

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

According to the Siloam Hospitals website (2025), states that autism within the autistic spectrum is a condition characterized by a complex neurological nature that influences behavior and cognitive functions. It encompasses every aspect of social, linguistic, and both verbal and non-verbal communication. The condition can be identified in childhood and persists throughout life. Autism is not an illness; it is a condition characterized by atypical brain function compared to others. Autism represents one of the various forms of disabilities that exist in Indonesia. According to a statement from dr. Dante, reported by Stefanni on detikhealth (2024), it is observed that the incidence of autism is projected to rise consistently over the years. Current estimates indicate that approximately 2.4 million children in Indonesia are affected by autism spectrum disorders. According to pediatrician dr. Bernie Endyarni Medise, SpA(K), MPH, the estimated annual birth rate of children in Indonesia is approximately 4.5 million. Based on this statistic, 1 in 100 children is diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

The Indonesian government offers support and regulations for people with autism under Law No. 8/2016 concerning Persons with Disabilities. This legislation served as the foundation for the founding of several institutions and therapeutic facilities dedicated to children with autism. Data indicates that certain children with autism can communicate and achieve in various fields. In the context of school, autistic children possess equal opportunity to access education as the other children. Therefore, inclusive schools have been established. Inclusive schools are general education institutions that support students with special needs, including people on the autistic spectrum. In inclusive schools, autistic children engage with other students while they may get special attention from teachers (Anas, 2020).

Although the policy of people with disabilities is protected by the law, the policy has not been effectively implemented. One of the main factors is the stigma

and stereotypes associated with autism in society. A lack of understanding and prevalent misconceptions regarding autism may end up in the bullying and discrimination of people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) with the continuing of stereotypes and stigmatizing beliefs (Handayani, M. M., & Paramita, P. P., 2018). In Indonesia, traditional beliefs suggest that issues during pregnancy and infancy, disrespect for pregnancy taboos, karma, supernatural intervention, God's plan or fate, and family size may contribute to the causes of autism (Riany, Y.E., et al., 2016; Handayani, M. M., & Paramita, P. P., 2018). According to Riany, Y.E., et al. (2016) emphasized that in Indonesian culture, children are seen as a source of social pride and are anticipated to generate joy and prosperity. Although more research is required, she suggested that stigma and misconceptions regarding autism may cause Indonesian parents to ignore their autistic children (Handayani, M. M., & Paramita, P. P., 2018). The lack of information and education about autism, along with societal stigma and stereotypes, causes many parents to feel ashamed of their child's condition. As a result, some people attempt to hide their children from others and make it difficult for them to access a proper quality of life (Education, health, economy, etc). This is also one of the causes of the difference in data from the government.

Societal stigma and stereotypes may directly impact people with autism. As explained in the previous paragraph, a lack of understanding and prevalent misconceptions regarding autism may end up in the bullying and discrimination of people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), especially at school. According to Mulia, A. L., et al (2022) schools that offer inclusive education enable students with special needs and their fellow students who are typically normal to learn collaboratively in the same environment, following the idea of adaptive learning. The diversity of characteristics, including physical problems and students' capabilities, can benefit or adversely impact the school within an inclusive educational environment. The advantageous impact is that the presence of students with special needs educates the other students to embrace and respect each individual's uniqueness. The considerable diversity among students may also lead to conflict (Salend in Mulia, A. L., et al., 2022). According to Penda Annie and Chrisness Chimuka (2024), the study identified the factors contributing to the

bullying of students with autism. These factors included their challenges in communication with other students, difficulties in self-expression, and a tendency to become frustrated when pressured to speak by non-autistic students. Additionally, their quiet behavior was perceived as irritating by other students, which contributed to the bullying behavior. Students with autism often showed their true selves while frequently staying in isolation, which created challenges for socializing with their classmates. Their antisocial behavior resulted in a lack of consideration for others' feelings during play, leading to a disconnect with their friends. Negative conflict occurs when an individual uses acts of violence to harm another person verbally, physically, or mentally. This behavior is classified as bullying if it continues over a long time and is repeated. Victims of bullying may experience fear, anxiety at school, and low self-esteem, which affects learning activities and impacts both academic and non-academic achievements (Mulia, A. L., et al., 2022).

