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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Emotional intelligence and family support in parents' acceptance of children with special needs

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Abstract: The purpose of this research is to examine the influence of emotional intelligence, family support, and demographic variables on parental acceptance of children with special needs, specifically those diagnosed with deafness and cerebral palsy. The study involved 183 participants selected using a non-probability purposive sampling method. Measurement instruments included the Parents' Acceptance Scale based on Medinnus and Johnson' theory, the Emotional Intelligence Scale following Goleman's (2006) model, and the Family Support Scale adapted from Dolan et al, (2006). The findings indicate that emotional intelligence and the type of special needs significantly influence parental acceptance, whereas family support dimensions (emotional, advice, concrete, and esteem support) and the child's age were not significant predictors. The R-Square value of 0.174 (17.4%) suggests that the independent variables explain 17.4% of the variance in parental acceptance, with the remaining 82.6% attributed to other factors. Although the R^2 value appears modest, it highlights the practical significance of emotional intelligence and special needs type in shaping parental acceptance, underscoring the need for targeted interventions. Data collection was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, necessitating an extended research period due to lockdown restrictions and limited access to participants. The study underscores the importance of emotional intelligence-based training programs and disability-specific support mechanisms to enhance parental acceptance and resilience. Future research should explore additional psychological and social determinants, particularly in diverse cultural and economic contexts, to develop more comprehensive intervention strategies.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Family Support, Parental Acceptance, Special Needs, COVID-19

INTRODUCTION

Children with special needs require a nurturing, supportive, and adaptive environment to facilitate their optimal emotional, cognitive, and social development. Parents play a central role in shaping this environment, particularly in fostering acceptance and psychological well-being for their children (Dolan et al., 2006). However, raising children with special needs presents unique challenges that can be further complicated by external stressors such as economic constraints, societal stigma, and inadequate access to support systems (Lazaro et al., 2019). These factors can significantly impact parents' ability to accept their child's condition, subsequently influencing both parental well-being and child development outcomes.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these challenges, leading to increased levels of parental stress, disruptions in healthcare and educational services, and a reduction in social support networks for families with children with disabilities. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2022), global reports indicate that parents of children with special needs experienced heightened levels of anxiety and emotional distress due to lockdown measures, financial instability, and restricted access to intervention services. The pandemic underscored the need for resilience and adaptability among parents, highlighting the importance of emotional intelligence and family support in fostering parental acceptance under adverse conditions.

Parental acceptance of children with special needs is a complex and multidimensional construct that is influenced by various factors, including emotional intelligence, family support, socioeconomic background, and cultural norms (Gusrianti et al., 2018). This acceptance is critical as it shapes the emotional and psychological development of the child, influencing their self-esteem, social adaptation, and overall well-being (Al-Kandari & Al-Qashan, 2010). Research suggests that parents who exhibit high levels of acceptance are more likely to engage in positive parenting practices, which in turn foster adaptive behaviors and resilience in children with disabilities (Guralnick, 2017).

Emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in parents' ability to regulate emotions, cope with stress, and maintain a positive perspective on their child's condition (Goleman, 2006). Emotional intelligence encompasses self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, all of

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which contribute to effective parenting and the ability to support children with disabilities (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Parents with high emotional intelligence are better equipped to navigate challenges, build supportive relationships, and create a nurturing home environment that fosters their child's growth and development (Sitoiu, & Panisoara. 2023). Studies have found that higher emotional intelligence in parents correlates with lower levels of parental stress and greater emotional attunement with their children, leading to improved developmental outcomes (Brackett et al., 2011). Furthermore, emotional intelligence enables parents to manage the stigma associated with raising a child with special needs, allowing them to advocate more effectively for their child's inclusion in education and social settings (Petrides et al., 2016).

Family support is another critical determinant of parental acceptance. The presence of a strong, emotionally supportive, and financially stable family network can alleviate parental stress and promote resilience (Whiting et al., 2019). Social support from extended family members, community networks, and professional resources plays a crucial role in buffering the emotional burden experienced by parents of children with disabilities (Hastings, 2016). Studies indicate that parents who perceive higher levels of family support demonstrate better psychological well-being and are more likely to engage in positive coping strategies (Zablotsky et al., 2013).

