

Lacks, Wants, Necessities on SDGs Content Reading Materials for Fifth Grade Students in Buleleng Regency

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the lacks, wants, and necessities on SDGs content reading materials for fifth-grade students in Buleleng Regency. The study was conducted in five elementary school students that using emancipated curriculum. Employing a qualitative descriptive method, the data were collected through questionnaires for students and interviews for teachers. The findings indicate that students experience significant difficulties in English vocabulary mastery and reading fluency, especially when encountering SDGs-related terms. Furthermore, students expressed a strong preference for reading materials that are fun, interesting images, multimedia-supported, and integrated with SDGs themes such as environmental protection and healthy living. The study also revealed that students recognize the importance of improving their English fluency and comprehension to support global citizenship and sustainable living values.

Keywords: Elementary School Students, English Reading Materials, Necessities, SDGs Content, Students' Lacks, Wants.

INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, the standard of education has continued to be an important factor for the country's progress. Education gaps still exist despite the introduction of several reforms, especially in rural and under-resourced areas like Bali's Buleleng Regency. Nowadays, the government is still working to ensure that Indonesian schools have an excellent quality. It is not only the government's responsibility, All of the sectors such as education institutions, private sectors, and the society should actively participate to improve the standard of education (Milati & Nugraheni, 2024).

Despite collaborative work, literacy problems also continue to be an important challenge. according to UNESCO data from the 2016 Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report, Indonesia is ranked 10th out of 14 developing nations (Fajar et al., 2017). Those data strongly support by one of Chairman of the Buleleng Regency Education Council named I Made Sedana stated that "hundreds of junior high school students in Buleleng regency unable to read fluently" (Kusuma, 2025). Additionally, building a polite and respectful classroom atmosphere is essential to supporting effective communication and preventing misunderstandings between teachers and students (Yoga et al., 2018).

According to information gathered at the Buleleng Middle School Principals' Working Meeting (*Musyawarah Kerja Kepala Sekolah*), Sedana reported that around 400 middle school students' difficulty in reading. The hundreds of students come from 60 middle schools in Buleleng Regency. The main factors on this chase are the automatic class

promotion policy without measuring students' mastery of basic competencies. The long-term effects of systemic policy decisions, such as the automatic class promotion policy, which allows students to move forward without enough mastery of core competencies, are also highlighted by this concerning number, in addition to the failure of early literacy initiatives.

The consequences of the educational lacks are very diverse. Lack of fundamental literacy abilities increases the possibility that students will struggle in all subject areas, which will reduce their chances of success in the future. More importantly, these weaknesses show that the educational system has failed to achieve one of its most basic goals. Giving students the fundamental abilities required for both active social engagement and lifetime study. In addition to being a fundamental ability, literacy especially reading comprehension is a foundation for critical thinking, higher-order thinking, and informed citizenship. Based on those problems, there are several factors that cause low literacy rates among students and even society in Indonesia.

Mardiah (2024) in the research entitle "*Minat Baca di Indonesia*" stated that there are several factors causes low literacy rates in Indonesia include facilities, family education, reading technology, family economy, motivation, and reading learning. The solution to the low interest in reading in Indonesia includes the development of sustainable programs that are relevant to the above factors, as well as the development of the government's role in making policies, programs and regulations in increasing interest in reading (Assingkily & Barus, 2019; Mardiah, 2024).

The creation of important and interesting reading materials is needed in this situation. The use of instructional media such as visual dictionaries is proven to support young learners in improving vocabulary and comprehension. Adnyani et al (2021) developed a multilingual thematic picture dictionary that significantly improved students' literacy by providing vocabulary with authentic illustrations and contextually relevant themes for elementary students (Adnyani et al., 2021).

Integrating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into primary school English reading curriculum is one promising strategy for reducing the literacy gap. According to Milati and Nugraheni (2024), With an emphasis on high-quality, inclusive, and equitable education, SDG 4 is essential to enhancing sustainable education in Indonesia. This includes improving access to education in 3T areas, teacher competency, integration of local wisdom, and character and environmental education (Milati & Nugraheni, 2024). Students' vocabulary, critical thinking, and global awareness can be improved by the universally relevant themes offered by the SDGs, which include social justice, gender equality, environmental sustainability, and high-quality education.

Integrating SDG content into English-language reading materials enhances global citizenship education and value-based education that is in line with Indonesia's national curriculum in addition to improving language learning. However, designing an effective reading materials, it is important to conduct a needs analysis. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) defined needs analysis as having three dimensions: lacks (what learners do not know or cannot do), wants (what students believe they need), and necessities (what students need to know to perform well in a given situation). Finding these dimensions offers a systematic framework for developing an effective reading material.

