



# Forecasting the Resilience of Mothers Having Children with Disabilities using Family Empowerment and Self-Efficacy as Predictors

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## Abstract

Maternal resilience plays a crucial role in enabling mothers of children with disabilities to adapt effectively to the emotional, social, and caregiving demands associated with raising a child with special needs. This study examined the predictive influence of family empowerment and self-efficacy on maternal resilience among mothers of children with disabilities in Banaybanay District, Davao Oriental, Philippines. Using a predictive quantitative research design, data were collected from 138 mothers through total enumeration sampling. Standardized questionnaires were utilized to measure family empowerment, self-efficacy, and maternal resilience. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple linear regression. Findings revealed very high levels of family empowerment, self-efficacy, and maternal resilience among the participants. Both family empowerment and self-efficacy were significantly and positively associated with maternal resilience. The regression model demonstrated that the predictor variables jointly explained 40.6% of the variance in maternal resilience ( $R^2 = .406$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Among the predictors, self-efficacy emerged as the stronger predictor, indicating that mothers' confidence in their caregiving abilities plays a central role in fostering resilience. The findings contribute to the growing literature on family-centered interventions by highlighting the importance of strengthening parental empowerment and self-efficacy to enhance resilience and well-being among mothers of children with disabilities. The study provides evidence-based insights for educators, program developers, and policymakers seeking to support families of children with disabilities.

## Keywords

Maternal resilience; Children with disabilities; Family empowerment; Self-efficacy; Predictive research design

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## Author Contributions

The authors contributed to conceptualization, methodology, investigation, writing—original draft preparation, writing—review and editing, and supervision. The authors approved the final manuscript.

## Ethics Statement

This study was conducted in accordance with ethical standards.

## INTRODUCTION

Raising a child with a disability presents substantial emotional, social, and practical challenges for families, particularly for mothers who often assume primary caregiving responsibilities. Maternal resilience has emerged as a critical

psychological resource that enables mothers to adapt positively to adversity, maintain well-being, and sustain effective caregiving despite ongoing demands. Previous studies have shown that mothers of children with disabilities frequently experience elevated levels of stress, emotional burden, and caregiving responsibilities that may compromise their quality of life and psychological functioning (Singh & Kumar, 2022; Rasoulpoor et al., 2023). Nevertheless, resilience enables parents to navigate these challenges and maintain positive family functioning over time (Ghanouni & Eves, 2023). Recent evidence further suggests that resilience serves as a protective factor against the adverse effects of caregiving stress among parents of children with developmental and intellectual disabilities (Biggs et al., 2024; Broll et al., 2025). Similarly, studies involving mothers of children with autism spectrum disorder and specific learning disabilities reported that higher levels of resilience contribute to better psychological adjustment and adaptive functioning despite caregiving demands (Aydemir & Önal, 2024; Pratiwi et al., 2025). Qualitative evidence has likewise demonstrated that resilience is often nurtured through personal meaning-making, family support, and perseverance in the face of long-term caregiving challenges (Pely, 2025).

Among the factors associated with resilience, family empowerment has gained considerable attention in family-centered intervention research. Research indicates that stronger support networks and greater family empowerment contribute to improved parental adaptation and well-being (Martínez-Rico et al., 2022). Intervention studies have likewise demonstrated that empowerment programs can significantly improve parents' confidence and capacity to manage the challenges associated with raising children with disabilities (Şahin Büyük & Özmen, 2025). Within inclusive educational contexts, parental involvement and empowerment are recognized as important mechanisms for promoting positive developmental outcomes for children and enhancing family resilience (Cariaga et al., 2025). Related studies on inclusive education have further emphasized that meaningful parental participation, collaborative school practices, and inclusive learning environments strengthen family engagement and contribute to positive educational experiences for learners with disabilities (Lazaga, 2025; Beñez, 2025; Cole, 2025). These findings highlight the importance of empowering parents not only within the family context but also within broader educational and community systems.

