CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Early childhood is a very crucial time for the development of children's language and literacy capability because it is at the early childhood time that children can be very sensitive to their surrounding environment and their developing brains will absorb information faster than adults do. So, it would be great if literacy media such as books could be introduced to children from an early age. Between the age of 3-5, children's brain develop rapidly and rich literacy experiences help strengthen neural connections that support language comprehension and expression (Kurniawati et al., 2024). Strong early literacy skills can contribute on a better academic achievement, writing skills, and critical thinking skills, and in order to develop and hone young learners' literacy skills, they are required to have engagement in reading (Annisa et al., 2025), it can foster children positive attitude towards reading and making them feel happy and comfortable to explore books, which in return this can become a strong foundation for young learners in strengthening their literacy skills, comprehension skills, and critical thinking skills. Reading is the basic literacy as the foundation for intellectual development (Ratminingsih et al., 2020).

In Indonesia, the Program for international Students Assessment (PISA) gained a lot of attention by the government and public, and the Minister of Education and Culture worked on the implementation of several programs which

included a program called National Literacy Movement (Gerakan Literasi Nasional) since 2015, but Indonesian students' accomplishment in PISA especially in reading has been quite poor (Emilia et al., 2022). According to OECD (2023), the PISA 2022 results indicate that Indonesia ranks low scores on reading with scores of 359, compared to the OECD'S average scores of 476. Therefore, Indonesia experienced a decline in scores from the previous year in 2018 with reading score of 371 points. Based on the data, we can see that literacy in Indonesia is not quite satisfactory. There are still many problems that occurred in Indonesia regarding their literacy and engagement in reading (Rismadewi, 2023). Literacy failure in early age is often rooted in the lack of a strong literacy foundation and reading engagement, the reality shows that early childhood reading literacy in Indonesia face various challenges and data shows that the reading engagement and ability of Indonesian children are quite low. This is not only because of individual child ability limit, but also lack of literacy support such as books and literacy media from school and home environments, resulting in children not being used to reading and affects their interest in reading (Agustina & Depalina, 2025; Padmadewi et al., 2018).

Preschool students are more likely not to engage in reading because of their attention span and the lack of reading media that can actually understand by children. To foster students' reading engagement and enhance their ability to understand texts, teachers need to take into account the characteristics and needs of young learners (Nitiasih et al., 2021). Children tend to like books that contain animation, cartoon, and less words than regular books, unlike adults who consume books with more complex words and story line. Children like it when the story is

fun and they can interact with the book through their imagination (Antariani et al., 2021). The shape of the book also needs to be much wider than regular books because it can hold much more images and bigger sentences for children to interact with (Suryani & Seto, 2021).

In order to increase reading interest for young learners, we must be able to provide learners with access to a good quality reading media, so that they can continue to sharpen their reading skills and develop their love for reading, books that can really help young learners become interested in reading can not only be seen from the writing but also from the animation, pictures, and story structure of the books because children have certain stages in understanding a reading media unlike adults, one of the book types that children can use to nurture their reading engagement is 'Big Books', which is a large book around 34x42 cm, with large appealing illustration, and commonly used in early education settings (Rofiah et al., 2023). The features of Big Book such as the bright colour, fun pictures, and singable word patterns are the contributing factors that make Big Book engaging for young learner (Hanani et al., n.d.).

The process of learning using Big Book will be more attractive to young learners because of its simple story, colourful pictures, and big letters, enabling them to understand the content of the story in a fun and enthusiastic ways (Prawiyogi et al., 2020). Hilda Hadian et al (2018) stated that Big Book rhythmic patterns appear to be very interesting for learners, its large display and straightforward story line make it an effective learning media to draw learners' attention in reading activity. As a result, Big Book can increase learners' reading

engagement by its interesting features fit for beginner reading, especially kindergarten children.

One way to use the Big Book with students is by shared reading, in which shared reading is an activity where adult and children read a book together and they engage together in a meaningful interaction and communication around the text (Quick & Erickson, 2024). They also stated that shared reading does not simply just reading aloud to children but instead emphasizes on response and interaction where the adult follows the child's interest and encourages participation without requiring specific response. Comments, wait time, and expansions rather than directive questioning were used, allowing children to initiate respond and express ideas in their own ways. The use of Big Book can create fun and meaningful learning process. It can develop language and literacy among children because it facilitates the use of certain reading strategies such as shared reading or reading a loud that can make the children involve themselves during learning process (N. W. S. Mahayanti et al., 2017; Nalantha et al., 2018).

