

Resilience and Affiliate Stigma Among Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder: The Mediating Role of Life Satisfaction and the Moderating Role of Ostracism

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Purpose: Parents of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) often encounter multifaceted challenges when addressing their children's special needs. While existing studies have examined the relationship between parental resilience and mental health in this population, the underlying mechanisms governing this association remain poorly understood. The present study aims to investigate the association between parental resilience and affiliate stigma, examine the mediating role of life satisfaction in this relationship, and assess the moderating effect of ostracism on these pathways.

Methods: This study employed a cross-sectional design to examine the relationship between resilience and affiliate stigma among parents of children with ASD, as well as the underlying mechanism. A total of 380 caregivers were recruited from autism intervention centers in Jiangsu Province, mainland China. Participants voluntarily completed questionnaires including the Brief Resilience Scale, the Affiliate Stigma Scale, the Satisfaction With Life Scale, and the Ostracism Short Scale.

Results: (1) Resilience of parents of children with autism negatively predicted affiliate stigma; (2) Life satisfaction partially mediated the relationship between resilience and affiliate stigma; and (3) Ostracism significantly moderated the relationship between life satisfaction and affiliate stigma.

Conclusion: This study reveals the complex relationship between resilience, affiliate stigma, life satisfaction, and ostracism among parents of children with ASD. It highlights the significance of enhancing parental resilience, improving life satisfaction, and reducing ostracism in alleviating the stress of affiliate stigma in families of children with autism. In the family support system for children with ASD, it is necessary to build an inclusive social environment and provide resources for psychological interventions to enhance parents' resilience in the face of challenges.

Keywords: resilience, affiliate stigma, life satisfaction, ostracism

Introduction

With the gradual increase in social awareness of autism, the mental health of parents of children with autism has become a growing concern.^{1,2} Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), as a complex neurodevelopmental disorder, not only affects the children themselves, but also brings great psychological stress and challenges to their families. Previous studies have found that parents of children with ASD generally have poor mental health and often experience anxiety and depression.³ This psychological stress not only affects their own physical and mental health, but may also have a negative impact on the recovery and development of their autistic children. Resilience, as a positive adaptive capacity of individuals in the face of adversity, is particularly important for parents of children with autism. However, previous research has mostly

focused on the children themselves, with relatively little research on the resilience of parents of children with ASD.⁴ This may lead to a poor understanding of the resilience of parents of autistic children and the factors influencing it, making it difficult to develop effective intervention strategies to enhance their mental health. Therefore, the present study investigated the impact of resilience on affiliate stigma among parents of children with ASD, and explored the intrinsic mechanisms involved. A moderated mediation model was used to test whether life satisfaction mediates the relationship between resilience and affiliate stigma, and the moderating role of ostracism in this process. This study contributes to the literature in related fields in three ways. First, it enriches research on the psychological states and coping mechanisms of parents of children with autism by revealing the intrinsic link between resilience and affiliate stigma, extending the protective role of resilience to this specific group of parents of children with autism. Second, it reveals the mediating role of life satisfaction in the relationship between resilience and affiliate stigma in parents of children with autism, providing a deeper perspective for understanding this relationship. Finally, the model proposed in this study provides valuable insights into intervention strategies on how to reduce affiliate stigma, emphasizing the importance of increasing resilience and reducing ostracism.

