

Parental Acceptance of Special Needs Children

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Abstract

Cases of violence against children with special needs continue to increase every year, as well as many children rights are abandoned. Frequently the cases came from the family, including parents. Nevertheless, there are also parents who take good care of their children. This variety of conditions makes parental acceptance a matter that needs to be researched. The purpose of this study is to determine the self-acceptance of parents who have children with special needs. The population in this study is parents who have children with special needs in the DKI Jakarta area. The sampling technique used is purposive sampling with $n = 46$ with children age ranging from 1 to 6 years old. Data were taken using the Porter Parental Acceptance Scale (PPAS) consisted of 40 items with $r = .865$. Research method used is descriptive quantitative. Data processing uses hypothetical statistics to see the categorization of parental acceptance total score, then categorization is carried out on each dimension: unconditional love, acceptance of feeling, acceptance of uniqueness, recognition of the child's need for autonomy. The results showed that the parental acceptance of parent with special needs children was on the moderate level. Meanwhile, from each dimension, parents are in the high to moderate category on three dimensions (acceptance of feeling, acceptance of uniqueness, recognition of the child's need for autonomy). Whereas in unconditional love, the parent category is at a moderate to low level.

Keywords: developmental psychology, parenting, parental acceptance, special needs children

INTRODUCTION

Based on data from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission or *Komisi Perlindungan Anak Indonesia* (KPAI) the number of violence against children with disabilities has increased every year. In 2017 there were four cases of violence, in 2016 there were four cases, and in 2015 there were three cases. (KPAI, 2017). Strengthened by the National Team for the Acceleration of Poverty Reduction or *Tim Nasional Percepatan Penanggulangan Kemiskinan* (TNP2K) until 2011 the number of children with special needs in Indonesia reached 18,000 children and many of them did not get rights according to their capacity (Republika, 2014). According to the Advocacy Center for Women, Disabilities and Children (SAPDA) where parents do not accept the situation of their children with special needs, there were 72 victims of children and women with disabilities in the period 2013 to 2014 and 60% of the perpetrators of violence came from the closest people and so far cases of violence are

often covered up even though this actually makes the perpetrators more courageous in carrying out their actions (Permadi, 2016).

Caring for children with disabilities is of course different from providing care for children in general, in this case children with disabilities need to learn skills, understanding and manners (Risnawati et al., 2015) that are given differently to each child by looking at the individual circumstances of each with their own abilities and shortcomings. -respectively. In this case how parents raise their children will have a strong influence on the child's behavior, attitudes and personality. Both of parents, mother or father, can feel same stress during parenting the special needs children. One way to reduce stress levels, especially for fathers, is self-compassion (Risnawati et al, 2021). Parents' acceptance and support will determine the outcome of their child's achievement and success in all life skills training and achievement.

Parental acceptance is the feeling or behavior of parents who can accept their child's existence unconditionally, acceptance is the ultimate goal of parents when they find out their child has a disability (Porter, 1954). The actions of mothers and fathers in treating their children between accepting or ignoring their children are very important to establish a close relationship between mothers and fathers and their children (Abqori & Risnawati, 2018; Risnawati et al., 2021). The attitude of acceptance from both parents to their children who experience disorders are events that are felt whether it is joy, happiness or difficult circumstances which are shown through feelings and behavior of affection, caring, familiar in caring for their children (Hurlock, 2002). The behavior of parents who lie to themselves, reject the condition of their child who is actually experiencing a disorder will actually have a negative impact on their child psychologically, but also the child feels that he is not acceptable as he is and causes rejection in unwanted actions from children towards their parents (Marijani, 2003).

Previous research on children with special needs and their parents has been carried out, for example qualitative research by Hendriani, et al (2006) found that 2 out of 3 informants did not meet the criteria for good parental acceptance. Parents' behavior tends to be bad, namely covering up the situation that happened to their child from other people, providing restrictions for children's activities, lack of responsibility in caring for children and giving attention that is different from other children (Risnawati, 2021). In addition, research by Eliyanto and Hendriani (2013) tested the correlation between emotional intelligence and mother's acceptance of children with cerebral palsy limited to knowing the correlation, but did not reveal each dimension level on parental acceptance. From this situation, researchers feel the need to examine more deeply about parental acceptance of children with special needs. Thus, to answer this question, the researcher intends to conduct research with the title of a descriptive study of self-acceptance of parents who have children with special needs. In this study, parental acceptance uses Porter's theory (1954), namely the feelings or behavior of parents who can accept their child's existence unconditionally, acceptance is the ultimate goal of parents when they find out their child has a disability. Parental acceptance consists of four dimensions, including respecting children, assessing unique personal children, knowing children's needs, and loving children unconditionally.

