



ENHANCING THE ABILITY OF STUDENTS WITH ATTENTION DEFICIT HIPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD)

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Abstract: This study was initiated due to the observed lack of concentration among children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) during learning activities at SD Muhammadiyah 3 IKROM Wage in Sidoarjo. Children with ADHD typically exhibit behaviors such as restlessness, frequent disruption of peers, inattention to teacher instructions, and difficulty concentrating overall. These behaviors negatively affect the effectiveness of the learning process. This study aims to examine the role of Inclusion Support Teachers (ISTs) in supporting and managing these children. It is expected that understanding these roles will improve the cognitive abilities and skills of children with ADHD. This study employed a qualitative, descriptive case study approach. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. Data validation utilized source and method triangulation. The analysis involved condensing, presenting, and drawing conclusions from the data. The study involved ADHD students and ISTs in grades one and two. The findings revealed the following: (1) ADHD children have shown a reduction in hyperactivity, with inattention now being the primary concern. This improvement is attributed to therapy provided by parents through specialized institutions. (2) One of the contributing factors to ADHD is the absence of developmental milestones, such as crawling. (3) ISTs fulfill nine distinct roles: educator, instructor, mentor, motivator, facilitator, and mediator. (4) Currently, ISTs focus on improving children's attention spans. Inclusion support teachers who educate in a humane and warm manner and caring parents have been proven to minimize conflict and moderate the negative impact of ADHD symptoms in schools.

Keywords: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Inclusion Support Teacher, Development

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country that upholds the rights and responsibilities of individuals, including the fundamental right of every child to receive education, as stipulated in Pasal 31 UUD 1945, which states, "Every citizen has the right to education." This provision implies that every individual has equal opportunities to access education regardless of gender, economic status, physical condition, or disabilities. Along with technological advancements, inclusive education services have been introduced to improve accessibility

and opportunities for Students with Special Needs to obtain education and develop their talents and interests according to their physical and mental conditions.

The rights of Students with Special Needs have received significant attention in Indonesia, as outlined in Undang-Undang No. 20 tahun 2003, Pasal 5 on the National Education System, which guarantees the right to special education for citizens with disabilities. Students with Special Needs are characterized by diverse and distinct needs, including categories such as hearing impairment, intellectual disability, visual impairment, physical disability, emotional and behavioral disorders, and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Therefore, inclusive education exists to address the educational needs of Students with Special Needs.

Inclusive education is an approach that integrates all learners, both general and special needs, within a shared learning environment. The government policy on inclusive education is articulated in UU No. 8 tahun 2016 concerning Persons with Disabilities, particularly pasal 10, which mandates the provision of quality and relevant education services for students with special needs across all types, pathways, and levels of education. (R.I, 2022) Schools implementing inclusive education require adequate preparation, particularly in terms of educators.

According to Ministerial Regulation No. 15 tahun 2018, Pasal 1, teachers are defined as professional educators whose main tasks include teaching, guiding, training, evaluating, and mentoring students. In inclusive education, a specialized educator known as a Special Needs Companion Teacher or shadow teacher is assigned to assist and support Students with Special Needs. These teachers are required to have specific competencies and skills necessary for addressing the needs of Students with Special Needs.

The role of the Inclusion Support Teacher is guided by the 3-H principle: heart (commitment), head (critical knowledge), and hand (practical strategies). (R.I, 2022) The inclusion support teacher is responsible for administrative tasks, assessments, student development, and communication with students and their families. They also coordinate with all parties involved in inclusive education. A core responsibility is developing an Individualized Education Program (IEP) tailored to each student's unique needs. Collaboration between the Inclusion Support Teacher and classroom teachers is essential for determining appropriate learning objectives and assessment indicators.

The Inclusion Support Teacher plays a particularly critical role for students with ADHD. Students with ADHD exhibit excessive movement and restlessness, resulting in limited attention spans and distractibility. This negatively impacts their learning and interactions at school and at home. The Inclusion Support Teacher plays a critical role for these students. These students exhibit excessive movement and restlessness, resulting in limited attention spans and distractibility. This negatively impacts their learning and interactions at school and at home.

