

Parental Involvement and Challenges in Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) and their Influences on the Social-Emotional Development of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the parental involvement and challenges in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and their influence on the social-emotional development of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) within selected Special Education (SPED) programs in the Division of Cebu Province, specifically Daanbantayan Central Elementary School and Liloan Central School, during the School Year 2025–2026. The findings indicate that parents of children with ASD undergoing ABA therapy experience significant challenges across logistical, emotional, social, and systemic domains, with financial burden, parental guilt, difficulties in social connection, and long waiting lists for services emerging as key concerns. The study also provides evidence supporting the effectiveness of ABA therapy in enhancing emotional and social development, particularly in strengthening emotional bonds with family members and caregivers. Furthermore, statistical analysis revealed a significant relationship between the extent of parental challenges and the social-emotional development of children with ASD across all dimensions of parental challenges examined. It was highly recommended for the implementation of the proposed intervention plan for SPED teachers and parents, encouraging SPED teachers to strengthen collaboration with parents through consistent communication and training, and urging school administrators to develop policies and allocate resources to improve ABA therapy accessibility.

Keywords: Special Education, Parental Involvement, Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Therapy, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Descriptive-Correlational

INTRODUCTION

This research examined how parental involvement influences the connection between Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and the social-emotional growth of autistic children. The study will take place during the 2025-2026 academic year at Daanbantayan Central Elementary School and Liloan Central School in Cebu Province, both of which provide Special Education (SPED) services.

Neurodevelopmental differences, notably autism spectrum disorder (ASD), pose significant challenges for individuals and communities globally. Although prevalence rates fluctuate geographically, the widespread effects of ASD are undeniable.

Characterized by reduced social engagement, restricted interests, and atypical responses to sensory input, most children with autism show signs before they turn three, and boys are diagnosed more often than girls. While early perspectives considered children with ASD untrainable, specialized interventions, such as Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), have demonstrated significant potential for improving developmental outcomes (Bordini et al., 2024).

The global rise in ASD diagnoses underscores the urgent need for effective interventions, with early intervention proven crucial for improving long-term outcomes. Extensive research confirms Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) as a highly effective intervention, significantly improving multiple aspects of life for autistic children.

With autism rates on the rise in China, there's a growing need for Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy. For children in care, ABA helps them learn essential life skills like communication and self-care, encouraging good behavior and reducing challenging behaviors. It uses positive reinforcement and real-life situations so kids can use what they learn in different places. This is especially important because caring for a child with autism can be very stressful for families, and many autistic children need extra support with daily tasks (Marshall, 2022).

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD), categorized as a neurodevelopmental disorder within the DSM-5 diagnostic framework, is characterized by persistent deficits across social interaction, communication, and behavioral domains, manifesting significantly from early childhood onward. These pervasive challenges, encompassing profound limitations in social-emotional competencies and activities of daily living, exert a considerable impediment to holistic development. Social-emotional functioning, encompassing the requisite skills for effective interpersonal engagement, including emotional regulation, decision-making, problem-solving, empathy, and perseverance, represents a critical area of deficit for individuals with ASD. Consequently, research dedicated to the enhancement of social and communicative capacities assumes paramount importance in optimizing the well-being of both individuals with ASD and their families (Bordini et al., 2024).

The effectiveness of ABA is not solely dependent on the therapy itself; parental involvement plays a critical mediating role. Autistic individuals face developmental hurdles stemming from neurological differences affecting communication, social interaction, and behavior (Hodges et al., 2020). Active parental engagement is crucial, particularly in educational settings. Studies consistently demonstrate that parental participation in therapeutic interventions significantly enhances a child's progress (Sneed & Samelson, 2022; Frohli et al., 2021).

ABA therapy, a leading evidence-based approach to autism treatment (Raches et al., 2019), uses behavioral techniques to build positive behaviors and decrease problem behaviors. A six-part model highlights the diverse ways parents can effectively support their children: through their parenting style, communication with school and therapists, volunteering, home-based learning, collaborative decision-making, and community involvement.

Within the Philippine context, access to quality ASD services, particularly in rural areas like Daanbantayan, Cebu remains a significant challenge. Understanding the specific dynamics of parental involvement within this cultural context is therefore crucial.

This study addresses a critical gap in understanding the effectiveness of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) for autistic children by examining the mediating role of parental involvement within the specific cultural and geographical context of Daanbantayan, Cebu, Philippines. Focusing on parents or primary caregivers, given their central role in childcare, focusing on them helps us understand how their involvement affects how well ABA therapy works.

The aim is to improve the well-being and social integration of autistic individuals by evaluating the impact of an evidence-based ABA program on key developmental areas in institutionalized children with ASD. Findings will be used in the development of more effective and culturally sensitive ABA interventions for children with ASD.

Legal Basis

Republic Act No. 7277 (Magna Carta for Disabled Persons): This foundational law prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities (PWDs), including those with ASD, and mandates equal access to education, employment, and healthcare. It promotes their integration into mainstream society.

Riesena, Morgana and Griffin (2015) opine that successful employment outcomes for people with disabilities are more of the norm today. Those are civil rights where the social barriers are lessened for people with disabilities. Which also includes supporting equal education, economic, and employment opportunities which is now part of the Philippine culture. To bolster this practice, Republic Act No. 10524 was passed in 2013

amending Republic Act No. 7277 or the Magna Carta for PWDs. These laws require government agencies to reserve at least 1 percent of their total positions to PWDs.

The Magna Carta accords certain rights explained by Moscoso (2017), and privileges to PWDs, including those regarding employment, and grants equal employment opportunity. It states that no disabled person will be denied access to opportunities for suitable employment. In other words, a qualified disabled employee shall be subject to the same terms and conditions of employment. The same compensation, privileges, benefits, fringe benefits, incentives or allowances as a qualified able-bodied person shall also be given.

Republic Act No. 9442, also known as the "Accessibility Law," significantly amends Republic Act No. 7277 (Magna Carta for Disabled Persons). While RA 7277 established the basic rights and protections for persons with disabilities (PWDs), RA 9442 expands upon these, providing additional privileges and addressing specific accessibility concerns. The focus on additional privileges for PWDs, particularly the discounts on goods and services, aims to alleviate some of the financial burdens faced by individuals with disabilities and their families.

RA 9442 provides a broader definition of disability, encompassing a wider range of impairments and functional limitations. This ensures that more individuals receive the protections and benefits intended under the law. This is the most widely known aspect of RA 9442. The law mandates discounts on various goods and services for PWDs. These discounts apply to a broad range of establishments, including transportation, restaurants, hotels, recreational facilities, and many others. The specific percentage of discount varies depending on the type of good or service.