Considering the issues of problems, stigma, and stereotypes, along with the impact of the cases outlined previously, it can be concluded that there is a need to increase awareness and education about autism. Raising awareness and education about autism should begin at an early age, especially for elementary school children, since they represent the beginnings of inclusive educational environments. A concept will be developed to create media aimed at raising awareness and education regarding autism. Picture books are an effective medium to increase knowledge and literacy in children. Illustrations in children's Picture books are designed to have appealing visuals and appropriate color and font selections that attract attention. The basic introduction about autism is expected to be understandable for children.

1.2. Problem Identification

According to the background, here are the points of the problem identification:

1. Discrimination, stigma, and stereotype about autism due to the lack of education and awareness.
2. Lack of information about autism.

3. Lack of media to raise awareness and education about autism.

1.3. Problem Formulation

Based on the problem identification and background, the problem formulation is how to create a story that will raise awareness and educate children about autism through an illustrated children's picture book?

1.4. Problem Scope

1.4.1. What?

This topic focuses on raising awareness and educating the children about autism.

1.4.2. Who?

- a. Target Audiences: Elementary school students (Normal or non-autism children)
- b. Age: 6-8 years old
- c. Region: Indonesia
- d. Gender: All gender

1.4.3. Why?

- a. The lack of awareness about autism
- b. The lack of education and information about autism

1.4.4. How?

By designing an illustrative children's picture book to educate and raise awareness about autism.

1.4.5. Where?

Data collection and observation are conducted in Bukittinggi.

1.4.6. When?

Estimates will be done in the year 2025.

1.5. Objective and Goals Research

Based on the issue chosen, the goal of this final project is “to create a children's picture book illustration about autism”. By introducing children to the

basic understanding about autism aims to enhance awareness and provide education regarding the existence of autism in their environment.

1.6. Research Benefit

1.6.1. Benefit for Children

To increase awareness, educate, and mitigate the negative stigma and bullying associated with autism. Besides, they can also learn how to connect with people with autism and be able to understand about the basic behaviour and characteristics of people with autism.

1.6.2. Benefit for the Readers

Receiving insights about autism. Increase the awareness and knowledge about autism, and about how to engage the people with autism.

1.6.3. Self-Benefit

To increase the knowledge regarding autism, and implementation of knowledge in a field that is substantially close to the author in the field of visual communication design.

1.7. Research Method

Qualitative research is a methodology that explores complex phenomena and meanings attributed to them. It is commonly used in social sciences, psychology, anthropology, and other fields where subjective experiences and interpretations are of interest. A qualitative research design typically relies on the collection of data through a variety of methods, including interviews, observations, focus groups, and the analysis of documents or artefacts. These methods allow researchers to collect comprehensive, descriptive data regarding participants' perspectives, experiences, and contextual factors (Ideascale, 2023).

1.7.1. Data Collection Method

a. Observation

The systematic observation and documentation of the characteristics being studied is referred to as observation. When relevant to the study aims, methodically planned and documented, and regulated for reliability and validity, observation may be one of the most successful data-gathering approaches.

Observation is a multifaceted activity involving biological and psychological mechanisms. Regulating the researcher's memory and observations is essential when employing observational methods (Husaini Usman & Akbar, P. S., 2017)

Data collection by visiting a special needs school for people with autism in Bukittinggi. This is done to connect directly with the children with autism, school principal, and their environment. By visiting directly, the author can also collect data through observations that occur in the field. In addition to doing the field observations, the author observed similar children's picture books as references and analyzed their features.

b. Interview

An interview is a dialogue aimed at obtaining thoughts, ideas, experiences, positions, or opinions from an interviewee, or acquiring knowledge regarding events that are not immediately observable by the researcher or concerning past events (Soewardikoen, 2021).

Collecting data involves conducting interviews with a variety of sources, including the special needs school's principal and the psychologist. This is done to find out more about the basic characteristics of children with autism and the types of educational content needed.

In addition, the data is collected through interviews with a person who is an expert in the field of children's picture book design. This is done to figure out the most ideal and appropriate design aspects for children's picture book illustrations.

c. Literature Study

The study of literature is an arrangement of fundamental theories that support research and offer theoretical responses to the primary research question (Tanjung, A. A. & Muliyani, 2021).

With references from book literature so that the validation of theory and design can be in accordance with procedures and in accordance with existing science and literature.

1.7.2. Data Analysis (Matrix Comparison)

A matrix encompasses rows and columns, each representing distinct dimensions, which may consist of sets of concepts or data. Matrix analysis

fundamentally involves juxtaposition or comparison through alignment. When visual things are compared and evaluated using a comparable standard, differences will become apparent, leading to gradations (Soewardikoen, 2021).