The Double ABCX model (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983) provides a theoretical framework for understanding family adaptation in the face of stressors such as raising a child with special needs. According to this model, family adaptation depends on the interaction of four key components: (A) stressors, (B) available resources, (C) perception of the situation, and (X) crisis adaptation. Families with strong support systems and effective coping mechanisms demonstrate greater adaptability and acceptance, reducing the risk of psychological distress and parental burnout (Weiss, 2002). Moreover, cultural factors influence the way families perceive and respond to stressors. In collectivist societies, where family cohesion and interdependence are highly valued, extended family support plays an essential role in mitigating parental stress (Chao & Tseng, 2002).

Several studies emphasize that targeted interventions, such as family-based therapy and parental training programs, can enhance family resilience and parental acceptance (McConnell et al., 2014). Programs that foster emotional intelligence, stress management, and family cohesion have been found to significantly improve parental well-being and child developmental outcomes (Dardas & Ahmad, 2015). Therefore, understanding the role of family support in parental adaptation is crucial for developing policies and interventions aimed at enhancing parental coping mechanisms and improving the overall quality of life for families raising children with special needs.

This study aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030, particularly Goal 4 (Quality Education) and Goal 10 (Reduced Inequalities), which emphasize inclusive education and equal opportunities for children with disabilities (United Nations, 2021). Ensuring parental acceptance is vital for achieving these global objectives, as parents play a key role in advocating for and facilitating their child's participation in educational and social settings. A lack of parental acceptance can hinder children's access to necessary resources and limit their integration into mainstream educational and community activities.

Despite the well-documented role of emotional intelligence and family support in shaping parental acceptance, empirical studies focusing on these variables within the Indonesian context remain limited. Research in Western contexts has extensively explored how emotional intelligence contributes to stress management, parenting efficacy, and family dynamics (Brackett et al., 2011; Petrides et al., 2016). However, cultural, economic, and social differences necessitate localized investigations, as the factors influencing parental acceptance may differ significantly across contexts (Chao & Tseng, 2002; Hastings, 2016).

Additionally, prior studies have predominantly focused on parental stress and coping mechanisms rather than the interplay between emotional intelligence, family support, and acceptance (McConnell et al., 2014; Weiss, 2002). Understanding how these variables interact within the Indonesian socio-cultural framework is crucial in designing interventions that enhance parental resilience and well-being.

This study aims to bridge this gap by examining the extent to which emotional intelligence and family support influence parental acceptance of children with special needs. By integrating theoretical frameworks such as Goleman's emotional intelligence model (Goleman, 2006) and the Double ABCX model (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983), this research seeks to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms underlying parental adaptation and resilience. The Double ABCX model, which emphasizes the interaction between stressors, coping resources, and adaptation, is particularly relevant in exploring how Indonesian families navigate the complexities of raising children with special needs (Weiss, 2002).

Furthermore, this study contributes to the broader discourse on inclusive education and disability advocacy, aligning with global initiatives such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 (United Nations, 2021). Specifically, it addresses Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and Goal 4 (Quality Education) by identifying key psychosocial factors that influence parental support and engagement in their children's education and well-being. By shedding light on these critical factors, the findings of this study are expected to inform educators, practitioners, and policymakers in developing targeted programs that foster parental acceptance and improve developmental outcomes for children with special needs.

METHOD

Study Design

This research employs a quantitative cross-sectional study design to examine the influence of emotional intelligence and family support on parental acceptance of children with special needs. A structured survey was utilized to collect data from parents in DKI Jakarta, ensuring a systematic approach to measuring the relationships among variables.

Population and Sampling Technique

The study population consists of parents who have children with special needs residing in DKI Jakarta, Indonesia. A non-probability purposive sampling technique was applied, allowing for the selection of participants based on predefined inclusion criteria. The eligibility

criteria required that participants be parents of children with special needs diagnosed with deafness or cerebral palsy, with the children falling within the age range of 2 to 17 years old. Additionally, participants were required to be currently residing in DKI Jakarta to ensure contextual relevance to the study.

