

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Literacy is a fundamental skill that plays a crucial role in children's growth and development. According to Hidayat & Fitria (2021), literacy enables individuals to obtain and communicate information while developing their ability to solve problems in everyday life. Therefore, early literacy development serves as a foundation for educational success and personal growth, playing a vital role in shaping a child's future. In the view of Dillon & Newman (2022), early literacy skills are key indicators of later reading success, and early literacy instruction in early childhood education can support both positive academic and behavioral child outcomes. Kresnawati et al. (2013) emphasizes that reading is one of the essential skills that students need to master because it plays an important role in supporting their learning process. In line with this opinion, Padmadewi et al. (2020) explain that reading skills, as one of the main components of literacy, need to be developed from an early age because they enable students to understand information, build knowledge, and support the learning process.

In Indonesia, literacy achievement among young learners remains relatively low. Based on Haryuniati & Suranto (2021) reported that Indonesia ranked 73rd out of 79 participating countries in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), indicating that students' reading literacy skills still require significant improvement. This condition is further reflected in the implementation

of the Minimum Competency Assessment (AKM), which identifies reading literacy as one of the fundamental competencies that students are expected to master (Tollo et al., 2025). Therefore, strengthening literacy from an early age has become increasingly important, and early childhood education plays crucial role in providing foundational literacy experiences that prepare children for future learning and lifelong educational success.

Despite its importance, children's literacy development is influenced by various factors, both internal and external. Internal factors include the limited reading culture and the insufficient availability of high-quality, engaging reading materials, which may reduce children's interest in reading and hinder their reading comprehension (Khuni et al., 2024). External factors, on the other hand, include the quality of the school environments, learning experiences, and social surroundings that shape children's literacy development (Khalifatussalam, 2021). This situation suggests that literacy development depends not only on children's individual abilities but also on the quality of instructional support and the learning media used during classroom activities. Therefore, innovative instructional strategies and engaging reading media are essential for fostering children's literacy development while encouraging active participation and behavioral reading engagement during reading activities.

To improve early childhood literacy skills, the reading media process must be designed in an engaging manner and in accordance with the characteristics of children's development. Early reading instruction for young children requires special attention from teachers to the characteristics and learning needs of students,

the design of effective learning strategies, and the selection of media that suit their learning styles. Currently, young children tend to get bored easily and are more interested in playing. In addition, the use of uninteresting teaching methods and media can hinder children's interest and motivation in learning to read. The use of learning media in the process of learning to read is very important to increase student involvement. The creation of learning media is also important in the learning process so that teachers can apply good pedagogical competence and create a fun learning environment for early childhood (Church & Bateman, 2019). Therefore, to make learning easier for students, teachers must use good, innovative, and creative learning media so that the learning process can be more interesting, fun, and meaningful for children.

Based on observations and interviews conducted at the PAUD Pelita Kasih Singaraja, students demonstrated low students' behavioral reading engagement during shared reading activities using story-based reading materials. Many students showed limited attention, inconsistent participation, and difficulty maintaining engagement throughout the shared reading sessions. The learning process still focuses on introducing simple vocabulary, such as the alphabet, body parts, jobs, vehicles, and animals, through repetition and sound recognition activities. In shared reading activities, teachers used small A4 storybooks. However, the small size and small print meant that not all students could clearly see the illustrations and read the text. As a result, some students were easily distracted by their peers, gradually lost attention during reading activities, and participated less actively in responding to the teacher or interacting with the story. This condition indicated that the reading

materials used did not effectively support students' behavioral reading engagement or encourage early literacy development.

Furthermore, teachers at PAUD Pelita Kasih Singaraja were familiar with the concept of sustainable development goals (SDGs), especially SDG 4 on quality education. The values of SDG 4 were reflected through the provision of supportive classroom facilities, a colorful and comfortable learning environment, the use of diverse learning media, and teachers who supported students in the learning process. The school had also implemented the principle of inclusivity, as seen by the presence of several students with special needs who studied together with other students in the same class. However, the implementation of SDG 4 values had not been integrated into the media and learning experiences used in the classroom. SDG 4 values are important to introduce from an early age so that children understand that education should be accessible to all and provide meaningful and quality learning experiences. For example, introducing these values through stories that teach that school is a safe, fun, and supportive place for children to learn, play, and achieve their dreams.