The media of the Big Book that was developed is about Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it refers to the United Nations (UN) approved agenda for Sustainable Development, which contains 17 Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) that pursue to control the current social environmental crisis situation (Rodríguez-Marín et al., 2020), the 17 SDGs are no poverty, zero hunger, good health and wellbeing, quality education, gender equality, clean and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth, industry, innovation, and infrastructure, reduced, inequalities, sustainable and communities,

responsible consumption and production, climate action, life underwater, life on land, peace, justice and strong institution, and partnerships for the goals.

SDGs can encourage learners to become citizens that are responsible for sustainable world development and have values in society, integrating SDGs in reading media can help learners to not only develop their reading skills and critical thinking skills but also introduce young learners about the responsibility in maintaining sustainable development as global citizens (Sarabhai, 2015). We need to plant the idea of SDGs from their early childhood in order for children to raise their awareness of their surrounding environment, not only that but also with preschool students' curiosity to learn something new, making them an ideal target to introduce the concept of sustainable development. Integrating the values of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into basic education is increasingly essential to foster global awareness, empathy, and social responsibility from an early age (Adnyayanti et al., 2025; Mahayanti et al., 2026) and Involving the global issues as listed in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in education is necessarily done in the education process, especially in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning (Astawa et al., 2024).

The main framework of this research is Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 12: Responsible Consumption and Production, which emphasizes the importance of using resources responsibly and reducing unnecessary waste. In this study, the focus is on responsible food consumption by encouraging children to take food according to their needs and avoid wasting food. When food is taken in excessive amounts and left uneaten, it contributes to food waste, which increases waste production and places unnecessary pressure on natural resources. Therefore,

SDG 12 promotes responsible consumption by encouraging individuals to make thoughtful choices, minimize food waste, and develop sustainable habits from an early age. Through these practices, children can learn to appreciate food, consume responsibly, and contribute to a more sustainable future. With this, the concept of SDG 12 is very crucial to introduce to young children, and applied in their environment, so as to create a young generation who understand the importance of protecting nature and adopting a sustainable lifestyles (Yuan et al., 2024).

The research that already exists regarding Big Book was focused mainly on the impact of Big Book on the literacy skills of young learners, with little regard towards the potential of using Big Book as teaching media to introduce awareness on sustainable environment to young learners and to promote the understanding of SDGs. While Big Book is seen as a great tool to develop early literacy to children, the potential of it being a device to promote SDGs remains unexplored. This research aims to address this problem and oversight, by looking into the effect of Big Book by developing Big Book based on SDGs to see its effect towards preschool students reading engagement and awareness on responsible consumption and production. Knowing the potential that Big Book has towards its effectiveness as teaching media, especially young learners reading engagement.

Previous studies, such as Setyorini et al (2019), have shown that Big Books can be an effective tool in early childhood education and it can support a more enjoyable learning experiences. Aliffiane (2022) stated that, Big Book can significantly improve students literacy skills and it can be a potential for effective educational resources. Sheehy et al (2024) stated that the use of Big Book indicated high engagement and enjoyment for Indonesia kindergartens students. However,

based on the pre-observations conducted in PAUD Pelita Kasih Singaraja, it was identified that the teacher did not use interactive reading media but more or so they used flashcards to build up communication and vocabulary skills. There is a lack of suitable reading media activity for preschool children, but all the children are really active in attending the class. Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap by supporting the teaching reading activities through development of Big Book based on SDGs.

The findings of the needs analysis revealed that PAUD Pelita Kasih Singaraja has already implemented several values related to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 12: Responsible Consumption and Production in daily classroom activities. For example, teachers encourage children to clean up after activities, use learning media responsibly, and avoid wasting food during mealtimes. However, these practices are still limited and are not systematically integrated into literacy learning activities. As a result, children have few opportunities to understand the meaning and importance of responsible consumption through structured learning experiences. To strengthen the implementation of SDG 12 values, this study developed a Big Book as a shared reading medium that explicitly introduces concepts such as taking food according to one's needs, reducing food waste, and making responsible choices. Through engaging stories, simple language, and attractive illustrations, the Big Book provides an age-appropriate approach to reinforcing existing practices while helping children develop greater awareness of sustainable consumption and production from an early age.

At PAUD Pelita Kasih Singaraja, although some elements of SDG 12 had been implemented in the activity at school but reading activity have not yet been

designed to incorporate Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) content, nor has the Big Book been used as a shared reading medium in early literacy practice. This condition indicates a gap between current classroom practice and the potential of early childhood education to foster both reading engagement and sustainability awareness. To address this gap, this study focuses on the development of a Big Book as a shared medium that integrates Sustainable Development Goal 12, which is responsible consumption and production). The Big Book is expected to support interactive end engaging reading activities that is suited to pre-school learners, while also embedded SDG content introduces age-appropriate concepts of responsible consumption and production. By implementing and instructional medium which is a Big Book and thematic content that have not previously been applied in this setting, this research aims to enhance students' reading engagement and contributes to the early integration of sustainability education within early childhood literacy.