A total of 183 respondents participated in this study. The demographic characteristics of participants, such as age, socioeconomic background, and educational level, were documented to provide contextual insights into the findings.

Research Instruments

This study employed three validated scales to measure the key variables. The Parents' Acceptance Scale, developed based on the theoretical framework of Porter, (1954), assesses the degree of parental acceptance of children with special needs. The Emotional Intelligence Scale, grounded in Goleman's (2006) emotional intelligence model, evaluates parents' ability to regulate emotions and manage stress effectively. Additionally, the Family Support Scale, adapted from the model proposed by Dolan et al, (2006), measures the perceived emotional and instrumental support provided by family members. Each instrument underwent rigorous validity and reliability testing to ensure measurement accuracy. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was computed for each scale, confirming internal consistency and the reliability of the measurement tools used in this study.

Data Collection Process

Data were collected via an online survey using Google Forms due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The questionnaire was distributed through various social media platforms, including Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, and Email. Additionally, it was shared within parent networks, special schools, and community groups supporting children with disabilities. To enhance response accuracy, participants were provided with clear instructions, and confidentiality measures were emphasized. Ethical considerations, including voluntary participation and informed consent, were ensured throughout the data collection process.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23, employing various statistical methods to ensure robust and accurate results. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize demographic data and key variables, providing an overview of participant characteristics. To examine the influence of emotional intelligence, family support, and demographic variables on parental acceptance, multiple regression analysis was applied, allowing for the identification of significant predictors. Additionally, reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha, ensuring the internal consistency and reliability of the measurement instruments.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to strict ethical research principles, ensuring the protection of participants' rights and confidentiality throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their involvement, ensuring that they were fully aware of the study's purpose and their voluntary participation. To further safeguard participant privacy, anonymity and confidentiality measures were implemented, with all personal data anonymized to prevent identification. Moreover, the study received ethical clearance from an accredited Institutional Review Board (IRB), ensuring compliance with ethical research standards and guidelines.

RESULTS

The results of this study indicate that emotional intelligence and the type of children with special needs significantly influence parental acceptance, while family support dimensions (emotional, advice, concrete, and esteem support) and the age of children with special needs do not have a significant impact. These findings suggest that emotional intelligence is a crucial psychological factor in enabling parents to accept and adapt to their child's condition.

The R-Square value of 0.174 (17.4%) suggests that emotional intelligence, family support, and demographic variables together explain only a small proportion of the variance in parental acceptance (table 1). The remaining 82.6% variance is likely influenced by other external factors such as socioeconomic status, social stigma, educational background, and parental mental health. While the model's explanatory power is relatively low, the statistical significance of the regression model indicates that the included predictors still play a meaningful role in parental acceptance.

The ANOVA results ($F = 5.278$, $p < 0.05$) confirm that the independent variables collectively have a significant effect on parental acceptance (table 2). This means that emotional intelligence, family support, and demographic variables, when considered together, contribute to understanding how parents accept and adapt to raising children with special needs. However, the individual regression coefficients reveal that only emotional intelligence and the type of children with special needs have a statistically significant impact, while other factors do not.

Table 3 presents the results of the multiple regression analysis, highlighting the influence of emotional intelligence, family support dimensions, and demographic variables on parental acceptance. The analysis identifies significant and non-significant predictors, providing insights into which factors play a crucial role in shaping parental acceptance.

The results indicate that emotional intelligence has the strongest positive impact on parental acceptance, as reflected by its high beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.282$, $p = 0.000$). This suggests that parents with higher emotional intelligence are more likely to demonstrate greater acceptance of their child's condition. Parents with enhanced emotional intelligence tend to manage stress more effectively, regulate their emotions, and adopt a more realistic yet optimistic perspective regarding their child's abilities. The ability to maintain emotional stability appears to be a crucial factor in enabling parents to provide consistent support and guidance to their children with special needs.