To address these gaps, this study developed a large book as a contextual and engaging reading media, designed to support the implementation of shared reading activities in the classroom. According to Haniya & Hasibuan (2024), a big book is a large-sized book featuring attractive illustrations and text designed to capture students' attention and facilitate the learning process. Its large and colorful visuals make it an effective media for enhancing early childhood reading experiences. Furthermore, Heriani et al. (2023) emphasize that the use of big books has been proven to be more effective in stimulating language development and is able to

captivate children's attention and help them understand stories. In addition, big books have advantages in terms of size, text, and images compared to other storybooks. As stated by Rizka (2020), storytelling using the big book can improve children's language expression skills by encouraging active participation and discussion. Compared to conventional reading media, Big Books provide advantages in terms of size, text clarity, and visual appeal (Zainudin et al., 2023). Therefore, in this study, a big book was developed with A3 size (29 x 32), consisting of 10-15 pages with colored illustrations and simple, repetitive sentences to support understanding and maintain student enthusiasm during shared reading activities. In addition to supporting early literacy development, the big book was designed to integrate the values of SDG 4 Target 4.a by portraying a safe, supportive, and child-friendly learning environment through stories that reflect children's everyday school experiences.

However, providing an appropriate reading media alone is not sufficient to ensure successful shared reading activities. The effectiveness of shared reading activities also depends on how actively students participate and engage with reading process. Therefore, this study focuses on students' behavioral reading engagement as the primary outcome supported by the developed big book. Behavioral reading engagement refers to students' observable participation during shared reading activities, including paying attention to the story, actively responding to teacher question, interacting with the text and illustrations, and demonstrating persistence throughout the reading activity (Wigfield et al., 2008; Fredricks et al., 2004). Students who demonstrate higher behavioral reading engagement are more likely to understand the story content and develop early literacy skills.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a global agenda adopted by the United Nations in 2015 through the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, consisting of 17 interconnected goals aimed at achieving a more sustainable and equitable future for all (Chapman & O’Gorman, 2022). One of these goals is SDG 4: Quality Education, which seeks to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. In particular, this study focuses on the important of providing safe, inclusive, and effective learning environment for children as part of the implementation of SDG 4. In many developing countries, education is regarded as a key driver for reducing poverty and improving quality of life (Mihai et al., 2015). Furthermore, quality education is widely recognized as a fundamental foundation for achieving sustainable development (Dei & Asante, 2022). Therefore, introducing the value of SDG 4 from an early age through simple, meaningful, and developmentally appropriate learning experiences is essential to fostering children’s understanding of the importance of education.

To introduce the value of SDG 4 to young children, learning experiences should be presented through simple, meaningful, and developmentally appropriate stories. Therefore, the big book developed in this study integrates the values of SDG 4 Target 4.a, which emphasizes the importance providing safe, inclusive, and effective learning environment for all children. The story portrays positive school experiences through enjoyable learning activities, supportive teacher-student interactions, cooperation among peers, and a welcoming classroom environment that is relevant to preschool children’s daily lives. Through shared reading activities, the big book not only supports students’ behavioral reading engagement

but also introduces the importance of learning in a safe and supportive educational environment. By integrating these values into the big book, this study aims to develop a reading media that supports early literacy development while fostering children's understanding of the importance of a positive learning environment. Furthermore, this research was conducted based on findings regarding the low students' behavioral reading engagement in shared reading activities and the limited use of large-format reading media at PAUD Pelita Kasih, Singaraja. Therefore, this research was conducted using the Design and Development (D&D) approach using the ADDIE model, which consists of five stages, namely analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation. These stages include analyzing children's learning needs, designing a big book that embodies the values of quality education and gratitude, developing a big book with simple text and attractive illustrations, implementing it through classroom reading activities carried out by teachers, and finalizing it through expert assessment and trials with students to assess the quality, effectiveness, and feasibility of the developed product.

1.2 Problem Identification

Student behavioral reading engagement during shared reading activities was still low, as some students easily lost their attention, became distracted by their peers, and participated less actively during shared reading activity. The learning process still focuses on introducing simple English vocabulary through repetition and pronunciation activities rather than using meaningful story-based reading materials. The teacher used an A4-sized storybook during shared reading activities. However, the small size of the book prevents all students from clearly seeing the text and illustration simultaneously, reducing opportunities for active participation.

The reading materials used in the classroom did not fully support interactive shared reading activities or promote students' early literacy development. Although the teacher was familiar with the concept of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 4: Quality education, its values have not yet been integrated into the storybook or other reading materials used during classroom instruction.

1.3 Limitation of the Problem

This study was limited to the development and evaluation of a big book integrating selected values of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 for preschool children at PAUD Pelita Kasih Singaraja. Specifically, the developed big book focused solely on SDG 4 Target 4.a, which emphasizes the provision of safe, inclusive, and effective learning environment, and did not address the remaining targets or sub-constructs of SDG 4. The study examined the quality and practicality of the developed product, as well as students' behavioral reading engagement during shared reading activities. However, it did not measure the effectiveness of the big book in improving students' reading achievement, vocabulary mastery, overall literacy skills, or their broader understanding of all SDG 4 dimensions.