Resilience and Affiliate Stigma in Parents of Children with ASD

Resilience is the ability of an individual to adapt, recover, and grow positively in the face of stress, adversity, or challenges.^{5,6} For parents of autistic children, improving resilience is of great importance.^{7,8} Resilience not only directly affects the mental health of parents of children with autism, but also indirectly affects the growth track of their children and the effectiveness of intervention treatments. When parents are equipped with resilience, they can face challenges with a more optimistic mindset, thus creating a more stable environment for their autistic children to grow up in. Affiliate stigma refers to the internalized stigma among family members of negative judgments and feelings held by others about themselves and children with disabilities.⁹ It is worth noting that the phenomenon of affiliate stigma attached to parents of autistic children may manifest itself particularly prominently in Chinese parents. From a cultural perspective, the Chinese tend to explore the roots of mental illness from a biological perspective.¹⁰ Given this cognitive tendency, parents of children with ASD in China may be accused more of passing on unfavorable genes that cause autism to their children.¹¹ Despite the increase in public awareness of ASD in recent years, parents of autistic children still face numerous misconceptions and prejudices.¹² These negative attitudes not only place a heavy psychological burden on parents, but also act as barriers to their seeking social support and help from others.¹³ Therefore, it is particularly important to explore the relationship between resilience and affiliate stigma among parents of children with autism. Although fewer studies directly address the association between the two, it is reasonable to speculate based on the existing research. High resilience may equip parents of autistic children with strong coping skills and strategies, such as actively seeking social support and maintaining an optimistic mindset. These abilities enable them to effectively resist psychological burden and stress in the face of stigma and thus cope better with challenges. Therefore, this study proposes Hypothesis 1: Resilience negatively predicts affiliate stigma among parents of autistic children.

The Mediating Role of Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction is a stable, broad cognitive assessment of an individual's overall life status and also an important indicator of one's quality of life.¹⁴ In families of autistic children, life satisfaction may play an important role, serving as a potential mediating mechanism for the link between parental resilience and affiliate stigma.

On one hand, there is a strong association between resilience and life satisfaction among parents of children with ASD. Studies have shown that parental resilience plays an important role in the face of the difficulties associated with parenting a child with autism.¹⁵ It not only empowers parents to cope with the challenges positively, but also enhances their overall psychological adaptation. Parents with higher resilience are more able to deal with the problematic behaviors triggered by their child's illness and actively explore ways to resolve them.¹⁶ This ability helps parents find a balance between their family responsibilities and personal lives, which in turn allows them to experience a higher level of life satisfaction. On the other hand, life satisfaction, as an important indicator of mental health, is of great significance in how parents of children with autism cope with affiliate stigma. When parents are satisfied with their lives, they tend to be more positive and confident when looking at problems and challenges.^{17,18} Such an optimistic mindset can help parents

better deal with external misconceptions and prejudices about autism. Thus, parents with higher life satisfaction may be better able to resist the negative effects of affiliate stigma and maintain self-esteem and self-confidence, thereby reducing the psychological stress associated with affiliate stigma.

Based on the above observations, it is reasonable to hypothesize that life satisfaction may serve as a mediator between resilience and affiliate stigma. Specifically, highly resilient parents of autistic children can still exhibit greater life satisfaction despite the challenges posed by their child's illness. This positive cognitive assessment not only helps parents cope positively with their current parenting dilemmas, but may also reduce the affiliate stigma they feel. Therefore, this study proposes Hypothesis 2: Life satisfaction mediates the relationship between resilience and affiliate stigma among parents of autistic children.

The Moderating Role of Ostracism

Human beings, as social animals, have a strong need for stable social connections during their survival and development.^{19,20} However, ostracism, as a negative social phenomenon, seriously threatens the fulfilment of this need. When an individual's need for social connectedness is severely compromised by ostracism and is difficult to restore, they tend to exhibit more negative behaviors.²¹ Ostracism is particularly prominent in parents of children with ASD.²² They may experience rejection or neglect from society because of their children's problematic behaviors. Previous studies have found that ostracism is related to life satisfaction and stigma, respectively.²³⁻²⁵ For parents of autistic children, the degree of ostracism they experience may moderate the relationship between life satisfaction and affiliate stigma. When parents of children with autism feel less ostracized, they are more likely to face life's challenges with a positive mindset. This positive mindset not only contributes to their mental health, but may also relieve the negative impact of affiliate stigma. It makes these parents more proactive in seeking resources, support, and educational opportunities to help their children better integrate into society. In contrast, for parents experiencing more ostracism, long-term stress and challenges may make it more difficult for them to discover the positives in their lives. These parents may feel isolated as they may feel they cannot get enough understanding and support from family, friends or the community, which further exacerbates the negative effects of ostracism and affiliate stigma. Therefore, this study proposes Hypothesis 3: Ostracism moderates the relationship between life satisfaction and affiliate stigma among parents of autistic children.

