



The Relationship between Anxiety Levels and Quality of Life of Mothers with Mentally Disabled Children at Bangkinang Special Needs School and Bangkinang City Special Needs School 2026

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Abstract

The level of anxiety in mothers who have children with intellectual disabilities is one of the psychological problems that impact the mother's quality of life. High anxiety in mothers can impact physical, psychological, social relationships, and the surrounding environment, potentially reducing their quality of life. This study aims to determine the relationship between anxiety levels and the quality of life of mothers who have children with intellectual disabilities in SLBN Bangkinang and SLBN Bangkinang Kota. This type of research is a quantitative study with a cross-sectional design. The study was conducted in 2026 with a sample of 90 respondents using a total sampling technique. Data collection was carried out using the GAD-7 and WHOQOL-BREF questionnaires. Data analysis in this study used univariate and bivariate analysis with the chi-square test. The results of this study indicate that the majority of respondents have high levels of anxiety as many as 48 respondents (53%) and the majority of respondents have poor quality of life as many as 57 respondents (63%). The relationship between anxiety levels and the quality of life of mothers who have children with intellectual disabilities ($p < 0.001 \leq 0.05$). It is recommended that mothers who have children with intellectual disabilities pay more attention to their psychological condition by implementing positive coping strategies, seeking social support from family and the surrounding environment, and participating in activities that can help reduce anxiety so that quality of life can be maintained and improved.

Keywords: Anxiety level, quality of life, mother, mental retardation.

Abstract

The level of anxiety in mothers who have children with intellectual disabilities is one of the psychological problems that impact the mother's quality of life. High anxiety in mothers can impact physical, psychological, social relationships, and the surrounding environment, potentially reducing their quality of life. This study aims to determine the relationship between anxiety levels and the quality of life of mothers who have children with intellectual disabilities in SLBN Bangkinang and SLBN Bangkinang Kota. This type of research is quantitative research with a cross-sectional design. The study was conducted in 2026 with a sample of 90 respondents using a total sampling technique. Data collection was carried out using the GAD-7 and WHOQOL-BREF questionnaires. Data analysis in this study used univariate and bivariate analysis with the chi-square test. The results of this study indicate that the majority of respondents have high levels of anxiety as many as 48 respondents (53%) and the majority of respondents have poor quality of life as many as 57 respondents (63%). The range of anxiety levels with the quality of life of mothers who have children with intellectual disabilities ($p < 0.001 \leq 0.05$). It is recommended that mothers who have children with intellectual disabilities pay more attention to their psychological condition by implementing positive coping strategies, seeking social support from family and the surrounding environment, and participating in



activities that can help reduce anxiety so that the quality of life can be maintained and improved.

Keywords: *Anxiety levels, quality of life, mothers, intellectual disabilities.*

INTRODUCTION

Mental retardation is a term used to describe the condition of children with intellectual disabilities, characterized by significant limitations in intellectual and adaptive functioning. Intellectual functioning encompasses the ability to reason, solve problems, think abstractly, and learn from experience, while adaptive functioning relates to conceptual, social, and practical skills in everyday life. (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Raising a child with intellectual disabilities presents a mother with complex emotional, social and financial challenges, thus requiring strong self-confidence in the parenting process, especially for the mother as the primary caregiver. (Ulfa Zahira, Alini, 2025) This condition can trigger anxiety, high parenting stress, and emotional exhaustion due to the demands of continuous caregiving. The anxiety experienced by mothers is an emotional response to various challenges, ranging from concerns about their child's future, difficulties in meeting their needs, to the social and financial pressures they must face. Parents of children with intellectual disabilities tend to have high levels of anxiety, with most parents experiencing moderate to severe anxiety. (Purwati et al., 2025) Uncontrolled anxiety can impact a mother's quality of life, including physical health, psychological health, social relationships, and environmental aspects.

According to the WHO, quality of life is defined as an individual's perception of their position in life. This is considered within the framework of their culture and values, as well as in relation to their aspirations, expectations, standards, and concerns. For mothers of children with intellectual disabilities, quality of life often declines due to the high burden of caregiving.

