



A Needs Analysis of Reading Media to Support Reading Engagement and Quality Education among Early Childhood Students

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Abstrak

Keterampilan anak usia dini memainkan peran penting dalam mengembangkan kemampuan literasi sekaligus menanamkan nilai-nilai pendidikan yang relevan, termasuk pendidikan berkualitas (SDG 4). Namun, pengajaran membaca di kelas masih didominasi oleh penggunaan media sederhana yang berfokus pada pengenalan kosakata dan tidak mampu mendukung keterlibatan siswa secara optimal. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kebutuhan guru dan siswa terhadap media membaca yang dapat meningkatkan keterlibatan membaca sekaligus mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai pendidikan berkualitas. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dengan metode analisis kebutuhan yang dilakukan di PNS Pelita Kasih (PAUD) Singaraja. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi kegiatan membaca di kelas dan wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan guru. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa keterlibatan membaca siswa masih rendah, ditandai dengan kurangnya perhatian, partisipasi, dan interaksi selama kegiatan membaca. Kondisi ini dipengaruhi oleh keterbatasan media dalam hal ukuran, variasi, dan daya tarik visual. Guru juga mengungkapkan kebutuhan akan media membaca yang lebih menarik, interaktif, dan sesuai dengan karakteristik anak usia dini. Oleh karena itu, pengembangan media baca berupa buku-buku besar yang mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai pendidikan berkualitas dipandang sebagai solusi potensial untuk meningkatkan keterlibatan membaca sekaligus menanamkan pemahaman tentang pentingnya pendidikan usia dini.

Kata kunci: *Keterlibatan Membaca, Media Pembelajaran, Pendidikan Berkualitas, Pendidikan Usia Dini.*

Abstract

Early childhood skills play a crucial role in developing literacy skills while instilling relevant educational values, including quality education (SDG 4). However, classroom reading instruction is still dominated using simple media focused on vocabulary recognition and unable to optimally support student engagement. This study aims to analyze the needs of teachers and students for reading media that can increase reading engagement while integrating the values of quality education. This study used a qualitative descriptive approach with a needs analysis method conducted at PAUD Pelita Kasih Singaraja. Data were collected through observations of classroom reading activities and semi-structured interviews with teachers. The results of this study indicate that student reading engagement is still low, characterized by a lack of attention, participation, and interaction during reading activities. This condition is influenced by media limitations in terms of size, variety, and visual appeal.

Teachers also expressed the need for reading media that are more engaging, interactive, and appropriate to the characteristics of early childhood. Therefore, developing reading media in the form of large books that integrate the values of quality education is seen as a potential solution to increase reading engagement while instilling an understanding of the importance of early education.

Keywords: Reading Engagement, Learning Media, Quality Education, Early Childhood Education.

INTRODUCTION

Literacy is a fundamental skill that plays a crucial role in a child's growth and development. Literacy helps individuals acquire and communicate information and supports problem-solving skills (Hidayat & Fitria, 2021). Therefore, early literacy development forms the foundation for future educational success and personal growth. Furthermore, early literacy skills are also important indicators of later reading success and contribute to positive academic and behavioral outcomes in children (Dillon & Newman, 2022). However, literacy levels among early childhood learners in Indonesia remain relatively low. According to the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Indonesian students' reading ability ranks 73rd out of 79 countries (Haryuniati & Suranto, 2021). This condition is influenced by various factors, both internal and external. Internal factors include low interest in reading, limited access to engaging reading materials, and external factors related to learning environments that do not fully support children's literacy development. In the context of early childhood education, the use of less varied and less engaging learning media is also a contributing factor to children's low engagement in reading activities.

Reading engagement is widely recognized as a crucial factor in supporting literacy development and overall academic achievement. Reading engagement refers to students' level of attention, motivation, and active participation during reading activities. This concept is a multidimensional construct encompassing cognitive, behavioral, affective, and social aspects (Binfehaid Alqahtani, 2024). Students with high levels of engagement tend to have better comprehension skills, positive attitudes toward reading, and higher academic achievement. Furthermore, engagement also reflects the extent to which students are active and committed to the learning process (Fredricks et al., 2004).