Another factor consistently linked to positive parental outcomes is self-efficacy. Grounded in social cognitive theory, self-efficacy reflects an individual's belief in their ability to successfully perform tasks and overcome challenges. Studies involving parents of children with disabilities have shown that higher levels of self-efficacy are associated with reduced parental stress, improved coping strategies, and stronger psychological adjustment (Kishimoto et al., 2023; Fayız & Palancı, 2023). Self-efficacy has also been identified as a significant predictor of resilience and well-being among caregivers and parents facing demanding life circumstances (Dönmez et al., 2024; Emamgholizadeh-Baboli et al., 2025). Furthermore, parents who possess stronger beliefs in their caregiving abilities tend to demonstrate greater perseverance and adaptability when confronted with caregiving-related challenges (Hermita et al., 2025; Ricon & Aviv, 2026). Consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior, individuals' beliefs about their capabilities influence behavioral intentions and adaptive responses in challenging situations (Ajzen, 2020). Likewise, research across educational and caregiving settings has shown that self-efficacy contributes significantly to engagement, motivation, coping, and resilience (Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008; Wang et al., 2024). Studies involving parents and educators have further demonstrated that self-efficacy functions as an important mechanism through which individuals sustain positive adaptation and effective performance despite adversity (Nyame et al., 2025; Sharifian et al., 2024).

Despite the growing body of literature on resilience, family empowerment, and self-efficacy, limited research has simultaneously examined the predictive contributions of family empowerment and self-efficacy to maternal resilience among mothers of children with disabilities in rural Philippine settings. Most existing studies have focused on either empowerment or self-efficacy independently, leaving uncertainty regarding their relative influence when considered together. Addressing this gap is important because understanding the predictors of maternal resilience can guide the development of targeted interventions and support programs for families of children with disabilities. Therefore, this study aims to forecast maternal resilience using family empowerment and self-efficacy as predictors among mothers of children with disabilities in Banaybanay District, Davao Oriental, Philippines. The findings are expected to contribute to the growing literature on family-centered support and provide evidence-based recommendations for educational leaders, program implementers, and policymakers seeking to strengthen resilience among mothers caring for children with disabilities.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Design**

This study employed a predictive quantitative research design to examine the extent to which family empowerment and self-efficacy predict maternal resilience among mothers of children with disabilities. The design was appropriate because it allowed the identification and assessment of relationships among variables and the determination of their predictive influence on maternal resilience. Through statistical analysis, the study explored how variations in family empowerment and self-efficacy contribute to differences in resilience levels among participants.

### **Locale and Participants**

The study was conducted in Banaybanay District, Davao Oriental, Philippines. Participants consisted of mothers of learners with disabilities enrolled in 18 public elementary schools during the School Year 2025–2026. A total of 138 mothers participated in the study through total enumeration, allowing all eligible individuals within the target population to be included. Participants were required to be mothers of learners with formally documented disabilities and currently enrolled in the participating schools at the time of data collection.

### **Instruments**

Data were collected using three structured questionnaires designed to measure family empowerment, self-efficacy, and maternal resilience. The family empowerment instrument consisted of 22 items assessing parents' knowledge, advocacy

skills, access to resources, and support systems. The self-efficacy instrument contained 21 items measuring mothers' confidence in managing parenting and caregiving responsibilities. Maternal resilience was assessed using a 34-item instrument covering dimensions such as emotional communication, cooperative problem-solving, family restoration, spirituality, utilization of resources, and positive coping with adversity. All instruments utilized a four-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Prior to the main data collection, the questionnaires underwent pilot testing to establish reliability and clarity. The results demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency, indicating that the instruments were appropriate for measuring the intended constructs.

### **Collection**

Approval to conduct the study was obtained from the appropriate educational authorities and school administrators. After securing permission, participants were informed about the purpose, procedures, and voluntary nature of the study. Written informed consent was obtained before the administration of the questionnaires. The questionnaires were distributed personally to the participants and were provided in a language that was easily understood by the respondents. Participants were given sufficient time to complete the instruments, and completed questionnaires were collected, checked for completeness, and prepared for statistical analysis.