The phenomenon of intellectual disability cases worldwide demonstrates that intellectual disability is a global health problem with significant implications. According to the WHO (2023), an estimated 1.3 billion people, or approximately 16% of the global population, have disabilities, with approximately 80% of these living in developing countries. (WHO, 2023). Data from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in 2025 showed that nearly 240 million children worldwide had various forms of disabilities. (UNICEF, 2025) Specifically, the prevalence of intellectual disability in children under 5 years old reaches 3.2%, while for the 5-19 age group it ranges from 1.5-2.0%, with variations based on demographic and socio-economic characteristics. (WHO-UNICEF, 2023). In the United States, the latest data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows that approximately 1.84% of children aged 3-17 years are diagnosed with intellectual disabilities, with a higher prevalence in boys (2.31%) compared to girls (1.37%). (Zablotsky et al., 2023).

Based on data from the 2023 Indonesian Health Survey (SKI), the number of people with disabilities in Indonesia reached 22.97 million, or approximately 8.5% of the total population. The 2023 SKI data shows that intellectual disability has the highest prevalence in Indonesia, at 1% in the 5-17 age group, with the highest prevalence recorded in West Java at 1.8%. (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2023).

Based on the latest data in Riau province in 2024, the number of people with moderate and severe disabilities reached 54,639 people, with 22,450 people already employed and 32,188 people unemployed. (Government of Riau Province, 2024). The author conducted a preliminary survey in two public special schools in Bangkinang City District, namely Bangkinang State Special School and Bangkinang City Special School in January 2026. The data obtained showed that Bangkinang City State Special School had a total of 145 active students in 2025, with 57 mentally retarded children, 40 deaf, 28 physically disabled, 5 blind, and 15 autistic children. According to the data, Bangkinang State Special School had a total of 85 active students, with 53 mentally retarded children, 23 deaf children, 7 physically disabled children, 1 blind child, and 4 autistic children. This data shows that mental retardation is the type of disability with the highest proportion in both schools.



Children with intellectual disabilities generally face various problems, such as difficulty with abstract thinking, unstable personalities, irritability, frequent interruptions, and self-harm. The cognitive and motor limitations of children with intellectual disabilities often hinder their ability to perform independent self-care. (Syafriani, 2023) They tend to withdraw from social environments, use unclear language, exhibit excessive anxiety, and exhibit hostile behavior (Purwati et al., 2025). These various problems often cause children with intellectual disabilities to experience unpleasant treatment from those around them.

The impact of this condition is not only felt by the child with intellectual disabilities, but also by the mother as the primary caregiver, because the unpleasant treatment in the social environment requires mothers to pay attention, care for, and provide intensive care. This has the potential to cause physical exhaustion, emotional stress, and limitations in social activities. This ongoing burden of caregiving results in a decline in the mother's quality of life, both physically, psychologically, and socially, especially when the mother must divide her time between childcare, work, and other family needs. Furthermore, a lack of family support, the environment, and service facilities can also exacerbate this condition, making the mother more vulnerable to anxiety and a decline in overall quality of life.

Based on the initial survey conducted by the author at Bangkianang City State Special School and Bangkinang State Special School on Friday, January 9, 2026. By distributing questionnaires to mothers of 10 mentally retarded children in each SLB containing a quality of life questionnaire of 26 questions, and an anxiety level questionnaire of 20 questions. At Bangkinang City State Special School of 10 respondents, the results obtained were 7 mothers experiencing a poor quality of life, 4 mothers had a poor quality of life due to the mother's worries about the child's future if the mother was gone, which caused psychological stress and a sense of unease. while 3 mothers had a poor quality of life due to factors of a fairly high burden of care, physical fatigue due to daily activities, and lack of time for themselves which caused increased emotional and decreased maternal well-being. Meanwhile, 3 respondents who had mentally retarded children had a good quality of life which was influenced by family support, support from the surrounding community and the mother's ability to manage stress and emotions.

Meanwhile, a survey at Bangkinang State Special Needs School (SLB Negeri) showed that of 10 mothers with children with intellectual disabilities, 4 experienced a poor quality of life, while the other 6 mothers had a good quality of life. Mothers with a poor quality of life experienced declines in physical, psychological, and social aspects, such as increased fatigue and concerns about their children's future and the surrounding environment. Meanwhile, mothers with a good quality of life generally adapted to their children's conditions, did not work, and received support from their families.