Republic Act No. 10627 (Anti-Bullying Act of 2013): This law protects children with ASD from bullying and harassment in schools, mandating anti-bullying policies and creating a safer learning environment.

Republic Act No. 11223 (Universal Health Care Act): While not specifically mentioning autism, this act aims to improve healthcare access for all Filipinos, including those with special needs. It indirectly supports access to necessary therapies and medical treatments for ASD.

Significance of the Study

This study emphasized the significance of parental involvement parental involvement and challenges in Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) and their influences on social-emotional development of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). It explored how existing programs help the parents with children that have autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The findings aim to inform the development of intervention plan that will help the parents to get involve in the social-emotional development of their children. The results of this research could be beneficial for school administrators, teachers, learners, parents, community, the researcher, and future researchers.

Objectives of the Study

The study aimed to evaluate the parental involvement and challenges in Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) and their influences on the social-emotional development of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in selected schools offering Special Education (SPED) programs within the Division of Cebu Province, particularly at Daanbantayan Central Elementary School, Liloan Central School, and Carmen Central School, during the School Year 2025–2026. The findings of this research served as the basis for formulating an intervention plan designed to assist both parents and SPED teachers in addressing the identified challenges, enhancing collaboration, and strengthening the implementation of ABA therapy to promote the holistic social-emotional development of children with ASD.

Statement of the Problem

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the demographic profiles of the parents in terms of:

1.1 age and gender

1.2 highest educational attainment

1.3 job sector

1.4 household composition

2. To what extent do parents experience challenges relate to their child's participation in ABA therapy in terms of:

2.1 logistical challenges;

2.2 emotional challenges;

2.3 social challenges, and

2.4 systematic challenges?

3. How do these parental challenges affect the social- emotional development of children with ASD?

4. How effective is ABA therapy in supporting the social-emotional development of children with ASD?

5. Is there a significant relationship between the extent of the parental challenges and the social – emotional development of the children with ASD?

6. Based on the findings, what intervention plan can be proposed?

Research Methodology

This study used a descriptive-correlational design to examine parental involvement, challenges associated with ABA, and their relationship to the social-emotional development of children with ASD. This design allowed for the description of key variables and the analysis of their statistical associations without manipulation.

Data were gathered through a structured survey questionnaire developed by the researcher and adapted from validated tools used in previous studies on parental involvement and ASD interventions (Fernandez et al., 2024; Zhou et al., 2019; Shiri et al., 2020).

Instrument Structure

Part 1: Demographic information (parent age, gender, educational attainment, occupation, child's age and gender, household composition).

Part 2: Extent of parental challenges related to ABA (logistical, emotional, social, and systemic).

Part 3: Perceived effects of these challenges on the child's social-emotional development.

Part 4: Perceived effectiveness of ABA therapy.

The instrument underwent content validation by field experts, and revisions were made to ensure clarity and relevance.

Research Design

This section outlined the research design, study flow, research setting, respondents, research instruments, data collection methods, statistical analysis, and scoring procedure, all of which are essential for achieving the purpose of this study.

Design

The study used descriptive – correlational design to investigate the parental involvement and challenges in Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) and their influences on the social-emotional development of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The study employed a descriptive–correlational design because it is suitable for examining the relationship between variables without manipulating them.

This design was appropriate since the study seeks to describe the level of parental involvement and the challenges in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), and to determine how these factors influence the social-emotional development of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). By using this design, the study can provide both a descriptive account of the variables and a statistical analysis of their relationship.

It primarily focused on ensuring the relationships between variables using statistical analysis. Data will be collected through standardized questionnaires which will be administered to parents and teachers to assess the extent do parents experience challenges related to their child's participation in ABA therapy in terms of logistical challenges, emotional challenges, social challenges, and systematic challenges, effect of parental challenges to the social- emotional development of children with ASD and the effectiveness of ABA therapy in supporting the social-emotional development of children with ASD.

Environment

This study was conducted at Daanbantayan Central School, Liloan Central School and Carmen Central School, all of these schools belong to the Division of Cebu Province. Daanbantayan Central Elementary School stands as an educational cornerstone in the community, catering to a substantial and diverse student population of 1735 children spanning the Kindergarten to Grade Six levels. This inclusivity extends to learners with Special Education (SPED) needs, emphasizing the school's commitment to providing education that accommodates a broad range of learning requirements.

Guided by a School Principal and supported by a devoted team of 62 teachers, the institution operates as a collaborative hub for academic growth and development. The student body mirrors the socioeconomic tapestry of the community, embodying a rich diversity that reflects the broader spectrum of backgrounds within the region. Notably, the community's reliance on maritime activities is evident in the backgrounds of many learners, whose families depend on the sea for their livelihoods.

Some students' parents engage in occupations such as sikad drivers and market vendors, contributing significantly to the local economy through transportation and trade. The presence of middle-class families further enriches the school community, creating a dynamic microcosm that encapsulates various economic situations.

Liloan Central School, located in Liloan, Cebu, Philippines, is a public educational institution dedicated to providing quality education to its students. Liloan Central School, located in Liloan, Cebu, Philippines, houses a Special Education (SPED) Center dedicated to providing quality education to students with special needs.

The SPED Center offers specialized programs tailored to the unique learning requirements of children with disabilities, ensuring an inclusive and supportive learning environment. The SPED Center actively engages in community events that promote inclusivity and awareness. For example, on January 19, 2024, the school celebrated its annual fiesta in honor of Señor Santo Niño, featuring various activities that foster community spirit and cultural appreciation.

As a public school, it is committed to providing accessible and high-quality elementary education, ensuring that students from diverse backgrounds receive the tools and knowledge necessary to build a strong academic foundation. The school's curriculum is designed to foster academic excellence, character development, and social responsibility, equipping students with the skills needed to succeed in higher education and beyond.

Instrument

This study aimed to investigate the parental involvement and challenges in Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) and their influences on the social-emotional development of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The primary research instrument was a structured survey questionnaire developed by the researcher and patterned after existing instruments used in similar studies on parental involvement and autism interventions (Fernandez et al., 2024; Zhou et al., 2019; Shiri et al., 2020).

Part 1 of the questionnaire focused on gathering demographic profiles in terms of age and gender, highest educational attainment, job/occupation, child's age and gender with ASD and household composition.