The Present Study

This study aims to explore the mechanisms underlying the relationship between resilience and affiliate stigma among parents of children with autism, and to examine the mediating role of life satisfaction and the moderating role of ostracism. Based on previous studies, we proposed the following hypotheses: (1) resilience negatively predicts affiliate stigma among parents of autistic children; (2) life satisfaction mediates the relationship between resilience and affiliate stigma; and (3) ostracism moderates the relationship between life satisfaction and affiliate stigma. These findings are expected to provide theoretical support and practical guidance for the development of intervention strategies to alleviate the psychological burden of parents of children with autism, improve their quality of life, and reduce affiliate stigma. Figure 1 shows the theoretical hypothetical model of the study.

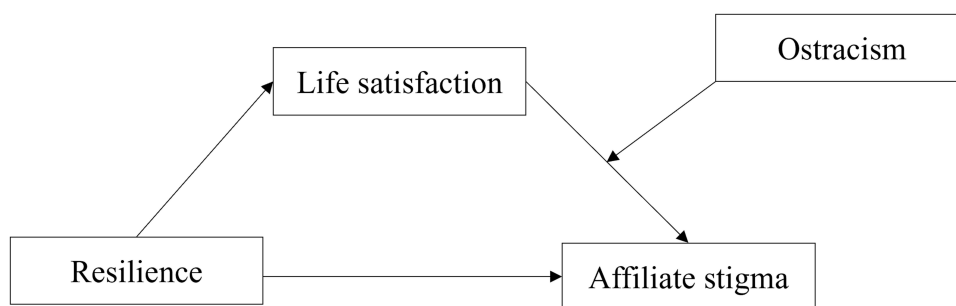


Figure 1 The proposed moderated mediation model.

Materials and Methods

Participants

In this study, questionnaires were administered to parents of children with autism in Jiangsu Province from November to December 2024. The researchers first explained the purpose of this study and then distributed 460 questionnaires after obtaining informed consent from parents of children with ASD. After excluding invalid questionnaires with either identical responses across all items or missing information, 380 valid questionnaires were remained, and the effective recovery rate of the questionnaire was 82.61%. The final sample was composed of 56 fathers and 324 mothers, with a mean age of 36.33 years ($SD = 5.97$). All children with ASD in this study were clinically diagnosed in the hospital, including 277 boys and 103 girls, with a mean age of 6.72 years ($SD = 3.14$). It is generally recommended that the ratio of subject-to-item should be no less than 5:1, while 10:1 would be more optimal, and the present study ensured an adequate sample size meeting this criterion.^{26,27} This study complied with the Declaration of Helsinki and was approved by the Ethics Committee of Nanjing Normal University of Special Education.

Research Tools

The Brief Resilience Scale

The Brief Resilience Scale was used to measure the resilience of participants.²⁸ The scale consists of 6 items on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*), with higher scores indicating greater levels of resilience. The scale demonstrated acceptable reliability when administered to disadvantaged population samples.²⁹ The Cronbach's α coefficient of the scale in this study was 0.74.

The Affiliate Stigma Scale

The Affiliate Stigma Scale adapted by Zhou et al was adopted.^{9,30} It consists of 12 items on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*), with higher scores representing a greater sense of affiliate stigma. The scale showed acceptable reliability in a sample of parents of children with autism in China.³⁰ In this study, the internal consistency for the scale was 0.94.

