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**Exploring the Relationship between Parenting Sel-Efficacy and Parental Acceptance
among Parents of Children with Special Needs**

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ABSTRACT

Background: Parenting self-efficacy (PSE) is an important factor influencing parental acceptance of children with special needs (CWSN). Parents' confidence in their ability to raise their children contributes to forming positive attitudes toward their child's condition. **Object:** This study aimed to explore the relationship between parenting self-efficacy and parental acceptance among parents of children with special needs attending special schools (SLB) in Cluring District, Banyuwangi Indonesia. **Method:** This quantitative cross-sectional study examined the relationship between parenting self-efficacy (independent variable) and parental acceptance (dependent variable) among parents of children with special needs attending special schools (SLB) in Cluring District. From a population of 200 parents, 188 were selected using purposive sampling. Data were collected using validated instruments: the Parenting Sense of Competence (PSOC) and the Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ). Statistical analysis was conducted using the Spearman Rank correlation test. **Results:** The results of the Spearman rank correlation test showed a correlation coefficient of 0.191 with a significance value of 0.009 ($p < 0.05$), indicating a positive and significant relationship between parenting self-efficacy and parental acceptance. These findings suggest that parents with higher levels of parenting self-efficacy tend to show greater acceptance of their children's conditions. **Conclusion:** It is recommended that parents of children with special needs enhance their parenting self-efficacy through participation in training programs, community support, and professional consultations to strengthen parental acceptance and promote positive parenting behaviours.

Keywords: Parenting Self-efficacy, Parental Acceptance, Parents, Children with Special Needs

BACKGROUND

Children are a divine blessing that completes family life. However, not all families are blessed with children in "normal" physical and mental conditions, as some are born with special conditions that require particular attention and care. These children are known as children with special needs (CWSN) (Yazicioğlu et al., 2023). The presence of CWSN often becomes a significant challenge for parents, as it evokes various emotional reactions such as denial, disappointment,

frustration, and difficulty in accepting their child's limitations (Ahmad et al., 2025; Pasyola et al., 2021; Rahayu & Mangunsong 2020). A low level of parental acceptance toward their child's condition can have negative consequences for both the child and the family.

Children with special needs often experience discrimination—being hidden from the social environment, denied access to proper education, and excluded from community activities due to the parents'

feelings of shame (Sry et al., 2024). Negative social stigma is one of the main obstacles in the process of parental acceptance of CWSN (Salsabila et al., 2020). Social perceptions that view the presence of a child with special needs as a family disgrace often trigger stigma experienced by parents, both public and internalized. Parents may feel ashamed, tend to hide their child's condition from others, and lose self-confidence (Oduyemi et al., 2021; Serchuk et al., 2021). The impact of this condition not only affects parents' psychological well-being but can also hinder the child's social, emotional, and independence development (McLean & Halstead, 2021).

According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2024), approximately 1.3 billion people worldwide, equivalent to 16% of the global population, live with various forms of disabilities (WHO, 2024). This figure represents an increase from the previous estimate of 15%. More than 80% of individuals with disabilities reside in low- and middle-income countries, the majority of which are located in Asia and Africa (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2023). Meanwhile, the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), through its report Portrait of Persons with Disabilities in Indonesia: Results of the 2020 Long Form Population Census, recorded that the number of persons with disabilities in Indonesia reached 22.97 million people, or approximately 8.5% of the total national population (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2024).

This number includes all age groups, not only children. For the child age group (5–19 years), data from the Coordinating Ministry for Human Development and Cultural Affairs (Kemenko PMK) estimate that the prevalence of children with disabilities is 3.3% of the total child population, or around 2.2 million children (Kementerian Koordinator Bidang Pembangunan Manusia dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia, 2024). However, only about

269,398 children are recorded as attending Special Schools (SLB) or inclusive schools (Liputan6, 2023).

