

PARENTAL ACCEPTANCE AND INVOLVEMENT IN THE EDUCATION OF LEARNERS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER AS ASSOCIATED WITH SCHOOL PERFORMANCE IN CARE SKILLS AND FUNCTIONAL ACADEMICS

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ABSTRACT: *The present study examines the relationship between parental acceptance and parental involvement in the education of learners with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) as associated in their school performance in areas of care skills and functional academics. Specifically, the study investigated: (1) the parent profile, (2) the performance levels of learners with ASD, (3) the level of parental acceptance, (4) the level of parental involvement in their child's education, and (5) correlation between parental acceptance and involvement with learners' performance in care skills and functional academics. The study is anchored on the Parental Acceptance-Rejection Theory, Self-Efficacy Theory, and Epstein's Theory of Overlapping Spheres of Influence, and is descriptive and correlational in the research method.*

Most of the parent respondents were mothers with good caregiving experiences. Generally, the average years, which aggregate to more than six years, those mothers, are primary caregivers. The primary care responsibilities are usually assumed by mothers who are engaged in full employment, with their qualifications reaching up to BS/BA levels. The subjects of this research are learners with ASD in West City Exceptional Child Learning Center, Dumaguete City.

The findings of the study show that learners with ASD are developing concerning the academic performance levels in care skills and functional academics. High parental acceptance and parenting self-efficacy from parents have been termed as general findings. Parental involvement has also been high, especially concerning parenting, volunteering, learning at home, and collaboration in the community, though responses in two other aspects, that is, communication and decision-making, show variations.

The results indicated that there was no significant link between parental acceptance and parental involvement and the school performance of learners with ASD in care skills and functional academics. These findings provide important insights into the role of parents in the education of learners with ASD. The study highlights the need to build strong relationships with parents throughout the educational journey of these learners. It recommends establishing a parental support program to enhance both acceptance and involvement in their children's learning experiences. Community support and parental advocacy are crucial for fostering meaningful development and positive societal impacts for these learners. Further research is needed to explore other factors influencing academic outcomes, especially in care skills and functional academics, emphasizing the importance of continued investigation to effectively meet the educational needs of learners with ASD.

Keywords: Parental Acceptance, Parental Involvement, Learners with Autism Spectrum Disorder, Care Skills, Functional Academics, School Performance

1. INTRODUCTION

Active involvement of parents is necessary in nurturing their children in school, especially learners with autism spectrum disorder. A good home-school partnership is essential to the growth and development of these children. Former Secretary Sara Duterte underscored this in her speech as she emphasized that "Education begins at home." She also stressed that the role of parents in preparing children for life's challenges is very important. As Quiros [1] noted to protect children, "parents have to provide basic teachings at home and work towards building 'a strong, loving, happy family'". Similarly, Duterte added, "We continue to engage parents and legal guardians in facilitating learning and regularly conduct home visitations and follow-ups" [2]. The Department of Education also has innovations such as External Partnership Services, which strengthens the home learning experiences and connects parents and stakeholders from all over the country [3].

Legal frameworks further underscore the critical role of parents. The Child and Youth Welfare Code of the Philippines (PD 603) mandates support for parents and guardians to promote the welfare of Filipino children. Likewise, RA 10410, or the Early Years Act of 2013, highlights the importance of the zero-to-eight age group as a

foundational period in a child's development [4]. DepEd Order No. 13s. 2022 provides the Omnibus Guidelines for Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) Operations, reinforcing the partnership between schools and parents.

Despite these provisions, not all parents of children with autism spectrum disorder are actively involved in their education. Research findings show that the rearing of a child with ASD imposes indirect economic costs that are significantly burdened on families. Parents face employment-related decisions, such as adjusting work arrangements, to deal with the specific needs and challenges of raising a child with a disability [5]. Such issues may lead to increased stress and anxiety, thus becoming obstacles to active involvement of parents.

Teachers in the local context of West City Exceptional Child Learning Center empathize with the difficulties that parents experience with their learners with autism spectrum disorder. Cheng's [6] research asserted that positive parenting sets off a robust support system; this resonates with Garrets'[7] findings which indicated that support from parents comes in different ways and is useful for students' academic success. As teachers at West City Exceptional Child Learning Center, we aim to mainstream the learners between the ages of 5 and

7 through inclusion. Although the school has successfully transitioned many learners with ASD into regular classes, this study aims to strengthen and expand efforts to support more children in achieving inclusion.

This study seeks to explore parental acceptance and involvement in the education of learners with ASD and how these factors correlate with school performance in care skills and functional academics. The findings will inform the development of a program to empower parents, enabling them to play an active role in advocating for their child's education and fostering their overall development.

The study aimed to determine the parental acceptance and involvement in the education of learners with autism spectrum disorder as associated with school performance in care skills and functional academics. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the parents in terms of:
 - 1.1 relation with the child;
 - 1.2 age and experience of parents of a child with a disability;
 - 1.3 duration of experience with a child with disability;
 - 1.3 parents' highest educational attainment; and
 - 1.5 parents' status of employment?
2. What is the level of performance of Learners with autism spectrum disorder in terms of:
 - 2.1 Care Skills; and
 - 2.2 Functional Academics?
3. What are the levels of parental acceptance of parents of learners with autism spectrum disorder:
 - 3.1 parental acceptance; and
 - 3.2 parenting self-efficacy?
4. What is the parents' level of parental involvement in the education of their learners with autism spectrum disorder in terms of:
 - 4.1 parenting;
 - 4.2 communicating;
 - 4.3 volunteering;
 - 4.4 learning at home;
 - 4.5 decision making; and
 - 4.6 collaborating with community?
5. Is there a significant association between:
 - 5.1 Care skills:
 - 5.1 A. Parental acceptance?
 - 5.1 B. Parental involvement?
 - 5.2 Functional Academics:
 - 5.2 A. Parental acceptance?
 - 5.2 B. parental involvement?

Hypothesis

Ho 1: There is no significant association between care skills and parental acceptance.

Ho 2: There is no significant association between care skills and parental involvement.

Ho 3: There is no significant association between care skills functional academics and parental acceptance.

Ho 4: There is no significant association between care skills functional academics and parental involvement.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In shaping the education of learners with ASD parental acceptance and involvement are two essential factors in designing appropriate programs tailored to their needs. Different aspects of parental demographic profiles help practitioners understand the nature of influences on parents' roles in the education of their children, according to Ribeiro [8]. It implies that collecting and analyzing information on parents would enable practitioners to have a meaningful understanding of parents of learners with ASD.

Parents Relation with Child with Disability

The role of mothers or fathers in giving care and support to children with disabilities has been a focal point in various studies. Research consistently highlights societal expectation places a significant responsibility on mothers to ensure the well-being and development of their children with disabilities.

