

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

***Corresponding Author**

Alice Zellawati
Universitas Negeri Semarang
Sekaran, Kec. Gunungpati, Kota
Semarang, Jawa Tengah 50229
Indonesia
Email:
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

Mulawarman
Universitas Negeri Semarang
Sekaran, Kec. Gunungpati, Kota
Semarang, Jawa Tengah 50229
Indonesia
Email: mulawarman@mail.unnes.ac.id

Sunawan
Universitas Negeri Semarang
Sekaran, Kec. Gunungpati, Kota
Semarang, Jawa Tengah 50229
Indonesia
Email: sunawan@mail.unnes.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the role of self-acceptance in mediating the influence of gratitude and social support on subjective well-being. The sample criteria include mothers who have children with special needs, specifically those with children aged 1 to 12 years. The total number of samples used was 102 participants. The sampling technique employed was purposive sampling. The instruments used to measure the subjective well-being variables were the SWLS (Satisfaction with Life Scale) and PANAS (Positive Affect Negative Affect Schedule). The gratitude variable was measured using the Gratitude Questionnaire (GQ-6), while social support was assessed using the MSPSS (Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support). Self-acceptance was measured using the Porter Parent Acceptance Scale (PPAS). Data analysis was conducted in the form of mediation analysis using JASP version 18.3. The results showed that self-acceptance significantly mediated the influence of gratitude and social support on subjective well-being. The magnitude of the influence of gratitude and social support on self-acceptance was 63.7%, while the combined 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, is substantial in shaping subjective well-being for mothers who have children with special needs. The findings of this study are also recommended for the development of counseling guidance science by emphasizing mothers' self-acceptance to foster positive subjective well-being.

Keywords: subjective well-being, self-acceptance, social support

INTRODUCTION

Parenting children with special needs requires more competence than raising typically developing children. Caring for a

child with developmental disorders, regardless of the diagnosis, creates stressful parenting responsibilities, such as adapting to different parenting roles, coordinating with the

therapy processes that will be undertaken, and taking the child to various services and appointments (Hsiao, 2018; Masefield et al., 2020) Parents of children with developmental disabilities face a greater risk of psychological stress compared to parents of children without developmental disorders (Masefield et al., 2020; Scherer et al., 2019). For example, in a sample of parents of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), more than half (52.5%) reported clinically elevated levels of parenting stress (Bohadana et al., 2019).

According to Faradina (2016), the initial reaction of parents when they are informed that they have a "problematic" child often includes disbelief, shock, sadness, disappointment, guilt, anger, and rejection. It is not easy for parents of children with special needs to navigate this phase before ultimately reaching a stage of acceptance. Parental acceptance of children with special needs significantly impacts the child's developmental process. Acceptance involves the feelings and behaviors of parents who can unconditionally embrace their children's existence, recognizing that their children have the right to express their opinions, feelings, and the need to be independent individuals (Porter, 1954). Parental acceptance can positively contribute to the psychological adjustment of children (Carrasco et al., 2019). If parents can accept their children's special needs, it will facilitate better parenting. However, in reality, not all parents of children with special needs can immediately accept their children's conditions. Many parents experience feelings of embarrassment and disappointment regarding their children, which can hinder the child's ability to develop skills for adjusting to their environment. Having a child with special needs can affect fathers, mothers, and families in various aspects of life.

Based on pre-interviews and observations of issues in several special education schools (SLBs) in Semarang City, it was found that mothers often feel sad, confused, irritated, and anxious about their children with special needs. They express a desire to share their experiences and seek advice and information

to care for their children properly, but they find it difficult to locate the right person or resource. Sometimes, when parents pick up their children and meet other parents, they share stories and offer each other advice, but there are still many questions they do not know how to answer or how to handle disruptive behaviors. Some mothers consult directly with classroom teachers due to the absence of guidance and counseling teachers in SLBs. However, the existing teachers often have limitations due to their numerous responsibilities and inadequate training, resulting in unsatisfactory responses to parents' inquiries. Additionally, pre-observations revealed that some parents treated their children inappropriately, such as yelling, scolding loudly, or pulling their children when they did not want to leave because they were still playing.

