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# Parental Acceptance of Children with Cerebral Palsy: A Family Counseling Approach

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## Abstract

Parents may feel a sense of despair when taking care of children with cerebral palsy. Some parents may even find difficulties in accepting the fact that their children were born with the disability. For this reason, needs analysis for parents of children with cerebral palsy is important by using a family counseling service that fits the family culture and socio-economic condition. This research aims to explain the parental needs of parents of children with cerebral palsy. This research used a quantitative approach by applying descriptive statistical analysis and was conducted in Padang with 21 samples of parents of children with cerebral palsy. The data of the research were obtained from questionnaires in a family counseling service for parents of children with cerebral palsy. Results of the research suggested that parental needs of parents with cerebral palsy involve several indicators: parental acceptance; factors influencing parental acceptance; parenting problems and challenges.

## Keywords

social entrepreneurship; entrepreneurship; digital; student

## 1 Introduction

Parents may feel a sense of despair when taking care of children with cerebral palsy. Some parents may even find difficulties in accepting the fact that their children were born with disability. For this reason, needs analysis for parents of children with cerebral palsy is important by using a family counseling service that fits the family culture and socio-economic condition. This research aims to explain parental needs of parents of children with cerebral palsy. This research used a quantitative approach by applying descriptive statistical analysis and was conducted in Padang with 21 samples of parents of children with cerebral palsy. The data of the research were obtained from questionnaires in a family counseling service for parents of children with cerebral palsy. Results of the research suggested that parental needs of parents with cerebral palsy involve several indicators: parental acceptance; factors influencing parental acceptance; parenting problems and challenges.

Parental acceptance is a positive and constructive way to make changes. According to Ghoreyshyadeh et al (2017), needs assessment is a process of collecting information, bridging gaps, and identifying priorities in solving problems. Parental acceptance allows parents of children with cerebral palsy to be provided with education and counseling and hence help children with cerebral palsy to live independently and have social interaction.

One of the approaches in analyzing parental needs for parents of children with cerebral palsy is family counseling. It should be noted that in examining parental needs, appropriate family counseling should fit the background, the culture, and the socio-economic condition of the family. As explained by Nurhastuti (2018) family counseling aims to rise tolerance among the family who encounters difficulties from within or outside the family.

## 2 Methods

This research is development research using conceptual and procedural model. This research was implemented in three stages. The first stage is preliminary research and design of hypothetical model. It

was conducted through research and literature study. The survey was employed to identify the problem. The results were used as the basis to characterize the problem. Further, parents were given access to family counseling.

The research was conducted in Padang with a total sample of 21 parents of children with cerebral palsy. After all the parents were provided with family counseling, questionnaires were given to examine educational needs and training for parents of children with cerebral palsy. The questionnaire includes 11 questions related to parental acceptance of parents of children with cerebral palsy.

### 3 Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Results

This research measured three elements: parental acceptance of parents of children with cerebral palsy; the factors influencing parental acceptance; and the parenting problems and challenges.

##### 3.1.1 Parental acceptance of parents of children with cerebral palsy

The questions about parental acceptance of children with cerebral palsy include respecting children, understanding children's independence, identifying children's needs, and accommodating children. The question items comprise of several aspects including love. The results are summarized in the table below.

**Table 1** A summary of responses on parental acceptance

Indicator	Responses				Score
	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never	
Parental acceptance (item 1 – 35)	218 47.9%	146 32.1%	63 13.8%	28 6.2%	455 100.0%

Table 1 describes that 47,9% of respondents have always accepted children with cerebral palsy, 32,1% of respondents accept children with cerebral palsy, 13,8% of respondents barely accept children with cerebral palsy, and 6,2% of respondents have never accepted children with cerebral palsy. This table also helps to identify the reason behind the low acceptance of parents of children with cerebral palsy.

**Table 2** Categories of items on parental acceptance

No	Category	Score	Items	
			Frequency	Percentage
1	High	43-52	20	57.1%
2	Moderate	33-42	13	37.1%
3	Low	24-33	2	5.7%
4	Very Low	13-23	0	0.0%
TOTAL			35	100.0%

The table shows that most respondents understand the factors affecting parental acceptance of children with cerebral palsy. However, they were stumbled over several statements, as stated in the following list: (1) Children with cerebral palsy have potential ability to be developed; (2) The condition of children with cerebral palsy affects their social behavior; (3) The affected condition can affect their learning development; (4) Children's potential ability can be maximized; (5) Children's condition can affect their process of interaction; (6) The different treatments given to children with cerebral palsy and other children; (7) Necessary goods and tools taken for children with cerebral palsy; (8) Send the children with cerebral palsy to every place they go; (9) Special attention given to motivate children with cerebral palsy to develop their potential ability; (10) Understand their dreams and hope.

### 3.1.2 Problems and challenges encountered by parents of children with cerebral palsy

The questions about the problems and challenges faced by the parents during nurturing their children comprise of internal and external aspects. The results can be seen in the table below

**Table 3** A summary of responses on parenting problems and challenges

Indicator	Responses				Score
	Always	Often	Sometimes	Never	
Parenting problems and challenges (item 62 – 114)	265	232	108	84	689
	38.5%	33.7%	15.7%	12.2%	100.0%

Table 3 shows that 38,5% of respondents understand the problems and challenges they encounter, 33 % of respondents have knowledge about the problems and challenges they encounter, 15,7% of respondents have little understanding about the problems and challenges they encountered, and 12,2% of respondents have no knowledge about the problems and challenges they encounter. The following table implies the items of which statements do not discuss children nurturing care and the difficult situations when handling children with cerebral palsy.

