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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Parental Functioning of Deaf and Normal Parents with Normal Children: A Comparative Study in Saudi Settings

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to determine how parental functioning differed between deaf parents and normal parents with hearing children. The parental functioning scale (parents-children) was developed by the researcher. Eighty fathers and mothers in Riyadh, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, made up the research sample. They were divided into two groups: Forty deaf fathers and mothers with their children who could hear normally and forty fathers and mothers with their children who could hear normally. Findings demonstrated statistically significant differences between the mean scores of deaf parents and normal parents favoring the normal parents' scores in the parental functioning scale for parents and in its dimensions. Findings also revealed statistically significant differences between the scores of deaf parents and the scores of normal parents in terms of parental functioning as perceived by their children in all of its dimensions favouring normal parents.

INTRODUCTION

Patterns of family functioning are now seen as mechanisms for balancing the family system rather than as distinctive characteristics of its members, so the psychology of parental functioning and its impact on children's behavior in various aspects of their development is currently receiving great attention in the Western world. One of the most significant factors influencing mental health, the emergence of disorders and conflicts, and a child's propensity for deviance and delinquency is thought to be parental functioning.

Cohesion and support among family members in a way that goes beyond necessary and partial relationships are achieved through the network of relationships and interactions within the family, the roles and responsibilities of family members, the forms of control exercised within the family, ways of fulfilling individual needs, in addition to the attitudes and treatment methods adopted by parents in upbringing. (Amin, 2017).

Many deaf parents often exhibit a lack of social maturity and a negative self-concept. In addition, they have a host of maladjustment issues, including impulsivity, rigidity, self-centeredness, and poor self-control. Along with their incapacity to adapt effectively in all of its dimensions, this may have a number of detrimental impacts, the most significant of which are psychological problems which prompts us to say that this may be reflected in their parental functioninng. (Hanfy, 2016)

However, the researcher thinks that most typical parents are psychologically compatible, exhibit typical social maturity, and interact with their children and the world around them in typical ways. All of this may be reflected in their role as fathers, knowing that some normal parents may have deficiencies in some dimensions of parental functioning.

Research problem

During the researcher's work in a family counseling center in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, he discovered that many families of deaf parents of children with normal hearing experience a variety of family issues due to their parents' hearing impairment and their incapacity to fulfill the crucial role of parents in the lives of their normal children.

In certain families, the eldest son frequently takes on the role of parents for the younger siblings, which causes additional dissatisfaction owing to the children's need for a close parental relationship. In other extended families, deaf parents rely on relatives and neighbors to monitor their child's progress in school and other areas, as well as to resolve many family issues. Furthermore, typical children of deaf parents are unable to break free from the constraints imposed by their parents' impairment, either within or beyond the home. Additionally, several studies and research point to a shortfall in deaf parents' functioning as parents in the foreign settings (Bakar, 2011; Duke, 2020). The researcher conducted this study because, to the best of her knowledge, there are not many Arab studies that addressed the disparities in parental functioning between deaf and normal parents with normal children, prompting the researcher to conduct this study. The problem of the current research can be fully expressed in the following question: Are there differences between deaf versus normal parents of normal children in parental functioning?

Research goal

Recognizing differences between deaf versus normal parents of normal children in parental functioning

Research significance

A: Theoretical importance

- The research's significance comes from the significance of the issue it attempts to resolve, namely the comparison between the functional performance of deaf parents and normal parents. There is no doubt; parents play a crucial role in their children's life.
- Insufficient studies in the Arab world comparing the deaf and normal parents' functional performance

A: Practical importance

- This study assists family counseling specialists in developing and implementing counseling programs by identifying disparities in parental functioning between deaf and normal parents.
- The recommendations and suggestions derived from this study are helpful to families and other stakeholders.