Furthermore, based on data from the Educational Data Reference of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek), the Province of East Java recorded 34,196 verified students with special needs (CWSN) out of a total of 7,215,868 students across all education levels. Among them, 13,055 students fall into the single-disability category, while 19,390 students are classified as having multiple disabilities (Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi Republik Indonesia, 2025). In addition, data from the Banyuwangi District Education Office indicate that in 2025, there were approximately 1,147 children with special needs (CWSN) recorded in the regency (Dinas Pendidikan Kabupaten Banyuwangi, 2025). Among all subdistricts, Cluring stands out as the area with the highest concentration of Special Schools (SLB), accommodating around 200 students in total. These students are distributed across several institutions, namely SLB Negeri Tamanagung Banyuwangi (100 students), SDLB ABCD PGRI 3 Cluring (47 students), SMPLB ABCD PGRI Cluring (40 students), and SMALB Bhakti Pertiwi (13 students). Consequently, Cluring Subdistrict holds the largest number of students enrolled in special education schools within Banyuwangi Regency (Dinas Pendidikan Kabupaten Banyuwangi, 2025).

Parental acceptance of children with special needs is influenced by multiple factors, including a harmonious family environment, spiritual background, social influences, and the family's financial circumstances (Sry et al., 2024). A key determinant of parental acceptance is parenting self-efficacy (PSE), defined as parents' confidence in their ability to care for and educate their child. Evidence suggests that parents with high PSE are better able to adapt to parenting challenges

and accept their child's condition (Glatz et al., 2024; Fang et al., 2021), whereas low PSE may increase psychological stress and hinder acceptance, particularly among parents of children with disabilities (Fu et al., 2023). In addition, social support plays a crucial role in enhancing PSE, with studies indicating that parents who receive adequate support demonstrate greater confidence and effectiveness in their parenting practices (Fierloos et al., 2023; Raikes et al., 2005).

Enhancing parenting self-efficacy (PSE) plays a crucial role in promoting parents' psychological well-being and strengthening their confidence in fulfilling parenting responsibilities (Fang et al., 2021). Parents with higher levels of PSE are better able to accept their child's condition and adapt to the challenges of caregiving (Glatz et al., 2024). Improvements in PSE directly support greater parental acceptance, which in turn positively influences family relationships and the emotional well-being of parents (Fu et al., 2023). Targeted interventions such as educational programs, emotional support, and PSE-focused guidance delivered by healthcare and educational professionals can further enhance parental acceptance and support optimal development for children with special needs (Hohlfeld et al., 2018; Hapsari et al., 2022).

Therefore, a deeper understanding of the relationship between parenting self-efficacy and parental acceptance is crucial for enhancing the quality of parenting and the psychological well-being of parents, particularly those with children with special needs in special schools (SLB), with the aim of reducing stigma and fostering greater acceptance of children with special needs within society.

RESEARCH METHODS

Description of Materials or Research Subjects

The research involved parents of children with special needs enrolled in Special

Education Schools (Sekolah Luar Biasa – SLB) located in the Cluring District, Banyuwangi, Indonesia. The total population consisted of 200 parents. The inclusion criteria were: (1) parents of children with special needs currently attending an SLB in Cluring District, (2) willingness to participate voluntarily, and (3) ability to understand and complete the questionnaire independently. Exclusion criteria included parents who withdrew during data collection or provided incomplete responses. A total of 188 respondents met the inclusion criteria and were included in the final analysis.

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional design aimed at examining the relationship between parenting self-efficacy (PSE) and parental acceptance among parents of children with special needs. This design allows for the assessment of relationships between variables at a single point in time without manipulating study conditions.

Research Procedure

Data collection was conducted from May to July 2025 following approval from relevant authorities and the ethics committee. Participants were first informed about the objectives, procedures, and voluntary nature of the research. Written informed consent was obtained prior to participation. Respondents completed the questionnaire in the presence of the researcher to ensure accuracy and completeness of responses. All completed questionnaires were checked for validity and completeness before data entry and analysis.

Instruments and Equipment

Two standardized and validated instruments were utilized in this study:

1. Parenting Sense of Competence Scale (PSOC)

Parenting self-efficacy was measured using the Parenting Sense of

Competence Scale (PSOC) developed by Gibaud-Wallston and Wandersman (1978) and refined by Gilmore & Cuskelly (2024). The instrument consists of 16 items divided into two subscales: efficacy (8 items) and satisfaction (8 items). Each item is rated on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6). Higher scores reflect greater perceived competence and satisfaction in the parenting role. The PSOC has demonstrated strong internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.75 to 0.84 across different populations (Gilmore & Cuskelly, 2024; Ohan et al., 2000).