According to statistics from October 2023 in Indonesia, the proportion of students with special needs (SSN) diagnosed with ADHD in the school-age population increased from 2–4% to 15%, indicating that 1 in 20 children has ADHD. At Muhammadiyah Elementary School 3 IKROM Wage, 14 students with special needs were identified, including those with ADHD, intellectual disabilities, dyslexia, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and hearing impairments. This study focused on two ADHD students in lower-grade classes (grades one and two), identified as ADM and MAH. These students have not received adequate support from inclusion support teachers, prompting the researcher to examine their role in handling ADHD cases. Early intervention in lower grades is expected to significantly impact the long-term development of students with special needs. Both students displayed typical ADHD behaviors, such as constant movement, disrupting their peers, ignoring teachers' instructions, shouting, and frequently changing locations, which interfered with their ability to focus.

The contributing factors to ADHD include genetic, neurobiological, and psychological influences. These children are highly sensitive to surrounding stimuli and struggle to maintain concentration. Their behavior is not a reflection of intelligence but rather differences in brain function. (Ika Trisanti, 2020). Children diagnosed with ADHD frequently experience challenges in sustaining attention, controlling impulsive behaviors, and regulating hyperactivity, which substantially affect their academic, social, and emotional functioning (Daley, 2020) These difficulties often necessitate targeted educational strategies, particularly within inclusive school settings where diverse learning needs are accommodated.

Since 2017, SD Muhammadiyah 3 IKROM Wage has collaborated with Lentera Fajar Indonesia (LFI), an institution focusing on student with special needs education. Out of the 13 of Inclusion Support Teachers at the school, six are affiliated with LFI. These

teachers work jointly with LFI to develop IEPs for all SSN at the school. Since 2017, SD Muhammadiyah 3 IKROM Wage has collaborated with Lentera Fajar Indonesia (LFI), an institution focusing on Students with Special Needs education. Out of the 13 of Inclusion Support Teachers at the school, six are affiliated with LFI. These teachers work jointly with LFI to develop IEPs for all Students with Special Needs at the school.

Teaching ADHD students requires patience and perseverance. Despite their limitations, these children often possess unique strengths. Therefore, in addition to support from families and communities, the role of Inclusion Support Teacher is crucial in facilitating their growth and development. The increasing movement toward inclusive education mandates schools to provide supportive environments that enable children with ADHD to thrive alongside their peers. This requires not only differentiated instruction but also the presence of trained professionals who can provide individualized support. Among such professionals, Special Needs Education Assistants or Inclusion Support Teachers (ISTs) play a pivotal role. Their responsibilities extend beyond classroom management to include the implementation of behavioral strategies, curriculum adaptation, and emotional scaffolding (McDougal, 2022). The quality of teacher–child relationships has been found to significantly moderate behavioral outcomes in children with ADHD, underlining the importance of warm, low-conflict, and trust-based interactions between children and their support teachers (McDougal, 2022), (Quill, 2022).

Research suggests that structured behavioral interventions and educational support delivered by trained personnel can significantly improve the executive functioning and behavioral regulation of children with ADHD (Moore, 2018). These interventions include self-management techniques, peer-mediated support, token economies, and consistent feedback, all of which require close adult facilitation and monitoring (Reiber, 2004). Furthermore, the presence of trained inclusion support teachers has been associated with reduced classroom disruptions, improved focus, and better academic outcomes (Dwarika, 2020).

However, despite the recognition of their roles, there is still limited empirical research exploring the specific strategies employed by inclusion support teachers in real-world inclusive settings, especially in developing countries. Existing studies emphasize the need for professional development, collaborative planning, and school-wide awareness to

ensure that children with ADHD are effectively supported (McKenna, 2025) The implementation of inclusive practices also demands systemic efforts in aligning curriculum, pedagogy, and psychosocial interventions (Dwi, 2024)

This study aims to investigate the strategies and efforts undertaken by special mentor teachers in supporting the development of children with ADHD within an inclusive school context at SD Muhammadiyah 3 IKROM Sidoarjo. By examining the actual practices, roles, and perceived effectiveness of their interventions, this study hopes to contribute to the growing body of literature on inclusive education and behavioral support, while offering practical recommendations for policy and teacher training.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive, qualitative, case-study design to thoroughly describe the role of special guidance teachers in working with children diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) at SD Muhammadiyah 3 IKROM Wage. This design enables the researcher to explore the various social and pedagogical dynamics occurring in interactions between of special guidance teachers and ADHD students in depth. In April 2025, the researcher conducted the study using three main data collection techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation. These techniques were used to build a comprehensive picture of the context and reality in the field.