The Satisfaction with Life Scale

The Satisfaction With Life Scale was used in this study.³¹ The scale consists of 5 items on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 7 (*totally agree*), with higher scores representing higher levels of life satisfaction. The scale showed satisfactory reliability in a sample of Chinese parents of children with autism.¹⁷ In the present study, the Cronbach's α coefficient for this scale was 0.91.

Ostracism Short Scale

Ostracism was measured by the Ostracism Short Scale.³² The scale consists of 4 items and is scored on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (*never*) to 7 (*always*). The higher the scores, the more the ostracism experiences encountered in participants' daily lives. The scale demonstrated good reliability when used with samples of vulnerable groups.³³ The scale demonstrated high internal consistency (ie, 0.93) in this study.

Statistical Analysis

The data were analyzed in this study using SPSS 26.0 and the PROCESS macro version 3.3 written by Hayes. Based on the proposed hypotheses, the mediation model and the moderated mediation model were tested using Model 4 and Model 14 in PROCESS, respectively. The bias-corrected Bootstrap method was used with 5000 samples to calculate the 95% confidence intervals (CI) for parameter estimates.³⁴ Mediation effect refers to the relationship between variable X and Y, wherein an intermediate variable M transmits the indirect influence, with this indirect causal pathway termed as mediation.³⁵ Moderation effect occurs when variable U alters either the magnitude or direction of the association between variables X and Y.³⁵

Results

Common Method Deviation

Common method deviation may appear when the study data is collected using self-administered questionnaires.³⁶ Therefore, Harman's single-factor test was used in this study, and the results of the unrotated factor analysis showed that a total of six factors had eigenvalues greater than 1. The total variance explained by the first factor was below the critical value of 40%, indicating that the present study did not have a severe common method deviation.

Descriptive Statistics and Related Analysis for Each Variable

Table 1 showed the mean (*M*) and standard deviation (*SD*) of each variable and the correlation between each variable. The results showed that resilience was positively correlated with life satisfaction and negatively associated with affiliate stigma and ostracism. Life satisfaction was negatively correlated with affiliate stigma and ostracism. Affiliate stigma had a positive association with ostracism.

Mediating Effect Analyses

To investigate the mediating role of life satisfaction between resilience and affiliate stigma among parents of children with ASD, a mediation effect test was conducted using Model 4 in the PROCESS macro for SPSS written by Hayes.³⁴ The results were shown in Table 2. The results of the first step indicated that resilience significantly negatively predicted affiliate stigma ($\beta = -0.34, p < 0.001$). The second-step results showed that resilience significantly positively predicted life satisfaction ($\beta = 0.23, p < 0.001$). The results of the third step demonstrated that life satisfaction significantly negatively predicted affiliate stigma ($\beta = -0.27, p < 0.001$) and that resilience continued to be a significant negative predictor of affiliate stigma ($\beta = -0.28, p < 0.001$), suggesting that life satisfaction mediated the relationship between resilience and affiliate stigma among parents of children with ASD.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Coefficients (N = 380)

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Resilience	19.47	3.29	1			
2. Affiliate stigma	45.57	12.95	-0.34**	1		
3. Life satisfaction	19.52	6.05	0.23**	-0.33**	1	
4. Ostracism	12.37	5.07	-0.32**	0.51**	-0.14**	1

Note: ** $p < 0.01$.

Abbreviations: M, mean; SD, standard deviation.

Table 2 Mediation Effect Test (N = 380)

Predictors	Affiliate Stigma		Life Satisfaction		Affiliate Stigma	
	β	t	β	t	β	t
Resilience	-0.34	-7.06***	0.23	4.55***	-0.28	-5.87***
Life satisfaction					-0.27	-5.58***
R^2	0.12		0.05		0.18	
F	49.86***		20.75***		42.51***	

Note: *** $p < 0.001$.

