



Research Article

Mindful parenting, emotional regulation, and parental stress on the parents of children with intellectual developmental disorder

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Article Info

Received: 10 November 2023

Accepted: 24 December 2023

Online: 30 December 2023

Keywords

Emotional regulation
Intellectual developmental disorder
Mindful parenting
Parental stress

Abstract

Parental stress is an issue that is commonly faced by the parents of children with Intellectual Developmental Disorder (IDD). If parental stress cannot be handled, it will develop into child harassment. Previous research presents a depiction that high leveled-mindful parenting may increase emotional regulation, and correlate with the decrease of parental stress level. This research aims to find out the correlation between mindful parenting and parental stress in children with IDD, in which emotional regulation presents as a mediating variable. This research is conducted to 76 parents' of children with IDD (aged from 4 to 13, categorized as low leveled-IDD), aged minimum 25 years, education level equals to High School (SMA). Measurement tool applied in this research is Parental Stress Scale, Emotional Regulation Scale, and Mindful Parenting Scale. Statistic test shows that there is an influence between mindful parenting and parental stress, mediated by emotional regulation (total effect index = -0.6180, p . 0.000 < 0.01). The variable of emotional regulation which has significance influence is cognitive reappraisal (r = -0.2685, boot LLCI, and boot UCLI = -0.4428 and -0.1200). This emotional regulation contributes influence in the value of r = 38.19%, and when it is not mediated directly by emotional regulation. The contribution of mindful parenting towards parental stress is only as high as 6.76% or this variable can also be categorized as significant (r = -0.2601, p 0.0147 < 0.05).

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To cite this article

Dewi, E. I., Suparmi, and Roswita, M.Y. (2023). Mindful parenting, emotional regulation, and parental stress on the parents of children with intellectual developmental disorder. *Journal for the Child Development, Exceptionality and Education*, 4(2), 81-88. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10577545>

Introduction

Every parent expects to be blessed with physically and mentally healthy children. They hope that their children can grow and develop optimally in their every phase of development. As a matter of fact, parents' expectation cannot be fully manifested yet because their children must face certain disorder or problem along their phase of development, especially when it affects them intellectually. Based on the data quoted from Basic Health Research of 2018, in Central Java alone there can be found 20.150 children with intellectual disorder (Marliana et. al., 2021). Fifty percent parents with IDD children spread in European, American, and Asian countries experience parental stress (Masulani-Mwale et.al., 2018), whereas Marliana et al. (2021) found that there is 43.6% parents of children with intellectual disorder in Semarang city and they are experiencing parental stress.

Berry and Jones (in Kumalasari & Fourianalistyawati, 2020) conveyed that parental stress is defined as various

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emotions involved during children parental time, which include intimidating feeling (e.g. restlessness, anxiety) and happiness resulting from satisfaction in playing the role as parents and in the interaction with children. Parental stress experienced by the parents of children with disability may result in parental harassment to children (Nurhamidah & Retnowati, 2018; Aini et al., 2020). There are 5463 children harassment case during 2020 in Indonesia (Saptoyo, 2021). If the parental stress in parents is not managed well, the same will bring certain impact to the whole family life, i.e. the decreasing level of parental quality and effectivity (Lestari, 2012). Further research on parental stress conducted by Bai and Han (2016) found out that the parents having the history as the victims of emotional harassment in childhood phase may have high level of parental stress, which may bring the impact to children's social competence, high level of anxiety, social withdrawal and children's stress (Crum and Moreland, 2017) and also depression in young people. (Liang, et. al., 2021). Based on the aforesaid research, it may be concluded that beside having the impact to our life as a whole, parental stress may also transform into a repetitive cycle which is transmitted from parent to children, and children may have the potential to deal with parental stress when they must play their roles as parents in the following day.