Table 1

Model Summary Regression Analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.418[a]	0.174	0.141	0.31912

a. Predictors: (Constant), types of children with special needs, concrete support, emotional intelligence, age of children with special needs, emotional support, advice support, esteem support

Table 2
Anova Overall Effect of Independent Variable on Dependent Variable

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.763	7	.538	5.278	.000[b]
	Residual	17.822	175	.102		
	Total	21.585	182			

a. Dependent Variable: Parents' Acceptance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Types of children with special needs, concrete support, emotional intelligence, age of children with special needs, emotional support, advice support, esteem support

Table 3
Regression Coefficient

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.361	.160		8.519	.000
	Emotional Intelligence	.196	.052	.282	3.773	.000
	Emotional Support	.038	.052	.056	.741	.460
	Advice Support	.031	.058	.043	.531	.596
	Concrete Support	.013	.059	.018	.214	.831
	Esteem Support	.039	.060	.057	.654	.514
	Age of Children with Special Needs	-.001	.001	-.110	-1.525	.129
	Types of Children with Special Needs	.098	.045	.160	2.196	.029

a. Dependent Variable: Parents' Acceptance

Similarly, the type of special needs was found to significantly influence parental acceptance (β = 0.160, p = 0.029). Parents of children with deafness tend to exhibit higher levels of acceptance, which may be attributed to greater access to communication interventions and social integration opportunities. In contrast, parents of children with cerebral palsy may experience more challenges due to physical impairments, increased caregiving demands, and limited accessibility to specialized interventions. These findings suggest that different disability types present distinct challenges, impacting how parents adapt to and accept their child's condition.

On the other hand, family support dimensions (emotional, advice, concrete, and esteem support) were not found to have a significant influence on parental acceptance (p > 0.05). This result implies that the presence of family support alone does not necessarily translate into enhanced parental acceptance. Instead, the quality and effectiveness of support mechanisms may play a more critical role. Family support structures that are passive or inconsistent may fail to provide meaningful reassurance for parents navigating the complexities of raising a child with special needs. Additionally, cultural expectations and family dynamics may influence how support is perceived and utilized by parents.

The age of the child with special needs was also found to be an insignificant predictor (p = 0.129), suggesting that parental acceptance remains relatively stable across different age groups. This contradicts findings that associate older children with higher parental stress levels. The results imply that acceptance is not necessarily dependent on the child's age but may be shaped by other psychological, social, and environmental factors that warrant further exploration.

Given the strong influence of emotional intelligence on parental acceptance, developing emotional intelligence-based interventions should be a key priority. Parent training programs focusing on stress management, self-regulation, and resilience-building could provide essential coping mechanisms.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that emotional intelligence and the types of special needs experienced by children significantly influence parental acceptance, whereas other factors, such as family support dimensions (emotional, advice, concrete, and esteem support) and the age of children with special needs, do not have a significant impact. These findings provide important insights into the psychological resilience of parents and underscore the need to strengthen parental emotional capacities through targeted interventions. More broadly, research on families raising children with disabilities indicates that parental adaptation is a multifactorial process shaped by parental psychological resources, characteristics of the child and disability, socioeconomic circumstances, social support, and access to appropriate services (Ilias et al., 2018; Nuri et

al., 2020; Pinquart, 2018). Thus, parental acceptance should be understood as the outcome of interacting individual, family, and contextual resources rather than as a response determined by a single factor.

Emotional intelligence was found to have a positive and significant influence on parental acceptance, as indicated by a regression coefficient of 0.196 with a significance level of 0.000. These findings are consistent with previous research by Eliyanto and Hendriani (2013), which highlighted that mothers with higher emotional intelligence were more accepting of their children with cerebral palsy. This interpretation is further supported by evidence showing that higher parental emotional intelligence is associated with greater parental competence and more adaptive parenting practices (Șițoiu & Pânișoară, 2023). Similarly, a meta-analytic review demonstrated that parents with stronger emotion-regulation skills tend to display more positive parenting behaviors and have children with better emotional regulation and fewer internalizing difficulties (Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2022). Parents who exhibit greater emotional intelligence may therefore be better equipped to process difficult emotions, regulate stress responses, and maintain a constructive perspective on their child's condition (Whiting et al., 2019). Such emotional capacities may be particularly important for parents of children with disabilities, for whom caregiving demands can produce persistent psychological and practical stress (Pinquart, 2018).