Part 2 of the survey questionnaire assessed the extent which the parents have experienced impacts related to the ABA therapy on the children with ASD in terms of logistical challenges, emotional challenges, social challenges and systematic challenges.

Part 3 of the survey questionnaire assessed the and effect of parental challenges to the social- emotional development of children with ASD. Lastly,

Part 4 contained the effectivity of the ABA Therapy in the emotional-social development of the children with ASD.

Data Gathering Procedure

Preliminary Stage. The researcher sought approval by submitting an authorization letter to the Schools Division Superintendent and the respondents' principal. Once approved, the questionnaires will be distributed to the respondents. After they have completed their responses, the instruments will be collected.

Data Gathering Stage. To emphasize the importance of the study, the researcher held a pre-conference with the participants. During the session, the content of the questionnaire and the steps for completing it were explained. The survey questionnaires were then distributed and collected once the participants had completed them.

Post Data Gathering Stage. The data were tabulated, presented and interpreted using the appropriate statistical tools. This was presented in tabular presentation, and the result was the basis in crafting the intervention plan.

Statistical Treatment

The data in this study was analyzed using the specified statistical methods to identify solutions to the problem of the study.

Frequency count. An attempt to determine the number of occurrences of specific units in specific variables.

Simple Percentage. It was employed to calculate the percentage of responses from teachers based on the demographic profile variables.

Standard deviation (SD). It was used as statistical measure that shows how much the values in a data set vary or spread out from the mean (average).

Weighted Mean. It was used to get the average on the extent which the parents have experienced impacts related to the ABA therapy on the children with ASD in terms of logistical challenges, emotional challenges, social challenges and systematic challenges and the effect of parental challenges to the social- emotional development of children with ASD.

Pearson Correlation Coefficient. It was used to compare significant relationship between the extent of the parental challenges and the social – emotional development of the children with ASD.

Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations were essential in research to uphold integrity, avoid mistakes, and foster accountability, trust, mutual respect, and fairness among all involved. In this study, ethical treatment of participants will be a top priority, ensuring that their information remains confidential and anonymous, informed consent is obtained, and participation is entirely voluntary with the freedom to withdraw at any time. Participants will be treated with respect, and the study will be conducted impartially, without bias or political influence, concentrating solely on the impact of professional development on enhancing the practices of special education teachers.

RESULTS

This chapter presented the analyses and interpretations of the data gathered from the study, which aimed to evaluate the parental involvement and challenges in Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) and their influences on the social-emotional development of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in selected schools offering Special Education (SPED) programs within the Division of Cebu Province, particularly at Daanbantayan Central Elementary School, Liloan Central School, and Carmen Central School, during the School Year 2025–2026, as the basis for the proposed intervention plan in the education system.

The data gathered included the profile of the respondents in terms of their age and gender, highest educational attainment, job sector, child's age with ASD, and household composition. It also assessed the extent to which parents experienced challenges related to their child's participation in ABA therapy in terms of logistical, emotional, social, and systemic challenges, and how these factors affected the social-emotional development of children with ASD. Lastly, the study evaluated the effectiveness of ABA therapy in supporting the social-emotional development of children with ASD.

With the help of the respondents' answers to the survey questionnaire, the following results and findings were presented and discussed as follows:

Profile Of the Respondents

This section presented the profile of the respondents in terms of their age and gender, highest educational attainment, job sector, child's age with ASD and household composition from the parents with ASD children in selected schools offering SPED Program in the Division of Cebu Province, particularly at the Daanbantayan Central Elementary School and Liloan Central School.

Age and Gender

This section presented the demographic profile of the participants with respect to their age and gender characteristics. The data obtained were systematically organized and displayed in the succeeding tables. Specifically, Table 2 illustrated the distribution of respondents according to age and gender.

Table 2 Age and Gender of the Respondents (n = 50)

Age (in years)	Female		Male		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
40 above	22	44.00	1	2.00	23	46.00
35 — 39	14	28.00	2	4.00	16	32.00
30 — 34	7	14.00	0	0	7	14.00
25 — 29	2	4.00	1	2.00	3	6.00

20 — 24	1	2.00	0	0	1	2.00
Total	46	94.00	4	0.06	50	100.00

Table 2 provided a detailed overview of the age and gender distribution among the respondents. Majority of the respondents aged 40 years and above, constituting 46.00 percent of the total. Within this group, females represent a significant majority (44.00%), while males account for a comparatively small proportion (2.00%). The next most prevalent age cohort is the 35–39-year range, representing 32.00% of the respondent pool.

Similar to the older age group, females dominate this category (28.00%), with males comprising a minor fraction (4.00%). Individuals aged 30–34 years constitute 14.00% of the sample, and this entire segment is composed of female respondents. The 25–29-year age bracket accounts for 6.00% of the total, with a distribution of 4.00% female and 2.00% male. The youngest age group, 20–24 years, represents the smallest proportion of respondents at only 2.00%, and this group is exclusively female.

This demographic profile implied that the teaching cohort under this study is predominantly composed of female educators, many of whom are in the mid to later phases of their professional careers. This gender and age distribution may have implications for the interpretation of study findings, particularly concerning perspectives on professional development, teaching practices, and challenges encountered in the field.

The impact of parental age on ASD risk and cognitive development may be contingent upon the child's pre-existing familial risk for ASD. Specifically, the direction of the association appears to be reversed in this high-risk population. These findings underscore the need for further research to disentangle the intricate interplay between parental age, genetic predisposition, and neurodevelopmental trajectories in ASD (Lyall, et al, 2020).

Highest Educational Attainment

This section highlights the distribution of parental educational attainment, which serves as an important factor in understanding their capacity to access resources, engage in interventions, and contribute to the overall well-being of their children with ASD. The presentation of data on the highest educational attainment of parents with children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) provides insights into their academic background and its possible influence on child-rearing practices and support for their children's development.

Table 3 Highest Educational Attainment of the Respondents (n = 50)

Educational Attainment	F	%
Doctorate Level	4	8.00
Master's Graduate	4	8.00
Master's Level	3	6.00
College Graduate	39	78.00
TOTAL	50	100.00

Table 3 presents the distribution of the respondents' highest educational attainment. Most parents, comprising 78.00%, are college graduates. Following this, 8.00% of the respondents have reached the doctorate level, reflecting advanced academic preparation. An equal percentage (8.00%) are master's degree holders, meanwhile, the smallest proportion, at 6.00%, are at the master's level but have not yet graduated.

The data implied that the respondents generally possess high levels of educational attainment, with the majority holding a college degree or higher. This educational background suggests a greater capacity for

understanding, accessing, and utilizing resources and interventions necessary for supporting the needs and development of children with autism spectrum disorder.