### **Analysis**

The collected data were encoded, organized, and analyzed using a statistical software package. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were employed to determine the levels of family empowerment, self-efficacy, and maternal resilience. Pearson product-moment correlation was used to examine the relationships between the predictor variables and maternal resilience. Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the individual and combined predictive influence of family empowerment and self-efficacy on maternal resilience. Statistical significance was evaluated using a .05 level of significance.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical standards were strictly observed throughout the conduct of the study. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed of their right to decline participation or withdraw at any stage without consequences. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by ensuring that no identifying information was disclosed in any report or publication. All collected data were securely stored and used exclusively for research purposes. Ethical approval was obtained from the Society of Moral Integrity and Legal Ethics (SMILE) Board and the Department of Education.

### **Rigor and Limitations**

Several measures were undertaken to ensure the rigor and credibility of the study, including the use of reliable instruments, standardized data collection procedures, and appropriate statistical analyses. Despite these efforts, the study was limited to mothers from a single school district, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the use of self-report questionnaires may have introduced response bias. Nevertheless, the study provides valuable insights into the factors associated with maternal resilience among mothers of children with disabilities in the local context. Limitations include: single-district sample ( $N = 138$ ), limiting generalizability; self-report bias; moderate explained variance ( $R^2 = 40.6\%$ ).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The findings revealed that mothers of children with disabilities demonstrated very high levels of family empowerment ( $M = 3.62$ ,  $SD = 0.37$ ), self-efficacy ( $M = 3.62$ ,  $SD = 0.38$ ), and maternal resilience ( $M = 3.59$ ,  $SD = 0.40$ ). These results indicate that participants generally perceived themselves as capable of managing caregiving responsibilities while maintaining positive adaptation despite the challenges associated with raising children with disabilities. The consistently high mean scores across all indicators suggest that the mothers possessed substantial psychological and social resources that support effective caregiving. Among the dimensions of family empowerment, "knowing the rights and defending the interests of the child" obtained the highest mean score ( $M = 3.64$ ), indicating that mothers exhibited strong advocacy behaviors and awareness of their children's needs. This finding supports the work of Martínez-Rico et al. (2022), who emphasized that family empowerment is strengthened when parents actively engage in advocacy, access support networks, and participate in decision-making processes concerning their children. Similarly, Şahin Büyük and Özmen (2025) found that parent empowerment interventions significantly improve parents' capacity to advocate for and support their children with disabilities.

For maternal resilience, the highest score was observed in transcendence and spirituality ( $M = 3.66$ ), suggesting that spiritual beliefs and practices serve as important coping resources among mothers. This finding aligns with Save the Children Philippines (2023), which reported that spirituality often functions as a protective mechanism that helps families adapt to adversity and maintain hope during challenging circumstances. Previous studies have likewise identified resilience as a multidimensional construct that is strengthened by emotional, social, and spiritual resources among parents of children with disabilities (Ghanouni & Eves, 2023; Rasoulpoor et al., 2023).

The high level of self-efficacy observed in this study further indicates that mothers possessed strong confidence in their ability to manage parenting demands and caregiving responsibilities. This finding is consistent with previous studies demonstrating that self-efficacy serves as an important psychological resource that promotes effective coping, positive adaptation, and parental well-being (Kishimoto et al., 2023; Gilmore & Cuskelly, 2024). Research has also shown that parents with higher self-efficacy are more likely to demonstrate resilience and maintain positive functioning despite caregiving challenges (Fayız & Palancı, 2023; Hermita et al., 2025).

Table 1  
 Descriptive Statistics of Family Empowerment and Maternal Resilience (N = 138)

Variable	M	SD
Family Empowerment	3.62	0.37
Understanding the strengths, needs, and abilities of the child	3.62	0.40
Knowing the rights and defending the interests of the child	3.64	0.38
Helping the child to develop and learn	3.62	0.38
Creating a Support System	3.60	0.40
Accessing the Community	3.61	0.41
Self-Efficacy	3.62	0.38
Maternal Resilience	3.59	0.40
Emotional Communication	3.61	0.36
Understanding Cooperative Problem-Solving	3.62	0.38
Family Restoration	3.60	0.39
Transcendence and Spirituality	3.66	0.41
Utilizing Social and Economic Resources	3.43	0.66
Coping with Adversity Positively	3.59	0.42

Note. M = Mean; SD = Standard Deviation.

