IDENTIFYING THE NEEDS FOR SDG 1 BASED BIG BOOK MEDIA TO FOSTER SHARED READING AND READING ENGAGEMENT IN EARLY EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This study is motivated by the limited reading media used in shared reading activities in early childhood education, which have not optimally supported reading engagement and have not integrated Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1 values related to poverty awareness. The study aims to identify teachers' and students' needs for SDG 1–based Big Book media to improve the quality of shared reading and reading engagement. A descriptive qualitative design was employed at TK Telkom Singaraja involving one teacher and kindergarten students. Data were collected through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews and analyzed using data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing supported by source triangulation. The findings indicate that shared reading activities were routinely conducted; however, the existing materials were small, less interactive, and lacked explicit SDG 1 content, resulting in suboptimal reading engagement. Both teacher and students expressed the need for Big Books that are visually large, attractive, linguistically simple, interactive, and socially meaningful. Integrating SDG 1 values into Big Book media has the potential to enhance reading engagement while fostering empathy and character development in early childhood education.

Keywords : *Big Book, Shared Reading, Reading Engagement, SDG 1, Early Childhood Education*

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education plays a crucial role in establishing foundational literacy skills. At the kindergarten level, literacy instruction emphasizes the development of vocabulary, listening comprehension, print awareness, and reading interest rather than formal reading mastery. One widely used instructional strategy in early literacy is shared reading, which allows teachers and students to interact with texts through discussion, questioning, repetition, and visual exploration. This approach aligns with Sociocultural Theory proposed by Vygotsky (1978), which highlights the importance of social interaction in the learning process. Additionally, shared reading has been widely recognized as an effective strategy to support early literacy development (Justice & Pullen, 2003).

Despite its benefits, the effectiveness of shared reading is highly influenced by the quality of instructional media used in the classroom. In many early childhood settings, reading materials are often limited to small-sized commercial storybooks that are not designed for group reading. As a result, young learners may experience limited visual access to text and illustrations, reducing their attention and participation. Research by Justice and Pullen (2003) shows that well-designed shared reading materials significantly enhance children's engagement, vocabulary development, and print awareness. Similarly, Lynch (2008) found that access to appropriate print materials strongly influences children's literacy engagement.

In addition to literacy development, early childhood education also aims to foster character education and social awareness. In the context of 21st-century education, there is an increasing emphasis on integrating global values such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into classroom instruction. One of these goals, SDG 1: No Poverty, promotes social equity, empathy, and awareness of disadvantaged communities (United Nations, 2015). Introducing such values through early literacy activities is essential to cultivate children's understanding of kindness, sharing, and social responsibility, especially during their developmental "golden age" (Ratminingsih & Budasi, 2018). Storytelling, in this regard, serves as an effective medium for embedding moral and social values in developmentally appropriate ways (Maya et al., 2022).

However, preliminary observations conducted at TK Telkom Singaraja revealed several challenges in the implementation of shared reading. The available reading materials were limited in number and relatively small in size, making them less effective for group interaction. Additionally, the storybooks used did not explicitly integrate SDG-related values. Although general moral messages were occasionally present, themes related to poverty awareness and social empathy were not systematically incorporated. Previous studies indicate that the lack of meaningful and contextually relevant content can reduce students' engagement in reading activities (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000).

These conditions indicate a gap between the ideal characteristics of effective shared reading media and the current classroom situation. Research highlights that reading engagement plays a central role in literacy development, involving emotional involvement, sustained attention, and active participation (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). When young learners are engaged, they demonstrate higher motivation and deeper comprehension. Therefore, instructional media must be visually clear, interactive, and meaningful to maintain learners' attention in 21st-century

learning environments (Santosa et al., 2022). Furthermore, digital and visual storytelling media have been shown to enhance students' motivation and participation (Maya et al., 2022).