Waltereit et al. (2021) underscore the critical role of familial context, parental education, and developmental history in the comprehensive management of autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Their research emphasizes that incorporating detailed information regarding a child's home life, educational experiences, and family social care involvement into ASD diagnostic evaluations, educational planning, and treatment strategies significantly enhances the understanding and support provided to individuals with ASD.

Job Sector

The job sector of parents with children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) serves as a significant indicator of their socio-economic standing and their capacity to provide for the developmental and educational needs of their children. Analyzing their occupational background offers a comprehensive understanding of the resources accessible to them, as well as the potential challenges they face in managing the dual responsibilities of employment and caregiving.

Table 4 Job Sector of the Respondents (n=50)

Job Sector	F	%
Public Sector	24	48.00
Private Sector	26	52.00
TOTAL	50	100.00

Table 4 illustrated the distribution of respondents according to their job sector. A slight majority of parents, accounting for 52.00%, are employed in the private sector, suggesting that more than half of the respondents are engaged in privately managed industries and enterprises. In comparison, 48.00% of the respondents are employed in the public sector, reflecting a nearly equal representation of parents working in government institutions.

The findings implied a relatively balanced distribution between public and private sector employment, with a marginal predominance of private sector workers. This distribution highlights the diverse occupational backgrounds of parents of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), which may have implications for their socio-economic stability, access to resources, and the flexibility of their work arrangements in balancing employment with caregiving responsibilities.

Families of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) experience considerable economic strain, largely due to the substantial healthcare costs required for therapy, intervention, and ongoing support. This financial burden is further intensified for families with lower income, making the economic impact even more significant. Hence, the development of universal healthcare provisions and inclusive workplace policies is crucial to address and mitigate the comprehensive financial and social challenges brought about by autism (Cidav, 2021).

Child's age with ASD

This section presented the age profile of the respondents' children, which serves as a basis for understanding the level of support and interventions required across different age groups. The distribution of children's ages diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) offers a significant perspective on their developmental stages and the varying needs they may present.

Table 5 Child 's age with ASD

Age	f	%
16 years old above	2	4.00
11 – 15 years old	13	26.00
6 – 10 years old	28	56.00
1 -5 years old	7	14.00
TOTAL	50	100.00

Table 5 illustrated the age distribution of children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) within the surveyed population. The most substantial proportion of children falls within the 6-10 year age range, representing 56.00% of the sample. This is followed by children aged 11-15 years, who comprise 26.00% of the cohort. A smaller segment consists of children aged 1-5 years, accounting for 14.00%, while the oldest group, those aged 16 years and above, represents the smallest proportion at 4.00%.

These findings implied that most children with ASD in this study are of elementary school age, highlighting the need for targeted interventions and educational support during this critical developmental period.

The analysis reveals specific insights into the similarities and differences in parental concerns based on their child's age, emphasizing the importance of individualized assessment approaches. Tailoring Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) evaluations to address the unique needs of children at different developmental stages has significant implications for facilitating timely diagnoses and ensuring access to appropriate care and support services (Pfeiffer et al, 2021).

Household Composition

This section outlines the distribution of household members, which is vital in understanding the caregiving dynamics and the potential resources accessible to the child with ASD. The household composition of families with children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) provides essential information on the family structure and the availability of support within the home environment.

Table 6 Household Composition of the Respondents

Composition	f	%
more than 10 members	2	3.51
7 – 9 members	9	15.79
6 – 10 years old	25	43.86
4- 6 members	14	24.56
TOTAL	50	100.00

Table 6 presented the household composition of the respondents, revealing a varied distribution in terms of family size. The most prevalent household size consists of 6 members, accounting for 43.86% of the respondents. This is followed by households with 4-6 members, representing 24.56% of the sample. Larger households, comprising 7-9 members, constitute 15.79% of the respondents. The least common household size is more than 10 members, accounting for 3.51% of the sample.

These data implied that most families in this study are of moderate size, with a considerable proportion also living in smaller households. The impact of household size on resource allocation, parental support, and the overall well-being of children with ASD warrants further consideration.

A potential inverse relationship between household size and the prevalence of mental health challenges in children. Specifically, larger households may be associated with a reduced incidence of mental health issues among children. This phenomenon could be attributed to several factors, including increased social interaction, enhanced emotional support networks within the family, and shared responsibilities among household members. The presence of multiple caregivers and siblings may foster a more supportive and nurturing environment, potentially mitigating the risk of mental health problems in children (Grinde, 2016).

Extent which the Parents have Experienced Impacts Related to the ABA Therapy on the Children with ASD

This section presented an analysis of parental experiences, providing insights into the perceived benefits, challenges, and overall outcomes associated with the implementation of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy. The degree to which parents have experienced impacts related to ABA therapy on their children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) reflects the perceived effectiveness and influence of such interventions on the child's development. This analysis encompasses ten distinct statements for logistical challenges, emotional challenges, social challenges and systematic challenges designed to capture various dimensions of parental experience, with the corresponding indicators presented in the tables below.

Logistical Challenges

The extent to which parents have experienced impacts related to ABA therapy in terms of logistical challenges highlights the practical difficulties encountered in accessing and sustaining therapeutic interventions for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). This section examines these challenges, emphasizing factors such as time, distance, scheduling, and transportation that affect the continuity and effectiveness of the therapy.

Table 7 presents an analysis of the extent to which parents of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) experienced logistical challenges associated with Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy. The findings reveal that the most salient concern among parents was the financial burden of ABA therapy, which yielded the highest weighted mean of 4.30 (SD = 0.84). Closely related is the difficulty of securing affordable childcare during ABA therapy sessions, which registered a weighted mean of 4.08 (SD = 0.90). Additional logistical challenges identified include the coordination of ABA therapy with other appointments or therapeutic interventions, which obtained a weighted mean of 3.90 (SD = 0.97), also characterized by a verbal description of agreement. Similarly, transportation to and from ABA therapy sessions was rated with a weighted mean of 3.80 (SD = 0.95).

Other logistical difficulties reported encompass the necessity of taking time off work for therapy sessions, with a weighted mean of 3.66 (SD = 0.94), and geographical limitations in accessing therapy services, with a weighted mean of 3.64 (SD = 0.90). Likewise, the inconvenient location of ABA therapy services was rated at 3.62 (SD = 0.99), and the perception that ABA therapy interferes with family time and other activities was rated 3.60 (SD = 1.09), both interpreted as agreement. Parents also indicated that the scheduling flexibility of therapy services was insufficient to meet their needs, with a weighted mean of 3.54 (SD = 1.01).

