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# THE ROLE OF SELF ACCEPTANCE IN MEDIATING THE INFLUENCE OF GRATITUDE AND SOCIAL SUPPORT ON SUBJECTIVE WELL- BEING

**Alice Zellawati\*, Dwi Yuwono Puji Sugiharto , Mulawarman, Sunawan**

**\*Correspondent Author**

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Alice Zellawati  
Universitas Negeri Semarang  
Sekaran, Kec. Gunungpati, Kota  
Semarang, Jawa Tengah 50229  
Indonesia  
Email: [alicezellawati@students.unnes.ac.id](mailto:alicezellawati@students.unnes.ac.id)  
Dwi Yuwono Puji Sugiharto  
Universitas Negeri Semarang  
Sekaran, Kec. Gunungpati, Kota  
Semarang, Jawa Tengah 50229  
Indonesia  
Email: [dypsugiharto@mail.unnes.ac.id](mailto:dypsugiharto@mail.unnes.ac.id)  
Mulawarman  
Universitas Negeri Semarang  
Sekaran, Kec. Gunungpati, Kota  
Semarang, Jawa Tengah 50229  
Indonesia  
Email: [mulawarman@mail.unnes.ac.id](mailto:mulawarman@mail.unnes.ac.id)  
Sunawan  
Universitas Negeri Semarang  
Sekaran, Kec. Gunungpati, Kota  
Semarang, Jawa Tengah 50229  
Indonesia  
Email: [sunawan@mail.unnes.ac.id](mailto:sunawan@mail.unnes.ac.id)

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## ABSTRACT

*This study aims to analyze the role of self-acceptance in mediating the influence between gratitude and social support on subjective well-being. The sample criteria are mothers who have children with special needs with a child age of 1 – 12 years. The number of samples used was 102 people. The sampling technique is purposive sampling. The instruments used to measure the subjective well-being variables are SWLS (Satisfaction with Life Scale) and PANAS (Positive Affect Negative Affect Schedule), gratitude variables in the form of Gratitude-Questionnaire (GQ-6), social support variables using MSPSS (Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support) and self-acceptance variables measured using the Porter Parent Acceptance Scale (PPAS). The data analysis was in the form of mediation analysis with JASP version 18.3. The results showed that self-acceptance was proven to be able to significantly mediate the influence between gratitude and social support on subjective well-being. The magnitude of the influence of gratitude and social support on self-acceptance was 63.7% and the magnitude of the influence of gratitude, social support and self-acceptance on subjective well-being was 97.4%. This indicates that the role of gratitude and social support with the mediation of self-acceptance in shaping subjective well-being is very large for mothers who have children with special needs. The results of this study are also recommended in the development of counseling guidance science by paying attention to mothers' self-acceptance in order to form good subjective well-being. Key words: subjective well-being, self-acceptance, social support, gratitude.*

## INTRODUCTION

Parenting children with special needs requires more competence than taking care of normal children. Raising a child with developmental disorders regardless of the diagnosis, creates stressful parenting responsibilities, such as adapting to different parenting roles, coordinating with the therapy process that will be undertaken, and taking the child to various services/appointments (Hsiao, 2018); Masefield et al., 2020). Parents of children with developmental disabilities have a greater risk of psychological stress than parents who have children without developmental disorders (Masefield et al., 2020); Scherer et al., 2019), for example in a sample of parents of children with ASD, more than half (52.5%) of parents reported clinically increased levels of parenting stress (Bohadana et al., 2019).