One type of reading media widely recommended for shared reading contexts is the Big Book. Big Books are large-format storybooks specifically designed for group reading, with enlarged text and illustrations that allow all students to clearly see the content. This facilitates joint attention and interaction during storytelling. Studies suggest that Big Books enhance participation and support the development of print awareness in early literacy instruction (Lynch, 2008). Therefore, integrating SDG 1 values into Big Book media may simultaneously address both literacy engagement and character education needs.

Based on these issues, there is a need to develop appropriate instructional media that not only supports shared reading but also integrates relevant social values. Needs analysis is essential to identify the gap between existing conditions and expected outcomes, as well as to understand the needs of both teachers and students (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Accordingly, this study aims to identify the needs of teachers and students regarding SDG 1–based Big Book media to support shared reading and enhance reading engagement in early childhood education. Specifically, this study addresses the following objectives:

1) the current implementation of the activities of shared reading,
2) the limitations of existing reading materials, and
3) teachers' and students' expectations for ideal SDG-integrated Big Book media.

This study is expected to contribute both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, it provides insights into the integration of SDG values in early literacy instruction. Practically, the findings will serve as a foundation for developing contextual and value-based Big Book media that can improve the quality of shared reading and promote children's engagement in literacy activities.

METHOD

A descriptive qualitative design was used to explore the needs of teachers and students regarding SDG 1–based Big Book media in supporting shared reading and reading engagement. A descriptive qualitative approach is appropriate for studies that aim to understand phenomena in natural settings and interpret participants' perspectives in depth (John W. Creswell, 2014). This study was conducted over several weeks during regular literacy sessions to ensure authentic data collection. The study took place at TK Telkom Singaraja over four weeks during regular literacy sessions. Participants included one English teacher as the key informant and one group of kindergarten students who regularly participated in shared reading activities.

The researcher acted as the primary instrument, which is a key characteristic of qualitative research where the researcher directly collects and interprets data (Sugiyono, 2017). Data were collected through non-participant classroom observations and a semi-structured interview. Observations were conducted in four sessions of 30–40 minutes each to examine the implementation of shared reading, students' engagement such as attention, participation, and responsiveness, the characteristics of reading materials, and the integration of SDG 1 values. An observation checklist and field notes were used to systematically record the data (Louis Cohen et al., 2018).

A semi-structured interview with the teacher was conducted to explore instructional goals, challenges, limitations of existing materials, and expectations for SDG 1–based Big Book media. Semi-structured interviews allow flexibility while maintaining a clear focus on research objectives (Steinar Kvale, 2009). The interview was guided by a needs analysis framework consisting of necessities, lacks, and wants (Tom Hutchinson & Alan Waters, 1987), audio-recorded with consent, and transcribed for analysis.

Data were analyzed using qualitative procedures, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, as proposed by Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman (2014). The data were coded and categorized into themes related to media needs, engagement, and SDG integration. To ensure trustworthiness, data triangulation and member checking were applied to enhance the credibility of the findings (Yvonna S. Lincoln & Egon G. Guba, 1985). Ethical considerations were addressed by obtaining permission from the school and maintaining participants' confidentiality throughout the research process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Several empirical reviews have been selected related to the needs for SDG 1 based big book media to foster shared reading and reading engagement in early education. The summary of the major findings of this study, covering the implementation of shared reading practices, the identified limitations of existing reading materials, and the needs and expectations of teachers and students regarding SDG 1–based Big Book media is presented in the table below followed by its explanation after its table. The table synthesizes the data obtained from observations and interviews, supported by relevant theories and previous studies. This overview serves as a foundation for the subsequent in-depth discussion of each finding.

