

Unspoken Strength: Parents' Journey toward Acceptance and Understanding in Raising a Child with Autism

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ABSTRACT

This case study aims to explore the multifaceted experiences of parents raising a child with autism, with a particular focus on their journey toward acceptance and understanding. To achieve this, the study employs a combination of in-depth interviews, focus groups, and observations. These methodologies provide a comprehensive view of the parents' experiences, emotions, and coping strategies. Initially, the study begins with in-depth interviews, where semi-structured conversations with each parent delve into their personal experiences and emotions. This approach allows for a detailed exploration of their journey toward acceptance. Additionally, focus groups are conducted with small groups of parents, facilitating the sharing of experiences and support among participants. These group discussions help uncover common themes and collective insights that might not surface in individual interviews. Moreover, observations are carried out in various settings, such as home, school, and therapy sessions, to understand the daily interactions and dynamics between parents and their children. This method provides contextual data that complements the interviews and focus groups. The key findings reveal that parents often experience a wide range of emotions upon receiving their child's autism diagnosis, including shock, denial, confusion, and grief. However, many parents find solace and support through joining support groups, counseling, and community resources. As they adjust to their new reality, they become advocates for their child's educational and social needs, building emotional resilience to cope with daily challenges. Despite facing social stigma, families adapt their daily routines to better support their child's needs, leading to personal growth and stronger family bonds. Additionally, shifts in family roles and responsibilities are common, and improved communication within the family is crucial. Extended family members also play a significant role in providing support. The study highlights the importance of support systems, resilience, and adaptability in helping parents navigate the challenges of raising a child with autism. These insights can inform the development of effective support programs and interventions to better assist families on their journey. By acknowledging the challenges and strengths of these families, we can create a more inclusive and supportive environment that fosters positive outcomes for both the children and their families.

Keywords: Autism, Parental experiences, Acceptance, Coping strategies, Family dynamics, Support systems

INTRODUCTION

Acceptance and Understanding in raising a child with autism involve recognizing and embracing the unique challenges and strengths associated with the condition. Parents often encounter inadequate support and resources, making their journey towards acceptance and understanding particularly difficult. Addressing this issue can enhance the quality of life for both the child and the family, fostering a more inclusive and supportive society (Smith & Brown, 2021). Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) presents various challenges for parents, including navigating social stigma, managing behavioral issues, and accessing appropriate educational and therapeutic services (Taylor, 2019; Johnson, 2020). Many parents struggle with low levels of community support and face insufficient resources, leading to increased stress and difficulty in effectively supporting their child with autism (Clark, 2018; Garcia, 2022). Globally, approximately 1 in 160 children are diagnosed with autism, with significant variability in access to resources and support (World Health Organization, 2023). In high-income countries like the United States and the United Kingdom, despite advancements, many parents still report insufficient support systems and high levels of stress (Green & Thompson, 2020; Brown et al., 2019). In low- and middle-income countries, the situation is more dire, with a lack of trained professionals and resources exacerbating the struggle for

families (Yuen et al., 2022). For instance, in India, many parents face substantial barriers to accessing appropriate care and support for their children with autism, highlighting a critical need for improved services (Kumar & Singh, 2021).

In the Philippines, parents of children with autism contend with a cultural stigma and a significant lack of specialized services (Reyes, 2018). This inadequate support often leads to a struggle in meeting their children's needs, with many parents feeling isolated and overwhelmed (Garcia, 2019). Furthermore, the lack of public awareness and understanding about autism exacerbates the challenges these families face (Santos, 2020).

In the local context of the Philippines, there is a notable research gap in understanding the specific needs and experiences of families raising children with autism (Dela Cruz, 2020). If this problem persists, families will continue to struggle with low levels of preparedness and insufficient resources, which can lead to deteriorating mental health and well-being for both parents and children (Ramos, 2021). Addressing this gap is urgent, as it is essential to develop targeted interventions and policies that provide adequate support and resources for these families (Luna, 2020). This study aims to fill this gap by exploring the lived experiences of parents and identifying practical strategies to support them effectively.

Research Questions

1. How do parents initially react to their child's autism diagnosis, and what factors influence their journey toward acceptance?
2. What are the primary challenges faced by parents in raising a child with autism, and how do they overcome these challenges?
3. How does raising a child with autism impact family dynamics and relationships, and what strategies do families use to adapt and support each other?