Sharabi [9] highlights that mothers report higher levels of involvement in caregiving activities compared to fathers, emphasizing the unequal distribution of caregiving responsibilities within families. This trend is further supported by Zimmermann et al. [10], who found that mothers are typically more engaged in both the emotional and practical aspects of caregiving. Furthermore, Althiabi [11] emphasize the emotional impact on mothers, noting that they are more attuned to the needs of their children with disabilities, which often results in higher levels of stress and emotional pressure. This shows the critical role mothers play in the caregiving process, demonstrating their significant influence on the well-being and development of their children.

In contrast, fathers are often depicted as secondary supporters in caregiving. Wondemu [12] discusses how fathers primarily contribute by fulfilling the family's financial needs, often at the expense of direct caregiving involvement. Additionally, Temmen [13] also notes that fathers' caregiving roles are typically less pronounced, largely due to their focus on other familial responsibilities.

Despite these differences, studies indicate that parents generally collaborate to support their children with disabilities. This partnership ensures that the diverse needs of the child and the family are met, with each parent contributing according to their strengths and circumstances. Such findings highlight the importance of both maternal and paternal roles in caregiving, even though their levels of involvement vary.

Parents' Age with Child with a Disability

Parental involvement and direct experience and caring in the lives of children with disabilities is fundamental to the development and care needs of these children, particularly children with autism spectrum disorder. Aim's [13] research further explores the significance of experiential knowledge, showing that it strengthens parents' commitment to guiding and supporting their children with special needs. This experiential knowledge is essential in fostering parental acceptance and involvement, which are critical in the caregiving process.

In turn, parents with little prior experience in caregiving typically experience greater stress, loneliness and burdens in terms of finances and emotions. Karim [14] reported that

experienced parents report more positive experiences, which leads to more involvement and trust in their family member caregiving. According to Ren's [15] results, parents' anxiety levels are significantly influenced by stress, behavioural and mental health problems as well as the absence of supportive social factors, therefore showing the difficulties of inexperienced parents.

Sorkkila's[16] research indicates that parents of older ages are typically more capable of the demands of parenting than parents of younger ages. This is also true according to Vilaseca's [17] observations that older parents who are financially stable tend to exert a greater role in their own direct reared children's lives. They are usually more relaxed, less stressed, and more inclined to spend time on their children's education.

Together, these studies also emphasize the value of parental experience and maturity as these relate to providing quality care for children in this population, emphasizing the significance of both experience and age with regards to providing care.

Parents' Duration of Experience with Child with a Disability

Caregiving duration is a critical factor for determining how parents will be able to effectively care for their children who has special needs. Bolano [18] points out that extensive caregiving, especially in mothers' case, may have a negative influence on health in particular due to the heavy burden of taking care of and helping a child with special needs. Despite all of these challenges, many years of caregiving experience leads to a more profound awareness of the child's special circumstances and therefore parents are better able to deliver more personalized assistance.

Kruithof [19] agrees with the view that the longer the caregiving phase, the more the parents have insight into the specific needs of their child and, consequently, more care time. This deep understanding is critical to the provision of appropriate support, and responses to the challenges of parenting children with disabilities.

Akhbari[20] stresses the role of family-centred care, goal-directed care, and positive home-environment care when effectively providing care for children with special needs. These features, learned from long experience of childcare, play an important role in the child's development.

However, parents with less caregiving experience may have difficulty in obtaining the required knowledge and resources. Hansen [21] notes that constructive advocacy is based upon recognized modes of communication as well as an assigned point of contact to allow families and support services to work together. This implies that the period of caregiving experience does not only lead to the development of parental expertise but also prepares parents to be more adaptive with professionals and support structures.

Generally, the literature suggests that the amount of time that parents devote to the act of provision for their children with disabilities is central in their development of knowledge and ability to respond to the individual needs of their children. It also emphasizes the role of experience in creating coordinated interaction between the child and support structures for optimal child outcomes.

Parents' Highest Educational Attainment

Parents' educational diversity is one of the major factors that affect their capacity to provide support to children with special needs. Garcia [22] reported a significant correlation between more parental education and more time devoted to their children's academic activities. This is also affirmed by Wael [23], whose findings showed that parental education is related to greater parental involvement in their child's development and that this parental involvement is beneficial. In addition, Chen [24] states that parents holding a higher education background are more likely to actively take part in learning activities with their children, thereby achieving better educational results. However, Yun Cha [25] has found that discrepancies in child outcomes are frequently associated with disparities in the parental level of education, indicating that education has a significant causal role in child development.

Bolano [18] further states that parents with a lower level of education encounter disadvantages because of the insufficiency of resources, which can lead to a decline in the quality of parental support. According to the literature, experiential knowledge, which is derived from the caregiving experience, also has an important contribution. Thereby parents gain empirical evidence about their own children's concrete needs, which augments the formal education they have been through. This integration between formal learning and direct knowledge is critically important in the production of good outcomes for children with special needs.

Parents' Status of Employment

The capacity of parents to meet the needs of their children with special needs is closely linked to their employment status and financial stability. Koball[24] found that full-time and year-round employed parents are less likely to reside in low-income families, which supports the notion that stable employment significantly benefits families with children who have special needs. Garcia [22] and Chen [24] also both reported that families living in poverty experience more difficulty particularly because of how the costs of highly specialized treatments and educational materials for children with disabilities are related. All this points to the need for parental employment to ensure the necessary financial dependability to meet the needs of children with special needs.

Sorkkila[16] show that kids with special needs deserve to be taken care of further than and with extra care and could be helped by parental employment leading to financial security. In addition, Anicama[27] additionally pointed to the key function of school-based activities and the supply of basic living items and educational aid and how access to this is more likely for the better-off family. Chen [24] additionally proposed that financial stability provides important support to the developmental requirements of children with special needs.

But, according to Vilaseca [17], full-time working parents, especially fathers, are frequently unable to make quality provisions for their children because of work commitments. Sellmaier[28] highlighted the difficulty parents face in balancing work and family demands, though the pandemic introduced some flexibility for parents working from home, allowing them to better integrate work and caregiving

responsibilities. On the other hand, Qian [29] concluded that mothers' employment suffered more due to the COVID-19 pandemic, both family income, but also opened up possibilities for more caregiving activities at home.

This implies that although employment is an important source of financial security, parents' capacity to juggle employment and caregiving duties depends on efficient planning and prioritization. Usual paternal roles as providers of financial security and maternal roles as child caregivers are clear, but changing, within the hopes and woes of modern living.

Level of Performance of Learners with Autism Spectrum Disorder

The development of care skills and functional academics in learners with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) has been widely studied, indicating that these learners show varying degrees of competence in both domains. Huerta [30] aligns with this notion, noting the heterogeneity of skills in individuals with ASD, as categorized into three levels of severity by the DSM-5: high, moderate, and low severity. This categorization underlines the diversity of support needs that children with ASD may require to cope with daily life challenges. Children with ASD, particularly those aged 4 to 10 years, tend to demonstrate lower self-care performance skills compared to their typically developing peers, as evidenced by research on functional abilities [30].

