

CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR IN DEALING WITH ANXIETY AND PROBLEM SOLVING IN THE *KUE KIMU* STORY BOOK BY HERLIANA

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Abstract. Anxiety is a common psychological challenge experienced by children, affecting their logical thinking and problem-solving abilities. This research is motivated by the importance of understanding the relationship between anxiety and children's problem-solving abilities, as depicted in the 2023 storybook *Kue Kimu* by Herliana. This study used qualitative methods with content analysis techniques to examine the representation of children's behavior in dealing with anxiety, emotional regulation, and problem-solving strategies reflected in the narrative and characters. The results show that the main character, Kimu, represents the process of children's emotional development through the stages of recognizing, accepting, and managing anxiety adaptively. *Kue Kimu* illustrates that anxiety is not pathological, but rather a natural part of children's learning and emotional growth. This book has high educational value because it teaches the importance of emotional regulation, creative thinking, and social support in helping children cope with anxiety and develop constructive problem-solving skills.

Keywords: Anxiety, Emotional Regulation, Problem Solving, Resilience, Social Support.

INTRODUCTION

Anxiety is a psychological problem that children often experience during their developmental period (Ramaiah, 2025). Anxiety can manifest in many forms, such as fear of facing new situations, fear of failure, or anxiety when faced with social or academic demands. Fikri (2025) argues that during early to mid-childhood, children are still learning to manage their emotions, so anxiety is often an obstacle to learning and social interaction. If not managed properly, anxiety can develop into more serious problems, such as decreased motivation to learn, impaired concentration, and difficulty building confidence. These anxiety problems become more complex when children are faced with situations of need Problem solving (Cici & Supriadi, 2024). The child's inability to Problem solving exacerbate their anxiety. Children tend to become confused, trapped in fear, or even choose to avoid problems. However, Problem solving is a fundamental skill needed to face life's challenges. Without these skills, children not only struggle to find solutions but are also vulnerable to greater psychological distress (Kuswandi & Mudjiati, 2022). This shows a close relationship between anxiety and Problem solving, where weakness in one area affects another.

In everyday practice, many children exhibit behaviors that reflect an inability to cope with anxiety. For example, when a child fails to complete schoolwork, he or she may panic, cry, or withdraw. These reactions suggest that anxiety can inhibit logical and creative thinking. Children who are not used to training Problem solving tend to give up more easily and feel incapable (Munawwirah & Ilyas, 2021). If this condition persists, it can lead to negative mindsets, such as viewing the problem as something scary and insurmountable. Children's anxiety can also be influenced by environmental factors, such as parental expectations, academic pressure, and social interactions with peers. Kuswandi & Mudjiati (2022) Revealing children who lack proper guidance and support are more prone to stress when faced with problems. Their inability to solve problems is further exacerbated by a lack of understanding of how to regulate emotions (Cici & Supriadi, 2024). Anxiety, which is supposed to be a motivator, can be an obstacle to development. This phenomenon suggests that children's anxiety problems are not isolated but are related to parenting styles, learning environments, and opportunities to practice Problem solving (Hernawati et al., 2025).

Early childhood often experiences anxiety when facing new situations or challenging tasks (Yan, 2023). For example, when they first participate in a classroom learning activity, some children exhibit behaviors such as crying, being reluctant to part with their parents, or refusing to participate. This anxiety can arise due to limited experiences and negative perceptions of the child's environment that is considered unfamiliar. If this condition is left unchecked, children will find it difficult to adjust, and even risk experiencing social-emotional development obstacles (Nurussakinah et al., 2024). It is important to understand that anxiety in early childhood is not just a momentary emotion, but part of a developmental dynamic that requires intensive mentoring (Fransiska et al., 2024). A child may immediately give up or cry when asked to put together a puzzle or recognize numbers, even though the task is meant to train cognitive skills. In this case, Problem solving plays an important role as a skill that can reduce anxiety. Children who are used to being given the opportunity to try, make mistakes, and find alternative solutions, tend to be more confident and do not panic easily (Widya et al., 2024). This shows that Problem solving needs to be instilled from an early age to foster children's resilience in facing difficulties. Social support from parents, teachers, and peers is critical to early childhood success in overcoming anxiety and building skills Problem solving (Zahra et al., 2025). Children who feel supported will be more courageous to face challenges because they know they are not alone. Positive interactions, strengthening motivation, and providing space to experiment without fear of punishment can strengthen children's confidence (Ginting, 2024).