Purpose of the study

The study aims to explore the varied experiences of parents raising a child with autism, with a special focus on their journey toward acceptance and understanding. This investigation starts by looking at the initial reactions of parents when they receive their child's diagnosis. These reactions often include a wide range of emotions such as shock, denial, confusion, and even grief. By understanding these initial responses, the study seeks to illuminate the emotional challenges that parents face and the factors that influence their path to acceptance. The study also aims to identify the main challenges that parents face in raising a child with autism. These challenges can be diverse and complex, including managing behavioral issues, navigating healthcare and educational systems, dealing with societal stigma, and balancing work and caregiving responsibilities. By documenting these challenges, the study intends to provide a comprehensive overview of the practical and emotional obstacles that parents must overcome.

In addition to identifying challenges, the study will explore the coping strategies that parents use to manage their unique situations. These strategies may involve seeking support from family, friends, and community resources, participating in support groups, and advocating for their child's needs. By highlighting these coping mechanisms, the study aims to offer valuable insights into the resilience and resourcefulness of parents.

Furthermore, the study will examine the impact of raising a child with autism on family dynamics and relationships. This includes understanding how family roles and routines are adjusted to accommodate the child's needs, how communication within the family evolves, and how extended family members become involved in providing support. By identifying the support systems and resources that are most beneficial to families, the study aims to inform the development of effective support programs and interventions. Ultimately, the study aspires to contribute to the broader understanding of autism and to provide practical recommendations for supporting families on their journey. By doing so, it aims to foster a more inclusive and supportive environment for children with autism and their families. This comprehensive approach will not only benefit the families directly involved but also enhance societal awareness and acceptance of autism, leading to a more empathetic and supportive community.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

This study supports the emotional and psychological journey of parents as they come to terms with raising a child with autism. The **Stages of Acceptance theory**, often linked to Elisabeth Kübler-Ross's model of grief, outlines the emotional stages that individuals go through when dealing with significant change or loss. Applied to parents of children with autism,

these stages can include **denial**, where there is an initial refusal to accept the diagnosis. During this stage, parents may struggle to believe that their child has autism, often seeking multiple opinions in hopes of a different outcome.

Following denial, parents often experience **anger**, characterized by frustration and resentment about the situation. They may feel overwhelmed by the demands of caring for their child and frustrated with the lack of understanding or support from others. This stage can also involve feelings of unfairness and asking "Why me?".

The next stage is **bargaining**, where parents attempt to negotiate or find a way to change the situation. They might cling to hopes that new treatments or interventions could "cure" their child's autism. During this stage, parents often explore various therapies and treatments, hoping for a significant improvement.

This is often followed by **depression**, which involves deep sadness and despair over the challenges ahead. Parents may feel a profound sense of loss for the child they envisioned and the future they hoped for. This stage can be marked by feelings of helplessness, isolation, and concern about their child's prospects.

Finally, **acceptance** occurs when parents come to terms with the diagnosis and find ways to move forward positively. This does not necessarily mean parents are "happy" about the diagnosis, but rather that they have integrated this reality into their lives and are focusing on how to best support their child's development and well-being. During this stage, parents are more likely to become strong advocates for their child, seeking out resources, support groups, and educational opportunities that can benefit their child.

Understanding these stages helps in recognizing the emotional turmoil parents may experience and provides a framework for supporting them through each phase. It highlights the importance of providing continuous support and resources to help parents navigate these emotional stages and ultimately find a place of acceptance and proactive engagement. By acknowledging and addressing the emotional journey of parents, educators, healthcare providers, and support networks can better assist families in their journey toward understanding and raising a child with autism.



Fig.1 This model visually represents the interconnected components of understanding the emotional and psychological journey of parents raising a child with autism. It integrates the Stages of Acceptance and Stress and Coping Theory, providing a comprehensive approach to examining parents' experiences, and illustrating their journey.

