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## Gender Difference on Hope & Psychological Well-being among the Parents of Differently Abled Children

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### **Abstract:**

*The aim of the present research is to study hope and psychological well-being among the parents of differently abled children. For this purpose, Hope scale developed by C.R Snyder (1992) and psychological well-being scale developed by Bhoghle & Prakash (1995) were administered to the sample of 200 parents. The participants were selected randomly from composite regional center Bemina Srinagar (J&K). Out of 200 parents, 88 were fathers and 112 were mothers. The independent sample t-test was used to analyze the data. The findings revealed a statistically significant difference between fathers and mothers having differently abled children on both hope and psychological well-being variable.*

**Keywords:** Hope, Psychological well-being, Parents of differently Abled children

### **1. Introduction and Background**

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. Parenting a child with a disability is a very difficult task (Peshawaria 1992). 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 stressors and stress reactions include anger, depression, extra financial burdens, sadness, dealing with child's problematic behavior, and other emotional reactions (Baker, Heller, & Henker 2000). Emotional reaction is the most commonly witnessed impact among these parents (Olshansky, 1962; Kaslow & Cooper, 1978). Besides, child's problematic behavior, parents own physical and mental health is also at risk. The quality and quantity of impact may vary from parent to parent, depending upon the social, physical, and emotional support. Interaction as well as the relationship between parents with their family members and friends is also affected. 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. This may be due to the certain factors such as social support, sense of coherence, self esteem, hardiness, optimism, and internal locus of control.

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". Scotland (1996) says, "hope is an expectation, greater than zero, of achieving the goal." Seligman & Csikszentmihayi (2000) says that human strength such as courage, hope, and optimism can act as a defense mechanism against psychological disorders. Hope acts as a moderator of stress on physical health outcomes (Chan, 1977). High hope is associated with greater well-being and positive coping. People with high hope were better able to notice positive aspects of their situations and had a number of ways to achieve a desired goal (Afflect & Tennen 1996; Anderson, 1988; Stanton et al. 2000). Conversely, people with low hope focus on the negative aspects of a situation (Michael, 2000). Researchers have found that high hope people report more positive affect and less negative affect on the Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS) than their low hope counterparts (Snyder, Harris, Anderson, Holleran, Irving, Sigmon 1991).

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. The term Psychological well-being was studied in philosophy under the name of 'Eudemonics', which means 'happiness'. It is based on subjective experiences and has both positive and as well as negative affects (Okun & Stok 1987). Psychological well-being is highly related to the emotional status of an individual (Bradburn 1969). It 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. Psychological well-being plays a significant role in one's personal and social life. It affects the home as well as work environment of a person. Those high on psychological well-being have a tendency to be in a good mental state. Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith (1999) found that individuals, who score high in psychological well-being, later on earn high income and perform

better at work than individuals who score low in well-being. Researchers have found that the prevalence rate of psychological distress is higher among mothers having mentally retarded children than mothers having normal children. The purpose of the present paper is to focus specially on to find a difference between fathers and mothers having differently abled children on hope and psychological well-being.

## 2. Objectives

- 1) To investigate the significance of difference between fathers and mothers having differently abled children on hope and psychological well-being.

### 2.1. Hypotheses

1.  $H_0$ . There will be no significant difference between fathers and mothers having differently abled children on hope and psychological well-being.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Participants

The participants in this study consist of 200 parents having differently abled children which were selected from Composite Regional Center Srinagar (Jammu and Kashmir). Children with disabilities had been identified by the consultant psychiatrist and clinical psychologist. Following criteria was applied to select the participants.

Parents having differently abled children

- i. Age group 26 to 40 years.
- ii. Having children with moderate to severe level of disability.
- iii. Diagnosed by the clinical psychologist, psychiatrist or the specialized doctors.
- iv. Parents having child aged between 4 to 16 years.

### 3.2. Measures

#### 3.2.1. 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.

#### 3.2.2. Psychological Well-Being Questionnaire

Psychological well-being questionnaire developed by Bhogale and Prakash (1995) was used to measure Psychological well-being among the parents having differently abled children. These are 28 sentences in this scale. All at the sentence had a two option "yes" or "no" belong two option can choose one option and marked by symbol ( $\surd$ ). 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 test – retest reliability coefficient is 0.72 and internal consistency coefficient is 0.84. The author has reported satisfactory validity of the questionnaire.

### 3.3. Procedure

Prior to the administration of the above mentioned tools, rapport was established with participants. The researcher informed all the participants that the information obtained from them will be used only for research purpose and will be kept confidential. After that tools were administered on the participants and participants were thanked for their co-operation.

### 3.4. Statistical Analysis

The data was analyzed by using the SPSS-16.0 version and independent sample t-test was used to analyze the data.

