



RESILIENCE IN PARENTS HAVING CHILDREN WITH MENTAL RETARDATION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN FAMILIES HAVING SINGLE CHILD WITH MR AND MORE THAN ONE CHILD WITH MR

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ABSTRACT

Background: Raising a child with intellectual disability may place substantial emotional, social and practical demands on parents. At the same time, families may develop resilience and adaptive strengths while coping with disability-related challenges. Psychological characteristics such as locus of control and personality may influence parental adaptation.

Aim: To compare disability impact, resilience, locus of control and personality factors among parents from families having one child with intellectual disability and those having more than one child with intellectual disability.

Materials and Methods: A comparative study was conducted among parents of children with intellectual disability selected using purposive sampling from the National Institute for the Mentally Handicapped, Secunderabad. The study included families with one child and more than one child with intellectual disability. Data were collected using the NIMH-Disability Impact Scale, Rotter's Locus of Control Scale, Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale and NEO Five-Factor Inventory. Mean and standard deviation were calculated, and independent-samples t test was used for comparison between groups. Pearson correlation was used to assess relationships among disability impact, resilience, locus of control and personality factors.

Results: Parents having one child with intellectual disability had higher mean positive impact (3.90 ± 2.524) and resilience (65.97 ± 6.795), while parents having more than one child had higher negative impact (15.50 ± 7.347). No significant differences were observed in positive impact ($p=0.818$), negative impact ($p=0.268$), resilience ($p=0.528$), external locus of control ($p=0.582$), or any personality domain. Positive impact was positively correlated with resilience, and resilience was positively associated with Conscientiousness.

Conclusion: The number of children with intellectual disability was not significantly associated with disability impact, resilience, locus of control or personality factors. Positive perceptions and resilience may contribute to adaptive parental functioning.

KEYWORDS: Intellectual Disability, Parents, Resilience, Locus of Control, Personality, Family Impact.

Introduction

Resilience has gained increasing attention in understanding how individuals and families adapt to adversity. It emphasizes strengths and positive outcomes rather than focusing only on problems, deficits or psychopathology[1]. Resilience is an ongoing process through which individuals adapt to stressful and challenging life circumstances[2].

Intellectual disability is characterized by significant limitations in intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviour, including conceptual, social and practical skills, with onset during the developmental period. Children with intellectual disability may require prolonged care and support, placing additional emotional, social and practical demands on parents[3].

Resilience refers to successful adaptation despite risk and adversity. Masten (1986)[4] described resilience as successful adaptation despite risk and adversity, while Masten, Best and Garmezy (1990) conceptualized it as a process, capacity or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging circumstances[5]. Supportive relationships, positive self-perception, problem-solving skills and effective coping contribute to resilience. Locus of control refers to an individual's perception regarding the causes of events in life. Individuals with an internal locus of control perceive outcomes as related to their own actions, whereas those with an external locus of control attribute outcomes to factors such as fate, luck or other external circumstances[6].

Personality represents relatively consistent patterns of behaviour, thoughts and emotions. The Five Factor Model includes Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness. Parenting a child with intellectual disability may affect parents emotionally, socially and interpersonally, with additional childcare responsibilities and burden. Understanding resilience, locus of control and personality may therefore help explain parental adaptation to intellectual disability.

The aim of the study was to compare parents having a single child with intellectual disability and those having more than one child with intellectual disability with respect to disability impact, resilience, locus of control and personality factors.

Materials and Methods

Study Design and Participants

A comparative study was conducted among parents of children with intellectual disability. The sample comprised parents aged 25–50 years, selected using purposive sampling from the General Services of the National Institute for the

Mentally Handicapped, Secunderabad. The study included families with a single child with intellectual disability and families with more than one child with intellectual disability, with 15 families in each group.

Eligibility Criteria

Parents of children with mild to profound intellectual disability who were living with their children were included. Parents of children with other disabilities and stepfathers or stepmothers were excluded.

Inclusion Criteria

- Those who are having a child with profound to mild intellectual disability
- Those who are living with the children

Exclusion Criteria

- Those who have children with other disabilities
- Step father or mother

Assessment Tools

The following standardized instruments were used: (1) NIMH-Disability Impact Scale (NIMH-DIS), assessing 11 areas of family impact; (2) Rotter's Locus of Control Scale, a 29-item forced-choice measure of internal and external control; (3) Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC), consisting of 25 items; and (4) NEO Five-Factor Inventory, consisting of 60 items assessing Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness.