Lastly, the lowest-rated concern pertained to the statement that scheduling therapy sessions conflicted with work schedules, which received a weighted mean of 3.24 (SD = 1.12) and was interpreted as neutral.

The aggregate mean of 3.74 (SD = 0.97) indicates that parents generally agree that logistical challenges significantly impede their ability to access and sustain ABA therapy for their children with ASD.

The results implied that logistical challenges represent a substantial barrier to the sustained implementation of ABA therapy for children with ASD. The finding that financial strain was rated as the most significant

challenge implies the urgent need for government and institutional support mechanisms, such as subsidies, insurance coverage, or financial assistance programs, to alleviate the economic burden on families.

Logistical challenges encompass the complexities inherent in the planning, implementation, and management of the flow and storage of goods, services, or information within a supply chain (Frazelle, 2020). Within the scope of this study, two primary challenges have been identified and categorized under the theme of logistical challenges: time commitment and emotional challenges.

Table 7 Extent Which the Parents Have Experienced Impacts Related to the ABA Therapy on the Children with ASD in terms of Logistical Challenges

Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
Scheduling ABA therapy sessions has conflicted with my work schedule.	3.24	1.12	Neutral
Transportation to and from ABA therapy sessions has been a significant challenge.	3.80	0.95	Agree
Finding affordable childcare during ABA therapy sessions has been difficult.	4.08	0.90	Agree
The location of ABA therapy services has been inconvenient.	3.62	0.99	Agree
The cost of ABA therapy has placed a significant financial strain on our family.	4.30	0.84	Strongly Agree
ABA therapy sessions have interfered with family time and other activities.	3.60	1.09	Agree
Coordinating ABA therapy with other appointments or therapies has been challenging.	3.90	0.97	Agree
Taking time off work for ABA therapy sessions has negatively impacted my income.	3.66	0.94	Agree
The scheduling flexibility of ABA therapy has been insufficient to meet our needs.	3.54	1.01	Agree
Accessing ABA therapy services has been hindered by geographical limitations.	3.64	0.90	Agree
Aggregate Mean	3.74		Agree
Aggregate Standard Deviation		0.97	
Legend: 4.21-5.00 – Strongly Agree; 3.41-4.20- Agree; 2.61-3.40- Neutral; 1.81- 2.60 – Disagree; 1.00 – 1.80 – Strongly Disagree			

Emotional Challenges

This section explored the parents' emotional experiences, including stress, anxiety, and coping mechanisms, which significantly shape their overall perception of the therapy's impact. The extent to which parents have experienced impacts related to ABA therapy in terms of emotional challenges underscores the psychological and emotional strain involved in supporting a child with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) through intensive interventions.

Table 8 Extent Which the Parents Have Experienced Impacts Related to the ABA Therapy on the Children with ASD in terms of Emotional Challenges

Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
Emotional exhaustion is experienced from managing the child's ABA therapy.	3.66	0.80	Agree
The responsibilities associated with supporting ABA therapy at home feel overwhelming.	3.82	0.78	Agree
Watching the child struggle during ABA sessions leads to emotional distress.	3.78	0.86	Agree
There is frequent anxiety about whether ABA therapy is effective for the child.	3.74	0.76	Agree
The emotional demands of coordinating ABA therapy impact mental well-being.	3.66	0.80	Agree
Feelings of guilt arise when unable to fully participate in the child's ABA therapy.	4.08	0.76	Agree
Stress is experienced when trying to meet the expectations of ABA therapists.	3.92	0.73	Agree
Emotional support is lacking when navigating the child's ABA treatment.	3.44	0.76	Agree
Doubts are experienced about doing enough to help the child succeed in ABA therapy.	3.68	0.72	Agree
Feelings of isolation occur due to a lack of understanding from others about the emotional impact of ABA therapy.	3.70	0.78	Agree
Aggregate Mean	3.75		Agree
Standard Deviation		0.9	
Legend: 4.21-5.00 – Strongly Agree; 3.41-4.20- Agree; 2.61-3.40- Neutral; 1.81- 2.60 – Disagree; 1.00 – 1.80 – Strongly Disagree			

Table 8 presents the extent to which parents have experienced emotional challenges related to their child's ABA therapy. The highest-rated indicator was the feelings of guilt when unable to fully participate in the child's ABA therapy, which obtained a weighted mean of 4.08 (SD = 0.76), interpreted as Agree. The second highest was stress experienced when trying to meet the expectations of ABA therapists, with a weighted mean of 3.92 (SD = 0.73), also described as Agree. Following this, the feeling that responsibilities associated with supporting ABA therapy at home are overwhelming ranked third, with a mean of 3.82 (SD = 0.78).

The next set of challenges reflected moderate emotional strain. Watching the child struggle during ABA sessions scored a weighted mean of 3.78 (SD = 0.86), while frequent anxiety about whether ABA therapy is effective registered 3.74 (SD = 0.76). Both reflect the parents' ongoing emotional distress and uncertainty regarding treatment outcomes. Similarly, feelings of isolation due to a lack of understanding from others (WM = 3.70, SD = 0.78) and doubts about doing enough to help the child succeed (WM = 3.68, SD = 0.72) reveal parents' vulnerability to self-doubt and social alienation.

Meanwhile, emotional exhaustion from managing the child's therapy (WM = 3.66, SD = 0.80) and the emotional demands of coordinating ABA therapy impacting mental well-being (WM = 3.66, SD = 0.80) tied at

the same mean score, signifying that the day-to-day strain of therapy management contributes to emotional fatigue. The lowest-rated indicator was the lack of emotional support when navigating the child's ABA treatment, with a weighted mean of 3.44 (SD = 0.76), though still interpreted as Agree.

The aggregate mean of 3.75 (SD = 0.90) suggests that parents generally Agree that they experience considerable emotional challenges while supporting their child's ABA therapy. These results emphasize that beyond logistical and financial burdens, the emotional toll of caregiving is a significant dimension of parental experience.

Emotional challenges pertain to the difficulties associated with regulating and expressing emotions in a healthy and adaptive manner. Such challenges may manifest through experiences of anxiety, depression, anger, or stress, all of which can significantly influence an individual's mental health and overall well-being (Palliative Care, 2024).

