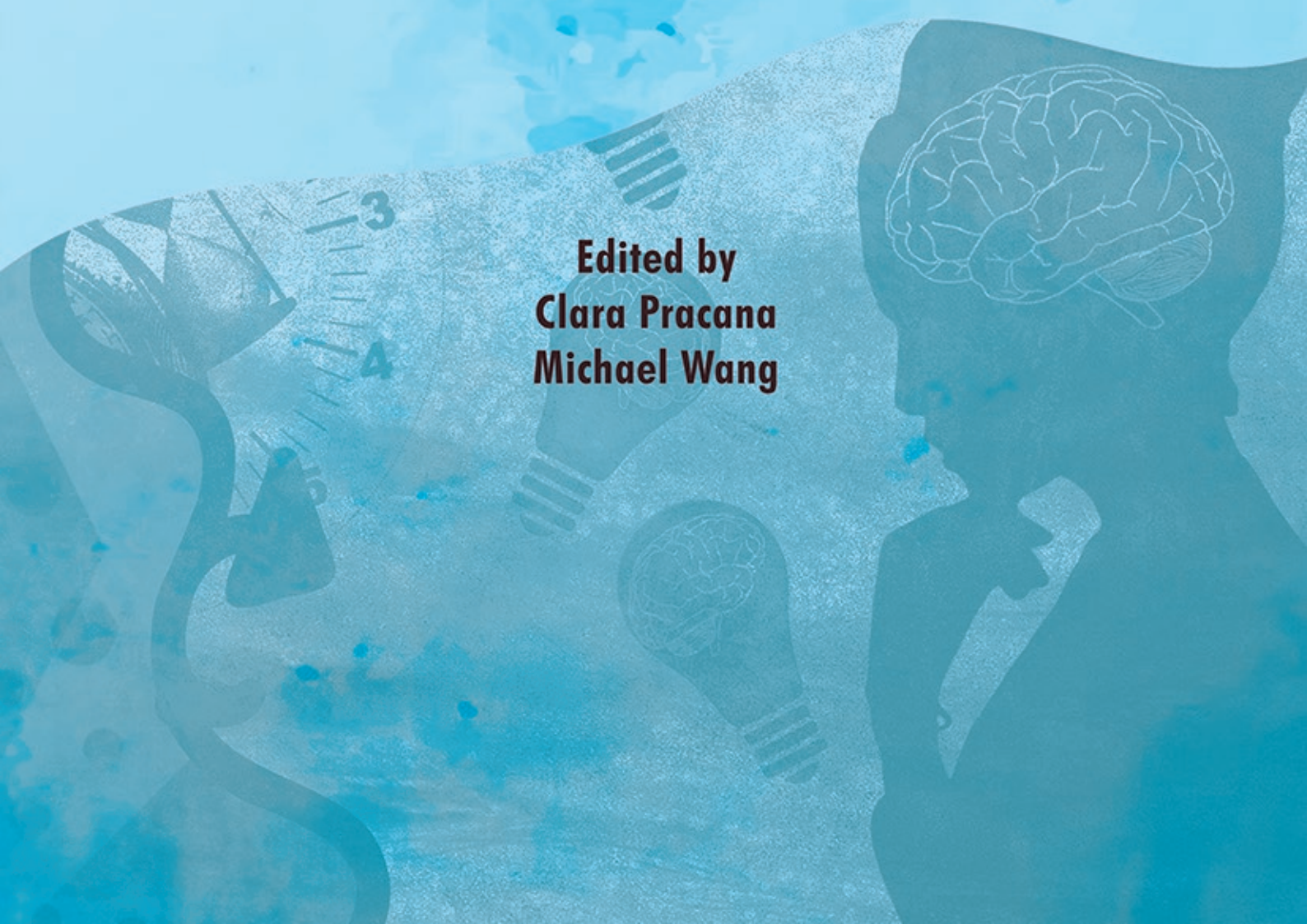


Psychological Applications and trends 2023



**Edited by
Clara Pracana
Michael Wang**



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2023

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&

Michael Wang

Edited by:

