed by the consultant psychiatrist, Clinical psychologist or Specialized doctor. Following criteria were applied while collecting the data.

Parents having differently abled children

- a) Age group 26 to 45 years.
- b) Having children with moderate to severe level of disability.
- c) Parents having child aged between 4 to 16 years.

### 2.2. Tools Used

#### 2.2.1. The hope scale

The Hope Scale developed by Snyder, Harris, Anderson, Holleran, Irving, Sigmon (1991) was used to measure the disposition of hope among parents having differently abled children. The scale consisted of eight hope items plus four fillers. The subjects have to rate their responses on an 8-point Likert scale on a continuum of definitely false (1) to definitely true (8). There are two domains, the agency and the pathways. Four (4) items reflect the agency, the overall successful sense of goal related determination of the past, the present and the future 4 items reflect the pathways, people's cognitive appraisals regarding their ability to generate ways of overcoming obstacles related to the goals and ways of achieving the goals. The remaining 4 items are fillers. Hope is calculated by taking the sum of the 4 pathways and 4 agency items. The 4 filler items are not used for scoring. Total possible score is 96. For the total scale Cronbach's Alpha ranged from .74 to .84. The Hope Scale possesses acceptable internal consistency and temporal stability.

#### 2.2.2. Psychological well-being

Psychological well-being questionnaire developed by Bhogle and Jai Prakash (1995) was used to measure Psychological well-being of parents having differently abled children. The scale comprised of 28 items with two alternative response categories 'Yes' and 'No'. The scale comprised of positive and negative sentences. In positive sentence 1 point for yes and 0 point for no and in negative sentence 1 point for no and 0 point for yes. The psychological well-being questionnaire consisted of 13 factors including meaninglessness, somatic symptoms, selflessness, positive affects, daily activity, life satisfaction, suicidal ideas, personal control, social support, tension, wellness, general efficiency and satisfaction. The total score gives the estimation of the psychological well-being, i-e higher the score; higher will be the psychological well-being. The test – retest reliability coefficient is 0.72 and internal consistency coefficient is 0.84. The author has reported satisfactory validity of the questionnaire.

### *2.3. Procedure*

Prior to the administration of the questionnaires, rapport was established with the parents. The researcher introduced himself and explained purpose of the research to the respondents. Participants who fulfill the inclusive criteria were provided with the necessary information about the study and the written information consent was obtained from the parents. They were promised that their responses will remain strictly confidential and will be used for research purpose only. Tools were then administered. The respondents were told to read the instructions carefully before responding to the questions. Each respondent took about half an hour to fill the questionnaire.

### *2.4. Statistical Analysis*

The data was analyzed by using statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 16.0. Independent sample t-test was used to know the difference between the two groups and Pearson's Product movement correlation was used to know the relationship between hope and psychological well-being among the parents having differently abled children.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

To examine the research objective, an independent sample t-test was used to assess the significance of difference between the parents having physically disabled children and parents having intellectually disabled children on hope and psychological well-being. Before analysing the results, skewness and kurtosis for all the variables were checked and found normally distributed (Fig. 1, &2).

