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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Hope, quality of life, and self-efficacy among mothers with special needs children

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to find out the level of hope, self-efficacy, and quality of life of mothers with special needs children. There has been very little research on mothers' health of special needs children and there was a significant gap that needed to be addressed. A correlational research design was used with purposive sampling of 30 mothers (N=30) from Amin-Maktab Institute Outreach Program, Lahore, Pakistan, who were involved in this study. A series of questionnaires as the quality of life, hope scale, and self-efficacy scale was administered to mothers after taking consent. Correlation and independent-sample t-tests were used to analyze data. Results revealed that standards/physical health (domain 1) has a strong relationship with hope/pathways (domain 2) with a 0.56 level of significance. Standards (domain 1) and pleasures/social (domain 3) have a strong relationship with 0.42 but there is a difference in the mean between mothers of boys and mothers of girls. The environment affects the physical, psychological, and social health of mothers with special needs children. While mothers with a higher level of hope have a higher quality of life and high self-efficacy leads to high physical health among mothers. Research conclusion specifies that mothers of intellectually disabled boys have had a higher level of hope and pleasure (social relationship) than mothers of girls.

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INTRODUCTION

Intellectual disability can be defined as a cognitive reasoning level verified in certain kids. It is a children's condition in which their intellectual functioning is obstructed in which they won't be able to process and receive information from their surroundings. IQ below 70 and insufficiencies in social, adaptability skills, mannerism, social dealings, and daily routine activities (eating, dressing, problem-solving, etc.) won't be practiced by the individual. This kind of disability not only affects the individual but also affects their family members, caretakers, society, and the people who lived around them (Shree & Shukla, 2016). According to Marquis and his colleagues (2020), parents of children with developmental disabilities experience mental sicknesses such as depression, frustration, and anxiety as compared to parents of children without ant mental disabilities (Marquis et al, 2020).

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Mothers are significant facilitators in providing care and rehabilitation to their kids. Their role at a different level of the rehabilitation process matters a lot and they are the most vulnerable person in the whole team. Therefore, while rehab centers work on children; they should monitor the mother's mental and physical health as well (Lalehgani Dezaki et al, 2018). Mothers with intellectually disabled children often felt low self-efficacy, hope, and psychological health which can lead them to negative health issues (Kubicek et al., 2013). There are family factors and risks that may affect the mental health of parents caring for children with intellectual disabilities. It is very important to acknowledge those risk factors to improve the well-being of caretakers (Baker et al, 2021).

The study was conducted at Amin-Maktab Institute, Lahore, under the authority of Pakistan society for the welfare of mentally retarded children. It is a Special education school for intellectually impaired children. It is a non-government organization which working on an Outreach program that was started in 1988 with UNICEF cooperation. This program helps families of children with special needs (SR Designwork, 2011).

The present study aims to explore the level of quality of life, hope, and self-efficacy in mothers with special needs children. This study also measures the level of hopefulness in mothers with special needs daughters and mothers with special needs sons. The study tries to promote understanding of the psychological risks caused by hectic routines for mothers taking care of their kids with special needs. It also examines the quality of life in mothers with help of previous literature and statistical analyses. This research is significant in general and in Asian culture.

According to Snyder et al, (1991), hope is the cognitive set that has two major components agency and pathways. The term agency defines direction toward goal achievements while pathways can be defined as plannings to achieve the targeted goals (Snyder et al, 1991). Similarly, hope is well-defined as the perceived competence to arise pathways to anticipated goals and stimulate oneself through agency intellectually using those pathways. Hope theory is linked to concepts of cultured hopefulness, optimism, self-efficacy, and self-approval (Snyder, 2002).

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Quality of life has been distinguished as one of the main health apprehensions for parents succeeding in a lifetime compound practice such as upbringing a child with special needs (Mungo et al, 2007). The term quality of life can be defined as the overall quality of life and general health among mothers with intellectually disabled children. It has four main components as physical health, psychological health, social relationships, and environmental health. The concept of quality of life has 4 domains as standards, hope, pleasures, and concerns. The concept of quality of life was developed by the world health organization (World Health organization, 1996). According to Smith and Grzywacz, (2014) mothers with special needs, and children stated poor psychological health, depression, and more agitated while performing routine activities with their special child (Smith & Grzywacz, 2014). The physical and psychological health of mothers taking care of their intellectually disabled child has always been at risk. Taking care of a special child is a risky task because they may face caregiving challenges such as greater time demands, care challenges, lower incomes, and employment limitations (Brehaut et al, 2011).