Table 1. Summary of Findings on SDG 1–Based Big Book Needs

Aspect	Findings	Supporting Theory/Source	Implications
Current Implementation of Shared Reading	Shared reading was regularly conducted; students initially showed enthusiasm, but some lost focus over time.	Guthrie & Wigfield (2000)	Engagement varies depending on learning conditions and media quality.
	Interactive strategies (movement imitation, prediction questions) increased student engagement.	Lev Vygotsky (1978)	Active participation and social interaction enhance learning effectiveness.
	Limited visibility of text and images reduced students' participation.	Lynch (2008)	Visual accessibility is crucial in maintaining attention during shared reading.
	Books were small-sized and not designed for	Cohen et al. (2018)	There is a mismatch between instructional

	group reading (not Big Books).		needs and available media.
Limitations of Existing Reading Media (Lacks)	Reading materials lacked SDG 1 (No Poverty) integration.	United Nations (2015)	Global values are not yet embedded in early literacy practices.
	Content did not strongly relate to students' real-life or social issues.	Guthrie & Wigfield (2000)	Meaningful content is essential to sustain engagement.
Teachers' & Students' Expectations (Needs/Wants)	Teachers expect large, colorful, simple, and bilingual (English–Indonesian) books.	Santosa et al. (2022)	Learning media should be engaging and developmentally appropriate.
	Students responded better to large visuals and interactive storytelling.	Ratminingsih et al. (2022); Lynch (2008)	Big Books can enhance attention, participation, and print awareness.
	Need for stories that promote empathy and social awareness.	Maya et al. (2022)	Literacy media should integrate socio-emotional learning.
Interpretation & Theoretical Implications	Big Book media should be visually accessible, interactive, simple, and meaningful.	Padmadewi et al. (2018)	Appropriate media supports effective literacy learning.
	Findings support engagement and sociocultural learning theories.	Lev Vygotsky (1978); Guthrie & Wigfield (2000)	Interaction and engagement are key in early literacy development.
	Big Books can function not only as literacy tools but also as value-based education media.	Lynch (2008); Ratminingsih & Budasi (2018)	Integration of SDG values creates holistic learning (cognitive + character).

Following the summary presented in Table X, each aspect of the findings is further elaborated to provide a deeper understanding of the results.

The Current Implementation of Shared Reading

The findings indicate that shared reading activities were regularly conducted in the observed kindergarten classroom. The teacher read storybooks aloud while students listened and responded to questions. Most students initially demonstrated enthusiasm and attentiveness. Approximately two-thirds of the students-maintained focus throughout the session, while others gradually showed signs of disengagement, such as talking to peers or shifting attention to other objects. This pattern reflects variations in students' reading engagement, which may fluctuate depending on instructional conditions and media used (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000).

Students' engagement increased when the teacher incorporated interactive elements, such as asking students to imitate characters' movements or answer prediction questions. This finding confirms that shared reading is not merely reading aloud but involves interactive scaffolding between teacher and students. In line with the Sociocultural Theory proposed by Lev Vygotsky (1978), learning occurs effectively through guided social interaction. The observed classroom interaction supports the idea that engagement is strengthened when children actively participate rather than passively listen.

However, the sustainability of engagement appeared to depend largely on the visibility and attractiveness of the reading materials. When students could not clearly see the illustrations or text, their participation decreased. This finding is consistent with previous research indicating that visual accessibility plays a significant role in maintaining children's attention and engagement during shared reading (Lynch, 2008).

Limitations of Existing Reading Media (Lacks)

The study found that the books used during shared reading were small-sized commercial storybooks rather than Big Books specifically designed for group instruction. The limited size of text and illustrations reduced visual accessibility, particularly for students seated farther from the teacher. Additionally, the number of available books was limited, and the stories were not systematically designed to integrate SDG 1 (No Poverty) values. This condition reflects a mismatch between instructional needs and available resources in early literacy contexts (Cohen et al., 2018).

Although some stories conveyed general moral lessons, themes related to poverty awareness, empathy toward disadvantaged individuals, and social responsibility were not explicitly addressed. This indicates a gap between the broader goals of character education and the actual content delivered through literacy materials. According to Guthrie and Wigfield (2000), reading engagement is closely related to meaningful and relevant content. When materials fail to connect with students' real-life experiences or broader social values, engagement tends to decrease.

The absence of SDG-integrated materials suggests that global educational frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals have not yet been fully translated into early childhood literacy practices. While SDG 1 emphasizes eradicating poverty and promoting social equity (United Nations, 2015), its values have not been intentionally embedded into classroom reading media. This finding highlights the importance of contextualizing global values into age-appropriate learning materials (Ratminingsih & Budasi, 2018).

