

Research Report

What are the positive experiences for Japanese parents of children with autism?

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研究報告

本邦における自閉症児の親にとっての肯定的育児体験とはどのようなものか？

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要 旨

本研究の目的は、自閉症児の親が感じた肯定的育児体験と、その肯定的育児体験が得られたきっかけを明らかにすることである。方法として、自閉症児の親が著者として刊行された自叙伝から、肯定的と解釈できた育児体験記述を抽出する手法を用い、Framework matrix を用いた分析を行った。その結果、11編の自叙伝から肯定的な育児体験として、“概念が変わる”、“親としての新たな役割認識”、“感謝”、“家族の絆”という4つのテーマが抽出され、その肯定的育児体験は「影響力のある人物からの一言」などがきっかけとなっている可能性がうかがえた。

キーワード：自閉症，肯定的体験，育児

Keywords : autism, positive experiences, parenting

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Introduction

Having a child with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) can drastically alter family life. To date, most existing studies on means of supporting families of children with developmental disabilities have focused on negative parenting outcomes, such as parental depression, psychosis, and other mental health problems (Boyd, 2002; Phetrasuwan & Miles, 2009; Pisula & Kossakowska, 2010; Ingersoll & Hambrick, 2011; Baker, Seltzer & Greenberg, 2011); such studies have shown that family members of ASDs must manage many caregiving aspects, the demands of which can negatively affect the family members' mental health (Baker, Seltzer & Greenberg, 2011; Ingersoll & Hambrick, 2011). Moreover, ASDs can experience difficulties regarding social communication, social interaction, and social imagination, which can further increase the burden on family members (Wing, 1988). Recently, however, researchers have begun to focus on positive parental perceptions of children (Hastings et al., 2005; Kayfitz, Gragg & Orr, 2010). These studies have suggested that positive parenting perceptions can buffer parenting stress, and can contribute to improving parents' well-being. Further, these studies have also considered burdens and stressors, adopting quantitative approaches to determine whether parenting stress can relate to positive experiences, and whether parental stress levels can be predicted by children's behavioral functioning.

Bandura's learning theory (1971) states that people can learn from others'

experiences. Human behavior is often shaped by socio-cultural processes, and particular models are imitated if the model is deemed to be similar to the individual in some way (Bandura, 1977). New patterns of behaviors can be acquired through not only direct experiences, but also through modeling others; an individual is more likely to be influenced by a similar person. According to the social learning theory, therefore, parents of ASDs can be encouraged by learning of similar families' positive experiences, and this can contribute to improving their mental well-being and enhancing their self-efficacy.

Qualitative studies that examine how parents of ASDs can develop positive perceptions, and the triggers or turning points that enable such a paradigm shift, have not yet been conducted in Japan. It can be difficult to conduct such examinations. In academic research projects, researchers can exhaust participants (Clark, 2008); meanwhile, for groups of bereaved parents, data-collection interviews can be emotionally painful (Dyregrov, 2004). Moreover, interview methods necessitate meeting with participants several times, but regularly meeting with parents of ASDs can be excessively difficult for the parents, as they must frequently address child-related incidents.

Hacking (2009) reported that autobiographical accounts offer useful knowledge regarding autistic people's, and their families', true feelings and perceptions.

The aim of this study is to identify positive parenting experiences, highlighted by parents

themselves, by analyzing autobiographical accounts of parents of CASDs, as this might enable and encourage other parents who are raising CASDs. In order to achieve this, the following key questions will be addressed:

1. What do parents of children with autism identify as positive parenting experiences?
2. Are there any identifiable triggers or turning points that enable a paradigm shift to a more positive perspective of parenting experiences?

Methods

Identifying Suitable Autobiographies

The purpose of this study was to identify positive parenting experiences; thus, it was considered necessary to analyze autobiographical accounts that described positive emotional occurrences. Suitable autobiographies for this research were identified using two databases: Google Book Search (in Japanese) and Amazon (Japan). The following keywords were used, both alone and in combination: “*jiheishou*” (autism), “*asuperugaa shoukougun*” (Asperger’s syndrome), “*jijyoden*” (autobiography), “*oyaniyoru shuki*” (written by parents), “*kazokuniyoru shuki*” (written by family members), “*jiheishou no ikuji*” (parenting children with autism), “*asuperugaa shoukougun no ikuji*” (parenting children with Asperger’s syndrome), “*jiheishouji no oya*” (parents of children with autism), and “*asuperugaa shoukougunji no oya*” (parents of children with Asperger’s syndrome). To identify relevant books were searched from March 24 to 29, 2014. Only the first 20 pages

of each were searched using the keywords.