Wolff [31] also discovered that there is a wide range of cognitive ability in children with ASD, with a bimodal distribution of IQ: 38.2% are below average (IQ < 85), 40% are above average (IQ > 115), and 21.8% are average (IQ between 85 and 115). This indicates that the needs of children with ASD are varied, and therefore, interventions and accommodations should be provided according to the specific needs of each child. Liao's [32] study further emphasizes the critical role of early intervention, especially in terms of neural plasticity in children with ASD. Since neural plasticity decreases with age, early intervention programs are effective in improving language, cognitive skills, and behavioural issues. Liao [32] argues that children with ASD experience problems in social interaction, joint attention, and emotional sharing. Such issues can be minimized by proper intervention. Positive outcomes from early intervention reveal that children with ASD are very adaptive and learn new skills with ease, especially if routine-based activities engage both parents and educators in the learning process.

These studies together highlight the need for individualized and early interventions that would help support the unique developmental trajectories of children with ASD, especially in care skills and functional academics.

Parental Acceptance of Learners with Autism Spectrum Disorder

The significant opposition parents express against actions that could emotionally harm their children aligns with Pozzi's [33] findings, which highlight that poor parenting practices, including harmful behaviors such as physical violence, lead to higher levels of negative functional connectivity in children. This connection further emphasizes the importance of positive parenting approaches for the well-being of children, particularly those with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Chan [34] and Clauser [35] similarly indicate that while parents face challenges in raising children with ASD, they strive to maintain positive and healthy relationships with their children, fully aware of the detrimental effects of violence. This reflects an overall trend of parental acceptance of their children's condition, which is rooted in love and care. Clauser [35] also discusses the struggles parents face in accepting the permanency of their child's disability, and the challenges this brings, reinforcing the need for support systems that can assist parents in coping with their unique experiences.

Haswar [36] defines parental acceptance as a crucial factor in managing emotions, achieving goals, and collaborating with professionals. In line with this, Lee [37] stresses the importance of advocacy and support, advocating for increased access to positive support for parents facing challenges in meeting their children's needs. Parental acceptance, rooted in warmth and emotional support, plays a pivotal role in the effective parenting of children with ASD. Davis [38] and Guidotti [39] both emphasize the importance of positive emotional experiences, affection and minimized conflict in improving family dynamics and overall outcomes for children with ASD.

Tekola [40] identifies four key themes in the experiences of parents of children with ASD: sociocultural perspectives, family relationships, challenges, and resilience. These findings highlight the complexities of the parental journey, even in contexts of general acceptance within certain communities. These insights underscore the importance of supporting parents in better understanding and addressing their children's needs, fostering an environment of resilience and positive family dynamics.

Parenting Self-Efficacy of Parents of Learners with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Parenting children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is often marked by unique challenges and demands. According to Gowramma [41], parents of children with ASD demonstrate considerable resilience, remaining highly involved in their children's lives despite the demanding circumstances that come with managing ASD-related behaviours. This implies how the emotional and practical complexity of raising a child with ASD, where emotional communication and affection might present challenges, as pointed out by Sandbank [42]. Specifically, despite parents' strong management abilities, the emotional communication between parents and their children can be difficult, emphasizing a common struggle faced by mothers in expressing affection and engaging in leisure activities.

Supporting this, Wolff's [31] study highlights that parents of children with ASD may have lower self-care performance due to the intense caregiving demands, while Talantseva [43] reveals the economic burdens of raising a child with ASD. Such challenges can strain parents' ability to establish effective communication with their children, as they navigate the complexities of emotional support while facing societal stigma and limited resources. Clauser [35] also identifies these stressors as significant barriers to parental acceptance, noting that the enduring nature of ASD, along with social stigma and inadequate support, leads to ongoing emotional and practical stress for parents. However, despite these

difficulties, parents remain deeply committed to their children's care, driven by a profound sense of love and concern.

Parental self-efficacy, which refers to a parent's belief in their ability to manage and influence their child's development, plays a crucial role in mitigating these challenges. Research by Glatz [44] suggests that confident parents who practice positive parenting behaviors tend to have higher levels of parental self-efficacy. This increased self-efficacy leads to greater parental involvement, fostering a positive environment for their children with ASD. Furthermore, Bubic[45] and Kmita[46] emphasize that higher parental self-efficacy is linked to better academic outcomes and improved family functioning, as parents who feel more competent in their roles are better able to support their children's development.

In addition, studies such as those by Pranindita[47] indicate that positive parental self-efficacy contributes to more active involvement in educational processes, reinforcing the idea that a parent's confidence in their abilities enhances their child's educational environment. Notably, the presence of parental resilience, as discussed by Lopez [48] and Barnes [49], helps parents persevere through the challenges of raising children with ASD. Gupta [50] suggests that factors contributing to parental resilience, such as support networks and coping strategies, strengthen parental self-efficacy, leading to positive outcomes for both parents and children. Kong's [51] work further underscores the positive impact of parental resilience on children's overall health and well-being, highlighting the reciprocal benefits of supportive parenting.

Finally, the Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire and Parenting Self-Efficacy Survey suggest that parents of children with ASD generally exhibit a moderate level of parental acceptance, indicating their capacity to consistently support their children's needs. Lee [37] affirms this notion, stressing the role of parental approval in creating a protective network for children with ASD, which is essential in promoting both their development and well-being. These studies collectively reinforce the notion that while raising a child with ASD presents significant challenges, it also provides opportunities for growth in parental self-efficacy, resilience, and involvement.

Parental Involvement in the Education of Learners with Autism Spectrum Disorder

The involvement of parents in the education of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is complex and varies across individuals, with some parents feeling confident in their roles and others experiencing distress and confusion. Research by Sharabi [9] and Chaidi [52] underscores the critical importance of active parental involvement in the learning of children with ASD. These studies emphasize the need for continuous interaction between parents and the educational system to support the learning pathways of children with ASD, fostering an environment where parents feel both supported and well informed about their children's progress.

Moreover, effective communication and collaboration between parents and schools are crucial for the success of children with ASD. Epstein's [53] model highlights the positive impact of bidirectional communication, suggesting

that active parent-teacher collaboration improves educational outcomes for students with ASD. This is supported by Hosch [54], whose research demonstrates that regular contact between parents and teachers contributes to better educational results. Azad [55] further connects this communication with increased self-efficacy and intervention fidelity, reinforcing the idea that informed and engaged parents can significantly influence their children's educational experiences.

However, challenges in the relationship between parents and educational institutions still exist, particularly in terms of trust and access to resources. Gulcan [56] notes that a lack of a trusting relationship between parents and schools can hinder parental awareness of their child's development. This highlights the importance of establishing more open and accessible communication channels within educational settings. Additionally, there is a need for more specific information and community resources to support children with ASD. Pillay [57] suggests that strengthening partnerships between parents, schools, and community networks can lead to a more holistic support system for children with ASD, and Anderson [58] emphasizes the importance of collaborative efforts to create an inclusive and nurturing environment. Research by Hou [59] shows that parental support both at home and at school leads to improvements in social and academic development. This is consistent with Barger's [60] findings, which link parental involvement in school activities to enhanced learner performance. Lau [61] further emphasizes that when parents engage in cognitive and language development tasks at home, children exhibit positive behaviours that foster academic success.