The development of Big Book for reading medium is include SDGs values specifically, awareness on responsible consumption and production. The features in the proposed Big Book reading medium are interesting visual or animations, singable words, valuable story lines for children. The book contained the themes of sustainable living and importance of responsible production and consumption. The book presented with a simple but meaningful story, where the concept of SDGs was easier for students to understand and comprehend.

The significance of this study is for preschool education and the broader reach towards sustainable development. The development of Big Book based on SDGs contributed to the valuable strategies regarding young learners reading

engagement and literacy regarding environmental awareness. The findings were not only introduced the design and concept of future education medium but also provide guidance on how Big Book can be used to receive specific learning outcomes related to sustainable development.

1.2 Identification of the Problems

Preschool students are young children, which make it quite hard for them to receive knowledge through reading. Children who do not have any interest in literacy may not engage as deeply as those who do put interest in it and that can influence their view towards reading. Other than that, classroom environment can also be the cause preschoolers struggle with reading engagement (Baroody & Diamond, 2016). Children's attention span is also quite short than adult. Making it quite hard for them to engage in reading. Students with larger VA (Visual Attention) span are more likely to perform better in reading task and this is because a good attention span allows the improvement of orthographic process, which is both important for both lexical (word-level) and sub-lexical (letter-level) reading strategies (Antzaka et al., 2019). Argument also shows that, when children are required to process and complex concept and information, their attention span can be held accountable, leading them to not maximize their performance in reading, and study also revealed that older students tend to have a better VA span and vocabulary knowledge than those who are younger.

Because of many preschools in Indonesia are not equipped with SDGs based media, as the concept of SDGs itself can be quite hard for young learners to

understand. Many preschools did not have many media regarding reading, since in preschool many of the students barely know how to read. They are at the stage where they may not yet ready for formal reading activity because of their cognitive and verbal skills that are still developing that can limit their ability to understand complex text and concept (Tollefson et al., 1986). It is also highlighted that children's verbal understanding and their numerical reasoning ability are a crucial indicator of their readiness to engage in reading activities. Study suggest that children should be exposed to a simple reading activity and introduce them to the concept of literacy. Age-appropriate book need to be facilitated by the teacher, in order for students to connect to the media. Activity needs to be tailored to the development of young children, with engaging and relatable media. In Indonesia itself, not many schools know about SDGs concept and if they do, they only apply it to their project and program but not on their reading and literacy for the children.

1.3 Limitation of the Study

This study has several limitations that should be considered. First, the previous research study reviewed was limited to summaries, therefore the literature review of this proposal focuses on articles relevant to Big Book development and SDGs, but does not comprehensively cover all existing literature. Second, this study is conducted as a Design and Development Research (DDR) study, with the initial state of the study being a need analysis tailored to the research context. Data collection in this stage was simple and concise, not aimed to discovering new phenomena, but rather to support the relevance of the Big Book product being

developed. Third, the research approach used is the ADDIE model, which is limited to the design stage, expert validation, and a small and limited trial. So, the primary objective of this study is to ensure that the Big Book product being developed was relevant for students and teachers' needs and that it is a suitable and credible learning media.

1.4 Scope of the study

1. **Scope of the Study**: The study focuses on developing and evaluating Big Book tailored for preschool students.
2. **Age Group**: Targeting preschool learners (ages 4-5) in early childhood education settings.
3. **Focus Areas**
    a. Reading engagement (interest, participation, comprehension).
    b. Awareness of sustainability through SDGs-based shared reading.
    c. Geographical location: PAUD Pelita Kasih, Singaraja, Bali.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What are the needs of teachers and students regarding reading medium that support responsible consumption and production and reading engagement?
2. How is the reading medium that promotes responsible consumption and production developed to engage students in reading activities?
3. What is the quality of the developed reading medium for early childhood learners?

1.6 Research Objectives

1. To identify the needs of teacher and students regarding medium that support responsible consumption and production and facilitates reading behaviour engagement at PAUD Pelita Kasih
2. To describe the development process of reading medium that promotes responsible consumption and production at PAUD Pelita Kasih.
3. To assess the quality of the developed reading medium at PAUD Pelita Kasih.

1.7 Significance of the Research

1. Theoretical: This study adds to the body of literature on literacy media development by focusing the role of Big Book with SDGs concept as an innovative and efficient tool in early literacy education. It provides theoretical insight on how visual and linguistic elements on Big Book, such as the large text, colourful visuals, and rhythmic patterns foster young learners' engagement in reading.
2. Practical: Providing Big Book products that can be used by teachers and students. These resources provide engaging and effective reading tool that is in line with curriculum and help teachers to enhance learners' experiences. While students benefit on engaging reading activity with Big Book that foster enjoyment and comprehension of stories