The problem that arises in this study is how children overcome anxiety and ability Problem solving them, especially as depicted in the storybook *Cake Cake* work Herliana (2023), which reflects the child's emotional dynamics, strategies Problem solving, and their social interactions when faced with stressful situations. This study aims to analyze children's behavior in dealing with anxiety and Problem solving Through Storybook Studies *Cake* work by Herliana, so that a deeper understanding can be gained of the relationship between emotion regulation, resilience, creativity, and social support in helping children overcome anxiety and solve problems constructively.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research method combines a comprehensive qualitative approach with a content analysis tool. This study uses qualitative techniques to explain the significance of Herliana's *Kue Kimu* narrative, focusing on children's behavior and emotions. Sugiyono & Lestari (2021) affirms that the goal of qualitative research is to comprehensively understand the experiences of research participants, including their behaviors, awareness, motivations, and actions, by engaging them in a natural context. Researchers used this strategy to analyze narratives and assess how characters, storylines, and social dynamics portray children's anxiety and problem-solving abilities. The research process described by Rukminingsih et al. (2020) consists of data reduction, data presentation, and decision-making. At the data reduction stage, the researcher identifies text segments that are relevant to the theme of the problem and its solution strategy. The collected data is then compiled into narratives and tables based on research variables, including emotion management, resilience, creativity, and social support. Researchers obtained results by analyzing the data to identify correlation patterns between children's anxiety and their problem-solving skills. The findings of this study are more reliable and accurate compared to the literature review on child developmental psychology and problem-solving theory. This is called theoretical triangulation.

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

In terms of overcoming worries, children's behavior is shown in Herliana's *Kue Kimu* storybook through the expression of emotions that are sincere and relevant to the psychological dynamics of early development, according to the study's findings. Kimu, the main character in the novel, shows several types of anxiety that are common to children. These include the fear of failure, the discomfort that arises when interacting with others, and the anxiety that arises when faced with unfamiliar

situations. The story shows that anxiety is not portrayed as a sign of weakness, but rather as a normal part of the learning process and emotional growth. The understanding that anxiety in children is an initial response to the environment that can be addressed with guidance and social support is getting stronger.

This research shows that the ability to control emotions is an important component in the process of overcoming anxiety. Kimu is portrayed as a boy who, when faced with a challenging situation, initially feels anxious, but eventually gains the ability to identify and manage his feelings. At some point in the narrative, the author shows a thoughtful process where Kimu takes a moment to calm down before acting. Self-regulation skills can be developed through experience, as shown in this book. Young readers can learn that the first step in dealing with worry constructively is to recognize their own emotions. It is better than an alternative to escape from the problem. By describing the process of fostering children's psychological resilience through the experience of failure and bounceback, the narrative of *Kue Kimu* illustrates the concept of resilience. When Kimu tries to make a cake, he doesn't succeed right away, but the mistakes he makes instead serve as a learning tool that helps him to keep going. The moral lesson that Herliana instilled in her students showed that failure is not the end of the effort, but the opportunity to try again in a more effective way. In the field of educational psychology, the idea of a growth mindset is shown by Kimu's attitude. Herliana teaches children that their talents can be improved through the accumulation of experience and practice. Based on the findings of this study, there is a significant relationship between children's creative abilities and their capacity to solve problems. In the process of finding answers to challenges, Kimu uses his creativity and ingenuity to come up with unconventional ideas. The use of this method is an example of different thinking, namely the process of finding alternative answers that go beyond the norm. This narrative teaches children that creativity is not only the ability to create artwork, but also a flexible thinking style that can be used to deal with the obstacles they face in their daily lives.