Table 3 Moderated Mediation Model Test (N = 380)

Predictors	Life Satisfaction		Affiliate Stigma	
	β	t	β	t
Resilience	0.23	4.55***	-0.14	-3.22**
Life satisfaction			-0.26	-6.09***
Ostracism			0.41	9.36***
Life satisfaction \times Ostracism			0.10	3.07**
R^2	0.05		0.36	
F	20.75***		53.21***	

Notes: ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

Moderated Mediation Model Tests

To explore the moderating role of ostracism between life satisfaction and affiliate stigma, we used Model 14 from Hayes' PROCESS macro for SPSS.³⁴ The results were shown in Table 3. The interaction between life satisfaction and ostracism had a significant predictive effect on affiliate stigma ($\beta = 0.10$, $p < 0.01$). This showed that ostracism had a significant moderating effect on the relationship between life satisfaction and affiliate stigma.

To further examine the moderating effect of ostracism between life satisfaction and affiliate stigma, participants were divided into two groups based on their ostracism scores: the high ostracism group ($M+1SD$) and the low ostracism group ($M-1SD$). The predictive effect of life satisfaction on affiliate stigma was then examined separately in each group. As shown in Figure 2, life satisfaction had a significant negative predictive effect on affiliate stigma among parents with low ostracism ($\beta_{\text{simple slope}} = -0.37$, $p < 0.001$); and for parents with high ostracism, life satisfaction also significantly negatively predicted affiliate stigma ($\beta_{\text{simple slope}} = -0.16$, $p < 0.001$), but the effect was weaker. Therefore, special attention needs to be paid to the mental health of parents with higher levels of ostracism.

Discussion

This study confirmed the negative correlation between resilience and affiliate stigma among parents of children with ASD, as well as the mediating role of life satisfaction and the moderating role of ostracism. These findings could provide



Figure 2 The moderating role of ostracism between life satisfaction and affiliate stigma.

a theoretical basis for future research exploring the mental health of parents of autistic children and play an important role in enhancing their life satisfaction and coping with social pressure.

The Relationship Between Resilience and Affiliate Stigma

The present study suggests that resilience is negatively correlated with affiliate stigma among parents of children with autism, which is in line with Hypothesis 1. This finding is similar to previous research, emphasizing the important role of resilience in mitigating affiliate stigma for parents of children with autism.^{37,38} Resilient parents of children with autism are more likely to cope positively with parenting difficulties when experiencing social misconceptions and prejudice, thereby reducing the negative impact of stigma. This finding can also be explained by the protective model of resilience,³⁹ which suggests that an individual's resilience, as an internal protective factor, can promote adaptive coping strategies in the face of stress and challenges, thus alleviating the impact of negative factors. In addition, a comparative analysis of the findings of this study with research in related fields reveals several similarities among caregivers of people with different disabilities in the face of stigma.⁴⁰⁻⁴³ Resilience can help them maintain a positive mindset in the face of stigma, which enables them to view social prejudices more rationally and reduce the sense of self-denial and shame arising from stigma. At the same time, resilience prompts them to proactively seek social support and communicate with peers sharing similar experiences for emotional support and coping strategies. In this process, they gradually build confidence in themselves and those they care for, further mitigating the effects of affiliate stigma. To enhance resilience among parents of children with ASD, mindfulness-based stress reduction programs led by psychological counsellors could be implemented, including mindfulness meditation and mindful breathing exercises. Given the fragmented schedules of these parents, sessions should offer flexible scheduling (eg, weekends or evenings). Additionally, the programs should integrate ASD-specific mindfulness practices, guiding parents in applying these techniques to real-life challenges, such as managing their child's emotional dysregulation and social difficulties.

The Mediating Role of Life Satisfaction

Consistent with Hypothesis 2, life satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between resilience and affiliate stigma among parents of children with autism, which enriches the existing theoretical and empirical research. Specifically, it improves our understanding of the mental health problems of parents of autistic children by revealing how life satisfaction serves as a bridge between resilience and affiliate stigma. Although there have been several studies on life satisfaction among parents of autistic children, the present study is one of the few that have both explored antecedent variables affecting the life satisfaction of parents of autistic children and considered the impact of life satisfaction on affiliate stigma. To our knowledge, few empirical studies have previously revealed the mediating processes involved in this complex association.