According to Faradina (2016), the first reaction of parents when they are initially told to have a "problematic" child is disbelief, shock, sadness, disappointment, guilt, anger and rejection. It is not easy for parents whose children have special needs to go through this phase, before finally reaching the stage of acceptance. Parents' acceptance of children with special needs greatly affects the process of child development. Acceptance is the feeling and behavior of parents who can accept the existence of their children unconditionally, realizing that their children also have the right to express their opinions, feelings and the need to be independent individuals (Porter, 1954). Parental acceptance can make a positive contribution to psychological adjustment in children (Carrasco et al., 2019). If parents are able to accept the situation of their children who have special needs, it will help good parenting of their children. However, in reality, not all parents who have children with special needs can directly accept the condition of their children. Many parents who have children with special needs feel embarrassed, and disappointed in their children, causing the child not to be given skills in adjusting to their

environment. Having a child with special needs conditions can affect fathers, mothers and families in various aspects of life.

Based on pre-interviews and pre-observation of problems in several SLBs in Semarang City, information was obtained that mothers feel sad, confused, irritated and anxious about their children with special needs, want to share their experiences and need a lot of advice and information to take care of their children properly, but it is difficult to find the right person or place. Sometimes when parents pick up their children to meet other parents, they tell each other stories and advise each other, there are only a few things that they both do not know the answer to or how to deal with children who behave in a disruptive way. There are several mothers who also consult directly with classroom teachers because there is no guidance and counseling teacher in SLB, but the limitations of existing teachers due to the many tasks and their inadequate capabilities so that the answers given to students' parents are also unsatisfactory. Likewise, in pre-observation, it was also found that there were still parents who treated their children inappropriately, such as yelling at their children, scolding loudly, and pulling their children when they did not want to go home because they were still playing from the case.

In addition, Inclusive School Services are currently still facing challenges in the school environment such as rejection from some parents/the community, harassment of people with disabilities, and limited competent Special Guidance Teachers (GPK), low ability to adapt the curriculum and learning and the availability of accessible learning media that is not optimal. In addition, the Support System has not been maximized, the availability and accuracy of data on Children with Special Needs (ABK), the Center for Identification and Assessment Services and Affirmative Policies that have not reached all regions.

For this reason, parents, especially mothers who have children with children, are expected to show their unconditional love by

getting social support from family, friends and significant others and being grateful for what God has given. Empirically, it was found that there was a difference in psychological approaches between mothers and fathers in the pattern of interaction with children (Pajulo et al., 2015); Cooke et al., 2017); & Pazzagli et al., 2018). In addition, the level of affective closeness in fathers was found to be lower than in mothers due to different ways of socializing gender roles, resulting in lower awareness and emotional expression among men (Cooke et al., 2017).

This low self-acceptance of parents ultimately affects subjective well-being (SWB) as a parent. SWB is a broad concept regarding the evaluation of a person's life and emotional experiences consisting of high life satisfaction, high positive effects, and low negative effects. A person with a strong SWB is able to regulate emotions and overcome problems. On the contrary, those who have an inadequate SWB tend to feel that their lives are unhappy, full of negative thoughts and feelings, anxiety, anger, and even the risk of depression (Davey et al., 2019). The importance of the role of self-acceptance in mothers towards their SWB is shown from several studies conducted by Xu et al., (2016; Muthmainah et al., 2019), Li et al., 2021), and Su et al., 2019) but on the contrary, Hafiza et al., (2020) actually stated that self-acceptance does not affect SWB.

The first factor that affects self-acceptance and SWB is the magnitude factor. Many cases show that a mother finds it difficult to accept the condition of her child with special needs, but in some other examples, there are also parents who have children with special needs who consider their child to be a sign of God's love and favor. Therefore, they feel compelled to provide diligent and attentive care to their children without harboring regrets in them. Several studies such as Hikmawati et al. (2023), Homan & Hosack (2019), Ikkyu & Yuliawati (2022), Cholili et al. (2023) prove that gratitude has a significant effect on self-acceptance. Individuals with a sense of gratitude also affect their subjective well-being because it is a form of positive expression and influences the creation of pleasant positive