For the final sample, six books written by mothers, four by fathers, and one by a couple were selected (see Table 1). All of these books were ranked highly in the search; the popularity of such books may indicate that they are sufficiently detailed, easy to read, and do not use abstract language.

Defining “Positive Experiences”

In this study, a positive parenting experience is defined as a parenting-related experience that causes the parents to feel happy, pleased, self-confident, joyful, sociable/friendly, and/or satisfied.

Positive experiences in parents’ autobiographical accounts are not always directly labeled as such; consequently, any instances that fulfilled the above criteria were interpreted as positive experiences. For example, when an author of an autobiographical account related a story of having been encouraged by another person, I interpreted this as a positive change in feeling.

Analysis Method

Framework analysis was determined to be appropriate for this research, as it helps to identify main themes and categories; each theme and category can be charted by completing matrices, and this can assist interpretation of their meanings (Srivastava & Thomson, 2009). Bazeley (2009) showed how displaying data in a matrix can facilitate comparisons of differences in data patterns; in qualitative work, simply discussing

Table 1. The autobiographies written by parents

| No. | Author | Japanese Book title | The meaning of the book title, Author and Issue | About Author |
|-----|---------|---|--|---|
| 1 | Mother | 歌おうかモトくん。: 自閉症児とともに歩む子育てエッセイ。(Utaou ka Moto-kun: jiheishouji to tomoni ayumu kosodate essei) | Let's sing songs, Moto-kun: an essay on life with my autistic son, Hitomi Ishiwatari, 2006. | Born in 1954, graduated university, and studied abroad in England; writer; three children, first son has autism. |
| 2 | Mother | 晴れ時々アスペルガー(Hare tokidoki Asuperuga) | Fair with occasional Asperger syndrome, Shiho Imamura, 2009. | Born in 1972, graduated high school; housewife; two children, first son has Asperger syndrome. |
| 3 | Mother | できる限り不親切に(Dekiru kagiri fushinsetsuni) | You should try unkind attitudes as much as possible, Sumiko Takano, 2001. | Born in 1948, graduated high school; housewife; two children, first son has autism. |
| 4 | Father | 数字と踊るエリ: 娘の自閉症を超えて(Sujito odoru Eri: Musume no jiheisho wo koete) | Eli dances with numbers: I overcame her autistic condition, Yo Yahata, 2011. | Born in 1958, graduated master course; psychologist; the first daughter is autistic. He wrote about Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) or another therapy. |
| 5 | Mother | 高機能自閉症児を育てる: 息子・Tの自立を育てた20年の記録(Koukinoujiheishoji wo sodateru: musuko・Tno jiritsu wo sodateta 20 nen no kiroku) | A 20-year record of raising my son to self-reliance, Kazuko Takahashi, 2013. | Born in 1958, PhD; working at a university as assistant professor; the first son has high-functioning autism. |
| 6 | Father | 神からの言葉なき子をもって(Kamikaranokotobanakiko wo motte) | A child from God, who has no words, Toshiyuki Miyagawa, 2006. | Born in 1958, graduated master course; high school teacher; second child (male) is autistic, the first daughter is not. |
| 7 | Father | 自閉症の子どもを持って(Jiheisho no kodomo wo motte) | I have a child with autism, Takashi Takebe, 2010. | Born in 1961, graduated university; journalist; the son has autism. |
| 8 | Mother | 無邪気な宝箱「お母さん」と呼ばれる日を夢見て(Mujyakinatakarabako: okasantoyobareruhiwoyumemite) | An innocent treasure box: I dream that he can call me "mom," Kazue Ohkubo, 2002. | Born in 1965, graduated university; housewife; two children, the second son is autistic, the first son is not. |
| 9 | Mother | Smileつうしん: 自閉症のむすこ二人とともに(Sumairutsushin: jiheishonomusukohutaritotomoni) | Smile report with my two autistic sons, Miho Takahashi, 2003. | Born in 1966, graduated university special needs education course; housewife and part-time job as teaching assistant; two sons are autistic. |
| 10 | Father | 自閉症児のその家族の10年: 親として教師として(Jiheishojinonokazokunno 10nen: oyatoshitekyoushitoshite) | 10 years for a person with autism and the family: as his father and a teacher, Hiroshi Sugawara, 2002. | Born in 1961, graduated university special needs education course and the master course; teacher for primary school; the second child (male) is autistic, the first daughter is not. |
| 11 | Parents | ひとまわり行く: 自閉症児伸明の成長の記録(Hitomawariyuku: jiheishoji Nobuakinoseichonokiroku) | I am going around nearby with my autistic son Nobuaki's record, Tokuzo Ezaki & Yasuko Ezaki, 2003. | Father born in 1943, graduated university, secondary school teacher(retired); Mother born in 1948, graduated university, housewife and chair of an autism society; two sons, the first son is autistic. |