In addition to the overall mediating effect, each part of the mediation model deserves attention. With regard to resilience and life satisfaction, our findings support the view that resilience plays an important role in increasing individual life satisfaction.⁴⁴ Parenting a child with autism is undoubtedly a difficult task, which poses challenges to parents' mental health. However, those parents with higher levels of resilience tend to utilize personal resources and social support more effectively to respond to these challenges.⁴⁵ In addition, research in cognitive neuroscience has found that resilience is strongly associated with brain regions such as the right dorsal anterior cingulate cortex (dACC), which is also involved in life satisfaction.^{46,47} These studies suggest that resilient parents show greater adaptability when faced with the challenges of parenting an autistic child. These behaviors not only help them to cope better with the challenges, but also enhance their life satisfaction to some extent. For life satisfaction and affiliate stigma, a negative correlation between life satisfaction and affiliate stigma is shown, which is similar to a previous study that noted the positive role of life satisfaction in reducing an individual's risk of experiencing stigma.⁴⁸ Individuals with higher life satisfaction are more likely to engage actively in social interactions, which improves their sense of social belonging. They can also maintain their self-image and reduce the internalization of negative labels. These factors may ultimately relieve mental health problems triggered by affiliate stigma. Additionally, this association can also be explained by the Broaden-and-Build Theory of Positive Emotions.⁴⁹ High life satisfaction tends to help individuals generate positive emotional experiences and catch the positive aspects of external events more acutely. This emotional state is particularly beneficial

for parents of children with ASD, enabling them to effectively meet the various challenges posed by affiliate stigma and mitigate the resulting negative effects.

Thus, life satisfaction may serve as a significant mediator between resilience and affiliate stigma among parents of autistic children. Psychological interventions targeting this group can focus on enhancing parents' life satisfaction to alleviate the negative impact of stigma. Specifically, cognitive behavioral therapy can be employed as an intervention. Psychological counsellors conduct in-depth assessments to identify parenting-related challenges and establish individualized treatment goals. During sessions, parents are guided to recognize negative mindsets (eg, self-blame regarding ASD etiology) and reframe these cognitions by emphasizing the multifactorial origins of autism. Additionally, psychological counsellors can direct parental attention to child developmental progress and their own caregiving efforts, thereby promoting parents' cognitive reconstruction and enhancing life satisfaction.

The Moderating Role of Ostracism

This study also explores the moderating effect of ostracism on the second path of the mediation model, and the result is consistent with our Hypothesis 3 that ostracism positively predicts affiliate stigma and moderates the relationship between life satisfaction and affiliate stigma. Specifically, lower ostracism can reduce the negative impact of parents' affiliate stigma on their life satisfaction. One possible reason can be that when parents of children with autism feel less ostracism, they are more likely to maintain higher self-esteem, which helps them to cope better with affiliate stigma. In contrast, when experiencing higher levels of ostracism, parents of children with autism may become isolated and helpless due to a lack of necessary social support and understanding. Ostracism not only undermines life satisfaction which always acts as a protective factor, but may also deepen the affiliate stigma and make parents difficult to integrate into society. Our findings also support cognitive deconstruction theory and hierarchy of needs theory.^{50,51} Specifically, high-level needs such as belonging and esteem are difficult to meet when parents of children with autism experience ostracism and a lack of recognition from others. These parents may experience psychological states such as emotional numbness and dwelling in the moment, then lose the motivation for meaningful thinking and self-reflection, which may further solidify their internalized identification with affiliate stigma. Therefore, to alleviate the negative impact of ostracism and relieve parents' pressure triggered by stigma, community-based systems should integrate multidisciplinary resources to provide accessible services for families of children with ASD. For instance, establishing community rehabilitation service centers could offer essential intervention training and guidance for autistic children. Additionally, social work organizations may implement structured parent-training programs to enhance caregivers' understanding of their child's developmental needs and improve their stress-coping competencies.

Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, the cross-sectional design made it difficult to draw causal inferences between resilience and affiliate stigma among parents of children with ASD. Future research could adopt longitudinal methods or experimental designs to test the hypothesis model. Second, data collection from parents of children with ASD presents notable methodological challenges. Within the Chinese cultural context, traditional gender roles—often characterized by “male breadwinner, female homemaker” dynamics—significantly influence parental involvement. Fathers predominantly assume the role of primary economic providers, allocating substantial time and effort to occupational demands. In contrast, mothers are typically responsible for transporting children to ASD intervention centers. These culturally embedded role divisions resulted in a pronounced gender imbalance within our sample, with maternal participation substantially exceeding paternal inclusion. Future research should incorporate gender-matching strategies and expand recruitment efforts to enhance sample representativeness, thereby strengthening the validity and generalizability of findings. Third, this study did not comprehensively account for the potential impact of parents' pre-existing mental health conditions or empathy quotient on the outcomes. Also, the severity of autistic symptoms in children—a factor that may reflect distinct etiological mechanisms and developmental trajectories—was not systematically controlled. Future research could incorporate these critical variables (ie, parental mental health history and children's autistic symptom severity) to provide more robust theoretical and practical insights. Lastly, while the present study primarily focused on

the role of ostracism as a moderator, other potential moderating variables, such as social support and financial stress, may also significantly influence the results and deserve further investigation.

Conclusion

The resilience of parents of children with ASD is often viewed as an important factor influencing affiliate stigma. However, the underlying mechanisms of this relationship have not been adequately empirically investigated. Therefore, the present study aims to explore this underlying mechanism in depth. Based on the existing theoretical framework and previous empirical studies, we constructed a moderated mediation model in which life satisfaction mediates the relationship between resilience and affiliate stigma and is moderated by ostracism among parents of autistic children. Theoretically, by proposing and validating this model, the present study contributes to understanding how parents' resilience affects their affiliate stigma and under what conditions this mechanism works. This not only enriches the theoretical framework of related fields, but also provides new perspectives and ideas for subsequent research.

From a sustainability perspective, the findings of this study have profound implications. As parental resilience improves, parents demonstrate enhanced adaptability and optimism when confronting challenges associated with raising a child with ASD. This positive mindset becomes internalized as a stable trait over time, thereby fostering long-term maintenance of elevated well-being levels. At the same time, enhanced life satisfaction contributes to greater parental acceptance of their life status, thereby reducing affiliate stigma associated with raising a child with ASD. These findings further underscore that interventions targeting parents of children with ASD should not be short-term or episodic, but rather constitute a sustained, systematic process requiring ongoing resource allocation and social attention. Finally, this study also provides specific suggestions for subsequent studies. Future research could design and implement multiple intervention programs, and assess the impact of these programs on increasing parental resilience, life satisfaction, and reducing affiliate stigma through an experimental design, thus providing a scientific basis for mental health interventions for parents of children with ASD.

Data Sharing Statement

The data can be obtained by contacting the corresponding author for reasonable requests.

Ethical Approval

This study complies with the Declaration of Helsinki and adhered to ethical norms as approved by the Ethics Committee of Nanjing Normal University of Special Education (Ethics approval number: NJTS20240628027).

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Author Contributions

All authors have made a substantial contribution to the work reported, be it in conception, design, execution, acquisition of data, analysis and interpretation, or all of these; have been involved in drafting, revising, or critically reviewing the article; have given final approval for the version to be published; have agreed on the journal to which the article will be submitted; and agree to accept responsibility for all aspects of the work.

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Disclosure

The authors report no conflicts of interest in this work.

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