Moreover, increased emotional intelligence in parents not only enhances their own well-being but may also contribute to better developmental outcomes for children. Research suggests that emotionally responsive parents can promote communication, help children regulate emotions, and support social-emotional development, thereby strengthening children's resilience and psychological adjustment (Elksnin & Elksnin, 2006; Gottman, as cited in Eliyanto & Hendriani, 2013). Meta-analytic evidence also indicates that parental emotion regulation is associated with children's emotional adjustment and that supportive emotion-socialization practices facilitate children's development of emotional competence (Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2022). Importantly, interventions targeting parental emotion socialization have demonstrated improvements not only in parenting practices and children's emotional competence but also in parental psychological well-being and children's behavioral adjustment (England-Mason et al., 2023). Given these benefits, community-based interventions that enhance emotional intelligence and emotion-regulation skills among parents, including programs integrated with accessible local health services such as POSYANDU, could provide practical support mechanisms for families raising children with special needs.

Contrary to expectations, the four dimensions of family support—emotional, advice, concrete, and esteem support—were not found to have a significant influence on parental acceptance. This finding should not necessarily be interpreted as evidence that family support is unimportant. Rather, it may reflect differences in the quality, source, consistency, and perceived usefulness of the support received. Reviews of families raising children with disabilities have shown considerable variability in how family support is conceptualized and delivered, while generally demonstrating relationships between meaningful support and more favorable family outcomes (Kyzar et al., 2012). Evidence from low- and middle-income countries similarly indicates that families often rely heavily on informal sources such as immediate family members, friends, and parent support groups, and that emotional support and childcare assistance may help reduce parental stress (Nuri et al., 2020). Thus, the effectiveness of support may depend more on whether it meets parents' specific emotional and practical needs than on its mere availability.

The study found that emotional support from family members was not sufficient to enhance parental acceptance, aligning with research by Bratanegara (2012), which indicated that family engagement may sometimes be inadequate or inconsistent. Although Bratanegara's study was conducted in a different caregiving context, it illustrates how the nominal presence of family members does not necessarily guarantee meaningful emotional involvement. Research specific to disability further suggests that social support operates alongside financial pressures, disability severity, parents' understanding of their child's condition, and culturally shaped coping resources (Ilias et al., 2018; Nuri et al., 2020). Peer-support interventions may also improve parental well-being and quality of life, although the magnitude of benefit varies across programs and study designs (Lancaster et al., 2023).

Similarly, concrete support was found to be ineffective, particularly among families from lower socioeconomic backgrounds who may receive insufficient material and service-based assistance. This finding is consistent with studies by Friedman (as cited in Simbolon, 2017) and Galani (as cited in Hadjicharalambous & Demetriou, 2020), emphasizing the importance of material resources within broader systems of family support. Evidence from disability research suggests that financial difficulties can intensify parenting stress and reduce families' ability to access appropriate services (Ilias et al., 2018; Pinquart, 2018). This issue is particularly relevant in Indonesia. Research among mothers and female caregivers of children with disabilities in Belu District identified affordability, limited financial capacity, shortages of qualified professionals, and restricted availability of rehabilitation services as important barriers to care (Asa et al., 2021). Consequently, material assistance may be most effective when combined with accessible healthcare, rehabilitation, educational, and psychosocial services.