the identification of four or five themes is insufficient. To clarify the analytic process, all of the accounts and categories were organized in a matrix. Once the books had been read, an Excel sheet was created using the matrix as a reference; generated themes and categories were listed horizontally and autobiographical accounts were listed vertically. Displaying all of the data in an Excel file enabled similarities between the determined themes to be examined and errors to be found. A coding process was utilized (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Finally, to determine the essential themes across all of the concepts, a relationship map was constructed to display connections between the themes.

Ethical Issues and Translation

In this study, autobiographical narratives are used as the data sources, and all autobiographies were already published for public use. As the present study analyzes books that are already published, there is a low risk of violating confidentiality or privacy.

This study was conducted by an individual of Japanese origin; consequently, there were no problems related to analyzing the Japanese stories selected for the study. However, as the article analyzing the autobiographical narratives was written in English, some narrative accounts had to be translated from Japanese to English. To avoid confusion and misinterpretation of data, I translated the texts. However, whether the narrative autobiographies of positive parenting experiences have been

correctly and properly translated according to their original contexts needs to be considered. For the purposes of this study, all accounts were translated from Japanese to English and contextual explanations were furnished when the study underwent proofreading by a native English speaker. Then, the accounts were translated from English to Japanese by another native Japanese researcher who lived in England for many years. I have made an effort to ensure that the translations in this study are as appropriate and contextually accurate as possible.

The accounts included in this study have been translated by the researcher as this use is permitted according to the Copyright Act of Japan:

Article 43. When exploitation of a work is permitted under any of the items listed below, such exploitation may be done pursuant to the method and in accordance with the provisions set forth in each respective item below:

- (i) Article 30, paragraph (1) or Article 33, paragraph (1) (including the case where applied *mutatis mutandis* pursuant to paragraph 2 paragraph (4) of the same Article), Article 34, paragraph (1) or Article 35: translation, arrangement, transformation, and adaptation;
- (ii) Article 31, item (i), Article 32, 36 or 37, Article 39, paragraph (1), Article 40, paragraph (2), or Article 41 or 42: translation.

Article 32 is quoted as follows:

- (1) It shall be permissible to quote from and thereby exploit a work already made

public, provided that such quotation is compatible with fair practice and to the extent justified by the purpose of the quotation, such as news reporting, critique or research.

This study serves no commercial purpose. It is purely research. Therefore, Japanese texts translated by this researcher were valid for inclusion in this study.

Results

By analyzing the autobiographical accounts of mothers and fathers of CASDs, four themes relating to positive experiences emerged: “conceptual shifts,” “recognizing an additional parenting role,” “appreciation,” and “family bond.” Further, significant triggers/turning points of these themes were

also identified (see Table 2).

Conceptual Shifts

“Conceptual shifts” is one of the most important themes identified. Several triggers were found to cause parents to change their perspectives – from conventional to more constructive. This theme shows that external stimuli can shift parents’ perspectives of their CASDs.

One of the triggers, the power of others’ opinions of their children, concerns parents’ stereotypical perspectives regarding their children being transformed by meaningful persuasion from a schoolteacher, counselor, therapist, doctor, or their partner. It shows how parents’ human connections and resources have a significant influence on

Table 2. The main themes and trigger/turning points

| Themes | The trigger/turning points |
|--|--|
| Conceptual shifts | The power of others' opinion of their children |
| | Experiencing time with the child |
| | Recognizing the child's autism |
| | Recognizing the child's potential |
| Recognizing an additional parenting role | Realizing unique aspects of the child's parenting experiences |
| | Desparate efforts to develop the child's ability and her parenting experiences |
| Appreciation | Courage to talk about the child to other people |
| | Mutual acceptance |
| Family bond | Relationship with husband |
| | Through their disabled children |
| | Encouragement from grandparents |

their perspectives. Thus, such comments can contribute to shifting parents' paradigms regarding parenting children with disabilities from pessimistic to optimistic. An example of such an account is the following:

One day, the head teacher said that my son was a precious gift from God. "He is a gift from God" [...] These words made me feel happy; the experience made me feel proud and gave me hope despite my desperate situation (Ishiwatari, 2006, pp. 21-22; date of translation: December 22, 2014).