Terminology

- **Parental functioning**: It is defined as parents' efforts, the methods they employ to resolve family conflicts, and the degree to which they are able to establish effective communication among their family members, meet basic needs, carry out their parental responsibilities, and foster social and psychological development. The researcher defines parental functioning procedurally as the degree achieved by parents on the Parental Functioning Scale for Parents as perceived by the children
- **Deaf**: a person who is unable to understand speech even with the use of assistive devices or aids, and whose hearing loss is assessed to be 90 decibels or more. A deaf person has been born deaf or has lost their hearing due to an accident or sickness. (Musa, 2018). The researcher defines a deaf person procedurally as: a person whose degree of hearing loss reaches 90 or more decibels according to the audiometric scale.
- **Deaf parents with normal children**: According to the researcher, they are the parents who are unable to hear or talk (deaf and dumb), while their children are normal, i.e. able to hear and speak. They live together on a regular basis.

- **Normal parents with normal children**: According to the researcher, they are the parents who are able to hear and speak and whose children are normal and able to hear and speak. They live together on a regular basis.

Previous studies

In order to compare the parental performance styles of families with deaf parents and their normal children, families with blind parents and their normal children, and families with normal parents and their normal children, the study "Baker 2011," entitled "Parental Functioning in Families of Deaf and Blind Parents," sought to identify the dynamics and characteristics of parental functioning in these scenarios. With parent ages ranging from 38 to 50, the study sample included 40 families with deaf parents and normal hearing children, 40 families with blind parents and normal children, and 40 families with normal parents and normal children. The average scores of individuals (parents) from families with deaf parents and their normal children and those from families with blind parents and their children differ statistically significantly, according to the study, which used the researcher's prepared parental functioning scale. In favor of families with normal parents and their children, the normal and average scores of the individuals (parents) from those families are normal. The study's findings also showed that dysfunction and disorder in family communication, family interaction, and conflict resolution are characteristics of deaf parents' functional performance as parents.

The purpose of the "Abdo, 2016" study was to develop a counselling program aimed at improving the functioning of deaf parents and to examine the impact of that program on the psychological and social compatibility of their normal children. The study was entitled "The effectiveness of a counselling program to improve the parental functioning of deaf parents and its impact on the psychological and social compatibility of their normal children." The two groups comprising the study sample are: The experimental group consists of six couples, each of which has two male and female children as well as a mother and father. The parents are in the 35–45 year age range, while their typical children are in the 9–12 year age range. The six families that make up the control group are each made up of a mother, a father, and two children, both male and female. The parents are in the 35–45 year age range, while their typical children are in the 9–12 year age range. The study's findings demonstrated statistically significant differences between the experimental group's mean ranks of the deaf parents' scores on the scale of parental functioning for deaf parents and its dimensions in the pre- and post-measurements, as well as a total score that favored the post-measurement.

The study "Parental functioning of deaf parents and its relationship to their self-concept and psychological adjustment in their children" was conducted by Debra Duke in 2020. The purpose of the study was to examine how deaf parents' functioning relates to their children's psychological development and self-perception. There were forty-six deaf parents and their kids in the study sample. The study came to the conclusion that weak and severe impairments in emotional responses, feeling expression, communication, carrying out parental tasks, and problem solving characterize the functional performance of deaf parents as parents. According to the study's findings, there is a positive correlation between deaf parents' parental functioning and their children's self-concept and psychological adjustment. This means that when deaf parents perform poorly as parents, their normal children develop a negative self-concept and have low psychological adjustment. The study also suggested that in order to train and equip deaf parents with the skills they need to improve their functional performance; specific assistance programs should be offered.

"Parental Resources of Deaf Parents and Their Normal Children," a study by "Mallory, 2021". The goal of the study was to compare the needs of deaf parents for counselling and resources with those of their typical child. There were fifteen deaf parents and fifteen normal children in the study sample. The findings demonstrated the necessity for professional social services and mental health for deaf parents. They are alson in a bad need to advice services available through programs designed for deaf parents.

