

## Finding Psychological Well-Being: The Role of Parental Gratitude in Raising Children with Autism at SLB X Samarinda

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### Abstract:

*The birth of a child with developmental disorders, such as autism, presents a significant challenge for parents. This study aims to examine the effect of gratitude on psychological well-being of parents with autistic children. Psychological well-being refers to aspects of self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, life purpose, personal growth, and autonomy. The study used a quantitative approach with a correlational design, with a sample of 61 parents of autistic children from SLB X Samarinda City. Data were collected through questionnaires consisting of two scales: Psychological Well-being and Gratitude, analyzed using simple regression. The results showed that gratitude significantly influenced psychological well-being, explaining 38.1% of the variability in psychological well-being. The higher the level of gratitude, the better the psychological well-being of the parents. These findings support the theory that gratitude plays a crucial role in enhancing psychological well-being. The study suggests that gratitude-based interventions be applied to improve the psychological well-being of parents with autistic children, and as a foundation for developing more effective psychological support programs.*

**Keywords:** *autism, gratitude, parents, psychological well-being*

## 1. Introduction

The birth of a child is a highly anticipated moment for every parent. The expectation that a child will grow up healthy and develop normally is a common belief in society. However, reality does not always align with expectations, especially for parents of children with developmental disorders, including autism. Autism is a neurodevelopmental disorder that affects social interaction, communication, and repetitive and restricted behavior patterns (Irawan & Kamaratih, 2022). According to data from the Samarinda City Government, the number of children diagnosed with autism has increased over the past three years, directly impacting the rising number of parents facing challenges in raising children with this condition (Geroda, 2018).

Being a parent to a child with autism is not easy. Studies indicate that parents of children with disabilities experience higher stress levels than parents of children without disabilities (Davis & Carter, 2008). This heightened stress can lead to various negative consequences, including reduced life satisfaction and an increased risk of depression and anxiety symptoms. Hidayati (2011) also emphasized that the presence of a child with autism can affect the psychological well-being of the entire family, leading to diverse emotional dynamics.

In facing these challenges, the concept of psychological well-being becomes a crucial aspect to consider. Psychological well-being refers to an individual's psychological health, encompassing self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, life purpose, personal growth, and autonomy (Ryff & Singer, 2008). Several factors influence psychological well-being, including social support, personality (Schmutte & Ryff, in Ryan & Deci, 1997), and gratitude (Wood, Joseph, & Maltby, 2009). Gratitude is defined as an individual's tendency to recognize and respond to positive experiences with appreciation, which can significantly impact a person's psychological well-being (McCullough, Emmons, & Tsang, 2002).

Several previous studies have explored the relationship between gratitude and psychological well-being. Wood, Joseph, and Maltby (2009) found that gratitude plays a vital role in enhancing psychological well-being. Another study by Fitria (2012) demonstrated that gratitude contributes 28.73% to psychological well-being among university students. However, research specifically examining the relationship between gratitude and psychological well-being in parents of children with autism remains limited.

Based on the discussion above, this study aims to reassess the impact of gratitude on psychological well-being among parents of children with autism. This research is expected to contribute to the development of psychological interventions aimed at improving the well-being of parents raising children with special needs. Additionally, this study holds significance in addressing the research gap regarding the specific role of gratitude in enhancing psychological well-being among parents of children with autism. Thus, the findings of this study may serve as a foundation for the development of more effective psychological support programs for those facing the challenges of raising a child with autism.

## 2. Methodology

The research method used in this study is a quantitative method with a correlational approach to analyze the relationship between gratitude and psychological well-being. The study population consists of parents of children with autism at SLB X in Samarinda City. The sample was selected using purposive sampling, with a total of 61 parents as participants.

Data were collected through questionnaires comprising two measurement scales: the Psychological Well-being Scale, adapted from Ryff & Keyes (1989) with 18 items, and the Gratitude Scale, adapted from Listiyandini (2015) with 30 items, both using a 4-point Likert scale. Data analysis was conducted using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 23.0, employing simple regression analysis to determine the effect of gratitude on psychological well-being. Before performing regression analysis, assumption tests, including normality and linearity tests, were conducted to ensure the data met the necessary statistical assumptions.

## 3. Results

This study aims to analyze the influence of gratitude on psychological well-being among parents of children with autism. Based on statistical analysis, the normality test indicates that the data are normally distributed, with a significance value of 0.128 ( $p > 0.05$ ). The linearity test shows a linear relationship between gratitude and psychological well-being, with a significance value of 0.211 ( $p > 0.05$ ). The simple regression analysis results indicate that gratitude significantly influences psychological well-being, with a significance value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ). The correlation coefficient (R) of 0.617 suggests a strong relationship, while the R Square value of 0.381 indicates that gratitude explains 38.1% of the variability in psychological well-being.

**Table 1.**  
*Results of Simple Linear Regression Analysis*

Variable	Sig	R	R Square
Gratitude - Psychological Well-being	0.000	0.617	0.381

These results indicate that the higher a person's level of gratitude, the better their psychological well-being. This finding aligns with previous research stating that gratitude plays a role in enhancing an individual's psychological well-being (Wood, Joseph, & Maltby, 2009).

## 4. Discussion

The results of this study indicate that gratitude has a significant influence on psychological well-being among parents of children with autism. This finding supports the theory of Ryff & Singer (2008), which states that self-acceptance and positive social relationships are essential aspects of psychological well-being. Additionally, this study aligns with the research of Wood, Joseph, and Maltby (2009), which found that individuals with higher levels of gratitude tend to have better psychological well-being.

The implications of these findings suggest that gratitude-based interventions can be an effective strategy for improving the psychological well-being of parents raising children with autism. Furthermore, this study contributes to existing research by reinforcing the idea that gratitude can serve as a protective factor against stress and emotional distress in the context of parenting children with special needs.

## 5. Conclusion

This study aims to examine the influence of gratitude on psychological well-being among parents of children with autism. The results indicate that gratitude has a significant impact on psychological well-being, explaining 38.1% of the variability in psychological well-being. The higher a person's level of gratitude, the better their psychological well-being. These findings suggest that gratitude plays a crucial role in maintaining the psychological well-being of parents raising children with autism. Therefore, gratitude-based interventions can be an effective strategy for enhancing their psychological well-being. The implications of this study serve as a foundation for developing more effective psychological support programs to assist parents in coping with the challenges of raising children with special needs.

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