The factors triggering parental stress from parents is among others parental trait. From the result of the research, the traits influencing parental stress are mindful parenting (Nurhamidah & Retnowati, 2018; Kumalasari & Fourianalistyawati, 2020) and emotional regulation (Babore et al., 2018; Deater-Deckard, 2016; Ikasari & Kristiana, 2017; Hu, 2019). Mindful parenting is the condition when parents giving all of their attention to children, focusing on their current condition, and avoid themselves from judgement (Kabat- Zinn 0in McCaffrey et.al., 2017). Mindful parenting may increase individual awareness towards physical, emotional, and mind sensation, thus it will decrease their stress level in nurturing their children as cited by Nurhamidah and Retnowati (2018). Mindful parenting besides having something to do with lowering the level of parental stress, but also having the influence to the increasing level of emotional regulation (Moreira & Canavarro, 2020). Emotional regulation is both internal and external processes covering initiating, evaluating, defending, and modifying emotional reaction to achieve their goals, i.e. giving good emotional response (Gross & John, 2003). Parents having the ability to regulate high level of emotion may also regulate emotional level so their amount of anxiety and other negative emotions may levelling down and they become more capable to handle their emotions whenever they must interact with their children (Deater-Deckard, 2016). Further on emotional regulation, based on the research conducted by Ikasari and Kristiana (2017) and Babore et al. (2018), there is a correlation between emotional regulation and parental stress.

Problem od study

Based on the description on parental stress, the researcher intends to find out the influence of mindful parenting towards parental stress of IDD children, mediated by emotional regulation. Emotional regulation is believed to have important role in parental stress, and the researches on emotional regulation as the mediating variabel are still limited in number. Thus, the researcher intends to further investigate on how important the role of emotional regulation in mediating between mindful parenting and parental stress.

Method

Research Method

This research applies quantitative method with correlational approach, i.e. perceiving the correlation between variables in the research (Sugiyono, 2013). Independent variable in this research is mindful parenting (X), mediating variable is emotional regulation (M), and parental stress (Y) as dependent variable is also applied in this research.

Participant

Research participants consist of 76 parents with IDD children, with minimal age of 25 years, and minimal education level equals to High School or Vocational School (SMA/SMK).

Data Collection Tool

This research applies three scales, i.e. Parental Stress Scale, Emotional Regulation Scale, and Mindful Parenting Scale. All scales are written in Indonesian language, and compiled in the form of self-report revealing the feeling or piece of thought expressing the bond between parents and their children who are affected with IDD disorder. The description summarizing those three scales is as follows:

Parenting Stress Scale

Parenting Stress Scale, applied in this research is the interpretation of Parental Stress Scale (PSS) by Berry and Jones (in Kumalasari and Fourianalistyawati, 2020), with instrument reliability coefficient of = 0.83. From the interpretation of original scale consisting of 18 statement items, after passing the phase of item analysis, 16 items may be used in this scale. Parental Stress Scale assesses the strain aspect (no resource found when parents doing their roles as parents, i.e. time, power, pride, control, chance, and rules). And pleasure aspect (positive achievement gained when parents performing their parental roles, i.e. happiness and affection). The higher the score of Parental Stress Scale, the higher the level of parental stress faced by parents.

Emotional Regulation Scale

Emotional Regulation Scale used in this research is adopted from Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) compiled by Gross and John (2003). ERQ has instrument reliability score = 0.787. The ERQ adopted by the researcher consists of 14 items. This ERQ assesses cognitive reappraisal score (as a form of cognitive transformation involving individuals to change their ways of thinking about the situations which may trigger emotional conflict, so individuals can change their emotional influence) and expressive suppression aspect (a form of response to decrease too expressive emotion shown when individuals are at their wits end/in high emotional level). The higher the score of Emotional Regulation Score, the higher the level of emotional control in individuals.

Mindful Parenting Scale

Mindful Parenting Scale adopted in this research is cited from Mindfulness in Parenting Questionnaire (MIPQ) compiled McCaffery, et. al. (2017) with instrument reliability coefficient = 0.915. From authentic scale comprising of 30 items, there are 29 items used in this research. MIPQ assesses mindful discipline aspect (parents' ability to control parental reaction and awareness, consisting of non-reactivity, parental awareness, and goal-focused) and being in the moment with the child aspect (the ability of the parents to put their focus on the present moment they experienced with their children, to understand and empathize their children, and accept them as they are). The higher the score of mindful parenting, the highest the ability of parents to implement mindful parenting.

Validity Item Test Result and Reliability Test Scale

Item validity test for those three scales apply IBM SPSS Statistics 24 tools, with Pearson correlation technique test, while the reliability of this research is tested by using those three scales and Cronbach's Alpha method is applied. For item validity test, the researcher applies the guidance from, as item selection criteria, i.e. minimal 0.3 with level of significance of 5%, while for reliability test scale, the guidance used in this research is reliability coefficient displaying score from 0 to 1, the higher the score of reliability coefficient, i.e. approaching 1, means the higher the reliability scale is. On the contrary, the coefficient approaching the score of 0 means the lower the score of reliability score is (Sugiyono, 2013).