A child's ability to cope with anxiety and successfully find solutions to problems is greatly influenced by the presence of social support, which is an external aspect. Kimu's family, especially his older brother, provided emotional support to the child by calming and inspiring them without exerting any pressure. Children's psychological growth is greatly aided by the existence of a supportive environment, as evidenced by the warmth of relationships in the family. In addition, children who receive this kind of social support are better able to understand that each challenge can be overcome collectively, not just individually. Through content analysis, it was found that Herliana used the idea of child development psychology indirectly when developing the plot. There are supporting characters in this book who act as scaffolding, giving temporary advice to children until they are ready to face their own challenges for the first time. Therefore, this is consistent with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory, which states that children can acquire high-level cognitive abilities with the help of adults or peers. Throughout the story of *Kue Kimu*, the implementation of this concept is demonstrated by Kimu's interaction with the supportive social environment in which he finds himself. Based on the results of the study, the depiction of anxiety in *Kue Kimu* is not described as something abnormal or disturbing but rather described as a natural aspect of a child's emotional growth and development.

The author seeks to portray worry as a human emotion that can be identified, understood, and controlled wisely. Using affectionate stories and easy-to-understand terminology, children are introduced to the idea that worry is not an enemy to be avoided, but rather a signal that can help them better understand themselves and the environment around them. The idea that feelings, including worries, are a naturally acceptable part of life is reinforced by images that vivid and depict their subjects. *Kue Kimu* is not only entertaining, but it also offers a deep emotional education for its readers. The findings of this study show that *Kue Kimu* has significant educational value in the process of developing emotional literacy in children. Children are taught to identify different types of emotions, mention their feelings, and learn how to control them in a healthy way through the narrative and the characters that are in them. This book explains that each emotion has its own meaning and learning value, such as the fact that fear is a source of courage, anxiety is a source of creativity, and sadness is a source of empathy. *Kue Kimu* have the potential to serve as a teaching tool that helps children develop emotional intelligence from an early age. Given that it has been

proven that children's mental health, social skills, and academic achievement in the future are influenced by their ability to detect and control emotions, this is an important point to convey.

Kue Kimu includes psychological and moral qualities that are relevant to children's character education today. The main character, who is suffering from anxiety, is shown to be able to recover by receiving support from friends and family, as well as having the confidence to think creatively and find answers to the problems they face. It is through this narrative that the ideals of resilience, social collaboration, and self-confidence are instilled, which are the three important components in overcoming the problems presented by life. *Kue Kimu* not only serves as a children's literary work, but also as a tool for character development and psychological well-being for young readers. Educators and parents can use this book as a tool to help develop children's emotional awareness in a fun and meaningful way in an educational setting.

1.1 Children's Emotional Regulation

As a foundation for creating a balance between emotions, ideas, and behaviors, emotion regulation is a basic ability that is essential for children's psychosocial development (Fitriyah & Rokhmawan, 2025). Children with emotion regulation skills can recognize their emotional triggers, understand their sensations, and react appropriately in certain situations. Protagonists in the narrative *Cake It* is shown to be able to identify tension that arises when under pressure and try to calm down before resuming its activities.



Figure 1. Kimu's Anxiety The cake is sticky

This illustrates that the regulation of emotions is about controlling unpleasant emotions so that they do not control the child's behavior, instead of suppressing them. The stage of healthy self-regulation development, which builds the basis for rational thinking and responsible decision-making, is reflected in this process (Angeling et al., 2024). Children's psychological and social development is strongly correlated with their capacity to control emotions. Children with strong emotion regulation skills often have an easier time adjusting to their social environment, forming healthy bonds with their classmates, and resolving disputes without resorting to extreme violence. Effective regulation of emotions lowers stress and anxiety levels in children and improves their ability to think logically in challenging situations (Rahma et al., 2024). A child who can calm down before responding, for example, is better prepared to try again without losing passion when they are frustrated by failure. Emotional control is a psychological ability as well as a way to mentally prepare oneself to face life's obstacles (Leo & Hendriati, 2022).