Moreover, inclusive school services currently face challenges within the school environment, such as rejection from some parents and the community, harassment of individuals with disabilities, and a shortage of competent Special Guidance Teachers (GPK). There is also a low ability to adapt the curriculum and learning materials, as well as suboptimal availability of accessible learning media. Furthermore, the support system has not been maximized, and the availability and accuracy of data on Children with Special Needs (ABK), as well as the Center for Identification and Assessment Services and Affirmative Policies, have not reached all regions.

For this reason, parents, especially mothers of children with special needs, are encouraged to demonstrate their unconditional love by seeking social support from family, friends, and significant others, as well as by expressing gratitude for what God has provided. Empirical evidence indicates that there are differences in psychological approaches between mothers and fathers in their interactions with children (Cooke et al., 2017; Pajulo et al., 2015; Pazzagli et al., 2018) Additionally, the level of affective closeness in fathers is generally found to be lower than in mothers, which can be attributed to different

socialization of gender roles, resulting in lower emotional awareness and expression among men (Cooke et al., 2017).

This low self-acceptance among parents ultimately affects their subjective well-being (SWB) as parents. SWB is a broad concept that encompasses the evaluation of a person's life and emotional experiences, consisting of high life satisfaction, high positive affect, and low negative affect. Individuals with strong SWB are better able to regulate their emotions and overcome challenges. Conversely, those with inadequate SWB tend to feel unhappy, burdened by negative thoughts and feelings, and may experience anxiety, anger, and even a risk of depression (Davey et al., 2019) (Davey et al., 2019). The importance of self-acceptance in mothers regarding their SWB is supported by several studies (Li et al., 2021; Muthmainah et al., 2019; Xu et al., 2016). However, Hafiza found that self-acceptance does not significantly affect SWB (Hafiza et al., 2020).

The first factor influencing self-acceptance and SWB is the magnitude of the situation. Many cases show that a mother may struggle to accept her child's special needs, while in other instances, some parents view their child as a sign of God's love and favor. Consequently, they feel compelled to provide diligent and attentive care without harboring regrets. Several studies, such as those by Hikmawati, Homan and Hosack, Ikkyu and Yuliawati and Cholili demonstrate that gratitude significantly affects self-acceptance (Cholili et al., 2023; Hikmawati et al., 2023; Homan & Hosack, 2019; Ikkyu & Yuliawati, 2022). Individuals who possess a sense of gratitude also positively influence their subjective well-being, as gratitude fosters positive emotions (Megawati et al., 2019). Additionally, they tend to feel happier in interpreting life and appreciating what they have. Parents who cultivate SWB within themselves are likely to have high self-acceptance, as shown by Komarudin, who stated that gratitude can enhance a person's happiness if they can accept themselves as they are (Komarudin et al., 2022). Through high self-acceptance, parents are expected to

also experience high SWB. Grateful parents exemplify acceptance of everything they have without feelings of inadequacy. Several previous studies have confirmed that gratitude affects SWB (Alkozei et al., 2018; Bono et al., 2020; Mead et al., 2021; Safaria, 2018; Salces-Cubero et al., 2019; Situmorang & Syuhada, 2021; Tilkeridou et al., 2021). However, differing research results were reported by Yang and Hermaen and Bhutto, indicating that gratitude was not proven to affect SWB (Hermaen & Bhutto, 2020; Yang et al., 2021).

The second factor affecting self-acceptance is social support. Several studies have demonstrated that social support significantly impacts self-acceptance (Hafni, 2020; Jati & Muhid, 2022; Komarudin et al., 2022; Kristiadi & Soetjningsih, 2024). According to Carpenter, when support from a partner is low, mothers are more likely to experience difficulties in psychological adjustment, leading to heightened feelings of anxiety and depression (Carpenter et al., 2016). A similar finding was reported by Cavonius-Rintahaka, which indicated that family functionality is determined by the level of support, particularly in families where responsibilities and care are evenly distributed and all nuclear family members participate according to their abilities (Cavonius-Rintahaka et al., 2019). When couples do not receive support from their family environment, parents caring for children with special needs may experience elevated levels of anxiety and depression. Increased anxiety and depression are indicators that the SWB experienced by couples, especially mothers, has diminished.

