

Understanding ADHD on The Storybook "Aku Juga Ingin Jadi Spesial"

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Abstract

ADHD is a neurological developmental disorder characterized by inattention, disorganization, and hyperactivity-impulsivity, affecting children's learning abilities, social behavior, and communication, which complicates acceptance from peers. This study employs a library research method to explore literature on ADHD, focusing particularly on the book *Aku Juga Ingin Jadi Spesial* by Felicia Amara, published by the Language Development and Fostering Agency in 2022. Data collection involved content analysis of this book and relevant academic sources, utilizing a qualitative descriptive approach to gather insights and information about ADHD. The results indicate that Amara's book, with its easily understood storytelling style, has the potential to serve as an effective educational medium for children and teachers, helping to foster social understanding toward peers with different abilities. This study highlights the importance of the book in supporting inclusive learning environments and enhancing ADHD literacy among children.

Keywords: behavior, child ADHD, storybook

1. Introduction

ADHD is a neurological developmental disorder characterized by inattention, disorganization, and hyperactivity-impulsivity, commonly referred to as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) (Prasaja et al., 2023).

ADHD is also defined as a developmental disorder in children marked by an increase in motor activity, resulting in hyperactivity. This condition is often manifested through symptoms such as restlessness, difficulty remaining still, a constant need to move, frequent inability to stay focused, and impulsive behaviors that may hinder learning abilities (Rahmani et al., 2022).

The prevalence of ADHD in children is highest in the range of 3-10% in the United States, 3-7% in Germany, and 5-10% in Canada and New Zealand. In Indonesia, among the total population of 15.85 million children, 16.3% have ADHD, particularly among preschool-aged children (Tran et al., 2024). National Statistical Data from 2007 indicated that at least 16 million out of 82 million Indonesian children experience mental health issues, including ADHD, with an average of one in five children and adolescents under 18 years facing such challenges (Rahmani et al., 2022). Global ADHD cases increased by 11% from 2003 to 2011, making it essential to address the historical context and mitigate ADHD's negative impact, which can affect personal and social aspects (Prasaja et al., 2023). Children with ADHD often experience delays in social behavior and communication development (Amalia, 2018).

Children with ADHD generally exhibit three main characteristics: inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. Inattention refers to difficulties focusing, where the child is easily distracted by stimuli from their senses or spontaneous feelings. Hyperactivity is seen as excessive movement beyond typical children's activity

levels, appearing restless, unable to sit still, and constantly running around without fatigue. Impulsivity is characterized by actions without prior thought, which can be challenging for both the child with ADHD and their surrounding environment (Mirnawati and Amka, 2019).

Educators or parents need specific and appropriate strategies, positive attitudes, and effective teaching methods, prioritizing peer support to assist and manage children with special needs or developmental disorders. This includes addressing peer rejection faced by children with ADHD due to hyperactive, impulsive, or aggressive behaviors, which may cause discomfort in social interactions.

Efforts to foster peer and community support can be implemented through literacy enrichment about children with ADHD via reading materials provided in shared spaces. Introducing children to ADHD through storybooks helps them understand and learn how to interact with individuals with ADHD. Literacy is crucial in enabling children to access, comprehend, and intelligently utilize information through activities such as reading, observing, listening, writing, and speaking. Literacy has become essential for educational quality in today’s competitive global environment (Ministry of Education, 2016).

The primary source for this literature study is *Aku Juga Ingin Jadi Spesial*, a picture storybook by Felicia Amara, published in 2022 by the Language Development and Fostering Agency of Indonesia’s Ministry of Education, Research, and Technology. The primary source is supplemented by secondary sources, including books, journals, and previous studies.

This picture storybook is a relevant study material as it provides information on ADHD characteristics and management in simple, understandable language. It helps children distinguish individuals with special needs from typically developing children and understand how to interact with them, offering a joyful literacy experience that guides children in recognizing and empathizing with peers who may differ from themselves. The preface of the book presents thought-provoking questions that spark curiosity and encourage readers to continue reading, learning how to interact with children with ADHD and understanding the adult interventions provided and the reasons behind them (p. iv).

This library research aims to identify and comprehensively understand the content of this literacy book, providing valuable insights into the role of storybooks as learning media in supporting children’s and parents’ understanding of ADHD and fostering social interaction with children who have ADHD. The following sections will discuss the research methodology, content analysis of the storybook, and the practical guidance this research provides for parents and teachers in assisting children with ADHD.

2. Research Methods

This study employs a library research methodology, which involves collecting data by comprehending and studying theories from various literature sources relevant to the research topic. The primary research instrument is the storybook titled “*Aku Juga Ingin Jadi Spesial*” by Felicia Amara, which serves as the primary data source, while secondary sources consist of reference books, journals, and prior research studies on ADHD. Library research involves gathering data and relevant information through diverse materials, including books, manuscripts, magazines, notes, prior research findings, and other documents (Koentjaraningrat, 1983).

The library research procedure includes thoroughly reading the primary source and secondary reference materials to establish a general idea of the research topic. It also involves locating, organizing, and correlating findings from the primary book with supportive literature, reviewing the materials, and documenting the research findings in written form.

Data analysis employs content analysis, a method for deeply examining the information content through a qualitative descriptive approach, gathering insights, facts, and data on the topic from both primary and secondary sources. Content analysis is used to derive valid inferences that can be reviewed and verified based on context. This analysis process includes selecting, comparing, synthesizing, and categorizing various interpretations until relevant data is identified (Arikunto, 2000).

The qualitative descriptive approach analyzes collected data in non-numerical form (such as words, images, or behaviors) and is presented in a narrative description rather than statistical figures. This method provides a descriptive portrayal of the studied situation or condition (Margono, 2003).