Teachers' and Students' Expectations for SDG 1–Based Big Book Media (Necessities and Wants)

Interview results revealed that the teacher expects reading media that are visually large, colorful, and rich in illustrations to maintain students' attention. The teacher also emphasized the importance of simple vocabulary, short sentences, and bilingual presentation (English–Indonesian) to support comprehension. Additionally, interactive storytelling elements were considered essential to sustain active participation. These expectations align with the characteristics of effective learning media for young learners, which should be engaging, meaningful, and developmentally appropriate (Santosa et al., 2022).

From students' behavioral responses during observation, it was evident that large and expressive visuals stimulated higher levels of enthusiasm. Students were more responsive when they could clearly see pictures and when the teacher integrated gestures and dramatic expressions. This finding is supported by research conducted by Ratminingsih et al. (2022), which shows that young learners engage more actively in interactive and enjoyable learning environments. Furthermore, previous studies also indicate that Big Books enhance joint attention and print awareness during shared reading (Lynch, 2008).

Importantly, data from both observation and interview suggest the need to integrate empathy-building themes into reading materials. Stories that portray characters helping others or experiencing social difficulties can promote early social awareness. Integrating SDG 1 values through storytelling may therefore serve a dual function: strengthening literacy engagement and fostering character development. This supports the view that early literacy instruction should not only focus on cognitive development but also incorporate socio-emotional learning aspects (Maya et al., 2022).

Interpretation and Theoretical Implications

This study answers the research question by identifying the need for SDG 1–based Big Book media that are visually accessible, interactive, linguistically simple, and socially meaningful to support shared reading and reading engagement in early education. The findings reinforce the importance of applying appropriate teaching techniques and media to achieve effective learning outcomes, particularly for young learners (Padmadewi et al., 2018).

The results confirm existing theories emphasizing the role of interaction and engagement in literacy development (Lev Vygotsky, 1978; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). However, this study extends prior research by highlighting the importance of integrating global social values, specifically SDG 1, into early literacy materials. While previous studies have focused on Big Books as tools for enhancing print awareness and participation (Lynch, 2008), this study suggests that Big Books can also function as instruments for value-based education.

Therefore, the findings imply a shift from traditional perspectives on shared reading media. Big Books should not only be visually engaging but also intentionally designed to incorporate structured social themes aligned with global educational goals. This integrated approach represents a more holistic model of early literacy instruction that combines cognitive engagement with character development (Ratminingsih & Budasi, 2018).

CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed to identify the needs of teachers and students regarding SDG 1–based Big Book media to support shared reading and reading engagement in early childhood education field. The findings clearly indicate that although shared reading activities were regularly implemented, the existing reading materials were not fully adequate in terms of size, visual accessibility, interactivity, and integration of SDG 1 values. The limitations of small-sized books and the absence of structured poverty-awareness themes affected students' sustained engagement during reading sessions.

The study concludes that both teachers and students require Big Book media that are visually large, colorful, linguistically simple, interactive, and contextually relevant. Furthermore,

integrating SDG 1 (No Poverty) values into storytelling is considered essential to promote empathy and social awareness alongside literacy development. The needs analysis revealed three major components: (1) the necessity of visually accessible and engaging media, (2) the lack of SDG-integrated reading materials in the current classroom context, and (3) the desire for bilingual and interactive storybooks that relate to children's daily experiences.

Theoretically, this study supports sociocultural perspectives on literacy learning by emphasizing the importance of interaction and engagement in shared reading. It also extends existing literature on Big Book usage by proposing the integration of global social values into early literacy media. Practically, the findings provide a foundation for developing SDG 1–based Big Book materials tailored to kindergarten contexts.

Future research may focus on the development and implementation stages of SDG-integrated Big Books to examine their effectiveness in improving reading engagement and social awareness among young learners. By integrating literacy instruction with global citizenship values, early childhood education can contribute not only to the development of academic but also to the formation of empathetic and socially responsible individuals.

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