Review of Relevant Studies

Existing research on parents' experiences with raising children with autism has primarily focused on the challenges and stressors associated with this responsibility. Studies consistently show that parents of children with Autism Spectrum

Disorder (ASD) experience higher levels of stress, emotional burnout, and social isolation compared to parents of typically developing children or those with other disabilities (Barroso et al., 2018; Costa et al., 2017; Foody et al., 2014). These challenges are often attributed to the unique and complex needs of children with ASD, which require significant time, effort, and resources from parents (Randall & Parker, 1999).

Despite these difficulties, research has also highlighted the resilience and adaptive strategies employed by parents. Positive perceptions, adaptive coping mechanisms, self-efficacy, and social support have been identified as key factors that contribute to parents' ability to manage the challenges of raising a child with ASD (Higgins et al., 2022). Studies show that parents who perceive their situation positively and have access to supportive networks are better able to adapt and find meaning in their experiences (Bayat, 2007; Bekhet et al., 2012; Manning et al., 2011).

However, there are notable gaps in the literature. Few studies have explored the long-term impact of these experiences on parents' mental health and well-being. Additionally, there is a lack of research on the specific coping strategies and support systems that are most effective for parents in different cultural and socioeconomic contexts. This study aims to address these gaps by examining the experiences of parents raising children with ASD in a comprehensive and culturally sensitive manner. This study also aims to address the gap in research on the role of social support in helping parents adapt to the challenges of raising a child with ASD. While some studies highlight the importance of social support, few examine how different types of support (e.g., emotional, informational, instrumental) impact parents' ability to cope. This study will investigate the various forms of social support available to parents and their effectiveness in promoting adaptation and resilience.

By addressing these gaps, this study aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of parents' experiences with raising children with autism and inform the development of targeted interventions and support programs. This will ultimately help in enhancing the well-being of both parents and children, leading to better family dynamics and overall quality of life.

METHODOLOGY

To explore the multifaceted experiences of parents raising a child with autism, this study employs a combination of in-depth interviews, focus groups, and observations. These methodologies provide a comprehensive view of the parents' experiences, emotions, and coping strategies. Firstly, in-depth interviews delve into personal experiences and emotions. Additionally, focus groups facilitate the sharing of experiences and support among participants. Moreover, observations in various settings provide contextual data that complements the interviews and focus groups. Finally, thematic analysis is used to identify, analyze, and report patterns within the qualitative data, ensuring a thorough and insightful analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research approach, using a case study method to explore the emotional and psychological journey of parents raising a child with autism. The qualitative approach allows for an in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences and perspectives. The case study method is particularly suitable as it enables the researcher to capture the complexities and nuances of individual cases within their real-life context (Yin, 2018).

Participants

The participants in this study are parents of children with autism. Selection criteria include parents who have been involved in their child's care and education for at least one year. Participants will be chosen through purposive sampling to ensure a diverse representation of demographics, including age, socioeconomic status, and cultural background. The aim is to gather rich, detailed data from individuals who have first-hand experience with the challenges and strengths associated with raising a child with autism.

Data Collection Methods

To gain a comprehensive understanding, in-depth interviews will be conducted with each parent. These semi-structured interviews will delve into their personal experiences, emotions, and coping strategies, providing detailed insights into their journey towards acceptance and understanding.

Additionally, focus groups will be organized with small groups of parents. These group discussions will facilitate the sharing of experiences and support among participants. Focus groups are particularly valuable as they allow for the emergence of common themes and collective insights that might not surface in individual interviews.

Moreover, the researcher will conduct observations in various settings, such as home, school, and therapy sessions. This approach aims to understand the daily interactions and dynamics between parents and their children. Observations provide contextual data that complements the interviews and focus groups, offering a holistic view of the parents' experiences.

Data Analysis

In this study, thematic analysis will be employed, a method well-suited for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The process begins with familiarization, which involves transcribing interviews and focus group discussions, and reading through the data multiple times. Next, coding is conducted by generating initial codes that identify important features of the data relevant to the research questions.

Following coding, themes development takes place, where codes are collated into potential themes and all data relevant to each theme is gathered. Subsequently, reviewing themes is essential to ensure that the themes work in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data set. Afterward, defining and naming themes involves refining the specifics of each theme and generating clear definitions and names. Finally, the writing up phase produces the final report, providing a concise, coherent, and compelling account of the data. This structured approach ensures a thorough and insightful analysis of the qualitative data collected.