Social Challenges

This section examined the social implications of therapy, focusing on the challenges that affect both parents and their children, such as feelings of isolation, experiences of stigma, and limitations in social engagement. The degree to which parents have experienced impacts related to ABA therapy in terms of social challenges reflects the difficulties they encounter in navigating relationships, community interactions, and social support systems while caring for a child with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

Table 9 Extent Which the Parents Have Experienced Impacts Related to the ABA Therapy on the Children with ASD in terms of Social Challenges

Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
Social relationships have been affected due to the time commitment required by ABA therapy.	3.50	0.97	Agree
Attending social gatherings is difficult because of the child's ABA therapy schedule.	3.58	0.95	Agree
Limited opportunities are available to interact with other parents due to ABA responsibilities.	3.34	1.06	Neutral
Participation in community events has decreased since starting the child's ABA therapy.	3.30	0.99	Neutral
There is a lack of understanding from relatives and friends about the demands of ABA therapy.	3.72	0.88	Agree
Feelings of social isolation arise from being unable to relate to other parents.	4.68	0.98	Agree
Social support systems have weakened as a result of focusing on ABA therapy.	3.38	1.03	Neutral
Building new friendships has become more difficult due to ABA-related responsibilities.	3.30	1.09	Neutral
Social relationships have been affected due to the time commitment required by ABA therapy.	3.40	1.05	Neutral
Attending social gatherings is difficult because of the child's ABA therapy schedule.	3.42	1.03	Agree

Aggregate Mean	3.46		Agree
Standard Deviation		1.0	
Legend: 4.21-5.00 – Strongly Agree; 3.41-4.20- Agree; 2.61-3.40- Neutral; 1.81- 2.60 – Disagree; 1.00 – 1.80 – Strongly Disagree			

Table 9 presented an analysis of the extent to which parents have experienced the social impacts of ABA therapy on their children with ASD. The most prominent indicator was feelings of social isolation stemming from difficulties in relating to other parents, which yielded a weighted mean of 4.68 (SD = 0.98), indicating general agreement. This was followed by a perceived lack of understanding from relatives and friends regarding the demands of ABA therapy, which garnered a weighted mean of 3.72 (SD = 0.88), also described as agreement. Subsequently, the difficulty of attending social gatherings due to the child's ABA therapy schedule was also noted, with weighted means of 3.58 (SD = 0.95) and 3.42 (SD = 1.03) across duplicate indicators, both reflecting agreements.

Similarly, the impact of ABA therapy time commitments on social relationships obtained weighted means of 3.50 (SD = 0.97) and 3.40 (SD = 1.05), both interpreted as agreement. Conversely, several indicators were rated as neutral, including limited opportunities to interact with other parents due to ABA responsibilities (weighted mean = 3.34, SD = 1.06), decreased participation in community events (weighted mean = 3.30, SD = 0.99), and difficulty building new friendships because of ABA-related responsibilities (weighted mean = 3.30, SD = 1.09). Likewise, weakened social support systems due to focusing on ABA therapy (weighted mean = 3.38, SD = 1.03) also received a neutral rating.

The aggregate mean of 3.46 (SD = 1.00) suggests that parents generally agree that social challenges are a notable consequence of ABA therapy. However, the variation in weighted means indicates that while logistical factors such as time constraints affect social participation, the most significant challenge lies in the emotional experience of social isolation and the lack of understanding from others. This intensifies parents' vulnerability to social withdrawal.

These findings implied that the social challenges faced by parents of children with ASD undergoing ABA therapy are not only logistical but also deeply emotional. The consistently high rating on feelings of social isolation underscores the need for interventions that foster meaningful social support networks and promote greater understanding within the broader community.

Addressing social-relational challenges can be a significant undertaking for parents; however, the implementation of effective strategies can substantially benefit their children. Peer interaction is a critical component of social skill development. Parents should actively cultivate opportunities for their children to engage with both neurotypical and neuro-diverse peers. Organizing playdates or group activities with familiar friends provides children with a comfortable environment in which to practice skills acquired in therapy, thereby fostering confidence and enhancing social competence (Fyfe et al., 2021).

Systematic Challenges

This section examined systemic challenges related to parental experiences with ABA therapy, focusing on barriers stemming from institutional structures, policies, and service delivery for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). It addresses limitations in healthcare, financial assistance, and policy implementation that affect the overall effectiveness of ABA therapy.

Table 10 Extent Which the Parents Have Experienced Impacts Related to the ABA Therapy on the Children with ASD in terms of Systematic Challenges

Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
Difficulty is experienced in accessing government support or funding for ABA therapy.	4.24	0.97	Strongly Agree

The process of enrolling the child in ABA therapy programs is complicated and time- consuming.	3.56	0.95	Agree
There is limited availability of qualified ABA therapists in the area.	4.16	1.06	Agree
Information and guidance from healthcare or educational institutions about ABA therapy are insufficient.	3.74	0.99	Agree
Policies and procedures related to ABA therapy are unclear or inconsistent.	3.48	0.88	Agree
Long waiting lists for ABA services delay timely intervention for the child.	4.88	0.98	Agree
There is a lack of coordination between ABA providers and the child's school or medical team.	3.52	1.03	Agree
Advocacy for the child's ABA needs within public systems (e.g., school, health services) is challenging.	4.06	1.09	Agree
The cost of ABA therapy is high due to limited subsidies or insurance coverage.	4.16	1.05	Agree
Navigating the legal and administrative requirements for ABA therapy causes significant stress.	3.74	1.03	Agree
Aggregate Mean	3.81		Agree
Standard Deviation		0.94	
Legend: 4.21-5.00 – Strongly Agree; 3.41-4.20- Agree; 2.61-3.40- Neutral; 1.81- 2.60 – Disagree; 1.00 – 1.80 – Strongly Disagree			

Table 10 presents an analysis of the extent to which parents have experienced systemic challenges related to ABA therapy for their children with ASD. The findings revealed that long waiting lists for ABA services, with a weighted mean of 4.88 (SD = 0.98), were the most significant concern. This was closely followed by difficulties experienced in accessing government support or funding for ABA therapy (WM = 4.24, SD = 0.97), also reflecting strong agreement, and the high cost of ABA therapy due to limited subsidies or insurance coverage (WM = 4.16, SD = 1.05), as well as the limited availability of qualified ABA therapists in the area (WM = 4.16, SD = 1.06), both indicating agreement.

Further challenges identified include the difficulty of advocating for the child's ABA needs within public systems (WM = 4.06, SD = 1.09), which also garnered agreement, and the perception that information and guidance from healthcare or educational institutions about ABA therapy are insufficient (WM = 3.74, SD = 0.99), along with the stress caused by navigating the legal and administrative requirements for ABA therapy (WM = 3.74, SD = 1.03), both also reflecting agreement.