2. Parental Acceptance–Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ)
Parenting Sense of Competence Scale (PSOC)
Parental acceptance was assessed using the Parental Acceptance–Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ) developed by Rohner & Ali (2016). The short-form version comprises 24 items divided into four subscales: acceptance/warmth, rejection/aggression, indifference/neglect, and undifferentiated rejection—each with six items. Responses are given on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from almost never true (1) to almost always true (4). Higher scores indicate greater levels of parental acceptance. The PARQ has been validated in more than 60 cultural contexts worldwide with excellent reliability and construct validity (Rohner & Ali, 2016).

Data Collection Methods

Data were collected using self-administered questionnaires distributed directly to respondents at participating SLBs. The researcher remained available during completion to clarify any questions or concerns. Upon completion, questionnaires were reviewed for

completeness, and all valid responses were included for analysis.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS and consisted of the following steps:

1. Descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage) were used to summarize demographic characteristics and the distribution of parenting self-efficacy and parental acceptance levels.
2. Spearman's rank-order correlation (ρ) was employed to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between parenting self-efficacy and parental acceptance.

A significance level of $p < 0.05$ was applied to all statistical analyses.

Research Ethics

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Health Research Ethics Committee of STIKES Banyuwangi (Approval No. 248/03/KEPK-STIKESBWI/VII/2024–2025). All participants were provided with information about the study's objectives, procedures, potential benefits, and their rights to withdraw at any time without consequence. Written informed consent was obtained before participation. Confidentiality and anonymity of all participants were strictly maintained throughout the research process.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

A total of 188 parents participated in this study. The majority of respondents were female ($n = 181, 96\%$), while male respondents accounted for 7 (4%). In terms of age, most participants were within the young adult group (18–44 years), totaling 101 individuals (54%). Regarding occupation, the largest proportion of respondents were housewives ($n = 126, 67\%$), followed by self-employed individuals, private employees, and others. Most respondents reported a monthly income below the Banyuwangi Regency

Minimum Wage (UMK), comprising 166 participants (88%). In terms of marital status, the majority were married (n = 162, 86%), while the remainder were widowed or unmarried. Concerning the type of special needs, the most common category was autism (n = 50, 27%), followed by intellectual disabilities, hearing

impairments, and other types of special needs. Overall, these findings indicate that the majority of participants were mothers in early to middle adulthood who play an active role in caring for their children with special needs, particularly within families of lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

Level of Parenting Self-Efficacy

Table 1.

Distribution of Parenting Self-Efficacy Levels among Parents of Children with Special Needs

Parenting Self-Efficacy	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low	2	1.1
Moderate	176	93.6
High	10	5.3
Total	188	100

According to table 1, the Parenting Sense of Competence (PSOC) revealed that most respondents demonstrated a moderate level of parenting self-efficacy, with 176 participants (93.6%) falling into this category. Meanwhile, 10 participants (5.3%) exhibited a high level, and 2 participants (1.1%) reported a low level of

self-efficacy. These findings indicate that the majority of parents of children with special needs possess a fairly strong sense of confidence in their parenting abilities; however, their perceived efficacy has not yet reached an optimal level.

Level of Parental Acceptance

Table 2.

Distribution of Parental Acceptance Levels among Parents of Children with Special Needs

Parental Acceptance	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low	0	0.0
Moderate	40	21.3
High	148	78.7
Total	188	100

Based on the Parental Acceptance–Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ) results, 148 respondents (78.7%) demonstrated a high level of parental acceptance, while 40 respondents (21.3%) were categorized as moderate. None of the participants fell into the low acceptance category. This

indicates that most parents are able to emotionally accept their child’s condition and maintain a positive, nurturing parenting attitude. The high level of acceptance also reflects adaptive coping mechanisms and emotional maturity

among parents of children with special needs.

Relationship between Parenting Self-Efficacy and Parental Acceptance

The analysis revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship between parenting self-efficacy (independent variable) and parental acceptance (dependent variable). The Spearman's rank-order correlation test produced a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.191$ with a significance level of $p = 0.009$ ($p < 0.05$). This result indicates that higher levels of parenting self-efficacy are associated with increased parental acceptance among parents of children with special needs. Although the correlation strength is weak ($r < 0.3$), the relationship remains meaningful, suggesting that parents who feel more confident in their parenting abilities tend to show greater acceptance of their child's condition. Overall, the findings support the research aim by demonstrating that parenting self-efficacy contributes to parental acceptance, even though the magnitude of its contribution is relatively modest.