Various relevant parties were involved in the study, including the school principal, two classroom teachers responsible for students with GPPH, two of special guidance teachers, two students diagnosed with ADHD (ADM and MAH), and their parents. The researcher examined the characteristics of children with ADHD, the types and causes of their behavior, and the intervention strategies implemented by of special guidance teachers. Involving various parties ensures that the information collected reflects diverse perspectives and strengthens the reliability of the data obtained.

The researcher conducted observations using participant observation, which allowed them to directly witness interactions between of special guidance teachers and ADHD students in various contexts, including the classroom and the school environment. These observations facilitate capturing behavioral nuances that may not be revealed in interviews, such as gestures, expressions, and spontaneous responses. The researchers

also observed how the GPK developed learning strategies and emotional support tailored to the needs of the ADHD students.

Meanwhile, semi-structured interviews were conducted with school principals, classroom teachers, of special guidance teachers, and parents of students to gather information. This type of interview allows researchers to explore answers in greater depth without losing focus on the main topic. Questions are designed to gain a comprehensive understanding of ADHD children's profiles and the strategic role of of special guidance teachers in assisting them. This approach strengthens observational data and supports analysis from various perspectives. (Ifah Rofiqoh, 2020)

Additionally, documentation in the form of photos of activities, psychological test results, and Individualized Education Program (IEP) documents were used to reinforce the findings. These documents provide concrete evidence of students' conditions and the interventions carried out by the school. Including visual and administrative documents enables researchers to compile a richer, more evidence-based contextual description.

Data validity is ensured through triangulation techniques: source and method triangulation. Source triangulation involves comparing data obtained from various informants, such as principals, teachers, of special guidance teachers, and parents. Method triangulation examines data from the same source using different techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation. This approach ensures that the obtained data is consistent and valid and reflects reality in the field more objectively.

Data analysis is carried out continuously from the initial stage through post-data collection. The analysis process includes three stages: data condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. During condensation, data is classified, selected, and focused based on its relevance to the research focus. This enables researchers to identify important patterns or themes. Next, the data are presented narratively to summarize the findings systematically and structurally, making them easier to analyze further. The final stage is drawing conclusions by considering the context of the data and the relationships between variables to produce valid interpretations that answer the research questions and contribute to inclusive educational practices.

RESULT AND DICSUSSION

1. Profile of children with ADHD at SD Muhammadiyah 3 IKROM Wage Sidoarjo East Java

The discussion in this study finds and systematically compiles data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation by selecting data that is in accordance with the formulation of the problem. The profile of ADHD children can be identified by looking at the child's background, observing the child's behavior, and information obtained from parents. information obtained from direct information from parents. ADHD behavior at SD Muhammadiyah 3 IKROM Wage there are two children, namely ADM and MAH.

The description related to MAH was known earlier by the parents, the characteristics possessed by MAH such as: like running around without seeing the situation and conditions, not obeying the teacher's orders to sit quietly, and difficulty concentrating. Meanwhile, information related to ADM conveyed by special assistant teacher, was known when the initial mapping entered elementary school with ADM's behavior that was difficult to condition and liked to disturb friends so that special assistant teachers often moved children to the resource room. These characteristics are indications that the child will experience learning difficulties.

The description of the initial conditions in the two children at SD Muhammadiyah 3 IKROM Wage is in line with the main symptoms expressed by Shvong that ADHD children are difficult to focus, tireless, like to disturb friends (nosy), difficult to obey orders, have no clear goals, and are destructive or destructive.