Advice support was also found to be ineffective in influencing parental acceptance, as suggested by the findings of Twistiandayani and Handika (2015). One possible explanation is the passive role of some family members in providing constructive advice, which makes it difficult for parents to broaden their perspectives or identify effective solutions to caregiving challenges (Priyanti, 2015). Evidence from low- and middle-income settings indicates that the usefulness of support depends not only on the availability of information but also on the source, responsiveness, and relevance of that support to the family's actual needs (Nuri et al., 2020). Similarly, esteem support was found to be insignificant, contradicting previous findings by Twistiandayani and Handika (2015), which suggested that positive reinforcement enhances parental self-acceptance. One possible explanation for this discrepancy is the influence of cultural norms on how families express validation and encouragement. Research in Southeast Asian families raising children with developmental disabilities highlights the importance of culturally embedded factors, including social support, beliefs about disability, financial difficulties, and family coping patterns, in shaping parental stress and resilience (Ilias et al., 2018). Indirect expressions of esteem or encouragement may therefore not always be interpreted by parents as meaningful support, underscoring the importance of culturally responsive family interventions.

The study also explored the influence of demographic factors on parental acceptance, specifically the age and

type of special needs of the child. Findings revealed that the age of children with special needs did not significantly influence parental acceptance. Darling (as cited in Eliyanto & Hendriani, 2013) has been used in earlier literature to suggest that parents' experiences may differ across developmental stages. Broader meta-analytic evidence also indicates that child age can be associated with parenting stress, although its influence occurs alongside illness or disability severity, parental mental health, marital factors, and perceived social support (Pinquart, 2018). Therefore, the absence of an age effect in the present study may indicate that chronological age alone is insufficient to explain parental acceptance. Hadjicharalambous and Demetriou (2020), although focusing more broadly on parent-child relationship quality and children's adjustment, likewise emphasize the importance of relational characteristics such as parental warmth and acceptance rather than demographic characteristics alone. The relatively high acceptance rate (86.3%) across age groups in the present sample may consequently reflect adaptive processes that develop over time and differ between individual families.

Meanwhile, the type of special need (deafness vs. cerebral palsy) was found to significantly influence parental acceptance, with a regression coefficient of 0.098 and a significance level of 0.029. This finding can be interpreted alongside Eliyanto and Hendriani (2013) and Erbasi et al. (2018), as well as condition-specific research demonstrating that different disabilities create distinct caregiving and adaptation demands. Parents of children with cerebral palsy frequently report substantial physical and emotional caregiving demands, social restrictions, financial concerns, and difficulties obtaining appropriate healthcare and educational support (Elangkovan & Shorey, 2020). Parents of children with hearing loss also experience stress related to communication development, professional services, educational concerns, social acceptance, and decisions surrounding intervention, while improved support systems and professional resources constitute important coping mechanisms (Gunjawate et al., 2023). Erbasi et al. (2018) further demonstrated that parental involvement in interventions for children with hearing loss is multifaceted and often includes advocacy, case management, language-development support, and continuous engagement with professional services. Accordingly, differences in parental acceptance between disability groups may reflect differences in caregiving intensity, communication opportunities, rehabilitation trajectories, service accessibility, and parents' perceived ability to support their child's development.

Given the findings, several recommendations can be made to improve parental acceptance of children with special needs in Indonesia. First, developing emotional intelligence and emotion-regulation training modules may constitute a useful intervention strategy. Evidence from parenting intervention research indicates that programs targeting emotional socialization can improve parenting practices, parental psychological well-being, children's emotional competence, and behavioral adjustment (England-Mason et al., 2023). Community-based programs that integrate these components into local healthcare services, including POSYANDU and other primary or community-based settings, may therefore provide parents with accessible strategies for managing stress and responding constructively to emotional challenges. Collaboration among psychologists, healthcare professionals, educators, rehabilitation providers, and community organizations should also be encouraged to strengthen parental coping and resilience. Evidence from Indonesia supports multisectoral, community-based approaches that combine health, education, economic, and social-inclusion components to strengthen family competencies and improve outcomes for children with disabilities (Kiling et al., 2022).

Second, enhancing the quality of family support should be prioritized. Structured family counseling and parent-support programs could improve active engagement, constructive communication, and relevant informational support from family members. Reviews suggest that appropriately structured family and peer support can contribute to improved parental well-being and family outcomes (Kyzar et al., 2012; Lancaster et al., 2023; Nuri et al., 2020). Financial and practical assistance should also be considered because socioeconomic constraints may prevent families from translating emotional support into effective caregiving resources. In the Indonesian context, reducing financial and structural barriers to healthcare and rehabilitation services is particularly important for families of children with disabilities (Asa et al., 2021).