1.4 Research Question

1. What are the needs of teachers and student regarding reading media that support quality education and behavioral reading engagement?
2. How is the reading media that promotes quality education developed to engage students in reading activities?
3. What is the quality of the developed reading media for early childhood learners?

1.5 Research Objectives

Based on the research problem, this study aims to achieve several objectives:

1. To identify the needs of teachers and students regarding reading media that supports quality education and facilitates behavioral reading engagement at PAUD Pelita Kasih.
2. To describe the development process of reading media that promotes quality education at PAUD Pelita Kasih.
3. To assess the quality of the developed reading media at PAUD Pelita Kasih.

1.6 Research Significance

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

This study is expected to contribute to the theoretical advancement of English language education, particularly in the development of Big Books as a learning media that integrates Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4: quality education. The findings contribute to the understanding of how the integration of large-format texts, engaging illustration, and shared reading strategies can support students' behavioral reading engagement among preschool children. In addition, this study expands the theoretical understanding of integrating early literacy development with values-based education by embedding SDG 4 values into learning materials for early childhood education.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

a. For students

This study is expected to encourage the development of early literacy in students through the provision of attractive and interactive learning media. The Big Book, which is based on SDG 4 (quality education), enables students to learn to read in a fun and meaningful way and support their students' behavioral reading engagement in shared reading. Furthermore, this study helps children understand the importance of quality education as part of their daily lives.

b. For teachers

This study offers innovative and practical learning media for teachers to use directly in the classroom. Big Books oriented towards SDG 4 not only support students' behavioral reading engagement in shared reading but also make it easier for teachers to introduce the values of quality education in a simple way that is appropriate for the children's age.

c. For researchers

This study can be used as a reference for future researchers who wish to explore the development of literacy-based learning media or integrate SDG 4 principles into early childhood education. This study enriches the literature by emphasizing that big books can be used not only to support students behavioral reading engagement of the importance of access to quality education from an early age.

1.7 Definition of Key Term

1.7.1. Conceptual Definition

1.7.1.1 Big Book

A big book is a learning media in the form of a large book designed with large text, colorful illustrations, and a simple storyline that is easy for young children to understand. Big books are used as a media to support shared reading activities and help develop children's early literacy skills (Setyorini et al., 2019; Diantari & Tirtayani, 2020).

1.7.1.2 Behavioral Reading Engagement

Behavioral reading engagement is the involvement of student behavioral during reading activities which is demonstrated through attention, active participation, effort, perseverance, and positive behavior when participating in reading activities (Wigfield et al., 2008; Fredricks et al., 2004).

1.7.1.3 Shared Reading

Shared reading is a joint reading activity carried out by teachers and students using a book so that all students can see the text and illustrations simultaneously. This activity aims to develop early literacy skills, vocabulary, and increase student interaction and participation during the reading process (Whitehurst, G. J., & Lonigan, 1998; Berkule et al., 2008).

1.7.1.4. SDG 4 (Quality Education)

SDG 4 (Quality Education) is one of the Sustainable Development Goals which aims to ensure inclusive, equitable and quality education, and encourage lifelong learning opportunities for all (UNISCO, 2016; Boeren, 2019).

1.7.2. Operational Definition

1.7.2.1 Big Book

In this study, the big book is a learning media developed using the IbisPaint application. It consists of colorful illustrations, simple text, and stories that integrate the values of SDG 4 (Quality Education). This media is used as reading material in shared reading activities at Pelita Kasih Early Childhood Education School, Singaraja.

1.7.2.2. Behavioral Reading Engagement

In the study, eight students engaged in shared reading activities, observing seven indicators: paying attention to the story, pointing to pictures, responding to teacher questions, repeating vocabulary or simple phrases, showing interest and enthusiasm, following teacher directions when interacting with text and pictures, and showing curiosity about the story's content. Data were obtained through an observation sheet using a four-level scale: never, sometimes, often, and always.

1.7.2.3. Shared Reading

This research involved a collaborative reading activity between a teacher and eight students in one class using a developed big book. During the activity,

the teacher read a story, asked questions, and encouraged students to interact with the text and illustrations in the big book.

1.7.2.4. SDG 4 (Quality Education)

In this study, SDG 4 is implemented through a big book story that introduces the values of quality education, such as the importance of learning, collaborative learning, safe, inclusive, and effective learning environment, mutual respect, and fostering a passion for learning from an early age. These values are conveyed through shared reading experiences tailored to the characteristics of early childhood.