The first step for MAH's parents after knowing these characteristics is to look for information on social media regarding therapies that support child development. Before entering elementary school, there were two therapy locations given by parents to MAH, namely the house of the beetle and Mrs. Olin. beetle and Mrs. Olin. Seeing MAH's condition which is much calmer than before, MAH's parents no longer provide therapy facilities because the location is far away and there is no free time. As for ADM's hyperactive behavior, it also gradually subsided after receiving therapy at Lentera Fajar Indonesia (LFI) once a week. Currently MAH and ADM only have difficulty focusing in learning. Therefore, these two children have the specificity of inattentive type ADHD. The inattentive type has characteristics such as difficulty maintaining focus, carelessness, avoidance of something complicated, often confused and distracted by their surroundings.

The steps taken by inclusion support teacher in responding to this by providing direction in the form of sounding which aims to refocus the child's attention.

The factor that causes MAH to have ADHD is that they have missed a stage of development. Missed motor development can cause neurodevelopmental disorders. This is the same as research conducted by the American Psychiatric Association states that impaired motor skills can have cascading effects on cognitive and behavioral outcomes. Most children with ADHD behavior also have language delay (dyslexia). This is because there are brain disorders or neurobiological factors. (Daley, 2020)

2. The role of Inclusion Support Teachers in handling the behavior of ADHD children at SD Muhammadiyah 3 IKROM Wage

a. Inclusion Support Teachers as Educators

Inclusion support teachers as an educator, is shown by his role in accompanying ADHD children when praying at the beginning and end of learning, praying dhuhā, applying learning rules, training discipline by giving soundings. A positive relationship between teachers and students with special needs is crucial for supporting their development. According to McDougal (McDougal, 2022), teachers who interact positively with students will reduce problematic behavior. As educators, teachers not only impart knowledge, but also morals through example, positive attitudes, and fostering close relationships with students, which can encourage children's engagement in learning (Quill, 2022)

b. Inclusion support teachers as Teachers and Evaluators

Teacher training and school-based interventions are effective in improving understanding of ADHD and are considered cost-effective. Media campaigns and digital programs also show promise, but their effects tend to be less profound than face-to-face training. (McKenna, 2025). One of the tasks of teachers is to develop through individualized learning. This requires intensive training. Inclusion Support Teachers as teachers as well as evaluators, shown from the activities of compiling IEPs, guiding children in working on IEP worksheet tasks, PAS questions and providing oral evaluations at the end of learning and making inclusion report cards. making inclusion report cards. IEPs are needed by special assistance teachers to find out the records and conditions of cognitive and psycho socioemotional development of each child.

c. Inclusion Support Teachers as Mentors

Inclusion Support Teachers as mentors, the problems that are often found by special assistant teachers in handling ADHD children are when doing individual assignments. This difficulty is due to concentration problems in children, so that children are not yet able to complete tasks independently or still need help from special assistant teachers. The special assisting teacher's step regarding this condition is to focus and invite children to discuss to solve these problems. The role of mentor has been proven by special assistant teachers in addressing existing problems and providing good solutions for children's development. This behavior is in line with what is expressed by Daley (Daley, 2020) that the role of the mentor functions to help children through difficulties. Inclusion support teacher as a coach. Some of the findings of talents and interests of ADHD children are coloring, good at memorizing short letters and English conversation. At every opportunity, special assistant teachers will train children's talents and interests. This step is in line with Quill et.al (Quill, 2022) that good relationships between teachers and children will improve learning performance, enable the development of personal potential, and also serve as a psychological bridge between children and their environment.

d. Inclusion Support Teachers as Facilitators

Inclusion support teacher as a facilitator, the role of facilitator is said to be fulfilled if inclusion support teacher provides the services needed by ADHD children. The needs needed by ADHD children are in the form of a comfortable learning atmosphere, namely a cool place and a conducive atmosphere. The school has provided facilities air conditioning in each class and infrastructure in the form of a source room away from the crowd. The role of special assistant teachers is shown by always ensuring that ADHD children are in these spaces and conditions. So that learning activities can run well and children are comfortable.

d. Inclusion Support Teachers as Mediators

Inclusion support teacher as a mediator, by restating the material with media. In addition, always in contact with parents of ADHD children on several occasions such as: communication through a liaison book containing the child's development carried out by inclusion support teacher every day, meeting once every three months, namely the delivery of the IEP, the submission of the STS report card and the submission of the PAS

report card. If the need is urgent, special assistance teachers also often communicate via WhatsApp. The teacher mediates between the child and their parents regarding their development through WhatsApp. This is important to support children's mental and physical development.