Reflective and social activities can help students develop emotional control in an educational setting. Role-playing, reading picture books, and talking to the instructor are all good ways to help children identify and label their feelings (Astuti & Nur, 2025). Children learn from the main character of the story that all emotions, whether joyful, angry, fearful, or depressed, are natural and controlled aspects of human experience. According to research Nurhasanah (2023), this therapy is essential for improving self-regulation skills, especially in children who experience social anxiety at school. Children can learn that emotions don't have to be hidden but can be talked about and turned into strength through an empathetic approach and open communication. Parenting and parental role models' practices have a significant impact on a child's ability to regulate their emotions at home.

Naturally, children gain knowledge by seeing how their parents behave and showing their feelings in a variety of contexts (Angeling et al., 2024). Creating a supportive emotional atmosphere at home is an important first step in helping children learn to control their emotions. Children learn to identify their emotions and understand that each emotion has a purpose and can be transformed into a valuable educational experience through direction and example. The development of strong, compassionate children who can face life's challenges in a healthy way depends heavily on their ability to control emotions (Rahiem, 2023).

1.2 Child Resilience

Resilience is an important component in children's personality development, allowing them to face life's obstacles with optimism and perseverance (Astuti & Nur, 2025). Protagonists Cake provides a vivid illustration of how a child can demonstrate mental toughness in the face of adversity. Instead of giving up when his cake didn't work, he decided to keep trying until it worked. Children are taught a strong moral way through this picture that failure is a normal aspect of learning and not the result of a lack of effort (Khairunnisa et al., 2025).



Figure 2. Kimu's resilience in decorating her cake

Children are encouraged to understand that the essence of resilience is the courage to try again through symbolic depictions in narratives. According to Lestari & Hermawati (2025), resilience is not something that just happens, but rather is developed through active learning experiences that provide a safe environment for children where they can fail and try again without fear. An important strategy for developing emotional resilience in early childhood education is teaching methods that offer opportunities to ask questions and solve problems. Children who are given the freedom to try new things learn how to control negative emotions such as disappointment and frustration and acquire the introspective skills necessary to correct mistakes (Annisa, 2023). Children who grow up in supportive environments tend to see failure as a learning moment, not as a danger to their self-esteem.

This opinion is supported by research Kristian et al. (2022), which shows the importance of problem-solving exercises such as puzzles and mazes in fostering resilience and persistence in early childhood. Children learn to think critically, solve problems, and survive in the face of adversity through these activities. Emotional and social factors are equally important. According to Lestari & Hermawati (2025), children's resilience is greatly influenced by external influences such as teacher and family support. Children who get emotional support and acceptance will view failure positively, which will make it easier for them to bounce back and try again (Khairunnisa et al., 2025). Resilience in children is the result of an interaction between a caring and supportive environment and a meaningful learning experience.

1.3 Creativity in Problem Solving



Figure 3. Kimu creatively decorates her cake nicely

Creativity and Problem solving Very closely related, creativity is an important component in children's cognitive development. This is seen in the novel "Cake", where the main character tries to make his failed dough better by trying different ingredients and techniques. Deviant thinking, or the ability to come up with many different answers to the same problem, is demonstrated by this activity (Syakhrani et al., 2021). Deviant thinking teaches children that making mistakes is an opportunity to learn new methods, not the end of the process (Romadhona et al., 2025). It is very important to instill this way of thinking in children from an early age so that they can bravely and creatively face life's obstacles. Learning that gives children the opportunity to try new things is essential for developing creativity and Problem solving their cognitive (Ramadhan et al., 2025) Children are taught to think critically and independently when they are allowed to experiment with different approaches without worrying about making mistakes. Fostering effective and flexible creativity in a variety of contexts requires a learning environment that prioritizes freedom of expression.