One highly effective medium for increasing reading engagement is the big book. A big book is a large book equipped with attractive illustrations and simple text designed to attract students' attention and facilitate the learning process. The large and colorful display makes this medium effective in enhancing the reading experience of early childhood (Haniya & Hasibuan, 2024). This study shows that the use of big books can stimulate language development, attract children's attention, and help them understand the story's content (Heriani et al., 2023). Furthermore, big books have advantages over conventional storybooks, especially in terms of size, text clarity, and visual appeal. The use of big books in storytelling activities has also been shown to improve children's language expression skills through active participation and discussion (Rizka, 2020). Therefore, big books can be a potential alternative reading medium to increase reading engagement and support early childhood literacy development.

In addition to developing basic literacy skills, early childhood education also plays a role in instilling global values, particularly quality education as stated in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4). Quality education emphasizes the importance of providing equal, inclusive, and meaningful access to learning for all children. However, based on observations at the PAUD Pelita Kasih in Singaraja, literacy activities still focus on repetitive vocabulary introduction and have not integrated the values of quality education into learning media. Furthermore, the use of reading media is still limited and not based on contextual and engaging stories. Based on these problems, a needs analysis is needed to identify the needs of teachers and students in developing appropriate reading media. Therefore, this study

proposes the development of learning media that can integrate the values of quality education into early childhood literacy activities. While previous materials only focused on the reading aspect, this study seeks to present media that not only improves reading skills but also encourages student engagement and instills an understanding of the importance of education for all children.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative descriptive design with a needs analysis approach to identify the need for developing reading media in early childhood education. This study aims to describe the real conditions in the classroom and understand the needs of teachers and students in that environment. This study was conducted at PAUD Pelita Kasih Singaraja by involving teachers and students as participants. Teachers were selected purposively based on their involvement in literacy learning, while students were observed during reading activities. Data collection was carried out through observation and interviews. Observations were used to see the learning process, media use, and student involvement, while interviews aimed to explore teachers' experiences and needs related to reading media. Data were analyzed descriptively to provide an overview of learning conditions and the need for developing reading media that support student involvement and quality education.

Data collection was conducted through two main techniques: classroom observation and semi-structured interviews with teachers. Observations were used to observe students' reading engagement during the activity, such as their attention, participation, and interest when interacting with the media used. Researchers also recorded how students responded to the reading activity and the extent to which they were involved in the process. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore teachers' views regarding the implementation of reading learning. These interviews aimed to identify obstacles faced by teachers, as well as their needs and expectations for the development of more effective and engaging reading media for early childhood. The focus of this study was directed at teachers' understanding of the concept of quality education and their tendencies in selecting learning media that were interesting and appropriate to the characteristics of early childhood. The use of semi-structured interviews provided space for researchers to explore in more depth the various obstacles faced by teachers, while identifying related needs, content, design, and effective use of reading media. This approach yielded comprehensive information regarding the limitations of currently used media and demonstrated the need to develop more innovative and relevant media for the learning context. Thus, this study emphasizes the importance of developing reading media that not only increases student engagement but also integrates the values of quality education into the learning process.

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key patterns and needs from the observations and interviews. The process began with a comprehensive review of the data, followed by coding relevant information, particularly related to student reading engagement and teachers' needs for learning media. These codes were then grouped into several main themes, such as media use, material suitability, and the integration of quality education values. Observation and interview data were analyzed in an integrated manner to provide a picture of learning conditions, which then served as the basis for formulating recommendations for developing large books as reading media that are engaging, appropriate, and support student engagement.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Classroom Observation Findings

This research was conducted through classroom observations and semi-structured interviews with English teachers at PAUD Pelita Kasih Singaraja. The primary findings focused on identifying students' levels of reading engagement during literacy activities and teachers' needs for appropriate reading media for early childhood. Overall, the research

findings indicated several issues related to low student participation in reading activities and the limitations of the learning media used in the classroom. Classroom observations were conducted to directly observe student engagement during reading activities using available media. The results of these observations are then summarized and presented in Table 1.