e. Inclusion Support Teachers as Companions

Inclusion Support Teachers as a companion, the assistance activities carried out by special assistance teachers are showing their presence or always being next to ADHD children. special assistance teachers accompany children in all activities, both in the classroom and outside the classroom or during extracurricular activities. This role has a positive impact when children experience difficulties because they get solutions and treatment faster. Classroom teachers feel greatly helped by the accompanying role of inclusion support teacher. From the results of these findings, researchers found similarities in Jebia's view that ADHD children always need assistance from special assistance teachers as therapists, the findings revealed that there was no provision of therapy from special assistance teachers for ADHD children, because the attitudes and behavior of ADHD children could already be classified as regular children. However, researchers found the existence of therapy that was unconsciously carried out by special assistant teachers, namely therapy using sounding techniques. The sounding technique has a great influence if it is done when the child is about to fall asleep, but it can also be done when the child is focused on the game or spectacle. At this moment, the child's subconscious mind remains active. This therapy is an easy way and has a tremendous positive effect if done repeatedly.¹¹⁰In addition to using sounding techniques, researchers found another therapy used by special assistant teachers, namely back in control therapy. Back in control therapy is also a simple therapy that requires coordination between teachers and parents. This therapy is in the form of rules that are carried out by children at school and at home. Examples of similar rules given by special assistant teachers and parents are memorizing short chapters, maintaining cleanliness, discipline, and telling the truth. A positive relationship between teachers and children with ADHD plays an important role in reducing problematic behavior. A warm and conflict-free relationship can moderate the negative impact of ADHD symptoms at school. (McDougal, 2022)

3. Comprehensive Development and Collaborative Support

Based on these results, it can be understood that the accompanying teacher's strategy in assisting ADHD children not only plays a role in the academic context, but also social and emotional. In this context, McDougal et al. (McDougal, 2022) suggested that the quality of the relationship between teachers and children can mediate the effect of ADHD symptoms on classroom behavior, so that teachers who are able to establish warm interpersonal relationships will have a positive impact on children with concentration disorders. In addition, Quill & Kahu (Quill, 2022) also asserted that the close relationship between accompanying teachers and students creates a sense of psychological security that can increase students' overall learning engagement. In line with this, the learning modification strategies carried out by special assistant teachers are also in line with those proposed by (Dwarika, 2020), that behavioral interventions that are consistently applied both at home and at school can reduce the intensity of ADHD symptoms, especially when teachers and parents are actively involved. Dwi et al. added that a collaborative approach between teachers, families, and learning environments will result in an inclusive educational climate that supports the needs of the whole child. (Dwi, 2024)

Furthermore, Reiber & McLaughlin (Reiber, 2004) showed that classroom-based strategies such as token economy, task adjustment, and peer intervention are very beneficial in improving ADHD children's focus and motivation, which was also found in the practice of support teachers in the school where the study took place. Dwarika & Braude (Dwarika, 2020) also highlighted that teachers need to be provided with continuous training in order to have competence in assisting ADHD children appropriately and effectively. This suggests that the capacity of support teachers greatly influences the outcome of implementing the strategies provided to learners. Finally, as outlined by McKenna et al. (McKenna, 2025) and Moore et al. (Moore, 2018) school-based strategies such as teacher training, classroom interventions, and curriculum-integrated programs have been shown to be cost-efficient and effective in improving ADHD children's understanding, engagement, and behavior management. Therefore, the strategies that the accompanying teachers have implemented in this study are in line with various scientific recommendations that support inclusive practices in primary schools.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that the role of Inclusion Support Teachers (ISTs) is vital in improving the behavior and cognitive abilities of students with ADHD. The ISTs

successfully applied multiple roles: educator, mentor, facilitator and motivator through various strategies. The collaboration between schools, families, and support institutions proved crucial in sustaining consistent interventions. This study highlights the importance of well-trained and dedicated support teachers to create an inclusive and effective learning environment for students with ADHD.

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