METHOD

The method used in this research is descriptive quantitative research to see the mean, standard deviation, and categorization.

Population and Sample

The population in this study are parents who have children with special needs, all disabilities in general. This study used a purposive sampling technique in order to obtain a total of 46 parents (fathers/mothers). The age range of children with conditions of special needs is from 1 to 6 years old.

Parental Acceptance Instrument

The instrument used in this research is the Porter Parental Acceptance Scale (PPAS). This measurement tool was developed by Porter (1954) based on the theory he put forward. Acceptance is the feelings and behavior of parents who can accept the existence of their children unconditionally, realizing that their children also have the right to express their feelings and needs to become independent individuals (Porter, 1954). Parental acceptance is expressed through a scale of parental acceptance based on the following indicators (a) respecting the child as an individual with all feelings, acknowledging children's rights and meeting the need to express their feelings, (b) assessing children as unique selves so that people parents can maintain the uniqueness of their children without limits so that they are able to become healthy individuals, (c) recognize children's needs to differentiate and separate themselves from parents and become independent individuals, and (d) love children unconditionally. This measuring instrument was translated to Bahasa by Eliyanto and Hendriani (2013) with $r = .865$ with a total of 40 items. In this measuring instrument there are two types of scale forms, namely Likert scale with a value of 1-5 on items number 1 to number 10 and multiple choice on items number 11 to number 40. On items numbered 1 to 10 there are statements and answers consisting of 5 type, i.e. "much less than usual", "less than usual", "as usual", "much more than usual", "much more than usual". Whereas in items 11 to number 40 there are five answer choices, each of which has a tiered score, for example item no. 17:

When my child kicks or hits his belongings, I:

- a. made me feel like to stop him,
- b. feel like punishing him,
- c. appreciates, realizing that he is free to express himself,
- d. makes me feel I will be happy when he has passed this stage and e. makes me feel annoyed

Score on each answer to question no. 17 based on guidelines including a=2, b=1, c=5, d=4, e=3.

In this scale, the higher the value obtained, the better the acceptance of parents towards their children with special needs. However, when the lower the value obtained, the lower the acceptance of parents towards their children with special needs. Porter Parental Acceptance Scale (PPAS) had been used and tested to know the construct validity of the instrument for Autism Spectrum Disorder Children in Indonesia by Sumiati et al (2022). The results showed that the model fit with Chi-Square= 764.612, df= 704, P-Value= .053, RMSEA= .021. All dimensions are valid so that PPAS can be used to measure the level of acceptance of parents of ASD children in Indonesia.

RESULT

Results

This research was conducted at several Churches and Special Needs Foundations around Jakarta. Based on the findings, the following demographic data were obtained:

Table 1. Parents Respondents

Category	N	(%)
Ayah	7	10.93%
Ibu	39	89.06%
Total	46	100%

From table 1, it is known that most of the respondents in this study were mothers (39%)

Table 2. Child Diagnosis

Diagnosis	N	%
<i>Autism Spectrum Disorder</i>	12	26%
ADHD	5	11%
<i>Down Syndrome</i>	7	16%
<i>Cerebral Palsy</i>	4	9%
<i>Global Developmental Delay</i>	2	4%
<i>Speech Delay</i>	3	7%
<i>Sensory Integration Disorder</i>	2	4%
Meningitis	1	2%
Deaf	2	4%
Visual Impairment	6	13%
Komorbid	2	4%
Total	46	100%

Source: Data Processing Results, 2023

Based on table 2, demographic data regarding diagnoses in children is obtained. It is known that the most are parents of children with Autism spectrum disorder (26%) down syndrome (16%) and visual impairment (13%). While the least is meningitis (2%).