The mother in the above account developed a more positive perspective when the head teacher of her son's preschool told her that her son was a gift from God. After hearing this, she felt a sense of relief, as if his words had relieved some of her burden. In short, comments from other individuals can positively change perspectives regarding children with disabilities.

Experiencing time with the child is another significant trigger that can cause parents to develop more positive perspectives of their child. For instance, one father stated:

What did our family lose when my son was born? I thought we had lost something when my son was diagnosed with autism. However, now I am not sure that we have lost anything; rather, we have gained many things. [...] While we may experience many challenges, what we have gained cannot be measured (Takabe, 2010, pp. 173, 197; date of translation: December 22, 2014).

Here, it can be interpreted that the father's perspective changed as a result of spending time with his child. Parents' perspectives can be shifted from pessimistic to optimistic by such triggers.

Recognition of the child's autism also relates to "conceptual shifts," as before diagnosis mothers may blame themselves for their children's difficulties. One mother said the following:

Before his diagnosis, I had assumed that my parenting style was not appropriate for him, as I noticed he experienced many difficulties in daily life. So, I was relieved to hear the diagnosis; my feelings of depression disappeared. Since then, I have been able to feel more relaxed about my care for him (Ezaki, 2003, p. 61; date of translation: December 22, 2014).

In this account, diagnosis of the child's autism represented a turning point in regard to relieving the mothers' burden, because the mother had previously thought that her child's emotional disturbances were a result of inappropriate care.

Another turning point is recognizing the child's potential, which some parents described as their happiest moment. Observing that their child has many abilities, and witnessing his/her development or growth, parents can feel positive regarding their child's progress. For instance, one mother said the following:

"Mom, I have cooked miso soup for you."

As he said this, he served me the soup [...]. If I sleep late in the mornings, he will help with the housework. [...] I never thought I would experience such a happy moment. That Sunday morning was like a dream (Takano, 2001, p. 163; date of translation: December 22, 2014).

This scene demonstrates that for this mother recognizing the child's potential contributed to creating a happy Sunday morning. Recognizing the child's strengths is not only a useful skill, it can help parents develop more positive perspectives. It can be considered that this trigger/turning point of recognizing the child's potential is also influenced by spending long periods with the child.

Recognizing an Additional Parenting Role

Another theme observed in the autobiographical accounts is named "recognizing an additional parenting role." Raising a CASD was found to create positive opportunities for some mothers, as it allowed them to adopt a new role in their parenting; in other words, they were exposed to a new parenting field. For instance, mothers could compare their experiences with those of other mothers and identify better ways of addressing difficulties. One mother sought to publicize this new parenting role by publishing a book describing the need to encourage parents who are facing similar difficulties and to share methods of addressing such issues. The following is an extract from the book: "I have had unique

experiences in comparison to other mothers. This is the reason I have decided to write my story; it is an account of my life as a mother over the past 29 years" (Takano, 2001, p. 5; date of translation: December 22, 2014). This extract shows that the author realized, through parenting a child with autism, unique aspects of her parenting experiences and the need to disseminate them. Thus, it relates to the trigger of "recognizing an additional parenting role."

Having a child with developmental disabilities also creates many questions for a mother. One mother said: "I have learned many things while helping my son develop" (Takahashi, 2013, p. 82; date of translation: December 22, 2014). In addition, this mother mentioned that her experiences broadened her perspective; it encouraged her to complete her PhD, and she now works as a researcher at the Center for Research in Human Development at Kanazawa University (Takahashi, 2013, p. 82; date of translation: December 22, 2014). Parenting motivated her to study at a post-graduate school; further, her desperate efforts to develop her son's abilities and her parenting experiences might allow her to make valuable contributions to the disability research field. She sought information regarding her son's disability in order to learn as much as she could about it, which contributed not only to her gaining an understanding of her son's condition, but also to her becoming conscious of the value of research questions. As she said: "the experience has broadened my perspective"; her profound knowledge of autism incited

further desire to learn. At that time, she realized an additional parenting role, as a researcher.