Matrix comparison compares similar projects that will be used. This is done to identify advantages and disadvantages, which might become evaluated to create platforms and media that effectively align with the user's needs, so that it may create platforms and media that align with the goals and targets.

1.8. Design Framework

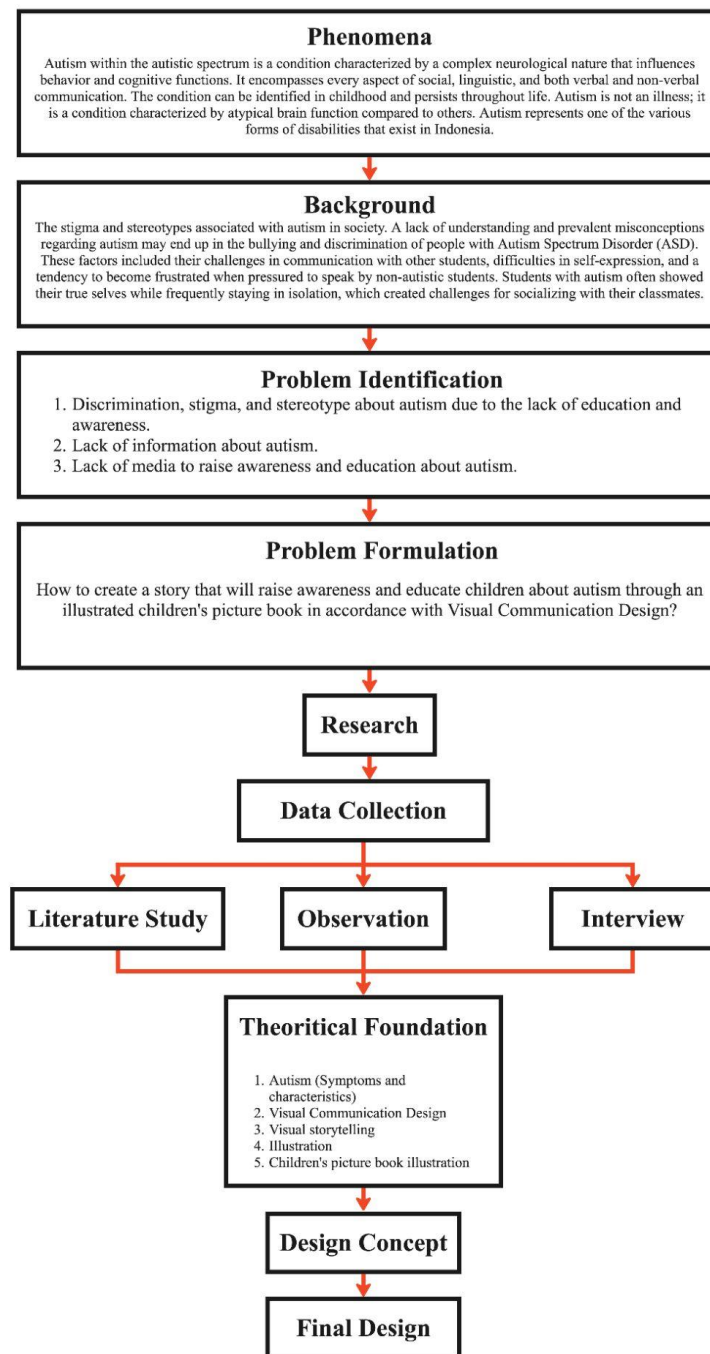


Image 1.1. Research Framework

(Source: Personal Data, 2025)

1.9. Chaptering

Here are the chaptering flow for the research report:

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains background, problem identification, problem formulation, problem scope, objective and goals research, research benefit, research method, data analysis, and framework.

CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

This chapter explains the theories related to the phenomena, media, audience, and methodologies utilised as a foundation for the design concept, starting with the background of the phenomenon and the problem.

CHAPTER III: DATA AND ANALYSIS

This chapter describes and analyses the results from observations and interviews. Furthermore, this chapter organises the data according to its hierarchy, providing a clearer picture of the research.

CHAPTER IV: DESIGN CONCEPT AND RESULTS

This chapter focuses on every progress of the project. An explanation of the design idea is included in the fourth chapter, which also describes the processes that are related with the design process until it becomes a children's picture book.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This chapter contains the conclusion and suggestion from the studies and design process through this research as a final project.