Self-efficacy states, that it is supervision aids across challenging and rare situations (Schwarzer, 1999). General self-efficacy (GSE) is about personal proficiencies to cater the numerous challenging and distressing circumstances (Bandura et al,1999). However, GSE may explain in a broader sequence of human movements and handling effects, when the agenda is less defined (Luszczynska et al, 2005). According to the explanation of the human investigational self-recognition scheme given by Bandura, self-efficacy theories have a predominant impact on the people's adoptions, their purposes, the struggles they do to accomplish a specific task, how long they can continue a particular task whether

they know the result can be in form of failure, how much stress they practice. According to Albert Bandura (1977), self-efficacy is explained as a viewpoint that one can implement the behavior which is essential to attain a definite result. It has been demonstrated by the social cognitive theory that frequent failures reduce self-self-assurance, and self-efficacy, whereas achievement experiences increase self-confidence. Boosted self-efficacy due to repetitive accomplishments, simplifies to new circumstances and concepts (Bandura, 1977).

According to a study, hope does not have any relationship with self-efficacy. It is all about social and demographic characteristics which matter in the hope and efficacy of mothers with special needs children. Self-efficacy in mothers does not have any connection with hope and pleasure (Kanwal & Asad, 2018). Similarly, a study indicated that mothers with a high level of hope are less anxious and as result, they do have high self-efficacy and self-esteem. Fathers are always concerned about the future life of their intellectually disabled kids, specifically their social acceptance and adjustments in society. Meanwhile, mothers are focused on the present physical and mental needs of a child with a disability. It has been found that the mother has severe vulnerability to get stressed, affected, and over-burdened due to her responsibilities and the demanding nature of the special needs children. Mothers of special needs children had to deal with so many issues such as house chores, financial issues, health issues, societal pressures, and sometimes spouse pressures (Christodoulou et al, 2020). Though mothers reported negative emotions and agitated moods while taking care of their children (Downey, 2016). Mothers taking care of their kids have been facing many caregiver barriers that may affect their social life, psychological and physical health, and their overall routine activities (Damiani et al, 2004). This article hypotheses that there is a relationship between self-efficacy, hope, and quality of life of the mothers with special need boy and mothers with special needs girls and there are mean differences among the variables.

METHOD

This was a quantitative correlational study in which a cross-sectional research design was used to conduct this study. A sample of 30 mothers of intellectually disabled children: girls and boys from the outreach program of Amin Maktab Institute, Lahore, was selected through the purposive sampling technique. Sample of mothers with special needs children (N=30) belong to low socioeconomic status, ages range from 22 to 43.

The adult hope scale developed by Snyder and his colleagues (1991), contains 12 items and it determines the level of hope in participants (Snyder et al, 1991). It contains 2 sub-scales as the agency (goal-directed energy) and pathways (planning's to accomplish goals) with Cronbach's alpha value of .87. Scale based on an 8-point Likert-type scale ranging from "definitely false" to "definitely true". Adult hope scale based on Synder's theory of hope; is well-defined as apparent competence to grow pathways towards wanted objectives and encourage one-self through agency intellectual thought pattern to practice those pathways (Snyder, 2002). The General self-efficacy scale is 10 item scale with Cronbach's alpha value between .76-.90 (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995). It was a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from not-at-all true to exactly true. WHO-quality of life-Brief scale; point Likert-type scale used to assess the quality of life in mothers of special needs children. It was a 5-point Likert-type scale, that contains 26 items in it with four major domains standards (physical health), hope (psychological health), pleasures (social relationships), and concerns (environment) (World Health Organization, 1997). Correlation analysis and independent sample t-test analysis were used to evaluate the psychometric properties of the data while using the SPSS-22 version.

RESULT

Table 1. Demographics of participants (N=30) mothers with special needs children

Variables	n (%)
Gender of children	
Male	18 (60.0)
Female	12 (40.0)
Income	
5.000 - 15.000	14 (46.7)
15.000 - 25.000	13 (43.3)
25.000 – 35.000	1 (3.3)
> 35.000	2 (6.7)

Table 1 showed the frequency and percentage of participants. The table depicts the participant's gender, monthly income, and gender of special needs children. The mean participant's monthly income was 1.70 with SD = 0.837. Table 2 showed a high-reliability coefficient demonstrating that data is appropriately reliable.

Table 2. Reliability alpha co-efficient of the scales

Variables	n	α
Self-efficacy	10	0.872
Hope	12	0.87
Quality of Life	26	0.76

To examine the hypothesis, this study uses the correlation analysis among the variables, the result showed that there is a strong relationship between scores of pathways and the agency of the intellectually disabled children's mothers, as shown in table 3.

