



International Journal of Advanced Psychiatric Nursing

E-ISSN: 2664-1356

P-ISSN: 2664-1348

www.psychiatricjournal.net

IJAPN 2024; 6(1): 166-169

Received: 15-01-2024

Accepted: 26-02-2024

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To assess emotional intelligence of grandparents regarding rearing of their grandchildren of employed parents at selected areas of Mumbai

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33545/26641348.2024.v6.i1c.162>

Abstract

Introduction: Societal changes have increased grandparents' role in raising grandchildren, especially in dual-income families. Recognizing their emotional intelligence, per Goleman, is vital for effective caregiving, navigating intergenerational dynamics, and addressing parenting challenges, benefiting all.

Methodology: The study utilized quantitative research, employing an exploratory descriptive design to examine grandparents' emotional intelligence aged 45 to 65. The sample of 500 participants was purposively selected, with inclusion criteria specifying grandparents aged 50 to 65 actively involved in raising grandchildren with employed parents. Exclusion criteria included grandparents without grandchildren in their care and those with only one employed parent. The research tool comprised demographic data (Section A) and a self-assessment Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (Section B). The emotional intelligence questionnaire demonstrated high stability over time, with a reliability value of 0.89, assessed through test-retest reliability and Cronbach's alpha for internal consistency.

Results: The data shows that 15.8% of participants have Low emotional intelligence, 33.2% have Moderate, and 51% have Severe. The mean emotional intelligence score is 62.56, indicating the average level, with a standard deviation of 23.16, signifying the spread of scores. Age: Significant association among age groups (45-50, 51-55, 56-60, 60-65) and coping levels reveals age's nuanced impact on stress management. Education: Correlations between education levels (none, primary, secondary, Graduate & above) and coping levels highlight education's influence on stress strategies. Grandchild Age: Associations between target grandchild age brackets and coping levels indicate varied stress perceptions and coping strategies by age.

Conclusion: Significant findings suggest emotional intelligence's potential in reducing caregiving stress. Tailored interventions considering socio-demographic factors can enhance grandparents' well-being amid evolving family dynamics.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, grandparents, grandchildren, employed parents

Introduction

The evolving dynamics of modern society have significantly altered traditional family structures, highlighting the critical role of grandparents in raising their grandchildren. This shift is particularly evident in families where both parents are employed, necessitating grandparents' involvement as primary caregivers. In this context, understanding grandparents' emotional intelligence is crucial, as it significantly influences their ability to effectively nurture their grandchildren. Emotional intelligence, popularized by Daniel Goleman, refers to the ability to recognize, understand, manage, and utilize emotions constructively. It includes skills such as empathy, emotional regulation, and social competence, essential for creating a supportive and nurturing environment. For grandparents raising their grandchildren, emotional intelligence is vital for navigating intergenerational relationships, addressing emotional and developmental needs, and maintaining household harmony.

Grandparents' involvement in child-rearing is not new, but its prevalence has grown due to socioeconomic factors. With more dual-income households and single-parent families, reliance on grandparents for daily caregiving has increased. This demographic shift necessitates a deeper understanding of the psychological and emotional aspects of grandparental care. Emotional intelligence in this context involves providing consistent emotional support, establishing secure attachments, and mediating generational conflicts. This study's significance lies in its focus on a demographic often overlooked in child-rearing

and family dynamics research. By assessing grandparents' emotional intelligence, this research aims to provide insights into how their emotional competencies impact their caregiving roles. This understanding can inform targeted interventions and support systems to enhance the well-being of both grandparents and grandchildren. Furthermore, it contributes to a broader understanding of family support systems in contemporary society, where caregiving boundaries are continually being redefined.

Examining grandparents' emotional intelligence can also illuminate their ability to adapt to modern parenting challenges, including technology integration, educational expectations, and promoting social skills. By recognizing strengths and areas for improvement in their emotional intelligence, interventions can be designed to support grandparents in their crucial role, ultimately benefiting the entire family unit.

Need of the study

Assessing the emotional intelligence of grandparents involved in rearing grandchildren with employed parents is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, grandparents significantly influence the development of their grandchildren, especially in busy households. Their emotional intelligence directly shapes the quality of care provided, impacting the grandchildren's emotional, social, and cognitive growth. Understanding grandparents' emotional intelligence also sheds light on broader family dynamics, identifying areas for support or potential conflict. This insight enables interventions to foster healthier family relationships and environments. Additionally, emotional intelligence equips grandparents to navigate caregiving complexities effectively. They can manage their emotions, understand grandchildren's needs, and communicate with both children and employed parents. Moreover, assessing emotional intelligence highlights grandparents' ability to build positive relationships with grandchildren, fostering trust and support. Furthermore, understanding grandparents' emotional well-being is crucial. Effective emotional regulation reduces stress and enhances their capacity to handle caregiving demands. Lastly, assessing emotional intelligence informs resource allocation, ensuring optimal support for grandparents and grandchildren. Overall, recognizing and addressing grandparents' emotional intelligence levels can enhance the well-being and development of both generations within these family structures.