The complexity and time-consuming nature of enrolling the child in ABA therapy programs (WM = 3.56, SD = 0.95) and the lack of coordination between ABA providers and the child's school or medical team (WM = 3.52, SD = 1.03) were also identified as challenges, again with parents in agreement. The policies and procedures related to ABA therapy being unclear or inconsistent (WM = 3.48, SD = 0.88) was the systemic challenge with the lowest score.

The aggregate mean of 3.81, with a standard deviation of 0.94, indicates that parents generally agree that systemic challenges significantly impact their ability to access and sustain ABA therapy for their children with ASD. The findings underscore the urgent need for policy reforms and improved service delivery systems to alleviate these systemic barriers and ensure equitable access to timely and effective ABA therapy for all children with ASD.

The findings in Table 10 implied that parents of children with ASD face systemic challenges that not only hinder timely access to ABA therapy but also place an additional burden on families already managing significant caregiving responsibilities. The prominence of long waiting lists, financial barriers, and the shortage of qualified therapists indicates that the current system is inadequate in meeting the urgent therapeutic needs of children with ASD.

Parents are strongly encouraged to actively participate in meetings with teachers and therapists to collaboratively discuss their child's specific needs and to formulate comprehensive action plans (Klatte et al., 2024). These meetings serve as crucial platforms for sharing insights, coordinating strategies, and ensuring that all stakeholders are aligned in their efforts to support the child's development. Active parental involvement in these discussions can lead to more tailored and effective interventions, ultimately enhancing the child's progress and well-being.

Effects Of Parental Challenges on the Social-Emotional

Development Of Children with ASD

The effects of parental challenges on the social-emotional development of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) underscore the intricate relationship between parental well-being and a child's capacity to establish interpersonal relationships, regulate emotions, and adapt to diverse social environments. This section examines how the challenges encountered by parents, such as heightened stress levels, emotional strain, and limited access to support systems, can influence the social and emotional growth trajectories of their children with ASD.

Table 11 Effects of Parental Challenges on the Socio-Emotional Development of Children with ASD

Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
My child shows signs of emotional distress when I am overwhelmed with caregiving responsibilities.	3.94	0.91	Agree
My limited time due to logistical challenges affects the consistency of my child's emotional support.	3.86	0.76	Agree
When I experience emotional burnout, my child becomes more socially withdrawn.	3.78	0.89	Agree
Financial stress within the family contributes to my child's emotional instability.	4.06	0.89	Agree
My child struggles to express emotions due to the inconsistent emotional environment at home.	3.86	0.90	Agree
Social stigma I face as a parent affects my child's willingness to engage socially.	3.84	0.89	Agree
My difficulty accessing services limits my child's opportunities for emotional and social growth.	3.98	0.77	Agree
Emotional tension at home impacts my child's ability to build positive relationships.	3.94	0.89	Agree
The child seeks more reassurance or closeness than before.	3.82	0.83	Agree
The child shows noticeable changes in appetite or eating patterns.	3.72	0.86	Agree
Aggregate Mean	3.88		Agree

Aggregate Standard Deviation		0.86
Legend: 4.21-5.00 – Strongly Agree; 3.41-4.20- Agree; 2.61-3.40- Neutral; 1.81- 2.60 – Disagree; 1.00 – 1.80 – Strongly Disagree		

Table 11 presents the analysis of the effects of parental challenges on the socio-emotional development of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The findings indicate that the highest-rated factor was financial stress within the family, which yielded a weighted mean of 4.06 (SD = 0.89).

Closely following this was the difficulty of accessing services, which parents perceived as limiting their child’s opportunities for emotional and social growth (WM = 3.98, SD = 0.77). Likewise, emotional tension at home (WM = 3.94, SD = 0.89) and signs of emotional distress exhibited by children when parents are overwhelmed with caregiving responsibilities (WM = 3.94, SD = 0.91) also ranked high, highlighting the direct consequences of home-based stressors on children’s emotional and relational development.

Other significant factors included parents’ limited time due to logistical challenges (WM = 3.86, SD = 0.76) and the inconsistency of the emotional was also identified as affecting the child’s willingness to engage socially (WM = 3.84, SD = 0.89), while children’s heightened need for reassurance or closeness (WM = 3.82, SD = 0.83) was likewise recognized as an effect of parental strain.

Although slightly lower in rank, parents also reported that children tend to become socially withdrawn when they experience emotional burnout (WM = 3.78, SD = 0.89). Furthermore, noticeable changes in children’s appetite or eating patterns (WM = 3.72, SD = 0.86) were the lowest-rated but still considered relevant, reflecting parents’ agreement that their challenges manifest in the daily behaviors of their children.

The aggregate mean of 3.88, with a standard deviation of 0.86, reflects that parents generally agree that their challenges significantly affect the socio emotional development of children with ASD. The findings emphasize the interdependence between parental well-being and child development, pointing to the necessity of holistic interventions that address not only the child’s developmental needs but also the financial, emotional, and social burdens borne by parents.

The result implied that there was a profound connection between parental= challenges and the socio-emotional development of children with ASD. The highest-rated factor, financial stress, indicates that economic strain not only undermines parents’ capacity to provide consistent care but also translates into heightened emotional instability for the child.

The documented challenges in emotional understanding and emotion regulation exhibited by children with ASD, and their demonstrated associations with diminished social competence, underscore the imperative to address these specific deficits within interventions designed to enhance social competence in young children with ASD (Gev, et al, 2021).

Effectiveness Of the Aba Therapy in The Emotional-Social Development of the Children with ASD

This portion explored how ABA helps nurture positive emotional growth and supports children in developing meaningful connections within their social environments. The effectiveness of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy in the emotional and social development of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) emphasizes its importance in building emotional regulation, social interaction, and adaptive skills.