The correlation analysis revealed significant positive relationships between family empowerment and maternal resilience ( $r = .583, p < .001$ ) and between self-efficacy and maternal resilience ( $r = .616, p < .001$ ). These findings indicate that increases in family empowerment and self-efficacy are associated with corresponding increases in maternal resilience. The moderate-to-high correlation coefficients suggest that both variables play important roles in supporting mothers' ability to adapt successfully to the demands of caring for children with disabilities. The significant relationship between family empowerment and maternal resilience supports the notion that empowered families possess greater capacity to access resources, build support systems, and advocate effectively for their children. According to Martínez-Rico et al. (2022), family empowerment enhances parental competence and promotes adaptive functioning through increased access to support networks and community resources. Similarly, Cariaga et al. (2025) emphasized that empowered parents are better positioned to participate actively in educational and developmental processes that benefit both the child and the family.

Likewise, the positive association between self-efficacy and maternal resilience is consistent with previous studies that identified self-efficacy as a critical determinant of psychological adjustment and adaptive functioning. Kishimoto et al. (2023) found that parental self-efficacy reduces stress and enhances coping among caregivers of children with autism spectrum disorder. Comparable findings were reported by Dönmez et al. (2024), who demonstrated that self-efficacy contributes significantly to resilience among parents managing chronic caregiving responsibilities. Moreover, Emamgholizadeh-Baboli et al. (2025) concluded that higher levels of self-efficacy are associated with improved quality of life and psychological well-being among individuals facing long-term caregiving and disability-related challenges. The slightly stronger relationship observed between self-efficacy and maternal resilience suggests that mothers' beliefs about their own capabilities may exert a more direct influence on resilience than empowerment alone. This finding is supported by Ergin et al. (2023), who reported that self-efficacy serves as a significant predictor of psychological resilience among individuals coping with demanding family responsibilities.

Table 2  
 Relationship Between Family Empowerment, Self-Efficacy, and Maternal Resilience

Predictor Variable	r-value	p-value	Decision on $H_0$
Family Empowerment	.583	<.001	Reject $H_0$
Self-Efficacy	.616	<.001	Reject $H_0$

Note. Correlation is significant at  $p < .05$ .

The multiple regression analysis revealed that family empowerment and self-efficacy jointly and significantly predicted maternal resilience,  $F(2,135) = 45.314, p < .001$ , accounting for 40.6% of the total variance in maternal resilience ( $R^2 = .406$ ). This finding indicates that both variables contribute substantially to explaining differences in resilience among mothers of children with disabilities. Among the predictors, self-efficacy emerged as the stronger predictor ( $\beta = .411, p < .001$ ), followed by family empowerment ( $\beta = .262, p < .001$ ). The stronger predictive influence of self-efficacy suggests that mothers who possess greater confidence in their parenting abilities are more likely to demonstrate resilience when confronted with caregiving challenges. This finding is consistent with studies showing that self-efficacy promotes adaptive coping, persistence, and psychological well-being in stressful circumstances (Fayız & Palancı, 2023; Dönmez et al., 2024). Similar evidence was reported by Shuakbayeva et al. (2025), who identified self-efficacy as a significant pathway toward resilience and positive adaptation. The significant contribution of family empowerment also highlights the importance of providing mothers with opportunities to access information, participate in decision-making, and develop supportive social networks. Research suggests that empowerment enhances parents' capacity to manage caregiving demands and navigate available services effectively (Martínez-Rico et al., 2022). Furthermore, intervention studies have demonstrated that empowerment-based programs improve parental confidence and family functioning, thereby strengthening resilience outcomes (Şahin Büyük & Özmen, 2025).

Although the model explained a substantial proportion of variance, approximately 59.4% of maternal resilience remained unexplained. This finding suggests that additional factors may contribute to resilience among mothers of children with disabilities. Previous studies have identified social support, family functioning, optimism, psychological well-being, stress management, and socioeconomic resources as potential determinants of resilience (Biggs et al., 2024; Broll et al., 2025; Sarhani-Robles et al., 2025). Consequently, future research should explore these variables to develop a more comprehensive understanding of resilience among mothers caring for children with disabilities. Overall, the findings demonstrate that family empowerment and self-efficacy are important predictors of maternal resilience. The results underscore the value of family-centered interventions that strengthen parental confidence, empowerment, and support systems to promote positive adaptation among mothers of children with disabilities.