The families of normal children of deaf parents are examined in the study of "Marc, 2023" which entitled "Deaf Parents and Their Normal Children." As a result, this study offers a succinct overview of how deaf parents interact with their non-deaf children, the deaf culture, the function of non-deaf children in their deaf households, and how well their families function in the world of the normal people. The study also covered the crucial factors and sources of information for these families'

education, healthcare, and other services. According to the study, typical kids with deaf parents also require guiding assistance. Ten children, five of them deaf parents and five of them normal, made up the study's sample.

Remarks on previous studies

Although the aforementioned foreign studies addressed this issue, the researcher found, to the best of his knowledge, that there are few Arab studies that compare the parental functioning of deaf parents with the parental functioning of normal parents who have normal children. This was discovered after reviewing previous studies and research related to the topic of the current study.

Research hypotheses

- There are statistical significant differences between the mean scores of deaf versus normal parents of normal children in parental functioning scale in favor of normal parents.
- There are statistical significant differences between the mean scores of deaf parents -as perceived by children- and normal parents -as perceived by children- in parental functioning scale -as perceived by children- in favor of normal parents.

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive analytical comparative method was adopted in order to examine the phenomena as it exists, obtaining an accurate description and interpretation in relation to the research variables in an objective manner aiming at scientific conclusions.

Participants: They were 80 parents (fathers and mothers) whose age ranges from 40 to 60 years. All parents live with their normal children.in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. They were divided into two groups:

Group (A): It includes 40 deaf parents (20 fathers and 20 mothers).

Group (B): It includes 40 norrmal parents (20 fathers and 20 mothers).

Tools:

- Parental functioning scale (parents' version - children's version) (Prepared by the researcher).

Aim of the scale: to the best of the researcher's knowledge, there was no scale for the parental functioning hat was in line with the characteristics of the participants, therefore the researcher developed this scale.

Procedures of the scale:

- **Review of the theoretical literature for parental functioning.**
- The scales that dealt with parental functioning differ from the scale of parental functioning for fathers (prepared by the researcher) because they are designed for normal parents only, which prompted the researcher to prepare a scale appropriate for deaf or normal fathers whose children are the current study sample, benefiting from the dimensions and items of these scales: (Parental functioning scale (By Amin, 2017) - Parental performance quality scale (By Abdul Wahab, 2019) - Parental functioning scale (By Abdullah, 2020) - Family functioning scale (By Abu Al-Hassan, 2011).
- **Determining the dimensions and components of the scale**: After reviewing the previous scales and their dimensions, the researcher defined parental functioning and determined the suitable dimensions for the current scale: Parental functioning is the efforts made by mothers and fathers, the methods they employ to resolve conflicts in the family, and the extent to which they are able to foster effective family communication, meet one's basic needs, offer support and assistance to the family, and promote social and psychological growth.The scale includes the following dimensions:

1. **Family communication:** It demonstrates the parents' ability to facilitate dialogue and interaction among family members, communicate their sentiments and emotions, and foster mutual understanding of the implications of that communication and its impact on them. It has four items (1, 8, 15, and 22).

2. **Family relationships "family interaction":** It relates to the nature of family ties and mutual interactions, the degree of intimacy, warmth, coldness, dryness, proximity, or distance, the emotions and feelings that exist between them, and their attitudes toward each other. It has four items: (2, 9, 16, and 23).
    1. **Methods of solving family problems:** It expresses the parents' strategy and style for resolving family disagreements and conflicts, as well as controlling anger or hostility. It has four items (3, 10, 17, and 24).
    2. **Family support and assistance**: It reflects how committed parents are to carrying out their duties to their kids and allocating responsibilities fairly among the family members. It has four items: (4, 11, 18, and 25).
    3. **Meeting the fundamental requirements**: It expresses the parents' ability to provide their children with food, drink, clothing, and a sense of security and reassurance, as well as a family atmosphere characterized by respect, appreciation, and care for their children from all psychological and social aspects. It has four items: (5, 12, 19, and 16).
    4. **Family control and order standards**: This refers to the parents' ability to control their children's behavior, teach them family rules, reward and punishment standards, and appropriately plan any activity undertaken by any family member. It has four items: (6, 13, 20, and 27).
    5. **Personal and social growth**: It refers to the chances parents give their children to grow personally and socially, as well as to improve their social skills, cultural awareness, and cognitive capacities. There are four phrases in it: (7, 14, 21, and 28).

