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# Resource utilization by children with developmental disabilities in Kenya: discrepancy analysis of parents' expectation-to-importance appraisals

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to describe parental perceptions of eight physical and human resources available to meet the needs of children with developmental disabilities in Kenya. Specifically, the study assessed the discrepancy between the importance parents attached to specified resources and the expected use of those resources by their children with developmental disabilities. Discrepancy analysis was conducted on parents' expectation-to-importance appraisals of eight resources identified in previous research including, health, education, friendships, husband/wife, religious organization, community membership/acceptance, employment/work, and home. Overall, parental appraisal of likely access-to-importance was significantly related across all eight physical and human resource areas. Discrepancy scores ranged from negative, through zero, to positive, categorized under-utilized, congruent, and over-utilized, respectively. Chi-square analyses were non-significant for gender across all resources with only slight gender differences noted on three resources. Most parents reported a match between expected use and importance in five of the eight community resources; health (57.4%), friends (54.6%), religious affiliation (59.8%), acceptance in the community (60.3%), and having one's own home (62.6%). However, "husband/wife" fell outside the congruent range (50.4%), with slight gender differences noted. Finally, two resource areas where the majority of parents reported non-

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congruence were educational programs and employment/career service. © 2002 Elsevier Science Ltd. All rights reserved.

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Researchers in the US and elsewhere have been working toward identifying the resources that optimally aid children with developmental disabilities in order for them to attain quality of life experiences. Recurrent resources cited include health, friendship, education, marital status/family, religious organization, and work (Campbell, 1981; Mutua, 1999; Newman & Cameto, 1993; Roessler, 1990; Schalock, 1990). Further studies (Dennis, Williams, Giangreco, & Cloniger, 1993) have suggested that such resources can be divided into inter-related categories (e.g., social, physical/material, psychological). In special education, particularly in the area of transition, research indicates that the majority of students with developmental disabilities will require multiple resources to reach their full potential (Flexer, 1983) as fully functioning adults (Hallahan & Kauffman, 2000).

Descriptions of critical resources have typically been derived from studies of children with disabilities in developed countries. Little is known about the specific resources available to children with developmental disabilities in developing nations. Indeed, one of the toughest challenges faced by many Third World countries is ensuring equitable resource use by all children (Nkinyangi & Van der Vynckt, 1994; Talik, 1991). The rights of children with disabilities are currently being discussed in developing nations like Kenya, which has recently adopted national educational policies designed to enhance self-sufficiency for all students (Eisemon, Ong'esa, & Hart, 1989). However, limited policies and funding for those with disabilities, along with negative cultural attitudes toward disabilities in general, may be serving to suppress national attempts to address resource issues related to children with disabilities within developing countries (Obiakor, Maltby, & Ihunnah, 1990). Further, within developing countries resource availability is often predicated upon the prevailing mechanisms of external funding (Bradshaw, Noonan, Gash, & Sershen, 1993; Lauglo, 1996). Most donor agencies demand that foreign aid to Third World countries be utilized in ways that result in quantifiable ends. Thus, research to obtain empirical evidence of the resources commonly used to assist children with developmental disabilities in a developing nation like Kenya appears warranted.

Research has found strong correlational evidence linking children's access to resources with parent's expectations of the benefits to the children (Carnie & Orelove, 1988). Indeed, based upon results obtained from families of children with disabilities in Kenya, Mutua (1999) reports that those who are motivated to use resources typically hold high expectations about the quality of life available to their children. One long-standing perspective on motivation is expectancy-value theory. Proponents of this model argue that behavior can be explained by the extent to which an outcome is valued (Atkinson, 1957). The expectancy-value tradition provides a framework for exploring the motivational factors that underlie

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