Table 12 Effectiveness of the ABA Therapy in the Emotional-Social Development of the Children with ASD

Indicators	WM	SD	Verbal Description
The child shows improved ability to express emotions appropriately.	3.82	0.80	Effective
The child demonstrates better control over emotional outbursts.	3.74	0.75	Effective

The child is more capable of understanding and labeling their own emotions.	3.72	0.73	Effective
The child has become more comfortable interacting with peers.	3.76	0.77	Effective
The child initiates social interactions more frequently.	3.7	0.84	Effective
The child demonstrates improved cooperation and turn-taking during play or group activities.	3.78	0.71	Effective
The child responds more appropriately to social cues (e.g., facial expressions, tone of voice).	3.86	0.76	Effective
The child shows greater confidence in social situations.	3.64	0.80	Effective
The child maintains eye contact more consistently during conversations.	3.76	0.82	Effective
The child demonstrates stronger emotional bonds with family members and caregivers.	3.98	0.62	Very Effective
Aggregate Mean	3.88		Effective
Aggregate Standard Deviation		0.86	
Legend: 4.21-5.00 – Very Effective; 3.41-4.20- Effective; 2.61-3.40- Moderately Effective; 1.81- 2.60 – Less Effective; 1.00 – 1.80 – Ineffective			

During play or group activities (WM = 3.78, SD = 0.71). Similarly, parents reported observable improvements in social interaction, as reflected in the child having become more comfortable interacting with peers (WM = 3.76, SD = 0.77) and the child maintaining eye contact more consistently during conversations (WM = 3.76, SD = 0.82).

Furthermore, the indicators reflecting the child demonstrating better control over emotional outbursts (WM = 3.74, SD = 0.75), the child being more capable of understanding and labeling their own emotions (WM = 3.72, SD = 0.73), and the child initiating social interactions more frequently (WM = 3.70, SD = 0.84) were also positively rated, providing further confirmation that ABA therapy contributes to enhanced emotional awareness and the reduction of maladaptive behaviors. The lowest-rated indicator, yet still positively perceived, was the observation that the child shows greater confidence in social situations (WM = 3.64, SD = 0.80).

The findings from Table 11 imply that ABA therapy has a meaningful and positive impact on the emotional and social development of children with ASD. The strongest improvement noted in the formation of emotional bonds with family members and caregivers underscores the importance of home-based reinforcement in maximizing therapy outcomes.

The implementation of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) programs has been shown to yield significant improvements in the social, communicative, and daily living skills of institutionalized children with autism spectrum disorder.

These ABA interventions, delivered through structured and systematically designed sessions, effectively enhance emotional and social development, thereby confirming the value of ABA as a robust and beneficial therapeutic approach within institutional care settings (Du et al, 2024).

Significant Relationship Between the Extent of The Parental Challenges and Social – Emotional Development of The Children with ASD

The test of significant relationship between the significant relationship between the extent of the parental challenges and the social – emotional development of the children with ASD is presented in Table 13.

Table 13 Test of Significant Relationship between the Extent of the Parental Challenges and the Social – Emotional Development of the Children with ASD

Variables	r-value	Strength of Correlation	p — value	Decision	Result
Logistical Challenges and Social-Emotional of the Children with ASD	0.9913	Very High Positive	0.00001	Reject Ho	Significant
Emotional Challenges and Social-Emotional of the Children with ASD	0.9963	Very High Positive	0.00001	Reject Ho	Significant
Social Challenges and Social-Emotional of the Children with ASD	0.9967	Very High Positive	0.00001	Reject Ho	Significant
Systematic Challenges and Social-Emotional of the Children with ASD	0.9957	Very High Positive	0.00001	Reject Ho	Significant
*significant at $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed)					

Table 13 presented the test of significant relationship between the extent of the parental challenges and the social-emotional development of children with ASD. The results indicate that all dimensions of parental challenges—logistical, emotional, social, and systemic—are significantly related to the social-emotional development of their children.

Specifically, logistical challenges yielded an r-value of 0.9913 with a p-value of 0.00001, showing a very high positive correlation and indicating that difficulties in transportation, scheduling, and time management strongly influence children’s emotional and social progress. Similarly, emotional challenges reported an even stronger correlation, with an r-value of 0.9963 and a p-value of 0.00001, suggesting that the parents’ emotional well-being and resilience are highly interconnected with the children’s capacity to regulate emotions and engage socially.

Social challenges also demonstrated a very high positive correlation (r-value = 0.9967, $p = 0.00001$), which means that the social stigma and lack of community support experienced by parents significantly affect the social confidence and engagement of children with ASD. Finally, systemic challenges yielded an r-value of 0.9957 with a p-value of 0.00001, affirming that barriers in policies, service accessibility, and institutional support systems have a strong impact on children’s social-emotional growth.

The results reject the null hypothesis across all variables, confirming that the extent of parental challenges has a significant and very high positive correlation with the social-emotional development of children with ASD. This finding highlights the interdependent relationship between parental experiences and child outcomes, underscoring the need for holistic interventions that address both parental support systems and child-focused therapies.

The findings strongly implied that the social-emotional development of children with ASD cannot be fully addressed without considering the challenges faced by their parents. Since logistical, emotional, social, and

systemic challenges all demonstrated very high positive correlations with children's developmental outcomes, this suggests that parental well-being and external support systems are integral to the success of ABA therapy and other interventions (Hou, Yan, & Zhang, 2023).

CONCLUSIONS

The study gathered data from parents across varying age groups, educational backgrounds, occupations, and household sizes. Many parents reported navigating multiple challenges related to ABA therapy. Logistical concerns such as financial strain and scheduling difficulties were prominent. Emotional challenges included guilt, stress, and uncertainty about therapy progress. Social challenges involved isolation, limited social engagement, and reduced support from peers or family. Systemic challenges centered on service availability and long wait times.

Despite these barriers, parents generally viewed ABA as beneficial to their children's emotional and social growth. The correlation analysis showed significant associations between parental challenges and children's social-emotional development, suggesting that the more challenges parents face, the more likely these difficulties may influence a child's developmental outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations were suggested:

1. The intervention plan be implemented by SPED teachers and disseminated to parents of children with ASD as a resource to supplement their existing strategies for supporting and managing their children's development.
2. The SPED teachers are encouraged to strengthen collaboration with parents through consistent communication, home-based activity guides, and training programs that enhance parental involvement in ABA practices. Teachers may also integrate socio-emotional learning strategies that reinforce ABA interventions and promote continuity between home and school settings.
3. The school administrators should develop policies and allocate resources to improve the accessibility of ABA therapy and related services. This includes establishing partnerships with government agencies and non-governmental organizations to address financial barriers, reduce waiting lists, and ensure timely interventions. Administrators should also create parent-teacher collaborative frameworks that institutionalize family engagement in special education programs.
4. The future researchers should conduct further studies focusing on longitudinal effects of PD programs on SPED teachers' competencies and student outcomes to provide deeper insights into their long-term impact and explore additional factors influencing the effectiveness of PD and IEP implementation, such as teacher motivation, workload, and institutional support.

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