emotions (Megawati et al., 2019). In addition, they also feel happy in interpreting life and appreciating what they have. Parents who are able to create SWB in themselves can be sure to have high self-acceptance, this is shown by Komarudin et al. (2022) who stated that gratitude can affect a person's happiness if he is able to accept himself as he is. Through high self-acceptance, parents are expected to also have a high SWB. Grateful parents are a form of accepting everything they have without feeling lacking. Several previous studies have proven that gratitude also affects SWB such as research from Situmorang & Syuhada (2021), Salces-Cubero et al. (2019), Tilkeridou et al., (2021), Alkozei et al (2018), Situmorang & Syuhada (2021), Safaria (2018), Bono et al. (2020), Mead et al. (2021). The existence of different research results was also shown by Yang et al. (2021) and Hermaen & Bhutto (2020) that gratitude was not proven to affect SWB.

The second factor that affects self-acceptance is social support. Several studies that prove that social support has a significant effect on self-acceptance, including Kristiadi & Soetjningsih (2024), Hafni (2020), Jati & Muhid (2022), Komarudin et al. (2022), Pastimo & Muslikah (2022). According to Carpenter et al. (2016), when support from a partner is low, mothers are more likely to have difficulty adjusting psychologically, to show more intense feelings of anxiety and depression. A similar result was reported by Cavonius-Rintahaka et al., (2019), that family functionality is determined by the level of support, especially in families whose responsibilities and care are evenly distributed and all nuclear families participate according to their abilities, then the result is that the support is positive. When couples do not receive support from the family environment, parents who care for children with special needs experience high levels of anxiety and depression. Increased anxiety and depression are one indication that SWB felt by couples, especially mothers, has decreased.

In addition to social support factors that can affect self-acceptance, it turns out that social support can also affect SWB. Several

previous studies that support that social support has a significant effect on SWB include Shang (2022) and Brajša-Žganec et al. (2018) stated that of the three forms of social support (Family, Friends & Significant Other) only social support from friends is proven to have an effect on subjective well-being. In fact, Dewi et al. (2021) added that family support, gratitude and self-acceptance have a simultaneous effect on subjective well-being. However, another study from Naraha et al. (2023) actually shows that social support, especially husbands, does not affect the mother's social welfare, because the subjective welfare of mothers is not always influenced by external factors such as the husband's social support.

Based on the pros and cons of several previous research results, the researcher determined the purpose of this study to analyze the influence of gratitude and social support on subjective wellbeing mediated by self-acceptance to form mental health in mothers who have children with special needs. The results of this research are also expected to provide benefits in the development of counseling for mothers by applying self-acceptance as the focus of counseling so that good subjective well-being is formed and part of the informal education side, namely the behavior of mothers as caregivers will be better in caring for their children.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The approach used in this study is quantitative correlation. The variables used include the bound variable is subjective well-being, the predictor variable is gratitude and social support, and the mediator variable is self-acceptance. The number of samples used was 102 people. This research was conducted in an Extraordinary School in Semarang City. The inclusion sample criteria are a mother who has a child with special needs. The sampling technique is in the form of purposive sampling.

The instruments used to measure subjective well-being variables are SWLS (Satisfaction with Life Scale) and PANAS

(Positive Affect Negative Affect Schedule) where the SWLS and HEAT instruments are based on the theory of Diener et al (2017), namely the affective aspect (consisting of positive affective and negative affective aspects) and cognitive aspects (related to life satisfaction). SWLS has been adapted in Indonesian with five items and an Alpha Cronbach coefficient value of 0.87 (Diener et al., 1985). SWLS was developed to identify the subject's overall life satisfaction, and the HEAT (Positive Affect Negative Affect Schedule) scale to measure positive and negative affective aspects. The scale contains twenty items with ten items measuring positive affective (such as happy and excited) and ten items measuring negative affective activity. This scale contains twenty items with ten items measuring positive affective (such as: happy and excited) and ten items measuring negative affective with a Cronbach alpha value of > 0.84 (Tran, 2020)

