

- **Name of the study:** Comparative study: home-work balance among parents of children with disabilities (neuro-developmental disorders) versus parents of children without disabilities aged 0-12
- **Year:** 2024
- **Type of research:** research
- **Catalog Number:** 890-663-2021
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- **Research Authority:** School of Social Work, Sapir Academic College.

Abstract

This work was supported by a grant from Shalem Fund

This study explored demographic differences, employment variables, and work-life balance among working parents of children aged 0-12 with neurodevelopmental disabilities versus those without disabilities. It also examined how demographic factors, employment variables, parental stress, work centrality, and life meaning predicted work-life balance. The findings revealed that parents of children with disabilities were less educated, worked less, and experience higher parental stress than did parents of children without disabilities. Additionally, increased parental stress significantly reduced work-life balance, with the effect being more pronounced among parents of children with neurodevelopmental disabilities.

Thousands of employees in Israel are parents of children with disabilities. Similar to international policies supporting deinstitutionalization, systemic changes have also developed in Israel, emphasizing the integration of people with disabilities into the community. The welfare ministry's policy clearly prefers living within the family unit, thereby emphasizing the role of the family system as the primary caregiver. Working parents of children with disabilities face challenges with both home demands and raising a child with a disability, as well as workplace demands. The concept of work-life balance describes the ability to balance home and family demands with workplace demands. Difficulty achieving this balance can create situations of stress and mental and physical illness among working parents, especially those with children

with neurodevelopmental disabilities. Therefore, it is important to examine the factors that contribute to work-life balance.

Research Objective: To examine differences in demographic variables, employment variables, meaning in life, parental stress, work centrality, and work-life balance between parents of children aged 0-12 with neurodevelopmental disabilities and parents of children without disabilities in these ages. An additional goal was to examine which research variables predict work-life balance.

The sample included 160 working parents of children aged 0-12 with neurodevelopmental disabilities who speak Hebrew in the research group, and a control group of 192 working parents of children without disabilities in the same ages, who also speak Hebrew. The study was a cross-sectional study conducted from October 2022 to October 2023. The research findings indicate differences between the two research groups, such that parents of children with neurodevelopmental disabilities work less and are less educated. They also experience greater parental stress and lack of work-life balance compared to parents of children without disabilities. Additionally, parental stress was found to significantly interact with work-life balance, such that the higher the parental stress, the less work-life balance. This interaction is stronger among parents of children with neurodevelopmental disabilities.

Keywords

Working parents of children with neurodevelopmental disabilities, parental stress, work-life balance.

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