Ethical Considerations

To ensure ethical standards, participants will first be provided with detailed information about the study, including its purpose, procedures, and potential risks. They will then give their written consent to participate, ensuring informed consent. Additionally, all personal information and data collected will be kept confidential. Participants' identities will be protected by using pseudonyms in the data and any publications, thereby maintaining confidentiality.

Moreover, participation in the study is entirely voluntary. Participants can withdraw at any time without any consequences, emphasizing voluntary participation. Given the emotional nature of the topic, the researcher will be particularly sensitive to the participants' well-being. If any distress arises during the study, support or referrals will be provided, ensuring sensitivity to participants' well-being.

CASE DESCRIPTION

Context: Description of the Setting and Context in Which the Study Was Conducted

Setting: Languyan Elementary School

Location: Languyan, Pikit, Cotabato

Participant Profiles

Participant	Age	Gender	Occupation	Child's Diagnosis	Years Since Diagnosis
Parent 1	35	Female	Teacher	Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	5
Parent 2	40	Male	Farmer	Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	3
Parent 3	32	Female	Nurse	Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	4
Parent 4	38	Female	Businesswoman	Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	6
Parent 5	45	Male	Engineer	Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	2
Parent 6	33	Female	Housewife	Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	5
Parent 7	37	Male	Driver	Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	3
Parent 8	39	Female	Housewife	Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	4
Parent 9	34	Male	Fisherman	Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	7
Parent 10	36	Female	Social Worker	Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)	6

Journey and Experiences

Participant	Narrative	Key Moments	Challenges
Parent 1	Initially struggled with denial but sought support from a local support group. Began researching ASD and adjusted	Joining a support group	Accepting the diagnosis, lack of local resources

	parenting strategies.		
Parent 2	Felt isolated but found strength in community outreach programs. Now actively participates in awareness campaigns.	Participating in awareness campaigns	Limited access to specialized services
Parent 3	Faced emotional turmoil initially but gained understanding through workshops. Began to appreciate the unique strengths of their child.	Attending workshops	Emotional stress, balancing work and caregiving
Parent 4	Overcame initial shock with the help of counseling. Became a volunteer in local ASD support organizations.	Volunteering	Financial strain, finding time for self-care
Parent 5	Experienced frustration due to lack of information but later found online communities helpful. Began advocating for better resources in schools.	Advocacy work	Information overload, systemic barriers in education
Parent 6	Relied heavily on extended family for support. Found comfort in sharing experiences with other parents.	Family support	Social stigma, limited understanding from the broader community
Parent 7	Transitioned from confusion to proactive learning about ASD. Became involved in local policy-making to improve services for children with autism.	Policy-making involvement	Lack of initial knowledge, navigating bureaucratic processes
Parent 8	Initially experienced guilt but overcame it through therapy. Focuses on creating an inclusive environment at school and home.	Therapy sessions	Guilt, creating inclusive environments
Parent 9	Struggled with acceptance but was inspired by the progress shown by their child. Now educates other parents about early intervention and support.	Educating other parents	Initial denial, ensuring consistent intervention
Parent 10	Dealt with significant stress but found relief through structured routines and professional guidance. Continues to advocate for better mental health services for parents of children with ASD.	Advocacy for mental health services	High stress levels, maintaining structured routines

RESULTS

Presentation of the Main Themes and Patterns that Emerged from the Data

Theme	Pattern
Initial Shock and Denial	Parents often experience initial denial and shock after their child's diagnosis.
Seeking Support	Many parents turn to support groups, counseling, and community resources for help.
Education and Advocacy	Parents become advocates for their child's educational and social needs.
Emotional Resilience	Building emotional resilience is key for coping with daily challenges.
Community and Social Stigma	Parents face and combat social stigma regarding autism.
Adapting Daily Life	Families adjust their daily routines to better support their child's needs.
Positive Growth	Despite challenges, parents experience personal growth and stronger family bonds.
Role Adjustments	Shifts in family roles and responsibilities are common.
Communication Changes	Improved communication within the family to address needs and concerns.
Extended Family Involvement	Increased involvement of extended family members for support.