Daulay[62] discusses how parents use coping strategies to manage the needs of their children with ASD while remaining dedicated to their well-being. Supportive and positive learning contexts are crucial for the development of children with ASD, and Brooks [63] highlights that effective communication and collaboration between parents, educators, and professionals are essential for providing optimal support to these children.

The multidimensional nature of parental support is reflected in Garrels' [7] study, which explores how different forms of support, including academic and emotional support, contribute to the academic success and well-being of children with ASD. Rensburg [64] also emphasizes the role of parents as educators who create protective and supportive home environments, thus reinforcing the idea that parental involvement is pivotal in shaping the educational experiences of children with ASD.

This implies that parental involvement is integral in fostering a supportive school culture that promotes the success of children with ASD [53].

3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings of the study feature the importance of monitoring the needs of learners with autism spectrum disorder through design approaches that provide the necessary support to enhance their knowledge and skills.

Parents of Learners with Autism Spectrum Disorder

The results will offer essential support and encouragement to parents, equipping them with effective strategies to help and advocate for their children's growth.

Special Education Teachers

The study will assist special education teachers in evaluating learners' progress and identifying effective strategies to promote independence. Moreover, it will support stronger collaboration between teachers and parents, adopting unified efforts to guide and support learners.

Regular Teachers

The findings will improve regular teachers' understanding of the significance of parent-teacher partnerships in supporting learners with autism spectrum disorder. With intensified awareness and knowledge, they will be better equipped to gather relevant information and implement diverse teaching methods and strategies for mainstream learners.

School Administrators

The results will aid school administrators in planning and implementing programs that cater to the needs of both learners and educators. This includes ensuring that special education and regular teachers receive adequate training and support to enhance their effectiveness.

Special Education Supervisors

The study will serve as an essential resource for planning and conducting in-service training programs. Insights from the research will help supervisors design sessions that tackle specific challenges faced by teachers in supporting learners with special needs.

Future Researchers

The findings will serve as a valuable reference for future researchers in the field of special education.

4. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A descriptive-correlational research design is applied for this study aimed at looking at parental acceptance and involvement for children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. This was done on assessing parental acceptance and involvement through its descriptive aspects as well as the association to the care skills, and functional academics as a dimension towards the school performance of the subjects.

Research Respondents

The study was done at the West City Exceptional Child Learning Center, Dumaguete City. The participants in this study were parents who had enrolled their children with autism spectrum disorder.

Population and Sampling

Parents of children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder are the population. The method of purposive sampling was

used wherein respondents were picked from those children enrolled at WCECLC school year 2023-2024 in Kindergarten and Lower Primary classes focusing on care skills and functional academics.

Research Instrument

A structured questionnaire checklist was used for data collection. The instrument consisted of four sections: Section I: Gathered demographic profiles of parents and their children, which include the relationship between the parents and the child, age, experience, highest educational attainment and employment status. Section II showed the performance of learners with autism spectrum disorder based on report card information gathered from the teachers in Kindergarten and Lower Primary levels.

Then section III examined the degree to which parents acceptance towards their child with autism spectrum disorder in their education, considering parental acceptance and parenting self-efficacy. Tools adapted for this section included the Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire Short Form by Rohner et al. and the Self-Efficacy for Parenting Task Index by Coleman and Mayangsari.

Lastly section IV the level of parental involvement of parents to their children with ASD in terms of parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and community collaboration. Data were collected using the Parent and School Survey (PASS), adapted from Ringenberg et al.

The tool was piloted with parents of children who are visually and hearing impaired in WCECLC, and factor analysis was used to purify the variables as well as evaluate their inter-relationship.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was initiated by the survey questionnaire being validated and cleared through an ethics committee. Questionnaires were administered to parents through face-to-face interviews and could be given voluntarily without their names and consequently, their responses being traced. Responses were collected over the period of a month and then put on tabulation for further analysis.

Descriptive and inferential statistical methods were used in data analysis. Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to describe the demographic profiles, levels of learners' performance, and the extent of parents' acceptance and involvement. For inferential statistics, Spearman's Rho analysis and p-value computation were conducted to test the hypothesis regarding the association between parental acceptance, involvement, and academic performance in care skills and functional academics.

Ethical Considerations

Informed consent was obtained from all participants, ensuring their privacy, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. Ethical clearance was granted by the university's research ethics board, ensuring adherence to ethical standards throughout the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1.1 Respondent's Profile in Terms of Their Relation with the Child

Civil Status	Father f (%)	Mother f (%)
Unmarried	3 (5.08%)	10 (16.94%)
Married	12 (20.23%)	34(57.62%)
Total 100%	15 (25.42%)	44 (74.57 %)

The findings indicate that mothers play a pivotal role in supporting their children with disability, regardless of their marital status. In both married and unmarried categories, mothers are the primary caregivers, with the majority of respondents being mothers. This aligns with societal norms that often regard mothers as the primary figures responsible for their children's well-being. In contrast, fathers tend to be less involved in caregiving, providing care less frequently.

These findings are consistent with Sharabi's [9] study, which highlights that mothers report higher levels of involvement compared to fathers. This observation is further supported by the research of Zimmermann et al. [10]. Similarly, Althiabi[11] noted that mothers are more affected by the caregiving responsibilities, as they are often more attuned to their children's needs. This understanding reinforces the notion that mothers demonstrate significant support and responsibility for their children with special needs.

Additionally, the data suggests that fathers often provide secondary support, primarily focusing on working to meet the family's financial needs [5]. Temmen [12] emphasized that fathers' involvement is generally less pronounced compared to mothers, largely due to their other familial responsibilities. Despite this, it is evident that parents, as a couple, collaborate to address and support the needs of their children with disability while managing the overall requirements of the family.

Table 1.2 Respondent's Profile in Terms of Age and Experiences of Parents Caring a Child with Disability

Respondent's Age	Yes f (%)	No f (%)
Under 30	10 (16.94%)	1(1.69 %)
30-39	27 (45.76%)	1 (1.69 %)
40-49	15 (25.42 %)	1 (1.69 %)
50 and above	3 (5.08 %)	1 (1.69 %)
Total	55(93.20 %)	4 (6.76 %)

The data indicates that only a small percentage of respondents lack experience in caring for children with disability, emphasizing that most parents have practical experience in nurturing and supporting their children with disability. This highlights the significant role of parental involvement and hands-on caregiving, particularly for children with autism spectrum disorder.

This finding aligns with Kruithof's [19] study, which underscores the dual roles of parents as both experts in understanding their child's communication, well-being, and pain, and as advocates who use this knowledge to collaborate with professionals supporting their children's needs. Additionally, Aim's [13] research highlights that experiential

knowledge fosters parents' commitment to guiding their children with special needs, illustrating its critical importance in the processes of parental acceptance and involvement.