Appreciation

Another theme regarding positive parenting experiences is labeled “appreciation.” “Appreciation” could be found in mothers’ accounts such as the following:

One day, I was talking to a neighbor who was walking his dog. I was impressed by his sudden statement: “it is said that such children are a precious gift from God, so you must treat him as a valuable person” [...]. It requires courage to talk about my son to other people; however, I realized that people will help me if I tell them about my son’s disability. After realizing this, I felt more at ease and smiled more often (Ohkubo, 2002, p. 74; date of translation: December 22, 2014).

For this mother, feeling “more at ease” and smiling more were instigated by a neighbor showing good understanding of her child’s disability. These warm feelings experienced by the mother can be interpreted as “appreciation,” both for the disabled child and for the person who said the kind words. Moreover, as she says that she needed courage to talk about her son to other people, and that she realized that people are helpful when they learn of her son’s disability, this suggests that courage can trigger positive “appreciation”-related experiences. Additionally, the parent’s perspective was

changed by appreciating the positive aspects of the child: that the child is a gift from God.

The trigger of feeling “appreciation” is identifiable in several additional accounts: “I am very appreciative of Dr. Shirataki, who is my son’s medical specialist [...]; when my son, my husband, and I were desperate, he explained my son’s condition and treatment strategies to his school teachers” (Takahashi, 2013, p. 147; date of translation: December 22, 2014).

Dr. O warmly welcomed us. He constantly smiles; I felt relieved to have him treat my son. The doctor said to me: “Mrs. Takano, do not expect too much. Let’s move forward one step at a time, little by little.” When I look back, it was at this moment that I became determined to help him (the child) grow up to become an independent person. (Takano, 2001, p. 163; date of translation: December 22, 2014).

“Appreciation” for specialists is evident in several parenting settings. It can be interpreted from the above extracts that mutual acceptance is the trigger for “appreciation” between parents and specialists, through the mediation of thoughtful words or attitudes. This mutual acceptance is generated based on respect for human beings.

Family Bond

The final positive parenting theme for CASDs is “family bond,” and this was evident in several accounts. The triggers for realizing

a “family bond” were mothers’ relationships with their husbands, overcoming difficulties through resilience, and receiving encouragement from the child’s siblings or grandparents. One mother described a representative scene of a good relationship with her husband as follows:

I had hoped that he would call me “mom” someday. [...] Moto came over to us at the dinner table. He was staring at me while wearing goggles, and suddenly he said “mom” [...]; he recognized us at last. We all laughed together as large tears streamed down my face (Ishiwatari, 2006, p. 19; date of translation: December 22, 2014).

In the above extract, the parents finally felt that their parenting was effective when they witnessed their child’s progress. It can be interpreted that sharing feelings and moments of progress with husbands leads to strengthening “family bonds.” Similarly, another mother stated the following:

...however, I have struggled with parenting because the children have many difficulties and my husband is always away at work. [...] One day, during a summer holiday, he (the husband) saw Kenta’s terrible temper with his own eyes. He realized that parenting is really tough, and since then he has been looking after both children from time to time. [...] As a result, we have been able to strengthen the family bond between us (Takahashi, 2003, p. 59, 64; date of translation: December 22, 2014).

This extract suggests that it is the children themselves who trigger strengthening of “family bonds.” This perception is further evidenced in the following extracts:

When he was on the slide, he smiled and looked like he was having a lot of fun. Before this, I never thought it would be possible to see him so happy, as he was always in a glum mood (Takano, 2001, p. 27; date of translation: December 22, 2014). When I said “good job!” after we had played on the swing together, he looked up at me and began clapping his hands. At that moment, I was delighted that we could convey our feelings to each other. I realized that he is such a lovely boy (Takahashi, 2013, p. 96 ; date of translation: December 22, 2014).

Encouragement from grandparents is considered to be another trigger for realizing “family bonds.” For instance, one mother, when she published the first edition of a book about parenting, received great encouragement from her own parents (Ezaki, 2003, p. 248). Thus, “family bond” seems to have several aspects, as positive experiences can be derived not only through interactions with a husband or wife or with the children themselves, but also with parents’ own parents.