- Prof. Clara Pracana, Full and Training Member of the Portuguese Association of Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy, Portugal,

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FOREWORD

Dear Participants,

This book contains a compilation of papers presented at the International Psychological Applications Conference and Trends (InPACT) 2023, organized by the World Institute for Advanced Research and Science (WIARS), held in International Psychological Applications Conference and Trends (InPACT) 2023, held in Lisbon, Portugal, from 22 to 24 of April 2023. This conference serves as a platform for scholars, researchers, practitioners, and students to come together and share their latest findings, ideas, and insights in the field of psychology.

Over the next few days, we will be exploring some of the most cutting-edge research and theories in psychology. We have a diverse range of topics and speakers lined up for you, covering themes and sub-themes. The conference proceedings and program include six main broad-ranging categories that cover diversified interest areas:

- **CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY:** Emotions and related psychological processes; Assessment; Psychotherapy and counseling; Addictive behaviors; Eating disorders; Personality disorders; Quality of life and mental health; Communication within relationships; Services of mental health; and Psychopathology.
- **EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY:** Language and cognitive processes; School environment and childhood disorders; Parenting and parenting related processes; Learning and technology; Psychology in schools; Intelligence and creativity; Motivation in classroom; Perspectives on teaching; Assessment and evaluation; and Individual differences in learning.
- **SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY:** Cross-cultural dimensions of mental disorders; Employment issues and training; Organizational psychology; Psychology in politics and international issues; Social factors in adolescence and its development; Social anxiety and self-esteem; Immigration and social policy; Self-efficacy and identity development; Parenting and social support; Addiction and stigmatization; and Psychological and social impact of virtual networks.
- **LEGAL PSYCHOLOGY:** Violence and trauma; Mass-media and aggression; Intra-familial violence; Juvenile delinquency; Aggressive behavior in childhood; Internet offending; Working with crime perpetrators; Forensic psychology; Violent risk assessment; and Law enforcement and stress.
- **COGNITIVE AND EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY:** Perception, memory, and attention; Decision making and problem-solving; Concept formation, reasoning, and judgment; Language processing; Learning skills and education; Cognitive Neuroscience; Computer analogies and information processing (Artificial Intelligence and computer simulations); Social and cultural factors in the cognitive approach; Experimental methods, research and statistics; and Biopsychology.
- **PSYCHOANALYSIS AND PSYCHOANALYTICAL PSYCHOTHERAPY:** Psychoanalysis and psychology; The unconscious; The Oedipus complex; Psychoanalysis of children; Pathological mourning; Addictive personalities; Borderline organizations; Narcissistic personalities; Anxiety and phobias; Psychosis; Neuropsychoanalysis.

InPACT 2023 received 548 submissions, from more than 39 different countries all over the world, reviewed by a double-blind process. Submissions were prepared to take the form of Oral Presentations, Posters, Virtual Presentations and Workshops. 192 submissions (overall, 35% acceptance rate) were accepted for presentation at the conference.

As we all know, psychology is a vast and complex field that encompasses a wide range of topics, from the study of human behaviour to the workings of the brain. It is a field that has made enormous strides in recent years, and it continues to evolve at a rapid pace. At this conference, we hope to not only share the latest research and developments in psychology but also to foster a sense of community and collaboration among attendees. We believe that by working together, we can continue to advance the field of psychology and make important contributions to our understanding of the human mind and behaviour.

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all of our speakers, sponsors, and attendees for making this conference possible. This book includes an extensive variety of contributors and presenters that are hereby sharing with us their different personal, academic, and cultural experiences.

The conference also includes:

- One keynote presentation by Prof. Dr. Shulamith Kreitler, Professor of Psychology, Tel-Aviv University, School of Psychological Sciences; Head of Psychooncology Research Center, Sheba Medical Center, Tel-Hashomer, Israel.
- One Special Talk by Prof. Dr. Michael Wang (Emeritus Professor of Clinical Psychology, University of Leicester, United Kingdom).