Table 3  
 Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Maternal Resilience

Predictor	B	SE B	$\beta$	t	p
Constant	1.003	.179	—	5.588	< .001
Family Empowerment	.282	.075	.262	3.768	< .001
Self-Efficacy	.433	.073	.411	5.907	< .001

Model Summary	
Statistic	Value
Multiple R	.637
R <sup>2</sup>	.406
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.397
F	45.314
p-value	< .001

Note. Dependent variable: Maternal Resilience. The regression model significantly predicted maternal resilience,  $F(2, 135) = 45.314, p < .001$ .

### Theoretical Implications

The findings of this study provide empirical support for the central propositions of Self-Determination Theory by demonstrating the significant roles of family empowerment and self-efficacy in predicting maternal resilience among mothers of children with disabilities. Within the framework of the theory, family empowerment may be viewed as an expression of autonomy, as empowered mothers possess the knowledge, resources, and confidence necessary to participate actively in decision-making, advocate for their children, and navigate available support systems. The significant predictive effect of family empowerment suggests that mothers who perceive greater control over their caregiving circumstances are more likely to adapt positively to challenges. This finding reinforces the theoretical assumption that autonomy-supportive conditions facilitate psychological growth, adaptive functioning, and positive developmental outcomes.

Similarly, self-efficacy reflects the competence dimension of Self-Determination Theory, representing mothers' beliefs in their ability to effectively manage caregiving responsibilities and overcome difficulties associated with raising children with disabilities. The finding that self-efficacy emerged as the strongest predictor of maternal resilience highlights the importance of perceived competence in fostering adaptive responses to adversity. Mothers who possess stronger confidence in their caregiving abilities appear better equipped to cope with stress, persist through challenges, and maintain psychological well-being. In this context, maternal resilience can be understood as an adaptive outcome that emerges when individuals experience sufficient levels of autonomy and competence within their caregiving roles.

However, the study provides only partial support for Self-Determination Theory because the relatedness component was not directly examined. Relatedness refers to individuals' sense of belonging, connectedness, and supportive relationships with others. Previous research has suggested that social support, family cohesion, and community connectedness contribute significantly to resilience among caregivers and parents of children with disabilities. Since these factors were not included in the present model, the findings do not fully capture the interaction among all three basic psychological needs proposed by the theory. Future studies should incorporate measures of social support, family connectedness, and interpersonal relationships to provide a more comprehensive test of Self-Determination Theory in explaining maternal resilience among mothers of children with disabilities.

### Practical Implications

School leaders and educational program supervisors should prioritize interventions that strengthen both family empowerment and maternal self-efficacy. Workshops focused on advocacy skills, resource navigation, and confidence-building may enhance resilience outcomes.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

This study concludes that family empowerment and self-efficacy are significant predictors of maternal resilience among mothers of children with disabilities. The findings indicate that mothers who possess greater confidence in their caregiving abilities and stronger capacities to access resources, advocate for their children, and participate in support systems are more likely to demonstrate resilience when facing caregiving challenges. Self-efficacy emerged as the stronger predictor, highlighting the critical role of mothers' beliefs in their capabilities to adapt effectively to demanding circumstances. The study contributes to the literature by providing empirical evidence from a rural Philippine context and by demonstrating the combined influence of family empowerment and self-efficacy within a single predictive model. However, the moderate

explanatory power of the model suggests that maternal resilience is a complex construct influenced by additional personal, social, and environmental factors beyond those examined in this study.

Based on these findings, educational leaders, special education coordinators, and community stakeholders should develop family-centered programs that strengthen parental empowerment and self-efficacy through advocacy training, resource-navigation workshops, psychosocial support, and confidence-building activities. Schools and local government units should also enhance collaborative support networks involving educators, healthcare professionals, and community organizations to provide comprehensive assistance to families of children with disabilities. Future research should investigate other potential predictors of maternal resilience, including social support, family functioning, economic resources, and caregiver well-being, using broader samples and longitudinal or mixed-methods approaches to generate a more comprehensive understanding of resilience among mothers raising children with disabilities.

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