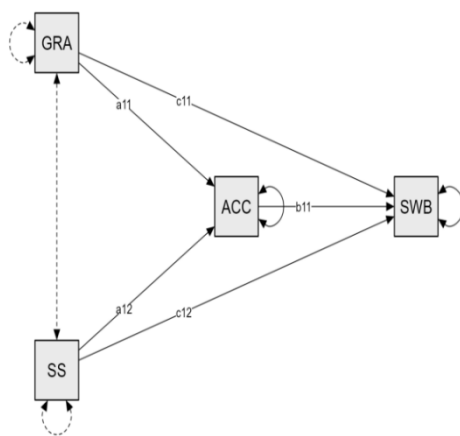
The gratitude variable was measured using Gratitude-Questionnaire (GQ-6) which is based on the theory of McCullough et al., (2004), namely intensity, frequency, span, density. The GQ-6 scale consists of six GQ-6 items that have been translated and adapted by Indonesian researchers, namely Moningka & Soewastika (2023). The reliability of Indonesia's Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ-6) was conducted on 300 respondents and tested using Cronbach's alpha method. The test results showed that the reliability value of this measuring tool was 0.73 (M = 21.65, SD = 4.62). The GQ-6 model has a value of RMSEA = 0.051; GFI = 0.99; AGFI = 0.99; CFI = 0.99; NNFI = 0.99. By looking at the model parameters, it can be said that the GQ-6 measurement model is appropriate.

The social support variable was measured by MSPSS (Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support) based on the aspect theory from Zimet et al. (1988), namely families, friends and significant others with 12 items. This MPSS has been translated in Indonesian and has been tested for validity and reliability by Istiqlal (2018) where from the results of the CFA analysis, a fit model with chi square = 51.48, df = 39, p-value = 0.08698 (p

> 5%), RMSEA = 0.037 means that the model matches one factor (unidimensional) in the MSPSS and all items are valid/valid

The Self Acceptance variable is measured using the Porter Parent Acceptance Scale (PPAS). PPAS was created by Porter (1954). The dimensions of self-acceptance are acceptance of feeling, acceptance of uniqueness, recognition of the child's need for autonomy and unconditional love (Porter, 1954). As for the PPAS that has been adapted to Indonesian by Sumiati et al (2022), with the CFA second-order model, the values of Chi-Square = 764,612, df = 704, p-value = 0.053, RMSEA = 0.021, CFI = 0.962 and TLI = 0.958, based on these four indices, the model is declared fit with the data. The total number of PPAS questions is 40 questions

The data analysis was in the form of regression mediation analysis with JASP version 18.3. This model determines the direction and influence of independent variables on dependent variables.



Picture.1  
Conceptual Framework

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The results of data analysis with JASP 18.3 can be seen in Table 1 to Table 4

Table.1  
Direct effects gratitude & social support toward subjective well-being

	Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
GRATITUDE → SWB	1.014	0.070	14.564	<.001	0.877	1.150
SS → SWB	1.191	0.053	22.271	<.001	1.086	1.296

Based on **Table.1**, it can be concluded that: First, the gratitude variable has a positive and very significant effect on subjective well-being which can be seen from the p < value of 0.001; Second, social support also has a positive and very significant effect on subjective well-being, which is shown by a p < value of 0.001. Furthermore, to see the indirect influence, you can see in Table.2.

Table.2  
Indirect effects

	Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
GRATITUDE → ACCEPTANCE → SWB	0.133	0.042	3.183	0.001	0.051	0.215
SS → ACCEPTANCE → SWB	0.144	0.036	3.954	<.001	0.072	0.215

**Table. 2** can be seen, namely First; that Self Acceptance was proven to significantly mediate the influence of gratitude on subjective well-being with a value of p = 0.001. Second; Self Acceptance was proven to significantly mediate the influence of social support on subjective well-being with a p < value of 0.001.