Based on survey results from two special needs schools (SLB) in Bangkinang Kota District, the Bangkinang City State Special Needs School has a lower quality of life for mothers due to higher levels of anxiety compared to mothers at the Bangkinang State Special Needs School. This phenomenon indicates the need for further research to address the quality of life of mothers with intellectual disabilities. Therefore, the author is interested in conducting a study entitled "**The Relationship between Anxiety Levels and Quality of Life of Mothers with Mentally Disabled Children at Bangkinang State Special Needs School and Bangkinang City State Special Needs School**".

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses an analytical method with a cross-sectional design, which is a study that seeks to find out or examines the relationship between independent and dependent variables that have a relationship to open a correlative between two varying variables. This study aims to determine the relationship between anxiety levels and the quality of life of mothers who have mentally retarded children in SLBN Bangkinang and SLBN Bangkinang City. The population in this study were all mothers who have mentally retarded children in SLBN Bangkinang and SLBN Bangkinang City with a sample size of 90 respondents. The sampling technique used was total sampling. Data collection was carried out using questionnaires and data analysis was carried out



univariately and bivariately using the Chi-Square test to determine the relationship between anxiety levels and the quality of life of mothers who have mentally retarded children in SLBN Bangkinang and SLBN Bangkinang City.

RESULTS

This study was conducted from April 8-13, 2026, and involved 90 mothers of children with intellectual disabilities at the Bangkinang Special Needs School (SLBN) and Bangkinang City Special Needs School (SLBN). Data collected included the independent variable (anxiety level) and the dependent variable (quality of life), measured using a questionnaire. Univariate and bivariate analyses were performed on the data obtained during the study.

Respondent Characteristics

Table 4.1: Frequency Distribution of Respondent Characteristics

Respondent Characteristics	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Age		
18-40 (Early Adulthood)	23	26%
41-60 (Middle Adult)	67	74%
Education		
Elementary School	11	12%
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL	10	11%
SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL	63	70%
College	6	7%
Work		
Work	21	23%
Doesn't work	69	77%
Total	90	100%

Table 4.1 shows that the majority of respondents in this study, namely 67 people (74%), were mothers with an age range of 41-60 years, and of all respondents, there were 63 people (70%) who had a final education level of high school, meanwhile based on employment status, the majority of respondents, namely 69 people (77%), were unemployed (housewives).

Univariate Analysis

In univariate analysis, research data was analyzed to determine the characteristics of the anxiety level variable which is the independent variable and quality of life which is the dependent variable.

Table 4.2 : Frequency Distribution of Anxiety Levels of Mothers with Mentally Disabled Children at Bangkinang Special Needs School and Bangkinang City Special Needs School

Anxiety Level	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Low Anxiety Level	42	47%
High Anxiety Level	48	53%



Total	90	100%
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From Table 4.2 it is known that the majority of respondents have a high level of anxiety, namely 48 people (53%), out of a total of 90 respondents.

Table 4.3 : Frequency Distribution of Respondents Based on the Quality of Life of Mothers with Mentally Disabled Children at Bangkinang Special Needs School and Bangkinang City Special Needs School

Quality of Life	Number (N)	Percentage (%)
Good	33	37%
Bad	57	63%
Total	90	100%

From Table 4.3 it can be seen that the majority of respondents who are mothers of mentally retarded children have a quality of life that tends to be poor, namely 57 people (63%) out of a total of 90 respondents.