Children's creativity can be developed effectively through the use of Problem Based Learning (PBL) (Maharani & Watini, 2022). PBL encourages students to think critically and cooperatively by exposing them to real-life problems that need to be solved. According to research Wicaksono et al. (2025), 5-6-year-olds who engage in problem-solving-based learning experience significant improvements in their critical thinking capacity, creative thinking abilities, and confidence when voicing their views. This shows that creativity is a talent that develops over time through repeated practice in a challenging yet supportive environment. According to research Asridoni (2025), children's creativity flourishes when they are allowed to express their ideas freely and are not under pressure to produce perfect results. In an educational environment that prioritizes process over results, children may feel comfortable trying new things. They found that original thinking and even failure are important components of the educational process. Parents and educators should avoid a perfectionist mindset that hinders the child's desire to try new things. The ability to take risks and accept failure as an essential component of learning is the foundation of creativity.

Parents play an important role in helping children develop creativity and problem-solving skills in the home environment. Simple activities such as cooking together, freeform art, or making toys out of garbage can be exploratory tools that help children develop their problem-solving skills (Yusliani et al., 2024). These exercises teach children how to overcome obstacles in an entertaining and curious way. Children feel valued and encouraged when their parents participate emotionally in the discovery process, which helps them develop into resilient, confident, and creative adults. In addition to being a useful tool for problem-solving, creativity is also important to help children develop resilient and adaptable character traits (Hanipa & Puspitasari, 2025).

1.4 Social Support

One of the most crucial aspects of protection in a child's psychological development is social support, especially when it comes to coping with anxiety and improving problem-solving skills. Brother, who plays the main character in *Kue Kimu*, is described as very kind and encouraging. He always accompanies Kimu, but instead of criticizing his shortcomings, he gives constructive criticism that increases children's self-esteem.



Figure 3. Kimu is helped by her sister when making a cake.

Children who are raised in this way are encouraged to try new things, learn from their failures, and use their imagination when faced with challenges because this fosters a stable emotional foundation. According to Khairunnisa et al. (2025), social support has a major influence on children's mental health, especially in lowering anxiety levels, which often hinders social engagement and learning. Social support also plays a role as a form of affection. According to research Nurussakinah et al. (2024), children's emotional well-being and academic success in school correlated positively with their view of high levels of social support from parents and teachers. Children who get help are often more intrinsically motivated and have better stress-coping mechanisms. In addition to only offering physical assistance, social support also includes a consistent presence for the child, communicating with empathy, and accepting them unconditionally.

Moelyono & Sumargi (2025) affirms that social support can increase the resilience of children and adolescents, especially in the face of stressful events such as exams, peer pressure, or environmental changes. This implies that children who have a strong support system are better equipped to turn obstacles into learning moments. The educational environment can also play a role as a mediator for social assistance. According to research Ristiana & Bantam (2024), teachers' methods in fostering a supportive social environment in the classroom can help socialize and develop confidence in children with social anxiety. Children who experience warm, friendly, and sympathetic interactions feel more comfortable expressing themselves, which can lower their social anxiety levels (Fadlan et al., 2025). Children's emotional, cognitive, and social development is based on social support, which also acts as a protective barrier against emotional stress. Children who receive this attention grow up to be more independent, brave in the face of adversity, and maintain a good psychological balance.

CONCLUSION

Based on research, the book *Kue Kimu* by Herliana managed to describe well how children deal with anxiety and problem solving through simple stories full of psychology lessons. The main character is described as able to control his feelings, tough when facing problems, and creative in solving problems. Getting support from the people closest to you, especially family, is an important factor in helping children feel calm and confident. Emotion regulation, resilience, imagination, and social support are the four main aspects that affect a child's ability to deal with anxiety and learn to solve problems in a healthy way. These aspects have been shown to be interrelated and play a big role in a child's ability to cope with his anxiety.

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