Discussion

Parenting Self-Efficacy

According to table 1, the majority of respondents (176 individuals or 93.6%) fell into the moderate parenting self-efficacy (PSE) category. This finding indicates that most parents of children with special needs have a fairly strong confidence in their parenting abilities; however, their self-efficacy has not yet reached an optimal level. Parenting self-efficacy (PSE) refers to parents' belief in their ability to care for their children, manage their behaviours, and handle various parenting challenges (Moelyono et al., 2025). Self-efficacy reflects the confidence in one's capacity to positively influence a child's development. Several psychosocial factors, including stress, social support, and family conditions, are

known to affect PSE levels (Setianingsih et al., 2024).

These findings align with previous research by Fang et al. (2021), which showed that high PSE is associated with emotional maturity and psychological stability in parents. Individuals with high self-efficacy tend to be more patient, responsive to their child's needs, and capable of managing parenting-related stress, whereas low PSE is often linked to higher stress and feelings of ineffectiveness in the parenting role. Cross-cultural research by Holloway et al. (2021) also demonstrates that PSE is strongly influenced by social and cultural contexts, including family norms, gender roles, and available social support in the community. In the Indonesian context, particularly in regions such as Banyuwangi, a strong family-oriented culture can provide emotional support, although economic and social pressures may hinder the optimization of parenting roles.

Additionally, Ronkainen et al. (2023) emphasize that parents of children with special needs often face complex psychological and social challenges, making social support and professional services critical in strengthening their self-efficacy. Similarly, [1] found that PSE is positively related to parents' emotional well-being as well as children's social and psychological development. Higher parental self-efficacy is associated with better quality parent-child relationships and enhanced child development.

Thus, the moderate level of PSE in this study indicates that parents' confidence is at a moderate level—not low, but not yet optimal. The development of self-efficacy is influenced by both individual characteristics and external support from partners, family, and the social environment. Without sufficient support, parenting stress for children with special needs can lower self-efficacy and increase the risk of emotional burnout. Therefore, community-based

interventions, parenting training, and social support programs should be developed to strengthen parental self-efficacy and improve the quality of caregiving.

Parental Acceptance

Based on the results presented in table 2, the majority of respondents (78.7%) exhibited a high level of parental acceptance toward their children. This finding indicates that most parents of children with special needs are prepared to accept their child's condition both emotionally and behaviorally, fostering a positive and supportive parent-child relationship (Salsabila et al., 2025). The process of parental acceptance for children with special needs often involves emotional stages, including denial, anger, bargaining, and depression, before ultimately reaching acceptance. At this stage, parenting is characterized by greater patience, consistency, and the ability to build a positive bond with the child (Mukhlis et al., 2023).

Research by Lorjin et al. (2022) has shown that parental acceptance from early childhood has long-term positive effects on educational achievement, psychological well-being, and social development of the child. Furthermore, a cross-cultural study by Ayar et al. (2024) emphasized that parental acceptance is influenced by sociodemographic characteristics, such as age, educational level, and economic status, which in turn affect parents' readiness to address the special needs of their children. In addition, studies by Prasetyaningrum et al. (2023) confirm that high parental acceptance, when supported by a positive family environment, contributes significantly to parents' psychological well-being. Support from partners, family members, and the community is an important factor in strengthening parental readiness, reducing stress, and improving the quality of caregiving.

This study also highlights the influence of individual and contextual factors on parental acceptance. Parents' age affects access to and openness toward parenting information, with younger parents being more adaptable to technology and new learning resources, while older parents tend to be more patient, firm, and emotionally mature. Gender also plays a role, as the majority of respondents were mothers, who typically have stronger emotional bonds and higher levels of empathy, making them more prepared to provide full support to their children. Additionally, economic background shapes acceptance, where financial limitations can foster a more realistic and resigned mindset regarding the child's condition. Some aspects of parental acceptance are also inherent, arising naturally from the resignation to situations beyond their control.

Overall, these findings underscore the importance of social support, parenting training, and community-based interventions to strengthen parental acceptance. Such efforts can help parents build healthy and supportive relationships with their children while promoting the psychological, social, and emotional development of children with special needs.