Bivariate Analysis

A bivariate analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between anxiety levels and the quality of life of mothers with children with intellectual disabilities at SLBN Bangkinang and SLBN Bangkinang Kota. The data in this study were analyzed using the SPSS program using the Chi-Square test, with a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. The results of the bivariate analysis can be seen in Table 4.4 below:

Table 4.4 : The Relationship between Anxiety Levels and Quality of Life of Mothers with Mentally Disabled Children at Bangkinang Special Needs School and Bangkinang City Special Needs School

Body Image	Self-Confidence				Total		P Value	POR (95%CI)
	Low		Tall					
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Negative	29	48.3	12	20.0	41	68.3	0.003	6,767 (1,992 – 22,984
Positive	5	8.3	14	23.3	19	31.7		
Total	34	56.7	26	43.3	60	100		

Based on the results of the bivariate analysis in table 4.4 above, it is known that of the 48 respondents with high levels of anxiety, 10 respondents (21%) had a good quality of life, while of the 42 respondents with low levels of anxiety, 19 respondents (45%) had a poor quality of life.

From the chi-square test, the P value was obtained = 0.001, so it can be concluded that there is a relationship between the level of anxiety and the quality of life of mothers who have children with intellectual disabilities at SLBN Bangkinang and SLBN Bangkinang City.

The prevalence odds ratio is 4,600, which means that maternal respondents who have children with intellectual disabilities with high levels of anxiety have a 4,600 times greater risk of having a poor quality of life.

The results of research conducted on 90 mothers who have children with intellectual disabilities at SLBN Bangkinang and SLBN Bangkinang City on "The Relationship Between Anxiety Levels and Quality of Life of Mothers Who Have Children with Intellectual Disabilities at SLBN Bangkinang and SLBN Bangkinang City in 2026". Based on the results of statistical tests, it was found that there was a relationship between anxiety levels and the Quality of Life of Mothers Who Have Children with Intellectual Disabilities at SLBN Bangkinang and SLBN Bangkinang



City. The research was conducted by coming directly to SLBN Bangkinang and SLBN Bangkinang City, where researchers conducted research on 90 respondents for 6 days. When meeting respondents, the initial steps the researchers took were to introduce themselves, ask for permission from the respondents, explain the purpose of the researcher in conducting the research and not to harm the respondents if they become research respondents. Respondents who agreed to be respondents signed the respondent consent form, answered the questionnaire. The data obtained were then processed and presented in tabular form.

DISCUSSION

The Relationship Between Anxiety Levels and Quality of Life of Mothers with Children with Mental Disabilities

Based on the results of the bivariate analysis using the Chi-square statistical test, it can be seen that the probability value (P) is 0.001 which means $P \leq \alpha$ (0.05) so that it can be interpreted that there is a significant relationship or correlation between the level of anxiety and the quality of life of mothers who have children with intellectual disabilities at SLBN Bangkinang and SLBN Bangkinang City in 2026. The results of this study are supported by the statement (Julisafrida et al., 2024) which states that anxiety has a negative impact on a person's quality of life, especially in psychological, physical and social aspects.

This phenomenon is in line with the statement (Agustini et al., 2024) which states that persistent anxiety can affect a person's psychological and physical well-being, such as increased emotional tension, a lack of a sense of calm and security, and impaired social functioning in carrying out daily activities. This can impact various aspects of quality of life, including physical, psychological, and social aspects.

The findings in this study are reinforced by previous research conducted by (Raisa Ardielvy, 2016) which states that high levels of anxiety are associated with a decrease in the quality of life, especially for mothers who have mentally retarded children who face a fairly heavy psychological burden related to their child's condition.

Based on the results of the study of 90 respondents, 48 respondents showed high levels of anxiety. Of this group, 38 (79%) were found to have a poor quality of life, while 10 (21%) had a good quality of life. Meanwhile, in the group with low levels of anxiety, there were 42 respondents, 23 respondents (55%) who had a good quality of life, while 19 respondents (45%) had a poor quality of life.

These data indicate that the percentage of mothers with poor quality of life is higher in the group with high levels of anxiety compared to the group with low levels of anxiety. Based on the results of the chi-square statistical test, a p-value of 0.0001 was obtained, which means it is smaller than α (0.05). This indicates that there is a relationship between anxiety levels and the quality of life of mothers who have children with intellectual disabilities at SLBN Bangkinang and SLBN Bangkinang Kota.

The data in this study shows a gap: of the 48 respondents with high levels of anxiety, 10 respondents (21%) had a relatively good quality of life. This indicates that high levels of anxiety in mothers do not directly lead to a decline in their quality of life. Other factors, such as age and economic status, can contribute to a decline in the quality of life in mothers of children with intellectual disabilities.