A needs-based analysis is essential for diagnosing the specific challenges in reading English texts, especially those consist of SDGs content. According to Padmawati and Dewi

(2021), many teachers have not conducted student needs analysis in teaching English, so the materials used tend to be too general and irrelevant to the needs of the student's major or context. This causes students to have difficulty in understanding and using English effectively according to the needs of their field (Padmawati & Dewi, 2021). Due to literacy challenges in the region and the growing demand for globally competent learners, this study aims to investigate fifth-grade students' lacks, wants, and necessities toward to reading material with SDG topic.

In addition to being relevant, this empirical study is essential to larger initiatives aimed at raising the standard of basic education and promoting sustainable development concepts. In the end, this study provides a more detailed understanding of the relationship between global education themes and literacy development. By identifying the appropriate needs of students, teachers or material developers should collaboratively create resources that suitable linguistically, culturally, and cognitively engaging. It is expected that the results of this study will offer relevant information to educators, curriculum designers, and policymakers who are dedicated to enhancing English literacy through locally relevant and globally relevant content.

METHOD

This study conducted in five elementary schools in Buleleng Regency, Bali, Indonesia. These five schools were selected using purposive sampling technique, with the inclusion criteria, which means that the first criteria are there is an English language subject, followed by the use of an emancipated curriculum and an English teacher with experience in an English language education program. The final requirement is the willingness to respond. To analyzing the students' lacks, wants, and necessities, this study is using two instruments named questionnaire and interview. Both of these instruments were created to investigate the students' lacks, wants, and necessities about reading resources related to the SDGs. Open-ended questions were used to give students the flexibility to express their thoughts without being constrained by a set of possible answers.

Furthermore, respondents are encouraged to grasp the topic and responses consistently by using closed-ended questions (Colosi, 2006). In addition, this study used semi-structured interviews to collect more detailed data. Kamaria (2021) states that this kind of interview is more adaptable than planned interviews. By getting the interviewee's ideas and opinions, the interview aims to more honestly identify the problems. In order to obtain more detailed information, interviews were done with English teachers in the elementary schools that were selected based on those various factors. For collecting the data, there are three phases in this study. First are preparation phases, where the researcher observing the schools for finding the school with those inclusion criteria. Second phase is administration of questionnaires, where the questionnaires were distributed and completed under the control of the researcher to ensure clarity. And the last phase is interviews with the English teachers. The interview was conducted in person, recorded by audio recorder, and transcribed for the analysis. The data were analyzed by thematic analysis technique, for interview. For questionnaire, the researcher using qualitative descriptive to analyzing the data. To ensure the accuracy of the data, researcher using triangulation, expert judgment, and audit trail for reliability and validity.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

This study aimed to determine the lacks, wants, and necessities of fifth-grade students in Buleleng Regency with regard to English reading materials that integrate Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) content. Questionnaires given to students and interviews with English teachers were used to gather the data. The findings will be presented based on each dimension on the needs analysis framework that adopted from Hutchinson and Waters (1987) theory. Here are the representations of the initial findings related to the students' lacks, wants, necessities on content reading materials in Buleleng regency:

Table 1. Questionnaire for Students

No	Questions	Answers	
		Yes	No
1	Have you ever read an English story in school?	86%	14%
2	Can you understand the contents of a story book without the help of a teacher?	64%	36%
3	Do you have difficulty understanding new vocabulary in English stories?	63%	37%
4	Do you know the meaning of words like "environment", "clean water", or "healthy food" in English?	47%	53%
5	Do you have difficulty to read fluently in English?	56%	44%
6	Have you ever read a story that discusses the topic of the environment, poverty, or health?	70%	30%
7	Do you want to read a story whose characters are children?	87%	13%
8	Do you like if English stories contain life lessons such as protecting the earth?	83%	17%
9	Do you want to learn English while reading stories about nature and healthy living?	90%	10%
10	Do you want a story that teaches not to litter?	84%	16%
11	Do you want the story to be told in a funny and fun style?	93%	7%
12	Do you want an English story with translations or a small dictionary?	89%	11%
13	Do you want a story with audio or video?	81%	19%
14	Do you want the story to be told with songs or chants?	61%	39%
15	Do you want to understand English stories about environmental cleanliness and health?	86%	14%
16	Do you want to be able to retell the story in English?	54%	46%
17	Do you want to learn important words about the environment and healthy living?	90%	10%
18	Do you think it is important to understand stories that talk about good living?	97%	3%
19	Do you want to be more fluent in reading and pronouncing English words?	97%	3%
20	Do you want stories that help you speak English confidently?	96%	4%
Total		79%	21%

