





Examining the Psychological and Emotional Adjustment of Parents of Children with Intellectual Disabilities

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E d i t o r	R e v i e w e r s
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1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The methodology states that thematic analysis was conducted using NVivo, but the process is only broadly outlined. The paper should specify whether an inductive or deductive approach was used, how themes were validated, and whether inter-coder reliability was assessed.

The study discusses stress, resilience, and coping strategies but does not define these constructs with citations from psychological literature. Consider operationalizing these terms in the methods section to ensure conceptual clarity.

The study states that “participants were recruited through online platforms, including parenting forums and social media.” Given that social media recruitment can introduce ethical concerns regarding informed consent, privacy, and potential distress, it would be important to clarify how these risks were mitigated.

The paper discusses “marital strain and sibling adjustments” but does not explore whether there were gender differences in how mothers and fathers experienced these challenges. Including such an analysis would provide a more nuanced understanding of parental adjustment.

The statement: “Parents frequently faced judgment, isolation, and stereotyping.” would be stronger if contextualized within a cultural framework. Is stigma more pronounced in certain sociocultural contexts? Adding references to comparative studies on stigma across different cultures would strengthen this section.

The study finds that “some parents engaged in professional counseling, while others relied on informal support networks.” However, there is no discussion on whether certain interventions were more effective than others. If possible, discussing which strategies led to better adjustment outcomes would be useful.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

In the Findings section, the discussion of parental stress mentions “higher levels of anxiety and depression compared to parents of typically developing children (Buthelezi & Mawila, 2024).” However, no direct comparison with a control group is present in the study. If this is a literature-based claim, it should be explicitly stated.

The phrase “grieving process involves mourning not only for the child they had imagined but also for the envisioned future they had anticipated for their child” in the introduction is a significant psychological claim. It would be beneficial to explicitly tie this to existing grief models, such as Kübler-Ross’s stages of grief or the Dual Process Model of Coping.

The paper includes multiple direct quotes from participants, such as: “I just couldn’t believe it at first. I kept thinking they had made a mistake.” While these are valuable, the study does not describe whether pseudonyms were assigned or if demographic information was linked to each quotation. Clarifying this would enhance ethical transparency.

The Findings section states that “financial strain due to the increased cost of specialized care and reduced work opportunities for caregiving parents exacerbates the psychological burden.” This is an important finding, but the discussion does not address any existing policies or economic support systems that could alleviate these burdens.

The discussion mentions “cognitive reframing” as a coping strategy, but it is not clear whether parents were engaging in spontaneous reframing or had received professional psychological guidance. This distinction could impact the interpretation of findings.

The study acknowledges that “the sample was limited to parents who were willing to participate in online interviews.” However, it does not discuss the potential bias of self-selection (i.e., whether parents with extreme stress or those without internet access were underrepresented). This should be explicitly addressed.

The study captures a cross-sectional snapshot of parental adjustment. However, psychological adaptation is often a dynamic process. Consider acknowledging this limitation and suggesting that future research employ longitudinal designs.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the document.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.