Description of the scale

After reviewing the theoretical literature of parental functioning (parents' version - children's version), the researcher developed this scale, which includes 28 items, 21 positive and 7 negative, dispersed across the seven dimensions stated above. Developing this scale, the researcher made sure to shorten the items while crafting them to make them easy to comprehend and to ensure that the language was straightforward, uncomplicated, and devoid of multiple meanings.

Scoring the scale

For positive items, one of four responses is chosen: "always" (4 points), "occasionally" (3 points), "rarely" (2 points), and "never" (1 point). The score is reversed if the item is negative. The response scores ranged from 28 to 112 points. A high score on the scale suggests successful parental functioning, whereas a low score implies a breakdown in such functioning.

Validity of the scale

The scale was given to ten expert juries in psychology, mental health, and special education to assess the validity of the scale items in measuring the dimension to which they belong. The juries' comments were considered authoritative. No items were removed from the scale as a result of this process; however, certain words were changed in response to the juries' remarks.

Table (1) shows the parental functioning scale items (parents' version- children's version) before and .after modifying according to the juries' remarks

Item	Before	After
1	I communicate with my family members in an understandable and friendly way.	I talk to my family members in an .understanding and cordial way
5	My goal is to give my family members a sense of comfort and security.	I provide my family members a sense of security.
22	I put a lot of effort into making sure that our family's communication is beneficial to all of us .and productive	We have great, productive, and good family .communication

Criterion-related validity

The scale's validity was verified by calculating the correlation coefficient between the Quality of Parental Functioning Scale developed by Abdul Wahab (2019) and the researcher's Parental Functioning Scale for Parents, which were administered to 60 deaf and normal fathers aged 40 to 60

years. The correlation coefficient between them was (0.84) and (0.877), respectively for parental functioning (fathers' version - childrens' version), which is significant at (0.01) level.

Reliability of the scale

Test-retest method

The scale was administered twice, with a two-week delay, to forty (40) deaf and normal parents. The correlation coefficient between the participants' scores in the first and second administeration was (0.84), (0.86) for parental functioning (parents' version-childrens' version) at the level of (0.01), indicating that the scale has a high degree of reliability.

Cronbach's alpha method

By administering the scale to a total of (40) deaf and normal parents and their children. The alpha reliability coefficient for the scale as a whole reached (0.89) and (0.88) for parental functioning (parents' version - children's version) at the level of (0.01), indicating a high reliability coefficient.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Hypothesis 1: Result and discussion

- The first hypothesis states that there are statistical significant differences between the mean scores of deaf versus normal parents of normal children in parental functioning scale in favor of normal parents. To verify this hypothesis, the researcher calculated the mean scores of deaf and normal parents in parental functioning, as shown in Table (2).

Table (2): The direction of the differences between the mean scores of deaf and normal parents in parental functioning (for parents)

Dimension	*parents*	*N*	*M*	*S.D*	*df*	*T*	*Sig.*
Family Communication	Normal	40	12.0333	2.0254	78	14.051	0.01
	Deaf	40	6.0333	1.8286			
Family Relationships Interaction	Normal	40	9.9667	1.7117		23.204	0.01
	Deaf	40	5.1667	1.1769			
Methods of solving family problems	Normal	40	11.9333	1.6802		22.374	0.01
	Deaf	40	5.3333	1.2685			
Family support and assistance	Normal	40	13.6333	1.8096		18.471	0.01
	Deaf	40	5.8333	1.4404			
Meeting the fundamental requirements	Normal	40	8.7667	1.6333		16.598	0.01
	Deaf	40	6.0667	1.9464			
Family control and order standards	Normal	40	11.7333	1.2847		23.566	0.01
	Deaf	40	5.5333	1.4077			
Personal and social growth	Normal	40	9.8000	1.3493		23.575	0.01
	Deaf	40	5.3000	1.4420			
Total	Normal	40	77.8667	3.7484		52.124	0.01
	Deaf	40	39.2000	4.6268			