In addition to social support factors that can affect self-acceptance, social support also influences subjective well-being (SWB). Several previous studies support the notion that social support has a significant effect on SWB. For instance, Shang and Brajša-Žganec found that among the three forms of social support (family, friends, and significant others), only support from friends was proven to have an effect on subjective well-being (Brajša-Žganec et al., 2018; Shang, 2022). In fact, Dewi added that family support,

gratitude, and self-acceptance have a simultaneous effect on subjective well-being (Dewi et al., 2021). However, another study by Naraha indicated that social support, particularly from husbands, does not significantly affect mothers' social welfare, as the subjective well-being of mothers is not always influenced by external factors such as their husbands' social support (Naraha et al., 2023).

Based on the pros and cons of several previous research findings, the researcher has determined the purpose of this study: to analyze the influence of gratitude and social support on subjective well-being, mediated by self-acceptance, in order to promote mental health among 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 emphasizing self-acceptance as the focus of counseling, thereby fostering positive subjective well-being. Additionally, this study aims to enhance the informal education aspect, improving the behavior of mothers as caregivers 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.

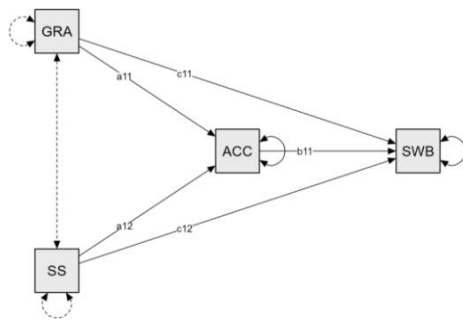
The instruments used to measure subjective well-being variables are SWLS (Satisfaction with Life Scale) and PANAS (Positive Affect Negative Affect Schedule). SWLS has been adapted in Indonesian with five items and an Alpha Cronbach coefficient value of 0.87 (Diener et al., 1985). PANAS (Positive Affect Negative Affect Schedule) scale to measure positive and negative affective aspects. 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, 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 (McCullough et al., 2004; Moningka & Soewastika, 2023).

The social support variable was measured by MSPSS (Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support) based on the aspect theory from Zimet, namely families, friends and significant others with 12 items (Zimet et al., 1988). This MPSS has been translated in Indonesian and has been tested for validity and reliability by Istiqlal where from the results of the CFA analysis, a fit model with chi square = 51.48, $df = 39$, $p\text{-value} = 0.08698$ ($p > 5\%$), The RMSEA value of 0.037 indicates that the model fits a one-factor (unidimensional) structure in the MSPSS, and all items are valid (Istiqlal, 2018). The self-acceptance variable is measured using the Porter Parent Acceptance Scale (PPAS), which was developed by Porter. The dimensions of self-acceptance include acceptance of feelings, acceptance of uniqueness, recognition of the child's need for autonomy, and unconditional love (Porter, 1954). The PPAS has been adapted for use in Indonesia by Sumiati (Sumiati et al., 2022). In the second-order CFA model, the values obtained were Chi-Square = 764.612, $df = 704$, $p\text{-value} = 0.053$, RMSEA = 0.021, CFI = 0.962, and TLI = 0.958. Based on these four indices, the model is considered to fit the data well. The total number of questions in the PPAS is 40.

Data analysis was conducted using regression mediation analysis with JASP version 18.3. This model determines the direction and influence of independent variables on dependent variables and identifies the role of mediating variables in their relationship.