Table 3. Correlation between hope, self-efficacy, quality of life, and their subscales

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Agency	-	.79**	2.30	3.44	.34	.37*	.31
Pathway	-	-	2.90	.20	.29	.31	.26
Self-efficacy total	-	-	-	.68**	.33	.24	.34
Standards/physical	-	-	-	-	.56**	.42*	.70**
Hope/psychological	-	-	-	-	-	.35	.64**
Pleasures/social	-	-	-	-	-	-	.52**
Concerns/environmental	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

*$p < 0.05$, **$p<0.01$*

Pathways are specific directions to achieve our goals and individuals are responsible to create the right paths (Snyder, 2000). Agency can be described as enthusiasm to utilize those paths to reach successfully towards our destiny.

Table 4. Independent sample t-test for hope sub-scales and pleasures (domain 3) between mothers of boys and mothers of girls

	Mothers of boys		Mothers of girls				
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*Df*	*T*	*P*
Agency	813.1	5.6	18.6	3.96	28	2.9	.01
Pathway	14.0	6.5	21.9	2.6	28	4.0	.001
Pleasures	9.4	3.03	3.03	2.10	28	2.2	.04

Table 4 showed that there were mean differences in the scores of hope sub-scales and pleasures (domain 3 of quality of life) between mothers of boys with special needs and mothers of girls with special needs.

The results of the study consisted of descriptive statistics such as frequency, mean and standard deviations, assumptions test results, and hypotheses test results, which were then analyzed critically and presented in a sequential or integrated manner. The explanation of the results section contains the results of the data analysis. If the research is qualitative, the research findings can be conveyed in the form of patterns, themes, tendencies, and motives that emerge from the data.

DISCUSSION

It is usually claimed that mothers taking care of their special needs children often experience psychological and physical health issues (Pearlin & Skaff, 1995). A study claimed a relationship between psychological health problems and adult caregivers (Bowlby, 1980). This study hypothesized that there was a significant relationship between quality of life, hope, and self-efficacy in mothers of children with special needs. Results of correlation analysis revealed that mothers' physical health (domain 1), physical health (domain 2), and social life (domain 3) were highly correlated with environmental health (domain 4), while they were dealing with their special needs children. Results claimed that a high level of self-efficacy leads to high standards (physical health) among mothers of special needs children. According to a studying parent of kids with intellectual disability face challenges that can origin psychological disturbances and reduces mothers' self-efficacy (Rahayu & Mangunsong, 2020). A study stated that familial and societal environments are considered to be very effective to maintain mother and kid's psychological and physical health (Fernandes et al, 2015).

This study found that agency and pathways had a positive relationship among caregiving mothers. A study defined that agency as a basic component of hope has a positive impact on the motivation of mothers with special needs children. Hope has a direct linkage with a mother's well-being agency is the element of hope which makes their (standards) physical health high, and makes them concerned and motivated (Golan, 2017). Results confirmed that mothers who were taking care of their intellectually disabled children had a high level of hope, self-efficacy, and quality of life. Meanwhile, a study claimed that mothers' scores high in the environmental health domain have had the highest score in the physical health domain (George et al, 2008).

The second hypothesis was there will be significant mean differences in agency, pathways, and pleasures (social relationships) in mothers of children with disability. Results indicated that the level of hope and pleasures (social relationship) was higher in mothers of boys with special needs than of mothers of girls. A study claimed that the gender of intellectually disabled children impacts upon anxiety level of the parents. To support this hypothesis previously a study was conducted to find out that parents taking care of disabled sons experienced higher social pressures compared to those bringing up daughters with special needs. However, boys with disability more often-ly experienced higher behavioral dysfunctioning and lower communication skills than girls; this is linked with high parental distress, cynicism, and lower quality of life (Bujnowska et al, 2019). Hence, the hypothesis approved through previous studies as stated in a study that an intellectually disabled son lowers the parental self-esteem than of intellectually disabled girl (Pisula, 1998)

CONCLUSION

This is a unique study to fill up the gap in the research area. The parents who bring up their children with intellectual disability have a different set of distress, financial and societal pressure, anxieties,

and future concerns; their issues and mental health needs to be reported and highlighted to guide and support them. The study aimed to highlight mothers' physical, psychological, social, and environmental health conditions when they were dealing with their kids. Mothers with disabled sons had more pressure than girls' mothers, while had more hope to make them an active social participants. This is a very vast area to be emphasized in an under-developing country such as Pakistan. Compared to foreign countries disabled children and their parents do have high governmental, financial, and societal support, but in under-developed countries, it is very hard for parents to perform their duties on their resources. To get a better understanding, this article recommends taking a larger sample to conduct better research.

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