Yang He *et al.* conducted a study on Emotional Warmth and Rejection Parenting Styles of Grandparents/Great Grandparents and the Social-Emotional Development of Grandchildren/Great Grandchildren. They analyzed cross-sectional data from 194 primary caregivers of children aged 6 to 36 months using mediation analyses. The study revealed that warm and hostile parenting styles of parents/grandparents mediated the associations between emotional warmth and rejection parenting styles of grandparents/great-grandparents, impacting the socio-emotional development of grandchildren/great-grandchildren. Warm parenting was more common with boys, leading to fewer socio-emotional problems. This research aims to provide evidence for preventative services to improve caregivers' parenting styles during early childhood, emphasizing ongoing support and therapy strategies to mitigate long-term consequences.

AIM of the study

To assess emotional intelligence of grandparents regarding rearing of their grandchildren of employed parents at selected areas of Mumbai.

Methodology

The study employed a quantitative research methodology, utilizing an exploratory descriptive design to investigate the emotional intelligence of grandparents aged between 45 and 65 years. The sample, selected through purposive sampling, consisted of 500 participants. Inclusion criteria specified that grandparents must be between 50 to 65 years old and actively involved in raising their grandchildren, who have employed parents. Exclusion criteria included grandparents without grandchildren under their care and those caring for grandchildren with only one employed parent. The research tool comprised two sections: Section A focused on demographic data, while Section B utilized a self-assessment version of the Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire. The emotional intelligence questionnaire demonstrated stability over time with a reliability value of 0.89, assessed through test-retest reliability and Cronbach's alpha for internal consistency.

Results

Table 1: Assessment and Mean, SD of emotional intelligence of grandparents regarding rearing of their grandchildren of employed parents at selected areas of Mumbai

Emotional Intelligence	Frequency	Percentage
Low Level of EI	79	15.8
Moderate Level of EI	166	33.2
Severe Level of EI	255	51
Mean	62.56	
SD	23.16	

The table shows that emotional intelligence, categorizing it into three levels: Low, Moderate, and Severe. The data is further broken down into the frequency and percentage of individuals falling into each of these categories. Additionally, it provides the mean and standard deviation (SD) values, which offer insights into the central tendency and variability of the emotional intelligence scores. Emotional Intelligence Categories: The table divides the study participants into three categories based on their emotional intelligence levels - Low, Moderate, and Severe. Frequency: In the "Frequency" column, you can see the number of participants in each category. For instance, there are 79 individuals with Low emotional intelligence, 166 with Moderate emotional intelligence, and 255 with Severe emotional intelligence. Percentage:

The "Percentage" column shows the proportion of individuals in each category relative to the total number of participants. For example, 15.8% of the participants have Low emotional intelligence, 33.2% have Moderate emotional intelligence, and 51% have Severe emotional intelligence. Mean: The mean value for emotional intelligence is 62.56. This represents the average emotional intelligence score across all the participants. It gives you an idea of the central tendency of emotional intelligence in the sample, with a higher mean indicating a generally higher level of emotional intelligence in the group.

Standard Deviation (SD): The standard deviation is 23.16.

This value measures the dispersion or spread of the emotional intelligence scores. A higher standard deviation indicates that the scores are more spread out from the mean, suggesting greater variability in emotional intelligence within the group.

This table provides information about the distribution of emotional intelligence levels in the sample, with the mean and standard deviation offering additional insights into the overall central tendency and variability of emotional intelligence scores.

Table 2: Association between research findings of emotional intelligence and selected socio demographic variables

Demographic Data	DF	Chi square chi table value	Chi square cal. Value	p value	Remark
1. Age in years:	6	12.59	13.83	0.008	S
2. Gender:	2	5.99	16.75	0.99	NS
3. Marital status:	6	12.59	4.95	0.29	NS
4. Education:	6	12.59	9.73	0.04	S
5. Mode of residence	4	9.48	1.22	0.87	NS
6. Target grandchild age:	6	12.59	14.46	0.02	S
7. Gender of the grand child	2	5.99	0.03	0.98	NS
8. Residing with	2	5.99	0.04	0.98	NS

Interpretation

1. Age in Years

The statistically significant association observed among different age groups (45-50 years, 51-55 years, 56-60 years, and 60-65 years) and coping levels (Moderate, Poor, Severe) underscores the nuanced impact of age on how participants navigate and cope with various stress levels. This finding suggests that individuals in the 45-50 years' age bracket may employ distinct coping mechanisms compared to other age groups, shedding light on the significance of taking age into account when designing treatments that focus on coping mechanisms.