**Table 6** Categories of items on parenting problems and challenges

No	Category	Score	Items	
			Frequency	Percentage
1	High	43-52	22	41.5%
2	Moderate	33-42	17	32.1%
3	Low	24-33	13	24.5%
4	Very Low	13-23	1	1.9%
TOTAL			53	100.0%

Table 4 indicates that most respondents understand the problems and challenges in nurturing children with cerebral palsy. However, they found problems in several statements as stated: (1) Understand dreams and hopes of children with cerebral palsy; (2) Quick response when the children cry; (3) Feel uneasy when their children are at school or therapy; (4) Scold their children when they cry; (5) Difficulty to accept the condition of their children; (6) Become infuriated at their children; (7) Slow response when their children ask a question; (8) Never pay attention when their children are playing; (9) Have no knowledge of their children’s problems; (10) Leave their children crying.

### 3.2 Discussion

Children’s health, like disability, is one of the problems that affect parents’ life quality. Research has found that problems in early childhood affect a mother’s life quality (Lee et al., 2010). Findings from the research by Guillamón et al (2013) showed that parental self-efficacy and coping strategies for children with cerebral palsy influence their life quality. Self-efficacy means the human ability to control their behavior. This belief can help individuals to complete their tasks and increase their success.

Ones et al (2005) Parents are members of the family who nurture children with cerebral palsy. Mother is the main caregiver. Raising a child with cerebral palsy will affect mothers’ psychological and physical health due to little time they spend for themselves and social life and thus diminishing their life quality (Burton et al., 2008).

Giving birth to children with cerebral palsy is not a mistake. It is a challenge for the children as they live with the effort to be independent and successful like their peers. (Karadağ Saygi et al., 2015) explained that families of children with cerebral palsy have become aware of their roles. Several aspects such as family education, social status, and psychological approach are important in the development of children with cerebral palsy.

Parents of children with cerebral palsy must understand their children’s needs, as proposed by (Eliyanto & Hendriani, 2013) that needs assessment for parents of children with cerebral palsy aims not to heal or fix them but to improve their function, ability, and their health through motor skills, cognitive

development, social interaction, and independence. Therefore, parents need education and experience to improve their intervention in overcoming the problems they encounter.

### ***3.2.1 Parental acceptance of children with cerebral palsy***

Cerebral palsy is a disability that needs special care. Although most caregivers of children with cerebral palsy are doctors or therapists, parents take the most important role in assisting their children. Hence, parents of children with cerebral palsy need to understand and accept their existence. They must acknowledge and understand them, identify their needs, and love them unconditionally. Findings of the research showed that most respondents accept their children although some of them do not. The survey suggested that parents have difficulties in communication and are unaware of the emotion and expressions of their children. To solve this problem, parents need to engage in interpersonal communication that integrates five aspects: (1) Openness is an open-minded attitude in an interaction. It refers to the act of delivering essential information to others. In this case, children will show a response when their parents talk to them; (2) Empathy, the expressions of empathy between normal children and children with cerebral palsy are different. Raising children with cerebral palsy can be exhausting and require a lot of patience. Thus, parents must control their emotions, understand their children's actions, and express empathy to them; (3) Supportiveness, Interpersonal communication will only be effective with supports. Open and empathic communication should be supported with supportiveness. For instance, parents appreciate their children's achievements in learning activities; (4) Positiveness, Positiveness can be expressed through the act of appreciation, positive thought, acknowledgment, adoration, and cooperation; (5) Equality, Interpersonal communication will be effective with equality. This means each person should carry an implicit acknowledgment that they have the same value and important points to share. This type of communication will create a comfortable and harmonious environment.

### ***3.2.2 Factors influencing parental acceptance of children with cerebral palsy***

Cerebral palsy can halt children's growth and development at an early age and affect their teenage and adult period. All children grow with their genetic potential and parents have to accommodate their basic rights. Children with cerebral palsy can be creative and productive like other normal children. The results of the research suggested that most parents have understood the factors that influence parental acceptance of children with cerebral palsy, except for several factors: education, experience, expectation, and socio-economic factors.

### ***3.2.3 Problems and challenges encountered by parents of children with cerebral palsy***

Findings of the research showed that most parents have understood the problems and challenges they face when raising children with cerebral palsy. The problems that parents encounter involve some aspects such as physical and psychological aspects, social aspects, communication, learning aspects, as well as motivation and aspiration aspects like opportunity and career.

Previous literature study stated in Kafah (2018) explained that brain paralysis or chronic disease affects individual's psychology. Parents of children with cerebral palsy will be overwhelmed by the feeling of guilty with their children's condition, depressed, helpless, anxious, and overprotective. The impact will also reach their siblings as they feel frustrated, embarrassed, have attitude problems and low self-esteem, are trapped in crime, and have poor education. This indicates that the parents and siblings are affected psychologically which can lead to family stress. Thus, the parents need psychological adaptation to avoid the risk.

## **4 Conclusions**

There are several aspects influencing the parental needs of parents of children with cerebral palsy. The investigation from the indicators on parental acceptance of children with cerebral palsy showed that some parents have not accepted their children's condition. The problems rely on communication, little knowledge of their needs, and the unawareness of their emotion and expressions. Meanwhile, the indicators of factors influencing parental acceptance of children with cerebral palsy are education, experience, expectation, and socio-economic factors. Then, the indicators on parenting problems and challenges involve some aspects such as physical and psychological aspects, social aspects, communication, learning aspects, as well as motivation and aspiration aspects like opportunity and career. Based on the findings, the implementation of parental needs of parents of children with cerebral

palsy is important. Thus, family counseling plays the important role to solve their problems. Through family counseling, parents will have their needs identified especially the aspects related to parental acceptance of children with cerebral palsy.

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