Tabel 1. Observation Findings Related to Student Reading Engagement

Observation Aspect	Indicator	Findings
Reading Resources	Availability and Diversity of media	Reading media is still limited in terms of both quantity and variety, so it does not fully support classroom learning activities
Content Suistability	Development Appropriateness	In accordance with the level of development of kindergarten age children in terms of the size of the letters, the vocabulary used, and the level of simplicity.
Physical Characteristics of Media	Visual Clarity and Accessibility	The reading media used is relatively small in size, an A4 format story book, so it does not support text visibility for students during reading activities.
Instructional Approach	Implementation of Shared Reading	Teachers use shared reading strategies by reading aloud, pointing to texts, and actively involving students during the reading process.
Student Attention	Level of Concentration	Some students show low levels of attention and are easily distracted during reading activities.
Student Involvement	Degree of Participation	Most students showed limited active participation in reading activities.
Engagement Pattern	Suistainability of Interest	Students appear enthusiastic at the beginning of the reading activity, but their attention and interest tend to decrease in the middle to the end.
Language Ability	Vocabulary Comprehension and Pronunciation	Students still have difficulty in understanding and pronouncing vocabulary and following instructions given by the teacher.
Educational Value Integration	Inclusion of Education Values Quality	The reading media used has not integrated quality educational values into the story content.
Overall Engagement	General Level of Reading Engagement	Observation results show that students' reading involvement is still not optimal and requires the development of more effective learning media.

Observation results indicate that student reading engagement is still relatively low and inconsistent. Although reading activities have been carried out, the availability and quality of reading media in the classroom are still limited. Based on Table 1, the media used are lacking in terms of quantity and variety, and the media used are small in size, such as A4 format storybooks, so they do not support the clarity of text and illustrations for students. In addition, students show a low level of attention and participation during reading activities. Students are more likely to be easily distracted and only engage in simple activities such as answering short questions and repeating words. Although enthusiasm is seen at the beginning of the activity, student engagement as the reading session progresses, indicating

that the media used has not been able to maintain student interest consistently. In the strategy session, the teacher has implemented shared reading activities, such as reading aloud, showing texts, and actively involving students. However, student engagement is still limited to basic responses and has not shown a deeper interaction with the text. The findings suggest that although the learning strategy is appropriate, media limitations, especially in terms of size and design, also contribute to low student reading engagement.

Teacher Interview Results

The results of semi-structured interviews with teachers reinforced the findings from classroom observations. A summary of the interview results is presented in Table 2.

Tabel 2. Summary of Teacher Interview Results

Aspects	Result of Interview with Teacher
Instructional Material Used	Teachers use children's story books with simple text and interesting illustrations in reading activities.
Students' Reading Behavior	Some students are active and enthusiastic, but some students are less involved, especially when the story is less interesting.
Students' Reading Ability	Students still have limited reading skills and tend to struggle to understand story content. Furthermore, conventional reading strategies also impact student engagement.
Availability of Learning Resources	Reading media is available, but is still limited and does not fully support learning needs.
Quality of Learning Media	The media used is quite simple and not yet optimal in attracting students' interest in a sustainable manner.
Learners' Preferences	Students are more attracted to media with attractive images, bright colors, relevant stories, and interactive presentation.
Integration of Educational Values	The learning media used have not fully integrated the values of quality education.
Use of Big Book Media	Teachers have not used large books as learning media in reading activities.
Teaching Strategies	Teachers use strategies such as reading aloud, asking questions, inviting students to predict the story, and involving movement and sound to increase engagement.

Interviews with teachers reinforced the findings from classroom observations. According to Table 2, reading activities in class have been conducted routinely, but students still experience difficulty maintaining attention throughout the activity. This is influenced by students' limited attention spans and a lack of engaging and varied reading materials. Teachers also stated that available media are still limited and dominated by small-format materials, such as storybooks, which do not optimally support student engagement. Therefore, teachers emphasized the need to develop more engaging reading media, particularly larger-format materials such as big books with clear illustrations, attractive colors, and simple stories that are appropriate for children's characteristics.

Furthermore, interviews also indicated that the learning media used do not fully integrate the values of quality education. Teachers believe that these values are important to introduce from an early age, particularly related to inclusive, meaningful, and life-relevant learning. These findings underscore the need to develop reading media that not only increase student engagement but also integrate the values of quality education contextually and appropriately to children's developmental stages.

Discussion

The results of the analysis of the learning process in the classroom showed a gap between the objectives of reading activities and the level of student engagement. Based on observations, 10 out of 20 students or 50 percent of the observed group experienced difficulty in maintaining attention during reading activities. This condition is related to the limitations of the learning media used, which are generally small A4 story books. The small size of the media becomes an obstacle because students cannot see the text and illustrations clearly from their seats. As a result, although students showed enthusiasm at the beginning of the activity, this interest tended to decrease as the learning progressed. By the end of the session, some students appeared to lose focus and interest. The inconsistency of student engagement indicates that the media used is not adequate for group learning, especially in supporting visual attention. This is in line with research that emphasizes the importance of visual attention in supporting children's engagement during reading activities, where the use of larger visuals can make it easier for children to focus their attention (Rizka, 2020 ; Wicks et al., 2020).