Table 1. Item validity test and reliability test scale

Variable	Item differentiation power	Cronbach's Alpha
Mindful Parenting	0.320 - 0.819	0.955
Emotional Regulation	0.544 - 0.831	0.922
Parental Stress	0.654 - 0.898	0.969

Base on Table 1 it is known that all scales used have good item discrimination and high reliability

Results

Before testing the hypothesis, an assumption test was carried out. Research assumption test is launched as the conditions to proceed with further analysis, i.e. normality test and linearity test, by using IBM SPSS Statistics 24 program.

Normality Test

Normality test is done by using Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, with residual technique. Data testing using residual technique aims to assess a number of data simultaneously, thus each analyses is not conducted in separable manner (Widiana & Muliani, 2020). The result of normality test has the significance of 0.200, or in other words it can be said that research population is normally distributed.

Linearity Test

Table 2. Results of linearity test

Variable	Deviation from Linearity	F _{count}	F _{table}	Interpretation
MP to PS	0.025	1.927	1.74	Not linear
EM to PS	0.106	1.517	1.74	Linear
MP to ES	0.458	1.036	1.74	Linear
MP and ER to PS	0.106	1.517	1.74	Linear

MP: Mindful Parenting ER: Emotional Regulation PS: Parental Stress

Base on table 2 it is known that mindful parenting does not have any linear correlation with parental stress. However, mindful parenting has linear correlation with emotional regulation, and emotional regulation also has linear correlation with parental stress.

Hypothetical test is conducted by using PROCESS application run in IBM SPSS Statistics 24 program (Hayes in Bolin, 2014). The reason of the researcher applying this research is PROCESS with bootstrapping method can be applied to analyze direct and indirect coefficients influencing simple mediation model.

Significance guide for hypothetical test is based on some issues, i.e. r value (coefficient of correlation) to infer how high the influence of independent variable, mediating variable, towards dependent variable, where p value < 0.01, and the range of Lower Level of Confidence Interval v(LLCI)-Upper Level of Confidence Interval (ULCI) value does not exceed the level of zero.

To test the research hypothesis, the researcher observes the correlation between mindful parenting and parental stress in parents of IDD children, mediated by emotional regulation, conducted through the following methods: a) testing the correlation between mindful parenting and parental test b) testing the correlation between mindful parenting and emotional regulation c) testing the correlation between emotional regulation and parental stress d) testing the influence of mindful parenting towards parental stress, mediated by emotional regulation. The following presents the table displaying the result of hypothetical test analysis:

Table 3. Hypothesis testing

Index Effect	R	P	LLCI	ULCI	Interpretation
MP to PS	-0.2601	0.0147	-0.4675	-0.0526	Significant
M to Y	-0.4641	0.0000	-0.6770	-0.2512	Very significant
Total effect MP to PS	-0.6180	0.0000	-0.7592	-0.4768	Very significant

Direct Effect	-0.2601	0.0147	-0.4675	-0.0526	Significant
MP to PS					
Indirect Effect MP-ER-PS	-0.3759	-	-0.5398	-0.1564	Significant

MP: Mindful Parenting **ER:** Emotional Regulation **PS:** Parental Stress

From Table 3, the result is that there is a significant variable in mindful parenting and it directly correlates with parental stress ($r = -0.2601$, $p = 0.0147 < 0.05$). R value is negative and it shows that high level of mindful parenting has significant value towards the decreasing level of parental stress. Mindful parenting is also very significantly influences emotional regulation ($r = 0.7713$, $p = 0.0000 < 0.01$), high level of mindful parenting triggers high level of emotional regulation. High level of emotional regulation has very significant correlation with the decreasing level of parental stress ($r = -0.4641$, $p = 0.0000 < 0.01$).

Next analysis is conducted by finding out the correlation between mindful parenting and parental stress via emotional regulation as mediating variable. Based on the result of the analysis, there is an influence of mindful parenting towards parental stress mediated by emotional regulation or the indirect influence is found in this research. ($r = -0.4641$, bootLLCI and bootULCI= -0.5398 and -0.1564). Total index effect or total influence of mindful parenting towards parental stress mediated by emotional regulation is -0.6180. The role of emotional regulation as a mediator is very significant ($p = 0.0000 < p = 0.01$), and has the contribution value of $R = 38.19\%$, whereas if emotional regulation does not play at hand (directly) the contribution of mindful parenting value towards parental stress is only in the amount of $r = 6.76\%$ or r value is significant ($r = -0.2601$, $p = 0.0147 < 0.05$). The result of this analysis if presented in a table will be seen as in Figure 1 below:

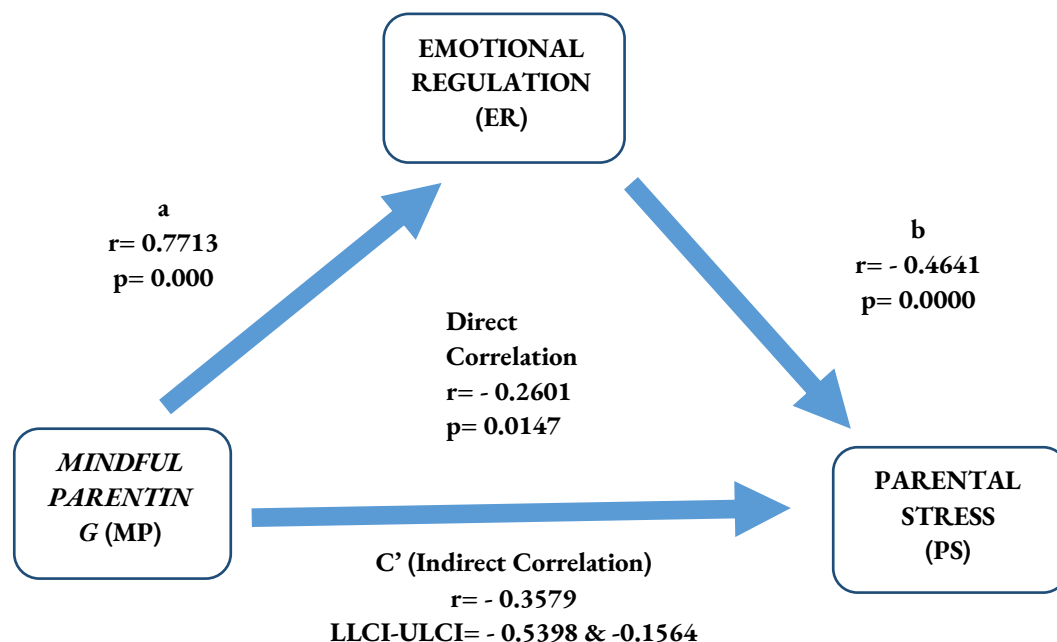


Figure 1. Model Parental Stress on The Parents of Children with Intellectual Developmental Disorder

a = Mindful Parenting-Emotional Regulation

b= Emotional Regulation-Parental Stress

c'=Mindful Parenting-Emotional Regulation-Parental Stress

To understand more specifically about regulatory aspect influencing parental stress, follow-up analysis to cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression is conducted. The result of this analysis can be seen in the table 4 as follows:

Table 4. Analysis of the table displaying cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression as mediating variables

Indirect Effect	r	LLCI	ULCI	Interpretation
MP, via cognitive reappraisal	-0.2685	-0.4428	-0.1200	Significant value is found

PS, to expressive suppression	0.0417	-0.0404	0.1360	No significant value
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MP: Mindful Parenting PS: Parental Stress

Base on Table 4, the result of analysis shows that there is a significant correlation between mindful parenting and parental stress via cognitive reappraisal ($r = -0.2685$, bootLLCI, and bootUCLI = -0.4428 and -0.1200), but on the contrary evidently the correlation between mindful parenting and parental stress via expressive suppression is not found ($r = 0.0417$, bootLLCI-bootUCLI -0.0404 and 0.1360 , passing the score of 0). Thus, mindful parenting may influence parental stress with cognitive reappraisal as mediating variable, whereas expressive suppression does neither have significant correlation nor presenting mediating effect to parental stress.

Discussion

The result of this research reveals that there is very significant correlation between mindful parenting and parental stress, mediated by emotional regulation. High mindful parenting will lower down the level of parental stress mediated by high level of emotional regulation. Direct correlation between mindful parenting and parental stress can be explained as follows. When parents interact with the children with IDD, parents with high level of mindful parenting may restrain reaction (not reactive) towards children's attitude. Those parents can accept, understand, and give more empathy to their children's condition (McCaffery, 2015). The ability of parents to regain one's and his/her children's emotion and being non judgmental to their children, enable those parents to adopt stronger mental capacity when they have to deal with any issues related to their children's behaviour. This result is in line with previous researched conducted by Chan and Lam (2017) to parents with IDD children. When parents figure out their own emotion and accept their children's condition without any judgment, the easier those parents will perceive positive things in their children and they will be happier in playing their roles as parents. This condition makes parents more satisfying with their achievement in nurturing their children and enable them to play their roles better as their parents. (Berry and Jones, in Kumalasari & Fourianalistyawati, 2020).

