

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Literacy development is an important part of a child's development. Literacy includes the ability to read, write, and understand information in various ways (Pekkolay, 2022). Involving children in reading activities at the primary school level greatly affects their reading ability in the long term. The development of literacy activities significantly influences children's reading ability. The literacy environment in the classroom is indirectly related to reading skills through children's interest and involvement in literacy activities (Dicataldo & Roch, 2022). Studies have shown that children who start reading early tend to have better comprehension, a wider vocabulary, and have high critical thinking skills (Fadilla & Pramudiani, 2023; Wani & Hanim Ismail, 2024).

However, based on the results of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), there is a significantly low literacy level among Indonesian students, which ranks 69th out of 80 countries (Dicataldo & Roch, 2022). The low literacy level of children in Indonesia shows that literacy programs that focus on improving school governance, teaching systems, and developing literacy culture for example reading 15 minutes before starting learning have not succeeded in achieving the expected goals (Defit et al., 2019). Some of the factors that cause this problem are the number of students who do not have the interest to read, which is caused by a lack

of support from teachers and external distractions such as the use of gadgets and digital devices (Sinaga & Ananda, 2024; Martesya & Abduh, 2024). This problem often becomes inhibitions that can cause children to not focus on reading. In addition, limitations in reading strategies, as well as differences in perception between teachers and students are also the causes of this problem (Mayuni et al., 2020). Additionally, other obstacles such as budget limitations, lack of coordination between institutions, limited access to reading and technology, and low public awareness are also challenges (Nugrahaeni & Wiarsih, 2023).

Furthermore, the lack of reading engagement is also an inhibiting factor in the development of literacy skills, where research shows that students' engagement in reading greatly affects their reading skills (Özdemir, 2024). Engagement in reading is a very complex concept which includes behavioural, cognitive, affective, and social dimensions (McGeown & Smith, 2024). One important part of this is behavioural engagement, which means how students act during reading. Reading behavioural engagement refers to students active and visible involvement that reflected in their effort, persistence, attention, positive conduct, active participation, reading frequency, and interaction with texts (Fredricks et al., 2004; Guthrie, 2004; McGeown & Smith, 2024; Rusmin et al., 2024). Students who show strong behavioural engagement usually read more regularly, stay focused, and seriously during reading activities. Their active participation helps them to improve their reading skills.

Based on the result of observations made at SD Lab Undiksha, it was found that there is a lack of variety in the reading materials used in the classroom. Teachers still use traditional textbooks that are often plain and not very interesting for students

(Fadilla & Pramudiani, 2023). These books usually have very few pictures and use a formal style that is not suitable for young learners. Because of this, students find it difficult to stay focused during reading activities. The reading materials are also repetitive because they are always similar and do not include creative content. In addition, there are no digital storybooks available to make reading more fun and engaging. This situation makes it harder for students to pay attention. When the stories are not colorful and not creatively designed, students become bored and lose their motivation to read. As a result, this low level of engagement can make it more difficult for them to improve their literacy skills.

To improve students' reading behavioural engagement, using materials based on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can be a good way to introduce important ideas to young learners. The SDGs include 17 connected goals created by the United Nations in 2015 to solve global problems and support sustainable development by 2030 (Wadhvani & Malpani, 2023). It is in line with 21st century learning which highlights the importance of linking lessons to real-life situations. It helps students think critically, solve problems, and apply what they learn in their daily lives (Rusmin et al., 2024). These goals cover many important issues such as poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental damage, and good health and well-being (UNESCO, 2017). By including these topics in reading materials, teachers can help students understand how these global issues relate to their own lives.

Among the 17 goals, goal no 3 is Good Health and Well-being. This goal focuses on helping people live healthy lives and promoting well-being for everyone at all ages as part of the 2030 agenda. It is recognized that good health is fundamental to sustainable development and encompasses a wide range of health issues, extending

beyond the traditional focus on disease control to encompass the broader determinants of well-being. By presenting these essential health concepts through engaging relatable stories, children can begin to develop a foundational understanding of health-related topics (Pulimeno et al., 2020). This can help build their attitudes and behavioural towards health, especially contributing to their overall development and quality of life. Therefore, integrating SDGs-based digital story books into early literacy programs is an important step in developing their literacy habits.