The Relationship between Parenting Self-Efficacy and Parental Acceptance among Parents of Children with Special Needs

Based on table 4, this study revealed a positive and statistically significant correlation between Parenting Self-Efficacy (PSE) and Parental Acceptance ($r = 0.191$, $p = 0.009$). This finding indicates that parents who perceive themselves as more competent and confident in their parenting roles tend to demonstrate higher levels of acceptance toward their child's condition. However, the small correlation coefficient suggests that, while statistically significant, the

relationship remains weak in strength, implying a limited practical impact.

This result is consistent with previous research emphasizing the role of self-efficacy in fostering adaptive parenting behaviours. Parents with higher levels of PSE have been shown to exhibit greater confidence, patience, and emotional regulation when facing parenting challenges, which in turn enhances their positive perceptions of their children (Mudrikallistanto et al., 2024; Ronkainen & Ali, 2016). Similarly, Fang et al. (2021) highlighted that psychosocial factors—such as social support, family cohesion, and stress management—significantly influence PSE, thereby promoting emotional stability and parental acceptance. Moreover, socio-cultural norms, gender expectations, and community support systems have been found to shape parental beliefs and acceptance levels (Holloway et al., 2021). In line with this, Rahayu & Mangunsong (2020) identified PSE as a mediating factor linking parental acceptance with children's socio-emotional development, underscoring its central role in positive family functioning.

Although the correlation observed in this study was weak, the findings suggest that self-efficacy alone cannot fully explain variations in parental acceptance. Other contextual and demographic factors such as parental age, family stability, and socioeconomic conditions may substantially influence emotional readiness and adaptive coping (Ma et al., 2024; Wu et al., 2023). Overall, these findings highlight the importance of enhancing Parenting Self-Efficacy as a key strategy to strengthen Parental Acceptance. The implementation of community-based interventions, evidence-based parenting programs, and structured social support systems is recommended to enhance parental confidence, reduce emotional burden, and foster a supportive home environment that promotes the

holistic development and well-being of children with special needs.

This study revealed a positive and statistically significant relationship between parenting self-efficacy and parental acceptance among parents of children with special needs ($r = 0.191$, $p = 0.009$). The majority of parents demonstrated moderate levels of parenting self-efficacy (93.6%) and high levels of parental acceptance (78.7%), indicating emotional readiness and adaptive coping in caring for their children. Although the correlation was weak, the findings emphasize that higher confidence in parenting contributes to greater acceptance and positive attitudes toward children with special needs.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings demonstrate that stronger beliefs in one's parenting competence are associated with more adaptive forms of acceptance toward the child's condition. This association underscores the central role of parenting self-efficacy as an internal psychological resource that facilitates emotional adjustment, constructive coping, and positive caregiving orientation in the context of raising a child with special needs. Moreover, the results highlight that parental acceptance is shaped not only by individual cognitions but also by broader psychosocial and environmental dynamics. These insights reaffirm the multidimensional nature of acceptance, which emerges through the interaction of personal beliefs, familial resources, and sociocultural contexts. Consequently, efforts to strengthen parenting self-efficacy may serve as an important pathway for enhancing parental well-being, improving family functioning, and promoting nurturing environments that support the holistic development of children with special needs.

SUGGESTIONS

Given these implications, the study recommends the implementation of structured intervention frameworks—such as evidence-based parenting programs, psychosocial support mechanisms, and community-driven initiatives—to reinforce parental competencies and resilience. Future research should further investigate moderating and mediating factors, including social support, sociocultural values, and socioeconomic conditions, to build a more comprehensive understanding of pathways that influence parental acceptance and parenting self-efficacy within diverse settings.

Future research should include both parents and employ qualitative approaches to capture deeper insights. Schools and healthcare professionals are encouraged to provide continuous psychosocial support and parenting programs to strengthen self-efficacy and acceptance among parents.

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INFORMED STATEMENT

Informed consent was obtained from all participants involved in this study. Prior to data collection, participants were provided with detailed information regarding the research objectives, procedures, potential risks, and benefits. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents had the right to withdraw at any time without any consequences. Confidentiality and anonymity of all participants were strictly maintained throughout the research process.

CONSENT

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest. The research was conducted independently and objectively without any financial, personal, or institutional relationships that could influence the study results or their interpretation. The funding institution had no involvement in the design, analysis, or decision to publish this research.

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