Students' Lacks

According to the results of the questionnaire and interview, most of fifth-grade students in Buleleng regency are still having difficulty with several aspects of English reading abilities, particularly when it relates to reading texts that contain SDG material. The most significant weakness is in knowledge of vocabulary. Even though 86% students have read an English story, however, there are 63% of students reported that they had trouble understanding new words in English reading materials. Additionally, 56% of students was difficult to read English text fluently. It was clear that student's vocabulary was limited, especially when it came to SDG-related concepts like "environment," "clean water," and "healthy food," which just 47% of students knew what these words meant. Another data reported that 64% of students can understand the content of story book without helping by teacher, and there are 70% of students have read a story that discusses the topic of environment, poverty, and health.

Based on the interviews that have been conducted, the teachers highlighted that vocabulary limitations and comprehending English grammar are the main difficulties faced by the students while reading the English texts. Teachers also noted that students of all levels (from first-grade until sixth-grade elementary school) frequently reported being unhappy about their lack of ability to comprehend the texts given to them.

Students' Wants

The questionnaire's findings showed that students had specific preferences for particular categories of English reading materials. There are 93% of students wanted the way of the stories to be delivered in a fun and humorous form, and there are 87% of students wanted to read a story whose characters are children. For content preferences, there are strong numbers of students wants to read reading materials that integrated SDGs. In which 83% of students like if English stories contain life lessons such as protecting the earth, 90% of students want to learn English while reading stories about nature and healthy living, and 84% of students want a story that teaches not to litter. For the way the story is presented, there are 89% of students want an English story with translations or a small dictionary, 81% of students want a story with audio or video, and 61% of students want the story to be told with songs.

Teachers also confirmed these students' preferences. Teachers stated that the most relevant and interesting topic for elementary school students is about Health and the environment. With the help of packaging picture books that essentially contain lots of pictures will increase students' willingness to learn. Teacher also stated that students were more interested and involved when the learning through videos, storytelling, and interactive PowerPoint presentations.

Students' Necessities

The analysis indicates that fifth-grade students require reading materials that introduce them to crucial SDG topics, SDGs-based topics also improving their English language development. It can be seen from the data presentation of students' choices, which is 97% of students thought the significant to understanding the stories that discuss about good life habits and sustainable living. Additionally, there are 86% of students want to understand English stories about environmental cleanliness and health. Another data told

that 90% want to learn important words about the environment and healthy living. For improving English skills, there are 97% of students want to improve their reading and pronunciation of English words. In addition, 54% of students want to be able to retell the story in English. And as many as 96% of students want the stories that help speaking confidently in English.

Teachers also highlighted that SDGs themes related to health and the environment are very significant and relevant to elementary school students. The teachers also recommended that SDGs-themes materials should be presented using relevant and age-appropriate content like stories, comics, and video animation with lots of visual assistance. Integrating SDGs content is seen as a chance for developing global awareness and positive life values in addition to increasing English literacy.

Discussions

The findings of this study provide crucial information on the needs of fifth-grade students in terms of English reading material that integrate SDG content. Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) framework divides these findings into three main categories: lacks, wants, and necessities. The findings show that not only the students' learning challenges, however, the students' learning preferences and crucial competencies that needed for their English literacy development.

The most prominent lack identified in this study is the students' limited vocabulary in English and their difficulties with reading fluency. This is in line with statements made by English teachers, who confirmed to the fact that most students, regardless of their level of ability, struggle with understanding English texts, especially those that use complicated sentence patterns and new vocabulary. The result is consistent with initial results from UNESCO's 2016 GEM report, which highlighted the Indonesian ongoing literacy issues. Limited vocabulary is a fundamental barrier to comprehension, which can significantly hinder students' ability to engage with content-rich texts like those integrating SDGs themes. In addition, the results are consistent with Mardiah's (2024) study, which revealed that insufficient literacy foundations frequently make students' low reading motivation and limited reading exposure worse. The impact of this deficiencies can be seen from the research by Ogundele et al (2024) and Veeran et al (2024) which stated that most of students have no knowledge of several goals in SDGs and lack of comprehensive education and engagement activities related to SDGs in higher education institutions, which hampers deeper understanding and active participation that causes students are often unaware of the interconnectedness of SDGs and the specific actions needed to achieve them, especially in rural or less developed areas. Thus, it is possible to see Buleleng students' poor vocabulary mastery as a component of this larger national problem. This suggests that English reading materials must incorporate supportive features such as glossaries, translations, and vocabulary repetition to scaffold students' understanding.