Data Collection Procedure

Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and informed consent was obtained. Confidentiality was assured. Demographic information including age, gender, parental education, economic status and locality was collected. The four assessment instruments were subsequently administered according to their respective instructions.

Scoring and Statistical Analysis

The CD-RISC was scored from 0–100, with higher scores indicating greater resilience; scores below 65 were classified as low resilience and scores ≥ 65 as high resilience. Rotter's scale was scored from 0–23, with scores ≤ 12 indicating internal and ≥ 13 indicating external locus of control. NIMH-DIS scores were interpreted as positive and negative impact scores, while NEO scores were obtained for the five personality domains. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 20.0. Independent-samples t-tests were used to compare the study groups, and Pearson correlation was used to examine relationships among disability impact, resilience, locus of control and personality factors.

Table 1: Distribution of study participants according to family group

Family group	n
One child with intellectual disability	15
More than one child with intellectual disability	15

Table 2: Comparison of positive and negative disability impact between the two groups

Domain	One child with ID (Mean $\pm$ SD)	>1 child with ID (Mean $\pm$ SD)	p value	t value
Positive impact	3.90 $\pm$ 2.524	3.07 $\pm$ 2.067	0.818	1.399
Negative impact	12.50 $\pm$ 11.048	15.50 $\pm$ 7.347	0.268	-1.238

Table 3: Comparison of personality factors between the two groups

Personality factor	One child with ID (Mean $\pm$ SD)	>1 child with ID (Mean $\pm$ SD)	p value	t value
Neuroticism	27.33 $\pm$ 3.144	26.40 $\pm$ 3.369	0.753	1.109
Extraversion	27.03 $\pm$ 2.834	28.57 $\pm$ 2.885	0.736	-2.077
Openness	24.57 $\pm$ 3.451	24.73 $\pm$ 3.194	0.889	-0.194
Agreeableness	25.93 $\pm$ 2.888	26.53 $\pm$ 3.540	0.529	-0.719
Conscientiousness	27.67 $\pm$ 3.155	28.47 $\pm$ 4.167	0.178	-0.838

Table 4: Comparison of resilience and external locus of control between the two groups

Factor	One child with ID (Mean $\pm$ SD)	>1 child with ID (Mean $\pm$ SD)	p value	t value
Resilience	65.97 $\pm$ 6.795	62.70 $\pm$ 7.675	0.528	1.745
External locus of control	14.47 $\pm$ 1.961	14.47 $\pm$ 1.961	0.582	-0.497

Table 5: Correlation between disability impact, Resilience, locus of control and personality factors

Variable	Positive impact	Negative impact	Resilience	Externalization	Neuroticism	Extraversion	Openness	Agreeableness	Conscientiousness
Positive impact	1	0.548**	0.367**	-0.072**	0.140	-0.261	-0.020**	-0.020**	-0.136
Negative impact	0.548**	1	0.248	-0.166	0.123	-0.233**	0.129	-0.207	-0.042**
Resilience	0.367**	0.248	1	-0.122	0.044	-0.045**	0.139	-0.033	0.028**
Externalization	-0.072	-0.166	-0.122	1	0.019	0.118	-0.053	0.069	-0.184
Neuroticism	0.140	0.123	0.044	0.019	1	-0.365**	0.425**	-0.105	0.235
Extraversion	-0.261*	-0.233	-0.045	0.118	-0.365**	1	0.015	0.351*	-0.079*
Openness	-0.020	0.129	0.139	-0.053	0.425**	0.015	1	-0.026	0.257
Agreeableness	-0.269*	-0.207	-0.033	0.069	-0.105	0.351*	-0.026	1	0.180*
Conscientiousness	-0.136	-0.042	0.028	-0.184	0.235	-0.079	0.257	0.180	1

Results

Table 1, depicts the distribution of the study families according to the number of children with intellectual disability. Equal numbers of families were included in the two comparison groups, with 15 families in each group.

Table 2, states that positive impact was higher among parents having one child with intellectual disability, whereas negative impact was higher among those having more than one child. However, neither difference was statistically significant.