Table.3  
Total effects

	Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
GRATITUDE → SWB	1.147	0.072	15.839	<.001	1.005	1.289
SS → SWB	1.335	0.051	26.143	<.001	1.235	1.435

the total effect of the gratitude variable on subjective well-being has increased by an

estimated value of 1,147 ( $p < 0.001$ ) and the social support variable has also increased by an estimated value of 1,335 ( $p < 0.001$ ). There is an increase in the estimated value of the total effect on the variables of gratitude and social support on subjective well-being and a  $p < 0.001$ , it can be concluded that gratitude and social support simultaneously have a very significant effect on subjective well-being.

Tabel.4  
*Combined Direct Effect*

		Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower	Upper
ACCEPTANCE	→ SWB	0.103	0.020	5.121	< .001	0.063	0.142
GRATITUDE	→ SWB	1.014	0.070	14.564	< .001	0.877	1.150
SS	→ SWB	1.191	0.053	22.271	< .001	1.086	1.296
GRATITUDE	→ ACCEPTANCE	1.296	0.319	4.063	< .001	0.671	1.922
SS	→ ACCEPTANCE	1.400	0.225	6.221	< .001	0.959	1.841

**Table.4** It can also be seen that the self-acceptance variable has a very significant effect on subjective well-being ( $p < 0.001$ ), the gratitude variable also has a very significant effect on subjective well-being ( $p < 0.001$ ), the social support variable has a very significant effect on subjective well-being ( $p < 0.001$ ), the gratitude variable has a very significant effect on self acceptance ( $p < 0.001$ ) and the social support variable also has a very significant effect on self acceptance ( $p < 0.001$ ).

#### The effect of gratitude on SWB

The results of this study show that gratitude has a positive and very significant effect on SWB. Individuals with a sense of gratitude affect their subjective well-being because it is a form of positive expression and influences the creation of pleasant positive emotions (Megawati et al., 2019). In addition, they also feel happy in interpreting life and appreciating what they have. Several previous studies have proven that gratitude also affects SWB such as research from Situmorang & Syuhada (2021), Salces-Cubero et al., (2019),

Tilkeridou et al. (2021), Alkozei et al. (2018), Situmorang & Shuhad (2021), Safaria (2018), Bono et al. (2020), and Mead et al. (2021).

#### The influence of social support on SWB

The results of this study show that social support has a positive and very significant effect on SWB. This is in accordance with previous studies including Shang (2022) and (Brajša-Žganec et al. (2018) stated that social support has an effect on SWB, but of the three forms of social support (Family, Friends & Significant Other) only social support from friends has been proven to have an effect on subjective well-being. In fact, Dewi et al. (2021) added that family support, gratitude and self-acceptance have a simultaneous effect on subjective well-being.

#### The effect of self-acceptance on SWB

The results of this study prove that self-acceptance has a positive and very significant effect on SWB. The importance of the role of self-acceptance in mothers towards their SWB is shown from several studies conducted by Xu et al. (2016), Muthmainah et al. (2019), Li et al. (2021), and Su et al. (2019). SWB is a broad concept regarding the evaluation of a person's life and emotional experiences consisting of high life satisfaction, high positive effects, and low negative effects. A person with a strong SWB is able to regulate emotions and overcome problems. On the contrary, those who have an inadequate SWB tend to feel that their lives are unhappy, full of thoughts and thoughts of negative feelings, causing anxiety, anger, and even the risk of depression (Davey et al., 2019).

#### The effect of gratitude on self acceptance

The results of this study prove that gratitude has a positive and very significant effect on self-acceptance. This is supported by several studies such as Hikmawati et al. (2023), Homan & Hosack (2019), Ikkyu & Yuliawati (2022), and Cholili et al. (2023) which prove that gratitude has a significant effect on self-acceptance.

### **The effect of social support on self acceptance**

The results of this study prove that social support has a positive and very significant effect on self-acceptance. Several studies that prove that social support has a significant effect on self-acceptance, including Kristiadi & Soetjningsih (2024), Hafni, (2020), Jati & Muhid (2022), Komarudin et al. (2022), and Pastimo & Muslikah (2022). According to Carpenter et al. (2016), when support from a partner is low, mothers are more likely to have difficulty adjusting psychologically, to show more intense feelings of anxiety and depression. Similar results were reported by Cavonius-Rintahaka et al. (2019), that family functionality is determined by the level of support, especially in families whose responsibilities and care are evenly distributed and all nuclear families participate according to their abilities, then the result is positive support.