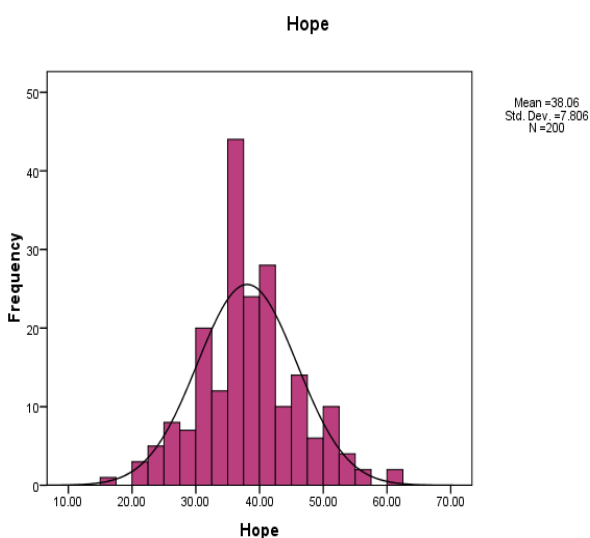


Fig. 1: Histogram of Hope

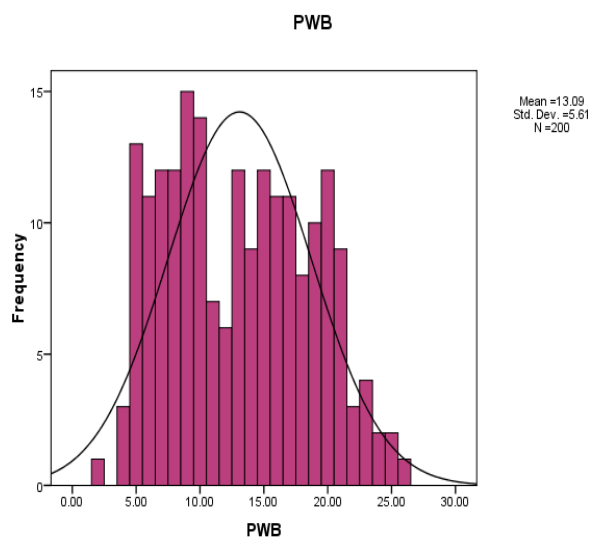


Fig. 2: Histogram of Psychological well-being

As can be seen from the table 1, the data was sufficiently normal for the purpose of conducting a t-test (i.e. skewness (-.5 to +.5) and kurtosis (-3 to +3) are within the range respectively). Additionally the assumption of homogeneity was tested via Leven’s *F* test,  $F(9.198) = .05$ . The table 1 shows that parents of physically disabled children score significantly higher on hope ( $t = 4.834, p < .01$ ) and psychological well-being ( $t = 5.776, p < .01$ ). The results indicate that parents of physically disabled children are more hopeful and have better psychological well-being than their counterparts. With better psychological well-being, parents having physically disabled children also score higher level of hopefulness than parents having intellectually disabled children. Hence, the hypothesis number 1<sup>st</sup> is accepted. This finding has been supported by (Olsoon & Hwang 2001; Majumdar 2005). They found a higher prevalence rate of anxiety and depression among parents having severe to profound disability than parents having mild to moderate disability and normal children.

**Table 1:** Comparison of parents having physically disabled children and parents having intellectually disabled children on hope and psychological well-being (PWB)

Variables	Child disability	N	Mean	S.D	Skewness	Kurtosis	t - value
<b>Hope</b>	Physically disabled	100	40.59	7.54	.250	.167	4.834**
	Intellectually disabled	100	35.53	7.25	.118	.891	
<b>PWB</b>	Physically disabled	100	15.22	5.11	-.026	-.792	5.776**
	Intellectually disabled	100	10.97	5.28	.500	-.927	

$P < .01^{**}$

To examine the second research objective, Pearson’s Correlational analysis was used to examine the relationship between the hope and psychological well-being.

The result indicates that correlation between hope and psychological well-being (Table 2, Fig. 3) is  $r = .684$ . The p value for the correlation coefficient is 0.00, hence less than 0.05 - the assumed level of significance. This implies that correlation coefficient between the hope and psychological well-being among the parents of differently abled children is positive, high and statistically significant. With the findings, it could be well established that with increase in the level of hope, psychological well-being among the parents also increases. Hence, hypothesis no 2<sup>nd</sup> stays accepted.

**Table 2:** Relationship between hope and psychological well-being among parents having differently abled children

Variables		Hope	Psychological well-being
<b>Hope</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.684**
<b>PWB</b>	Pearson Correlation	.684**	1
	N	200	200

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

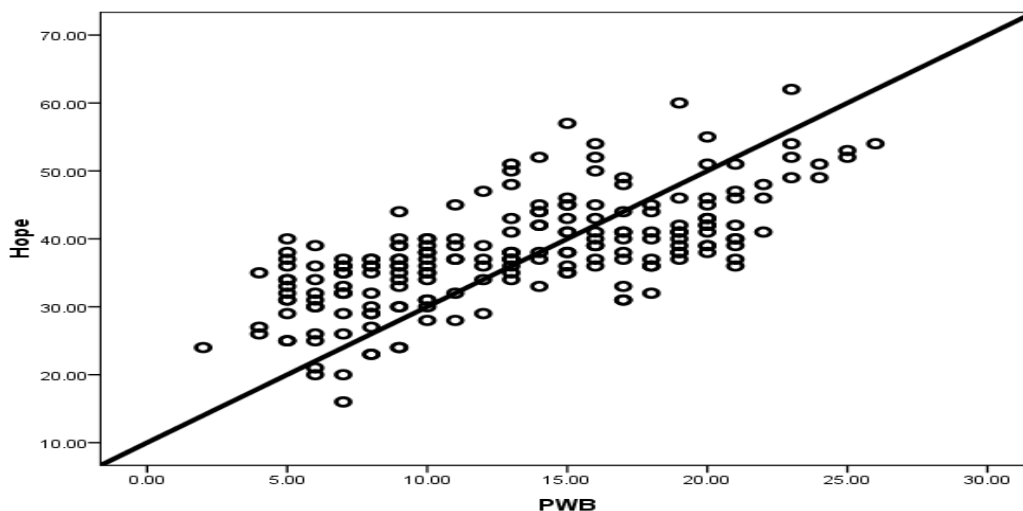


Fig. 3: Correlation between hope and psychological well-being

#### 4. Conclusion

Findings display a statistically significant difference between parents having physically disabled children and parents having intellectually disabled children on hope and psychological well-being. Parents having physically disabled children score higher on hope and show better psychological well-being than parents having intellectually disabled children. Further, the study shows a positive, strong and statistically significant correlation between hope and psychological well-being between these two variables.



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