Mindful parents can develop better emotional regulation, and it is affected by the process internalized in the parents' themselves, i.e. the awareness towards self-emotion (Duncan, et. al. in Chan & Lam, 2017). Parents awareness of their own selves is an important characteristic to build emotional regulation (Gratz & Roemer, in Hill & Updegraff, 2011). This is in accordance with the conclusion of Erisman and Roemer's research (in Hill & Updegraff, 2011), that the emotional regulation developed during quality time spent by parents and children is caused by parents' awareness of their self-emotion, to whatever feelings developed during the interaction with their children. In the time when an individual is really aware of his/her self-emotion, prefrontal-cortex part of the brain, focusing on the parental goals and suppression of the impulse, will be activated (McRae & Gross, 2020). The latter issues make parents more focused on any positive things related to children's parenting and those ones will trigger lower level of parental stress.

This research also finds out that there is a significant negative correlation between emotional regulation and parental stress, i.e. it can decrease the level of the aforementioned. One of the aspects of emotional regulation which has significant effect is cognitive reappraisal. This finding is in accordance with previous research by Barbore (2018) stating that by having cognitive reappraisal, parents will be able to change their emotion before they emerge negative emotion from their interaction with their children. When parents are bond to a very difficult situation, i.e. when they must face the condition that their children is having certain disorder, those parents will be aware of their feelings, i.e. being stressed out due to their children's condition. Next, those parents will understand that such feeling will trigger the flow of negative emotional responses, which may bring about worse impacts. To avoid heavier burst of emotional pressure, parents must change their perspective and attitude towards any situations triggering such stressed out conditions. If they are responsive, supportive, and sensitive to their children's needs, their children's development will be much better. Almost similar result is also presented by Deater-Deckard et. al. (2016), arguing that cognitive reappraisal will trigger individuals to do reframing, i.e. changing their state of mind to perceive things from different angle, and such reframing

will further neutralize the effect of the negative emotion they develop previously. If this reframing process works, the stress triggered by prolonged negative emotions can be avoided.

Negative correlation between mindful parenting and parental stress through emotional regulation as mediating variable can be explained in the following discussion. In this research, cognitive reappraisal is significantly evidenced to be the mediator between mindful parenting and parental stress, whereas expressive suppression does not have significant value in mediating between mindful parenting and parental stress. Cognitive appraisal has significant correlation because according to Gross and John (2003), when an individual is cornered by certain situation which may trigger negative emotion, his/her cognitive appraisal is the one which can lower down the potential of developing negative attitude as the upcoming response of their action. Besides, cognitive reappraisal is the first thing first response to develop when parents must encounter negative situation constraining their interaction with their children. In this research, expressive suppression does neither correlate with parental stress nor become the mediator of the correlation between mindful parenting and parental stress. Based on Gross and John (2003), the way how expressive suppression work reflects response-focused strategy, which aims to modify emotion and attitude to certain stimulus. Expressive suppression helps parents to reduce the developing response and negative traits from their children, but the first cannot help an individual in tackling the experience of integrating negative feeling, and if such condition lasts, expressive suppression will pile up the problems faced by an individual and let the problem unsolved. Such condition triggers an individual to contribute bigger effort needed to maintain his/her own emotion.

Recommendations

Research participants are expected to be able to apply a mindful parenting approach and reduce the level of parenting stress in lowering the level of emotional regulation. Mindful parenting can be done by way of not reacting spontaneously whenever children are being emotional. In raising children, parents should have goals, pay attention, accept, understand, and empathize with their children. Emotional regulation can be done by changing parents' mindset to be more positive, seeing the positive side of children, and being optimistic about children's development.

From the result of the research, it was obtained the data revealing that cognitive appraisal has a very significant influence in reducing parental stress, then the researcher can develop emotional regulation measurement tools. This research instrument focuses on the measurement of cognitive appraisal aspects. Likewise, the tools' application, i.e. training to reduce pre-parenting stress, can be focused on the measurement of cognitive appraisal.

This research reveals the role of emotional regulation as a mediating variable. For further research, emotional regulation can also be used as a moderating variable, so the researcher can get more comprehensive insight regarding emotional regulation.

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