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 Effect Gratitude and Social Support toward Subjective Well-being

	Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower	Upper
Gratitude → SWB	1.01	0.07	14.56	< .001	0.88	1.15
SS → SWB	1.19	0.05	22.27	< .001	1.09	1.30

Based on Table 1, it can be concluded that: First, the gratitude variable has a positive and very significant effect on subjective well-being, as indicated by a p-value of less than 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 less than 0.001. Furthermore, to examine the indirect influence, please refer to Table 2.

Table 2.
Indirect Effect

Pathway	Estimate	Std. Error	p-value	95% CI (Lower - Upper)
Gratitude → Acceptance → SWB	0.13	0.04	0.001	0.05 - 0.22
SS → Acceptance → SWB	0.14	0.04	<0.001	0.07 - 0.22

Table 2 it can be observed that: First, self-acceptance significantly mediates the influence of gratitude on subjective well-being, with a p-value of 0.001. Second, self-acceptance significantly mediates the influence of social support on subjective well-being, with a p-value of less than 0.001.

Table 3.
Total Effect

Pathway	Estimate	Std. Error	p-value	95% CI (Lower - Upper)
Gratitude → SWB	1.15	0.07	<0.001	1.01 - 1.29
SS → SWB	1.34	0.05	<0.001	1.24 - 1.44

Table 3 shows that the total effect of the gratitude variable on subjective well-being has increased, with an estimated value of 1.147 (p < 0.001), and the social support variable has also increased, with an estimated value of 1.335 (p < 0.001). The increase in the estimated values of the total effects of gratitude and social support on subjective well-being, with a p-value of less than 0.001, indicates that gratitude and social support simultaneously have a very significant effect on subjective well-being. These findings suggest that fostering gratitude and social support can be essential strategies for enhancing individuals' subjective well-being.

Table 4.
Combined Direct Effect

Pathway	Estimate	Std. Error	p-value	95% CI (Lower - Upper)
Acceptance → SWB	0.10	0.02	<0.001	0.06 - 0.14
Gratitude → SWB	1.01	0.07	<0.001	0.88 - 1.15
SS → SWB	1.19	0.05	<0.001	1.09 - 1.30
Gratitude → Acceptance	1.30	0.32	<0.001	0.67 - 1.92
SS → Acceptance	1.40	0.23	<0.001	0.96 - 1.84

Table 4 it can 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),

and the social support variable has a very significant effect on subjective well-being ($p < 0.001$). Additionally, 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 subjective well-being (SWB). Individuals with a sense of gratitude positively influence their subjective well-being, as it fosters positive expression and the creation of pleasant emotions (Megawati et al., 2019). Furthermore, they tend to feel happy in interpreting life and appreciating what they have. Several previous studies have confirmed that gratitude affects SWB (Alkozei et al., 2018; Bono et al., 2020; Mead et al., 2021; Safaria, 2018; Salces-Cubero et al., 2019; Situmorang & Syuhada, 2021; Tilkeridou et al., 2021).

The influence of social support on SWB

The results of this study indicate that social support has a positive and very significant effect on SWB. This aligns with previous studies, which stated that social support affects SWB (Brajša-Žganec et al., 2018; Shang, 2022). However, among the three forms of social support (family, friends, and significant others), only support from friends has been proven to have an effect on subjective well-being. In fact, Dewi added that family support, gratitude, and self-acceptance have a simultaneous effect on subjective well-being (Dewi et al., 2021).

The effect of self-acceptance on SWB

The results of this study demonstrate that self-acceptance has a positive and very significant effect on SWB. There are several research results on the importance of self-acceptance in mothers regarding their SWB (Li et al., 2021; Muthmainah et al., 2019; Xu et al., 2016). SWB is a broad concept that includes an evaluation of a person's life and emotional experiences, consisting of high life satisfaction, high positive effects, and low negative effects. Individuals with a strong SWB are better able to regulate their emotions

and overcome challenges. In contrast, those with inadequate SWB tend to feel unhappy, burdened by negative thoughts and feelings, and may experience anxiety, anger, and even a risk of depression (Davey et al., 2019).