This finding is also supported by (Pristina et al., 2024) which states that a person's quality of life can be affected by unstable psychological conditions, economic limitations in meeting daily needs, low levels of education, and a lack of emotional self-control. These various factors can trigger a decline in a person's quality of life.

However, each individual experiences this condition differently, depending on how they cope and adapt to the challenges they face. Therefore, high levels of anxiety do not directly lead to



a decline in quality of life, especially for individuals who are able to adapt and manage themselves when facing challenges.

Based on the researcher's assumptions, the results showed that almost all respondents with high levels of anxiety had a poor quality of life (38 respondents (79%). This suggests that the higher the level of anxiety experienced by mothers of children with intellectual disabilities, the greater the likelihood of their perceived quality of life being poor. High levels of anxiety can have various impacts, such as physical and psychological fatigue, difficulty in carrying out daily activities, reduced social interaction, and decreased satisfaction with life, all of which impact the mother's quality of life.

However, a gap was still found in the research results, with 19 respondents (45%) reporting low levels of anxiety but reporting poor quality of life. Researchers assume that quality of life is influenced not only by anxiety levels but also by an individual's perception of their physical condition, social relationships, and surrounding environment. Therefore, even though respondents have low levels of anxiety, they may still perceive their quality of life as poor due to dissatisfaction with other aspects of life.

Additionally, 10 respondents (21%) had high levels of anxiety but still had a good quality of life. Researchers assume this is possible because the respondents had good coping mechanisms, strong family support, financial stability, good acceptance of their child's condition, and the ability to adapt to the situation they faced, allowing them to maintain their quality of life despite experiencing high levels of anxiety.

The results of this study are also supported by research (Raisa Ardielvy, 2016) which explains that poor quality of life is also influenced by various factors such as the mother's psychological state, economic situation, and the social environment in which she interacts. The results of this study align with this research, which shows that poor quality of life occurs not only in mothers with high levels of anxiety but also in mothers with low levels of anxiety.

Thus, the results of this study indicate that the quality of life of mothers with children with intellectual disabilities is not only influenced by anxiety levels but also by various other factors. Although this study found some mothers with high levels of anxiety who still had a good quality of life, and mothers with low levels of anxiety who had a poor quality of life due to the influence of other factors, the analysis still shows a significant relationship between anxiety levels and the quality of life of mothers with children with intellectual disabilities. This indicates that anxiety levels are one factor that plays a role in maternal quality of life.

Based on the results of the Prevalence Odds Ratio (POR) analysis, a value of 4.6 was obtained, indicating that mothers with high levels of anxiety have a 4.6 times greater risk of experiencing poor quality of life compared to mothers with low levels of anxiety.

Therefore, the results of this study indicate the importance of efforts to manage anxiety in mothers who have children with intellectual disabilities through moral, social, financial, educational, and psychological support, in order to help mothers to continue to improve their quality of life.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research on the relationship between anxiety levels and the quality of life of mothers who have children with intellectual disabilities at SLBN Bangkinang and SLBN Bangkinang City in 2026, several conclusions were obtained that more than half (53%) of mothers of children with intellectual disabilities at SLBN Bangkinang and SLBN Bangkinang City had relatively high levels of anxiety. More than half (63%) of mothers of children with intellectual disabilities at SLBN Bangkinang and SLBN Bangkinang City had poor quality of life. There was a significant relationship between anxiety levels and the quality of life of mothers who had children with intellectual disabilities as indicated by a p-value of 0.001 ($p < 0.05$).

**THANK-YOU NOTE**

The author would like to thank the supervisor who provided guidance, direction, and motivation during the preparation of this research. He also thanks the examiners who provided constructive input and suggestions to improve the research.

The author would also like to express his gratitude to all respondents who volunteered their time and participated in this research, as well as to all lecturers at Pahlawan Tuanku Tambusai University who provided knowledge and support throughout the educational process. He would also like to express his deepest gratitude to his parents for their constant prayers, support, and affection, as well as to his fellow researchers who provided assistance, encouragement, and support throughout the research process and the completion of this scientific article.

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