The previous table shows that there are statistical significant differences between the mean scores of deaf versus normal parents of normal children in parental functioning scale in favor of normal parents. These results align with the findings of the Baker study (2011), which found that there were statistically significant differences between the mean scores of parents from families of deaf parents and their normal children, the mean scores of parents from families of blind parents and their normal children, and the mean scores of parents from families of normal parents and their normal children, in favor of families of normal parents and their normal children. The results of the study also indicated that the parental functioning of deaf parents is characterized by dysfunction and disorder in the areas of family communication, family interaction, and in resolving family problems and conflicts .

The first hypothesis' results are interpreted by the researcher on the grounds that they support the general trend in psychology and education, which holds that normal parents are better able to carry out their basic responsibilities, meet their children's needs, and provide for them. Normal parents are also better able to establish positive relationships with their children, solve problems in a way that is appropriate for the situation, maintain control over their behavior, and are not crippled. On the other hand, deaf parents are less capable of fulfilling these roles.

Hypothesis 2: Result and discussion

- The second hypothesis states that are statistical significant differences between the mean scores of deaf versus normal parents of normal children in parental functioning scale in favor of normal parents.To verify this hypothesis, the researcher calculated the
- Mean scores of deaf and normal parents in parental functioning, as shown in Table (3).

Table (3): The direction of the differences between the mean scores of deaf and normal parents in parental functioning (for children)

Dimension	*parents*	*N*	*M*	*S.D*	*df*	*T*	*Sig.*
Family Communication	Normal	40	10.7333	3.4133	78	15.09	0.01
	Deaf	40	6.0000	1.7617			
Family Relationships "Family Interaction"	Normal	40	13.7433	2.4486		17.367	0.01
	Deaf	40	5.1333	3.4133			
Methods of solving family problems	Normal	40	11.9333	1.7617		22.671	0.01
	Deaf	40	5.3000	2.4486			
Family support and assistance	Normal	40	11.6333	1.8096		18.513	0.01
	Deaf	40	5.800	1.4479			
Meeting the fundamental requirements	Normal	40	12.9333	2.0667		13.187	0.01
	Deaf	40	5.9667	2.0254			
Family control and order standards	Normal	40	12.2667	2.6253		12.381	0.01
	Deaf	40	5.5333	1.4077			
Personal and social growth	Normal	40	13.8000	1.3493		23.575	0.01
	Deaf	40	5.3000	1.4420			
Total	Normal	40	87.1000	2.2480		38.868	0.01
	Deaf	40	38.9667	4.8742			

The previous table shows that there are statistical significant differences between the mean scores of deaf versus normal parents of normal children in parental functioning scale in favor of normal parents (as perceived by children). These results are in line with the research conducted by Debra Duke in 2020, which found that those deaf parents' weak and severely deficient emotional responses, expression of feelings, communication, role-playing, and problem-solving abilities characterize their parental functioning.

The researcher bases his interpretation of the second hypothesis' results on the idea that children of normal people believe their fathers do a good job of fulfilling their parental duties because they give them good family communication, engage in typical family activities, and resolve family conflicts in typical ways. Furthermore, typical fathers give their kids chances for social and psychological development as well as support and guidance in every circumstance they face. Deaf fathers are also subject to limitations imposed by society and its perceptions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the research findings, the following recommendations were provided:

- The importance of developing programs to improve deaf parents' functional performance into educational plans, as well as plans for family guidance centers and other responsible authorities.
- Providing specialized workshops and courses to help deaf parents improve their parenting skills.

- Early intervention is essential to address the issue of deaf parents' dysfunctional parenting, as it affects their children's academic, social, and psychological development.

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