

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

One of the important skills that must be possessed by humans in this life is the ability to read. The ability to read and write (literacy) of a person is certainly different for each individual depending on how long their experience is. Especially in 2022 Indonesia's PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) score, ranked 69 out of 80 total countries listed. With a reading score of only 359. This shows the need for literacy in Indonesia to increase. Early literacy development is crucial as it helps students succeed in school and build their social skills. When students engage in reading activities during elementary school, it significantly impacts their long-term literacy skills. According to the study, reading is a fundamental skill that enhances comprehension, communication, cognitive development, and also can increase student engagement and motivation in reading (Sara., 2021). Early exposure to reading, prepares students for better academic achievements and encourages a deeper understanding of the world around them making lifelong learning and exploration (Rawian et al., 2022)

Since it covers children's motivation, excitement, and active participation in reading activities, reading engagement is a crucial component of literacy development, particularly in primary school. Active readers are more likely to develop a lifelong love of reading, improve their vocabulary, and develop strong comprehension skills. Reading engagement enhances

students' understanding of texts and fosters the development of critical thinking and analytical skills, all of which are essential for academic success (Sudatha et al., 2024). Additionally, Lailiyah et al. (2022), demonstrate that students who are actively reading are more likely to engage in discussions and collaborative learning, which leads to a deeper understanding of the subject. Its importance is demonstrated by the impact that reading engagement has on students' overall academic achievement. According to research, students who read a lot do better in a variety of subjects. Furthermore, fostering a lifetime love of reading at an early age is linked to a number of social and cognitive advantages (Siregar et al., 2022). Therefore, teachers need to create an environment that supports reading behavioural engagement if they seek to enhance literacy results and help students develop a love of reading.

The behavioural of reading habits among students in Indonesia are generally low due to students' interest in digital entertainment over reading (Wiranatha & Santosa, 2024). Based on interviews and preliminary observations at Mutiara Elementary School students often face challenges in reading textbooks, as it is difficult to understand, students also show less focus and usually talk to their friends. Elementary schools often face challenges in reading engagement due to their limited attention spans which makes students less focused on reading within a certain time (Husnah et al., 2024). And also the need for interactive and visually stimulating materials. The study highlights that young learners require engaging content to maintain their interest and motivation in reading (Rawian et al., 2022). Interactive

storytelling and colourful illustrations are essential to capture their attention and enhance their reading experience, which is often lacking in traditional reading materials. Furthermore, the development of digital storybooks as engaging supplementary reading media needs to be done to seek a better result for students' reading.

Digital storybooks have emerged as a useful tool for improving early reading experiences in young learners (Indriani & Suteja, 2023). These interactive materials mix exciting text with colorful pictures to capture children's attention and encourage their love of reading. The use of digital storybooks, often in the form of an app or website, allows for a multisensory approach to literacy in which children can not only read the text but also interact with the story through animations and often include with sound effects, making the reading experience more enjoyable (Son & Butcher, 2024). According to research, digital storybooks are able to significantly increase children's reading comprehension and motivation by providing a dynamic platform that stimulates active engagement (Kuo, 2021). Furthermore, the interactive nature of digital storybooks supports diverse learning styles, providing to students with engaging learning styles, all of which are important in early literacy development. Due to this potential, digital storybooks can be an effective means of instilling various important values among young learners, including sustainable development issues that are familiar for them which are align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Integrating Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into reading media is an effective strategy for fostering early awareness of sustainability among young learners. By connecting educational content to real-world issues, teachers can help children understand the importance of sustainability in their daily lives and develop a sense of responsibility (Cordova, 2024). Incorporating themes related to environmental, social, and cultural sustainability allows educators to provide a comprehensive understanding of global challenges. This approach not only enhances literacy skills but also encourages critical thinking and problem-solving, empowering children to become active participants in their communities (Stahl et al., 2023). Ultimately, integrating SDGs into reading media prepares young learners to face future challenges with knowledge, empathy, and a commitment to sustainability.

Among the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, SDG-2 (Zero Hunger) is considered highly relevant for elementary school especially for fifth-grade students at Mutiara Singaraja elementary school because it addresses basic human needs that children can easily understand and experience in their daily lives (Mulero et al., 2024). Besides that, from teacher interviews stated that topic such as food are closely related to fifth-grade students' as it along with one of the materials in their English subject. Compared to other SDGs, SDG-2 provides concrete and familiar contexts that can be meaningfully explored through storybook, making it suitable for young learners with limited abstract thinking abilities (Reyes et al., 2025).

SDGs-based storytelling is important in early childhood education because it raises environmental, social, and cultural awareness. By integrating SDG-2 into storybooks, children can get a basic awareness of how hunger impacts individuals and communities throughout the world by listening to stories that emphasize the significant of food security, nutrition, and sustainable agriculture (Grosso et al., 2020). For example, stories depicting the route of food from farm to table can highlight the interdependence of environmental health, social equality, and food-related cultural behaviours (Stahl et al., 2023). By investigating various cultural views on food and nutrition, students may get a better understanding of the importance of local food systems and the effect of global concerns on their own communities (Stahl et al., 2023). Furthermore, storytelling fosters empathy and critical thinking, encouraging childrens to explore their roles in combating poverty and supporting sustainable behaviours (Gedzune, 2014). This strategy not only improves reading skills, but also enables young students to become educated and responsible global citizens who understand the necessity of maintaining food security for all. Finally, SDGs-based storytelling especially SDG-2 in early school creates the framework for a generation that prioritizes environmental sustainability, social justice, and cultural diversity in the battle against hunger.