Conversely, studies have shown that parents without caregiving experience for children with special needs often face heightened levels of stress, loneliness, and financial and emotional strain. Experienced parents, on the other hand, tend to have more positive experiences, fostering greater involvement and trust [14]. Ren's [15] findings further reveal that anxiety in parents is significantly influenced by factors such as stress, behavioural and mental health challenges, and a lack of social support. This suggests that parents without prior experience in raising children with special needs may find it particularly challenging to cope in high-stress situations, underscoring the critical role of experience in caregiving.

Moreover, the data shows that the majority of participants are between 30-39 and 40-49 years old, suggesting that most respondents are mature adults. This is consistent with Sorkkila's[16] observation that older parents are better equipped to embrace the responsibilities of parenthood than younger parents. Vilaseca's [17] study further supports this, noting that older parents often play a more significant role in their children's lives. They are calmer, more adept at managing stress, and more willing to dedicate time to support their children's education.

Table 1.3 Respondent's Profile in Terms of their Duration of Experience with a Child with a Disability

Duration of experience with a child with a disability	Frequency (f)	Per cent (%)
Less than a year	1	1.69 %
1 Year	3	5.08 %
2 Years	1	1.69 %
3 Years	4	6.77 %
4 Years	1	1.69 %
5 Years	5	8.47 %
6 Years	11	18.64 %
More than 6	33	55.93 %
Total	59	100 %

The data suggest the significance of the duration parent has been raising their child with special needs. Bolano [18] concluded in his study that the health of parents, particularly mothers, suffers because of the numerous responsibilities in parenting and in attending to the needs of their child. Experience in this aspect, however, develops a greater understanding of the child. Similarly, Kruithof [19] posited that a long period of caregiving enables parents to have more knowledge about the specific needs of their child. Additionally, Akhbari[19] stated that family-centered practices, goal direction, and an encouraging home environment are necessary to successfully care for children with special needs. These findings collectively suggest that the time parents dedicate to caregiving very significantly enhances their expertise in understanding and addressing the unique challenges associated with raising children with disabilities.

Conversely, parents with limited caregiving experience may face challenges in accessing information and resources to seek appropriate support. Hansen [21] pointed out that effective advocacy requires well-established communication channels between various services and a designated point of contact to facilitate collaboration and communication. This indicates that the duration of the caregiving experience not only fosters a deeper understanding and expertise in managing a child's needs but also equips parents to share valuable insights with professionals working to support their child's growth and development.

Table 1.4 Respondent's Profile in terms of their Highest Educational Attainment

Respondents Highest Educational Attainment:	Frequency (f)	Per cent (%)
Elementary level/ graduate	1	1.69 %
High School level/graduate	13	22.03%
Finished Two Year course	10	16.94 %
BS/BA Degree	35	59.32 %
Total	59	100 %

The educational diversity among respondents enhances the study by integrating varied perspectives and experiences. This diversity indicates that the majority of respondents have undergone different levels of education. Garcia [22] found that higher parental education levels are linked to increased involvement in a child's academics, a finding supported by Wael [23]. Furthermore, Chen [24] revealed that parents with higher educational attainment actively engage their children in educational activities.

Yun Cha [25] further highlighted the view that disparities in child outcomes are often influenced by parental education. Bolano [18] concluded in their study that low-educated parents are disadvantaged as they have limited resources that can provide for their children. These studies collectively suggest that parental education is very necessary to translate into better care or outcomes for children with ASD.

The findings imply that while education is a significant factor, it may not be the sole determinant in shaping positive outcomes for children with ASD. This aligns with the insights from Tables 1.2 and 1.3, which emphasize the critical role of experiential knowledge gained through parents' extended caregiving experience. This highlights the importance of both formal education and hands-on experience in nurturing and supporting children with special needs effectively.

Table 1.5 Respondent's Profile in terms of their Status of Employment

Respondents' status of employment	Frequency (f)	Per cent (%)
Employed	43	72.88%
Full- Time	33	76.74%
Part-Time	10	13.25%
Unemployed	16	27.11%
Total	59	100 %

The data strongly suggest that parents likely can meet the needs of their children with special needs. This is in coherence with the Koball[26] study stating that full-time and

year-round employed parents are less likely to reside in low-income families compared to those with parents working part-time or not employed. In addition to Koballs' [26] findings, Garcia [22] suggested that families in poverty encounter more difficulties than wealthier families which correlates to Chen's [24] study stating that low-income families with lower levels

of education face potential disadvantages in addressing their needs since this type of treatment often requires financial stability. This implies that parents' employment status is very beneficial and important in nurturing children with special needs.

Accordingly, the impact of parental employment affects children with special needs as these children demand extra attention and care Sorkkila[16], more school-based involvement [27], and provision of essential living goods and educational supplements [24]. This shows how parents' financial stability seems to support significantly the needs of the children with special needs.

The study also revealed that parents with full-time employment face challenges. As Vilaseca's study [17] revealed the fathers tend to spend less time on joint attention activities with their children because of their work. Moreover, Sellmaier[28], on one hand, cited in her study that parents face challenges in integrating work and family demands. But contrastingly, she also cited that during the pandemic, parents who work from home experience more available resources and show how work and family demands are settled. On the other hand, Qian's [21] findings show that mothers' employment was hit harder by the COVID 19 impairing the family income but it shows an opportunity for them to take care of their children with special needs. This implies that parents' employment status depends on the parents' management and priorities. The notion of secondary support of fathers in caring for their children with special needs is evident as they work for the financial stability of the family while mothers do caregiving to take care of the well-being of their children.

Table 2. Level of Performance of Learners with Autism Spectrum Disorder in terms of Care Skills and Functional academics

Curriculum Packages	Mean	95% CI Mean Upper	95% CI Mean Lower	Std. Deviation	Level of Performance
Care Skills	2.22	2.36	2.07	0.32	Developing
Functional Academics	2.15	2.34	1.95	0.33	Developing

(Rating of the level of performance is acquired from the DepEd Order No.44 S. 2021 or the Policy Guidelines on the Provision of Educational Programs and Services for Learners with Disabilities in the K to 12 Basic Education Program.)

These findings indicate that learners with autism spectrum disorder have a developing degree of skill in Care Skills and Functional Academics. The reasonably consistent performance across both domains, as evidenced by the confidence intervals, suggests that learners with ASD could benefit from focused interventions and support to improve their skills in both areas.

This suggests a notable variability in the results among learners with autism spectrum disorder, aligning with the current definition in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (5th ed.; DSM-5), which categorizes ASD into three functioning levels: high severity, moderate severity, and low severity. These severity levels determine the level of support children need for them to cope with their daily lives as they have diverse needs [30]. This highlights significantly lower self-care performance skills among children aged 4 to 10 years with ASD compared to their typically developing counterparts. Moreover, Wolff's [31] study uses a larger sample of ASD patients revealing a bimodal IQ distribution, with 38.2% falling below average intelligence (i.e., IQ < 85), 40% exhibiting above-average intelligence (IQ > 115), and 21.8% demonstrating average intelligence (IQ between 85 and 115). This implies that children with ASD need a tailored intervention with proper accommodation and modification to cater to their diverse needs.