The effect of gratitude on self acceptance

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

The effect of social support on self acceptance

The results of this study show that social support has a positive and very significant effect on self-acceptance. Several studies that have been conducted previously also support the results of this research (Hafni, 2020; Jati & Muhid, 2022; Komarudin et al., 2022; Kristiadi & Soetjningsih, 2024; Pastimo & Muslikah, 2022). According to Carpenter et al. (2016), when support from partners is low, mothers are more likely to experience psychological adjustment difficulties, resulting in increased feelings of anxiety and depression. Similar findings were reported by Cavonius-Rintahaka, shows that family function is influenced by the level of support, especially in families where responsibility and care are evenly distributed (Cavonius-Rintahaka et al., 2019).

The effect of gratitude on SWB mediated by self-acceptance

The results of this study demonstrate that self-acceptance significantly mediates the relationship between gratitude and subjective well-being (SWB). This aligns with the research of Komarudin, which stated that gratitude can enhance a person's happiness when they are able to accept themselves as they are (Komarudin et al., 2022). Through high self-acceptance, parents are expected to experience higher levels of SWB. Grateful parents exemplify acceptance of everything they have without feelings of inadequacy. This indicates that individuals with a sense of gratitude positively influence their subjective well-being, as it fosters positive expression

and the creation of pleasant emotions (Megawati et al., 2019). They feel happy interpreting life and appreciating what they have, while parents who cultivate SWB tend to have high self-acceptance.

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

The results of this study also indicate that self-acceptance significantly mediates the relationship between social support and SWB. Interactions within the family and social support from peers, family, and significant others can not only motivate mothers positively but also help them feel accepted by their environment. This support fosters a sense of understanding and reduces feelings of judgment. Conversely, when mothers do not receive support from their family, friends, or significant others, they may feel rejected and unrecognized, especially if they have a child with special needs. This lack of support can lead to increased anxiety and depression, which are indicators of decreased SWB among mothers.

The role of self-acceptance is crucial for mothers, as it involves embracing their identity as parents of children with special needs. This acceptance enables them to provide love, attention, warmth, comfort, and support, which significantly impacts their child's well-being (Kristiadi & Soetjningsih, 2024; Rahayu et al., 2022). Winarsih noted that self-acceptance entails a positive attitude towards oneself, including the acceptance of one's strengths and weaknesses without negative feelings such as shame, guilt, or inferiority (Winarsih et al., 2020). It also involves freedom from anxiety about the judgments of others, which is a key factor in developing self-acceptance when social support is present.

For mothers of children with special needs, self-acceptance is essential for providing the necessary care and affection. Without self-acceptance, there can be numerous negative impacts on their parenting and family dynamics. The findings of this study are also recommended for the development of counseling guidance practices, emphasizing the importance of mothers' self-acceptance to foster positive subjective well-being and

promote more effective parenting approaches, such as Mentalized Based Counseling.

CONCLUSION

The current research study focuses on the importance of self-acceptance in increasing subjective well-being (SWB) among mothers who have children with special needs. The results of this study conclude that self-acceptance can mediate the influence of gratitude and social support on SWB. Parenting a child with special needs is often considered a stressful experience that requires daily anxiety management, as mothers may worry about their children's future and experience disruptions in normal family life. In this context, the findings of this study demonstrate that when parents view their children's disabilities with gratitude and receive strong social support from family, friends, and significant others, self-acceptance in mothers can positively influence their personal lives and that of their families, significantly impacting the mothers' SWB. For mothers of children with special needs, self-acceptance is crucial for providing the necessary care and affection. Without self-acceptance, a mother may face numerous negative consequences in her parenting, which can affect both her children and the family as a whole.

Through this study, the researcher hopes to encourage a commitment from both central and regional governments to promote a culture of inclusive education at all levels of society. This includes engaging policymakers, schools, communities, and families in fulfilling the need for Special Supervisors in special education schools (SLBs) and inclusive schools, as well as organizing special competitions. Additionally, it is essential to ensure the availability of 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 implementation of regulations for inclusive education at the regional government level.

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