How effort towards challenge is depicted in stories for young children: an Indonesian study

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Abstract

This study examined the nature of effort towards challenge in stories recommended for young children in Indonesian schools. One hundred and nine stories with challenge information, recommended by the Indonesian government for Years 1 and 2 were analyzed, using a combination of content and structural analyses. When exploring the characters' efforts towards challenge, the findings revealed that the most prominent type of effort depicted in the stories was exerted by characters other than the protagonist (other-initiated effort). Furthermore, while all stories with this type of effort

had a successful outcome, self-initiated individual effort (exerted by the main character) was the most prevalent type of effort in stories with an unsuccessful outcome. These findings can be interpreted in more than one way. From the perspective of the achievement motivation literature, the responses to challenges depicted in the stories do not seem to promote a proactive approach towards difficulties. From the perspective of prevalent local values, however, the examples of effort presented in the stories may represent societal expectations concerning the acceptance of life events (in Indonesian: *nrimo*) and the promotion of caring values towards individuals in need. By integrating findings of the extant literature on achievement motivation with a contextually sensitive approach to the interpretation of the stories' content, this study raises important questions for future research in this area.

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