### **The effect of gratitude on SWB mediated by self-acceptance**

The results of this study also prove that self-acceptance is able to significantly mediate between gratitude and SWB. This is in accordance with the research of Komarudin et al. (2022) which stated that gratitude can affect a person's happiness if he is able to accept himself as he is. Through high self-acceptance, parents are expected to also have a high SWB. Grateful parents are a form of accepting everything they have without feeling lacking. This shows that individuals with a sense of gratitude also affect their subjective well-being because it is a form of positive expression and influences the creation of pleasant positive emotions (Megawati et al., 2019). In addition, they also feel happy in interpreting life and appreciating what they have. Parents who are able to create SWB in themselves can be sure to have high self-acceptance.

### **The effect of social support on SWB mediated by self-acceptance**

The results of this study also prove that self-acceptance is able to mediate significantly between social support and SWB.

Individual interactions in the family or with others as well as the social support she gets from the environment of peers, family, and significant others can not only motivate a mother positively but also feel accepted by the surrounding environment, feel that there are others who can understand her, do not judge her. When the partner does not receive support from the family environment, friends, significant others, then the mother will feel rejected and not recognized because she has a child with special needs, so that indirectly anxiety and depression tendencies arise in her. Increased anxiety and depression are one indication that the SWB felt by mothers has decreased. The role of self-acceptance by mothers, which involves accepting their identity as parents of children with special needs, is very important. This acceptance leads to the provision of love, attention, warmth, comfort, and support, which has a significant impact on the child's well-being (Rahayu et al., 2022; Kristiadi & Soetjningsih, 2024). Winarsih et al. (2020) stated that self-acceptance is a positive attitude towards oneself, accepting one's shortcomings and strengths without negative feelings such as shame, guilt, or inferiority, and freedom from anxiety about the judgment of others and a determining factor for the emergence of self-acceptance when there is social support from people around them. For mothers who have children with special needs, self-acceptance is essential to provide the necessary care and affection. Without the self-acceptance of a mother, there are many negative impacts in her parenting for children and families. The results of this study are also recommended in the development of counseling guidance science by paying attention to mother's self-acceptance so that good subjective well-being is formed and creating parenting that looks more bounded such as Mentalized based Counseling.

### **CONCLUSION**

The current research study focuses on the importance of having self-acceptance to increase SWB in mothers who have children with special needs, where the results of this study conclude that self-acceptance is able to

mediate the influence of gratitude and social support on subjective well-being (SWB). This is because parenting a child with special needs is considered a stressful experience and requires daily anxiety management, the emergence of mothers' worries about the future of their children, and the emergence of disturbances in normal family life. In this situation, the results of this study have proven that the way parents view their children's disabilities with gratitude, the existence of great social support from family, friends and significant others through self-acceptance in mothers in particular can have a positive influence on the personal life of mothers and their families, and have a significant impact on the mother's SWB. For mothers who have children with special needs, self-acceptance is very important to provide the necessary care and affection. Without self-acceptance from a mother, it will cause many negative impacts in her parenting in the future on children and families

Through this study, the researcher hopes that the commitment of the government, both central and regional, to the culture of inclusive education at all levels of society, both the scope of policy makers, the scope of schools, the community and families, the fulfillment of the availability of Special Supervisors in SLB and Inclusive Schools and having special competitions. In addition, it is also expected to fulfill accessible learning media, strengthen the identification and assessment of Children with Special Needs (ABK), provide Disability Service Units (ULD) in Provinces and Regencies/Cities, and support the issuance of regulations for the implementation of inclusive education in the Regional Government.

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