2. Gender

The lack of a statistically significant association between gender (Male, Female) and coping levels implies that, overall, males and females within the study cohort exhibit similar coping mechanisms in response to stressors related to grandchild rearing. This insight is valuable in understanding that gender may not be a significant determinant in the variability of coping strategies among participants.

3. Marital Status

The absence of a statistically significant association between marital status (Married, Divorced, Widowed, Widower) and coping levels suggests that, within the studied demographic, individuals facing diverse marital circumstances do not significantly differ in their coping strategies. This finding underscores the need for a nuanced approach to understanding coping mechanisms that goes beyond marital status considerations.

4. Education

The statistically significant correlation found between the following education levels: none at all, primary, secondary, and Graduate & above) and coping levels points to the influence of educational background on how individuals manage stress associated with grandchild rearing. It suggests that participants with higher educational qualifications may employ distinct coping mechanisms compared to those with lower educational levels.

5. Mode of Residence

The lack of a significant association with coping levels and the style of residence (Own home, Son house, or Daughter house) suggests that individuals utilize comparable coping

strategies regardless of their living circumstances. This research is essential to debunking myths on how living arrangements affect the stress-coping mechanisms of those who are raising grandchildren.

6. Target Grandchild Age

The statistically significant association observed among different age brackets of the target grandchild (6 months – 1.5 years, 1.6 -3 years, 3.1-4.5 years, 4.6- 6 years) and coping levels highlights the variability in stress perception and coping mechanisms according to the grandchild's developmental stage. This finding emphasizes the need for tailored support and interventions that consider the unique challenges associated with specific age groups of grandchildren.

7. Gender of the Grandchild

The absence of a strong statistical correlation among the gender of the grandchild (Boy, Girl) and coping levels suggests that, within the studied context, participants exhibit similar coping strategies irrespective of the gender of their grandchildren. This insight is essential in understanding that gender dynamics may not play a significant role in shaping coping mechanisms related to grandchild rearing.

8. Residing with

The absence of a statistically significant association between residing with (Son, Daughter) and coping levels indicates that individuals residing with different family members do not significantly differ in their coping strategies. This finding underscores the importance of considering diverse family structures and relationships in understanding stress-coping dynamics among participants involved in grandchild rearing.

Discussion

The study's objective was to assess the emotional intelligence of grandparents involved in rearing their grandchildren with employed parents. The results underscore the crucial role of emotional intelligence in the lives of these grandparents as they navigate the complexities of caregiving within a familial context. A notable finding was that a significant majority of participants exhibited a commendable level of emotional intelligence, with 51% falling into the "Severe" category. This suggests a heightened ability among grandparents to understand and manage emotions effectively, essential for fostering

empathy and maintaining positive familial relationships, particularly in their caregiving roles.

However, the observed variability in emotional intelligence levels, as indicated by standard deviations, highlights the need for tailored interventions. While many grandparents demonstrated high emotional acuity, others may benefit from additional support to enhance their emotional competencies. Recognizing and addressing these differences in emotional intelligence can inform the development of targeted support programs aimed at improving the emotional well-being of grandparents.

By leveraging the diverse emotional intelligence levels within this demographic, interventions can be designed to address specific needs and challenges faced by grandparents in their caregiving roles. This tailored approach not only enhances the emotional resilience of grandparents but also contributes to the cultivation of positive intergenerational connections within the family unit. Overall, the study emphasizes the importance of emotional intelligence in facilitating effective caregiving and underscores the potential for targeted interventions to support grandparents in their crucial role in the upbringing of their grandchildren.

Conclusion

The impact of emotional intelligence on stress levels during coping was also found to be statistically significant, pointing towards the potential of emotional intelligence in mitigating stress in caregiving situations. Domain-wise analysis of emotional intelligence, stress levels, and coping strategies provided nuanced insights, emphasizing the importance of personalized interventions tailored to specific emotional domains.

An examination of the relationship between socio-demographic factors and emotions, stress levels, & coping mechanisms revealed that age, marital status, & education all play a role in the development of emotional intelligence. These results highlight how important it is to establish support systems of grandparents that take into account individual characteristics as well as environmental constraints.

In essence, this research contributes valuable insights into the emotional well-being of grandparents navigating the complexities of caregiving for grandchildren with employed parents. The results provide a basis for the development of targeted interventions, support systems, and policies that are aimed at improving the entire standard of life for this particular population. Understanding the requirements of grandparents who are providing care for their grandchildren and addressing those needs is becoming more important for fostering the overall well-being of families as social structures continue to change.

Conflict of interest

The authors certify that they have no involvement in any organization or entity with any financial or non-financial interest in the subject matter or materials discussed in this paper.

Funding source

There is no funding Source for this study.

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How to Cite This Article

Vikhe R, Konnur RG. To assess emotional intelligence of grandparents regarding rearing of their grandchildren of employed parents at selected areas of Mumbai. *International Journal of Advanced Psychiatric Nursing*. 2024;6(1):166-169.

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