

Investigating the relationship between quality of life and career development of parents of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Institution:

Flinders University Business School (SA)

Tags:

Quality of Life, Career Development, Parents

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QUALITY OF LIFE AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

Abstract

This study examines the human resource impact on opportunities for career development in parents of children with Autism spectrum disorder (ASD). There is little literature that investigates the impairment of quality of life (QOL) in parents of children with (ASD). The relationship between QOL and career development has been poorly addressed in the literature to date. The purpose of the current study is to:

- 1) Investigate the relationship between parents of children with ASD and QOL and to establish what implications this has on their career development;
- 2) Identify if quality of life and career development is poorer for parents of children/adult children with high level functioning autism and Asperger syndrome, than parents of children/adult children with other forms of autism;
- 3) Identify if quality of life and career development varies between parents of children/adult children with ASD during early childhood, late childhood and early adulthood.

Parents of children with ASD were interviewed in this study to determine what effects that had on their QOL and the flow on effect it had on their career development. There is no known study that has investigated parents of children with ASD and its impact on QOL with the flow on effects on the development of their careers. Parents registered with Autism SA were randomly selected with children/adult children aged either three to four, eleven to twelve or nineteen to twenty years of age. Consenting parents were invited to participate in a telephone interview, to assess the quality of life changes associated with being a parent of a child with ASD and the impact this had on their career development. This study adds a new perspective to the existing literature that has tested the relationship between QOL and CD by examining the relationship that exists for parents of children with ASD.

Business Organisations already face a challenge in dealing with the management of human resources and this is further compounded by the increase in incidence of

employees who have children that have a diagnosis of an Autism spectrum disorders. The impacts this has on career development of these employees has not yet been formally researched. Evidence suggest that parents of children with high functioning autism, Asperger syndrome, experience greater stress than parents of children with other forms of autism (Mungo, Diego, Ruta, D'Arrigo and Mazzone, 2007). The QOL scores are lower for these parents, than parent of children with Autism. The growing number of children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorders in Australia signals the importance of its potential effects on career development. A recent study identified the impact and relevance on quality of life of parents of children with ASD (Mungo, Ruta, D'Arrigo and Mazzone, 2007). The current study investigates the impact this has on the quality of career development of those parents. Research has shown that the QOL of mothers are effected more so than fathers and this is an area that requires attention, from an Australian perspective. How quality of life issues affect career development, is the major contribution of this paper.