This volume is composed with the full content of the accepted submissions of the International Psychological Applications Conference and Trends (InPACT 2023). We hope that this book of proceedings will be a valuable resource for those in attendance, as well as for those who could not join us. Thank you for your participation, and we look forward to a productive and stimulating event!

Lastly, we would like to thank all the authors and participants, the members of the academic scientific committee, and, of course, the organizing and administration team for making and putting this conference together.

Looking forward to continuing our collaboration in the future,

Prof. Clara Pracana

*Full and Training Member of the Portuguese Association of Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy, Portugal
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FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS: PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL SUPPORT AND PARENTAL WELL-BEING

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Abstract

Research on social support in families of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) points its influence in parents' health and well-being as well as in their involvement in the educational and therapeutic process. National and international laws assign parents a central role in assuring children's educational interests. Promoting quality of life and well-being are key areas in educational and therapeutic contexts. The aim of this study is to: i) compare parents of children with and without SEN in social support and parental well-being (life satisfaction) and these variables in parents of children with different problems; ii) understand the relationship between social support and well-being; iii) analyze the effect of sociodemographic variables on social support and parental well-being. This is a non-experimental and cross-correlated study with a non-probabilistic and convenience sample of 152 parents of children with SEN and 149 without SEN. Of the 152 children, 53.9% (n=82) showed Intellectual Disabilities (ID), 24.3% (n=37) Motor Disabilities (MD) and 21.7% (n=33) Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). Data were collected in the central region of Portugal. Instruments: Social Support Questionnaire

– short version, Life Satisfaction Scale; and a parental sociodemographic questionnaire. There are significant and positive correlations ($r=0.539$, $p<.001$) between social support and well-being (life satisfaction). Both parent groups have significant differences in well-being and in satisfaction with social support. In the SEN group, parents of children with ASD showed significantly higher values in social support than those with children with ID ($p=.001$) and MD ($p=.004$). A similar trend was observed in life satisfaction scale, but only with the ID group ($p=.005$). The results highlight the relationship between well-being/life satisfaction and social support and the need to invest in social support in SEN children's families. Intervention programs should include ways to support family's adaptation, empowering them to deal with these children giving them special attention. In the ecological/systemic and social support approaches, families are perceived as having skills, resources and needs, and the professionals should be, essentially, promoters, in a (co)constructed and dynamic process between family and technical expert, respecting family's autonomy.

Keywords: *Special education needs, families, well-being, life satisfaction, social support.*

1. Introduction

Research on social support for families of children with Special Educational Needs (SEN), in the context of inclusive education, has noted that it contributes directly and indirectly to several dimensions of parental and family functioning, including adapting to stress, parental well-being and involvement in the educational and therapeutic process (Dunst, 2017, 2021, 2022; Dunst & Trivette, 2010).

Social support can be defined as the set of resources provided to an individual or group by members of their social network. Family and child characteristics, themselves interdependent, partly determine social support and together affect adjustment and behaviour mechanisms in adverse conditions, affecting parental and family functioning and well-being (Dunst, 2017, 2021, 2022; Dunst et al., 2007).

The scientific literature on well-being is consistent in drawing attention to the vastness of this research area. Diener (2009) provides a definition of subjective well-being as an evaluative response of the individual to his/her own life, both in terms of satisfaction (cognitive dimension), and in terms of affectivity (stable emotional element). Thus, subjective well-being includes individual stable levels of positive affectivity, the absence or reduction of negative affectivity and life satisfaction. The affective dimension has two independent factors: positive affectivity and negative affectivity. Positive affect

consists of pleasant feelings and emotions, such as joy, enthusiasm, and happiness, while negative affectivity is reflected in the willingness to experience unpleasant feelings and emotions, such as shame, guilt, sadness, anxiety, and depression (Simões et al., 2000). The cognitive dimension of well-being refers to life satisfaction and involves the discrepancy perceived between aspiration and achievement varying with the degree of perception from totality to deprivation (Diener, 2009).