Furthermore, Liao's [32] study highlighted those children with autism spectrum disorder neural plasticity that declines with age, emphasizing the importance of early intervention in enhancing language and cognitive abilities when behavioural issues arise. Early ASD detection is very important as these children display social interaction challenges and lack of common attention, social interaction, and emotional sharing among these children.

Table 3.1 Level of Parental Acceptance of Parents of Learners with Autism Spectrum Disorder in terms of Parental Acceptance

Parental acceptance using the Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire Short Form (PARQ-SF)	Mean	SD	VD
1. I care about the hardships my child is facing.	1.27	0.69	VC
2. I treat my child with gentle and loving care.	1.34	0.73	VC
3. I care about what my child thinks and encourage him/her to talk about it.	1.39	0.79	VC
4. I give full attention to my child.	1.42	0.72	VC
5. I openly declare to my child that I love him/her.	1.46	1.02	VC
6. I feel that other kids are better than mine in many ways.	2.73	1.01	I
7. I do not pay attention to my child as long as he/she doesn't bother me.	3.24	0.88	I
8. I consider my child a burden of my life.	3.25	1.17	I
9. I tend to ignore my children.	3.29	1.05	VI
10. I make my child feel unloved if he/she is naughty.	3.36	0.92	VI
11. I ignored my son/daughter when he/she asked for help.	3.39	0.95	VI
12. I beat my child when I get angry.	3.39	0.79	VI
13. I feel annoyed with my child.	3.4	0.79	VI
14. I hurt my child's feelings.	3.41	0.85	VI
15. I hit my son/daughter even though he/she didn't deserve it.	3.54	0.79	VI
Overall Mean	2.66	0.88	I

Early intervention for these children suggests a positive perspective on learners as they are highly adaptive and capable of learning new concepts utilizing routine-based activities that parents deemed to provide.

The results show that parents are strongly against any actions that could emotionally harm their children. This is consistent with Pozzi's [33] findings, which indicated that children who experience poor parenting have higher levels of negative functional connectivity compared to those who do not.

The results highlight parents' significant disapproval of using physical force or violence as a disciplinary method for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), demonstrating a high level of parental awareness and concern for their children's well-being. Chan's [34] research pointed out that even though parents encounter challenges, they strive to maintain healthy and positive relationships with their children. Similarly, Clauser's [35] findings reveal that while parents may find it difficult to discipline their children, they are aware of the detrimental effects of violence on their children's development. This indicates that parents of children with ASD show a strong level of acceptance, grounded in love and care, and firmly reject the use of violence.

Even with the challenges parents face in coming to terms with their children's diagnosis of ASD, they remain conscious and opposed to harmful behaviours, reflecting their love and care. Clauser's [35] study also identified key factors influencing parental challenges, noting that the permanence of a child's disability can complicate acceptance. The study calls for support systems to assist parents in navigating their unique journey with their children with ASD. Haswar [36] defined parental acceptance as the ability to manage emotions, achieve goals, and collaborate with others. Lee's [37] research further emphasizes the importance of advocacy and support for children with ASD, suggesting that parents facing challenges should receive positive support to help them address their children's needs. This highlights the significant level of parental acceptance, showcasing parents' confidence in their ability to nurture and support their children. Davis [38] pointed out that warmth, acceptance, and emotional support are essential components of effective parenting. Guidotti's [39] research indicated that positive parental acceptance—characterized by affection, minimized conflict, and enriched emotional experiences—improves family dynamics, a finding that aligns with Crowell's (2019) study. This suggests that parents are aware of the critical role they play in promoting positive outcomes for children with ASD.

Additionally, Tekola's [40] research uncovered four key themes in the experiences of parents with children who have ASD: the impact of sociocultural perspectives, family relationships, various challenges, and resilience. These insights underscore the complexities that parents encounter, even amidst a general sense of acceptance in certain communities. Therefore, it is vital to support parents of children with ASD in understanding and addressing their children's needs more effectively.

Table 3.2 Level of Parental Acceptance of Parents of Learners with Autism Spectrum Disorder in terms of Parenting Self-Efficacy

Parenting Self-Efficacy using Self-Efficacy for Parenting Task Index tool	Mean	SD	VD
1. I am a loving and caring parent for my child.	1.31	0.70	VC
2. I can share joyful experiences with my children.	1.32	0.63	VC
3. I can make sure that my child feels that his/her health is being monitored.	1.41	0.59	VC
4. I encourage my child to show his/her feelings.	1.42	0.72	VC
5. I feel satisfied that I can provide fun activities for children.	1.46	0.73	VC
6. I have done everything necessary to make my child healthy.	1.49	0.73	VC
7. I am involved in my child's school activities as much as possible.	1.50	0.70	VC
8. It's easy for me to be a loving parent.	1.51	0.73	VC
9. I can guide my child to solve his/her school problems.	1.63	0.76	VC
10. I feel that I have provided support in every activity of my child following his/her expectations.	1.64	0.76	VC
11. I can discipline my child in many ways.	1.68	0.75	VC
12. I can do the things that are needed when my child is doing his/her schoolwork.	1.71	0.87	VC
13. I have done the necessary things when teaching my child to play with his/her friends.	1.76	0.79	C
14. I am quite capable of guiding my child to obey the rules that I set.	1.78	0.85	C
15. Being busy makes it difficult for me to pay attention to my child's health.	2.44	1.04	C
16. I find it hard to make proper rules for my child.	2.46	0.99	C
17. Compared to teaching other things, I have more difficulty disciplining my children.	2.46	0.95	C
18. My efforts to teach discipline to my child are vain.	2.64	1.03	I
19. I find it hard to teach my children to obey my commands.	2.68	0.99	I
20. I find it hard to be involved in my child's educational activities as I would like to do.	2.76	0.92	I
21. I feel inadequate to make my child happy.	2.81	1.01	I
22. I care less about my child's social life.	3	1.07	I
23. Teaching my child to do schoolwork frustrates me.	3.05	1.04	I
24. I do not engage in activities that are fun for children.	3.36	0.91	VI
25. I find it hard to show my love for my child.	3.44	0.9	VI

The findings indicate that parents overall do not agree that it is difficult to express affection and engage in leisure activities with their child with ASD. This is in line with Gowramma's[41] research, which described parents of ASD children as continuing to be heavily and actively involved on account of difficult circumstances. In addition, Sandbank's [42] research points out that, for the mothers of children with ASD, though parents have a strong management ability, children with ASD still have difficulty in expression emotion,

which indicates common challenges in emotional communication between parents and their children.