Lastly, addressing rural-urban disparities is crucial for ensuring equitable support for all families. Future research should explore rural areas of Indonesia where healthcare, rehabilitation, specialist education, and social support may be less accessible. Indonesian evidence demonstrates that families of children with disabilities in resource-constrained areas can experience substantial barriers related to affordability, geographic access, qualified personnel, and availability of rehabilitation services (Asa et al., 2021). Research on rural inclusive primary schools has also identified challenges in implementing effective inclusive teaching strategies and meeting the needs of students with special educational needs (Kurniawati, 2021). Community-based models involving families, community leaders, service providers, educational institutions, and policymakers may therefore offer a more sustainable framework for addressing these gaps (Kiling et al., 2022). By strengthening parental emotional capacities, improving the quality of family and professional support, reducing financial barriers, and expanding disability-inclusive services, interventions have the potential to enhance parental acceptance, reduce caregiving stress, and improve developmental outcomes for children with special needs across diverse socioeconomic and geographic settings.

Limitations And Future Research

This study has several limitations. First, the absence of interviews limited the depth of understanding regarding parental acceptance. Future research should incorporate qualitative methods to capture parents' personal narratives and emotional experiences. Second, the data collection was constrained by the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to challenges in sample recruitment. Future studies should ensure offline data collection to diversify participant recruitment. Finally, the broad age range (2-17 years) in this study may have obscured age-specific parental acceptance patterns. Future research should focus on specific developmental stages (e.g., early childhood or adolescence) to obtain more targeted insights.

By addressing these limitations and implementing the suggested interventions, policymakers, educators, and healthcare providers can better support parents in fostering resilience, emotional intelligence, and adaptive family environments for children with special needs.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the significant role of emotional intelligence and types of children with special needs in shaping parental acceptance, while revealing that family support dimensions (emotional, advice, concrete, and esteem support) and age of children with special needs do not have a significant impact. The findings underscore the need for targeted interventions that enhance emotional intelligence among parents, as it plays a crucial role in helping them regulate emotions, cope with stress, and foster a positive perspective toward their child's condition. This reinforces the importance of mental health programs, including community-based emotional intelligence training modules integrated with local health services such as POSYANDU to provide accessible and sustainable support for parents.

The study also highlights disparities in family support effectiveness, suggesting that the quality of support—rather than its mere presence—is more influential in shaping parental acceptance. Future family intervention programs should focus on enhancing the engagement and responsiveness of family members, ensuring that support systems are proactively involved in providing emotional and practical assistance to parents of children with special needs.

Furthermore, this study reinforces the importance of contextualizing interventions based on socioeconomic and cultural factors, as families from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may require additional financial and material support. Future policies should prioritize economic empowerment programs, ensuring that concrete support mechanisms are available to parents in need.

Given the findings, future research should focus on examining rural populations, as access to healthcare, education, and social support varies significantly between urban and rural areas in Indonesia. Additionally, qualitative approaches such as in-depth interviews could provide a richer understanding of parental experiences, offering deeper insights into the complexities of parental acceptance.

By implementing these recommendations, stakeholders—including policymakers, educators, mental health professionals, and healthcare providers—can contribute to fostering resilience, emotional intelligence, and adaptive coping mechanisms among parents raising children with special needs. These efforts will ultimately enhance parental acceptance, reduce psychological distress, and improve developmental outcomes for children with special needs, aligning with global disability inclusion initiatives such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030.

DECLARATION

Consent for publication

All participants were informed of the objectives and procedures of the study and subsequent publication of the results.

Availability of Data and Material (ADM)

Data not available because it compromises the anonymity of participants.

Competing interests

Authors declare no conflict of interest

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Authors' contributions

The authors confirm responsibility for the following - study conception and design, data collection, analysis and interpretation of results, and manuscript preparation.

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