Hypothesized Sequence of Positive Parenting Experiences

Summarizing the above interpretations,

the theoretical framework presents “conceptual shifts” as the core theme of positive parenting for CASDs. For instance, “conceptual shifts” can be perceived when a particular person uses positive words to illustrate how a mother’s/father’s perception of their children and/or their disabilities have changed. “Conceptual shifts” can bring great joy; as one mother says: “my blurred vision suddenly became clear, and my body felt lighter.” Sharing feelings of happiness with other family members leads to stronger family bonds and creates a good family environment. A good family environment can help to further shift conventional thought to positive thinking. In addition, having a disabled child creates various opportunities, including “recognizing an additional parenting role” and enabling parents to connect with similar parents and disseminate information that can help parents and CASDs live more comfortably. Connection with society and other humans also contributes to positively changing thoughts, as other individuals can help parents develop a better understanding of the child, and this leads to increased “appreciation” from the parents. Thus, it is postulated that: “recognizing an additional parenting role,” “appreciation,” and “family bonds” can work to shift parents’ negative conventional concepts regarding CASDs towards more positive thinking.

Discussion

This study focuses on positive experiences regarding parenting CASDs. This is significant, as a number of previous studies

have focused on the negative aspects of such parenting. In this study, many positive experiences were identified, which were described by parents as fulfilling and joyful. In particular, “conceptual shifts” was identified as the key theme, and it, in turn, influenced all other themes: “appreciation,” “recognizing an additional parenting role,” and “family bonds.” In other words, “conceptual shifts” can mean “self-growth.” Yuzawa and Yuzawa (2010) found that parents of CASDs develop a “positive attitude to childcare” and, as a result, engage in “self-growth” regarding themselves. Initially, the children’s problems were highlighted by professionals during diagnosis, and at this point parents were forced to focus on these negative aspects, consequently developing the perception that their parenting would be difficult. In the literature reviewed in this study, one parent mentioned: “What did our family lose when my son was born?” At first, the parent must have felt that he, his wife, and his child were fated to experience difficulties. However, the parent then said: “I am not sure that we have lost anything; rather, we have gained many things.” Thus, his initial desperate feeling disappeared or changed. Kimura and Yamazaki (2013) found that when children are diagnosed with autism, parents focus on the associated problems and view the prospects for their future lives and those for the children themselves negatively; however, their study also showed that parents can suddenly recognize the positive aspects of their parenting and of the children. In this study,

several factors were found to trigger parents' realization that their parenting has many positive experiences (see Table 2). In this study, the trigger/turning points did not occur suddenly; rather, the parents only recognized the positive experiences when they had developed resilience to the challenges. Resilience is an important factor for enjoying positive experiences. When people experience difficult situations, they can overcome these difficulties by emphasizing resilience. King et al. (2003) examined resilience in people with chronic illnesses and identified the factors that triggered turning points that helped them cope with their adversities. The parents examined in this study emphasized resilience in the process of their parenting. It is considered that the parents became resilient to their challenging parenting situations by spending time with their children, and they sought to disseminate their approach by writing autobiographies. In particular, they emphasized that the power to recognize the positive aspects of the children is extremely important for raising children with disabilities. Focusing on the children's problems leads to a desire to improve and normalize them, because the problems are unsuited to current society and people with disabilities living in such society experience many difficulties. However, this notion must be shifted from its present medical/individual model to a social model. In the social model of disability, the child's characteristics are not problems, but rather components of his/her unique nature, and society must identify and remove the barriers that impede related

positive parenting experiences (Charlton, 2000). In the medical model, a disability is always something that belongs to the affected individual; disability is considered a personal attribute that should be removed or reduced through treatment and therapy (Brisenden, 1986). However, the basic nature of CASDs cannot be eliminated, because autism is a lifelong developmental disability (Wing, 1988). When discarding the medical/individual model, parents can begin to focus on the positive aspects of their children. It can be considered that encouraging parents can encourage them to actively work towards viewing their children positively and, in turn, to pressure society to change and help such children and their parents live comfortably.

Study Limitations

Although various positive parenting stories were identified in this analysis, only 11 books were examined. Thus, it may not be possible to generalize these findings and consider them representative of all parents' experiences.

Further, future studies should conduct interviews to identify such parents' positive experiences and trigger/turning points, and compare the resultant data with the findings of the present study.

Conclusions

In this study, by analyzing autobiographical accounts, the themes: "conceptual shifts," "recognizing an additional parenting role," "appreciation," and "family bond" were identified as representative of the positive

experiences of parents of CASDs. Further, it was also revealed that several trigger/turning points can cause parents to recognize the positive aspects of parenting. This study can reveal how parents' perspectives regarding their children and the environment can be shifted from the medical model to the social model of disability. In this study, when released from their negative perspectives, the parents were able to celebrate and feel great joy living with their children, and were consequently able to recognize the positive aspects of their parenting.

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