It was found that appropriate and relevant reading material is urgently needed. In language learning, needs is the gap between what students already know and what they need to know to succeed (Richards, 2001). According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987) , needs includes target needs and learning needs. Target needs include what students must learn (necessities), what students are missing (lacks), and what students want to learn (wants). And learning needs which focus on how students learn best, such as their motivation, study habits, and preferred activities. Grabe and Yamashita (2022) adds that reading is not easy and requires different skills depending on the purpose like reading for study or fun. So, reading lessons should be based on both what students need to learn and how they learn best to make learning more effective and meaningful.

One of the alternative solutions to support the literacy development and reading behavioural engagement among students is to provide reading material that are suitable with the characteristics of children such as Digital Story Books. Digital Story Books are interactive narratives presented on touchscreen with multimedia features (Kucirkova, 2019) . Digital Story Books offer multimedia and interactive features that can impact children's engagement and literacy outcomes (Vackova et al., 2023). In

early childhood education, digital story books serve as an important method to enhance learning experiences, making them enjoyable and engaging (Purnama et al., 2022). It can improve vocabulary mastery in elementary school students (Harsiwi & Yunarni, 2021; Rahmadona et al., 2022). This visual stimulation not only attracts young readers but also motivates them to participate actively in the learning process (Hadiana et al., 2018). However, the use of digital story books depends on several factors such as parental support, the age of the children, and the feature of the digital story books (Kucirkova, 2019). By providing digital storybook to students, teacher can create a more interactive and enjoyable reading experience for elementary school students (Kucirkova, 2019). This not only helps students improve their reading skills, but also makes them more interested in reading. When reading is fun and interactive, students can feel more confident to read.

Even though previous studies show good results, there are still some gaps. Most research from Fridayanti et al. (2023) and Khriemaswari et al. (2023) focuses on secondary school students, with limited attention to sixth-grade students in Indonesia. Although some storybooks include local culture (Dharma et al. 2025; Gunayasa et al. 2023) only a few matches the themes in the national English curriculum which make them less suitable for use in the classroom. And then, tend to rely mainly on quantitative or qualitative approaches (Jayendra et al., 2018; Yulianawati et al., 2022) with few using mixed methods. Moreover, global and health themes (Pulimeno et al., 2020) are rarely connected to English literacy at the primary level and study conducted by Wibawa et al. (2025) explores the lacks, wants, and necessities of fifth-grade students in Buleleng regency regarding SDGs-based reading materials. This study addresses

these gaps by using a digital storybook on SDG-3 to enhance sixth graders' reading behavioural engagement. It combines real-world health topics with English curriculum content, offering both educational and contextual relevance.

Based on discussion related to the need of student and teacher of reading material that can facilitate reading behavioural engagement. It is important to support the literacy engagement by developing these reading materials. Moreover, the reading material emphasizes the importance of good health and well-being and integrating interactive illustrations to attract young learners. By presenting these goals, the digital storybooks will not only improve literacy skills but also deliver important health messages that encourage children to adopt healthy habits. It aims to create a more interactive learning experience and help students understand the importance of well-being in their lives. Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap by developing reading material through digital storybooks that help students stay engaged in English reading. The focus is on creating digital storybooks that make reading more interesting for students. The development of digital storybooks that focus on SDG-3 are designed to support sixth-grade students at SD Lab Undiksha Singaraja to facilitate their reading behavioural engagement.

1.2 Problem Identification

Based on the result of observations and interviews with teacher at SD Lab Undiksha, it was found that the reading materials used in the classroom were still very limited. The teacher mostly relied on traditional printed textbooks. While these books could be

used for teaching, it lacked in the ability to make students enjoy reading. The contents were often monotonous, with little variety in topics which made the reading experience less exciting. The textbooks are also limited in colour and pictures, so it is hard to pay students attention. In addition, the teacher did not use a digital storybook in the classroom. This meant students had limited chances to explore stories in a more engaging way that combines text and pictures in digital format. Without these engaging reading sources, it becomes harder to build children's reading habits and develop their behavioural engagement in reading.