In addition to the limitations of media size, this study also showed low levels of active student participation in reading activities. Observations showed that 10 out of 20 students, or 50 percent, were only minimally involved and rarely responded to teacher questions or story content. This low participation was also influenced by students' difficulties in understanding vocabulary and following instructions, so their engagement tended to be limited to simple repetition without in-depth understanding. Reading engagement is influenced by early language skills and the quality of interaction with the text (McGeown & Smith, 2024). In addition, the use of books with illustrations in a format that attracts children's attention can also increase their active engagement in the reading process (Smirnova & Klopotova, 2025). Therefore, teachers need to encourage interactive engagement by designing shared reading activities that can invite, motivate, and guide verbal participation during the activity (Son et al., 2023).

Findings from teacher interviews corroborate observations that indicate an urgent need for the development of appropriate learning media. Teachers identified students' limited attention span as a major obstacle to reading activities. Although shared reading strategies such as reading aloud and question and answer were implemented, the limitations of the media used prevented optimal student engagement. Therefore, teachers emphasized the need for larger, more engaging, and interactive reading media, such as big books, equipped with simple text, clear illustrations, and colors that suit the characteristics of early childhood (Rofiah et al., 2023). This is in line with the opinion that attractive and developmentally appropriate visual media can increase student attention and engagement in learning (Heriani et al., 2023; Alabi, 2024). Furthermore, the use of large-sized media in shared reading can create more meaningful interactions between teachers and students and support language development and reading comprehension (Noble et al., 2020).

One gap in this research is the suboptimal integration of quality education values (SDG 4) into classroom literacy activities. The reading materials used implement the values of equal access to education, inclusivity, and the importance of learning for all children. Teachers also revealed that the concept of quality education has not been explicitly conveyed through learning media or is not yet included in the curriculum. This condition indicates an untapped opportunity to make reading activities a means of instilling broader educational values. Integrating quality education values into story-based media can help children understand the importance of learning, appreciate educational opportunities, and develop inclusive attitudes. In line with the view that early childhood education plays a role in shaping social values and understanding through meaningful learning experiences (Chapman & O'Gorman, 2022; Zöggeler-Burkhardt et al., 2023; Development, 2023). This effort not only strengthens literacy skills but also supports the development of children's character as a whole.

In conclusion, this study shows that developing reading media in the form of large books that integrate quality educational values is an important intervention in early childhood education. Although the learning strategies implemented by teachers are appropriate, their effectiveness is still limited by the lack of visually appealing media that also contain relevant educational values. The use of large books has the potential to increase student focus, engagement, and interaction with the text in a more meaningful way. Furthermore, the integration of quality educational values in learning media can help instill an understanding of the importance of learning, inclusivity, and educational opportunities for all children. Thus, the development of innovative and contextual reading media can support the creation of more effective, interactive, and meaningful literacy learning for early childhood.

CONCLUSION

This study emphasizes the importance of needs analysis as a foundation in developing appropriate reading media for early childhood education. The results of the study indicate that students need visually appealing and story-based reading materials to increase reading engagement, while teachers need media that are appropriate to the characteristics of child development and can integrate the values of quality education (SDG 4) in a simple and meaningful manner. These findings indicate that reading media not only functions to develop basic skills, but also needs to encourage active participation and interaction of students in shared reading activities. Therefore, teachers are advised to utilize contextual and interesting media, such as large books, to increase student engagement. In addition, teachers also need to play an active role in facilitating discussions so that students can understand the content of the story and understand the important values of education, inclusivity, and equal learning opportunities. On the other hand, the development of teaching materials and curriculum design are expected to be able to integrate the values of quality education into reading media through simple language, interesting illustrations, and contexts close to children's lives. This effort is expected to support the implementation of SDG 4 in early childhood education. This research also opens opportunities for further research to develop and test the effectiveness of SDG 4-based book prototypes in increasing student reading engagement and comprehension. Thus, the integration of literacy development and value instillation is expected to create more inclusive, interactive, and meaningful learning for early childhood.

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