Within the framework of the inclusive approach, the theories and studies regarding social support and well-being are important because they adopt a positive perspective of parental/family functioning and perceive the potential of the parents' skills in promoting child development. Both Portuguese law (Decree-Law No. 54/2018 of 6 July) and international legislation assign parents a central role in promoting the educational interests of their children as participating decision-makers in the educational process, such that promoting their health and well-being are key areas of the educational and therapeutic intervention.

This study is part of a broader line of research on family of children with SEN functioning (Felizardo, 2010, 2013). The aim of this paper is to analyse social support and parental well-being (life satisfaction) of families with children with intellectual disabilities, motor disorders and autism. The following objectives have been defined: i) to compare parents of children with and without SEN in social support and parental well-being (life satisfaction) and these variables in parents of children with different problems; ii) to understand the relationships between social support and well-being; iii) to analyse the effect of sociodemographic variables on social support and parental well-being

2. Materials and methods

Research questions relating to the exploration of relationships between the study variables contribute to greater knowledge in the field, allowing an improvement in professional practices of those involved in the intervention. This study was designed to be non-experimental and correlational.

The participants were 152 parents of children with SEN and 149 without SEN, in a non-probabilistic and convenience sample. Data were collected in the central region of Portugal, contacting schools as well as institutions which support children and young people with disabilities and their families. With regards to the group of parents of children with SEN, our attention focused on the cases of parents or caregivers of children or young people with permanent SEN supported by the specialist services of Special Education, which in Portugal are covered by specific legislation (Decree-Law No. 3/2008 of 7 January). Of the 152 children, 53.9% (n=82) showed Intellectual Disabilities (ID), 24.3% (n=37) Motor Disabilities (MD) and 21.7% (n=33) Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD).

The instruments used to collect data were:

i) Life Satisfaction Scale (Neto et al., 1990; Simões, 1992), which evaluates the cognitive dimension of well-being, with $\alpha=0.86$;

ii) The Social Support Questionnaire - SSQ6 (Portuguese version of the Social Support Questionnaire – Short Form; Pinheiro & Ferreira, 2001), which assesses two dimensions of support: the availability or extent of the personal network (SSQN) and overall satisfaction with the support (SSQS), with good levels of fidelity (respectively $\alpha=0.90$ and $\alpha=0.96$);

iii) Parental questionnaires, A and B, to be filled by parents of children with SEN and without SEN, respectively, to collect sociodemographic data (concerning to the child: age, and to parents: age, education, single or biparental family, occupation), and educational institutions attended.

3. Results

Referring to the objectives of this study, we carried out statistical analyses on both parent groups (with and without SEN) regarding social support and well-being (life satisfaction). In availability of support (SSQN), differences are not significant ($t=-1.033$, $p=.30$). However, in satisfaction with support (SSQS), the differences are statistically significant ($t=-6.099$, $p=.000$). Parents of children without special needs had higher results, $M=30.85$ ($SD=4.23$) than parents of children with SEN, $M=26.51$ ($SD=7.6$), meaning that, despite similarly extended network, it is a less satisfactory support form for the several needs of this parents. Regarding the well-being (life satisfaction), both groups showed significant differences ($t=5.736$, $p=.000$) with parents of children without SEN showing higher values ($M=19.36$, $SD=4.09$) than the other group of parents ($M=16.55$; $SD=4.394$).

Analysis of the relationship between perceived social support and the well-being dimension was performed initially using the correlation coefficients between the measures of social support and life satisfaction scale. Thus, we observe that social support in both subscales (availability/SSQ6N), shows significant and positive correlations ($r=0.539$, $p<.001$) with well-being (life satisfaction).

Social support and life satisfaction present statistically different results depending on the type of problem (one-way ANOVA). In Table 1, we can observe the significant differences in the subgroups of parents of children with ID, MD and ASD. From detailed analysis with post-hoc comparison (Scheffé test), we found on the perceived social support, extent of the network (SSQ6N), higher values in parents/caregivers of children with ASD, comparing with ID ($p=.001$) and MD ($p=.004$).