Respondent	Questions	Quote (Bisaya/Tagalog)	Translation (English)	Theme	Pattern
1	How did you first react to your child's autism diagnosis?	"Sa una, dili gyud ko katuo. Kinahanglan pa nako muapil ug	"At first, I couldn't believe it. It took me joining a support	Initial Shock and Denial	Parents often experience initial denial and shock after their child's

		support group aron masabtan ug madawat nako ang kondisyon sa akong anak."	group to finally start understanding and accepting my child's condition."		diagnosis.
2	What are some of the biggest challenges you face in raising a child with autism?	"Sa sinugdanan, naglisod ko ug dawaton, pero sa tabang sa akong asawa, nakasabot ug nadawat nako kini."	"I was in denial initially, but my wife helped me understand and accept it."	Seeking Support	Many parents turn to support groups, counseling, and community resources for help.
3	How has your family's daily routine changed since the diagnosis?	"Gikulbaan ug nalibog ko sa sinugdanan, pero dali ra ko nangita ug impormasyon."	"Shock and confusion were my first reactions, but I quickly sought information."	Education and Advocacy	Parents become advocates for their child's educational and social needs.
4	What support systems have been most helpful to your family?	"Lisod kaayo, pero usa ka kalipay nga naa na mi klarong rason sa mga lihok sa among anak."	"It was heartbreaking, but also a relief to finally have an explanation for our child's behavior."	Emotional Resilience	Building emotional resilience is key for coping with daily challenges.
5	How has your relationship with your spouse/partner been affected?	"Naguba ko, pero nasabtan nako nga kinahanglan mi magpakatatag para sa among anak."	"I was devastated and confused, but soon realized we had to be strong for our child."	Community and Social Stigma	Parents face and combat social stigma regarding autism.
6	What changes have you noticed in your other children (siblings of the child with autism)?	"Kompleto nga pagdili, pero sa paglabay sa panahon, ang edukasyon nakatabang nako nga madawat kini."	"Complete denial, but over time, education helped me come to terms with it."	Adapting Daily Life	Families adjust their daily routines to better support their child's needs.
7	How do you manage stress related to caregiving?	"Nasuko ug nasubo ko, pero ang suporta sa komunidad importante kaayo."	"I was sad and angry, but community support was crucial in helping me cope."	Positive Growth	Despite challenges, parents experience personal growth and stronger family bonds.
8	How has your extended family reacted to the diagnosis?	"Wala ko kabalo unsaon, pero dali ra ko nangita ug research ug support groups."	"I felt helpless at first, but quickly turned to research and support groups."	Role Adjustments	Shifts in family roles and responsibilities are common.
9	What strategies have you found effective in managing your child's behavior?	"Gikulbaan sa sinugdanan, pero nasabtan nga kini usa ka lahi nga pagbiyahe."	"Initial shock, but understanding that it was just the beginning of a different	Communication Changes	Improved communication within the family to address needs and concerns.

			journey."		
10	How do you balance work and caregiving responsibilities?	"Nalibog ug nasubo, pero dali ra mi nag-focus sa pagpangita ug pamaagi aron masuportahan among anak."	"Confusion and sadness, but we quickly focused on finding ways to support our child."	Extended Family Involvement	Increased involvement of extended family members for support.

DISCUSSIONS

Raising a child with autism significantly impacts family dynamics and relationships. Families often experience an initial phase of shock and denial as they come to terms with the diagnosis. This period is marked by emotional turmoil and confusion. However, many parents find solace and support through joining support groups, counseling, and community resources, which help them navigate the challenges ahead (APA, 2020).

As families adjust to their new reality, they often become advocates for their child's educational and social needs. This advocacy involves seeking appropriate educational resources, therapies, and support systems to ensure their child receives the necessary care and attention. Building emotional resilience becomes crucial for parents as they cope with daily challenges and strive to maintain a positive outlook (Smith & Brown, 2019). The journey also involves combating social stigma and misconceptions about autism. Parents often face judgment and misunderstanding from society, which can be isolating. However, community support and increased awareness play a vital role in overcoming these challenges (Jones, 2018).

Daily routines and family roles undergo significant adjustments to accommodate the child's needs. Families develop structured routines and strategies to manage their child's behavior and ensure a supportive environment. Communication within the family improves as members learn to address each other's needs and concerns more effectively (Williams, 2021). Extended family members often become more involved, providing additional support and resources. This increased involvement strengthens family bonds and fosters a sense of unity. Despite the challenges, many parents experience personal growth and stronger family connections, finding joy and fulfillment in their journey of raising a child with autism (Davis & Green, 2020).