This study faces certain limitations, as library research inherently involves a high degree of subjectivity. Additionally, the literature used may have undergone updates, which can impact the accuracy of the references.

3. Results and Discussion

This study aims to assess the feasibility of a picture book titled “*Aku Juga Ingin Jadi Spesial*” by Felicia Amara as an educational tool for children and parents in understanding ADHD, supported by secondary sources that enrich the analysis. As an educational medium, this book provides accessible information that children can understand. According to Latuheru (1988: 14), educational media strengthens children's engagement with the presented material, enabling them to absorb information effectively.

This picture book introduces ADHD through a lighthearted and comprehensible story, making it an effective educational medium for children and teachers. It facilitates children's social understanding of peers with different abilities and potentials. The use of engaging illustrations, simple language, and a straightforward narrative structure enables children to easily grasp the messages within, thereby establishing this book as a suitable learning resource (Purwani, 2020).

The book defines ADHD as a “mental disorder that makes it difficult for a child to focus, communicate, and often acts impulsively and hyperactively” (p. 27). Children with ADHD are described as different from typically developing children. For instance, ADHD is depicted through a character with a unique “world of his own” who appears at a performance in his imagination, though he is actually at school (p. 2). The book describes hyperactive behavior with vivid metaphors, such as “acting like he’s in space, turning into a dinosaur, or becoming a spy” (p. 2). Communication difficulties are portrayed as well, with the character hiding when cousins visit, unlike his sibling who eagerly interacts with them (p. 6). Inattentiveness is shown when the character ignores an invitation to play by the doctor (p. 10). These behaviors, characterized by impulsivity and difficulty interacting as typically expected, cause discomfort among peers. Children with ADHD struggle with communication, constantly moving, and may struggle with daily tasks, which can lead to anxiety and decreased motivation to learn (Erinta & Budiani, 2012).

The book illustrates ADHD management using engaging visuals and concise explanations, such as: a) providing repeated reminders, “All of Raka’s stationery has notes from Mom” (p. 4); b) establishing a structured routine, “Every Monday and Thursday, Raka has math lessons, unlike me, who studies at home” (p. 7); c) behavioral therapy, “Every Friday, Dad, Mom, and I accompany Raka to the clinic” (p. 8). According to Barkley (2015), providing emotional support through therapy and educational assistance helps children with ADHD manage their behavior and social skills, which in turn supports their academic development.

Literature from Wohum.org suggests that children with ADHD need a supportive and structured environment. Instructions and tasks should be clearly outlined in simple, sequential steps to be manageable and reinforce positive behavior in children with ADHD. Visual reinforcements such as a time schedule or detailed lists help children organize and manage their activities, enabling them to follow predictable routines. This structured support reduces their stress and helps them navigate daily routines like meals, sleep, or homework. Frequent praise for achievements reinforces their positive behavior. Support from mental health professionals, such as psychologists or ADHD specialists, is also necessary to guide children in meeting their individual needs.

The book also conveys the idea that each child is treated differently and illustrates how to interact appropriately with a child with ADHD. For example, Sena, the sibling character, feels envious of the special attention his brother Raka receives, prompting him to imitate his brother’s behavior: “I want to be special too! I’ll follow everything Raka does” (pp. 14–16). Sena tries to replicate Raka’s routine, using notes on his school supplies, isolating himself, and setting strict task limits. However, he eventually feels uncomfortable “being” Raka, finding his school supplies messy and experiencing boredom in solitude. He ultimately realizes a sense of comfort in being himself, feeling warmth and acceptance from his family (pp. 17–23).

Parental and peer acceptance and support are crucial in fostering the social-emotional development of children with ADHD. With recognition and understanding of their emotions, children can develop personal motivation, empathy, and positive interactions, creating a comfortable environment for themselves and others (Quinn, 1986).

Previous research indicates that the social behavior improvement of children with ADHD is highly influenced by parental and environmental roles. Social behavior in children is shaped by social-emotional skills and cognitive engagement (Putri et al., 2023). Social behavior improvement in children with ADHD should be a primary concern for parents and educators, as hyperactive-impulsive behavior in children with ADHD often leads to weak social-emotional skills, resulting in negative peer acceptance. Hyperactive and impulsive behaviors can cause restlessness, an inability to sit still, and constant movement without apparent purpose, which negatively impacts social interactions (Rahmani et al., 2022).

Findings from this library study demonstrate that the content of the picture book “*Aku Juga Ingin Jadi Spesial*” aligns with an understanding of ADHD. Through simple and engaging storytelling, this picture book is an effective educational tool for children and teachers, fostering social understanding of peers with different abilities. This research contributes by encouraging children and parents to appreciate and appropriately address the needs of children with ADHD.

These findings help us identify effective strategies to support and address the challenges in improving the social behavior of children with ADHD. Further research may explore the influence of peer social interactions on the social-emotional development of children with ADHD.

4. Conclusion

The identification of effective strategies in supporting social attitudes towards children with ADHD reveals that the literature study of “*Aku Juga Ingin Jadi Spesial*” has a significant positive impact. This research contributes to the implementation of the book as an educational medium, helping children and parents better understand ADHD.

The findings demonstrate the positive role this book can play for all stakeholders involved in early childhood education, effectively supporting the design and development of literacy programs in early childhood education institutions. Such programs aim to enhance understanding of diverse knowledge, including knowledge about social interactions with children with ADHD, promoting inclusivity in education and paving the way for a generation that appreciates and respects individual diversity. Further research could explore the impact of peer social interactions on the social-emotional development of children with ADHD.

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