After obtaining the data, the researcher processes and performs descriptive statistical tests to obtain results. The results obtained mean = 141 and SD = 16. Then the researcher categorizes based on a hypothetical test with the following results:

Table 3. Categorization of Parental Acceptance

Category	Range	n	%
Low	< 93	0	0
Moderate	93 - 146	30	65%
High	146 <	16	35%
Total		46	100 %

Table 3 shows that the acceptance of parents of children with special needs is in the Moderate (65%) to high (35%) category. Not only that, the researchers tried to look at the mean and standard deviation for each dimension.

Table 4. Mean and Standard Deviation

	Unconditional Love	Acceptance of feelings	Acceptance of uniqueness	Recognition of the child's need for autonomy
Mean	27	36	38	40
SD	11	7	5	4

Source: Data Processing Results, 2023

Table 5. Hypothetic Categorization

							Recognition of the child's need for autonomy	
	Unconditional Love		Acceptance of feelings		Acceptance of uniqueness			
Category	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Low	16	35%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
			21	46%	1	37%	9	20%
Moderate	20	43%			7			
			25	54%	2	63	37	80%
High	10	22%			9			
					4			
TOTAL	46	100 %	46	100%	6	100 %	46	100 %

Source: Data Processing Results, 2023

From the data in table 4, where each dimension has the same composition of questions, namely 10 questions per dimension, it is known that the highest mean is in the dimension of recognition of the child's need for autonomy and the lowest is unconditional love. Then the researchers conducted a hypothetical test on each dimension and obtained the following results

Table 5 described, it is known that parents are in the high to moderate category on three dimensions (Acceptance of feelings, Acceptance of uniqueness, Recognition of the child's need for autonomy). Whereas in unconditional love, the parental acceptance level is at a moderate to low level.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study are that the acceptance of parents with children with special needs is at a moderate level (65%), this finding is in line with Eliyanto and Hendriani (2013) who state that the level of acceptance of mothers for children with Cerebral Palsy is mostly moderate. Carrasco et al (2019) mentioned that acceptance had a higher contribution to psychological adjustment in children, especially maternal acceptance. Similar to this research, this research which was dominated by mothers compared to fathers as respondents produced similar results to the research of Eliyanto and Hendriani (2013). In addition, in Sarasvati (2004) it is known that religious factors determine the level of parental acceptance. This is supported by Sumiati & Dewi's research (2021) that religiosity is related to unconditional love in children with autism spectrum disorder. Considering that this research collects a lot of data from churches and foundations with special needs, the religiosity factor supports the level of acceptance by parents of children with special needs.

Furthermore, the researchers conducted categorization tests on each dimension and found that parents were in the high to moderate category on three dimensions (Acceptance of feelings, Acceptance of uniqueness, and Recognition of the child's need for autonomy). Whereas in unconditional love, the parental acceptance level is at a moderate to low level. This finding is somewhat contradictory to the findings of Sumiati & Dewi (2021), if we examine the factors of the diversity of diagnoses it seems that this can explain the dimensions of unconditional love which are classified as moderate to low. This study does not specialize in one type of diagnosis. Different diagnoses lead to different conditions and sample requirements. Families' coping depends on level of the child's handicap (Kandel & Merrick, 2007). Research by Eliyanto and Hendriani (2013) specializes in the type of diagnosis of cerebral palsy, then the diversity of diagnoses is of course related to the level of difficulty in caring for and caring for children. In addition, younger children are more vulnerable to causing more pressure on their parents compared to older children with special needs (Korn (1978) in Darling-Darling (1982). In this study, the age range of children was 1-6 years which are still relatively on the early age. Porter (1954) states that unconditional love is closely related to the ability of parents to love their children regardless of their conditions and whatever they do, even if they are not liked. There are times when parents with children with special needs find it difficult to accept their conditions. Even so, parents still respect and know the needs of their children, and are able to find the uniqueness of each child.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that the level of parental acceptance of children with special needs is at a moderate to high level. Meanwhile, when viewed from each dimension, it was found that parents with children with special needs were in the high to medium category on three dimensions (Acceptance of feelings, Acceptance of uniqueness, and Recognition of the child's need for autonomy) and the medium to low category on the dimension of unconditional love.

To improve this research, it is better to specify the type of diagnosis or to compare the acceptance of parents with various diagnoses. Of course this is offset by increasing the number of samples and sampling evenly.

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