Moreover, Wolff's [31] work suggests that parents may have lower self-care performance and Talantseva's[43] study reveals the economic cost of raising a child with ASD. These results explain why parents may have difficulty establishing effective communication with their children. They show that parents experience difficulty accepting the child's situation but reject behavioural actions that might inflict or inflict harm. This result is consistent with Clauser's [35] research, which describes the enduring nature of the condition, social stigma, and shortage of support as important sources of stress that hinder parental acceptance. These stress factors constantly impose a heavy emotional and practical load onto parents' shoulders, but their care and concern are ever-constant. The solution to these challenges is of great importance in the development of a universal framework of support aimed at enabling parents to provide for the individual conditions of their ASD children.

Glatz's [44] study supports these findings, noting that confident parents often practice positive parenting, which in turn enhances their confidence. As parents actively support their children with ASD, they develop greater acceptance and advocacy for their children's welfare. Results indicate that parents show a tendency toward high parental acceptance and parental self-efficacy, which in turn induce a very high level of parental involvement and a very high level of approval of positive behaviours on the part of their children. This underlines parents' potential to create a safe, nurturing and positive one for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

According to Bubic's[45] and Kmita's[46] studies, linking higher parental self-efficacy to higher academic achievement, and a positive parental attitude to general family functioning, respectively. According to Glatz's [44] study, maternal self-efficacy is a significant predictor of effective parenting behaviours. According to Pranindita's[47] study, positive parental self-efficacy has a positive effect on the level of involvement in the educational process of children with ASD, which indicates that a high degree of parental self-efficacy leads to a supportive care environment.

Notwithstanding the obstacles, parents of children with ASD exhibit resilience and set out to address the needs of their children, as manifested by high rates of parental involvement with their child's education. Lopez's [48] work highlights the continuing process that parents undergo, and Barnes' [49] work validates that helping children with ASD does indeed enable parents to become their advocates. Gupta [50] found that parental resilience is shaped by multiple factors that lead to their self-efficacy. According to Kong's [51] study, this resilience has a positive effect that extends to children's development and general health and well-being.

Findings from the Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire and Parenting Self-Efficacy Survey suggest that parents of children with ASD exhibit a moderate level of parental acceptance. This suggests their capacity to systematically and powerfully promote the needs of their children. This accords with Lee's [37] research, which stresses the role of parental approval in enabling a protective network for learners with ASD.

Table 4 Level of Parental Involvement Parents in the Education of their learners with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Indicators	Mean	SD	Verbal Description
8.1 Parenting			
8.1.1.I frequently explain difficult ideas to my child when he doesn't understand.	1.88	1.15	Agree
8.1.2 There are many children's books in our house.	2.15	1.01	Agree
8.1.3 Reading books is a regular activity in our home.	2.59	1.16	Agree
8.1.4 My child misses' school several days each semester.	3.20	1.19	Partially agree/Disagree
Over All – Parenting	2.46	0.71	Agree
8.2 Communicating			
8.2.1 I always know how well my child is doing in school.	1.74	0.86	Strongly Agree
8.2.2 If my child misbehaved at school, I would know about it soon afterwards.	1.75	0.98	Strongly Agree
8.2.3 Talking with my child's principal makes me uncomfortable.	3.88	1.05	Disagree
8.2.4 Talking with my child's current teacher makes me somewhat uncomfortable.	4.07	1.16	Disagree
Over All – Communicating	2.86	0.62	Partially Agree/Disagree
8.3 Volunteering			
8.3.1 I feel very comfortable visiting my child's school.	1.42	0.99	Strongly Agree
8.3.2 I have visited my child's classroom several times in the past year.	1.59	1.00	Strongly Agree
8.3.3 In the past 12 months I have attended activities at my child's school several times (e.g. fun nights, performances, awards nights).	1.88	0.97	Agree
8.3.4 In the past 12 months I volunteered at my child's school at least 3 times	2.49	1.21	Agree
Over All -Volunteering	1.85	0.74	Agree
8.4 Learning at Home			
8.4.1 Every time my child does something well at school, I compliment him.	1.64	1.13	Strongly Agree
8.4.2 My child's schoolwork is always displayed in our home (e.g. hanging papers on the refrigerator).	2.14	1.11	Agree
8.4.3 I read to my child every day.	2.24	1.18	Agree
8.4.4 I don't understand the assignments my child brings home.	4.12	1.23	Disagree
Overall All – Learning at Home	2.53	0.75	Agree
8.5 Decision Making			
8.5.1 I know the laws governing schools well.	2.25	1.14	Agree
8.5.2 I have made suggestions to my child's teachers about how to help my child learn.	2.58	1.32	Agree
8.5.3 In the past 12 months I attended several school board meetings.	3:00	1.34	Partially Agree/Disagree
8.5.4 I am confused about my legal rights as a parent of a student.	3.93	1.29	Disagree
Overall All – Decision Making	2.94	0.81	Partially Agree/Disagree
8.6 Collaborating with Community			
8.6.1 I talk with other parents frequently about educational issues.	2.17	1.18	Agree
8.6.2 My child attends community programs.	2.54	1.30	Agree
8.6.3 I know about many programs for youth in my community.	2.68	1.32	Partially Agree/Disagree
8.6.4 If my child was having trouble in school, I would not know how to get extra help for him.	3.14	1.56	Partially Agree/Disagree
Over -Collaborating with the Community	2.63	0.92	Partially Agree/Disagree

The findings of this study emphasize the crucial role of parental involvement in the education of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), particularly the importance of communication, collaboration, and community participation. The study revealed that parental experiences are diverse, with some parents feeling confident and responsible in their roles, while others experience distress or confusion

about their child's education. This variation aligns with Sharabi [9] and Chaidi [52], who underscores the importance of active involvement in ASD education despite the challenges in communication and common understanding. Effective communication between parents and schools emerged as a significant factor in supporting the educational development of children with ASD. Parents expressed a need for improved communication infrastructure, which resonates with Epstein's [53] model on bidirectional communication dynamics. Research by Hosch [54] and Azad [55] further supports the idea that positive parent-teacher interactions lead to better educational outcomes, with Azad linking communication to self-efficacy and intervention fidelity. Additionally, the study found that a lack of trust between parents and schools can hinder parental awareness of their child's progress, echoing Gulcan's [56] concerns about the importance of fostering trustful relationships. Furthermore, parents indicated a need for more community resources and support for children, aligning with Pillay [57] and Anderson [58], who advocate for stronger partnerships between parents, schools, and the community to better support children with ASD.

The study also found that parents perceive themselves as responsible and contribute directly to their child's growth. This finding is consistent with Hou's [59] research, which shows that parental support at home and school enhances both social and academic development. Lau's [61] study further supports the importance of adapting support to meet the unique needs of each family, particularly through engagement in language and cognitive tasks at home. The study also highlighted varying levels of parental involvement and knowledge about decision-making processes, which corresponds with Dauly [62] who emphasizes the diversity of coping strategies among parents and the importance of supportive learning contexts.