The preferences of the students were clearly shown that they wanted reading materials that were engaging, fun, and interactive. Most students indicated that they were interested in stories that were entertaining and child-friendly, had child characters, and had lessons about environmental sustainability. These preferences support the theory proposed by Hutchinson and Waters (1987) that learning is more effective when materials align with students' interests and expectations. Additionally, the high demand for multimedia learning

resources like songs, videos, and interactive games aligns with the growing trend of digital learning among young learners today. This is supported by previous research which found that students' motivation and positive attitudes towards learning English are significantly influenced by the presence of interesting, authentic, and engaging learning materials (Kusuma & Adnyani, 2016). The results of the interviews support this, as teachers stated that while studying through videos or audio-visual presentations as opposed to conventional text-based reading, children were significantly more motivated and focused. These findings also align with the research that have been conducted in Indonesia. Milati and Nugraheni (2024) stated that the necessity for high-quality, inclusive, and equitable education that utilizes modern, technology-based approaches. Integrating multimedia not only accommodates students' preferences but also addresses their learning styles and enhances their engagement. Furthermore, the development of English reading materials should not only focus on linguistic elements but also cultivate critical reading skills among students. This is in line with Mahayanti et al. (2025), who emphasized that many teacher educators and the current curriculum have not been sufficiently critical in designing reading instructions that promote critical literacy and 21st-century thinking skills. Therefore, integrating SDGs content into English reading materials should also be directed at encouraging students to critically analyze global issues, rather than merely understanding the surface meaning of the texts. Another research revealed that interactive language learning activities improve learners' English-speaking ability (Omar et al., 2020). Additionally, The use of interactive learning technology significantly improves students' English language skills compared to conventional learning methods (Muliasari & Efendi, 2022).

Students' necessities can be seen from the results of the questionnaire above which states that students recognize the importance of improving their English reading fluency and comprehension, particularly regarding texts that promote sustainable living and global citizenship. Nearly all students agreed that it is crucial to understand English stories that provide life lessons and that they need to become more fluent and confident in reading and speaking English. This necessity is in line with the goal 4 of SDG, which have a strong emphasis on high-quality education that develops life skills and global competencies. Students can simultaneously improve their language skills and global awareness by incorporating SDGs content into English reading materials. This is crucial for training them to be responsible citizens in a globalized world. The teachers also emphasized the crucial of selecting SDGs topics that are age-appropriate and relatable for students' level, especially those focusing on environmental cleanliness, health, and social interactions within the school environment. These topics are not only relevant to the students' immediate lives but are also embedded within Indonesia's national curriculum and character education goals.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study showed that English reading materials integrated with SDGs content are important for developing students' English literacy and global awareness. The fifth-grade students in Buleleng Regency continue to struggle with vocabulary mastering, reading fluency, and understanding SDGs-related terms, according to the results of the questionnaires and interviews. These weaknesses show that students need learning materials that are more accessible and engaging. Students showed a great interest in learning English while studying SDGs subjects, especially those related to environmental cleanliness, health, and sustainable living, through the use of entertaining, interactive, and multimedia-supported reading materials. Students also expressed that they need reading activities that not only help them build vocabulary but also develop their fluency and confidence in using English for speaking and comprehension. It can conclude that integrating SDGs content into English reading materials is not only aligned with Indonesia's national education objectives but also supports SDG 4, which emphasizes inclusive and quality education. The findings of this study clearly support the necessity of creating English reading resources for students in elementary schools that are linguistically accessible, culturally appropriate, and cognitively engaging. The role of professional teachers is essential in this process, as they must continuously improve their pedagogical and technological competencies to effectively deliver English reading materials that are aligned with students' needs (Ratminingsih, 2015).

The findings suggest that teachers should design the English reading materials with appropriate for the students' level, interactive, fun, and presented through modern learning media such as videos, interactive PowerPoints, and games or fun activities. In order to promote engagement and meaningful learning, teachers are encouraged to utilize student-centered learning strategies including practice-based learning, group projects, and storytelling. It is suggested that curriculum designers and policymakers offer extra assistance in the form of digital resources, teacher training, and culturally and contextually appropriate English reading materials based on the SDGs. To learn more about how well SDGs content improves English literacy, future researchers are asked to carry out comparable experiments in other areas and at various school levels. In conclusion, the integration of SDGs content in English reading materials is proven to be relevant, effective, and necessary in developing students' English proficiency, critical thinking, and global citizenship values.

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