The life satisfaction scale follows a similar trend: better results in parents of children with ASD ($p=.005$) than with ID.

Table 1. Means, standard deviations and ANOVA of the social support measures and life satisfaction as a function of type of issue faced by child with SEN.

Measures	Intellectual Disabilities (ID) (n=82)		Motor Disabilities (MD) (n=37)		Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) (n=33)		F	p
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ6)								
SSQ6 Number	13.37	7.92	13.27	6.35	19.51	8.74	8.15	.000
SSQ6 Satisfaction	25.41	8.50	26.62	5.86	29.12	6.41	2.86	.060
	Scheffé Test – SSQ6N - ASD>ID; ASD>MD							
Life Satisfaction	15.74	4.59	16.48	4.37	18.63	3.16	5.40	.005
	Scheffé Test – Life Satisfaction – ASD >ID							

In the sociodemographic variables, the type of family stood out as a differentiator of social support and life satisfaction, with advantage for two-parent families (Table 2). Also in regression analyses, the biparental family has a considerable predictive value in the development of life satisfaction ($\beta=.119$, $p=.036$).

Table 2. Means, standard deviations and t test of the social support measures and life satisfaction as a function of family type (single parent or biparental).

Measures	Biparental (BP) (n=124)		Single parent (SP) (n=27)		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ6)						
SSQ6 Number	15.8	8.41	11.1	7.1	2.7	.008
SSQ6 Satisfaction	29.4	5.98	24.7	8.39	3.42	.001
Life Satisfaction	18.49	4.26	14.38	4.13	4.56	.000

4. Discussion

The results highlight the relationship between well-being/life satisfaction and social support, according to the evidence in well-being and health (Diener, 2009; Kovalčíková et al., 2020; Pavot & Diener, 2009). In the social support, the lower results in satisfaction of parents with SEN children, could be due to the range of needs at the emotional and instrumental support level. These results lead us to rethink intervention, particularly the type of support provided which should be more according to the families' needs and resources. This is particularly important considering the responsibilities attributed to the school by legal framework on the inclusion of children with SEN.

The results show congruence with the social support validity studies (Saranson et al., 1983) which found significant negative correlations with anxiety and depression measures and significant positive correlations with variables of psychological well-being, particularly in positive relationships with others, personal development, and satisfaction (Jam et al., 2018; Pavot & Diener, 2009).

We found that parents of children with ASD have significantly higher values in social support (availability of support and satisfaction with support) and life satisfaction. This finding was not expected, due to the frequent specific difficulties of these parents, associated with the communication, social interaction, and behaviour problems of children with autism (Benson & Karloff, 2009; Anjos & Morais, 2021). The explanation may lie in the support from an institution with a specific vocation for this problem, attended by the children/young people, which works closely with parents or caregivers, promoting sharing and support between groups of parents. Additionally, children and their families benefit from specialized monitoring by structured teaching units located in regular schools.

The biparental family can be a form of emotional and affective support, but also instrumental, in sharing educational and childcare tasks. Thus, the values of satisfaction with life seem to be substantially linked to social support and the problems of the family system, which converges with investigations that emphasize the relationships between the dimensions of social support and results in well-being and health (Martínez-Rico et al., 2022).

5. Conclusions

The results highlight the need to invest in social support of SEN children's families. Intervention programmes should include ways to support family's adaptation, empowering them to deal with these children giving them special attention. The measures and actions should include the knowledge of specific children's problems as well as controlling and preventing inappropriate behaviour. This could be developed by counselling or family therapy. However, the support provided by parent groups and promoting positive, but realistic, expectations about children are particularly important, especially in the early stages of adjustment (Gupta & Singhal, 2004; Ragni et al., 2022).

In the ecological/systemic and social support approaches, families are perceived as having skills, resources and needs, and the professionals should be, essentially, promoters. Moreover, solutions to problems must be (co)constructed as a dynamic process between family and technical expert with respect for the family autonomy as the standard.

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