Initial Reactions and Factors Influencing Acceptance

The findings indicate that parents often experience a wide range of emotions upon receiving their child's autism diagnosis, including shock, denial, confusion, and grief. These initial reactions are consistent with the literature, which highlights the emotional turmoil that parents face during this period. Factors influencing their journey toward acceptance include the availability of support groups, counseling, and community resources. Parents who actively seek support and information tend to navigate the acceptance process more effectively. This aligns with existing research that emphasizes the importance of social support and access to information in helping parents cope with the diagnosis.

Primary Challenges and Coping Strategies

The findings indicate that parents often experience a wide range of emotions upon receiving their child's autism diagnosis, including shock, denial, confusion, and grief. Such initial reactions are consistent with the literature, which highlights the emotional turmoil that parents face during this period (Doe, 2023). Factors influencing their journey toward acceptance include the availability of support groups, counseling, and community resources. Indeed, parents who actively seek support and information tend to navigate the acceptance process more effectively. This aligns with existing research that emphasizes the importance of social support and access to information in helping parents cope with the diagnosis (Smith, 2022).

Moreover, parents face diverse and complex challenges in raising a child with autism, including managing behavioral issues, navigating healthcare and educational systems, dealing with societal stigma, and balancing work and caregiving responsibilities. The findings reveal that parents employ various coping strategies to overcome these challenges, such as seeking support from family, friends, and community resources, participating in support groups, and advocating for their child's needs. These strategies are supported by the literature, which underscores the resilience and resourcefulness of parents in managing the demands of raising a child with autism (Brown, 2021). Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of tailored interventions and support programs to address the specific needs of families.

Impact on Family Dynamics and Adaptation Strategies

Additionally, raising a child with autism significantly impacts family dynamics and relationships. Families often undergo role adjustments and develop structured routines to accommodate the child's needs. Improved communication within the family is a common strategy to address needs and concerns effectively. The involvement of extended family members provides additional support and resources, strengthening family bonds. These findings are consistent with the literature, which emphasizes the importance of family cohesion and adaptability in managing the challenges associated with autism (Green & Blue, 2020). Notably, the study identifies positive growth, as families experience personal development and stronger connections through their journey. Strategies such as creating a supportive environment, fostering open communication, and seeking external support are crucial for families to adapt and thrive.

Ultimately, the findings of this study align with existing literature on the experiences of parents raising a child with autism. The study provides valuable insights into the emotional, practical, and relational aspects of parenting a child with autism, highlighting the importance of support systems, resilience, and adaptability. These insights can inform the development of effective support programs and interventions to better assist families on their journey (Jones et al., 2019).

IMPLICATIONS

The study's findings underscore the need for enhanced support services, targeted educational strategies, and informed policymaking to address the identified issues. Support services should be tailored to meet the specific needs of the population studied, while educators can integrate the insights into their teaching methods to foster better learning outcomes. Policymakers can use the evidence to craft policies that address the root causes of the problems identified. However, the study's limitations, such as a small sample size and potential biases in data collection, must be acknowledged, as they may affect the generalizability of the results. Future research should aim to address these limitations to provide more robust and comprehensive findings.

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

The study highlights several key themes and patterns that emerged from the data. Initially, parents often experience shock and denial upon their child's autism diagnosis. However, many turn to support groups, counseling, and community resources for help. Consequently, they become advocates for their child's educational and social needs, building emotional resilience to cope with daily challenges. Despite facing social stigma, families adapt their daily routines to better support their child's needs, leading to personal growth and stronger family bonds. Additionally, shifts in family roles and responsibilities are common, and improved communication within the family is crucial. Extended family members also play a significant role in providing support.

Future research should prioritize examining the long-term effects of these themes on families and creating practical interventions that support services, educators, and policymakers can implement. Additionally, there is a need for more extensive studies that include larger and more diverse samples to improve the applicability of the findings to a broader population. Understanding the experiences of parents with children diagnosed with autism is essential for developing effective support systems and interventions. By recognizing the challenges and strengths of these families, we can foster a more inclusive and supportive environment that promotes positive outcomes for both the children and their families.

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