Parents' active participation in creating a positive home environment and supporting academic achievement was found to motivate their children to pursue success, as noted by Brooks [63]. Their involvement is essential for building a positive learning environment that supports both social and academic growth. Finally, the study found that while parents are generally highly involved, their responses varied, reflecting the complexity of parental engagement in the education of children with ASD. This heterogeneity aligns with Rensburg's [64] research, which emphasizes that despite challenges in communication, decision-making, and collaboration, parents remain deeply committed to their children's education.

In conclusion, the study supports the notion that parental involvement is a key factor in the educational development of children with ASD. Effective communication, trust-building, and collaboration among parents, schools, and communities are essential for creating a holistic and inclusive learning environment. These findings reinforce existing research, emphasizing the need for tailored support to meet the unique needs of families and foster positive educational outcomes for children with ASD.

Table 6 Association between Parental acceptance and Involvement to the Improvement of Learners with Autism Spectrum Disorder in terms of School Performance in Care Skills and Functional Academics

Variable	Factors	Spearman rho	p-value	Descriptive Interpretation	Decision
9.1 Care Skills					
9.1 A. Parental Acceptance	-0.17	0.38		Not Significant	No Significant Correlation
9.1 B. Parental Involvement	-0.06	0.75		Not Significant	No Significant Correlation
9.2 Functional Academics					
9.2 A. Parental Acceptance	0.13	0.33		Not Significant	No Significant Correlation
9.2 B. Parental Involvement	-0.11	0.39		Not Significant	No Significant Correlation

The findings of this study indicate that parental involvement does not significantly influence the development of care skills in learners. Additionally, variations in parental involvement do not show a significant association with changes in functional academic performance. However, it is essential to interpret these results with caution, as the sample size may impact statistical significance. Larger and more diverse samples could yield different outcomes, suggesting that further research is needed to confirm these findings.

One possible explanation for these results is the varying nature of parental involvement. It is possible that while general parental involvement does not directly enhance care skills or academic performance, specific types of engagement—such as targeted instructional support at home or structured reinforcement of school-based activities—may have a more meaningful impact. Additionally, other factors, such as teacher effectiveness, school resources, peer interactions, and the learners' abilities, could act as mediating variables that influence the relationship between parental involvement and student outcomes.

The results present a nuanced perspective when compared to previous studies. Barten's [65] research highlights the importance of parental support, particularly in extracurricular activities, suggesting that engagement beyond academic tasks plays a role in children's success. This aligns with Rensburg's [64] study, which advocates for stronger school-parent collaboration to enhance learning experiences for children with special needs. However, Derrick's [66] study presents a contrasting viewpoint, asserting a strong correlation between academic success and parental involvement. The discrepancy between these findings and the current study could be attributed to differences in research methodologies, the operational definition of parental involvement, or contextual factors such as socioeconomic status, parental education levels, and cultural influences.

Given the complex relationship between parental participation and academic achievement, future research should explore the specific dimensions of parental involvement that contribute most significantly to student development. Studies incorporating qualitative data, longitudinal tracking, and a broader range of external factors may provide deeper insights into the mechanisms through

which parental involvement influences learning outcomes in children with ASD.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the demographic profile of parents reveals that mothers constitute the majority of those surveyed, with an average of over six years of caregiving experience. Many of these parents hold a bachelor's degree, indicating their potential to advocate for their children while balancing work and caregiving responsibilities.

Learners with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) demonstrate a developing level of competence in both parent's skills and functional academics. This underscores the necessity for additional support and targeted interventions to enhance their abilities and academic achievements.

The study finds that while parents exhibit high self-efficacy in their parenting roles, overall parental acceptance remains low. This suggests that, despite difficulties in fully accepting their child's condition, parents remain committed to providing care and support. Parental involvement is notably high in parenting, volunteering, and home learning but varies in communication, decision-making, and community engagement.

Interestingly, no significant correlation was found between parental involvement and acceptance with the progress of learners in caregiving skills and functional academics. This finding diverges from previous studies that emphasize the positive impact of parental involvement on academic success (Derrick, [66]). One possible explanation is that the type and quality of parental involvement may be more important than its frequency. It is also possible that other variables—such as instructional quality, individualized education plans (IEPs), or external support services—play a greater role in influencing learning outcomes than parental involvement alone. The variation in findings highlights the complexity of factors affecting the development and academic progress of children with ASD.

Despite the challenges in parental acceptance, the high level of parental self-efficacy presents an opportunity to strengthen caregiver support systems. These results suggest the need for a more tailored approach to parental involvement, focusing on how parents engage with their children's education rather than the extent of their involvement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations aim to provide targeted actions that educators and policymakers can implement despite the absence of a significant correlation between parental involvement and learner outcomes:

1. Contextualized Parent Support Networks

While the study found no direct correlation between parental involvement and learners' academic performance, it does highlight the emotional and caregiving challenges parents face. Establishing structured peer support groups—particularly for mothers—can help address low parental acceptance by providing emotional support, parenting strategies, and coping mechanisms. The government through

DSWD and schools should provide training on how to cope with challenges face in parenting children with ASD.

2. Refining the Nature of Parental Involvement

Rather than increasing general parental involvement, the study suggests the need for targeted parental engagement. The LGU and DepEd should work collaboratively to build a Learning Resource Center and hire professionals to complete the multidisciplinary team for the IEP, such as behavioural therapists, speech therapists, and other specialists. This targeted approach ensures that parents receive the necessary support and resources to actively participate in their child's educational journey, ultimately enhancing learning outcomes.

3. Enhancing Communication and Decision-Making Strategies

The study identified mixed responses regarding parental involvement in school communication and decision-making. Schools should implement clearer and more transparent mechanisms to bridge this gap, including: monthly parent-teacher learning sessions to guide caregivers on best practices., digital engagement platforms where parents can access updates, share concerns, and collaborate with teachers and a structured parental advisory committee that ensures parents' voices are included in school policy discussions.

4. Data-Informed Intervention Programs

Given the findings that parental involvement does not significantly impact academic performance, it is crucial to explore other influential factors. Schools should conduct regular progress monitoring of learners to identify the variables that most contribute to the development of functional academics and care skills of children with ASD. This data can guide the development of intervention programs that integrate teacher-driven and parent-supported strategies for individualized learning.

5. Implementing the "Empowering Parents in Supporting Their Children with ASD" Program

Despite the study's finding that parental involvement does not directly influence academic performance, structured parental engagement can still enhance learner outcomes when strategically implemented. The proposed "Empowering Parents in Supporting Their Children with ASD" program should focus on: customized training based on parents' specific challenges in caregiving and education, guidance on evidence-based interventions that parents can use at home to reinforce school-based learning and collaboration with specialists to provide professional insights on ASD-focused parenting strategies.

6. Further Research on the Factors Contributing to Low Performance in Care Skills and Functional Academics Among Learners with ASD

Future studies should explore the underlying factors affecting learners with ASD's challenges in care skills and functional academics. Investigating these factors can help develop targeted interventions to improve their independence and overall learning outcomes.

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