Based on earlier discussion and previous studies related to low student literacy and also the results of preliminary observations, this study develop a digital storybook based on SDG-2 to facilitate English reading behavioural engagement of fifth grade students at SD Mutiara Singaraja. This

study addresses the unavailability of reading media that are appropriate to the student's level and addresses reading behavioural engagement of elementary school students.

1.2 Problem Identification

Through teacher interviews and preliminary classroom observations at SD Mutiara, several challenges related to English reading behavioural engagement have been identified. The most prominent issue is the lack of interest in reading independently. Many students show low behavioural engagement when engaging with English reading materials, which are often perceived as less appealing or difficult to relate to their daily lives. This lack of behavioural engagement affects their overall reading comprehension and ability to enjoy the reading process.

Another issue is students' low focus during reading activities. Instead of concentrating and do the reading task on the text, many students tend to talk with their peers and easy to get distracted in the classroom. This behavioural reduces the effectiveness of reading lessons, as students do not fully engage with the material or understand its content.

The teacher also noted that one contributing factor to this is the absence of reading materials that are interactive, visually engaging, and relevant to students' real-world experiences and students teaching materials used by the teacher rely solely on LKS (student worksheets). This limited use of instructional materials reduces students' exposure to more engaging and varied reading resources, such as storybooks or interactive texts. As a result,

reading activities tend to feel monotonous and less meaningful, which can decrease students' interest and active engagement in reading.

1.3 Limitation of the Problem

1 Scope of the study:

This study focuses on the development and evaluation of a digital storybook specifically designed for fifth-grade elementary school in order to create an engaging reading experience and encourage active reading behaviour. This innovation lies in the integration of thematic content aligned with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2: Zero Hunger theme within the story narrative. By combining literacy development with global citizenship education, this digital storybook aims to address only their reading behavioural engagement through only one trial session and also internalize values related to sustainable living.

2 Age Group:

The target audience for this research is fifth-grade elementary school students. At this stage, children are developing basic reading habits and the ability to connect text to real-world concepts. This makes them an ideal group to introduce SDG-based content, as they are able to understand moral lessons while still enjoying the interactive, story-based format. Therefore, the digital storybook design incorporated age-appropriate language, illustrations, and interactive elements to maintain their interest while supporting reading comprehension and behavioural engagement.

3 Focus Areas:

This research focuses on two aspects. First, it explores the potential of a digital storybook to support students' reading behavioural engagement through their participation, attention, effort, persistence, and interaction with the text during one session trial reading activities. Second, it integrates SDG-2: Zero Hunger concepts into the digital storybook to introduce students to issues related to hunger, food sharing, and access to food. Through this integration, the digital storybook is designed to provide meaningful reading experiences that connect literacy activities with sustainability-related themes.

4 Geographical location:

Geographically, this research was conducted at Mutiara Elementary School in Singaraja, Bali that provides a rich cultural and educational background for integrating relevant local examples into the storybook content. By situating the research within a specific community, the research ensured contextual relevance, as the themes and scenarios in the digital storybooks could reflect the students' lived experiences. This local approach increased the likelihood of sustained engagement and practical application of the values promoted through the stories.

1.4 Research Question

- 1 What are the needs of grade fifth students and teacher regarding materials that integrate SDG-2 to facilitate reading behavioural engagement?

- 2 How can a digital storybook integrating SDG-2 be designed and developed to support grade fifth students' reading behavioural engagement?
- 3 How is the quality of the developed SDG-2 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-2 digital storybook, as evaluated by teachers, in terms of students reading behavioural engagement?

1.5 Research Objective

1. To identify the needs of grade fifth students and teacher reading media that integrate SDG-2 to facilitate reading behavioural engagement.
2. To design and develop a digital storybook integrating SDG-2 to support grade fifth students reading behavioural engagement.
3. To evaluate the quality of the developed SDG-2 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-2 digital storybook, as assessed by teacher, in terms of students reading behavioural engagement.

1.6 Research Significance

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

1. Theoretical significant:

This study contributes to the field of literacy and English language learning by developing a digital storybook that integrates Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) themes. It demonstrates the potential of digital storybooks to encourage reading behavioural engagement while introducing global issues to young learners. The findings of this study provide additional insights into the use of technology-based learning materials, literacy instruction, and educational technology in elementary school settings.

2. Practical Significant:

a. For teacher

This study provides educators with practical guidance on integrating sustainability themes into English lessons through digital storytelling. It also offers examples of how digital storybooks can be used not only to support language learning but also to promote character development and global awareness among students.

b. For students

Digital storybooks that are interactive and appropriate for students' interests and cognitive abilities are beneficial. In addition to encouraging reading engagement, the materials help them comprehend SDG-2 Zero Hunger, which promotes meaningful learning that goes beyond language proficiency.

c. For researcher

The findings of this study provide insights into the use of digital media, particularly digital storybooks, to support reading

behavioural engagement and awareness of global issues. In addition, this study may serve as a reference for future researchers interested in developing and evaluating similar educational reading media, especially in the areas of literacy, digital learning resources, SDG integration, and reading behavioural engagement among young learners.