Table 3, explains that the group with more than one child with intellectual disability had higher mean

scores for Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness, while Neuroticism was higher in the one-child group. None of the personality factors showed a statistically significant difference between groups.

Table 4, depicts higher mean resilience among parents having one child with intellectual disability, while both groups had identical mean scores for external locus of control. Neither resilience nor external locus of control differed significantly between the two groups.

Table 5, states that positive impact showed positive correlations with negative impact and resilience, while resilience showed a positive correlation with conscientiousness and a negative correlation with

extraversion. Several additional associations were observed among the personality domains and disability-impact measures.

Discussion

The present study compared parents having one child with intellectual disability with those having more than one child with intellectual disability in terms of disability impact, resilience, locus of control and personality. Regarding disability impact, parents having one child showed a higher mean positive impact score (3.90 ± 2.524) than parents having more than one child (3.07 ± 2.067), whereas negative impact was higher among parents having more than one child (15.50 ± 7.347 vs. 12.50 ± 11.048). However, these differences were not statistically significant. Lakhani et al. (2013)[7], reported that mothers caring for children with mental retardation perceived positive contributions to family life, along with acceptance of the situation. Similarly, Blacher et al. (2007)[9] reported positive impacts of intellectual disability on families and noted that positive perceptions could influence the relationship between child-related difficulties and parenting stress. The present findings therefore indicate the coexistence of both positive and negative dimensions of family impact.

With respect to resilience, parents having one child with intellectual disability had a higher mean resilience score (65.97 ± 6.795) compared with parents having more than one child (62.70 ± 7.675), although the difference was not statistically-significant ($p=0.528$). Bayat et al. (2007) [10] identified resilience processes among families of children with autism, including making positive meaning of disability, mobilizing resources, becoming closer as a family and gaining spiritual strength. Similarly, Gerstein et al. (2009)[11] found that parental well-being, marital adjustment and positive parent-child relationships were associated with changes in daily parenting stress. The present study further found a positive correlation between positive impact and resilience, suggesting that positive perceptions of the family situation may coexist with better adaptation.

Regarding locus of control, both groups had an identical mean external locus of control score of 14.47 ± 1.961 , with no significant difference between the groups ($p=0.582$). Lloyd et al. (2009)[12] reported that parental locus of control was related to psychological adjustment among mothers of children with intellectual disability, with dimensions of locus of control predicting negative adjustment and showing a bidirectional relationship with stress. Lanfranchi et al. (2012)[13] similarly found that parental locus of control was related to family stress across families of children with different developmental syndromes. The absence of a significant difference between the two groups in the present study suggests that having more than one child with intellectual disability did not substantially alter the measured locus of control.

The comparison of personality factors showed no

statistically-significant differences between the two groups. Parents having one child had a higher mean Neuroticism score (27.33 ± 3.144), while parents having more than one child had higher mean scores for Extraversion (28.57 ± 2.885), Openness (24.73 ± 3.194), Agreeableness (26.53 ± 3.540) and Conscientiousness (28.47 ± 4.167). Øie et al.[14]. reported associations of Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Openness with positive parenting characteristics, while lower Neuroticism was associated with more favourable parenting. In the present study, although the personality profiles differed numerically between groups, none of the five domains reached statistical significance.

The correlation findings provide additional insight into parental adaptation. Positive impact showed a positive correlation with resilience ($r=0.367$), while resilience showed a positive correlation with Conscientiousness and a negative correlation with Extraversion. The findings are consistent with the broader resilience literature included in the study, where individual and family strengths, supportive relationships and adaptive processes were considered important for adjustment. McConnell et al[15]. (2014) found that families raising children with disabilities and behavioural problems demonstrated better outcomes under conditions of greater social support and lower financial hardship, emphasizing the importance of available family and social resources. Overall, the present findings suggest that parents may demonstrate resilience and positive adaptation despite the challenges associated with raising children with intellectual disability, with resilience, disability impact and personality characteristics showing interrelated patterns.

Conclusion

The study found no significant difference between the two family groups in disability impact, resilience, locus of control or personality factors. Parents having one child with intellectual disability showed higher mean resilience, while those having more than one child showed higher negative disability impact. Positive disability impact was positively associated with resilience. Resilience also showed a positive association with Conscientiousness. The findings highlight the importance of resilience and individual psychological characteristics in parental adaptation to intellectual disability.

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None

Conflict of Interest

None

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