## 4. Results

To examine the research objective, an independent sample t-test was used to assess the significance of difference between father and mother having differently abled children on hopefulness and psychological well-being. Prior to analysis, the assumption of normality was assessed with a Histogram. The assumption is only said to have achieved when the shape of histogram is approximately like a normal curve (Figure1). As can be seen from the table 1, the data was sufficiently normal for the purpose of conducting a t-test (i.e. skewness and kurtosis are within the range of -.5 to +.5 & -3 to +3 respectively). Additionally the assumption of homogeneity was tested via Leven's  $F$  test,  $F(9.198) = .05$ . As can be seen from table 1 fathers score significantly higher score on hope ( $t = 2.67$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and psychological well-being ( $t = 3.45$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The results indicate that fathers are more hopeful and have better psychological well-being than their counterparts.

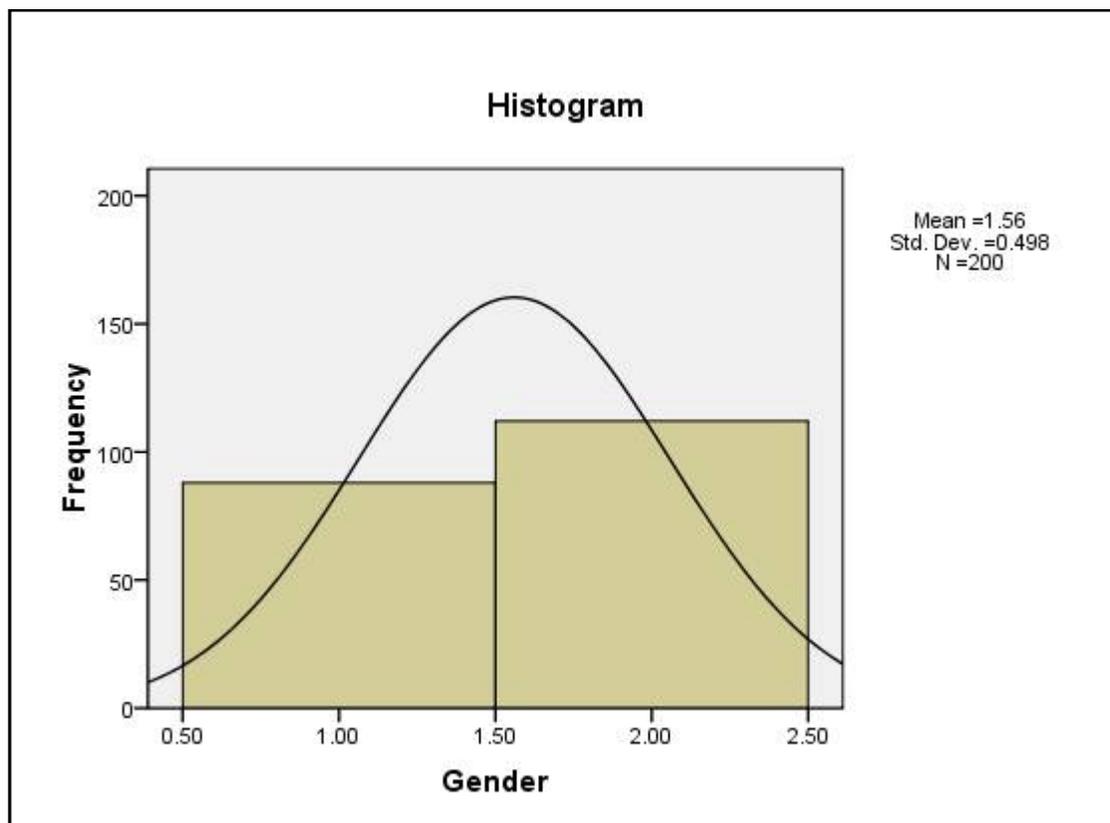


Figure 1

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	S.D	Skewness	Kurtosis	t- value
Hope	Father	88	39.75	8.772	.090	-.180	2.67**
	Mother	112	36.73	6.700	-.041	1.074	
PWB	Father	88	14.63	6.104	-.138	-1.102	3.45**
	Mother	112	11.88	4.883	.271	-1.032	

Table 1: Comparison of fathers and mothers having differently abled children on hopefulness and psychological well-being  
\*\* $P < .01$

## 5. Discussion

The above mentioned table shows statistically significant difference between fathers & mothers having differently abled children, on hope and psychological well-being. With better psychological well-being, fathers are more hopeful than mothers. Hence, hypothesis number 1<sup>st</sup> stays rejected. These findings have been supported by Beck, Daley, Hastings, & Stevenson (2004) & Ogeston, Mackintosh, & Myers (2011). They concluded that there is a higher prevalence rate of psychological distress, poor social support & psychological well-being among mothers having differently abled children. As compared to their spouse, lower hope and future related worry were also witnessed among such mothers.

## 6. Conclusion

Findings display a statistically significant difference between fathers and mothers having differently abled children on hopefulness and psychological well-being. Fathers score higher on hope and have better psychological well-being than mothers of differently abled children.

## 7. Limitations

- The present study was conducted on parents (fathers & mothers) having differently abled children. Researcher didn't include all the members of such families.
- The data was analyzed based on total score on the studied variables; depth understanding requires that variables should be analyzed dimension wise.

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