Based on this issue, it is important to grow students awareness of global challenges. This is very relevant to 21st century skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, and digital literacy. These skills can support and help students become aware of global issues, care, and empathy to real world problems. One important issue they need to aware and understand is Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG-3 about good health and well-being.

To solve the problem and bring solutions to teachers, researcher also consider important elements in the development of digital story books, such as the use of interactive and attractive images, engaging storylines, and the integration of SDG-3 values to increase students' awareness of good health and well-being. This research will develop digital story books on SDG-3 to facilitate reading behavioural engagement for grade sixth students at SD Lab Undiksha.

1.3 Limitation of the Problem

The scope of this research is limited because this research focuses on the development of digital story books on SDG-3 for grade sixth students at SD Lab Undiksha Singaraja for the academic year 2025/2026. The digital story books was used online and designed based on the students' needs, attractive, and interactive to foster their reading behavioural engagement. It was only concentrate on the process of analysing, designing, developing, and evaluating the digital storybook as a reading material and does not cover wider classroom implementation. In addition, this study only involved teacher interview during the needs analysis process and did not include student interview. Teacher was selected because they have broader experience and understanding regarding students' learning needs, classroom conditions, reading behavioural, and the use of reading materials in the classroom.

1.4 Research Question

Based on the explanation above, the research questions are:

1. What are the needs of grade sixth students and teachers regarding materials that integrate SDG-3 to facilitate reading behavioural engagement?
2. How can a digital storybook integrating SDG-3 be designed and developed to support grade sixth students' reading behavioural engagement?
3. How is the quality of the developed SDG-3 digital storybook, as evaluated by experts, in terms of content, design, and relevance to literacy and sustainability education?

4. How is the quality of the developed SDG-3 digital storybook, as evaluated by teachers, in terms of students reading behavioural engagement?

1.5 Research Objective

Based on the formulation of the problem above, the objectives of the research are:

1. To identify the needs of grade sixth students and teachers reading materials that integrate SDG-3 to facilitate reading behavioural engagement.
2. To design and develop a digital storybook integrating SDG-3 to support grade sixth students reading behavioural engagement.
3. To evaluate the quality of the developed SDG-3 digital storybook, as assessed by experts, in terms of content, design, and relevance to literacy and sustainability education.
4. To evaluate the quality of the developed SDG-3 digital storybook, as assessed by teachers, in terms of students reading behavioural engagement.

1.6 Research Significance

This study has two significances, that are theoretical and practical significance:

1. Theoretical significance

This research aims to support educational development by designing digital storybooks on SDG-3 to facilitate students reading behavioural engagement for sixth grade students at SD Lab Undiksha Singaraja. This research is important for several reasons. First, the digital storybook includes content from SDGs

number 3 that focus on good health and well-being topics, which help the students not just learn about English, but support their learning English while also building care and responsibility for the world. Second, it supports Teaching English for Young Learners (TEYL) by using interesting content that matches the students age and level. The digital storybook helps students learn English while also understanding the topic of good health and well-being. Third, it adds to the collection of English reading materials for elementary school students by giving them stories that are easy to understand and related to their daily life related to good health and well-being. Lastly, this research shows how technology can be used in English classes to make learning more interactive because the digital format of the storybook can help students improve their behavioural engagement and understanding

2. Practical significance

a. For Teachers

This research will help teachers understand how digital storybooks can be used to facilitate students' reading behavioural engagement. By using digital storybooks with health topics related to SDG-3 teachers can make learning more fun and interactive. The result of this study can guide teachers in designing better reading materials that not only help students read better but also teach them about health and well-being.

b. For students

This research will benefit sixth grade students by introducing them to digital story books that make reading more engaging. With the values related to health, these storybooks can help students improve their reading skills. The use of digital features such as images and animations can make reading more exciting.

c. For future researchers

This research can serve as a reference for future research on digital storybooks in education. It may encourage other researchers to explore how different types of interactive reading materials can help students learn better. By adding new knowledge to this area, this study can inspire more research on creative reading materials that make learning more effective and enjoyable

